

Dolls gone fascist

How Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* satirized the Brazilian middle and upper classes

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DOLLS GONE FASCIST: HOW INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT *BARBIE FASCIONISTA* SATIRIZED THE BRAZILIAN MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES

ABSTRACT

Created during Brazil's 2018 presidential election, Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* published memetic images of the Barbie doll that were accompanied by captions and short texts in which the character expressed racist, classist, homophobic and sexist views, as well as her support for far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro. The profile – which was among several social media accounts that popularized the meme known as Fascist Barbie – quickly garnered more than 100,000 followers and received coverage from important Brazilian and foreign news outlets such as *Folha de S. Paulo* and *Le Monde*. Its main character – who represents a white, female, middle- or upper-class social media influencer – clearly satirizes Brazil's affluent segments and engages with the polarized climate that permeated the 2018 election and divided the country between progressives and conservatives. Considering the increasing importance of digital artifacts such as memes for political debates and the significant sociopolitical moment that Brazil is going through, the study is based on the research question: How do the memetic images and texts published by Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* portray the Brazilian middle and upper classes? Because the content of *Barbie Fascionista* features complex interconnections between written and visual texts, the investigation relies on a multimodal approach that combines two complementary research techniques – semiotic analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. In total, the analysis encompasses 45 posts that were published by the account between October 11 and December 24, 2018. The results show that, in line with the ideologically and politically polarized context in which *Barbie Fascionista* is embedded, the profile invariably depicts the members of the middle and upper classes of Brazil as privileged, prejudiced and conservative. Despite the lack of nuance, many of the criticisms conveyed by the account echo scholarly interpretations which denounce the widespread presence of classist, racist, sexist and homophobic discourses in Brazilian society. Furthermore, *Barbie Fascionista* also conveys, implicitly, a criticism against American economic and cultural imperialism. The account highlights the potential of humor to delegitimize dominant discourses and features many characteristics of memes such as intertextuality, remixes and parodies. *Barbie Fascionista's* discursive sophistication is paradoxical because, at the same time that it allows the account to deliver powerful messages, the subtleness of its criticisms might cause the audience to interpret the content differently from what its creators expected.

KEYWORDS: *Brazil, memes, Barbie, politics, prejudice*

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1.Introduction

1.1 Barbie and the bourgeoisie

The bourgeoisie is neither charming nor discreet
With its doll hair wigs
The bourgeoisie wants to join the country club
The bourgeoisie wants to go shopping in New York
(...)
Their napkins are always clean
Their maids, always wearing uniforms
They are mixed-race, but they want to be English
They are mixed-race, but they want to be English
("Burguesia", n.d.)

It was 1989 when late Brazilian rocker Cazuza launched his last album – *Burguesia* – which featured a hit song by the same title. At the time, Brazil was going through a convoluted process of redemocratization, after a military dictatorship that had lasted from 1964 to 1985. Cazuza's verses show his resentment towards the elites of the country, whom he deemed responsible for the many inequalities and social issues of Brazil. Three decades later, another powerful critique against Brazil's middle and upper classes has come to light. This time, however, the protest has been conveyed through Fascist Barbie, a meme that has several versions and which has become very popular in social media. The images and their captions – which have been produced by several anonymous internet users – depict the Barbie doll as a stereotypical member of the Brazilian elites: she is white, conservative, alienated and prejudiced.

Similarly to 1989, the Brazil where this meme has emerged is going through a series of political convulsions. In the last six years, the country has experienced – among other significant events – several massive protests which took millions of people to the streets; the controversial impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff; the polemic trial and imprisonment of former president Lula; and the victory, in the last presidential election, of Jair Bolsonaro, a former Army captain and far-right politician. According to Souza (2016), these major changes reflect the class struggle that lies at the core of Brazilian society, comprising a reaction of the country's conservative elites against the upward mobility experienced by the lower classes in the 2000s and 2010s.

In this context, Barbie represents a staunch opponent of the leftist Workers' Party – which governed Brazil between 2003 and 2016 – and its welfare policies as well as a hardcore supporter of

meritocracy and of Jair Bolsonaro. Several accounts have been created on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter with the purpose of publishing the doll's meme – some with large numbers of followers. The satirical series received coverage from major Brazilian news websites as well as foreign outlets such as *Euronews* and *Le Monde* (Bayce, 2018; Gatinois, 2018). The Barbie meme has become so popular that it even gained a Chilean version – a Facebook fan page named *Barbie y Ken Ciudadanos de Bien* – as well as Colombian and Salvadoran adaptations (“Barbie y Ken”, n.d.; “Barbie y Ken”, n.d.; Hidalgo, 2018). These reinterpretations are perhaps facilitated by the similarities between racist and elitist discourses that are prevalent in different Latin American countries (Van Dijk, 2005).

Among the many social media profiles that have published Barbie's memetic images, one of the most popular was Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* – a portmanteau of the words *fascista* (“fascist”) and *fashionista* (a line of Barbie dolls launched by Mattel) – which was active between October 2018 and March 2019. The profile parodied Brazil's conservative social media influencers and resembled a blog – each memetic image was accompanied by a short essay in which Barbie expressed her prejudiced and retrograde political views. *Barbie Fascionista's* humor relied on the contradiction between the doll's idealized and glamorous world – which is shown in the images, originally produced by Mattel, that illustrate the profile – and the character's shockingly prejudiced statements. Furthermore, although Barbie complains about her “hard life” all the time – blaming the Workers' Party for her “problems” – it is evident that she is part of a wealthy and privileged minority.

According to an article published by *Folha de S. Paulo* – one of Brazil's most prominent newspapers – *Barbie Fascionista* was created by two young women from the states of São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul (Fioratti & Moura, 2018). *Le Monde* describes the latter as a “white, overweight and homosexual” resident of a conservative town where most inhabitants supported Bolsonaro (Gatinois, 2018). In a non-satirical post that was published by the account between the first and second round of the 2018 presidential election (which took place, respectively, on October 7th and October 28th), one of the profile's creators declares her support for Fernando Haddad – the Workers' Party candidate –, which highlights *Barbie Fascionista's* interconnection between humor and political activism. However, the article by *Folha de S. Paulo* states that the author – who is identified as a student – is not a member of any party (Fioratti & Moura, 2018). The abovementioned “serious” post explains that the profile's goals were to criticize elitist and prejudiced discourses, foster debates about relevant social themes and help promote sociocultural changes. Nevertheless, the text mentions the fact that several people took the profile's posts literally – as if they were meant to be read as racist, classist and sexist discourses – and went as far as complimenting *Barbie Fascionista* and saying that the account represented their views. In doing so, the author urges her audience to take the profile's content as irony. This highlights *Barbie Fascionista's* complexity and

subtleness, which can be challenging for the less attentive viewer – and problematic in what concerns the account’s creators’ goals.

In order to understand *Barbie Fascionista*’s content, the first step is to be familiar with the agitated – and often chaotic – Brazilian sociopolitical context of the last six years. Therefore, the next section will present a contextual summary of the main political events which took place in Brazil between June 2013 and October 2018.

1.2 From Tropical Spring to long winter

In June 2013, Brazil experienced a series of protests which took millions of people to the streets of the country’s major cities. The first demonstrations took place in São Paulo, were organized by a leftist group known as Movimento Passe Livre (“Free Fare Movement”) and opposed the rise in the city’s bus fares. Due to the police’s brutality and inability in handling the protests – as well as the protesters’ strong presence in social media – similar movements started emerging in other regions of the country (Carlos, 2015; F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016; Scherer-Warren, 2013). These demonstrations quickly diverged from the original protests and morphed into an umbrella movement. People of all ideological orientations went to the streets for a plethora of reasons such as protesting against political corruption, criticizing the capitalist system, demanding better public services, claiming for a return of the military dictatorship and opposing the government’s high expenditures in events such as the 2014 Soccer World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics (Goldstein, 2016; Pinto, 2017; F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016). Given the heterogeneous character of the protests and their resemblance to other international movements such as the Arab Spring, Los Indignados and Occupy Wall Street, they started being referred to as a “Tropical Spring” (“More than one million”, 2013; Winter, 2013).

The mainstream media, which had opposed the demonstrations in their earlier stages, ended up embracing and supporting the protests (Carlos, 2015; Goldstein, 2016). According to Goldstein (2016), this change happened because the traditionally conservative Brazilian media realized that the mobilizations were increasingly turning against leftist president Dilma Rousseff, of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (“Workers’ Party”) – also known by its acronym PT. Rousseff’s popularity was, indeed, irreparably damaged by the massive 2013 street protests (F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016). In the subsequent three years, a succession of new demonstrations took place. This time, however, the mobilizations were mainly composed of the conservative segments of Brazilian society – especially the middle and upper classes –, opposed the Workers’ Party and started claiming for Rousseff’s impeachment (F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016). Multiple socioeconomic and political factors have contributed to the events which took place between 2014 and 2016 – and which still reverberate

today –, amongst which:

- Brazil's conservative mainstream media have constantly attacked the Workers' Party, extensively covering the investigation of corruption scandals associated with the PT – while giving less prominence to the misdeeds of other parties (Goldstein, 2016; F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016; Souza, 2017; Van Dijk, 2017);
- the country's middle class resents the Workers' Party government (2003-2016) because of its affirmative action and social welfare policies, which have diminished the socioeconomic gap between Brazil's affluent segments and lower classes (Bähre & Gomes, 2018; Souza, 2019; Teshainer, Lara, & Dunker, 2018);
- Rousseff's government had a poor economic performance (Goldstein, 2016; F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016);
- a new Brazilian right-wing has been increasingly more influential since the 1990s, blending radical religious, neoliberal and antileft discourses which often target the PT (Miguel, 2018);
- Brazil's financial elites defend an agenda of austerity, privatization, labor and pension reforms and see the Workers' Party as an obstacle to achieving their goals (Rossi & Dweck, 2018; Souza, 2017).

Finally, it has also been argued that US governmental and private organizations have played a covert role in the events of the last years due to geopolitical and economic American interests in Brazil (Nassif, 2016; Souza, 2017). In this sense, it is significant that prominent right-wing groups such as the Movimento Brasil Livre ("Free Brazil Movement") – which played a pivotal role in the 2014-2016 protests – have ideological and financial ties to American think-tanks (Amaral, 2016; Casimiro, 2018).

On August 31, 2016, president Dilma Rousseff was removed from office on grounds of fiscal mismanagement. The dubious impeachment process has been defined, by several scholars, as a parliamentary coup d'état (Miguel, 2018; F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016; Souza, 2017; Teles, 2018). Not only the legality of the process has been questioned but also the fact that the former president has not been formally accused of corruption (F. Santos & Guarnieri, 2016). Rousseff was succeeded by vice president Michel Temer – a conservative politician whose period as president (2016-2018) was marked by accusations of corruption and an agenda of economic austerity, privatizations and neoliberal reforms.

In 2018, shortly before the presidential election, former president Lula da Silva, of the Workers' Party, was sentenced to 12 years in prison as a result of the investigation known as Operation Car Wash. Lula, who was in power for two consecutive terms – between 2003 and 2010 –,

intended to run for a third term and his trial has been criticized as biased and moved by political interests (Souza, 2019; Van Dijk, 2017). The Workers' Party replaced the former president with candidate Fernando Haddad, who made it past the first round of the polling – which took place on October 7th – to face extreme-right politician Jair Bolsonaro in the second round. Bolsonaro, a former army captain who initiated his career during the military dictatorship, is known for his misogynist, homophobic, classist, racist and antileftist statements, as well as his association with neoliberal economists and religious fundamentalists (Goldstein, 2018; Pasqualini, 2016; Schaefer, 2018). The far-right politician often praises the Brazilian military regime (1964-1985) and supports measures such as the relaxation of gun ownership laws and harsh police operations against crime (Goldstein, 2018).

On October 28th, after a highly polarized and violent election, Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil with 58 million votes. According to Souza (2019), the ultraconservative politician's victory reflects Brazil's widespread economic, racial and gender divides and he was significantly supported by the country's white affluent classes. Nevertheless, the far-right politician has also received a considerable amount of votes from lower class Brazilians – a fact that the scholar attributes to the frustration of the working class with the country's long-standing economic crisis and high unemployment levels which, in turn, are a consequence of Brazil's political instability in the last years (Souza, 2019). Moreover, Bolsonaro's campaign made heavy use of social bots and fake news which attacked the Workers' Party and negatively affected its image (Maranhão, Coelho, & Dias, 2018; Souza, 2019).

It was in this turbulent socioeconomic and political context that the meme known as Fascist Barbie – of which *Barbie Fascionista* was one of the main exponents – has emerged. In the following section, I will outline the social and academic motivations for selecting this particular Instagram profile as an object of study.

1.3 Social and scientific relevance and research question

The considerable popularity achieved by *Barbie Fascionista* highlights the important social, cultural, historical and political roles that memes have played in the 21st century. Shifman (2014) underscores the relevance of these artifacts for contemporary digital culture, arguing that the current era is characterized by a "hypermeme logic", in which every major event has the potential to become a meme. Mina (2019), in turn, highlights the memetic character of movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MakeAmericaGreatAgain, #OccupyWallStreet and #MeToo, emphasizing the participatory and collective elements of meme culture.

Although internet memes are increasingly more political and have become an important

element of grassroots mobilizations (Chandler, 2013; Mina, 2019; Shifman, 2014), the corpus of academic studies about these digital artifacts is still relatively small. According to Halupka (2014) – who defines memes as a form of *clicktivism* – this is because there is certain resistance in academia against clicktivism, which is considered a lazy and ineffective form of activism. Nevertheless, even if the practical results of clicktivism are discussable, it has the potential to encourage debates and raise awareness about important social issues. Thus, in what concerns memes, Mina (2019) explains that they help expand the *Overton window* – i.e., the range of discourses that are considered to be acceptable by a given society. In light of the above, I consider this research to be scientifically relevant because it highlights the importance of memes as political objects and may help scholars who research themes such as digital activism, participatory culture and spreadable media. Furthermore, the study is socially relevant because it provides knowledge about topics that are indissociable from contemporary life, which is considerably shaped by digital culture.

Additionally, this thesis is potentially useful for those who would like to have a better understanding of Brazil's digital culture in the 2010s. Lunardi (2018) contends that memes possess different roles in contemporary Brazil, such as: protesting injustices and stimulating the discussion of controversial issues; helping Brazilians connect with each other online and build a sense of community; and contesting the dominance of the English language on the internet. Because memes are highly contextual and can only be understood by those who share a common social and cultural background (Arizzi, 2017), this study serves the purpose of shedding light on the current sociopolitical Brazilian context and possesses historical value. Therefore, it is relevant for contemporary and future researchers who will analyze the intersections between digital culture and Brazilian politics as well as for citizens and activists who aim to understand why Brazilians have created this meme and what its meanings are.

However, the research engages not only with Brazil's digital culture, but also with the country's economic, racial, gender and sexual inequalities, prejudices and struggles. If, as Fairclough (2013) explains, researchers who analyze discourses are themselves producing discourses – and every discourse can potentially help shape the social world – the discussion of these issues is central to those who intend to promote social change and contribute to the development of Brazil into a more inclusive and egalitarian country. In light of these considerations, the research question for this thesis is:

How do the memetic images and texts published by Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* portray the Brazilian middle and upper classes?

I expect the content of *Barbie Fascionista* to be engaged in a discursive struggle between the progressive and conservative segments of Brazilian society, comprising a form of resistance against what its creators perceived as retrograde ideas. Moreover, I hypothesize that the profile will reflect the tensions and inequalities that are present in the country and issues such as racism and classism. Therefore, in the first section of the next chapter – the theoretical frame – I will discuss the dynamics of race and class in Brazil. The following sections of the second chapter will be dedicated to sociocultural aspects of internet memes and the diverse symbolic roles of the Barbie doll.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Class and Race in Brazil

To a great extent, class and race relations in contemporary Brazil stem from the social dynamics that were prevalent in the country during its slavocrat period (mid-1500s to late 1800s) and the subsequent two centuries of Europeanization and modernization (Souza, 2017). After the abolition of slavery, in 1888, Brazilian elites encouraged the immigration of large contingents of European, Asian and Middle Eastern workers to the country. This immigration policy had two main goals: a) whiten the predominantly black and mixed-race population of the country – a measure which was viewed as necessary for Brazil's development; and b) provide Brazil with workers for rural and urban areas (Reiter, 2009; Souza, 2017). Afro-Brazilians, who had been left to fend for themselves after the abolition of slavery, were faced with a double burden – besides experiencing racism, they had to compete against foreign workers who were more qualified and productive (Souza, 2017). As a result, Brazil developed a large marginalized population of people of African and race-mixed descent.

The amount of immigrants who entered Brazil between the late 19th century and the early 20th century was not sizeable enough to create a demographic white majority in the country (Reiter, 2009). In light of this, Brazilian elites reluctantly embraced a policy of race-mixing, believing that the population of Brazil would become more efficient and productive if it was infused with European blood (Dyer, 1997; Reiter, 2009; Skidmore, 1992). This measure was coupled with the rejection of African and indigenous traditions and the adoption of European cultural values and institutions – which were considered to be superior and supposed to bring progress and development to the country (Reiter, 2009; Skidmore, 1992; Souza, 2017).

Notwithstanding the fact that the population of Brazil is, in its majority, of black or mixed heritage, racism is a major issue in Brazilian society. Brazilian middle and upper classes are composed predominantly of white – or light-skinned mixed – individuals, while the lower social segments are, in their majority, of African, indigenous or visibly mixed heritage (Souza, 2017). These social dynamics are complex – much more so than a bi-racial “black and white” dichotomy – and involve intricate racial hierarchies that are based on factors such as physical characteristics and socioeconomic standing (Skidmore, 1992; Van Dijk, 2005). Being perceived as white is a considerable advantage in Brazil and whites have, on average, better income and education levels than non-whites (Reiter, 2009). Furthermore, whites are viewed as superior, more attractive and more “civilized” than blacks (Reiter, 2009; Van Dijk, 2005). Afro-Brazilians, in turn, generally live in the poorest areas of Brazilian cities and comprise the majority of victims of criminality and police

brutality (Layton & Smith, 2017; R. Santos, 2012; Souza, 2017). In what concerns Brazilian media, whites are overrepresented in TV shows such as soap operas, while blacks receive little exposure which often consists of negative and/or stereotypical portrayals (Da Silva, 2018; Van Dijk, 2005). This takes place because, as explained by Dyer (1997), visibility is a fundamental asset for whites to maintain their dominance in the societies they are part of. By being overrepresented, whites become the standard or the norm ethnicity and gain predominance over other groups (Dyer, 1997).

Even though racism has been denounced by several scholars and activists, large segments of Brazilian society argue that Brazil is a “racial democracy”. The concept, which emerged in the early 20th century, is grounded in the belief that, due to widespread miscegenation, there is no racism in Brazil and discrimination in the country is strictly class-based (Layton & Smith, 2017; Van Dijk, 2005). This idea is largely motivated by the fact that Brazilians generally do not acknowledge being racist and often express their prejudices in subtle ways (Layton & Smith, 2017; Van Dijk, 2005). Moreover, the claim that discrimination in Brazil is purely class-based is contradicted by the experiences of several upper-and middle-class black individuals who, despite their affluent material conditions, have frequently been faced with racism (Figueiredo, 2004).

The denial of racism by white elites is not a Brazilian exclusivity. Bonilla-Silva (2015) states that, in the last decades, American whites have adopted dissimulated practices such as concealing their racist views and arguing that the United States is a “post-racial society”. Dyer (1997), in turn, argues that whites unconsciously see themselves as standard human beings while considering people of different ethnicities “Others”. These covert prejudices are related to the emergence of a new social paradigm known as cultural racism – i.e., the notion that discriminatory beliefs are supposedly based on cultural differences rather than biological characteristics (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Souza, 2017). Despite the widespread belief that cultural racism is a completely new form of racism, it is closely intertwined with older forms of racism – after all, racist individuals can now disguise and justify their ethnic prejudices on the basis of cultural background (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Souza, 2017).

In a country like Brazil, in which the staggering majority of the lower class is composed of non-white individuals, racism and classism are easily conflated, but the latter is expressed more openly. Several humoristic TV shows such as *Sai de Baixo* (1996-2013) and *Zorra Total* (1999-2015) have parodied the working classes by portraying them as unrefined, ignorant and unclean (M.L.M. Mendonça & Jordão, 2014). Conversely, Brazilian elites espouse an intense admiration – blended with a deep-rooted feeling of inferiority – for the societies of North American and European countries, believing that they are superior to Brazil in every possible way (Souza, 2017). This belief is pejoratively known, in the country, as the “mongrel complex” – the term criticizes the idea that Brazil’s shortcomings as a nation stem from the mixed-race origins of its population and its supposed

“racial inferiority” (Souza, 2017). The obsession with European/North American physical traits, for example, is so intense in Brazil that, significantly, Brazilian fertility clinics are among the largest purchasers of U.S.-produced semen in the world – a reflection of the desire, by many upper- and middle-class Brazilian women, to have children who look like foreign whites (Assis, 2018; Souza, 2018).

If, according to cultural racist beliefs, some ethnicities are more successful than others due to their cultural institutions (e.g. religion, education) as well as moral character and achievements (Oliver, 2001), class prejudice justifies social inequalities on the perception that the lower classes are in a subordinate position due to their inferior morals and values (Souza, 2017). These notions are intimately related to neoliberal ideas that arrived in Brazil in the aftermath of the country’s military dictatorship (1964-1985) (Negrão, 1996). Nowadays, it is not uncommon for members of the Brazilian elites to justify their privileges by arguing that they earned their social position due to their hard work and diligence – a belief known as meritocracy (Cavalcante, 2018; Souza, 2017). Nevertheless, this argument omits structural factors such as access to quality education, family stability and parental income (Cavalcante, 2018).

Based on Bourdieu’s theory, Souza (2017) explains that social classes are defined by three kinds of capital that are unequally distributed, namely: *economic*, *cultural* and *social*. If economic capital is largely concentrated in the hands of the upper class – the real elites – the Brazilian middle class is, *par excellence*, the segment which detains cultural capital (Souza, 2017). This capital is transmitted from parents to children, and middle-class Brazilians grow up surrounded by cultural products such as books, being encouraged, since very early on, to excel at school and learn foreign languages (Souza, 2017). Cultural capital is fundamental for the Brazilian middle class because it allows this segment to differentiate itself from the lower classes and to compensate for the fact that it cannot compete, in economic terms, against the upper classes (Souza, 2017). Because people tend to interact with individuals of the same social class, social capital – which encompasses advantageous personal and professional relations – is a privilege of those who already possess the other two types of capital (Souza, 2017). Moreover, given that the reproduction of cultural and social capitals is invisible, meritocracy is conveniently used as a justification for class and race inequalities in Brazil (Souza, 2017). Once again, this is not an exclusivity of Brazilian society. Dyer (1997) underscores that, in several countries, whites live in better conditions than people of other ethnicities but are unable to acknowledge their privileges, believing that their social position reflects their individual qualities.

Another neoliberal discourse which is closely associated with meritocracy is the defense of entrepreneurship. It is widely believed, in capitalist societies, that entrepreneurial individuals – those

who possess characteristics such as self-confidence, adaptability and competitiveness, among others – need only invest enough effort in their careers/projects to achieve professional success (Cavalcante, 2018; Fernández-Herrería & Martínez-Rodríguez, 2016). Nonetheless, this argument ignores the fact that well-succeeded entrepreneurs are more often than not people who already possessed significant capitals before launching their initiatives (Cavalcante, 2018). According to Dyer (1997), entrepreneurship is a concept that is intimately related to white-dominated societies. Whites have viewed themselves, for many centuries, as people who are spiritually and intellectually elevated in comparison to other ethnicities (Dyer, 1997). This is precisely the reason why entrepreneurship has been used as a justification for colonialism and imperialism – the argument being that whites are destined to rule the world because of their spiritual qualities such as leadership and willpower (Dyer, 1997). Brazilian supporters of meritocracy and entrepreneurship ignore the fact that the country's lower classes have no access to good-quality education, health and other services (Souza, 2017). The competition for jobs and prestigious social positions is even harsher for black lower-class women, who have to face multiple intersectional prejudices – sex, class and race – added together (Layton & Smith, 2017). In light of these differences, neoliberal discourses end up contributing to legitimize the inequalities of Brazilian society.

The embrace of neoliberal values by the affluent classes of Brazil is conflated with their strong anti-leftist feelings. Several scholars have argued that the Brazilian middle class opposes the social welfare and affirmative action policies that have been implemented by the left out of fear of losing its privileges (Bähre & Gomes, 2018; Souza, 2017; Teshainer, Lara, & Dunker, 2018). Souza (2017) accuses the Brazilian bourgeoisie of selectively protesting against corruption scandals that are associated with left-wing parties while largely ignoring those that are connected to the right-wing. Furthermore, the scholar contends that the middle class acts as a “buffer” segment between the lower and upper classes – serving the double purpose of keeping the poor under control while protecting the privileges of the real elites (Souza, 2017).

Considerable fractions of the Brazilian middle class have far-right or fascist leanings (De Jesus, 2017; Souza, 2017). Among them is the category known as *cidadãos de bem* (“Good citizens”). The *cidadão de bem* is usually defined as someone who is white, high or upper middle-class, conservative, law-abiding and tax-paying (De Jesus, 2017). Historically, the term has been employed as a way of self-identification and as a source of pride. However, in recent times the expression has also been used in critical and ironic ways by the progressive segments of Brazilian society. The *cidadãos de bem* tend to espouse misogynistic, racist, moralist and classist beliefs, while being nostalgic of the country's military dictatorship and supporting measures such as the liberation of gun sales and the execution of criminals by the police (De Jesus, 2017; M.M. Ribeiro, 2018; Teles, 2018).

In this sense, the *cidadão de bem* relates to Van Dijk's (2005) assertion that, in Latin America, classist and racist systems of domination are intertwined with sexism and patriarchy. However, it must be stressed that the Brazilian middle class is not an ideologically homogeneous group – in fact, significant fractions of this social segment espouse progressive and critical views (Souza, 2017). In 2018, for example, middle-class women initiated the movement #EleNão (“Not Him”), which opposed Jair Bolsonaro’s run for the presidency and organized protests that took hundreds of thousands of people to the streets (Souza, 2019).

The deep ethnic and social divide in Brazil has led Souza (2017, p. 61) to define the country as a “caste society”. Reiter (2009), in turn, contends that the lifestyle of Brazilian elites is more similar to that of North Americans and Europeans than to the conditions experienced by the non-white majority. Lower-class Brazilians have limited opportunities for social mobility and are forced to take up the worse and less prestigious jobs, often being exploited by the middle and upper classes (Souza, 2017). Class prejudice is often evidenced by the unwillingness of the affluent classes to share their traditional spaces – such as shopping malls, universities and airports – with poor individuals (Souza, 2017). Between 2013 and 2014, Brazil experienced a series of events known as *rolezinhos*. These were occasions when large groups of lower-class teenagers would leave the ghettos of Brazilian cities and head to shopping malls to indulge in consumption (Catalan, 2017). The country’s middle and upper classes reacted against the “invasion” of these places, and shop owners went as far as unsuccessfully attempting to take legal action to prevent lower class mobs to enter deluxe malls (Catalan, 2017; Socal & Cardoso, 2015).

Nevertheless, many members of Brazil’s underprivileged segments do not accept these inequalities and prejudices passively. Several social movements have advocated for more inclusiveness and equality in the country. Afro-Brazilian activists, for example, have managed to achieve significant advances in the last decades such as affirmative action policies in public universities, the implementation of national anti-racism laws and the foundation of organizations that promote black culture and traditions (Magnoni, 2016; Van Dijk, 2005). Because activism can also take place in online environments and often involves creative tactics such as the production and diffusion of memes, in the next section I will discuss some of the sociocultural aspects of these digital artifacts.

2.2 Memes: A new form of expression

Digital culture in the 21st century is marked by the ubiquitous presence of fast spreading and dynamic cultural artifacts known as memes. The term “meme” was coined in 1976 by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins to define units of culture that could be transmitted in a

similar fashion to genes (Arizzi, 2017; Chandler, 2013; Lunardi, 2018; Marwick, 2013; Mina, 2019; Plevriti, 2013; Shifman, 2014). While Dawkins' original definition was quite broad and could be linked to a plethora of cultural manifestations such as religious beliefs, jokes, clothing fashions and even professional skills (Arizzi, 2017; Shifman, 2014) the term has been increasingly associated with diverse types of online content – often humorous – such as gifs, images, hashtags and videos that can be quickly shared from person to person.

For the purposes of this study, I subscribe to Shifman's (2014) definition of memes as a group of digital items that share common characteristics such as form, content and/or stance, have been created with awareness of each other and widely circulated, imitated and transformed by different internet users. The author explains that a meme is always a collection of similar memetic texts and not a singular object such as a text, a video or a photo (Shifman, 2014). Therefore, it must be clarified that the posts published by *Barbie Fascionista* are not memes *per se*, but memetic images which are part of the larger Fascist Barbie meme.

Nevertheless, Dawkins' biological analogy highlights some interesting characteristics of memes such as *copy-fidelity* (the ability to be copied accurately); *fecundity* (the speed of their replication); and *longevity* (their endurance and stability) (Marwick, 2013). Although memes rely on imitation, they are not exact copies of each other, but rather recreations in which the next iteration is slightly different from the former (Shifman, 2014). The abovementioned biological analogy can also be applied to the way memes compete with each other in a process similar to natural selection, in which some are eliminated while others thrive (Arizzi, 2017). Another fundamental characteristic of these artifacts is their intertextuality: not only do memes reference other cultural objects such as films, songs, photos, toys and many others, but they often relate to other memes in creative and complex ways (Shifman, 2014). In this sense, the production and diffusion of memes can be understood as a form of conversation – a dialogue which invites the viewer to create his/her own response to other memes (Arizzi, 2017; Mina, 2019). Finally, memes are extremely versatile and often take the form of remixes, parodies and mashups (Shifman, 2014).

In seeking to define memes, one important distinction that needs to be made is between these cultural artifacts and *virals*. While a viral is always a single item – such as a video, an image or a hashtag – that has become very popular in a short amount of time, memes are always a group of digital objects with similar characteristics (Shifman, 2014). Virals often inspire the creation of memes that parody and imitate them, but that does not always happen. Memes, in turn, can viralize but do not need to go viral to be considered memes. Because Fascist Barbie is an example of a meme that has gone viral, examining the factors that cause virality can be useful for understanding its success. Shifman (2014) highlights six characteristics that are usually found in viral content: *positivity* (people

are inclined to share positive stories or humorous content); *high-arousal emotions* (virals often comprise content that inspires people to have positive feelings – such as a sense of awe – or negative sensations – such as outrage); *participation* (virals can be texts that encourage people to take concrete actions and/or engage in causes); *packaging* (clear and simple content tends to spread easier than complex messages); *prestige* (if the content concerns a famous individual or character, this might contribute to its popularity); and *positioning* (if the content reaches influential personalities or relevant news media outlets, they might help propagate it).

Despite the fact that a significant proportion of memes is based on older viral content – such as humorous videos and photos – many of these artifacts do not stem from virals. In this case, they are defined by Shifman (2014) as *egalitarian memes* and consist of versions that have evolved simultaneously without a founding text. Fascist Barbie seems to be an egalitarian meme – although it could be argued that it descends from another Brazilian meme, Sexist Ken, which went viral in 2017 (De Mingo, 2017). These blurry lines between adaptation and creation underscore the complex issues which concern meme authorship. According to Marwick (2013), memes are aligned with the current times, in which audiences are not merely passive receptors of content but have the ability and the tools to create their own content. The authorship of these digital objects is always collective and anonymous and, in order to understand their implicit meanings, the viewer must belong to a larger community (Arizzi, 2017). The emergence of new technologies such as sophisticated image-editing software and “do-it-yourself” websites has facilitated the processes of meme creation and diffusion (Chandler, 2013; Plevriti, 2013). Nevertheless, not every internet user has the necessary skills and expertise to produce these cultural artifacts, which means that the opportunities for digital self-expression are not equally distributed (Plevriti, 2013).

Shifman (2014) links the creation of memes to three types of logics: *economic*, *social* and *cultural*. The economy-driven logic is related to the concept of “attention-economy” – i.e. the way attention is considered the most important value in contemporary society (Shifman, 2014). Imitation is an efficient way to attract attention and, since memes are synonymous with imitation, people have made use of them to capture the interest of other internet users (Shifman, 2014). The social logic, in turn, is connected to the idea of networked individualism: while users create memes to fulfill their self-expression and personal needs – such as being seen as creative and digitally literate – they are also part of a bigger community and, by offering their memetic contributions, help foster a sense of collective identity (Shifman, 2014). Lastly, the cultural logic refers to the way memes are connected to broader cultural and aesthetic practices that are not restricted to the internet (Shifman, 2014). Although memes are inextricably linked to web 2.0 and participatory culture, they always derive from a larger cultural, political, historical and social context (Mina, 2019; Shifman,

2014). This notion can be related to Mina's (2019, p. 167) assertion that memes are mirrors that "reflect, amplify and distort" culture. In this sense, memes can be viewed as a new form of postmodern folklore which simultaneously reflects past trends while influencing social norms, attitudes and rules (Shifman, 2014).

Every meme is a story, and these narratives clash and compete for attention, at times being frontally opposed to each other (Mina, 2019). This is the reason why memes have been used as tools to express political views and ideologies. Although academics have often been dismissive of memes, considering them to be trivial entertainment, the number of scholars who are aware of the political relevance of these artifacts is on the rise (Arizzi, 2017; Chandler, 2013; Lunardi, 2018; Mina, 2019; Ross & Rivers, 2017; Shifman, 2014). Plevriti (2013) situates memes in the continuum of political satire, comparing them to caricatures that were produced in England during the 18th century and in France after the Revolution, and which spawned political cartoons that have been published by newspapers in subsequent centuries. Chandler (2013), in turn, argues that, due to a resurgence in Marxist critique and the ongoing crisis of capitalism, memes have become increasingly more politicized. Discussing the importance of memes for grassroots mobilizations and connective actions, Shifman (2014) highlights the potential of these artifacts to spread ideas among loosely connected activists or citizens who share a common cause. Memes allow people to participate in political campaigns in a personalized way, providing their own individual contribution to a collective cause (Shifman, 2014).

According to Plevriti (2013), individuals who engage in the production and distribution of political memes can be divided in three categories: *creators*, *sharers* and *viewers*. This classification is interesting because it reveals that political engagement with memes is not restricted to their creation, but also encompasses other digital practices. The author argues that creators produce political memes to support causes they believe in, to raise awareness about important issues and to criticize actions and attitudes that they oppose. Sharers, in turn, engage with memes to reinforce social bonds and to promote collective identities and group solidarities. Finally, viewers consume memes for informational and entertainment purposes.

Nowadays, memes are important not only for grassroots mobilizations, but also for top-down campaigns, having been used by several politicians (Shifman, 2014). Political memes are present both in democratic and non-democratic contexts, often as subversive messages that manage to elude censorship (Mina, 2019; Shifman, 2014). Additionally, these digital objects have the potential to counter messages that have been propagated by powerful corporations or dominant political groups (Shifman, 2014). It must be stressed that memes are connected to other forms of political participation – often encouraging people to take actions in the offline world such as voting,

signing petitions and participating in demonstrations (Mina, 2019; Shifman, 2014). Furthermore, these cultural artifacts help increase political engagement, especially among young internet users (Plevriti, 2013).

Despite the fact that memes are frequently associated with progressive movements such as Black Lives Matter, Los Indignados and We Are the 99%, they have also been extensively used by conservative and authoritarian groups (Mina, 2019). One famous example is Pepe the Frog, a popular meme that was created by white supremacists in the United States (Mina, 2019). In Brazil, several anti-leftist memes have been published by right-wing social media profiles such as *Socialista de iPhone* (“iPhone Socialist”) and *Movimento Brasil Livre* (“Free Brazil Movement”). Moreover, former presidents Lula and Dilma Rousseff have been attacked with memes that blend anti-leftism with class prejudice and sexism (Bähre & Gomes, 2018; Gambarato & Komesu, 2018).

Discussing the potential of memes to delegitimize political adversaries, Ross and Rivers (2017) outline four strategies that are used by the creators of these artifacts: *Delegitimization through authorization*, which consists of criticism and mockery directed toward authority figures, implying that they are ineffective in performing their roles; *delegitimization through moral evaluation*, which relates to value and belief systems, conveying criticism in a subtle manner that demands careful interpretation; *delegitimization through rationalization*, which depicts the target as irrational or out of touch with reality; and *delegitimization through mythopoesis*, which encompasses short narratives that convey cautionary tales in which future scenarios are imagined as catastrophic.

Memes are increasingly present in a variety of environments other than social media. Nowadays, they have become part of popular culture and, as previously seen, often receive news media coverage. Thus, mainstream media also play an important role in the diffusion of memetic content, and activists have taken advantage of that by targeting journalists (Mina, 2019). Moreover, memes often create narratives that compete with those conveyed by traditional media. These narratives, however, are not necessarily positive or progressive. In this sense, Mina (2019) underscores the frequent use of memetic content to spread fake news and disinformation in different digital platforms. According to the author, visual memes are more appealing and attract more attention than written texts, and this makes them an efficient tool in the diffusion of propaganda and fake news.

Additionally, memes are powerful agents of globalization. Shifman (2014) explains that these digital artifacts are often exported to other countries and gain globalized versions – such as the adaptations of Fascist Barbie that were created in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. Although Lunardi (2018) highlights the potential of memes to reinforce local cultures and identities, Shifman (2014) underscores the power of these cultural objects to transmit American and Western

values, often in an invisible way. However, despite their ability to influence culture, society and politics, memes have limitations which can be exploited by those who want to prevent their diffusion. Mina (2019) argues that the regulation of internet providers, the use of tracking and surveillance mechanisms and changes in algorithms are among the strategies employed by governments to contain the spread of memes and diminish the influence of digital activists.

Due to the fact that memes are intrinsically intertextual and often involve parodies and remixes, they relate to other relevant social and cultural artifacts. Thus, considering the Barbie doll's importance for *Barbie Fascionista*, in the next section I will discuss some of the symbolic roles of this iconic toy.

2.3 Barbie and her symbolic roles

Few toys have had the cultural, social and economic impact of Barbie. Despite being around for 60 years, the doll still generates approximately \$ 1 billion in annual sales (Tulinski, 2017). Furthermore, there is a myriad of products based on Barbie such as books, videogames, movies and comics and the doll has been licensed to major brands such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Disney and Walmart (Steinberg, 2011). Not only is Barbie a commercial success, but she has become a cultural icon, an object which transcends its materiality.

Tulinski (2017) explains that certain items can be qualified as totems. They are worshipped in ritual fashion and help produce social cohesion and legitimize group values. Dolls have belonged in this category for millennia. Blending elements of religiosity and play, these figures were already around before writing was invented (Lord, 2004). If the Venus of Willendorf embodied the ideals of femininity that were prevalent 30,000 years ago, Barbie can be considered its modern version, touching values that lie deep within the collective unconscious (Lord, 2004).

The most popular doll of the 20th century was envisioned by American entrepreneur Ruth Handler in the mid-1950s. At the time, Handler intended to create a doll with an adult body for little girls to play with and to project themselves as women – something that was not available in the market (Tulinski, 2017). During a trip to Europe, the entrepreneur discovered a German toy named Lilli, which was a sensual doll originally designed to entertain men (Lord, 2004). Lilli was the inspiration that Handler needed. Over the subsequent years, her company – Mattel – would work in partnership with Japanese doll-makers to develop Barbie (Tulinski, 2017).

When Barbie was launched, in 1959, she was sold as a “wholesome all-American girl” imbued with an air of middle-class respectability (Lord, 2004, p. 23). The doll promoted a Hollywoodian and idealized version of American life which was superior to that conveyed by human actors and actresses because, unlike them, her plastic body would never decline, age or die (Lord,

2004). Barbie was originally envisioned as a teenage model. Her clothes were created by experienced fashion designer Charlotte Johnson and inspired by famous brands such as Dior, Givenchy, Yves Saint-Laurent and Balenciaga (Tulinski, 2017). Therefore, since the beginning, Barbie's world has been defined by values such as beauty, fashion, glamour, materialism and consumerism (Driessen, 2016). In this sense, the doll has helped perpetuate old-fashioned societal views such as that women need to be beautiful and well-dressed in order to be successful in life (Driessen, 2016).

Nevertheless, Barbie was also revolutionary for her time. Aligned with the protofeminist developments of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the doll was independent, unmarried, had her own career, lived by herself and had no kids (Lord, 2004). Furthermore, Barbie's creator stated that the doll did not engage in domestic chores – something that was quite uncommon among women back then (Pearson & Mullins, 1999). Even though Barbie was not as lascivious as Lilli, she was still sensual – which provoked controversy at the time (Tulinski, 2017). If, during the 1950s and 1960s, women were expected to be subordinate to men, that has never been the case for Barbie. Unlike the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, Barbie was created before her partner, Ken, who would only hit the shelves in 1962 (Lord, 2004). And, while Barbie is a popular and charismatic character – receiving a great amount of fan mail – Ken plays merely a supporting role in Barbie's world and can be compared to one of her many accessories (Lord, 2004).

It is worthy of note that the nature of Barbie's relationship with Ken has always been questioned. Steinberg (2011) points out the lack of genitalia of both dolls and Ken's lackluster personality, arguing that their fictional relationship is asexual. In the same vein, Lord (2004) argues that Mattel tried to compensate for the characters' physical incompleteness by giving Barbie a vast amount of purses – which can be associated with female sexual organs – and providing Ken with phallic accessories such as baseball bats, flag sticks and barbecue forks. Moreover, Ken has often been considered a closeted homosexual – a little less closeted, perhaps, in the Earring Magic Ken version which was released in 1993 (Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011). In light of such conjugal obstacles, Mattel announced in 2004 that the couple had split (Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011).

Like the material she is made of – plastic –, Barbie's symbolic power is extremely flexible. Toffoletti (2007) defines the doll as a "transformer" which has a fluid and mutable identity, contending that Barbie is an unresolved and discontinuous object which is in a state of perpetual change. In this sense, Barbie is neither real nor unreal, but an object that challenges reality, confuses categories and destabilizes meaning itself (Toffoletti, 2007). Lord (2004), in turn, compares the doll to a Rorschach test, arguing that every observer projects different meanings and fantasies on it.

To some, Barbie reinforces social norms such as whiteness, heterosexuality and consumerism (Toffoletti, 2007). During the 1960s – a decade in which the United States experienced

intense social conflicts and changes – the doll remained neutral, aloof and immersed in her materialistic fantasy life (Lord, 2004). If, as Barthes' (1991) writes, a myth is a type of discourse which has the goal of emptying reality and often serves the interests of the ruling classes, Barbie embodies several myths which include, but are not restricted to: the myth of white/American superiority, the myth of capitalism as the path to success and the myth of material accumulation as the key to happiness. The mythical character of the doll is evident, for example, in the American Stories Collection, in which Barbie represented a Civil War nurse, a pilgrim woman, an American Indian and a pioneer (Steinberg, 2011). The storybooks that were sold along the dolls depicted the history of the United States as a harmonious and peaceful succession of events, omitting its darker facets such as the genocides that were committed against the Indian population (Steinberg, 2011). Thus, Barbie works as a myth by distorting reality and depoliticizing speech (Barthes, 1991).

The first black doll in the Barbie line – Christie, Barbie's friend – was launched in 1968 (Steinberg, 2011). Over the subsequent years, several dolls of different ethnicities and backgrounds were launched – including Hispanic and Afro-American versions of Barbie herself, which were made available in 1980 (Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011). Nevertheless, despite these attempts by Mattel to diversify the Barbie line, Toffoletti (2007) underscores that the newer dolls had the same appearance as the original Barbie, except for their skin color. This erasure of difference characterizes a commodification of race and a tacit reinforcement of racial hierarchy, placing whites as the predominant ethnicity (Toffoletti, 2007). Additionally, many international versions of Barbie – such as Jamaican Barbie, Polynesian Barbie, Puerto Rican Barbie and Indian Barbie – are portrayed in caricatural and stereotypical fashion (Steinberg, 2011). This is not the case, however, for the dolls that represent women from European countries such as British Barbie, Norwegian Barbie and German Barbie – these are associated with less negative stereotypes (Steinberg, 2011).

Because Barbie is exported to several countries around the world, some argue that she propagates (North) American values globally. Emphasizing Barbie's strong presence in Latin America, Lord (2004) defines the doll as a cultural colonist in the likes of Mickey Mouse and Ronald McDonald. If American imperialism is intimately connected to capitalism, Barbie is a perfect symbol for both. Over the last six decades, she has amassed a large amount of material goods which includes nineteen houses, several deluxe cars, a plane, and enough animals to open a zoo (Driessen, 2016; Steinberg, 2011). The doll's extreme materialism can be associated with the commodification of women – after all, she represents a woman who can be purchased, consumed, manipulated and discarded (Lord, 2004; Toffoletti, 2007). Besides accumulating material possessions, Barbie collects jobs. During her existence, she has been a medical doctor, a NASCAR racer, an astronaut, a police officer, a businesswoman, a sergeant and a presidential candidate, among countless other careers

(Steinberg, 2011). Nonetheless, the doll is never shown working, and her life seems to be a never-ending succession of leisure activities such as spending time with friends, going shopping and attending parties (Driessen, 2016).

Barbie also reflects capitalist values such as philanthropy, charity and meritocracy (Steinberg, 2011). Regarding the latter, it is worth mentioning that, in the 1980s, the doll was advertised with the slogan “We girls can do anything” – which has been adapted, in the 2010s, to “You can be anything” (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004). The phrase echoes neoliberal discourses which depoliticize gender inequalities and place the responsibility for success – or failure – on individual girls, commodifying female empowerment (Banet-Weiser, 2015). Finally, one of the main criticisms against Barbie is that the doll promotes unattainable beauty standards that influence girls negatively and affect their self-esteem (Driessen, 2016; Tulinski, 2017).

In spite of the abovementioned values, Barbie is symbolically malleable and her meanings can be subverted. Different scholars have argued that girls frequently play with the doll in ways that were not intended by Mattel – such as mutilating and torturing Barbie dolls or creating stories that resist the objectification of women (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004; Toffoletti, 2007). Although Barbie was originally designed for young women, diverse social segments have embraced the doll. Lord (2004) explains that Barbie is very popular among the LGBT public, which includes gay men, lesbians, transvestites and drag queens, among other segments. These consumers often rewrite Barbie’s narrative and create queer storylines that challenge heteronormativity and ascribe new meanings to the doll (Lord, 2004; Toffoletti, 2007).

Moreover, throughout her history, Barbie has been in the center of several political and discursive debates. In the early 1970s, feminists accused the doll of encouraging girls to see themselves as mannequins, housewives or sex dolls (Lord, 2004; Tulinski, 2017). Two decades later, in 1993, activists from a group named Barbie Liberation Organization replaced the voice chips of hundreds of Barbie dolls with those of G.I. Joe dolls and vice-versa – in a protest against gender stereotypes (Lord, 2004). As a result, the modified female dolls would utter phrases such as “Vengeance is mine” – in a masculine voice – while the toy soldiers would urge their owners to take them shopping (Lord, 2004). Barbie has also been the theme of several artistic recreations and performances such as paintings, sculptures, collages and installations – many of them quite subversive and critical (Lord, 2004).

Although Mattel is considerably protective of its creations and often opposes these reinterpretations, the company is also sensitive to criticism and has tried to answer the demands of the public (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004). In 2016, Mattel launched the *Barbie Fashionistas* line, which includes dolls of different body types – tall, curvy and petite – and several ethnicities. According to

Driessen (2016), this time the non-white dolls had more elaborate features and were not mere copies of the original Barbie. Nevertheless, curvy Barbie is in fact quite slender and, as a result, overweight women are not represented in the line, which contributes to perpetuate traditional beauty standards (Driessen, 2016). Furthermore, similarly to the original doll, *Barbie Fashionistas* conveys traditional ideals of femininity – such as that women need to be well-dressed – and encourages consumerism and materialism (Driessen, 2016).

Considering Barbie's chameleonic and syncretic nature, it is no surprise that the doll has been adopted by Brazilian internet users as a symbol of the country's white conservative elites. Lord (2004) explains that Barbie is a powerful archetype that can cross ethnic, national, class and cultural borders, representing several kinds of women. Furthermore, the fact that Barbie is so popular and adaptable makes her ideal for remixes, reinterpretations and recreations. In this sense, the doll embodies many of the characteristics of memes and that is why both cultural artifacts have been merged in *Barbie Fascionista*.

The study of such a complex object which encompasses the three very different – yet interconnected – themes of class and race in Brazil, internet memes and the Barbie doll demands a careful and precise methodological approach. In the next chapter, I will discuss in detail the research procedures I have adopted for this thesis as well as the analytical methods I have chosen and issues concerning their limitations and credibility.

3.Methods

3.1 Units of analysis and methodological approach

3.1.a Units of analysis

Although several other pages have been created on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook with the purpose of publishing memetic images that depict Barbie as a middle- or upper-class conservative Brazilian, I have decided to focus on *Barbie Fascionista* for the following reasons: a) it was one of the most popular accounts to share this meme, having surpassed the mark of 100,000 followers; b) it attracted the attention of the national and international press, receiving coverage from important Brazilian newspapers such as *Folha de S. Paulo* and foreign outlets such as *Le Monde*; c) while other profiles such as the Facebook fan page *Barbie e Ken Cidadãos de Bem* (“Good Citizens Barbie and Ken”) publish images that have been collected from other sources, *Barbie Fascionista* produced its own content, which gave the account a distinct identity as well as discursive unity; d) the memetic images published by *Barbie Fascionista* were always accompanied by short texts that complemented their meaning and enriched the profile’s content, providing the opportunity for a more complex analysis; e) with the exception of two posts that were published on March 6th and March 8th, 2019 – after which the profile was deactivated – the account’s timeframe is closely aligned with the 2018 Brazilian presidential election and its aftermath. The first post by *Barbie Fascionista* was published on October 11, only four days after the first round of voting, while the last post I selected for the sample was published on December 24, eight days before Jair Bolsonaro’s inauguration as president of Brazil. For all these reasons, the material provides valuable insights into the Brazilian political climate of the time, being connected to the tensions and polarization that characterized the election process.

The study analyzes 45 memetic images – as well as the short texts that accompany them – that were published by Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* between October 11 and December 24, 2018. I have decided to exclude the two posts that were published in March 2019 from the analysis because, by the time they were made available, Jair Bolsonaro had already been the president of Brazil for two months and, in my view, this significantly altered the political context of the country. Moreover, I have analyzed one specific element of the account separately from the rest of the sample: a non-parodic text in which the author describes her political motivations that was published by *Barbie Fascionista* a few days before the second round of the presidential election – which took place on October 28th, 2018. I have used this material to complement the introduction of this thesis. With the exception of a screenshot of the profile’s description section which was obtained from an article published by *Folha de S. Paulo*, I collected the data directly from the

Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* between December 26 and December 27, 2018. Although some of the earlier images feature no captions, most of the visual elements of the sample can be classified as “image macros” – one of the most popular types of memetic images, which comprises a photo with two lines of text written on it, one at the top of the picture and the other at its bottom (Chandler, 2013). In addition to the images, the data used for this thesis consists of the short satirical essays that accompany them. Considering that the texts comprise approximately 8,000 words when added together, and that they are accompanied by the images they refer to, the sample size is compatible with the guidelines for Critical Discourse Analysis, which establish a number of approximately 10-15 exemplary texts, while also fitting the requirements for the qualitative content analysis of blog posts, which set an amount of approximately 40-60 articles or posts (Janssen & Verboord, 2018).

3.1.b Methodological approach

The content of *Barbie Fascionista* is complex and multilayered. It consists of four different semiotic modes: the original images (which were produced by Mattel); the memetic captions (which were apparently added to the original images by the person who created the profile); the short essays which accompany the images; and the hashtags which follow the texts. These objects interact in intricate ways, with the texts, hashtags, images and captions often dialoguing with each other. Moreover, besides this intra-post interaction, *Barbie Fascionista*’s posts frequently contain references to content that had been previously published by the profile.

In light of the strong connections between texts and images, I have decided to analyze each post in an integrated way – i.e., considering pictures, captions, texts and hashtags as constituent elements of a single object. The first step of my investigation consisted of analyzing each of the 45 posts individually, writing a critical interpretation of the content that was informed by the theoretical background of my research as well as my personal experience as a Brazilian national, which allowed me to understand certain cultural references and linguistic resources such as, for example, slangs and puns. During the process of analysis, I would go back and forth between texts and images, drawing connections between them and seeking to understand the messages conveyed by each post. There were moments in which I looked for additional theoretical and non-theoretical sources – this happened whenever I felt that I needed to complement my investigation with extra materials. I have included, as an appendix, three examples of analyses conducted during this phase so that the reader might have a clearer view of the process (Appendix B).

After finishing the preliminary stage of the analysis, I sought to identify the general themes that were present in the sample. This was facilitated by a series of keywords that I had assigned to

each post after concluding each of the preliminary analyses, which can be seen in the examples included in Appendix B. The list of keywords was quite comprehensive, but I filtered them and found three overarching themes: *privilege*, *prejudice* and *conservatism*. The next step consisted of textually organizing these themes in categories. To do so, I edited, condensed and merged my preliminary analyses with the goal of answering the research question (“How do the memetic images and texts published by Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* portray the Brazilian middle and upper classes?”). It must be clarified that, although the account’s posts were originally written in Portuguese, I have translated the selected excerpts to English to keep the analyses coherent with the rest of the thesis. My findings will be presented in the next chapter – the results section.

Considering the complex interconnections between the texts and images that are featured in *Barbie Fascionista*, I have decided to adopt a multimodal approach to my analysis. According to Wang (2014), multimodality is a relatively new approach to discourse analysis that takes into consideration the different modes of perception that might be present in a discourse – such as visual, auditory or tactile. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) state that, because post-modernity is characterized by fragmentation and dispersion as well as the presence of digital communication technologies, multimodal discourses are increasingly more prevalent. Today, different modes of representation can be operated by one single individual who can blend them in varied and intricate combinations (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) – such as memetic images.

If, in the past, captions were mainly used as accessories to images – aiming to explain and delimit their meanings in a process known in Barthian semiotics as *anchorage* – nowadays the relationship between text and image is increasingly less hierarchic and more complementary – a phenomenon known to semioticians as *relay* (Van Leeuwen, 2004b). Thus, scholars who adopt a multimodal approach view image and text as integrated components of a whole. These elements interact and maintain a dialogue with each other, not being restricted to rigid dynamics (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 2004b). Due to the fact that many written/verbal texts are interconnected to visual elements, critical discourse analysts should pay attention to visual communication (Van Leeuwen, 2004b). Researchers of visual communication, in turn, can enrich their analyses by taking into account the written/verbal elements that are associated with the images they study (Van Leeuwen, 2004b).

In light of the previous considerations, my study relies on a combination of two different methods that have been used complementarily: semiotic analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. The theoretical and methodological aspects of each technique – as well as the way I integrated them to my analysis – will be explained in the next subsections.

3.2 Semiotic analysis

Researchers of visual communication have several options to choose from in what concerns their methodological approach. Because one of my goals with this study is to understand the manifest and latent meanings that are conveyed by the images published by *Barbie Fascionista*, I have opted for a method that is well-suited for this task: semiotic analysis (Van Leeuwen, 2004a).

In what concerns visual semiotics – also known as Barthian semiotics –, Van Leeuwen (2004a) explains that two of its main concepts are *denotation* (which refers to the explicit/manifest meanings of an image) and *connotation* (its implicit/latent meanings). Denotative interpretation is the most basic way of perceiving a picture – it does not require the viewer to have in-depth previous knowledge of what is shown in the image and is almost analogous to perceiving reality (Van Leeuwen, 2004a). Connotation, in turn, refers to the second layer of meaning – the broader ideas, values and concepts that are conveyed by the objects, people and places which are shown in a given picture (Van Leeuwen, 2004a). My analyses alternate between employing denotation – i.e., describing what is in the image – and emphasizing the visual texts' connotations. This way, the reader will be able to form a mental image of the picture while having a deeper understanding of the meanings behind it.

In analyzing *Barbie Fascionista*, I have taken note of the complementary relations between signs – e.g., the doll's elegant clothing and the exotic or luxurious places in which she is invariably located. Thus, I have subscribed to the notion that every text – whether verbal, visual or in any other form – is a complex system of signs and semioticians must focus on the relationships between these elements and the different meanings they convey (Berger, 2013). Additionally, I have kept in mind that concepts possess meaning because they oppose other concepts – the idea of “good”, for example, only exists because it opposes the idea of “evil” (Berger, 2013). Therefore, by paying attention to *Barbie Fascionista*'s opposing semiotic relations such as left x right, poor x rich, black x white, I have managed to enrich my interpretation and give it more depth.

Besides being composed of signs which have complex relationships with each other, texts establish intricate relationships with other texts, in a dialogical dynamic which is known as intertextuality (Berger, 2013). Thus, semioticians must also pay attention to intertextuality when analyzing discourses (Berger, 2013). In this sense, Rose (2007) advises researchers of visual communication to consider the relations between the images they are studying with other images that may complement or contradict them. By paying attention to intertextuality, I have managed to identify allusions to other discourses in most of the images which compose the sample, including references to ideological, cultural, political and social concepts. This has provided me with important resources for my analysis, regarding the way *Barbie Fascionista* interacts with discourses that it

endorses or opposes.

One of my major concerns with this study is to understand the ideologies that *Barbie Fascionista* subscribes to. Thus, I have investigated the different visual strategies that the account uses to convey denotative and connotative meanings. During my analysis, I have adopted Machin and Mayr's (2012) proposed set of tools for visual analysis that considers the different ideas and values that are represented by *objects*; the role that *settings* play in the creation of meaning; and *salience*, which is related to composition and encompasses the presence of relevant cultural symbols in images, the *color* and *tone* of elements, the *size of objects*, the *use of focus/blur*, the presence of *overlapping items* and the *foregrounding of elements*. Additionally, even though Barbie is a doll, she represents a woman and is portrayed in a lively way. Thus, I have considered the aspects highlighted by the authors concerning the way people are represented in images, such as: people can be depicted in groups, which suggests commonality, or alone, which implies individuality; different poses and angles might produce diverse impressions; cultural and physical stereotypes can be employed to categorize and typify subjects; distance might be used to create anonymity or intimacy; and the way certain people or groups are absent from images is also a way to communicate messages (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

An important notion that I kept in mind while conducting my analyses is that visual communication has less fixed meanings than its verbal counterpart, and images can be open to different interpretations (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Furthermore, due to the complex and often incongruous nature of messages, it is not uncommon for images to contradict the texts that accompany them and vice-versa (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). While working on my research, I have found several contradictions between the images and the texts that accompany them – e.g., the way Barbie invariably claims to be hard-working while the images always show her relaxing or engaging in consumption. This has been useful to me because the contradictions expressed by the account's content in great part reflect the inequalities and injustices of Brazilian society, which is the main point of the criticisms formulated by *Barbie Fascionista*.

Although individual signs might convey certain meanings, their interaction with other signs has the potential to create overarching systems known as codes. According to Berger (2013), codes are complex patterns of associations that are learned by all individuals who belong to a certain culture, and which shape the interpretation of the signs and symbols they encounter. Therefore, I have partly based the analysis on my knowledge of the Brazilian code, which has allowed me to understand some of the meanings that the analyzed images might convey to Brazilians. Another notion that has been useful to me is the relation between *myths* – connotative signs that attribute subjective and broad values to objects/subjects, emptying them of their history – and the collective

systems they are part of, which are known as mythologies (Rose, 2007). Both the Barbie doll and the elitist and prejudiced discourses which are connected to her in *Barbie Fascionista* are myths – and, because myths serve ideological purposes (Barthes, 1991), I have sought to understand how the account attempted to contest the ideologies behind these mythologies.

Despite the many affordances of semiotic analysis, this method is not free from limitations. One of its main shortcomings is that it is too centered on textual elements while leaving contextual information aside (Van Leeuwen, 2004a). Due to the fact that *Barbie Fascionista* relates to different social, cultural, political and historical contexts, I have decided to combine semiotic analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis – which, as will be seen in the next section, is a method which places great importance on context.

Similarly to other forms of communication, visual communication is a complex practice and images possess multiple meanings and play different roles. Thus, by making use of these two approaches and relying on the theoretical background, I analyze the visual and written texts of *Barbie Fascionista* in depth and strive to provide the reader with a clear and complete exposition of the themes and topics found.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Because the content of *Barbie Fascionista* engages with the political struggles, as well as the social, racial, gender and economic inequalities and conflicts that are present in Brazilian society, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an appropriate method of research for this study. Fairclough (2013) underscores the contextual character of CDA, stressing that this method focuses not only on discourse itself but also on the relations it establishes with objects in the physical world, power dynamics, institutions and persons. In this sense, critical discourse analysts consider discourses to be a form of social practice that is both shaped by and shapes the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Therefore, CDA is different from other methods of discourse analysis which consider discursive interactions to be mechanical processes that are disconnected from broader social relations (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak, 2001b). In light of the abovementioned notions, I have sought to analyze the profile's texts attentively, believing that no discourse is neutral and that each of its constituent elements has the potential to convey meaning and relate to other objects and contexts. It has been clear to me, since the beginning, that *Barbie Fascionista* is an attempt to shape the social world it is part of, and this awareness has been crucial to my study.

Due to its complex character, Critical Discourse Analysis necessarily requires a transdisciplinary approach which might include fields such as linguistics, sociology and political science, among others (Fairclough, 2013). This is why, in my theoretical framework, I have relied on

sociological research about class and race in Brazil and sociocultural analyses of internet memes and the Barbie doll. The work of previous scholars has helped me identify connections between *Barbie Fascionista* and other discourses and understand the themes that are present in the profile more deeply.

During my analysis, I have given great importance to the context that surrounds the texts and which, according to Wodak (2001a, p. 67), can be divided into four levels: 1) the characteristics of the text itself; 2) the connections between the text and other texts, discourse and genres (intertextuality/interdiscursivity); 3) the extralinguistic context in which the text is situated (social/sociological variables); and 4) the broader historical and sociopolitical context in which the text is embedded (grand theories). In what concerns *Barbie Fascionista*, I have focused, respectively on: 1) the linguistic and textual aspects of the memetic images and satirical texts published by the account; 2) the relations between the content and the prejudiced/elitist discourses it parodies, as well as its references to Barbie and other cultural artifacts; 3) the sociocultural and political context of contemporary Brazil; 4) historical dynamics of class and race in Brazil and their relationship with racist and classist ideologies that have been historically present in other countries.

By paying attention to intertextuality, I have engaged with a concept that is as essential for Critical Discourse Analysis as it is for semiotic analysis. Intertextuality refers to the way texts are influenced by former texts, in a dialogical process in which each text can be considered a link in a longer chain (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Interdiscursivity – which is a form of intertextuality – occurs when different discourses and genres are combined in a communicational event, which can be a text or a discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). By uniting the old and the new, intertextuality and interdiscursivity are simultaneously agents of continuity and change (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Keeping this in mind, one of my main concerns during the analysis has been to identify the allusions to other texts and discourses that are present in the posts published by *Barbie Fascionista*, as well as make sense of the blend of discourses which is characteristic of its parodic texts. The theoretical framework, my personal background and several non-academic sources that I resorted to while doing the analysis have been essential for my work and have enabled me to recognize several references and examine how they were employed by the profile.

As previously mentioned, one of my main goals with this thesis is to identify the ideologies that are present in *Barbie Fascionista*. According to Fairclough (2013) ideologies contribute to legitimize and maintain power relations and are often opaque – i.e., they are considered to be “common sense” by the members of a society. Moreover, ideologies are related to the notion of hegemony, which can be understood as the cultural, economic and political domination that a social group exerts – in association with other actors and institutions – over a given society (Fairclough,

2013). This domination, however, is not absolute and involves concessions, negotiations and challenges to the hegemonic order, which is always unstable and based on a fragile consensus (Fairclough, 2013; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In this sense, I have set out from the premise that *Barbie Fascionista* is related, predominantly, to progressive ideologies which oppose hegemonic conservative discourses that are widespread in Brazil. I consider the profile to be involved in a discursive struggle, clashing with other narratives which attempt to shape Brazilian society.

A concept that has helped me understand this discursive struggle is the idea – originally developed by Foucault – of *order of discourse*, which encompasses all the diverse, competing, complementary and conflicting discourses that compose an institution or society (Fairclough, 2013; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). If certain discourses aim to legitimize and maintain relations of power, others intend to change and subvert the existing order of discourse (Fairclough, 2013). This subversion is achieved through creative uses of language which go against established conventions – therefore, the researcher who intends to study a subversive discourse must focus both on the specific text and on the order of discourse it is attempting to challenge (Fairclough, 2013; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Wodak, 2001b). Thus, when analyzing *Barbie Fascionista*, I kept in mind the economic and social discourses that are prevalent in Brazilian society so that I could make sense of how the account contested them.

While no discourse can be expected to convey the absolute truth – since truth itself is a construct –, every discourse attempts to persuade its readers and influence their world views, reproducing or resisting ideologies and systems of belief (Van Dijk, 1995). In doing so, authors employ different techniques to highlight certain elements in their discourse while excluding others – thus, every text is akin to the map of a territory, an idealized representation that foregrounds some features and suppresses others (Machin & Mayr, 2012). To achieve my analytical goals and understand the strategies behind *Barbie Fascionista*'s discourse, I have adopted the method proposed by Machin and Mayr (2012) for CDA, which advises the researcher to pay attention to elements such as the *lexical choices of the author*, the *suppression* of certain terms, the *overlexicalization* (repetitive use of certain words and/or their synonyms), the use of *authoritative language* and the presence of *structural oppositions* (such as good x bad, old x new, us x them etc.). Moreover, I have sought to follow Van Dijk's (2001) recommendations, which encourage a researcher who adopts CDA to be theoretically well-informed, adopt a systematic method of analysis and produce relevant research that is accessible (i.e., not written in a hermetic style that is beyond the comprehension of the general public).

Finally, it must be stressed that, although both the aforementioned methods of semiotic analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis possess considerable strengths, they are not free from

weaknesses. Thus, in the next section I will address the limitations of these methods and issues of credibility.

3.4 Limitations and credibility

No research – whether of a quantitative or qualitative nature – can be considered a perfect account of reality, because reality is a matter of perspective (Silverman, 2011). Nonetheless, researchers must strive to produce analyses that are as accurate, credible and plausible as possible (Silverman, 2011). In regard to qualitative studies, two factors that must be taken into account by scholars are *reliability* – the possibility that the study could be replicated – and *validity* – the accuracy of the study in describing and interpreting a social phenomenon.

In order to produce credible research – that is, research which is simultaneously reliable and valid – scholars need to take a number of measures, such as: base their studies on appropriate literature; be transparent about their theoretical background, methods of data collection and analysis; and consider negative cases and alternative explanations (Silverman, 2011). An important step for achieving transparency is the inclusion, in the study, of *low-inference descriptors* – i.e., examples of unaltered data such as transcripts and recorded observations (Silverman, 2011, p. 361). This is the reason why I have taken screenshots of all posts published by *Barbie Fascionista*, downloaded and dated all of its images and texts and included some examples of the material in the thesis, as appendices (Appendices A and C). Furthermore, I have also sought to achieve transparency by including examples of my preliminary analyses in the appendices, so that the reader might have a better understanding of the procedures I have adopted (Appendix B).

Silverman (2011) argues that triangulation – or the use of different research methods – can offer breadth, richness and complexity to an analysis. In this sense, I have used two different techniques – semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis – in a complementary way, with the goal of producing a study that is as complete and nuanced as possible. Nevertheless, even when combined, these methods are not free from limitations. Both semiotic analysis and CDA will necessarily be influenced by the way the researcher perceives the social world of which he/she is part of (Berger, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Aware of this reality, I have reflected on my biases and considered alternative points of view and interpretations of my object of study. Additionally, I have striven to ground my analyses in appropriate literature – produced by multiple scholars from Brazil and other countries. Moreover, when necessary, I made use of non-academic sources that provided me with relevant contextual information which is connected to specific facts that were alluded to by *Barbie Fascionista*.

The fact that I am a Brazilian researcher who is living abroad has provided me with

advantages and disadvantages. At the same time that I – even when being as objective as possible – cannot avoid taking a political stand in regard to the content of *Barbie Fascionista*, my familiarity with the Brazilian order of discourse allows me to capture subtle nuances of the account's texts. Moreover, while the fact that I am outside of Brazil has forced me to research certain specific events that are mentioned in the posts, it has also given me the freedom to conduct my study without being directly involved in the polarized – and at times aggressive – atmosphere that the country is currently experiencing. If I had written this thesis in Brazil, it is possible that its content would have been even more influenced by the ideological divide that is taking place in the country.

Given the scope of this project, its methodological approach and the timeframe that was allotted to it, some limitations are inescapable. Multiple scholars argue that Critical Discourse Analysis is an endless process and that no study is able to reveal all the potential meanings of a text (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Molina, 2009; Van Dijk, 2001). Thus, scholars must be able to select the most important elements of a given discourse and produce an analysis that is as complete as possible (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Van Dijk, 2001). Furthermore, neither semiotics nor Critical Discourse Analysis place great emphasis on the role of producers and audiences of texts (Breeze, 2011; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004) – but, had this been my approach, the thesis would have followed a completely different track from the one I have chosen. Additionally, this particular study is by no means generalizable. It intends to interpret, in depth, a single object of analysis. Nevertheless, this limitation is, paradoxically, one of its main strengths – for *Barbie Fascionista* was a unique, rich and sophisticated Instagram account which deserves a detailed analysis. Hopefully, this will be clear to the reader in the next chapter, which features the results of my research.

4. Results

In this chapter, I outline the three main themes that I have identified in *Barbie Fascionista's* discourse and which permeate the way the Brazilian middle and upper classes are portrayed in the account: *Privilege, prejudice and conservatism*. As previously explained, these topics are based on the keywords I have assigned to each post after conducting each of the analyses (examples are included in Appendix B).

4.1 Privilege

Barbie Fascionista suggests that the Brazilian middle and upper classes are composed of privileged individuals who espouse neoliberal, capitalist and materialistic values. Both the texts and images show Barbie as a rich individual who possesses an incredible amount of material goods, often travels abroad, is always elegantly dressed and places great importance on fashion. This is in line with the interpretations of scholars who view Barbie as a symbol of economic status and capitalism (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011).

The doll's political views are often associated with her shallow materialistic views. Thus, Barbie expresses, in post #1, the idea that a developed Brazil would be a more "fashionable and clean" country where people can have "beautiful cars and stylish purses". This reveals that the character does not equate development and progress with social inclusion and equality, rather viewing the world through purely aesthetic and material lenses. In addition, the character fears that, if the Workers' Party is elected, Brazil will become a "socialist hellhole" in which she will not have access to proper skin-care (post # 22) and her son will be obliged to "share his Kinder eggs" and "trade collectible cards" with poor children (post #15). These puerile concerns are similar to the afflictions of the character who appears in the meme known as *First World Problems* – a white woman who is often distraught about trivial things such as not having milk for her cereal, lacking batteries for her GameBoy and not being able to read a meme that is written in a foreign language (Chandler, 2013). Thus, it is implied that the middle and upper classes of Brazil live in a privileged bubble, leading a lifestyle that is more similar to that of North Americans and Europeans than to the conditions experienced by the majority of the Brazilian population (Reiter, 2009; Souza, 2017).

Most of the images which illustrate *Barbie Fascionista's* posts show the doll in luxurious, foreign or exotic settings such as Paris, North American-looking metropolises, fancy houses and paradisiac beaches. Therefore, the profile suggests that, unlike most Brazilians, Barbie is a wealthy individual who has enough money to travel abroad whenever she wants. Additionally, the account contains several references to Apple products: in post #24, for example, Barbie boasts that she possesses an "iPhone X MaxPower" (a fictitious model); another reference appears in post #34, in

which the doll mocks leftists, challenging them to “go try to buy iPhones in Venezuela” (a reference to the neighboring country’s leftist regime and economic crisis); finally, the picture which illustrates post #42 shows a laptop with the tech company’s logo – which has been Photoshopped into the image – in Barbie’s backpack. The reason why Apple is constantly referenced in *Barbie Fascionista* is because, in Brazil, the company’s products are sold at very high prices. According to Antunes (2014), Brazil is the most expensive country in the world to buy an iPhone. Therefore, because iPhones and other items produced by the American technology company are inaccessible to the majority of the Brazilian population, they are seen as symbols of status, richness and snobbery. *Barbie Fascionista* also contains allusions to several foreign cosmetic and clothing brands such as Yves-Saint Laurent (which is referred to as “YSL”, showing the character’s intimacy with the brand), Dior, Céline, Zara and Victoria’s Secret. This is because foreign products tend to be seen, in Brazil, as the epitome of sophistication and status – a consequence of the intense admiration the country’s middle and upper classes dedicate to North American and European countries (Souza, 2018). Nevertheless, despite the doll’s material wealth, she claims in several instances that the Workers’ Party (PT) government has “ruined her life”. This implies that the middle and upper classes of Brazil are hypocritical in their antagonism to the PT and have no real reason to criticize the left – after all, Barbie is always surrounded by luxury and opulence and the government does not seem to have affected her privileges. The argument is corroborated by Souza (2016), who states that the Workers’ Party did not represent a threat to the financial gains of the elites.

If meritocracy is one of the main values for the members of the Brazilian middle class – who attempt to legitimize their privileges by claiming that they have worked hard to obtain them (Cavalcante, 2018; Souza, 2017) –, *Barbie Fascionista* is no different. In post # 9, the character claims that she has had to struggle in order to achieve her socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, this is contradicted by the fact that the professions Barbie says she has had are either part-time jobs at companies owned by her family or careers that do not demand a great amount of physical labor – such as entrepreneur coach and saleswoman at deluxe stores. In this sense, like many members of the Brazilian middle and upper classes, Barbie is averse to menial work – which is reserved for the lower classes – and prefers occupations that provide her with a high social status (Cavalcante, 2018; Souza, 2018). Furthermore, when talking about the supposed sacrifices that she has had to make in order to save money, the doll mentions actions such as not buying luxurious purses, not going to Disneyland every week and not visiting her family during student exchange periods abroad. All of these actions are small sacrifices when compared to the hardships that members of the Brazilian lower classes have to face such as lacking access to proper public transport, health and education services (Reiter, 2009; Souza, 2017).

Meritocracy is conflated, in *Barbie Fascionista*, with entrepreneurship – a concept which is closely related to individualistic neoliberal beliefs and to claims that the most successful individuals are those who work hard enough to achieve their goals (Cavalcante, 2018). The doll is portrayed, multiple times, as an entrepreneur who expects her employees to work “with a smile in their faces” (post # 7) and who uses hashtags such as #Empreendedora (“Entrepreneur”) and #Batalhadora (“Hard-working”) (post #9). However, while Barbie’s texts, hashtags and captions claim that she is always working, the images which illustrate the posts invariably show her relaxing and indulging in consumption or in leisure activities. In this sense, besides attempting to delegitimize neoliberal discourses of entrepreneurship by denouncing them as hypocritical, *Barbie Fascionista* relates to interpretations of the original Barbie doll that view the character as someone who, despite not working, is the ultimate consumer (Driessen, 2016). Moreover, the doll’s argument that she is a self-made entrepreneur is disqualified by the revelation that her father has given her R\$ 500,000 (approximately € 110,000) so that she could start her own business (post # 28). Therefore, *Barbie Fascionista* reflects Cavalcante’s (2018) argument that successful entrepreneurs are generally individuals who already possessed significant material and cultural capitals before launching their initiatives. Similarly to meritocracy, the discourse of entrepreneurship is defined, in *Barbie Fascionista*, as a way to legitimize inequalities. In this sense, the character emulates white colonialists who justified the exploitation of poorer nations on their purportedly superior entrepreneurial values (Dyer, 1997).

In several occasions, the doll’s ideas are similar to discourses that are promoted by self-help literature. By asserting that the “the sky is the limit” and “impossible is a matter of opinion” (post #28), *Barbie Fascionista* can be related to the way self-help books are used to depoliticize inequalities and defend neoliberal values (Rimke, 2000). Furthermore, these messages allude to the ideals of self-empowerment that are conveyed by the Barbie doll – specially the slogan “You can be anything” (Driessen, 2016). Additionally, the character’s focus on entrepreneurship is interconnected to neoliberal ideals of femininity. *Barbie Fascionista* is usually depicted as a typical social media influencer who often advertises beauty products on her Instagram profile. One exception is post #44, in which the doll says she has worked as a dermatologist at the Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein – one of the most famous and expensive private hospitals of Brazil. The fact that Barbie has worked there denotes richness and social prestige. Moreover, the choice of dermatology as a specialty for the character is connected to her superficial – skin-deep – personality and the strong importance Barbie attributes to physical appearance. In this sense, *Barbie Fascionista* embraces a view of femininity which blends beauty ideals and vanity with entrepreneurship (Alessandrini, 2017). By teasing feminists and saying that they should defend the rights of “the women who conquer their

place everyday” (post #9), the doll is advocating for a neoliberal strand of feminism which argues that women should rely on self-empowerment to progress in their personal and professional lives. This view is intertwined with the concept of post-feminism, which is described by Alessandrini (2017) as an ideology which entangles feminism and anti-feminism and is based on the belief that women have already achieved gender equality and should work towards self-improvement. Therefore, Barbie represents a rich, white and successful woman who does not acknowledge her privileges and ignores the struggles faced by lower class women – especially those who are black (Layton & Smith, 2017).

Barbie Fascionista’s entrepreneurial facet is also linked to the way the doll commodifies her political views and tries to make a profit out of Brazil’s politically polarized atmosphere. In post #3, for example, the character advertises elegant clothes that she has designed for women to wear during political demonstrations against the Workers’ Party. The garments are made of expensive materials such as pearls and silk and their prices begin at “only R\$ 590” (circa € 130). The strong emphasis on the importance of being well-dressed during the protests suggests that the middle and upper classes of Brazil – as well as their political views – are shallow and materialistic. Moreover, by mentioning that the prices of the clothes are “super accessible”, Barbie shows her lack of knowledge about the living conditions of the majority of the Brazilian population. After all, the minimum wage in the country is currently around R\$ 1000, which would make the clothes very expensive for most Brazilians. The commodification of politics is also visible in the promotional hashtags that the doll urges her followers to adopt, such as #FasciLinda15 (a pun which can be read either as “Pretty Fascist” or “Pretty Face”), #FasciSkinCare10 and #FascimoresPlenosSemOPT10 (“Self-fulfilled Fascilovers Without the Workers’ Party”). These excerpts allude to the increasing presence of advertisements in contemporary life as well as to its commodification and marketization (Berger, 2013; Fairclough, 2013). Furthermore, due to the fact that advertising is used as a tool to convey ideologies (Rose, 2007), it is not surprising that *Barbie Fascionista* blends politics with marketing. Finally, the pictures that illustrate the account’s posts – which were originally produced by Mattel – follow the aesthetics of advertising, which makes them compatible with this sort of criticism and reinforces the Barbie doll’s polysemic role as a symbol of capitalism, marketing and beauty (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011; Tulinski, 2017).

As a stereotypical neoliberal, *Barbie Fascionista* hates the state and sanctifies the market – views that are often found among the conservative segments of the country’s population, particularly the middle and upper classes (Miguel, 2018; Souza, 2017). In post #7, the doll passionately defends capitalism by arguing that the economy “saves lives”, “creates jobs”, “unites people” and “makes everything lighter and happier”. On the other hand, the government – which

she generally associates with the Workers' Party – is accused of “killing people for years in the lines of the pension and health services”. By describing the government as inefficient and harmful, Barbie is implicitly defending the minimal state. This is related to the belief that markets function better than public institutions because they are associated with competition and freedom of choice (Larner, 2000). Her views are confirmed in post #35, in which the character argues that the next government should “privatize everything” so that health and education services will be supposedly more efficient and organized. The phrase echoes the claims by Michel Temer – who was the president of Brazil between 2016 and 2018 – that he would like to privatize “everything that is possible” (Pereira, 2016). However, despite the doll's defense of neoliberalism as the solution for all the problems of Brazil, her views are exclusivist and classist, and she argues that health and education should only be available to those who “really deserve it” and “work hard every day”. In this sense, the account suggests that individuals who defend the minimal state are socially insensitive. The argument relates to Teshainer, Lara and Dunker's (2018) assertion that Brazil is experiencing a struggle between a strand of neoliberalism that is completely focused on the production of financial capital and another branch of capitalism which is in favor of social policies that benefit the working classes.

In light of the doll's ideas, it is no surprise that she supports Bolsonaro. After all, the far-right politician is associated with prominent economists such as Paulo Guedes – a graduate from the University of Chicago who is a defender of neoliberalism and considers social democracies to be corrupt and inefficient (Schaefer, 2018). The conflation between the doll's entrepreneurship and her support for Bolsonaro is reinforced by Barbie's assertion that she has forbidden her workers to spread “fake news” against the far-right candidate (post # 7). This seems to be a reference to businessmen such as Luciano Hang – the owner of a large Brazilian retail store chain who has been accused of threatening to fire his employees if they did not support Bolsonaro during the 2018 election (“MPT processa dono”, 2018).

Barbie's strong capitalist views are linked to her disregard for the environment. In post #39, the character is particularly satisfied with Bolsonaro's announcement, shortly after being elected, that he intended to merge the ministries of Agriculture and Environment (Watts, 2018). The measure was criticized for its potential threats to the Amazon, which stem from the strong influence of agrobusiness tycoons – who intend to exploit the forest for economic purposes – in Brazilian politics (Watts, 2018). By having the doll argue that trees and clean air are not important and contend that Brazil needs more butcheries, shopping malls and commercial establishments, *Barbie Fascionista* accuses the capitalist system in general and Brazilian elites in particular of being materialistic, consumerist and antagonistic to the environment. The criticism is aligned with Fairclough's (2013, p. 12) argument that, by placing unrestrained emphasis on growth, neoliberal capitalism poses a threat

to nature.

Despite Barbie's richness, it must be stressed that her capital is not only economic. The doll's privileges are also associated with her cultural capital. The character reveals, in post #28, that she has studied "marketing and entrepreneurship" at the University of Cambridge. And, in post #42, she says that, in her youth, she applied for a university in Boston (possibly an allusion to Harvard University). The fact that Barbie is connected to highly-ranked international universities is a reference to the important role education has for the Brazilian upper and middle classes. According to Souza (2017), cultural capital allows the elites to differentiate themselves from the lower classes, obtain better-paying jobs as well as prestigious social positions and legitimize their privileges – after all, education is used as a justification for a higher socioeconomic stand.

In Brazil, education is unequally distributed – the middle and upper classes, which are predominantly composed of white individuals, are significantly more educated than the lower classes (Reiter, 2009). Moreover, it is estimated that 80% of Brazilians attend public schools, while an affluent minority goes to private schools (Reiter, 2009). The situation is curiously paradoxical in what concerns tertiary education. Because state-funded universities are generally considered to be of better quality and more prestigious than private institutions, the majority of the students who go to public universities belong to the middle and upper classes – and the fact that many of them have previously studied in private schools makes these students better prepared for the competitive admission exams into the country's state and federal institutions (Magnoni, 2016). The abovementioned circumstances were used by the Workers' Party government to justify the implementation of affirmative action quotas destined to increase the numbers of Afro-Brazilians, indigenous students and public-school students in public universities – a policy that was highly criticized by the country's conservative segments (Magnoni, 2016).

Barbie denies being privileged by making use of a ludicrous argument: the doll claims that her teenage years were difficult because she was obliged to take French, gastronomy and ballet lessons, gymnastics, horse-riding and swimming while studying at a foreign school. On the other hand, lower-class Brazilians are described by her as privileged because they have the "freedom" to study at public schools and do menial jobs at the same time (post #42). Moreover, the doll argues that poor students are better prepared for the admission exams for public universities because the tests take place at rundown facilities in which the "chairs are uncomfortable, the desks are uneven and noisy and there is no ventilation" – circumstances that are unknown to her because she has had the "disadvantage" of attending a private school.

By employing irony and exaggeration, the text criticizes the aversion that the elites of Brazil espouse toward university quotas for Afro-Brazilians and public-school students. If Brazilian whites at

times compare inclusive policies to reverse racism (Magnoni, 2016), Barbie's absurd argument can perhaps be defined as "reverse privileges". Nevertheless, affirmative action policies have contributed to increase the number of lower-class, Afro-Brazilian and indigenous students at the country's universities, addressing historical inequalities which still remain sharp (Magnoni, 2016). Additionally, Barbie's attempt to disqualify university quotas is contradicted by the fact that she and her friends have gone to university abroad – which means that the presence of black and poor Brazilians at public educational institutions is not a threat to her privileges at all, since she did not have to compete against them for a place at university. In this sense, it is suggested that the doll's aversion to affirmative action policies is connected to her racist and classist views.

Barbie's class privilege – and, in a broader way, the class inequalities of Brazilian society – are implicitly related, in post #9, to the pre-revolutionary France of the 1780s. By using the hashtag #LutoDiariamentePeloMeuGanhaCroissant ("I fight daily to earn my croissant") the doll not only mentions a foreign food – which gives her an air of snobbery – but also echoes the famous quote (falsely) attributed to French Queen Marie Antoinette: "Let them eat brioches". In this sense, Brazil is compared to a feudal society – or, in Souza's (2017) words, to a highly unequal caste society. Starting from this premise, in the next section I analyze the doll's prejudices against those who eat "ordinary bread" – namely, the underprivileged segments of Brazilian society.

4.2 Prejudice

According to several scholars, Brazilian society is characterized by the intersectionality of different types of prejudices (De Jesus, 2018; Figueiredo, 2004; Layton & Smith, 2017; Van Dijk, 2005). In this sense, Barbie – who represents a white, conservative, middle/upper-class woman – is often revealed to have negative opinions about the underprivileged segments of the country's population. In post #2, for example, the character argues that "small issues" like racism, sexism and homophobia should not be subjected to public debate and that the government has more important matters to take care of. In doing so, the doll clearly adopts a neoliberal stance and defends a minimal state that does not take care of "private matters". This is an example of depoliticization, a discursive strategy that denies structural inequalities and discourages the pursuit of social struggles, arguing that capitalist societies are harmonious, egalitarian and free from conflicts (Haikola, 2018). *Barbie Fascionista's* disdain for social struggles is reinforced by her constant use of terms that belong to the Brazilian right wing's lexicon, such as *mimimi* – a word which mimics the sound of crying – and *vitimismo* ("victimism"). She employs these terms when arguing that minorities have no reason to complain and that their demands are childish and unreasonable.

Nevertheless, the character reveals her prejudices in several instances. In post #38, Barbie

says that she went into blackface to celebrate Halloween. Apart from being an American celebration – which emphasizes the doll’s foreignness and obsession with US culture – Halloween is an occasion in which people usually dress up as monsters or supernatural entities. Therefore, the post implies that the upper and middle classes of Brazil see Afro-Brazilians as non-human. Furthermore, the tradition of blackface is historically situated in a context of practices that have been used to caricature and demean people of African descent in Western societies (Dyer, 1997; Van Leeuwen, 2004a). Thus, going blackface contributes to the depoliticization and dehistoricization of racial inequalities. In this sense, the practice can be related to Barthes’ (1991) concept of myth, which empties a concept of its historicity. The French scholar highlights how the bourgeoisie is unable to face difference and has to absorb the Other and transform into him (Barthes, 1991, p. 152). Nevertheless, at times the Other is irreducible; in these occasions, the bourgeoisie resorts to the objectification, the exoticism and the spectacle (Barthes, 1991, p. 153). According to Dyer (1997), whites go in blackface and exaggerate African characteristics in order to reinforce their own racial identity – i.e., by emphasizing non-whiteness, they attempt to stress their whiteness.

The post is possibly a reference to an incident that took place in 2018 in which a white, upper-class woman dressed her son up as a slave for a Halloween party (“Mãe ‘fantasia’ filho”, 2018). Similar situations had occurred before, such as a 19th century-themed party organized by a Brazilian socialite in which black actors and actresses were hired to pose as slaves (“‘Racismo é uma acusação’”, 2018). If, in the abovementioned situations, both of the women involved apologized or denied being racist, Barbie is similar to them because she does not see her costume as racist. Instead, the doll argues that she is praising the “exotic” and “tropical” beauty of black women and mentions, in the post’s hashtags, a series of prejudiced terms and slogans – as if they were compliments – such as #Tanajura (“Big Booty”), #NeguinhaMaluca (“Crazy Blackie”), #EscravaDeMimMesma (“Slave of Myself”) and #DaCorDoPecado (“Shades of Sin”). Similar practices are not uncommon in Brazilian media, and the country’s television soap operas have often portrayed black people as slaves, sensual mulattas or Macumba priestesses (Van Dijk, 2005).

Moreover, the explanation featured in the text about Barbie’s transformation into a black woman blends the doll’s plasticity with her prejudice: the character states that, among other procedures, she has had her nose surgically widened and her skin artificially tanned and dyed with *cocoa essence*. This emphasizes her fakeness and exaggeration. Dyer (1997) argues that whites who strive to get tanned often do so out of a desire to look more natural, fun and sensual – reflecting stereotypical views of other races. However, while whites demand the right to put themselves in the place of others, the same possibility is not reserved for people of different ethnicities. This is evident in Michael Jackson’s case, and how the artist was ridiculed and humiliated for supposedly trying to

look white (Dyer, 1997).

Finally, by adopting an Afro hairdo, wearing African-looking clothes and mentioning axé, a musical style often associated with Afro-Brazilians, Barbie could be accused of cultural appropriation. Marini (2017) defines this practice as the exploitation, by a dominant culture, of an element that belongs to a subordinate culture. By dismissing the political and historical underpinnings of cultural practices, cultural appropriation is harmful to marginalized cultures because it can lead to fetishization and misrepresentation (Marini, 2017). Therefore, although the doll vehemently states that she is not doing cultural appropriation, but rather *cultural valuation*, her behavior is a representation of offensive and demeaning practices. It must be stressed that the doll which is featured in the image that illustrates this post features cultural stereotypes such as voluminous Afro hair and exotic-looking clothes and jewelry. The choice of such image might be an implicit criticism to Mattel itself and to its neoliberal approach to diversity – suggesting that it is discriminatory and profit-driven.

Barbie's attitudes can be defined as "colorblind" racism – her behavior is typical of racists who claim to not see color while still discriminating people of other ethnicities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). This is shown in the doll's assertion that people's skin-color does not make a difference (post # 24) – which is contradicted in the same paragraph, when Barbie says that she has "several black housemaids" and that she has hired them "even if they are of color". Furthermore, by mentioning examples of successful black people such as Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey and Nelson Mandela as proof that racism does not exist (post #24), Barbie is employing typical elitist discourse which attempts to mask prejudice and deny the existence of racial inequalities (Van Dijk, 2005). In this case, the strategy consists of citing "exceptions that prove the rule" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 139). It is worthy of note that all the individuals mentioned by the character are foreigners, which corroborates Van Dijk's (2005) assertion that famous black people from other countries might be seen by Brazilians as "less black" than Afro-Brazilians and thus be treated with more respect.

By arguing that Mandela, Obama and Winfrey are "living examples" of "rich, elegant and influent" blacks who never "carry the banner of racial division", Barbie shows her ignorance concerning the South African politician – who, besides being dead since 2013, was one of the main black leaders in the struggle against the apartheid regime. Conversely, her admiration for the former US president and for the prominent African-American TV host might stem from the fact that both Obama and Winfrey are often viewed as symbols of a post-racial America whose opposition against racism has been mild and catered to white audiences (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Peek, 1994).

It is worthy of note that black men are not pejoratively mentioned in any of the texts published by *Barbie Fascionista*. The racism is always directed to black women, which is perhaps a

reflection of the way Afro-Brazilian females experience more than one type of discrimination, especially if they belong to the lower-class (Layton & Smith, 2017). Moreover, racism is also alluded to in the way non-white dolls are underrepresented in *Barbie Fascionista*'s memetic images. Out of the 45 pictures which illustrate the account's posts, only four feature characters who are not white. This might be a criticism against the overrepresentation of whites in the media of Brazil – a country whose population is predominantly non-white (Da Silva, 2018; Van Dijk, 2005). It must be stressed that three of the black dolls which appear in the images have features commonly associated with Europeans such as blue eyes, straightened hair or light-brown skin. The fourth is described as *Barbie Fascionista* herself in blackface. Therefore, none of the representations of Afro-Brazilians is entirely authentic.

Besides being racist, *Barbie Fascionista* is also prejudiced against LGBT people. Nevertheless, the doll defends herself from accusations of homophobia by saying that her hairdresser, makeup artist and personal stylist are "homosexualists" – a neologism derived from the archaic Portuguese word *homossexualismo*, which implies that homosexuality is an ideology or a choice and has been replaced by the more neutral term *homossexualidade* (post #8). The use of the word makes the character sound old-fashioned and conservative. Moreover, it is worthy of note that all of her homosexual friends have stereotypical professional roles in the beauty industry, which reveals that she sees male homosexuals as effeminate and subservient to heterosexual women. Finally, by claiming that she is not homophobic because her home office is going to be decorated with unicorn wallpapers, Barbie is once again assigning stereotypes to homosexuals – such as that they are childish and effeminate.

The strategy of claiming not to be prejudiced against a minority because one has friends who belong to that group is a common one. Writing about the concept of new racism, Bonilla-Silva (2015, p. 1365) explains that American whites often disguise their prejudiced views by employing phrases such as "I am not a racist" or "I have black friends". By claiming that her gay friends are going to vote for Bolsonaro, Barbie is implying that, despite his multiple homophobic declarations, the candidate is not really prejudiced. This strategy has been used by Bolsonaro himself. During the 2018 presidential campaign, the politician published a video on his social media accounts in which he appeared beside Amin Khader, a famous gay TV host in Brazil, who stated that he was going to vote for the far-right candidate (Salgado, 2018). Although homosexual supporters are a minority among the segments who voted for Bolsonaro, these individuals have been analyzed in the study conducted by Kalil (2018). They are mainly men of conservative ideological orientation who do not identify with the LGBT movement and defend the idea that gay men should adopt a traditional masculine behavior and hide their sexuality when in public (Kalil, 2018).

The distinction between “good homosexuals” and “bad homosexuals” is a political strategy that has been adopted before. Smith (1994, p. 58) explains that, during the Thatcher era, conservatives would define themselves as being in the middle ground, distant from “violent-queer bashers” but also from “disease-spreading, child-seducing queers”. This discourse received considerable influence from new racist discourses that were prevalent in the 1980s (Smith, 1994). In such a context, homosexuals were expected to be closeted, well-behaved and discreet to be socially accepted (Smith, 1994). Moreover, Thatcherites often accused the left of promoting “social engineering” programs whose goal was to pervert the sexual and moral values of the English society (Smith, 1994). The same strategy has been adopted by the Brazilian new right. The conservative segments of Brazilian society frequently argue that the country’s left-wing is behind a conspiracy which intends to corrupt family values, distort gender roles and overthrow the capitalist system (Miguel, 2018). Many conservative politicians, such as congressman Marco Feliciano, have argued that the left intends to implement a “gayzist dictatorship” in the country with the purpose of forcing Brazilians to become homosexuals (Pasqualini, 2016, p. 40). One of the pillars of this conspiracy theory is the so-called “gay kit” – a supposed teaching package which would be used by leftist teachers to pervert and erotize Brazilian schoolchildren. The “gay kit” is a narrative which distorts the unsuccessful attempt, by the Workers’ Party government, to launch a program named Escola Sem Homofobia – “Schools Without Homophobia” – in 2011 (Maranhão, Coelho, & Dias, 2018). The initiative, which comprised educational materials intended to reduce homophobia among Brazilian students, was vetoed in Congress thanks to the actions of right-wing evangelical politicians (Maranhão, Coelho, & Dias, 2018). Nonetheless, prominent conservative politicians – including Jair Bolsonaro – have taken advantage of this incident to massively spread fake news which imply that the Workers’ Party has plans to brainwash children into homosexuality (Maranhão, Coelho, & Dias, 2018).

Barbie Fascionista mentions this rumor several times, frequently emphasizing that she is not against all gays, but only against those who “support the gay kit”. Once again, this reproduces the dichotomy between “well-behaved homosexuals” and “troublemaking queers”. Because the Ken doll has often been perceived as a closeted homosexual (Lord, 2004; Steinberg, 2011), the character fits Barbie’s idea of a “good gay guy”. Thus, post #8 is illustrated by an image which shows Barbie being playfully carried in the arms of two male Ken dolls. In this sense, male homosexuals are portrayed stereotypically as playful, childish, flaunting and submissive to their heterosexual female friends. Finally, when arguing that gay men would not vote for Bolsonaro if the right-wing politician was homophobic, the doll asks a rhetoric question which features a creative pun that alludes to Ken’s sexuality – when asking “Who in his right mind would be masochistic to this point?”, Barbie replaces

the word *Quem* (“Who”) for the homophonous name of the male doll (Ken).

Barbie Fascionista’s homophobia is connected to the character’s sexist and patriarchal views. Despite being a woman, she believes that women should be submissive to men and subscribe to traditional gender roles. This is, simultaneously, a subversion and a reinforcement of the values conveyed by the original Barbie doll – because, at the same time that the toy represents an independent woman who has her own career and does not depend on any man, Barbie suggests that women need to look beautiful and be always well-dressed (Driessen, 2016; Lord, 2004; Toffoletti, 2007).

Barbie Fascionista’s submissiveness to men is expressed in post #43, in which the doll accuses leftists of being too harsh on her father because he is “flirtatious” with women and likes “politically incorrect” jokes. This is a reference to an incident in which Silvio Santos – a famous 88-year old TV host from Brazil – told singer Cláudia Leitte, during a televised event, that he could not hug her because this would make him aroused (Foggin, 2018). The incident – which took place just a few days before the post was published – caused widespread controversy and showcased the sexism that still permeates Brazilian society. According to Couto and Schraiber (2013), despite a few social changes in the last decades, sexist behaviors and attitudes are still prevalent in Brazil and sexism is naturalized in the country. Significantly, the authors interviewed Brazilian individuals and found that 90% of the male subjects and 94% of the female subjects believed that there is sexism in Brazil (Couto & Schraiber, 2013).

By naturalizing her father’s behavior and claiming that this sort of attitude was not frowned upon “in the old times”, Barbie is revealed to view women in an archaic and objectified manner. Thus, her earlier discourses on female empowerment through entrepreneurship are contradicted and emptied of meaning. The doll’s father’s sexism is conflated with his appreciation for politically incorrect jokes that mock blacks and LGBT people. In this sense, politically incorrect humor is depicted as a form of oppression and subjugation of marginalized groups by privileged individuals such as Barbie’s father, who is shown in the image which illustrates the post as a white, rich and elderly man. It must be stressed that, despite Barbie’s complaint about the supposed “political correctness” of contemporary Brazilian society, politically incorrect humorists such as Danilo Gentilli have been active in mass media spreading jokes which, similarly to Bolsonaro’s statements, propagate sexist, racist, classist and homophobic views (Di Carlo & Kamradt, 2018).

Barbie’s sexist views are linked to her strong aversion to feminism. In post #19, the doll claims that all feminists are dirty “lesbianas” who want to enslave men, steal their semen, inseminate each other and raise “homossexualistas” children. By misspelling the words *lésbicas* (“lesbians”, in Portuguese) and *homossexuais*, the text makes Barbie sound old-fashioned and

ignorant, implying that these are the roots of her prejudices. Furthermore, the character's opinions are in line with widespread stereotypes of feminists, such as that they are bra-burning and man-hating fanatics (Avdelidou-Fischer & Kirton, 2016; Crossley, 2010). According to several scholars, mainstream media play a significant role in propagating such stereotypes and myths about feminists (Avdelidou-Fischer & Kirton, 2016; Crossley, 2010; Faludi, 2006). After interviewing female university students of twelve different nationalities in England, Crossley (2010) concluded that these stereotypes are transnational and prevent women from fully identifying as feminists, affecting even those females who are not necessarily opposed to feminism. Some of *Barbie Fascionista's* views are radically anti-feminist, which is evident in the caption that is featured in one of its memetic images (post #19): "Feminist, no! Feminine, yes!". The phrase illustrates the belief that feminism and femininity are mutually exclusive, which is very popular among anti-feminist women, who often argue that female activism has been detrimental to women (Avdelidou-Fischer & Kirton, 2016).

Barbie's anti-feminism is also related to the blend of neoliberal and religious discourses which is widespread in Brazilian society. By claiming multiple times that she is "independent", "empowered", "hard-working" and does not need feminism, the character is expressing the post-feminist view that society has already achieved gender equality and feminism is unnecessary (Alessandrini, 2017; Avdelidou-Fischer & Kirton, 2016; Crossley, 2010). Additionally, by accusing all feminists of being abortionists, the doll is aligned with the opinions expressed by religious fundamentalists (Miguel, 2018; S. Ribeiro, 2018). Finally, by believing that feminists are involved in a conspiracy which intends to subvert traditional gender roles, the character embodies radical neoconservative views that see feminists and LGBT people as threats to social cohesion and to the capitalist system (Carapanã, 2018; De Almeida, 2018; Smith, 1994).

The last type of prejudice to be featured in *Barbie Fascionista* is the character's classism. In post #26, the doll complains about the "social barrier" which "forces" her and her friends to live behind bullet-proof windows and reinforced doors (measures often adopted by the Brazilian middle and upper classes to protect themselves against violent crime). Nevertheless, Barbie is unable to realize that these barriers are a consequence of the country's deep class inequalities, which are at the root of Brazil's high crime rates. Moreover, even if the middle and upper classes often feel unsafe and complain about violence, it is the lower classes, in fact, which are the most affected by crime (R. Santos, 2012).

The doll expresses unhappiness with the fact that Brazil's streets are now crowded with cars because the poor can buy vehicles (post #26) – a reference to the economic improvements and social policies implemented by the Workers' Party (Bähre & Gomes, 2018; Souza, 2017; Teshainer, Lara, & Dunker, 2018). By wishing that the streets were "emptier and cleaner", Barbie represents the

class segregation that exists in Brazil and the unwillingness of the elites to share their spaces with the underprivileged. Teshainer, Lara and Dunker (2018) define this tendency of the affluent classes of Brazil to segregate themselves as the *logics of condominium*. Influenced by the logics of consumerism and idealized spaces such as residential condominiums and shopping malls, Brazil's upper and middle classes tend to live in bubbles and see the world beyond their walls as dangerous, disorderly and chaotic (Teshainer, Lara, & Dunker, 2018).

The logics of condominium causes Brazil's privileged segments to be protective of the spaces they frequent and feel uncomfortable when they are close to lower-class individuals (M.L.M. Mendonça & Jordão, 2014). This aversion is shown, in *Barbie Fascionista*, by Barbie's assertion that Disney World is now overcrowded with poor Brazilians whom she accuses of behaving in an obnoxious manner (post # 16). Expressions of displeasure at social mobility are not unprecedented in Brazil. Danuza Leão, a well-known socialite and journalist, famously wrote – much like Barbie – that travelling to New York or Paris was not fun anymore because you could end up meeting your building's doorman there (“Danuza lamenta”, 2012).

Barbie's class prejudice reflects the anxiety that the Brazilian middle class feels about the potential loss of its privileged positions. The doll claims that “in the old times” Disney World was not filled with huge crowds wearing “the same-looking Mickey t-shirts”. By being horrified by the sameness of the clothes, the character shows her antagonism to social equality and inclusion. Additionally, the criticism portrays Barbie as a clueless individual, given that crowds wearing Mickey shirts are probably not a recent development at Disney World. Lastly, the doll is depicted as a hypocrite, because the image which illustrates the post shows her wearing a plastic headband with two Minnie Mouse ears – which makes her look like a childish tourist who probably behaves in an obnoxious manner.

Barbie Fascionista's aversion to inclusion stems from different factors. Firstly, class differentiation is not simply a matter of economic capital, but also encompasses family origins and cultural capital (M.L.M. Mendonça & Jordão, 2014). Thus, Barbie is disgusted that the poor Brazilians who go to Disney World cannot speak English properly, claiming that they say “Walter” when trying to pronounce the word “water” – a reflection of their lack of proper education. Moreover, her anxiety about social mobility is also caused by the fear that the lower classes will eventually acquire cultural capital and be able to compete for the best educational and professional opportunities (Miguel, 2018).

The middle class' fear of losing its privileges has been described by Souza (2019) as one of the main reasons why people from this social segment supported far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro during the 2018 presidential election. Therefore, the next section analyzes how conservatism is

portrayed in *Barbie Fascionista*.

4.3 Conservatism

Many of the posts featured in *Barbie Fascionista* depict the doll as an ardent Bolsonaro supporter. The character expresses her endorsement of the far-right politician's presidential campaign in multiple ways, such as addressing her female followers as "bolsodivas" (post #4) and constantly referring to Bolsonaro's slogan – "Brasil acima de tudo, Deus acima de todos" ("Brazil above everything, God above everyone").

Barbie agrees with the former captain's political views and endorses measures such as a "military intervention" (post #4). It is not clear whether the intervention that the doll is referring to is a military coup d'état – similar to the one which took place in Brazil in 1964 – or the controversial occupation, by the Brazilian Army, of Rio de Janeiro's slums in 2018 – an action which, according to the federal government, had the purpose of tackling crime in those areas (Teles, 2018). The ambiguity is, perhaps, intentional. Many conservative members of the Brazilian affluent classes are nostalgic of the military dictatorship while being supportive of intensive police operations against crime – actions that tend to target black and poor Brazilians, who are often not involved in criminal activities (De Jesus, 2018; Goldstein, 2018; Souza, 2017; Teles, 2018).

In the last years, Brazil's conservative political discourses have been increasingly militarized – a trend which is intertwined with social polarization (Teles, 2018). In this context, the members of the country's middle and upper classes consider themselves to be *cidadãos de bem* ("good citizens") who oppose "criminals" and "troublemakers" – i.e., blacks, lower-class individuals, social activists, indigenous Brazilians, etc (R. Santos, 2012; Teles, 2018). Due to such radicalism, it is no wonder that discourses that criticize human rights – qualifying them as a way to protect criminals – are increasingly more prevalent among Brazilian conservatives (Frigo & Dalmolin, 2017; Miguel, 2018). This is why Barbie mentions, in post #13, the slogans "A good criminal is a dead criminal" and "Human rights for rightful humans" – which are frequently used by individuals who defend harsh anti-crime measures such as the adoption of death penalty. However, the defenders of such policies fail to acknowledge that lower-class Afro-Brazilians are the most frequent victims of crime and that, conversely, many crimes are committed by white middle- and upper-class Brazilians (R. Santos, 2012; Teles, 2018).

Barbie's nostalgia of the military dictatorship is conflated with her revisionist historical views. In post #23, the character argues that the Brazilian military dictatorship never happened and that "Ustra did not exist". The late colonel Brilhante Ustra – who was an army officer during the military regime (1964-1985) – has been accused of murdering and torturing several political opponents –

including former president Dilma Rousseff. Bolsonaro has declared several times that Ustra is one of his personal heroes, going as far as praising the colonel in Congress when, as a congressman, he voted for Rousseff's impeachment in 2016 (Frigo & Dalmolin, 2017). Barbie's lack of historical knowledge is not uncommon among Brazilian conservatives. Goldstein (2018) explains that Brazil's ignorance of its past is rooted in the fact that the country's governments never prosecuted the individuals who committed crimes against humanity during the dictatorship. Moreover, the doll's denial of reality is connected to the emergence of "politically incorrect" discourses which promote revisionist versions of Brazilian history (Di Carlo & Kamradt, 2018). Finally, the character's depoliticization is a reflection of how the original Barbie doll depoliticizes history (Steinberg, 2011).

In post #30, Barbie states multiple times that those who do not agree with her should leave Brazil. This is a reference to Bolsonaro's assertion, a few days before the election, that "the red criminals will have to accept our law or get out of the country" (H. Mendonça & Gortázar, 2018, para. 1). The politician's phrase, in turn, echoes a popular slogan that was used by the Brazilian government during the military dictatorship: "Brazil: love it or leave it". According to Feijó (2011), approximately 5000 Brazilians were forced to leave the country during the dictatorship. Therefore, Barbie's and Bolsonaro's statements are antidemocratic and historically insensitive. Nevertheless, the doll views the military dictatorship in an idealized way and wishes that Brazil would go back to that period. This is made clear in her references to a dreamy authoritarian scenario of "olive green lawns, camouflaged carpets and curtains decorated with coats of arms" (post #32). The aesthetic description of the military regime is interrelated to her professed love for the "dictatorship of fashion" (post #37) and the "dictatorship of beauty" (post #23). Thus, the doll associates the military regime with order, harmony and beauty – aesthetic ideals that are analogous to the absence of conflicts and to the character's depoliticization. Finally, in her view, Bolsonaro is a messianic savior who will rule Brazil with an iron fist and bring the military regime back – restoring a mythical period which is glorified in the right-wing politician's discourse (Goldstein, 2018).

Barbie's defense of fascism is connected to her religious views. The account includes several allusions to Christianity such as the expression "Amen" (post #22), a biblical verse (post #23) and a cross emoji (post #27). The combination of religion and politics reflects the increasing presence of Christian individuals – especially Evangelicals but also, to a lesser extent, Catholics – in Brazil's political scene (Bulgarelli, 2018). These politicians vehemently oppose women's and LGBT rights and have been successful in blocking bills aimed to combat discrimination and prejudice (Bulgarelli, 2018). Therefore, by constantly alternating Barbie's use of religious expressions with prejudiced statements, it is implied that the doll's backward opinions stem, partly, from her religiosity.

In the same vein as Bolsonaro – whose slogan "Brazil above everything, God above

everyone” blends religion with nationalism –, Barbie is depicted as a histrionic patriot. The doll alludes several times to Brazil’s national symbols such as the country’s motto – *Ordem e Progresso* (“Order and Progress”) – as well as the Brazilian flag. In post #37, the character uses the hashtag #NossaBandeiraNãoSeráVermelha (“Our Flag Will Not Be Red”). The slogan – which is frequently used by Brazilian conservatives – underscores the conflation between patriotism and anti-leftism which is characteristic of the Brazilian right-wing (Goldstein, 2018; M.M. Ribeiro, 2018). It is clear that, for the doll, anyone who is of leftist orientation – which, for her, is synonymous with being against Bolsonaro – espouses antinationalist and antipatriotic views. By urging those who agree with her to take to the streets wearing “our shirt” (post #30), *Barbie Fascionista* refers to the crowds that protested against former president Dilma Rousseff, between 2014 and 2016, wearing Brazil’s national soccer jerseys – a series of events which is compared, by Souza (2017), to the march of Mussolini’s Blackshirts in fascist Italy.

Nevertheless, Barbie’s pretense nationalism is contradicted by her obsession about everything that is North American and European – i.e., her mongrel complex. The doll often makes use of English words and expressions and all her friends have foreign-sounding names such as Henry, Jordan, Daphne, Melanie and Sarah. Moreover, she considers the United States to be superior to Brazil – which is shown, for example, in post #26, in which the character states that Miami and Los Angeles are cleaner and more organized than Brazilian cities. The criticism, thus, implies that Brazilian elites, while pretending to be patriotic, are subservient to American interests. This notion is corroborated by Souza (2017), who argues that the United States played a role in the events that led to former president Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment due to their interest in Brazil’s economic and natural resources. Finally, Barbie’s fake patriotism might also be a reference to Bolsonaro’s self-professed love for the United States and closeness to Donald Trump (H.G. Batista & De Orte, 2019).

As stated above, Barbie’s conservative and fascist views are indissociable from her anti-leftism. The doll detests the left – which, for her, is an umbrella term that encompasses all sorts of progressive political views, social activism, communism, socialism, and the Workers’ Party. This reflects how Brazil is currently experiencing a reenactment of the Cold War, in which the Workers’ Party – despite being a center-left organization – is considered to be the embodiment of communism by the Brazilian right-wing (Miguel, 2018).

The character often criticizes the social policies that were implemented by Brazil’s former leftist government (2003-2016). Thus, in post #20, the doll attacks the social welfare program known as Bolsa-Família (“Family Allowance”), arguing that it is too costly and makes its recipients lazy. Barbie’s aversion to social programs is related to neoliberal discourses which depoliticize poverty – contending that it is a consequence of individual choices – and argue that the state should be

minimal. Moreover, her antagonism to Bolsa-Família also stems from the fact that, because of the social policies which were implemented between the 2000s and 2010s, lower-class Brazilians became less socially vulnerable, which made it more difficult for the country's middle and upper classes to exploit them (Miguel, 2018; Souza, 2017). Furthermore, the doll accuses the Workers' Party of being a populist organization which makes use of social welfare programs to bribe the lower classes into voting for them (post #35). This is a depiction of the middle class' belief that the lower classes are manipulated by populist leaders while the country's affluent social segments are immune to political manipulation (Souza, 2017). According to Souza (2017), this argument is used to delegitimize the vote of the poor and attack democracy. Nevertheless, Barbie's assertion that she is politically conscious is contradicted by her support of right-wing politician Aécio Neves – a 2014 presidential candidate who is currently being investigated on charges of passive corruption and obstruction of justice ("Powerful Brazilian Senator", 2018).

According to several scholars, moralism is one of the most important values for the Brazilian middle class (Cavalcante, 2018; Miguel, 2018; Souza, 2017). By being moralists, middle-class Brazilians gain a sense of superiority over the lower and upper classes (Souza, 2017). Nevertheless, their moralism – which is often expressed in anti-corruption demonstrations – has been criticized for only targeting corruption scandals in which the left is involved while ignoring the misdeeds of right-wing politicians (Miguel, 2018; Souza, 2017). Furthermore, while Brazilian moralists claim to abominate corruption, using it as a scapegoat for the country's problems, they do not oppose Brazil's class inequalities nor the way the dominant classes exploit the underprivileged majority – which, even more than political corruption, is the real reason behind the country's shortcomings (Reiter, 2009; Souza, 2017).

Although *Barbie Fascionista* claims to be a staunch critic of corruption, her morality is revealed to be selective. In post #11, the doll argues that being a corrupt is not really a problem, as long as corrupt politicians possess traits associated with the elites such as "being stylish", "speaking eight languages" and "belonging to the high society". However, this is contrasted with her condemnation of "classless", "vulgar" and "fingerless" individuals who "steal millions" – a reference to former president Lula da Silva, a member of the Workers' Party, who lost one of his fingers in a work accident in the 1960s. According to Bähre and Gomes (2018), Brazilian elites do not really antagonize Lula because of the corruption charges attributed to him, but rather due to his lower-class origins and to the fact that they perceive the leftist politician as a threat to their privileges. Furthermore, the doll often contradicts herself by revealing unethical, immoral and illegal attitudes. In post #25, for example, Barbie reveals that she went shopping in Miami and New York and "forgot" to declare the items she bought in those cities when going through customs on her way back home.

She also asks, rhetorically: “Who has never accepted, by accident, a 12-million deposit in their bank account?”. In this sense, the profile accuses the Brazilian middle and upper classes of being dismissive of attitudes such as tax evasion and money laundering which, when done by rich businesspersons or corporations, are often not considered to be corruption (Kalil, 2018; Souza, 2017).

Brazil’s affluent conservatives are depicted, in *Barbie Fascionista*, as being prone to believe fake news and conspiracy theories. This is why the doll accuses the country’s mainstream media of publishing fake news against the Brazilian right-wing (post #14). The same argument is used by Bolsonaro, who often claims to be persecuted by the media, which are supposedly being controlled by left-wing parties (Goldstein, 2018). Ironically, however, the former army captain’s electoral campaign relied heavily on fake news and social media bots which attacked the Workers’ Party (Maranhão, Coelho, & Dias, 2018; Souza, 2019). This fact is humorously alluded to in post #33, in which Barbie claims that, out of her 100,000 followers on Instagram, 50,000 are robots.

In addition to believing the aforementioned narrative of the “gay kit”, which implies that the left plans to turn Brazilian schoolchildren into homosexuals, Barbie fears that the Workers’ Party will turn Brazil into a “new Venezuela”. Her paranoia is rooted in the fact that, in the last years, the Brazilian right-wing has attempted to revive the political climate of the Cold War – this time, however, the enemy is not the Soviet Bloc, but rather Latin American leftist regimes such as Venezuela and Cuba (Maitino, 2018). Thus, the belief that the Workers’ Party, in association with the Venezuelan and Cuban governments, is trying to promote a communist revolution in Brazil, is very common among Bolsonaro supporters (Goldstein, 2018; Maitino, 2018). The doll partakes in the anti-communist paranoia by stating that the Workers’ Party forces Brazil’s media to broadcast Mexican soap operas so that Brazilians will learn Spanish and eventually be controlled by Venezuela (post #14). In Barbie’s view, the neighboring country is the ultimate nightmare, a socialist hellhole in which people cannot purchase iPhones, receive proper skincare or eat good quality bread. Therefore, she considers the 2018 presidential election to be a dispute between communism – represented by the Workers’ Party – and capitalism – embodied by Jair Bolsonaro. This reflects the widespread political and ideological polarization that Brazil has experienced in the last years.

Although Barbie is a harsh critic of the left, she complains of being persecuted because of her political views. In post #10, the doll claims to support values such as love, tolerance and empathy and accuses her adversaries of creating fake profiles to offend her on the internet. In the last line of the text, however, the character contradicts herself by using offensive words such as “filthy”, “shit” and “maggots” to refer to those who espouse different political views. This pattern occurs in several posts, and Barbie often claims to be a religious or spiritual person – using mystical mantras such as

“Ubuntu” or “Ho’oponopono” – while inflicting violent attacks on people who disagree with her. Thus, *Barbie Fascionista* suggests that Bolsonaro supporters are aggressive, bigoted and hypocritical. The depiction of the far-right politician’s supporters as intolerant alludes to the radical stance adopted by many of these voters. Upon analyzing the Facebook group *Bolsonaro Zuero 3.0*, created by supporters of the candidate, L.G.M. Ribeiro, Lasaitis and Gurgel (2016) conclude that its content is connected with extremist and fascist ideals and propagates racial, social and sexual prejudices. Goldstein (2018), in turn, defines Bolsonaro as part of a larger right-wing movement which follows a racist, sexist and anti-leftist agenda. Thus, both the politician and a considerable number of his supporters produce a large amount of hateful content on the web (Pasqualini, 2016). By addressing such tensions, *Barbie Fascionista* underscores the role of the internet as a tool that promotes public debate and political discussions – which are not always positive or constructive.

Writing about political polarization in Brazil’s social networks, M.M. Ribeiro (2018) argues that Brazilians are widely separated in *anti-leftist* and *anti-anti-leftist clusters*. This online polarization is referred to in an ironic and self-referential post, in which the doll complains about the fact that her opponents spend their time “lying and creating Barbie memes” (post #17). The fact that the character is offended by the memes stresses the important role of digital artifacts in contexts of political polarization. Ross and Rivers (2017) have highlighted the potential of memes to delegitimize political opponents. In this context, one of the discursive strategies employed by the creators of these artifacts is delegitimization through moral evaluation, which comprises criticisms that are conveyed in a subtle and oblique manner (Ross & Rivers, 2017). The whole corpus of *Barbie Fascionista* fits this description, because the criticism conveyed by the profile is implicit and requires the viewer to pay attention to contextual and discursive clues in order to be able to understand it.

Barbie’s irritation with the viral images also underscores the potential of memes for political satire. Plevriti (2013) relates memes to caricatures, a type of satire that emerged in England and France in the 18th century. Therefore, although memes are often seen as a form of entertainment, they can be used as a tool for civic engagement (Plevriti, 2013). Finally, the doll feels threatened by the memes not only because of their political role, but also because of their potential for virality and their relevance for popular culture (Chandler, 2013). Incidentally, the Fascist Barbie meme has become a powerful cultural symbol in Brazil, which is attested by the fact that many party-goers dressed up as the character during the 2019 carnival (Phillips, 2019). Nevertheless, the power of memes to promote social change is debatable (Mina, 2019). *Barbie Fascionista* acknowledges this – also in ironic and subtle fashion – in post #37, which was published two days after Bolsonaro’s victory in Brazil’s presidential election. By stating that her hashtags contributed to the far-right politician’s victory, the text offers two possible interpretations: it can be read either as an

acknowledgement of the important role played by social media in Bolsonaro's campaign or as a sarcastic statement which denies the importance of digital new media in the election. The latter interpretation could also mean that the text is ironically self-referential – i.e., that despite *Barbie Fascionista's* popularity, the Instagram account could not stop Bolsonaro from becoming president.

Brazil's political divide is also mentioned in post #31, in which Barbie celebrates the fact that all of her family members and friends agree with her views and that she never needs to argue with anyone she knows. The doll's happiness is related to her anti-democratic beliefs and intolerance towards difference. In this sense, the text implies that Brazil's white elites are composed overwhelmingly of Bolsonaro voters. It is worthy of note that the ultraconservative politician was by far the most voted presidential candidate in the majority of the richest cities of Brazil, also prevailing in those cities in which the proportion of white Brazilians is the highest (Llaneras, 2018). Nevertheless, a great proportion of the 58 million people who voted for the former army captain was not white and economically privileged. Kalil (2018) interviewed Bolsonaro supporters of several social backgrounds, including Afro-Brazilians, LGBT people and lower-class individuals, concluding that the right-wing politician's voters had different socioeconomic profiles and motivations. Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco (2018), in turn, have studied lower-class teenagers from the city of Porto Alegre and concluded that many of them were admirers of the former captain, supported gun liberation and believed that the state was too lenient on criminals. Therefore, *Barbie Fascionista's* criticism cannot be taken as an exact representation of reality.

Finally, the last unit of the sample (post #45) encapsulates many of the ideas and themes that are present in *Barbie Fascionista*. In it, the doll joyfully announces that she is expecting a baby. This goes against Mattel's unwillingness to ever launch a pregnant Barbie (Lord, 2004), and the image which accompanies the post is clearly photoshopped. Significantly, the post was published on December 24th and includes several references to Christmas, alluding to the character's religiosity and the symbolic relationship of Christmas with pregnancy and birth. Barbie never mentions the identity of the child's father, which might be a reference to Ken's irrelevance in her world (Lord, 2004) but also to the religious belief that Christ was born to a virgin mother. In this sense, both the doll and Virgin Mary – who is often represented as a European-looking woman – are idealized white women who can reproduce while being ethereal, saintly and free from sexuality (Dyer, 1997). Additionally, the doll's pregnancy is a statement of her heterosexuality and ability to reproduce, which are closely linked to her racial pride (Dyer, 1997).

Barbie relates her pregnancy to the dawn of a new age – a time which is marked by the rule of meritocracy and the end of leftism, social welfare and “gay kits”. The doll's proud statement that her baby is going to have blue eyes and “perfect skin” reflects her racism and obsession with

European physical characteristics. Dyer (1997) explains that blue eyes and blond hair are especially valued in Western culture because they are the ultimate white traits, which indicates that the bearer of these characteristics is “untainted” by race-mixing. Furthermore, this could be an allusion to the frequent – and ideological – depictions of Christ as a white man (Dyer, 1997).

The character alludes to Jair Bolsonaro by celebrating the fact that she is expecting a boy, and not a “mistake” (as the far-right politician once defined his youngest daughter in a statement). The former army captain is also referred to in one of the hashtags, which says that “Little Jair is on his way”. Barbie’s praise of Bolsonaro – whose second name is Messiah (“Messiah”, in English) – is transferred to her son, who is going to be named after the extreme-right politician and whose birth is considered by her to be a messianic sign of the extreme right’s rise to power. Nevertheless, while her son may be a Messiah for the right-wing and privileged segments of Brazilian society, it is implied that he is the Antichrist for the lower-class and marginalized groups. This negative meaning is reinforced by the dark and blurry ultrasound image that has been photoshopped into Barbie’s hand, which simultaneously evokes birth and death.

Excusing herself for wearing a “Communist/Workers’ Party-like” red dress – which is shown in the image that illustrates the post – the doll says that its color is supposed to represent “the bloodshot eyes of incoming change”. Therefore, Bolsonaro’s future government is depicted in a sinister way, as a period of authoritarianism, violence and repression. Finally, it is implied that Barbie will educate her son – whom she nicknames “FasciBaby” – to be prejudiced and elitist like her. This highlights the importance of family influence in the formation of political and ideological views and suggests that the cycle of inequality and exclusion that characterizes Brazilian society will be perpetuated.

Having presented my findings, in the next chapter I discuss my main conclusions, suggest directions for future research and address the study’s socio-theoretical implications and limitations.

5. Discussion

5.1 Main conclusions

This thesis sets out from the research question: How do the memetic images and texts published by Instagram account *Barbie Fascionista* portray the Brazilian middle and upper classes?

Upon analyzing 45 posts published by the profile, I have concluded that *Barbie Fascionista* depicts Brazil's affluent segments as privileged, prejudiced and conservative. In this sense, the account suggests that the country's middle and upper classes form a homogeneous reactionary bloc. The only post that features some nuance and hints that not every affluent Brazilian is conservative is post #6, in which Barbie attacks Helena Rizzo, a famous chef who criticized Bolsonaro shortly before the election (for the complete analysis of this unit, check Appendix B). Moreover, the polarized atmosphere that permeated the 2018 election is highlighted by the fact that *Barbie Fascionista* conflates every criticism against the Workers' Party with prejudiced and elitist sociopolitical views – ignoring criticisms to the party that were made by the progressive segments of Brazilian society, such as that the PT's downfall was partly a result of its ill-fated alliances, when in power, with retrograde political groups and religious fundamentalists (Miguel, 2018).

In light of the country's deep political and ideological divide at the time, and considering that the account was created after the first round of the presidential election – when only two candidates remained: Fernando Haddad and Jair Bolsonaro – the lack of nuance is understandable. *Barbie Fascionista* represented a protest against what its authors considered to be an urgent threat to Brazil's democracy, political stability and social equality. Moreover, as seen in the theoretical framework and results chapter, many of the criticisms conveyed by the profile match the interpretations of scholars who have analyzed issues of race, class and gender in Brazil.

If, as Berger (2013) puts it, a semiotician needs to pay attention to the oppositions between signs, this study concludes that the fundamental opposition in *Barbie Fascionista* is between “us” and “them”. By parodying classist and elitist discourses that divide Brazil between white, wealthy, religious, heterosexual and conservative individuals and “the rest”, *Barbie Fascionista* mirrors these discourses and becomes their inverted reflection – in this sense, the “us” conveyed by the account comprises blacks, women, LGBT people, lower-class individuals and progressive Brazilians and the “them” is the country's privileged minority, which is denounced and satirized. To subvert hegemonic discourses that are widespread in Brazilian society, *Barbie Fascionista's* creators largely employed the strategy defined by Ross and Rivers (2017) as delegitimization through moral evaluation. This tactic, which relies on resources such as sarcasm and irony to subtly contest value and belief

systems, demands an attentive and careful interpretation from the audience (Ross & Rivers, 2017). Thus, at the same time that the profile's discursive sophistication is one of its main qualities, it may have prevented many internet users from understanding its message the way it was intended by the authors – i.e., *Barbie Fascionista* might have suffered from what Berger (2013) qualifies as *aberrant decoding*.

By making the Barbie doll the protagonist of their narrative, the account's creators have made a very interesting choice. Barbie embodies many characteristics of Barthes' myth: her discourse is depoliticized and attempts to purify social relations and remove their historicity (Barthes, 1991). Thus, *Barbie Fascionista* makes use of a myth to criticize Barbie and other myths, namely, the prejudiced and elitist discourses of Brazilian society. According to Barthes (1991), poetry has the potential to challenge and contest myths. *Barbie Fascionista*, in turn, shows us that humor can also be employed to delegitimize mythical narratives – in this sense, the account simultaneously attacks and repoliticizes the doll's depoliticized discourse.

As previously seen, Barbie's plasticity and symbolic flexibility allow those who play with the doll to subvert the meanings attributed to her by Mattel and to create new stories for the toy. Thus, *Barbie Fascionista* plays with Barbie in creative and innovative ways which rely on intertextuality, remix and parody – characteristics that are remarkably present in memetic discourse (Mina, 2019; Shifman, 2014). The doll's artificiality and fakeness can be related to the way *Barbie Fascionista* accuses the middle and upper classes of hypocrisy – after all, the character frequently claims to be peaceful and tolerant while violently attacking her adversaries and exhibiting prejudiced attitudes. These characteristics are also compatible with Van Dijk's (2005) argument that Brazilian elites attempt to portray themselves in a positive way and generally deny having racist and classist views.

Although Barbie is a foreign myth – an example of *provenance*, a phenomenon which takes place when signs are borrowed from other cultural, historical or geographical contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) – her foreignness is not out of place in *Barbie Fascionista*. On the contrary, it serves the purpose of parodying the intense admiration that middle- and upper-class Brazilians feel for the “developed” world as well as their sense of superiority towards the lower classes – which Souza (2018, p. 112) compares to colonialism, arguing that Brazil's affluent classes are akin to “Belgians living in Congo”. But Barbie's foreignness also conveys a second layer of criticisms, which is subtler than the main themes analyzed in this thesis. The account is, implicitly, a parody of American cultural imperialism and capitalist globalization – of which Barbie is a symbol (Lord, 2004). The image of a bossy blonde doll who loves capitalism, discriminates Brazilian minorities, only has friends with foreign names, blends English with Portuguese in her speech and meddles in the country's politics can be interpreted as a caricature of the United States. The paradox, here, is that by constantly

referring to Barbie's idealized world of luxury and wealth, *Barbie Fascionista* might end up reinforcing the imperialistic and capitalist values it attempts to challenge. As Shifman (2014) explains, humoristic memes often play the role of invisible agents of Westernization and Americanization.

Barbie Fascionista is, first and foremost, a political object. Created during the most polarized Brazilian presidential election of the last three decades, its *raison d'être* was to dissuade people from voting for Jair Bolsonaro. In this sense, the profile is aligned with Shifman's (2014) assertion that one of the criteria for online content to go viral is its possibility for participation – defined by the author as practical actions, such as engaging in a campaign, which are associated with the diffusion of memes. Despite the fact that the profile reached 100,000 followers in a matter of days and received coverage from mainstream news media, it is worth asking if its content has managed to significantly reach any social segments besides the progressive cluster of middle-class Brazilians who use social media and appreciate sophisticated political satire. Moreover, the fact that *Barbie Fascionista* was so closely associated with the election might be the reason why the profile's creators decided to deactivate the profile, in March 2019.

5.2 Socio-theoretical implications and limitations of the study

Overall, *Barbie Fascionista* is a rich, complex, sophisticated and contradictory object of study – not unlike Brazilian society. It proves that memes deserve to receive attention from scholars and can reveal many of the intricacies of the sociopolitical contexts in which they are produced. Although this study attempts to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the content published by the abovementioned Instagram account, it is not free from limitations. While I have focused on *Barbie Fascionista's* posts, I have neither interviewed the profile's creators nor analyzed the comments that were published by the account's followers. If this thesis had a broader scope – in terms of time, length and methodological approach – these procedures might have contributed to enrich the study and give it more depth. Moreover, a more complex analysis might have included a comparative study between *Barbie Fascionista* and other accounts which have published the Fascist Barbie meme – e.g., the Spanish-speaking adaptations that were produced in other Latin American countries.

Nevertheless, these shortcomings underline the vast unexplored fields that await scholars who decide to study memes. Future researchers who are interested in the intersection between memetic content and politics have a myriad of topics to choose from: they can either follow a similar path to the one I have adopted and analyze other political memes or focus, for instance, on the audiences and creators of memetic content – something which is remarkably lacking from memetic

research, apart from a few notable exceptions such as Plevriti (2013). Scholars could also analyze how memes are used by politicians and grassroots campaigns, the intersections between memetic content and fake news or how mainstream media make sense of memes. To paraphrase *Barbie Fascionista*, “the sky is the limit” when it comes to studying these digital artifacts. Finally, much like the creation of memes, academic research is a collective process. In this sense, just as I have been helped by the authors of previous studies, hopefully this work will be useful for future scholars.

In what concerns the study’s societal relevance, this thesis already possesses historical value. It comprises a detailed analysis of a once-popular Instagram account that no longer exists and which was active during a very specific and relevant period in Brazil’s contemporary history – the 2018 presidential election. Considering that the country’s sociopolitical context has changed considerably since that time – and will go on changing –, my work simultaneously helps to explain those events while registering them for future generations. In analyzing the memetic images and texts published by *Barbie Fascionista*, this study promotes political discussions about themes such as racism, classism, sexism and homophobia. To foreign readers, *Dolls gone fascist* provides the chance of better understanding the complex and drastic sociopolitical developments Brazil has been experiencing. To a Brazilian audience, this thesis offers perspectives which are not always debated by the country’s mainstream media. Additionally, by delving into prejudiced and elitist discourses and explaining how they are challenged by *Barbie Fascionista*, this work can be useful for activists who want to promote Brazil’s development into a more inclusive country as well as individuals who intend to combat racism and classism in Brazilian society and/or in other countries.

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Appendix A: Publishing timeline of the sample

First round of the election (October 7, 2018)	
Posts (texts + memetic images)	Publication date
#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10	October 11, 2018
#11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17	October 12, 2018
#18, #19	October 13, 2018
#20, #21	October 14, 2018
#22	October 15, 2018
#23	October 16, 2018
#24	October 18, 2018
#25	October 19, 2018
#26	October 20, 2018
#27, #28	October 21, 2018
#29	October 22, 2018
#30, #31	October 23, 2018
#32, #33	October 24, 2018
#34, #35, #36	October 25, 2018
Second round of the election (October 28, 2018)	
#37	October 30, 2018
#38	November 1, 2018
#39	November 2, 2018
#40	November 4, 2018
#41	November 6, 2018
#42	November 8, 2018
#43	November 12, 2018
#44	November 16, 2018
#45	December 24, 2018
Bolsonaro's inauguration as president (January 1, 2019)	

Appendix B: Examples of preliminary analyses

Post #4: Barbie openly expresses her support for Bolsonaro's presidential campaign by stating that she has dressing tips for *bolsodivas* – a word which addresses the candidate's female supporters and that alludes to the terms *bolsogatas* ("Bolsogorgeous") and *bolsolindas* ("Bolsopretty") (Kalil, 2018). According to Kalil (2018), this niche of Bolsonaro supporters consists of women between their 20s and 30s who: often oppose feminism, considering it to be a form of self-victimization; are economically independent and professionally successful; defend neoliberal notions of female empowerment; and believe that women should be "feminine", espousing traditional views of beauty and femininity.

Moreover, the character identifies herself as a fan of the armed forces and as someone who is in favor of a military intervention. It is not clear whether the intervention that the doll is referring to is a military coup d'état – such as the one which took place in Brazil in 1964 – or the controversial occupation, by the Brazilian Army, of Rio de Janeiro's slums in 2018 – an action which, according to the federal government, had the purpose of tackling crime in those areas (Teles, 2018). This ambiguity is, perhaps, intentional. In any case, both forms of armed intervention are often supported by the segment of the Brazilian middle class that is known as *cidadãos de bem* ("good citizens"). Souza (2017) stresses that a significant fraction of the Brazilian middle class has fascist leanings, while De Jesus (2018) highlights that the *cidadãos de bem* are often nostalgic of the 1964-1985 dictatorship. Furthermore, many members of the middle and upper classes of Brazil are supportive of intensive police operations against crime – actions that tend to target black and poor Brazilians, who are often not involved in criminal activities (Souza, 2017). The hashtags #BrasilMaisSeguro ("A Safer Brazil") and #ChegaDeTrombadinha ("No More Pickpockets") express the concern about security that is central to the upper and middle classes, even if the black and poor are the most affected by violence (R. Santos, 2012; Souza, 2017).

The fact that the doll encourages women to use bullet fragments and rubber bullets to customize their clothes and personal accessories implicitly refers to the fractions of the Brazilian middle and upper classes that are in favor of gun liberation – a policy that is supported by Bolsonaro (De Jesus, 2018; Goldstein, 2018; R. Santos, 2012). Moreover, the admiration *Barbie Fascionista* feels for the armed forces and law enforcement institutions is further evidenced by the image that illustrates the post, which shows the doll wearing a variety of outfits, including military and police uniforms. In this sense, the account suggests a conflation between political conservatism and post-feminism – an ideology that defends the idea that women do not need feminism and is frequently related to fashion and beauty ideals (Alessandrini, 2017). Although the feminist movement includes a branch that is known as *armed feminism* – which contends that women should be in the military

and law enforcement institutions and have access to guns as a form of emancipation and empowerment (R. Santos, 2012) – many of Bolsonaro’s female supporters are socially conservative, defend traditional gender roles for women and identify themselves as anti-feminist (Kalil, 2018). Thus, the texts and memes in which *Barbie Fascionista* attacks feminists are not incompatible with her pro-gun stance.

The defense of gun liberation is related to neoliberalism. One of the main arguments of pro-gun advocates is that the state is inefficient in protecting Brazilian citizens against violence and people should have the opportunity to defend themselves (R. Santos, 2012). In this sense, the middle and upper classes find themselves in a contradictory position because at the same time that they want less state control regarding guns, they want the police and the army – two government institutions – to intensify their actions and have more power. Moreover, the pro-gun movement makes extensive use of the Brazilian flag and other national symbols in their propaganda (R. Santos, 2012), which is compatible with *Barbie Fascionista*’s frequent patriotic statements. Finally, militarism, patriotism and a nostalgia of the dictatorship era (1964-1985) are themes that are often explored in Bolsonaro’s discourse, who also defends a simplistic and “tough” approach against urban violence in Brazil (Goldstein, 2018).

Lastly, one of the four merged images that illustrate the post shows Barbie in Paris, in front of the Eiffel Tower. This is an allusion to the privileges of the middle and upper classes which, unlike the lower classes, can often travel abroad. Additionally, the image gives *Barbie Fascionista* an air of foreignness – as if she was not truly connected to Brazil – and refers to the intense admiration the Brazilian affluent classes espouse toward the “developed world” (Souza, 2018).

Keywords: Bolsonaro, fascism, Good Citizens, Neoliberalism, Guns, Security, Military, Classism, privileges, foreignness.

Post #5: This post portrays Barbie as someone who, despite belonging to a privileged social segment, claims to suffer from “reverse racism”. By stating that, in her childhood, she used to be bullied with nicknames such as “whitey”, “cocaine”, “heart of palm” or “Casper the Friendly Ghost’s fart” – all of which emphasize the whiteness of her skin –, the character implies that she has had to endure considerable suffering because of her racial background. Nevertheless, by employing lexical suppression, the text does not mention the institutional racism that mixed-race and African-Brazilians have to face, which extends beyond offensive monikers. The discrimination against non-white Brazilians causes them to have lower incomes and lack access to proper health, housing and education (Reiter, 2009; Souza, 2017). Furthermore, lower-class Afro-Brazilians are the main victims

of urban violence – not only enacted by criminals, but also by police officers who target them because of their ethnicity and social class (Layton & Smith, 2017; R. Santos, 2012; Souza, 2017).

Thus, by attempting to equal herself to non-white Brazilians, Barbie is trying to minimize the concrete issues they face, in an example of colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). This kind of behavior has also been satirized by the series of memes entitled *First World Problems*, which blends the image of a white woman crying with captions that describe problems such as “My back hurts from lying on the couch all day” (Chandler, 2013, p. 77). The offensive nicknames Barbie claims to have received are contrasted with the privileged ways she has found to cope with her suffering. Stating that she made use of tanning lotions produced by “YSL” – which shows her familiarity with the famous cosmetic brand Yves Saint-Laurent – and Dior, and that she used to spend her summer vacations in Saint-Tropez, from where she would return “more colored”, the doll reveals her affluent economic conditions, which separate her from the majority of Brazilians. The fact that both Yves Saint-Laurent and Dior are French brands and that Saint-Tropez is located in France is not by chance. As Souza (2017) explains, the paradigm of cultural racism causes Brazilians to see Europeans as superior. Therefore, spending one’s vacations in Europe or owning European products is a sign of high socioeconomic status in Brazil, as well as a marker of cultural capital. Consonantly, the constant emphasizing of Barbie’s whiteness, in her own words, suggests that she is proud of being white. In this sense, the character is flaunting her whiteness and her richness, even when she appears to be complaining of reverse prejudice.

Furthermore, by urging her followers to share stories of overcoming difficulties and using the hashtag #Superação (“Overcoming”), Barbie is defending neoliberal values such as meritocracy – a concept that is fundamental for the Brazilian middle class (Cavalcante, 2018). The character implies that everyone, regardless of his/her ethnic background or social conditions, has the same conditions to succeed in life. This argument depoliticizes inequality and the structural conditions that produce it, a strategy that is frequently employed in neoliberal discourse (Haikola, 2018).

The last line of the text, which reads “Self-love above everything! God above all!” is a parody of Jair Bolsonaro’s slogan: “Brazil above everything, God above all”. By employing this phrase, the account depicts the Brazilian middle and upper classes as supporters of the extreme right-wing candidate and sympathizers of fascism – in this sense, it is worth of mention that Bolsonaro’s slogan echoes the Nazi-era German motto “Deutschland über alles”.

The image that illustrates the post shows Barbie as a student who wears glasses and is holding a book – this might be a reference to the importance of cultural capital for the Brazilian middle and upper classes and the consonant desire to look intelligent and well-educated (Souza, 2017). Moreover, the doll is surrounded by light, which is common in artistic and photographic

depictions of white women and gives them an ethereal look, as if they were saintly beings (Dyer, 1997).

Keywords: First World problems, Whiteness, colorblind racism, cultural racism, richness, materialism, depoliticization, Neoliberalism, Bolsonaro

Post #6: This post refers to a controversy involving Maní, a famous high-profile restaurant in São Paulo. On October 6th, 2018, one day before the first round of the Brazilian presidential election, Maní's chef and co-owner Helena Rizzo posted a picture on her personal Instagram profile in which she was accompanied by a group of colleagues ("Clientes fazem campanha", 2018). All of them gave their fingers to the camera while showing tattoos in their arms which read #EleNão ("Not Him") – a popular hashtag that was used as a protest against Bolsonaro's run for the presidency ("Clientes fazem campanha", 2018).

The image caused a social media stir in Brazil, with many people opposing Rizzo's positioning while others supported her (Fonseca, 2018). A boycott campaign was started by internet users who were offended by the protest and used hashtags such as #ManíNão ("No to Maní) and #ManíNuncaMais ("Maní Never Again") (Fonseca, 2018). Moreover, several Bolsonaro supporters filled the restaurant's profile on Instagram with comments such as "Go sell packed lunch in Venezuela" (J. Batista, 2018) – an allusion to the leftist government of Brazil's neighboring country.

The post illustrates the political polarization that characterized the 2018 Brazilian presidential election. According to M.M. Ribeiro (2018), the Brazilian social media sphere is divided between conservative individuals – who strongly oppose the Workers' Party – and people who espouse progressive views. *Barbie Fascionista* is definitely part of the former group. Although she does not mention Rizzo's name, she criticizes the "mediocre little chef" who has "declared support for that bunch". Despite the fact that the "bunch" is not named, the word is often used by Brazilian conservatives, in a pejorative way, to refer to the Workers' Party or, more broadly, to the left in general. This makes clear that, for the character, anyone who is against Bolsonaro is necessarily a leftist or a Workers' Party sympathizer. Therefore, the post illustrates the logics of "us x them" that is prevalent among Brazilian conservatives, who view people who espouse progressive ideologies, the Workers' Party, communism, socialism and the left in general as a unified and common enemy (Miguel, 2018).

Although the post does not mention Venezuela directly, the caption which is in the image reads: "Go sell packed lunch!", alluding to the right-wing phrase which urged Maní to move to the neighboring country. According to Maitino (2018), the Brazilian right-wing antagonizes Cuba and Venezuela – two Latin American countries which are ruled by leftist regimes – in a reenactment of

the Cold War. In this context, the Workers' Party is often accused of being associated with the Cuban and Venezuelan governments in an attempt to overthrow capitalism and turn Brazil into a communist dictatorship (Maitino, 2018).

The most significant aspect of this post is that it depicts a political division between the progressive and conservative segments within the Brazilian middle and upper classes – after all, Helena Rizzo is, herself, a white and upper middle-class woman. This can be related to Souza's (2017) assertion that the affluent social segments of Brazil are not uniform, but can be divided in groups that espouse different political and ideological orientations. Moreover, *Barbie Fascionista* is revealed to be a hypocrite when she accuses Helena Rizzo of being disrespectful and making obscene gestures, because the character often uses offensive and aggressive terms herself, when referring to the left. The contradiction alludes to the way Bolsonaro supporters frequently express hateful and prejudiced ideas online (Frigo & Dalmolin, 2017; Goldstein, 2018; L.G.M. Ribeiro, Lasaitis & Gurgel, 2016). Finally, the fact that Barbie makes use of popular hashtags and phrases to criticize the restaurant highlights the virality that can be achieved by memetic content, something which has been emphasized by Mina (2019).

In the memetic image which illustrates the post, Barbie is wearing expensive jewelry and elegant sunglasses, which denote her material richness. The fact that she is speaking on her cellphone suggests that she is criticizing Maní while talking to a friend. Thus, the virality of the criticisms and Brazil's widespread political polarization – which is implied to have become the topic of everyday conversation in the country – are also depicted in the post.

Keywords: Polarization, Bolsonaro, social media, virality, Anti-leftism, richness, hypocrisy.

Appendix C: Screenshots of analyzed posts

Post #4



Post #5



Post #6



barbiefascionista • Seguindo

barbiefascionista Gente, quero contar pra vocês sobre algo que me deixou muito chateada. Uma chefinha meia boca andou postando foto obscena e declarando apoio a essa corja!!!!!! Que absurdo, sabe? Vai ter que criar o Bolsa Polvilho agora, porque eu e minhas amigas nunca mais colocamos os pés lá. BRBRBR #ManiNao #CHEGAAAAA #ABSURDO #GenteSemBerço

Carregar mais comentários

mbambini @mariana_preta gargalhando serio

biancacameiroo @pimenpedro

nayanevylle @isaaa_carvalho o restaurante que alguns participantes do masterchef já falaram

catiaacolorada @robertinha_gnl fiquei curiosa! 🤔



4,422 curtidas

11 DE OUTUBRO

Adicione um comentário...

