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THE DIGITAL AND THE SOUTH: QUESTIONINGS VOL. 2

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O DIGITAL E O SUL: TENSIONAMENTOS VOL. 2
LO DIGITAL Y EL SUR: CUESTIONAMIENTOS VOL. 2

EDITORIAL

- 001 THE DIGITAL AND THE SOUTH: QUESTIONINGS VOL. 2
O DIGITAL E O SUL: TENSIONAMENTOS VOL. 2
LO DIGITAL Y EL SUR: CUESTIONAMIENTOS VOL. 2
MARCELO TRAMONTANO, JULIANO PITA, PEDRO TEIXEIRA, CAIO NUNES, ISABELLA CAVALCANTI, RENAN TEIXEIRA, ALINE LOPES

INTERVIEW

- 004 THE TECHNOCENE AND THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A HORIZON OF URGENCY
O TECNOCENO E O RESTABELECIMENTO DE UM HORIZONTE DE URGÊNCIA
EL TECNOCENO Y EL RESTABLECIMIENTO DE UN HORIZONTE DE URGENCIA
HENRIQUE PARRA, PEDRO TEIXEIRA, MARIO VALLEJO

AGORA

- 015 DYSPHORIA AS THE POTENCY OF CONTRADICTIONS: A BET BY PAUL B. PRECIADO
DA DISFORIA COMO POTÊNCIA DAS CONTRADIÇÕES: UMA APOSTA DE PAUL B. PRECIADO
MARCOS BECCARI
- 023 DIGITAL FRAMEWORKS / MODERN URBAN FRAMES
ESTRUTURAS DIGITAIS / ESTRUTURAS URBANAS MODERNAS
CARLOS FEFERMAN
- 033 GLOBAL SOUTH ADRIFT: DIGITAL REGULATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND BRAZIL
SUL GLOBAL À DERIVA: REGULAÇÃO DIGITAL NA UNIÃO EUROPEIA E NO BRASIL
MAGNO MEDEIROS
- 042 DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND PLATFORM (DE)REGULATION IN ELECTORAL CONTEXT
ATIVISMO DIGITAL E (DES)REGULAÇÃO DE PLATAFORMAS NO CONTEXTO ELEITORAL
ARNALDO DE SANTANA SILVA, MILENA CRAMAR LÔNDERO, VITÓRIA SANTOS

- 052 COSMOPLATFORMIZATION: DIGITAL PLATFORMS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH
COSMOPLATAFORMIZAÇÃO: PLATAFORMAS DIGITAIS A PARTIR DO SUL GLOBAL
ELI BORGES JUNIOR, EVANDRO LAIA, BRUNO MADUREIRA
- 060 SOCIAL ROBOTS: A SOCIO-TECHNICAL CONTROVERSY
BOTS SOCIAIS: UMA CONTROVÉRSIA SOCIOTÉCNICA
RAMON FERNANDES LOURENÇO
- 069 LAND, FREEDOM, AND DIVERSITY: METAPHORS TO THE DIGITAL WORLD?
TERRA, LIBERDADE E DIVERSIDADE: METÁFORAS PARA O MUNDO DIGITAL?
LUCCA AMARAL TORI
- 079 BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL WINDOWS: OPENINGS OF LIVING IN THE PANDEMIC
ENTRE JANELAS FÍSICAS E VIRTUAIS: ABERTURAS DO MORAR NA PANDEMIA
PAULA LEMOS VILAÇA FARIA

PROJECT

- 087 ECOLOGICAL ENSEMBLE
CONJUNTO ECOLÓGICO
ANA CECILIA PARRODI ANAYA

DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND PLATFORM (DE)REGULATION IN ELECTORAL CONTEXT
ATIVISMO DIGITAL E (DES)REGULAÇÃO DE PLATAFORMAS NO CONTEXTO ELEITORAL
ARNALDO DE SANTANA SILVA, MILENA CRAMAR LÔNDERO, VITÓRIA SANTOS

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Abstract

This article investigates the intersections between digital activism, platform regulation, and the electoral context, focusing on the tensions characteristic of the Global South, with an emphasis on Brazil. Digital activism has played a central role in mobilizing and increasing the visibility of social causes, particularly those of the LGBTQIA+ community. However, it simultaneously exposes these groups to heightened risks of cyber violence and persecution, exacerbated by hate speech and misinformation. This study uses a qualitative methodology grounded in bibliographic review and document analysis to evaluate how digital platforms shape activism and state regulation, particularly during electoral periods, amplifying structural inequalities. While these platforms expand opportunities for social mobilization, they also facilitate the spread of hate speech and misinformation, undermining the integrity of public discourse and democratic processes. The findings underscore the need for inclusive regulations that promote online safety and justice while preserving the digital sovereignty of Global South nations. Finally, the article emphasizes the importance of alliances between governments, digital platforms, and civil society to create effective moderation mechanisms that guarantee fundamental rights, foster social equity, and ensure an inclusive digital environment that strengthens democracy and digital governance.

Keywords: Digital activism, Platform regulation, Misinformation, LGBTQIA+ Rights

1 Introduction

Digital activism has emerged as a transformative force in contemporary societies, where the dynamics of Internet governance and technological innovations significantly shape the space for collective action and the exercise of rights. This article addresses the central question: How do digital platforms impact LGBTQIA+¹ activism in Brazil and the Global South during electoral contexts, simultaneously enhancing possibilities for mobilization and increasing risks of repression and silencing? This question gains further relevance in the Global South, particularly in Brazil, where digital activism faces global challenges of digital dynamics and economic, social, and technological inequalities that exacerbate preexisting structural oppressions. The LGBTQIA+ community, in particular, is disproportionately affected by forms of digital violence, exacerbated by the lack of adequate protection policies and the proliferation of conservative discourse. During electoral contexts, hate speech and misinformation circulate widely on digital platforms, threatening the security and visibility of minorities and intensifying their political and cultural marginalization. Therefore, understanding these dynamics and the role of platform regulation is essential to protect fundamental rights and balance these challenges with the digital sovereignty of Global South nations.

While the Internet has created new opportunities for mobilizing social causes and building support networks, these advancements come with challenges. Major technology corporations, primarily headquartered in the Global North, control the digital infrastructure and impose policies that disregard local realities, reproducing patterns of exclusion and inequality. This control, conceptualized as digital colonialism, restricts the sovereignty of Global South nations by limiting their capacity to develop their agendas and adapt policies to their populations' cultural and social needs. In the Brazilian electoral context, these dynamics are exacerbated as digital platforms facilitate political mobilization and promote exclusion through biased algorithms and inadequate moderation practices. Social network accessibility only sometimes translates into effective inclusion or structural transformation. Digital justice understood as the capacity to ensure equality and protection of rights in the virtual environment, is essential for preserving the integrity of democratic processes and ensuring fair and plural participation.

The originality of this study lies in its integrated analysis of technology, activism, and regulation, focusing on the implications of digital colonialism for LGBTQIA+ activism during electoral periods. Although the literature addresses misinformation and hate speech, there still needs to be more regarding how these phenomena specifically affect LGBTQIA+ mobilization during elections. This article seeks to fill this gap by proposing a regulatory model articulating democracy, technology, and human rights. The research employs a qualitative approach based on bibliographic review and document analysis to investigate the intersections between sexuality, technology, and activism. By

¹ The acronym LGBTQIA+ was chosen to encompass the identities of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders, Queers, Intersex, and Asexuals, as well as other orientations and gender identities represented by the '+' sign. This acronym reflects a continuous effort toward inclusion and recognition of diversity, giving visibility to populations that have historically been marginalized and subjected to discrimination. The use of this terminology seeks to respect and reflect the complexity of identities, avoiding the erasure of groups facing specific challenges, such as LGBTQIA+ phobia in digital and physical environments, in line with the variant adopted by the United Nations (UN) since the Free and Equal campaign.

exploring both advances and setbacks in the digital environment, the analysis underscores the urgent need for digital regulations that consider the specificities of the Global South, ensuring fundamental rights and digital sovereignty. The findings aim to contribute to future debates and more effective collaborations among civil society, governments, and digital platforms toward building a safer, more inclusive, and equitable virtual space.

2 Digital Colonialism and Internet Governance: Impacts on Activism in the Global South

The impacts of digital activism in Brazil must be analyzed in light of the unequal power dynamics that characterize Internet governance. This governance involves a complex interplay of actors—including major corporations, governments, and civil society organizations—competing to define the rules governing freedom of expression, data protection, and accessibility. These disputes reflect global inequalities, influencing how the Internet is accessed and regulated and how it reproduces existing power relations. While the Internet amplifies voices and connects individuals globally, it also presents contradictions that establish a form of digital colonialism. In this framework, the interests of corporations from the Global North disproportionately shape conditions of access and regulation, often disregarding local needs and realities. According to Faustino and Lippold (2023), this digital colonialism manifests in the concentration of infrastructure and data control in a few companies headquartered in the Global North, imposing values and norms that perpetuate historical inequalities in the digital age. For Global South countries like Brazil, these dynamics hinder efforts to build a more inclusive and sovereign Internet, deepening barriers to equitable digital governance that respects local specificities.

This power architecture is fundamental to understanding how social movements organize and mobilize in the digital public sphere, leveraging the Internet to advance rights and collective action. However, these movements often encounter algorithmic practices² and corporate interests that marginalize local or minority causes, such as LGBTQIA+ activism, thereby reinforcing deeply rooted global hierarchies of power. Furthermore, technological innovations—particularly the advent of the Internet—have profoundly transformed global economic dynamics, influencing international capital flow. Despite being hailed as one of modernity's most significant innovations, the Internet's impact reveals ambiguities. Emerging technology companies³ hold disproportionate power compared to national corporations, operating in a transnational sphere where rules are often imposed without room for local adaptation or revision.

The new digital governance models largely reflect the Global North's economic interests, shaping the digital environment according to their values. While the Internet is promoted as a democratizing tool, it perpetuates digital colonialism by concentrating power in transnational corporations. By imposing rules that disregard local specificities, these companies reinforce inequalities and establish barriers to the sovereign participation of states and communities in the Global South.

The control exerted by digital platforms creates obstacles to the digital sovereignty of Global South nations and marginalizes local voices, as algorithms prioritize content originating from the Global North. In Brazil, digital infrastructure and governance reflect a neocolonial dynamic in which transnational corporations dominate the landscape. This dependency undermines the ability of nations to define their digital agendas, leaving them vulnerable to the commercial and regulatory priorities of external interests (Faustino & Lippold, 2023). In response to this scenario, states may adopt various governance models. The liberal model permits platforms to manage data autonomously, adhering to their internal policies. Conversely, the restrictive model prioritizes state sovereignty, requiring platforms to comply with local regulations to operate. The hybrid model, meanwhile, seeks a balance between state authority and corporate freedom, combining digital sovereignty with economic development (Pigatto, Datysgeld & Silva, 2021).

Multistakeholderism in Internet governance ensures that applicable norms consider diverse perspectives and foster an inclusive digital ecosystem (Kurbalija, 2016). This approach contrasts with Barlow's (1996) utopian vision of the Internet as a lawless, regulation-free space. However, the absence of a United Nations secretariat to regulate Internet governance underscores the complexity of articulating diverse interests within the multistakeholder model. Despite its inclusive proposition, Internet governance often follows patterns reinforcing the concentration of power among Big Tech companies, limiting civil society's influence and overshadowing state authority. As Figueredo and

² We refer to the actions or decisions of algorithms, which are rules programmed to process data and produce outcomes. In digital platforms, these practices include recommending content, prioritizing information in feeds, and automatically moderating posts. These processes are often based on criteria that can perpetuate biases or distort the visibility of certain groups and issues.

³ Innovative technology companies develop impactful digital products and services, such as social media platforms, communication applications, and artificial intelligence solutions. These companies often rise to prominence in the global market, competing with established corporations.

Bolaño (2017) argue, this digital colonization exacerbates information access inequalities and obscures digital dynamics' authenticity. Consequently, advocacy strategies have sought to reverse this trend by amplifying the visibility of community-based issues and elevating historically marginalized voices.

International organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Greenpeace have integrated digital mobilization strategies to foster global debates and advance international agendas. Similarly, local and regional social movements employ these practices to promote government policies aligned with social interests. This process has innovated the diplomacy field by elevating media diplomacy's relevance (Burity, 2013; Nogueira & Burity, 2014) and introducing new voices into political debates. Nevertheless, these innovations occur within a digital colonialism context, deepening power dynamics and intensifying historical and geopolitical inequalities. Faustino and Lippold (2023) highlight that major international corporations impose cultural standards aligned with their interests by monopolizing access to information and centralizing data monetization. In Brazil, these platforms use algorithms that marginalize local voices, obstructing the promotion of social causes and perpetuating historical exclusions. Burity (2013) emphasizes that this marginalization is not merely technical but reflects cultural and economic dynamics of domination, cementing digital colonialism as an extension of structural inequalities within virtual spaces.

3 LGBTQIA+ Activism and Challenges in the Digital Environment

LGBTQIA+ activism utilizes the Internet as a strategic space for articulation and mobilization, connecting individuals from diverse geographic contexts, from urban centers to isolated areas. Despite amplifying the visibility of LGBTQIA+ issues, digital technologies also present contradictions. They are frequently used to silence social movements and obscure local content (Probox, 2023; IDEM, 2022). This duality manifests in challenges such as censorship and algorithmic manipulation, which directly affect the exposure and relevance of mobilizations.

Since its inception, the LGBTQIA+ movement in Brazil has been a central force in the struggle for rights and recognition. However, it is critical to question to what extent digital activism transforms the power dynamics that have historically marginalized this community within institutional politics. While the visibility achieved through social media represents a significant advancement, it does not eliminate entrenched patterns of exclusion. The commercial logic of platforms and the absence of structural safeguards hinder profound changes, requiring ongoing critical analysis of the capacity of digital activism to promote full inclusion and lasting social transformation.

The Internet and social media have introduced new forms of organization, information dissemination, and the creation of support networks, fostering citizenship and belonging. Seen as democratic spaces by marginalized groups (Bonoto & Brignol, 2020), digital platforms facilitate the multiplication of voices and representations in public debates. However, algorithms that privilege certain agendas while marginalizing others compromise the diversity of discourse, restricting the visibility of social movements and the plurality necessary for social transformation.

These dynamics are particularly relevant for LGBTQIA+ activism in Brazil. The movement is anchored in historical resistance milestones, reflecting global influences and local dynamics. The Stonewall Rebellion inspired political actions and legislative advancements worldwide, including in Brazil, where the "Brazilian Stonewall" occurred in 1980 at Ferro's Bar. This event marked a pivotal moment of resistance against repression, drawing attention to the struggle for LGBTQIA+ rights and strengthening mobilization efforts toward an inclusive agenda.

As in New York, the Ferro's Bar episode symbolized resistance to violence and repression, showcasing the courage of national activists and driving the fight for recognition and inclusive public policies. These historical milestones reveal the continuity of the struggle for equality, demonstrating how Brazilian LGBTQIA+ activism aligns with global movements while addressing the cultural and political specificities of the local context. This resistance has been central to confronting the criminalization of gender and sexual expressions that challenge cisheteronormativity, particularly within a landscape shaped by conservative structures and religious influences. Such resistance is essential, especially in political contexts that reaffirm traditional norms and exclusionary values, with LGBTQIA+ activism challenging normative discourses that marginalize dissident identities and strive for a more inclusive and equitable space.

The innovations brought about by the Internet and social media have significantly transformed LGBTQIA+ activism, renewing strategies for action and articulation. Digital platforms are used to denounce violence, disseminate achievements, and advocate for historical and social reparations (Apocalypse & Jorente, 2024), thereby expanding the scope and visibility of activism. These tools enable efficient communication

about events, protests, and support networks in various contexts, facilitating access to information and promoting engagement in campaigns for rights, citizenship, and dignity. However, while they amplify activism, these platforms also serve as vehicles for disseminating hate speech and reinforcing prejudices. Frequently, they deepen marginalization and violence against the LGBTQIA+ community, underscoring the urgent need for regulation and more effective actions against harmful content.

Within this landscape of oppression and resistance, Gloria Anzaldúa's (2016) concept of "borders" offers valuable insights into the identity dynamics experienced by minorities. Anzaldúa views borders as spaces of continuous negotiation between identity and oppression, constituting territories of struggle for belonging and resilience. This concept helps frame activism as a practice that transcends the barriers between physical and digital spaces, reaffirming identity and resistance in hostile environments. The "digital border," where LGBTQIA+ voices are silenced by algorithms or repression, echoes the concept of *nepantla* — a liminal space of resistance and transformation that challenges oppressive systems.

Digital violence against the LGBTQIA+ community is a global phenomenon, manifesting in forms such as persecution, harassment, and online hate crimes, often encouraged or tolerated by state actors. For example, in the MENA region⁴, communication and dating apps are weaponized to identify, expose, and criminalize LGBTQIA+ individuals, undermining both identity expression and local activism efforts. Reports from Human Rights Watch (2023) and Article 19 (2018; 2024a; 2024b; Rigot, 2022) document these violations, illustrating how repression silences resistance, infringes upon fundamental rights, and limits opportunities for social transformation.

Many activists are forced into exile to escape retaliation, highlighting the severity of persecution (UNCHR, 2022). Beyond direct repression, marginalization persists through conservative political contexts that reinforce exclusion. In Brazil, this dynamic is reflected in the lack of legislative initiatives to advance LGBTQIA+ rights. As Bonin (2011) noted, conservatism dominates Congress, leaving the Judiciary to assume responsibility for ensuring progress without legislative support (Campos & Alfano, 2021). Concurrently, LGBTQIA+ political advocacy has evolved to address growing demands for inclusive public policies. However, the absence of mechanisms for declaring gender identity and sexual orientation since 2002 has contributed to the underreporting of violence and discrimination (Pereira, 2017). Data from ABGLT underscore the urgent need for more inclusive and transparent policies that reflect and respond to the community's realities.

Brazil remains among the countries with the highest rates of LGBTQIA+ homicides, a situation exacerbated by the community's increasing visibility and the rise of conservative discourses. These discourses have intensified violence in recent years (Grupo Gay da Bahia, 2024; Portal G1 Bahia, 2024; Dobbin, 2022), promoting dehumanization and exclusion under the guise of preserving traditional values. This narrative perpetuates violence and consolidates exclusionary social structures, complicating efforts to promote rights and citizenship. Beyond physical violence, political violence is pervasive and directly impacts LGBTQIA+ representation. The exclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals from participatory processes reveals significant democratic deficits. In recent Brazilian elections, transgender, *travesti*, and cisgender candidates advocating progressive agendas faced hate and threats both online and offline (Instituto Matizes, 2023). This hostility reflects individuals' structural resistance in challenging the status quo and striving to reform power structures embedded in the so-called "cistema"⁵.

LGBTQIA+ activism represents ongoing resistance to representation and the protection of fundamental rights, using the Internet and social media as essential tools for mobilization, visibility, and social engagement. However, these platforms also expose the community to new forms of violence and discrimination. Despite these challenges, activism remains central in both virtual and physical spaces, highlighting the importance of maintaining a dual presence to meet the community's demands. While the digital environment expands opportunities for expression, LGBTQIA+ activism emphasizes the need for fundamental rights, such as access to basic resources and the full recognition of identity and dignity. This integrated approach fosters safety and social inclusion, contributing to the construction of a more just and pluralistic society.

⁴ The MENA region includes countries in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, characterized by diverse social, cultural, and political contexts.

⁵ In the book "Transfeminismo: Teorias e Práticas," Professor Letícia Nascimento introduces the term "cistema*" to critique the social system that favors cisgender identities over transgender identities. The "cistema" refers to the social structures and norms that uphold and reinforce cisnormativity as the dominant standard, which leads to the marginalization and erasure of trans experiences and identities, as well as those deemed deviant (Nascimento, 2021).

4 Challenges of (De)Regulating Digital Platforms in Electoral Contexts

4.1 Algorithms, Platform Business Models, and the Brazilian Electoral Context

Like any other technology, digital platforms are not inherently positive or negative; their impact depends on how they are utilized and managed. However, it is crucial to recognize that these platforms are shaped by sophisticated algorithms that organize and prioritize content with the primary goal of maximizing user engagement. The core logic guiding companies like Google and Meta is to provide services or foster social interactions and sustain a business model centered on datafication⁶ and targeted advertising (Gregori & Finger, 2023). This model monetizes user behavior by converting personal data and browsing patterns into commercial capital for advertisers.

Algorithms prioritize emotionally engaging content, such as polarizing discussions and hate speech, as these reactions keep users active on platforms for longer periods. Prolonged exposure is monetized through targeted advertisements, enhancing the company's profitability (Pardo, 2022). This dynamic explains why hate speech, including that directed at the LGBTQIA+ community, remains widely available despite violating the platforms' guidelines. Effectively moderating such content conflicts directly with the financial interests of these companies, as it entails operational costs and reduces revenue from removing high-engagement content (Quadrado & Ferreira, 2020).

Algorithms also contribute to the "filter bubble" phenomenon, where users are repeatedly exposed to content aligned with their beliefs, limiting access to alternative perspectives (Quadrado & Ferreira, 2020). This phenomenon is particularly harmful to the LGBTQIA+ community, as it amplifies discriminatory discourse and entrenches social prejudices. Consequently, digital platforms create a hostile virtual environment where diversity is marginalized and attacked. During elections, this digital polarization is exacerbated by misinformation campaigns and hate speech. Brazil's 2018 and 2022 presidential elections demonstrated how political actors, often in collaboration with platforms, manipulated public opinion to reinforce conservative narratives (Gregori & Finger, 2023). Misinformation targeting the LGBTQIA+ community not only undermined candidacies but also reinforced stereotypes that hindered the advancement of inclusive policies.

Digital platforms have become indispensable in the Brazilian electoral landscape, facilitating connections between candidates and voters. However, they have also created opportunities for disseminating misinformation and hate, compromising public debate and electoral integrity (Gregori & Finger, 2023). Such campaigns exacerbate social exclusions and obstruct the promotion of rights, strengthening conservative discourses. The dissemination of misinformation involves collaboration between political actors and platforms, transforming the digital space into an informational battleground. Digital militias⁷ manipulate algorithms and fake profiles to amplify deceptive campaigns, intensifying political polarization (Quadrado & Ferreira, 2020). This context perpetuates the political marginalization of LGBTQIA+ candidates (Instituto Matizes, 2023).

The lack of clear regulations for moderating harmful content highlights a gap in the current legal framework, allowing the proliferation of hate speech and misinformation. Legislative proposals such as PL 3.814/2021⁸ and PLP 120/2022⁹ aim to hold platforms and fraudulent profiles accountable, but they still prioritize criminalization over effective preventive mechanisms (Gregori & Finger, 2023). This regulatory void underscores the urgency of a more comprehensive and inclusive approach in Brazil. Beyond criminal accountability, coordinated efforts among governments, civil society, and international institutions are essential to ensure digital sovereignty and more inclusive governance. Moderation policies sensitive to gender and identity and transparent reporting systems are critical to preventing digital environments from perpetuating exclusion and discrimination.

⁶ Datafication is the process of converting elements of everyday life, behaviors, and interactions into digital data that can be collected, stored, and analyzed. In the context of digital platforms, datafication enables companies to utilize this data to target advertisements, shape algorithms, and make business decisions, often without fully informing or obtaining the consent of users.

⁷ The term used here refers to organized groups that leverage digital tools, such as social media and messaging apps, to spread misinformation, manipulate public opinion, or target political opponents. These groups often operate coordinatedly, utilizing fake profiles, bots, and various strategies to amplify deceptive campaigns or hate speech.

⁸ It proposes measures to hold digital platforms and social networks accountable for content moderation, particularly in addressing the spread of misinformation and hate speech. The project aims to regulate algorithm usage and enhance platform transparency in Brazil.

⁹ It emphasizes holding fraudulent profiles accountable and fighting digital manipulation through stricter sanctions and measures to prevent the abusive use of data.

4.2 Hate Speech and Its Impact on the Mental Health of the LGBTQIA+ Community

As discussed previously, by prioritizing content based on emotional engagement, digital platforms often facilitate the dissemination of hate speech. This dynamic is particularly damaging to historically marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQIA+ community, which faces verbal attacks and discriminatory behavior on social networks. Rather than serving as inclusive spaces for dialogue and expression, these platforms often reinforce prejudices and perpetuate social exclusion. The absence of effective moderation allows hostile discourses to thrive, hindering the creation of safe and welcoming digital environments (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

Studies by the Human Rights Campaign (2020) and the World Health Organization (2022) reveal that prolonged exposure to online hate speech increases rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, particularly among LGBTQIA+ youth. These impacts are exacerbated during electoral periods when misinformation targeting the LGBTQIA+ community increases stress levels and makes members more vulnerable to both online and offline violence (Pardo, 2022). Such discourses not only delegitimize diverse gender identities and sexual orientations but also promote intolerance, undermining the full citizenship and social recognition of the community. The difficulty in reporting these hostile discourses further aggravates the situation, as many incidents of digital violence go unaddressed.

Beyond individual harm, this dynamic undermines the political participation of the community. During Brazil's 2018 and 2022 elections, hate speech and misinformation campaigns directly targeted LGBTQIA+ candidates, undermining their campaigns and restricting the advancement of inclusive public policies (Instituto Matizes, 2023). Political violence directed at these groups exemplifies the challenges they face in exercising basic democratic rights and perpetuates structural inequalities, limiting the creation of representative policies (Quadrado & Ferreira, 2020).

The digital marginalization of the LGBTQIA+ community highlights a global issue, particularly acute in the Global South, where activists face both local and international repression (Pardo, 2022). This underscores the urgent need for effective platform regulation. As Kurbalija (2016) emphasizes, transparent moderation policies that include vulnerable groups are essential, alongside accessible channels for reporting violence and ensuring timely responses for victims. Without such measures, platforms will continue exacerbating inequalities rather than contributing to social inclusion and justice.

4.3 The Role of Platforms and Effective Regulation

Digital platforms, operating on a global scale, challenge traditional state legal frameworks, which still need to regulate their social and political impact adequately. Effective governance of these platforms requires innovative approaches that address data protection and the prevention of abuses, such as the spread of misinformation and hate speech. Regulation must account for the unique dynamics of local contexts, respecting the peculiarities of Brazil's digital environment and the needs of its civil society (Kurbalija, 2016).

The absence of a robust regulatory framework leaves gaps that facilitate the proliferation of harmful content, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities like LGBTQIA+ individuals. These communities suffer from the lack of effective regulations to curb the circulation of discriminatory discourses, particularly during periods of heightened visibility, such as electoral campaigns. In this context, regulation must go beyond individual accountability and establish clear platform content moderation rules. Such measures can ensure a faster response than current judicial processes and prevent more profound social harm.

Bolaño, Martins, and Valente (2022) argue that platforms, guided by their terms of service, exploit misinformation to maximize user engagement. While they may appear neutral, these platforms shape public discourse and reinforce narratives of hate and misinformation already discussed in this article. Digital sovereignty is central to this issue, as it enables states to establish rules tailored to their cultural and political contexts, ensuring transparent and responsible platform operations. However, addressing the transnational operations of these companies requires greater international cooperation and cross-sector collaboration (Pardo, 2022). Effective regulation demands partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector to preserve freedom of expression and technological innovation.

An effective regulatory framework must also include clear enforcement mechanisms and proactive moderation policies to protect vulnerable communities and ensure the rapid removal of harmful content. Platforms must assume greater responsibility for the impact of their algorithms

and the dissemination of harmful content, incorporating these practices into their operational models. These initiatives mitigate misinformation and foster a more inclusive and safer digital environment.

Additionally, digital literacy must be promoted to enable users to better understand the risks associated with online information and identify misinformation. Such education can strengthen public trust in democratic institutions and reduce the negative impacts of informational manipulation.

5 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how digital platforms pose significant challenges for the Global South while promoting social mobilization. In Brazil, LGBTQIA+ activism illustrates the advancements enabled by digital technologies and the persistent structural barriers. The Internet has become a crucial space for resistance and advocacy, yet algorithmic dynamics and commercial interests continue to reproduce exclusions and marginalizations, undermining democratic integrity and restricting the autonomy of Global South countries in shaping an inclusive digital environment.

The concept of digital colonialism is pivotal to understanding how Internet governance reflects asymmetrical dynamics, where transnational corporations impose values and practices disconnected from local realities, perpetuating the exclusion of minorities such as the LGBTQIA+ community. The lack of adequate regulation and the manipulation of algorithms exacerbate inequalities, hindering these groups' full political participation, particularly during electoral processes.

Platform regulation must move beyond punitive approaches, adopting preventive and collaborative policies that ensure transparent moderation and effective reporting systems. To achieve this, fostering South-South cooperation is critical, enabling Latin American and other Global South countries to develop alternative digital governance models better aligned with their realities and needs. In this context, digital education emerges as a strategic tool to strengthen societal resilience, empowering users to identify informational manipulations and critically engage in the digital public sphere.

Furthermore, governments, civil society, and platforms must collaborate to promote inclusive governance based on transparency, respect for diversity, and the protection of human rights. Regulation of digital platforms cannot be treated as a purely technical issue but as an essential component of the struggle for digital equity and justice. Only through coordinated efforts can the digital environment be transformed into a truly democratic space aligned with the needs and specificities of the Global South.

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