# Brazilian elections and the rise of Bolsonaro
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## Abstract

In this thesis, I set out to identify and statistically test the core explanatory factors behind Jair Bolsonaro's 2018 election as president of Brazil. Based on various sources on the supply of ideas and stances from Bolsonaro's campaign, combined with articles on common sentiments among Brazilian voters and literature on the impact of different factors on vote choice, I outline four different hypotheses. Using the LAPOP 2018/2019 dataset, I develop two different models that allow me to fully test the effects of pro-army sentiments, anti-democratic sentiments, aversion against political corruption, and support for Bolsonaro's tough stances on crime through multivariate binary logistic regression. The results indicate that only the first hypothesis concerning pro-army sentiments can be proven. These findings lead me to conclude that the current discourse on the roots of Bolsonaro's electoral success ought to be reexamined.

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# Introduction

In late 2018, a right-wing populist by the name of Jair Bolsonaro became the president of Brazil. Several interesting aspects of this election make this a puzzling case. Ever since Brazil became a democracy after the military dictatorship ended in 1985, its presidents have traditionally been rather centrist (Faiola & Lopes, 2018). Bolsonaro, however, is a far-right populist, and him becoming the president is thus rather remarkable. Throughout his political career, Bolsonaro has been very outspoken about his support of gun rights, the rule of law, a small state and privatization (Winter, 2018). However, this has been paired with derogatory comments towards several minorities, leading Bolsonaro to be labelled a racist, a misogynist, and a homophobe (ibid.). These elements of Bolsonaro's identity make him an atypical president of Brazil, which begs the question: which factors played a role in Jair Bolsonaro's victory in the Brazilian presidential election of 2018?

The puzzle in this thesis can be found in the surprising success of Bolsonaro and his campaign. Ideally, the answer to the central research question may also provide insights into the larger question whether this event is unique to Brazil and its political landscape, or whether one should expect similar politicians to enjoy similar success in other developing and developed countries. Obtaining the knowledge of the core reasons behind the success of such a politician may also be relevant for both the scientific community and society at large. Ideally, the Brazilian elections and their results could provide us with a deeper understanding which factors are dominant in contributing to the success of extremist politicians.

Operation Car Wash, a large-scale corruption scandal in Brazil, was one of the most salient political issues in Brazil in the years leading up to the 2018 election. It heavily damaged the reputation of several prominent political actors (Watts, 2017). I expect this scandal and the resulting discontent with politics among the electorate to have provided a window of opportunity for the rise of new faces and ideas within Brazilian politics. Therefore, in the theoretical chapter, I will first provide an overview of this scandal and the extent of its fall-out. Furthermore, I will discuss the element of Bolsonaro's identity as a populist, as I expect especially his anti-elite mentality to have worked in his favor. Together, I expect these two background conditions to be closely related to the hypotheses I will outline further on, which makes it necessary for me to properly discuss them beforehand.

Ever since Bolsonaro's campaign began to gain popular support, various authors have tried to establish which factors could explain his appeal. Through a brief study of these analyses, one can identify four prevalent explanations. These are Bolsonaro's identification with the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985 (also known as the Fifth Republic), his anti-liberal stances closely linked to his support for the autocratic military regime, his portrayal as an outsider candidate uninvolved in the corruption amongst the ruling political elite in Brazil, and his policy

promises on how he would fight crime (Hunter & Power, 2019; Junge, 2019; Phillips, 2018; Watson, 2018; Winter, 2018).

These four factors as outlined by various authors will be discussed further in the theoretical chapter, where I will construct four separate hypotheses in order to test their effects. For each section, I will first talk about the circumstances surrounding the hypothesized effects, before linking them to relevant literature on vote choice. For each hypothesis, I will distinguish between the supply and demand sides of the particular factor, as I expect the supply side, being Bolsonaro's portrayal in his election campaign, to have resonated with certain elements on the demand side, being the different dominant feelings in the members of the Brazilian electorate. I thus assume the supply of Bolsonaro's persona and ideas to have triggered common sentiments within the Brazilian voters, causing a majority of them to eventually vote for Bolsonaro. I have decided to make this distinction between supply and demand based on Spruyt, Keppens, and Van Droogenbroeck, who argue that the inclusion of factors on both sides can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of support for populists (2016, p. 336). As I expect Bolsonaro's political identity as a populist to be closely related to several of my hypotheses, it makes sense to discuss both supply and demand elements when defining them.

In the methodological chapter, I will elaborate on the how and why of the testing of the hypotheses. I will use a quantitative approach in order to adequately identify which factors played a significant role in Bolsonaro's election. Because Bolsonaro's victory seems to be a rather unique case, being able to estimate the size of the hypothesized effects may be crucial in providing a convincing answer to this thesis' research question. I will construct two separate multivariate logistic regression models, based on the 2018/19 Latin American Public Opinion Poll (LAPOP 2018/19) database (Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org). LAPOP is a survey on political attitudes and societal characteristics, which is carried out in different Latin American countries including Brazil. As such, it is a perfect fit for this thesis, as it contains information on many different characteristics of average Brazilians.

I expect that the structural factors behind Bolsonaro's elections will turn out to be decisive. I think the cultural aspect of Brazil's militarily dictated past, as well as the crime element, will certainly have provided Bolsonaro with initial support, but that these factors would never have sufficed in winning him the elections. Instead, I expect the anti-party sentiments in Brazil at the time of the elections to have been the decisive factor. As Brazilians throughout the country were growing ever more disillusioned with the leading political parties, Bolsonaro rose to the occasion to provide the electorate with an antithetical alternative. Thus, I expect to find many clues that much of Bolsonaro's success was not particularly shaped by voters' support for him, but rather by their aversion against other candidates.

**Theoretical framework**

As mentioned in the introduction, finding the reasons why the majority of the Brazilian electorate voted will be the central theme of this thesis. As I expect Operation Car Wash to have provided a window of opportunity for the rise of Bolsonaro, I will first provide an overview of this scandal.

What started as an ordinary investigation into state-owned Petrobras with little chance of achieving actual convictions culminated into a large-scale corruption case which involved several major politicians (Watts, 2017). The investigation found that politicians abused their leverage in order to appoint acquaintances into leading positions at Petrobras, which exploits sizeable underwater oil fields off the coast of Rio de Janeiro (ibid.). In turn, these leading figures at Petrobras would then consciously overpay on contracts with different types of contractors, such as suppliers of drilling rigs and refineries, in exchange for them channeling a small percentage (1 to 5%) of the money involved in the deal into secret funds (ibid.). These funds could then be used to finance electoral campaigns, securing the long-term power positions of numerous politicians (ibid.).

One by one, previously untouchable high-ranking officials caved in and granted the Brazilian public an increasingly comprehensive understanding of the large-scale corruption within their political system (ibid.). Politically speaking, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Worker's Party) was the biggest casualty of Operation Car Wash. The PT took the majority of the blame, as it had been the nation's leading party for the bulk of the scandal's time frame (from 2003 until Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016), and because many of its political top figures (including the two presidents it supplied in the mentioned time frame) were directly or indirectly involved (ibid.). The most direct implications for the PT included the prison sentence for former president (2003-2011) Lula da Silva, and the impeachment of Rousseff and subsequent loss of presidential power to the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement), as Michel Temer took office for the remainder of Rousseff's second term (ibid.) (Spektor, 2018).

That is not to say that the PT was the main culprit: Luiz Edson Fachin, one of the eleven judges on Brazil's Supreme Federal Court, released a list in 2017 of individuals that were suspected to have been involved in the scheme. His list named no less than nine ministers, as well as 29 senators and 39 members of the Chamber of Deputies, who represented influential parties like Temer's 'Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro' (PMDB), the 'Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira' (PSDB), and the 'Partido Socialista Brasileiro' (PSB).

Needless to say, Operation Car Wash caused public outrage. Aside from a loss of faith in politicians, common Brazilians also endured economic setbacks, as Petrobras, which accounted for one eighth of all investments within Brazil and provided hundreds of thousands of jobs, saw many of its projects suspended due to

the ongoing investigation (Watts, 2017). As a result, large amounts of ordinary Brazilians took to the streets in different protests throughout 2015 and 2016.

The protests reached their first height in March 2015, as over one million people were estimated to have assembled in the opposition-oriented (and thus anti-PT) city of Sao Paulo (BBC, 2015). Similarly, around a year later, protester numbers were estimated to reach up to 3,5 million people, as their focus shifted more and more towards the actual people in charge and thus deemed responsible for the ever-evolving corruption scandal (Watts, 2016).

I expect this scandal to have created a window of opportunity, which provided Bolsonaro with the chance to pose a serious challenge in the presidential election of 2018. As I will demonstrate further on in this theoretical chapter, all the explanatory factors for Bolsonaro's success are in one way or another linked to the scandal and its fallout. Furthermore, the fact that Bolsonaro was an outsider to the political system, who was not implicated in the scandal, allowed him to take the most advantage of the situation. This notion is supported by Karakas & Mitra's (2017) mechanism, wherein voters perceived more extremist candidates as more likely to keep their policy promises and challenge the status-quo (p. 3).

A second important element of Bolsonaro's rise to the presidency can be found in his identity and self-portrayal as a populist. In his 2001 article, Weyland creates a political redefinition of populism (p. 12). Within this systematic definition, 'an individual leader seeks or exercises government power based on support from large numbers of followers' (p. 12). The individual leader uses a particular form of discourse to build a connection with the unorganized masses, promising to represent those 'who feel excluded or marginalized from national political life, promising to rescue them from crises, threats, and enemies' (ibid.). This usually entails an appeal on the common man for support in this 'heroic effort to regenerate the nation, combat the privileged groups and their special interests, and transform the '"corrupt" established institutions' (ibid.).

Already, a few similarities between Weyland's definition and Bolsonaro's political identity can be observed. For instance, Bolsonaro is a clear-cut example of an individual leader, whose 'heroic effort' of attacking the political status quo has earned him the nickname of 'Bolsomito', a combination of his last name and the Portuguese word for 'legend'. Also, the purported corruption of Brazilian political parties and institution was an instrumental part of Bolsonaro's campaign, as I will demonstrate later. Support through the unorganized masses is another element of Weyland's definition which is visible in Bolsonaro and his campaign. Lastly, Bolsonaro routinely identified factors such as the PT and its supporters, as well as the high crime rates in Brazil as threats to the nation's stability. Based on these similarities, I would argue that Bolsonaro is a populist according to Weyland's definition. Within the scope of this thesis, the anti-elitist element of Bolsonaro's identity as a populist is especially relevant, as it directly links with the theoretical background behind the third and fourth hypothesis I will formulate further on.

Daly (2018) further connects Bolsonaro's populist nature with his success in the 2018 election. According to Daly, Brazil endured over a decade of left-wing oriented governance, which in turn sparked 'wide right-wing populism, and an even wider disenchantment with the political system' (p. 2). According to Daly, this 'far-right backlash' then provided with the Bolsonaro with the perfect opportunity for his right-wing populism to flourish in terms of support (p. 3-4). Based on Weyland and Daly, I expect Bolsonaro's identity as a right-wing populist to have played a similar role in Bolsonaro's success as Operation Car Wash, being a background condition which has ties to every explanatory factor discussed in this thesis, and especially the factor of anti-party sentiments, for which I will formulate two different hypotheses.

Now that these background conditions have been discussed, it is time to look into the factors outlined in the introduction. First, I will discuss Bolsonaro's identification with Brazil's former military dictatorship and the sentiments this may have triggered among the Brazilian electorate.

**Pro-army sentiments**

Within this hypothesis, I will first Bolsonaro's personal affiliation with the armed forces on the supply side, before linking this to feelings of support for and trust in the armed forces on the demand side, the latter of which is the central element of this hypothesis. Starting with the supply side, it is useful to mention Bolsonaro's personal history. Bolsonaro joined an army prep school after graduating high school when he was 18 (Wallenfeldt, 2020). At the time (1973), Brazil was in the midst of a military dictatorship which was notorious for its violations of human rights. Bolsonaro would spend fifteen years in total as an army official, eventually reaching the rank of captain (Wallenfeldt, 2020).

Throughout his consequent political career, Bolsonaro remained an avid supporter of both the military dictatorship and the military itself. For instance, he was cited as favouring a return to the past over a continuation of a democratic regime he thought to be 'irresponsible', as well as mentioning the economic growth and military discipline as positive aspects (Brooke, 1993). Furthermore, he was quoted in 2008 saying that the dictatorship's main error was that it tortured, but did not kill (Bangkok Post, 2019). For the record, Brazil's National Truth Commission, which published a 2,000-page report on the human rights abuses during the Fifth Republic after over two years of investigation, found that 191 people were killed and 243 people disappeared during the regime as a direct result of political repression by the military (Watts, 2014). Around 10,000 people were forced into exile by the regime, while estimates of the amount of detainees during this time surpass 50,000 (Yale Review of International Studies, 2012).

Bolsonaro further claimed in 2018 that the military regime 'stopped Brazil from falling under the sway of the Soviet Union' (Reeves, 2018). In fact, during the election-filled autumn of the same year, Bolsonaro stated in an interview with O Globo that he intended to return Brazil to the way it was '40, 50 years ago' (O Globo, 2018). The most concrete example of what he meant by these words were his repeated calls for the closure of Congress, and his promise to 'start a dictatorship right away' if elected president (Winter, 2018).

The question now of course is whether this component of Bolsonaro's political identity has triggered sentiments among the Brazilian voters which made a vote for Bolsonaro more likely. I assume that Bolsonaro's support for the military regime can be linked with a nostalgically oriented pro-army sentiment within Brazilian society. A clear indication of this sentiments roots and effects can be witnessed in an anthropological study by Benjamin Junge (2019).

Junge followed the Pereira family, a typical example of Brazil's 'new middle class' situated in the major northeastern city of Recife, for periods of time throughout 2017 and 2018. During this time, the author witnessed notable examples of nostalgia towards the Fifth Republic, like the family's second-oldest son sending his mother a YouTube clip which praises the military for its achievements of the time, including the likes of infrastructure and economic prosperity (the 'Brazilian miracle') (p. 915). When

asked later about the clip, the man also mentioned modern-day violence and declining respect for elders and authority as reasons why he felt that things were better 'back then' (p. 921). Throughout this conversation between family members, Junge noted an overarching longing for the structure and hierarchy of the old days. As recalled by the matriarch of the Pereira family, the only one old enough to vividly remember the days of the Fifth Republic, the Morro Doce neighborhood of Recife (the family's home base) was 'much safer and quieter' than nowadays (p. 920). The Pereira's seemingly thought of politicians as opportunists or even thieves, while associating the military with positive issues like rights and security (p. 922).

Junge's first-hand account ties into a larger debate about the failure of transitional justice in post-dictatorship Brazil, and the resulting effects on the societal image of the era. The lengthy process of transitional justice, as evidenced by the Truth Commission being established 27 years after the regime came to an end, coupled with the government's recurring usage of military personnel for purposes like infrastructure projects and education, prevented the people from obtaining the full picture of the hardships suffered during the dictatorship (Mariano de Carvalho, 2018). An important factor in this process is the fact that the elderly who witnessed the dictatorship are still alive to tell of its accomplishments, while younger generations faced a combination of silence on the behalf of their peers, and a lack of institutionally produced factual knowledge about the negative aspects of the military dictatorship (Foggin, 2019). Moreover, the fact that the two Brazilian presidents (Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff) who did take action in providing documentation of the repression suffered by those who opposed the regime (like themselves) were convicted of corruption in the years leading up to the 2018 election, may have significantly discredited the Truth Commission's findings (ibid.).

Another piece of literature which corroborates the idea that nostalgic pro-army sentiments played a role in Bolsonaro's election was written by Leonie Schiedek (2019). She first argues why transitional justice can be considered to have failed in Brazil, as none of the four criteria for a successful process were met. The 1979 Amnesty Act prevented comprehensive reforms of political institutions (p. 80-81). The assertion of the right to truth and memory was impeded by the dictatorship's 'superficial democratic appearance' and its long and peaceful transition to democracy, leaving room for a narrative of a 'soft dictatorship' (p. 82). The Amnesty Act also effectively prevented any form of prosecution and sentencing of those guilty of violating human rights, for instance through torture (p. 83). Finally, the reparations towards victims of the regime's oppression were heavily criticized, both in terms of financial sums and restoration into formerly held positions (p. 84). Based on this critical assessment of Brazil's transitional justice process, Schiedek links these remnants of the past to Bolsonaro's rise to power. She mentions a 'significant majority of the society' taking notice of Bolsonaro's nostalgic glorification of the military dictatorship, as well as Bolsonaro using social media to tell his story of having served in the army during the regime (p. 86). The people of Brazil were certainly open to such nostalgic reminiscing, given Latinobaremetro's 2018 findings, which revealed that 40,5 percent of respondents did not care whether Brazil was democratic or not (p. 86). This leads Schiedek to conclude that 'Bolsonaro's election

in 2018 was favored by the failings in transitional justice after the military dictatorship' (p. 87).

I expect this failure of transitional justice to have led to the relatively positive view of the military and the military regime, identified by Junge. I would also argue that the tarnishing of the reputations of those Brazilian presidents that actually made an effort to see transitional justice established contributed to this failure. Based on the processes, I assume these pro-army sentiments to have been an important factor in Bolsonaro's electoral success. This leads me to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** The more an individual voter supports the armed forces, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro.

**Anti-democratic sentiments**

Next, it is time to discuss the factor of anti-democratic sentiments in Bolsonaro's electoral success. Like with the previous hypothesis, I expect anti-democratic elements of Bolsonaro's political identity on the supply side to have triggered similar sentiments among the Brazilian electorate on the demand side, which in turn made a vote for Bolsonaro more likely. Different statements and actions by Bolsonaro have led some authors, such as Daly (2019), to label him as being hostile to liberal democracy (p. 18). Bolsonaro's support for the military dictatorship and aversion to democracy became a prominent narrative in the presidential campaign on social media, as corroborated by Lima (2018). His analysis of tweets by the main parties and candidates in the run-up to the election revealed that Bolsonaro's Partido Social Liberal 'connects the candidate's image to the army', while the PT warned that Bolsonaro was a threat to democracy (p. 9). As for campaign speeches, the most striking example of Bolsonaro showing his anti-democratic ideas occurred when he addressed his followers in Sao Paulo in October 2018, announcing that PT adherents would all 'go to the beach', he would 'cut off all their luxuries', in a 'purge never seen in the history of Brazil' (Fuks & Tamaki, 2019, p. 12). The most interesting part of this threat is the beach reference, as this was the common place to take political prisoners for execution during the days of the military dictatorship (ibid.).

I expect Bolsonaro's somewhat anti-democratic identity to be connected with his support for the former autocratic military regime, as discussed in the previous hypothesis. The question now is whether similar sentiments among the Brazilian electorate could reasonably be expected to have contributed to Bolsonaro's election. Two different academic papers are relevant in this light, as they both look into the effect of regime type-based nostalgia on vote choice. Through a questionnaire in three different post-communist states (Russia, Belarus and Ukraine), Peter White (2010) examined nostalgic feelings towards the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and everything it stood for. He found that respondents who regretted the demise of the USSR were more likely than others to 'favor the restoration of a wholly Soviet system of government', to 'favor a Soviet-type economy', and to 'support the formation of a unitary state on the basis of the CIS member countries' (p. 8). Also, in terms of political identification and support, nostalgics were found to be 'much more likely to support parties of the left, or at least those that favored public ownership, a Soviet or 'more democratic Soviet' system of government, and a closer association among the former Soviet republics; they were much less likely to support the parties that favored a 'civilized divorce', a wholly market economy, or Western-style democracy' (p. 8).

Furthermore, WooJin Kang (2018) researched the effect of nostalgic feelings towards Park Chung Hee, South Korea's president from 1963 to 1979, on the support for his eldest daughter, Park Guen-hye, in the 2012 presidential election. Kang's findings give further credibility to the assumption that, as his article is titled, 'the past is long-lasting'. Through a similar approach as White, running a logistic regression on the

responses to a questionnaire, Kang found that 'the more favorable a citizen's view of PCH, the more likely that citizen was to support his daughter', as well as the fact that 'PCH nostalgia also exercised a significant influence over the conversion to PGH for citizens who previously favored other parties' (p. 242-243).

I assume the effect found by White to have worked in the same way in Brazil, with nostalgia towards the former regime shaping vote choice, although in a different political direction than in post-communist states (right- rather than left-wing). Also, I would argue that Kang's findings lend further credibility to this notion, as PCH's presidency is much more comparable to the Brazilian military dictatorship in terms of time frame than the Soviet Union. I expect these sentiments of nostalgia towards a former non-democratic regime to translate directly into an anti-democratic attitude. This leads me to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** The less an individual voter values democracy as a political regime, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro.

**Aversion against political corruption**

Next, it is time to focus on the factor of aversion against supposedly corrupt politicians. Like with the previous two hypotheses, I will first outline Bolsonaro's statements on the corruption within Brazilian politics in his campaign, before linking this element on the supply side to anti-corruption sentiments within the Brazilian electorate, as I expect these sentiments on the demand side to have ultimately contributed to Bolsonaro's electoral success. Starting with Bolsonaro's agitation against the supposed corruption, an academic research paper by Juliana Chueri (2018) looked into Bolsonaro's usage of Twitter between the fifth of May and the fifth of September of 2018, when his electoral campaign was in full swing. Chueri found a recurrence of digital attacks aimed at the political elite, which were laden with accusations of corruption and attribution of blame for the economic downturn. In fact, a significant part of his rhetoric in the run-up to the elections focused on anti-corruption and anti-PT discourse.

Winter (2018) notes the way in which Bolsonaro's campaign used the large-scale corruption towards his own benefit, by repeatedly pointing out that he was pretty much the only candidate to never be accused of financial malpractices. A supporter was quoted describing Bolsonaro as 'our only hope for clean government', while one of his aides was observed compiling a video wherein the campaign responded to comparisons with Hitler and Mussolini by stating: 'they call him everything but CORRUPT' (Fishman, 2018).

As for sentiments amongst the Brazilian electorate on the demand side, a certain feeling of antipathy toward the supposedly corrupt political elite in general and the Workers' Party in particular was sensible among the Brazilian people around the time of the election. One of the important findings by Hunter and Power (2019) corroborates this, as they discuss the Latinobarometro reports of 2017 and 2018, wherein support of the incumbent government was measured at just six percent (p. 8). Also, of the Latin American countries measured by Latinobarometro in terms of their satisfaction with the performance of democracy, Brazil was in last place for 2018 (ibid.). Furthermore, they mention *antipetismo*, the Portuguese term for aversion towards the Workers' Party, and directly link Operation Car Wash with anti-establishment and anti-PT sentiments (p. 7). Polling in the months leading up to the election showcased these effects, with support for PT candidate Fernando Haddad never reaching over 25%, thereby proving that PT support throughout the 2000's was more aimed at then-president Lula than at the party itself (Romero, 2018).

The dwindling support for the PT seems to have been symptomatic for the broader disillusion of average Brazilian with their political leaders and parties. As I mentioned earlier, the large-scale corruption laid bare by Operation Car Wash involved pretty much every major party in Brazil. As a result, establishment parties took the majority of the blame (Hunter & Power, 2019, p. 69). The PT was of course damaged by the

scandals concerning Lula and Rousseff; the centre-right was tainted by the failure of Rousseff's successor, the PSDB's Michel Temer, in fighting the economic downturn and the rising crime rates (ibid.). As a result, his approval ratings remained low, while parties that supported his cabinet were discredited as well (ibid.). The resulting erosion of both left and centre-right power blocs resulted in no less than thirty different political parties being elected to the Chamber of Deputies, which meant Brazil broke the world record it had set four years earlier for the most parties in the national cabinet (p. 79).

Now, it is useful to take a look at relevant academic articles on the possible effects of these sentiments on vote choice. The first article is a study by Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017). By examining the political system in Chile, 'in which the two primary political coalitions have growing difficulties maintaining their linkage with voters and restoring their credibility after massive corruption scandals', the authors intend to test their claim of a connection between anti-establishment political identities and populism (p. 2). Their results show that 'holding populist attitudes increases the odds of advancing an anti-establishment political identity', leading them to conclude that 'the larger the size of an anti-establishment identity, the easier it is for populist actors to obtain strong electoral results' (p. 10-12). The lack of populist success in Chile can therefore be explained by the relatively small scale of the anti-establishment identity among the Chilean electorate. Based on the findings by Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser, it makes sense to expect the clearly present anti-establishment sentiment among the Brazilian electorate to have contributed to the success of Bolsonaro, who is of course a populist.

Also, Slomczynski and Shabad (2010), in their analysis of Polish elections between 1988 and 2008, established that perceptions of corruption within political parties affect both the individual vote choice in general and the tendency to vote for one party over a specific competitor (p. 18). Moreover, the authors found that corruption perceptions impact the decision whether one will vote or not.

Two other academic articles stand out because their findings seem to corroborate the notion that anti-corruption sentiments were an important factor in the success of Bolsonaro's campaign. Klasnja and Tucker (2013) examined two different countries, being Sweden and Moldova, in order to establish how the impact of corruption on vote choice may differ in various political contexts. They concluded that corruption only had a strong effect on vote choice in Moldova during economically tough times; this finding may well explain how Brazil's political corruption had such a profound effect on the 2018 election, namely because it deeply affected great parts of the Brazilian economy, such as Petrobras (p. 541-542). Also, in another multi-country analysis, Ecker, Glinitzer and Meyer (2015) conclude that non-partisan voters in particular will be susceptible to corruption influencing their vote choice (p. 349). In a country where partisanship was on the decline, as evidenced by Lula being much more popular than Haddad in the run-up to the election, a great deal of voters may thus have been influenced by the corruption in their vote choice. Furthermore, the authors discover that the more salient the corruption practices are, the more likely they are to have an impact on vote choice; the large-scale attention for Operation Car Wash, as well as the size of the consequent protests, therefore paint a clear picture

of just how big the influence of the corruption issue on vote choice might have been in Brazil (ibid.).

Based on these articles, and especially the one by Klasnja & Tucker, I assume a moderation effect to have taken place. I expect that the relationship between political corruption and vote choice is moderated by an individual voter's experience of economic difficulties. In order to provide a conclusive result for this assumption, it has to be divided into three different sub-hypotheses. These are:

**Hypothesis 3a:** The more an individual voter perceives politicians to be corrupt, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro.

**Hypothesis 3b:** The more an individual voter has experienced economic difficulties, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro.

**Hypothesis 3c:** The effect of voter's perception of politicians being corrupt on that voter's likelihood to vote for Bolsonaro is moderated by that voter's experience of any economic difficulties.

Throughout the discussion of this hypothesis, anti-PT sentiments have also come to the fore. As I mentioned earlier, I expect these sentiments to be an expression of the larger anti-corruption element, and not a separate factor. However, I will control for the effect of any anti-PT sentiments in my eventual analyses, which I will explain further in the methodological chapter.

**Tougher punishments**

The fourth and final individual factor which I expect to have contributed to Bolsonaro's election is the high crime rate in Brazil in the years prior to the election. Seventeen of the world's fifty most violent of 2017 cities were situated in Brazil (Hunter & Power, 2019, p. 73). The density of crime in Brazil is further demonstrated by the 2017 murder rate of 30,8 per 100.000 citizens; this ranked Brazil among the world's least safe states, comparing unfavorably even to Mexico, a nearby state notorious for its drug wars (ibid.). Hunter & Power claim that this negative aspect within Brazilian society allowed Bolsonaro to gain support. His policy promises concerning crime seemed appealing especially to those who were both located in crime-ridden areas, like the larger cities, and were or felt financially unable to provide for their own safety (p. 74). The attraction of Bolsonaro's proposed measures was coupled with a 'widespread view that recent governments had failed to keep the public safe' (ibid.). This purported view was further demonstrated through PT presidential candidate Fernando Haddad's failure to gain the majority of the votes in all but two of Brazil's northeastern major cities, which endured record crime rates at the time (p. 79).

Bolsonaro himself made the fight against crime one of his main campaign issues. Having made a 'hard-line "eye for an eye" discourse', as well as the view that 'human rights must be subordinated to public safety' integral parts of his political identity ever since his entrance into politics, the public had no reason to question his commitment towards the measures he proposed in the run-up to the election (p. 73). In order to combat crime, Bolsonaro strongly supported the expansion of gun rights in Brazil: 'Every honest citizen, man or woman, if they want to have a weapon in their homes - depending on certain criteria - should be able to have one', he said in October 2018 on national television (BBC, 2018). Furthermore, he was quoted as in favor of a restoration of the death penalty, explaining via Twitter: 'We need to be really tough on crime to make criminals understand that they won't enjoy impunity' (BBC, 2018). Lastly, Bolsonaro proposed an expansion of the police's mandate in terms of their access to potentially lethal force; his campaign quote, 'a good criminal is a dead criminal', speaks volumes (Londono & Andreoni, 2018).

A further important factor in the support for Bolsonaro's attitude towards crime was the fact that he himself had to deal with the consequences of crime in Brazil. On the campaign trail in the state of Minas Gerais in September 2018, Bolsonaro was stabbed in the abdomen by a mentally unstable man who claimed to have been on a 'mission from God' (NBC, 2018). Several of Bolsonaro's internal organs were damaged; he suffered heavy blood loss and, according to his son, arrived at the hospital 'almost dead' (ibid.). Needless to say, as soon as he had recovered, Bolsonaro used this personal experience to the gain of his campaign. From his

hospital bed, he for instance tweeted 'While they insist on fallacies, labels and this fixation with the word 'dictatorship', more than 14 million people are unemployed, citizens are held hostage in their own homes, there are 60,000 homicides and 50,000 women are being raped each year', following an hour later with 'We want to rescue our long-lost values and get Brazil out of this swamp of violence and corruption they have put us in!' (Phillips, 2018). Brazil insiders opined that the attack was actually good news for Bolsonaro and his campaign: 'his loyal base of supporters hardened', while presidential rivals felt morally unable to execute their strategy of 'just destroying him' with negative attacks in the press (ibid.). From this, I would argue that the attack on Bolsonaro both benefited his campaign and provided him with concrete evidence that a tougher stance on crime was necessary.

Naturally, it would make sense for individual voters to cast their vote towards the candidate which seems to have their best interests at heart. As Bolsonaro's policy stances on crime were evidently popular among the electorate, I expect them to have contributed significantly to his eventual election. This leads me to the last hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4:** The more an individual voter agrees with Bolsonaro's tough proposed measures on crime, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro.

**Methodological chapter**

In this section, I will explain how I intend to test the hypotheses I have outlined in the theoretical framework. This will entail discussing the data, the method, and the variables I will use for the hypotheses. I will provide descriptive statistics for each variable included in the eventual statistical analysis, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of these parameters.

**Data**

I will use the LAPOP 2018/2019 dataset for my statistical analysis. Every two years, LAPOP measures public opinion within no less than 34 countries throughout the Americas, by having a representative sample of participants answer a questionnaire (1498 participants in Brazil's case). This questionnaire is based on a core document of questions asked in every country, and for each country, there are also some specific questions. As the interviewing in Brazil was conducted in early 2019, only a couple of months after Bolsonaro was elected, I think the data from the LAPOP questionnaire will provide an extensive and reliable picture of the attitudes of the Brazilian people towards the defining aspects of this thesis' theoretical framework.

A noteworthy detail of the LAPOP dataset for Brazil is the fact that it is weighted. Weighting entails the practice of valuing the responses of groups of respondents that are underrepresented in the dataset in terms of some of their characteristics more than the responses of those groups of respondents which are fittingly represented or even overrepresented, in order to achieve as much representativity as possible. Various reasons may cause weighting to be necessary, such as non-response (a certain group is excluded due to the way the responses are collected, i.e. people without a telephone connection are excluded from an opinion poll over the phone) or self-selection (people who are interested in a certain question or questionnaire are more likely to be drawn to it, i.e. those who have strong opinions on a sensitive issue like abortion are more likely to fill in a questionnaire on the topic), which is especially common in online surveys. For the LAPOP dataset on Brazil, neither pf these two issues would appear to have been at play, based on the technical information provided by LAPOP itself. In fact, the sample seems to have been constructed with a maximization of representativity at heart, as respondents were drafted from different parts of the country, encompassing both rural and urban areas; only voting age civilians were eligible; and the interviewers did not allow more than one person from the same household to participate (LAPOP, 2019, p. 2). As such, the weighting was only applied in order to improve the reliability and representativity of Brazil data to be used in cross-country comparisons. Given the fact that my analysis only focuses on one country, being Brazil, and

because SPSS (in contrast to for instance STATA) automatically applies the weighting command to any analysis conducted on the data, I do not expect any validity issues to arise from this practice.

**Method**

In order to statistically test my hypotheses, I will use the 26th version of SPSS, a data analysis tool which enables me to test for the effects of my independent variables on the dependent variable of vote choice. As I assume that the third factor, concerning aversion against corrupt politicians, is part of a moderation effect, it is necessary to develop two separate model, one unconditional and one conditional. Both models will include the first, second, and fourth hypothesis, as well as the control variables which I will mention further on in this chapter. The difference between these models will be that in the unconditional model, hypotheses 3a and 3b will be tested, while the conditional model will only focus on hypothesis 3c. For both models, I will be conducting multivariate logistic regressions, based on the fact that my dependent variable has been transformed into a binary dummy, which I will explain later.

As I will use multivariate logistic regressions to test my hypotheses, it is of the utmost importance that the four assumptions connected to this statistical approach are fulfilled. For logistic regression to function properly, the model needs an appropriate outcome structure, observation independence, an absence of multicollinearity, and a large sample size (Schreiber-Gregory, 2018, p. 4).

Since the vote choice variable has been recoded into a dummy, it is now a binary dependent variable, which means that the dependent variable in my models only has two possible outcomes (being 'did not vote for Bolsonaro' and 'voted for Bolsonaro'). Therefore, the assumption of appropriate outcome structure has been met. Judging by the technical information on the Brazil data, which I mentioned earlier when discussing the sample weighting, I would also argue that the observations in the dataset are independent from one another. I would like to specifically point out the fact that only respondent from the same household was allowed to participate, as I feel this was an especially wise move by those responsible for the way the sample was constructed. Thus, based on these elements of the sample design, I would argue that the assumption of observation independence has also been met for this analysis.

As for the absence of multicollinearity, the specific design of my second, conditional model may lead to a problematic situation, as variables constructed specifically in order to measure a moderation effect is very likely to cause multicollinearity issues. This tends to occur for a rather simple reason: since the model includes a variable which is composed of the multiplication of every respondent's score on two other variables also included in the model, it makes a lot of sense for SPSS to suspect multicollinearity of playing an interfering role. I have therefore conducted tests on the independent variables before conducting both

multivariate logistic regressions. These tests actually showed that multicollinearity was well below the level where it would make the results from the regression unreliable. As the graphs show, the VIF scores for all independent variables were all below 10. Despite the three variables connected to my moderation hypothesis all showing significantly higher VIF scores than the other variables in Figure 1, I would still argue that the fact that none of these scores exceeded the threshold implicates that there is no reason to exclude any of them from the eventual analyses due to multicollinearity issues. This leads me to conclude that both my models meet the assumption of the absence of multicollinearity.

**Figure 1: Multicollinearity statistics for every independent and control variable.**

| Model | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | Trust in the Armed Forces | ,834 | 1,199 |
| | Democracy is better than any other form of government | ,913 | 1,096 |
| | Trust in the National Congress | ,197 | 5,071 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development | ,246 | 4,061 |
| | Interaction H3 | ,119 | 8,412 |
| | Capital Punishment Dummy | ,971 | 1,030 |
| | Age | ,763 | 1,311 |
| | Years of education completed | ,670 | 1,493 |
| | Gender Dummy | ,936 | 1,069 |
| | Income Category | ,790 | 1,266 |
| | Religion | ,956 | 1,046 |
| | Pro-PT Dummy | ,972 | 1,029 |

Lastly, for the sample size, Schreiber-Gregory uses the general guideline that at least 10 cases with the least frequent outcome for every variable need to be present in the dataset (p. 4). Since the dependent variable was a binary dummy, it did not come close to violating this assumption whatsoever, which becomes even clearer from Figure 3 further on in this chapter. The assumption can also be upheld for every regular independent variable: the lowest frequency of a single score belonging to one of these five independent variables originated from variable ING4, which was used to measure the effect of anti-democratic sentiments. In total, 55 respondents ranked their agreement with the statement 'democracy is better than any other form of government' with a score of 2 on the question's seven-point scale. Because the interaction variable B13IDIO2 was computed by multiplying each respondent's score for variable B13 with their score for variable IDIO2, this was the independent variable with the largest amount of possible scores, being 15. Nevertheless, the least frequent outcome, being a score of 18, was still measured 32 times, which is well below the threshold of 10. Thus, the independent variables did not violate the fourth assumption of multivariate logistic regression. Three control variables, however, did: the dataset only included 9 respondents who completed precisely 12 years of education, as well

as just 3 respondents who indicated that their religious beliefs fit into the category of 'Non-Christian Eastern Religions'. Moreover, each separate age past 70 years old was represented less than 10 times in the sample, with a total of 19 different scores belonging to that category. However, I do not expect problems such as bias or skewed results to occur from this slight violation, for two different reasons. First, since my models consisted of a rather large *N*, being 1235 respondents, as can be witnessed from Figure 2 below, I would argue that the sample size is sufficient. Secondly, since the assumption was only violated by control variables whose effects are logically not directly of interest to me, the impact of this violation on the inferences I intend to make based on my results is acceptable.

**Variables**

In this section of my methodological chapter, I will discuss the important elements of the different variables I will use in my models, be it dependent, independent or control. For each variable, I will provide a short analysis on the frequencies of each possible score, in order to give the reader an insight into the prevalent stances among the respondents on certain issues relevant to my hypotheses. I have decided to showcase these frequencies through different types of graphs, such as pie charts and bar charts, in order to make them more appealing to the reader. For each variable, I have also included statistics on the amount of missing values. Even though the *N*, or total amount of respondents included in the sample, was well above the point where it could become problematic, I figured I would still include this information on missing values in order to clarify that the cases missing from the models were distributed rather evenly over the different variables. Lastly, as a typical frequency table does not include the mean score of a variable, I included the figure below, which also encompasses each variable's range and standard deviation.

**Figure 2: Descriptive statistics of all variables included in the models.**

| | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vote Choice Dummy | 1425 | 1 | 0 | 1 | ,39 |
| Trust in the Armed Forces | 1476 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 5,15 |
| Democracy is better than any other form of government | 1471 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 4,84 |
| Trust in the National Congress | 1461 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3,39 |
| Perception of personal economic situation development | 1494 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2,04 |
| Capital Punishment Dummy | 1446 | 1 | 0 | 1 | ,52 |
| Age | 1498 | 76 | 16 | 92 | 39,15 |
| Years of education completed | 1479 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 8,93 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Dummy | 1498 | 1 | 0 | 1 | ,50 |
| Income Category | 1405 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1,95 |
| Religion | 1482 | 1500 | 1 | 1501 | 40,72 |
| Pro-PT Dummy | 1498 | 1 | 0 | 1 | ,08 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 1235 | | | | |

**Dependent variable**

For the dependent variable, I will use the question from the LAPOP questionnaire coded as VB3N (p. 16). The answering categories for this question are the names of the most prominent candidates in the 2018 election, meaning it is measured at the nominal level. However, by re-coding this question, equaling the answer 'Jair Bolsonaro' to a score of 1 and all other answers to a score of 0, it is possible turn this question into a dummy variable. That way, it should be possible to measure the effect of the five hypothesized factors on the likelihood that an individual respondent would vote for Bolsonaro, all else equal. As I expect the effect of corrupt politicians to also have enticed some voters to either cast a blank vote blank or cancel their vote altogether, the coefficients regarding the effects of this factor on the likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro may become skewed. Therefore, I have decided to register these responses in the same manner as do not know / no answer / did not vote responses, labeling them as system-missing. That way, the risk of finding skewed results for this factor is reduced significantly.

Since the question I intend to use specifically focuses on vote choice in the first round of the 2018 presidential elections, my results may slightly differ from what they would be if vote choice in the second round was measured. In Brazil's electoral system, all presidential candidates are eligible in the first round, while the second round only consists of the two most elected parties and candidates from the first round (Toda Política, 2018). Because of this institutional design, I expect a vote for Bolsonaro in the first round to be more indicative of a voter's full support of Bolsonaro than a vote in the second round, as it shows that the voter in question thinks Bolsonaro is the most adequate option out of all presidential candidates, rather than a better option than the PT's candidate Fernando Haddad, who opposed Bolsonaro in the second round. Therefore, I expect my results for the first, second and fourth hypothesis to be suitably representative, as these hypotheses focus on aspects specifically associated with Bolsonaro personally, being his affiliation with Brazil's past of military dictatorship and his tough stances on criminality.

For the third hypothesis, I expect the results to be somewhat less pronounced, as an individual voter's aversion against the allegedly corrupt politicians is likely to have played a larger impact on vote choice in the second than in the first round. I expect this because in the second round, Bolsonaro was pitted directly against the PT's candidate, who may have invoked the anti-elitist and anti-party sentiments in some voters; as discussed in the theoretical chapter, the PT was the political actor that was associated with and blamed for the uncovered political corruption the most. Thus, I expect to find stronger results for the

first, second, and fourth hypothesis, while the results for the third hypothesis may be somewhat less pronounced.

As shown in Figure 4, 73 out of the 1498 participants in the questionnaire gave a response which was labeled as 'missing'. As some of these missing values represent a blank or canceled vote, due to the way this dummy variable was coded, I do not expect this amount of missing values to be troubling. Figure 3 further shows that merely 38,6% of the respondents in this sample voted for Bolsonaro during the first round of elections, compared to 46% in the actual nation-wide first round of the elections. This negative difference of almost 10 percentage points may prove to be problematic, as it could indicate that the LAPOP sample does not adequately represent the portion of the Brazilian electorate that supported Bolsonaro in the first round of the elections.

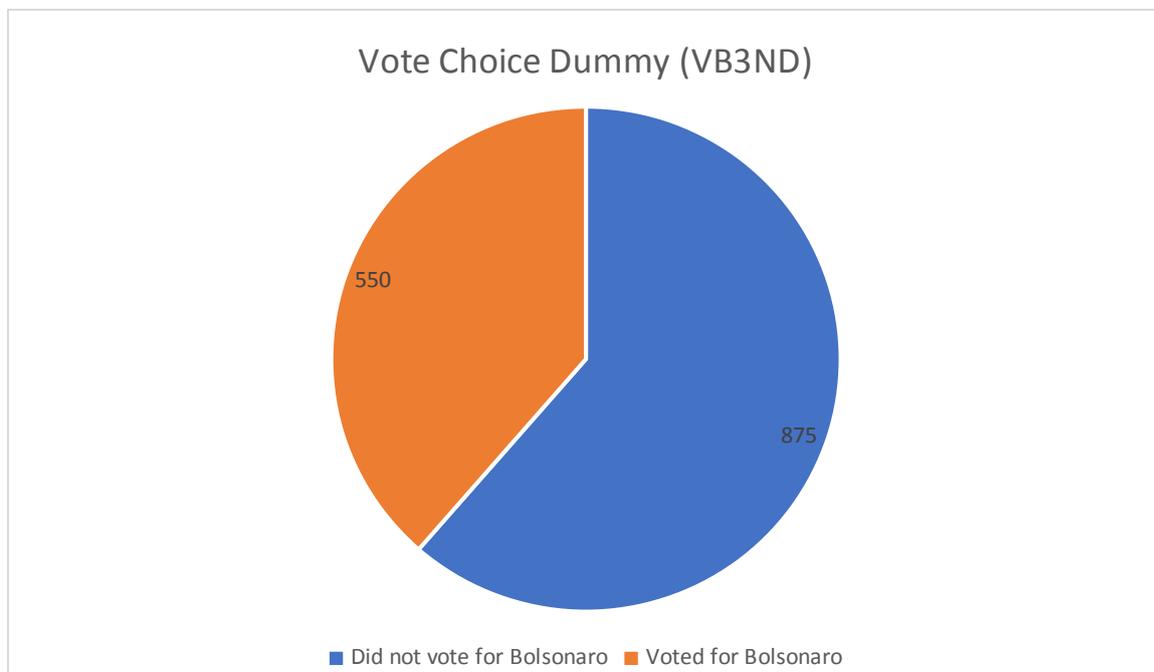**Figure 3: Dependent variable frequencies.**



**Figure 4: Dependent variable descriptive statistics.**

**Statistics**

Vote Choice Dummy

| N | Valid | 1425 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 73 |
| Mode | | 0 |
| Range | | 1 |
| Minimum | | 0 |
| Maximum | | 1 |

**Pro-army sentiments**

For the first hypothesis, a question regarding an individual respondent's nostalgia towards the military dictatorship would be most fitting. However, the LAPOP questionnaire unfortunately does not contain such a perfectly suited question. Instead, I assume that nostalgia towards the military dictatorship translates into a general trust in the armed forces, which is why I have chosen to use question B12 (p. 8). As witnessed in the theoretical chapter, the nostalgia within Brazilian society seems to be closely linked with the current image of the armed forces. Criminal acts committed by the military during the time of the regime were swept under a carpet of legal immunity, while the military itself built a reputation as a helpful friend to the population, through their contribution to infrastructure projects for instance. Therefore, I expect that nostalgic voters are more likely to support the armed forces, as a lack of awareness of the negative aspects of the military dictatorship has prevented the army's reputation from being tarnished accordingly. For this reason, I would argue that B12 is the most suitable question to measure the level of nostalgic deprivation in an individual respondent.

The responses to the question I used were measured on a seven-point scale, and therefore on a quasi-continuous level. A score of 1 indicates that an individual respondent trusts the armed forces 'not at all', while a score of 7 indicates that the respondent trusts the armed forces 'a lot' (p. 8). I therefore expect that the higher an individual respondent rates his or her trust in the armed forces, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro.

The data from Figure 5 below show that trust in the armed forces seems to be rather high among the participants in the LAPOP sample, given the fact that there are more respondents who rate their trust to be 'high' than respondents who either rate it from 4 to 2 and even 'not at all'. This generally positive perception of the army is further reflected in Figure 1, which shows a mean score of 5,15 for this variable. The data thus reinforces my theoretical assumption that pro-army respondents were widespread among Brazilian voters at the time of the 2018 elections.
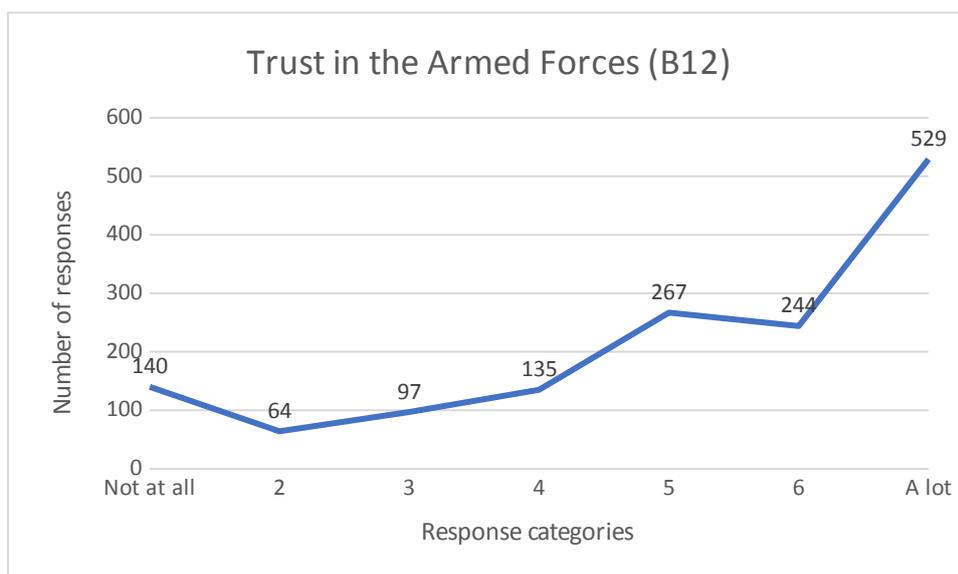
**Figure 5: Independent variables H1 frequencies.**

**Figure 6: Independent variable H1 descriptive statistics.**

### Statistics

Trust in the Armed Forces

| N | Valid | 1476 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 22 |
| Mode | | 7 |
| Range | | 6 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 7 |

## Anti-democratic sentiments

In order to test the second hypothesis, regarding Bolsonaro's image and self-portrayal as an anti-democratic candidate supporting the former military regime, a question into an individual respondent's view of this regime would be most fitting. However, since there is no such question in the LAPOP database, I have instead decided to use question ING4 (LAPOP, 2019, p. 10), which delves into respondents' views on the current political system in Brazil, being democracy. I expect voters who were positively attracted to Bolsonaro's anti-democratic identity and support for the military regime to resonate with his aforementioned statements on these subjects, praising the regime's accomplishments and favoring it over the current democratic system. From this agreement with Bolsonaro's statements, I further assume that this group of voters would then therefore be more likely to disagree with the statement in ING4 that democracy is better than any other form of government, as they hold the autocracy associated with the military regime in equal, if not higher regard. Therefore, I believe ING4 is the question best suited to this hypothesis.

Respondents are asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the statement that democracy is better than any other form of government on a seven-point scale, wherein a score of 1 indicates strong disagreement, while a score of 7 indicates strong agreement with the statement. Going back to the hypothesis, I expect that the lower an individual respondent rates his or her agreement with the statement, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro.

Unlike with the first hypothesis, the descriptive statistics displayed in Figure 7 below do not seem to corroborate the theoretical framework. Looking at the frequencies, anti-democratic sentiments among the participants in the sample do not appear to be as prevalent as expected. The average score of 4,84 further indicates that most respondents actually hold democracy in a rather high regard, contrary to the assumption on which the hypothesis is based. This may therefore also indicate that anti-democratic sentiments did not play as large of a role in Bolsonaro's electoral success as hypothesized, because these sentiments were not as present in Brazilian society as previously expected. Ultimately, however, only the results from the analysis can provide a definitive answer.
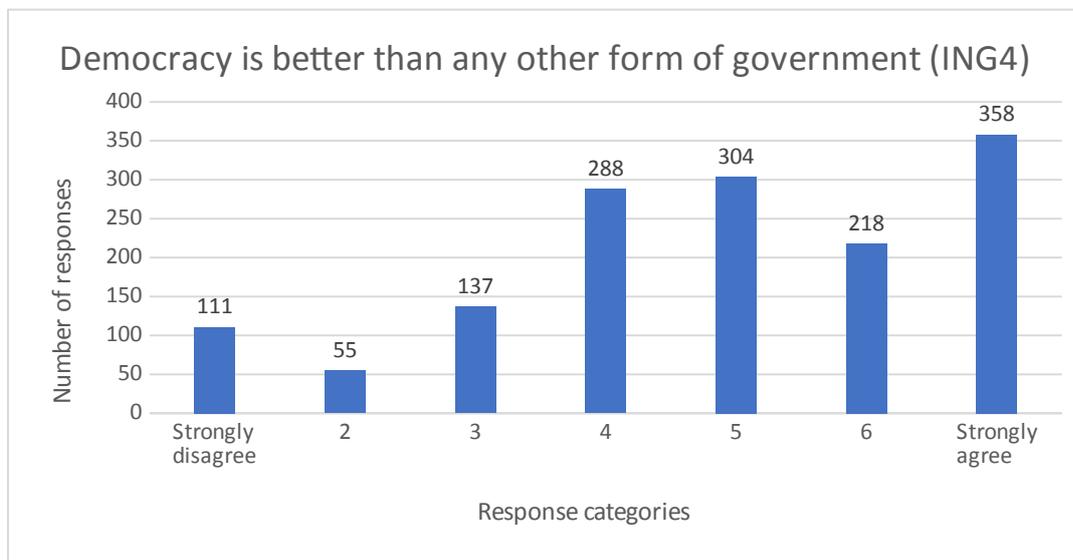
**Figure 7: Independent variable H2 frequencies.**



**Figure 8: Independent variable H2 descriptive statistics.**

Democracy is better than any other form of government

| N | Valid | 1471 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 27 |
| Mode | | 7 |
| Range | | 6 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 7 |

**Aversion against political corruption**

For the third hypothesis, concerning the moderation effect between voters' perception of politicians being corrupt, economic difficulties, and vote choice, three different variables need to be constructed, which also requires three different questions to be used. For voters'

perception of politicians being corrupt, I first intended to use EXC7NEW (p. 14). This question was measured on a five-point scale, where respondents could rank their perception of the amount of Brazilian politicians involved in corruption from 'None' (1) to 'All' (5). However, due to reasons unknown to the author, over half of the responses to this question were labelled as 'missing'. Thus, including this variable in my models would decrease the study's *N* to a mere 583 respondents. Due to the severe representativity and generalizability issues the inclusion of variable EXC7NEW would surely cause, I had no choice but to choose another question from the dataset. A very similar question, which looked into respondents' assessment of the level of corruption among public officials and was asked right before EXC7NEW (it was typically coded EXC7 as well) showed similar issues concerning a large amount of missing values, therefore this almost identical question could not be included in the analyses either.

Through a quick evaluation of the other corruption-related questions in the LAPOP questionnaire, I was able to come up with two more question which might be used to measure the effect of aversion against political corruption on vote choice: B13 and B21 (p. 8). Neither of these questions had anywhere near the amount of missing values encountered in question EXC7 and EXC7NEW, which meant that I had to choose between a question measuring an individual respondent's trust in the national congress (B13), and trust in the Brazilian political parties (B21), respectively. As previously discussed in the theoretical chapter, feelings of dissatisfaction with Brazilian politics in general were closely related to feelings of aversion against corruption within politics in particular. Based on these findings, I would argue that a question into an individual respondent's trust in key elements of Brazilian politics is the most fitting substitute for question EXC7NEW. As for the eventual consideration between B13 and B21, I decided that B13 would be most capable of providing information on the Brazilian electorate's level of trust in politics in general. As politics in Brazil are more candidate- than party-oriented, evidenced by Bolsonaro's PSL being transformed from a party in the margin to the party that supplied the new president within the timeframe of a single presidential election, I would argue that trust in political parties will not be a direct reflection of trust in politics as a whole. The previous discussion of Operation Car Wash contributes another reason to choose B13 over B21; as every major political party in Brazil was involved in the corruption scandal, respondents are likely to therefore have very little trust in the parties themselves. The Congress, however, is a different story; the majority of the politicians in Congress were not involved in Operation Car Wash, leading me to believe that B13 is more likely to entice an individual respondent to take the full picture of Brazilian politics into account in their response than B21. Lastly, since Bolsonaro himself was a member of Congress at the time, but was not affiliated with a major party (as the PSL's role was relatively marginal prior to the elections), I would argue that B13 can more adequately take his campaign and popularity into account than B21. Based on hypothesis 3a, I expect that the lower a respondent rates their trust in the national Congress, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro.

As for the element of economic difficulties, I will use question IDIO2 (p. 2). Respondents were asked to answer this question by rating their current economic situation as being 'Better', 'Same', or 'Worse' than 12 months ago. These answers were then numerically coded from 1 ('Better') to 3 ('Worse'), making it a categorical variable. In order to establish potential differences between respondents who for instance stated they were better off, and respondents who felt they were worse off, I treated IDIO2 as a categorical variable in both

my models, with the 'Better' response being used as the reference category. Following hypothesis 3b, I expect that the higher a respondent scores on this question, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro.

In order to properly test the hypothesized moderation effect in the second model, I initially intended to transform these variables into centered variables. This entails revaluing the responses to the questions used for the original variable by subtracting the initial score for each respondent from the respective variable's mean. This practice is designed both to make measuring the presence and size of a moderation effect possible, and prevent any multicollinearity issues resulting from the measuring of said effect. However, since IDIO2 had only three separate responses, while B13 was measured on a five-point scale, multicollinearity issues were less likely to arise than I initially assumed. Based on the multicollinearity statistics showcased in Figure 1 above, I decided against centering the original variables, as I deemed it to be unnecessary. As I expected a lower score for B13, but a higher score for IDIO2 to increase the likelihood of an individual respondent voting for Bolsonaro, I had to transform variable IDIO2 to make the results of an interaction variable understandable in terms of what the beta coefficient could potentially indicate about the direction and size of a possible effect. By recoding a score of 1 into a score of 3 and vice versa, the direction of the new variable I constructed was similar with variable B13, and both variables were assumed to have a negative relation with the binary dummy I used for my dependent variable. Thus, I was able to construct a variable aimed at measuring the size of the hypothesized moderation effect by multiplying respondents' scores for variable B13 with their scores for the new variable, which I labelled IDIO2D: the interaction variable was labelled B13IDIO2D. Based on hypothesis 3c, I expect that the lower a respondent scores on variable B13IDIO2D, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro.

The descriptive statistics for variable B13, displayed in Figure 9 below, seem to corroborate my theoretical assumption that aversion against corrupt politicians was relatively high in Brazil at the time of the 2018 presidential elections. Looking at the level of trust the respondents from the LAPOP sample had in their national Congress, there is reason to believe that the general aversion against corruption severely and negatively impacted the way common Brazilian viewed the Congress. The fact that the response category indicating a respondent' level of trust to be 'Not at all' is by far the most frequently chosen, shows that trust in the Congress was very low at the time. This notion is further supported by the mean score of 3,39 displayed in Figure 2, in a variable whose numerical scores ranged from 1 to. Thus, assuming that aversion against corruption and (lack of) trust in the national Congress are closely related, the descriptive statistics of variable B13 are consistent with the expectations outlined on this factor in the theoretical chapter.

As for variable IDIO2, Figure 11 does not seem to indicate mostly negative or positive developments of respondents' personal economic situations in general. The frequencies for each score instead show a rather evenly divided experience of economic downturns on the one hand, and economic growth on the other. With the response category 'Same' being by far the most chosen option, it would seem that economic hardships and difficulties were not highly common among the Brazilian people; the mean score for this variable of 2,04, found in Figure 2, further supports this notion. Therefore, the descriptive statistics for variable B13 slightly contradict my assumptions as discussed in the theoretical chapter, although the data

does not indicate that there was no matter of economic hardships among the Brazilian people at the time of the elections whatsoever.

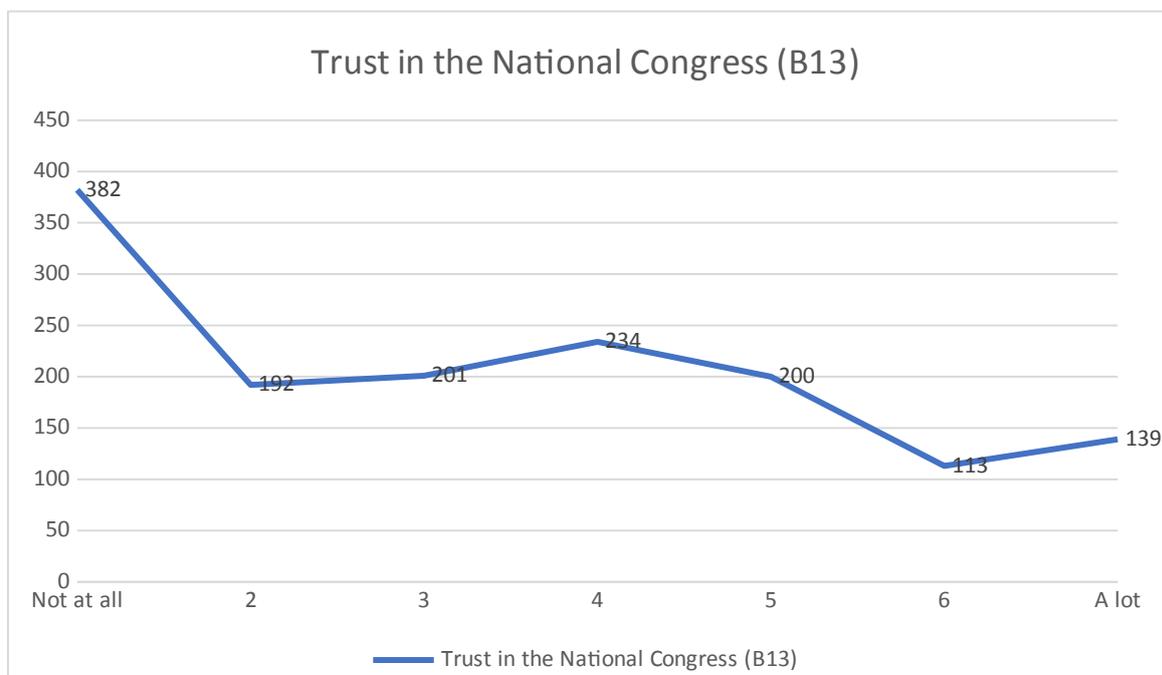**Figure 9: Independent variable H3a frequencies.**



**Figure 10: Independent variable H3a descriptive statistics.**

### Statistics

Trust in the National Congress

| N | Valid | 1461 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 37 |
| Mode | | 1 |
| Range | | 6 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 7 |

**Figure 11: Independent variable H3b frequencies.**



Perception of personal economic situation development (IDIO2)

(Horizontal bar chart — Response categories vs Number of responses)
- Better: 387
- Same: 657
- Worse: 450

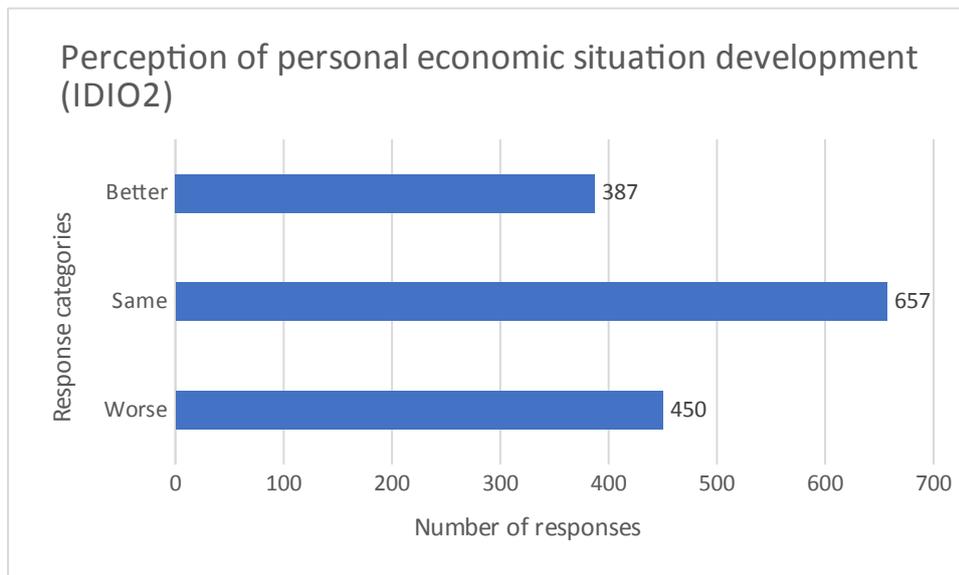**Figure 12: Independent variable H3b descriptive statistics.**

Perception of personal economic situation development

| N | Valid | 1494 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 4 |
| Mode | | 2 |
| Range | | 2 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 3 |

**Tougher punishments**

As for the final hypothesis, the one about crime, I have decided to use CAPITAL1 (p. 5). Unfortunately, a question from the core questionnaire directly aimed at respondents' attitudes towards stronger punishment of criminals was not asked in Brazil. Instead, I have attempted to find a question which was closely related to Bolsonaro's stances on crime. The tough measures he proposed in order to combat crime included the usage of the death penalty. As the death penalty is an important element of Bolsonaro's approach to crime, and is also a typical element of right-wing populism, I feel that CAPITAL1 is the most suitable option for measuring an individual respondent's level of agreement with Bolsonaro's proposed measures on crime.

CAPITAL1 has been transformed into a dummy variable, where a score of 0 indicates that a respondent is against the death penalty for those guilty of murder, while a score of 1 indicates that a respondent is in favor. This way, it is possible to directly test the impact of an individual respondent's stance on the death penalty on that respondent's vote choice. Based on the original hypothesis, I expect that those in favor of the death penalty are more likely to vote for Bolsonaro than those who are against.

The descriptive statistics for this dummy variable, as shown in Figure 13 below, do not seem to indicate a general agreement or disagreement with Bolsonaro's stances on crime among the participants in the LAPOP sample. The circle graph indeed indicates that the respondents in the sample are split roughly evenly in terms of their stances on the death penalty. The average score of 0,52 in Figure 2 seems to confirm this: just over half of the respondents agrees with the death penalty, while slightly less than half of them disagrees.
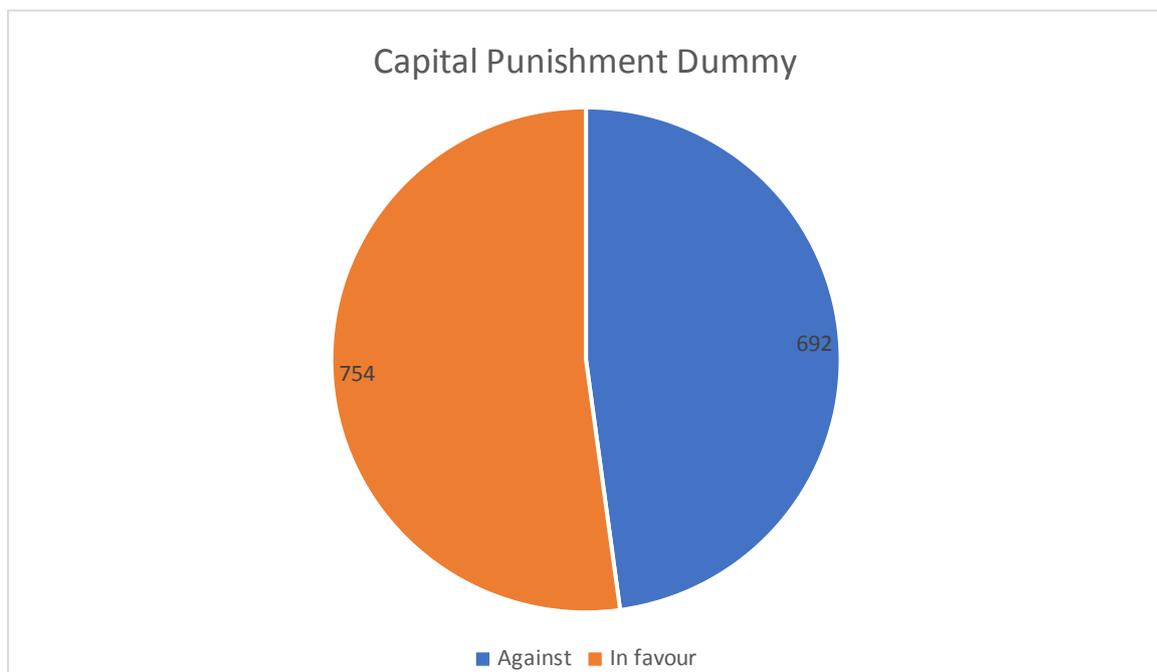
**Figure 13: Independent variable H4 frequencies.**

## Capital Punishment Dummy



- ■ Against  ■ In favour

692

754

**Figure 14: Independent variable H4 descriptive statistics.**

Capital Punishment Dummy

| N | Valid | 1446 |
|---|---|---|
|  | Missing | 52 |
| Mode |  | 1 |
| Range |  | 1 |
| Minimum |  | 0 |
| Maximum |  | 1 |

**Control variables**

In the theoretical chapter, I mentioned the important notion that the results and conclusions from this thesis should be viewed in light of the notion of *ceteris paribus*. This means that any significant causal effects I may find in the process of my research only work in their respective ways when all other factors remain the same. In order to properly test the hypothetical framework, it is therefore necessary to control for the effects of any interfering factors. That way, the situation where I conclude that either or both of the hypothesized factors played a significant role in Bolsonaro's election, while the effect that I found was actually partially caused by another variable, can be prevented. To this end, I will control for the effects of a respondent's age, education, gender, income, and religiosity. I will do so by including the respondent's answers to questions Q2 (p. 2), ED (p. 20), Q1 (p. 2), Q10NEW (p. 22), and Q3CN (p. 20) in each individual logistic regression that I will carry out.

I have chosen to control for the effect of these variables based on other articles on the factors that possibly influence vote choice towards populist parties and politicians (Gest, Reny & Mayer, 2017; Meléndez & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Rooduijn, 2018). In these articles, the variables whose effects I have decided to control are present as potentially interfering demographic factors. I feel that these five specific characteristics are the most defining factors of an individual's identity, thereby making it likely that they also play a role in that individual's vote choice, which makes it all the more important that their influence is controlled for in a study into vote choice.

For age, I have not altered the original variable in any way, meaning it simply states the respondent's answer to being asked how old they are. For gender, I have constructed a dummy variable with women being the reference category, making it possible for me to establish how much more likely (or so I expect) men were to vote for Bolsonaro in comparison to women. For income, I have transformed the original variable into one which categorizes respondent's income as 'lower', 'average', or 'higher'. A monthly household income up to 1000 real was classified as lower, an income between 1001 and 2000 real as average, and an income over 2000 real as higher. These categories and their ranges were created as such in order to have each category cover roughly a third of the respondents. For both religiosity and education, I have not altered the original variables. These questions

enabled respondents to classify their religious beliefs as most fitting to one of the nine different categories displayed in Figure 23, and rate their level of education by indicating the number of years of education they completed, respectively.

Lastly, there is another control variable specifically tied to one of the hypotheses. As mentioned when discussing the element of aversion against supposedly corrupt politicians central to the third hypothesis, some authors expect this sentiment to be aimed directly against the PT. As is visible from the eventual hypothesis, I expect there to be only a general dissatisfaction with politicians in general, and not with the PT in particular. However, the *antipetismo* element still needs to be controlled for, so as to make sure that any impact of this element on vote choice is not confused with the impact of aversion against supposedly corrupt politicians on vote choice. To this purpose, I will use question VB11 (p. 16), which I have transformed into a dummy variable, wherein a score of 1 indicates a respondent identifying with the PT, while any other answers are scored as 0. I have decided to use specifically this question because it is the only one in the questionnaire directly aimed at party identification. While it does not allow me to measure *antipetismo*, or anti-PT sentiments, it is possible to measure pro-PT sentiments through it. The fact that my dependent variable measures vote choice in the first round of the 2018 presidential election leads me to expect that the results for this control variable will be somewhat understated, as the dichotomous competition between the PT and Bolsonaro was only really present in the second round of elections.

Based on the descriptive figures, each regular control variable seems to indicate that the LAPOP sample is roughly representative of the Brazilian population at large. Figure 2 shows that the average age of the respondents is 39,15. In terms of education, the frequencies for each value, representing the years of education an individual respondent completed, show results similar to what may be expected of a relatively developed country like Brazil, with the average participant in the sample completing 8,93 years. The sample also seems to represent the genders almost equally, with female participants outnumbering their male counterparts by 2. The income variable shows a very equal division of respondent across categories, which is to be expected: as I mentioned earlier, the boundaries for each category were created based on the cumulative percentages of the original variable's frequencies. The descriptive statistics for the religion variables also do not indicate that the sample is not representative of the Brazilian electorate. However, the dummy variable measuring pro-PT sentiments may provide some problems in terms of validity and generalizability, as only 8,4% of the respondents in the sample indicated that they identified with the PT. Compared to the PT's vote share of 29,28% in the first round of the elections, the sample seems to understate the amount of support for the PT present in the Brazilian electorate of 2018. However, since a vote for a certain party certainly does not automatically translate into identifying with that same party, it remains to be seen whether this variable will negatively affect the validity and generalizability of my findings.
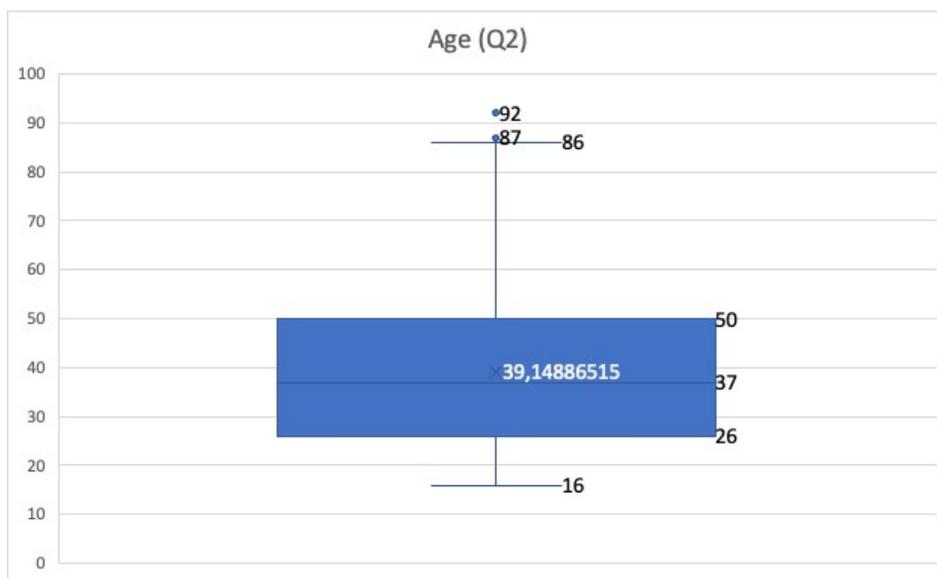
**Figure 15: Control variable 'age' frequencies.**



**Figure 16: Control variable 'age' descriptive statistics.**

**Statistics**

Age

| N | Valid | 1498 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 0 |
| Mean | | 39,15 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Median | 37,00 |
| Std. Deviation | 16,249 |
| Range | 76 |
| Minimum | 16 |
| Maximum | 92 |

**Figure 17: Control variable 'education' frequencies.**
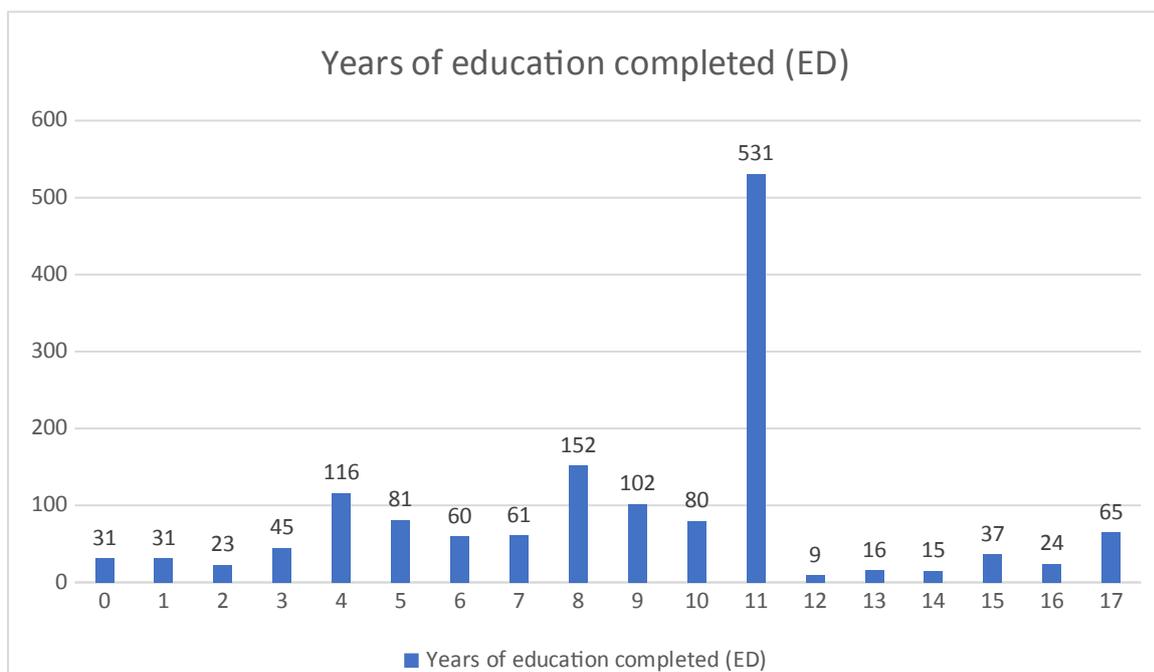


**Figure 18: Control variable 'education' descriptive statistics.**

**Statistics**

Years of education completed

| N | Valid | 1479 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 19 |
| Mode | | 11 |
| Range | | 17 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Minimum | 0 |
| Maximum | 17 |

**Figure 19: Control variable 'gender' frequencies.**
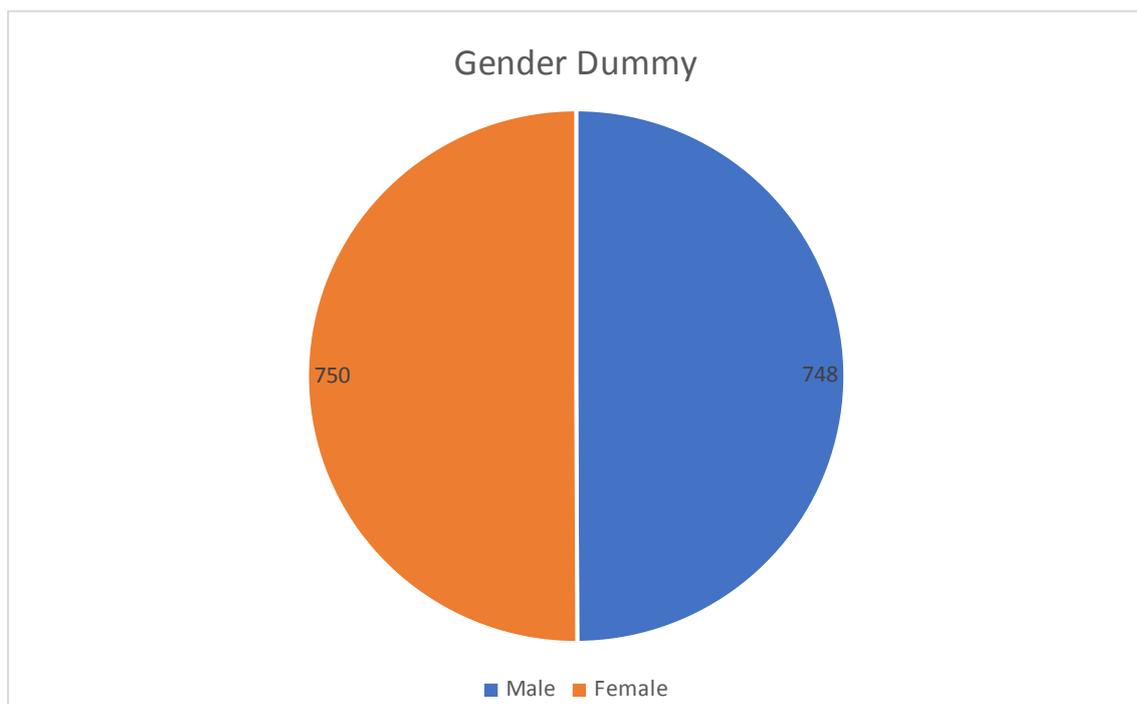


**Figure 20: Control variable 'gender' descriptive statistics**

Gender Dummy

| N | Valid | 1498 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 0 |
| Mode | | 0 |
| Range | | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Minimum | 0 |
| Maximum | 1 |

**Figure 21: Control variable 'income' frequencies.**
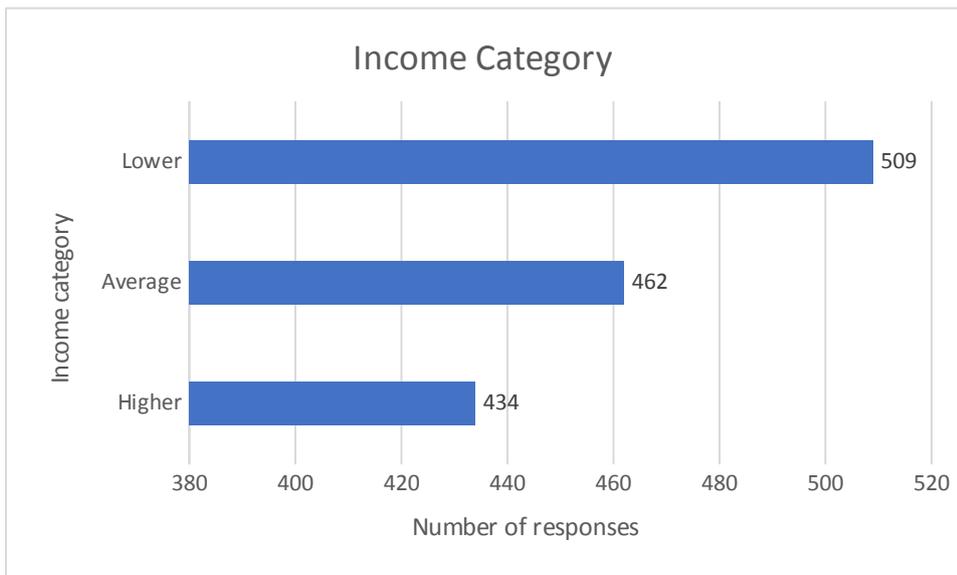


**Figure 22: Control variable 'income' descriptive statistics.**

Income Dummy

| N | Valid | 1405 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 93 |
| Mode | | 1 |
| Range | | 2 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 3 |

**Figure 23: Control variable 'religion' frequencies.**
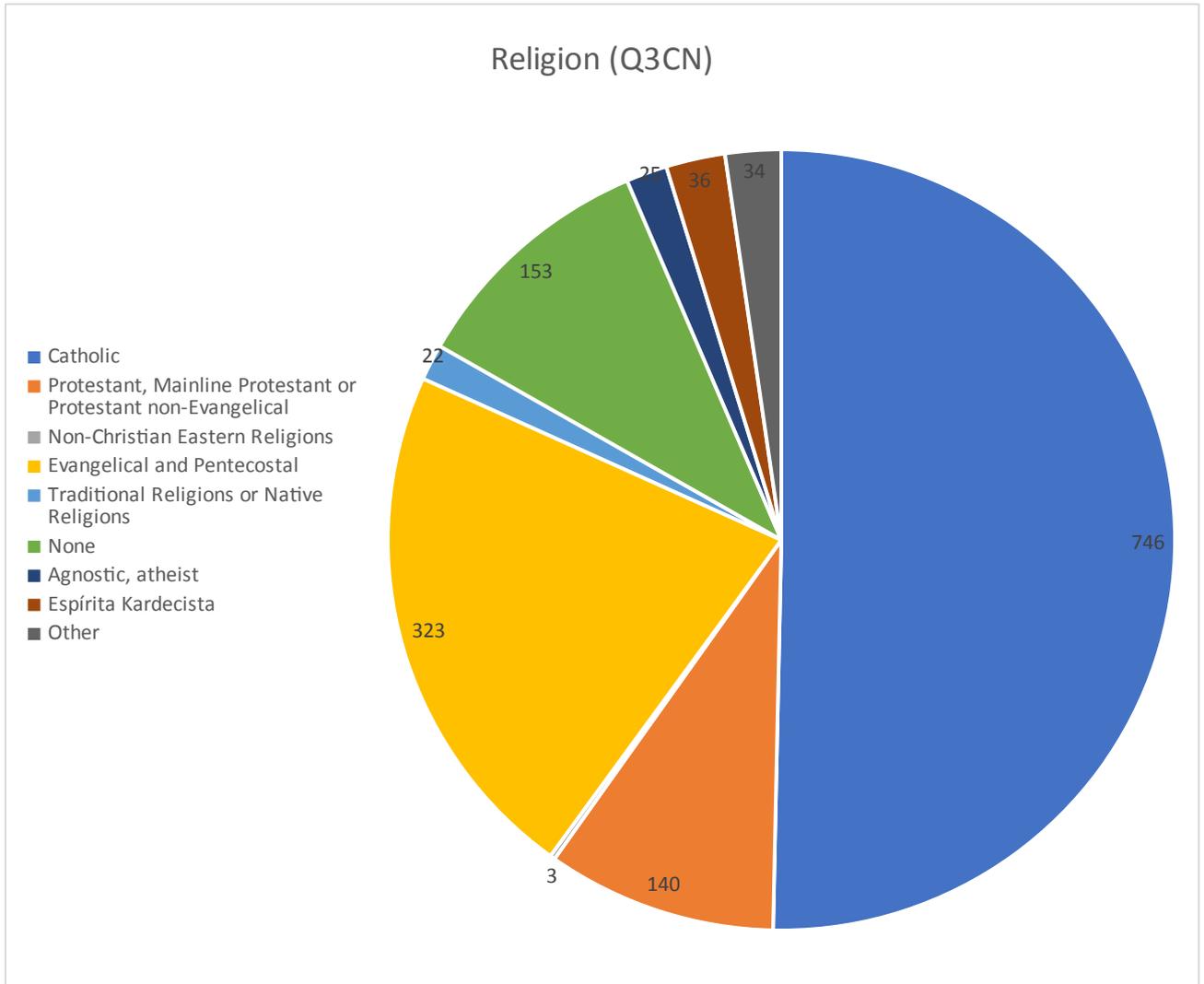
**Figure 24: Control variable 'religion' descriptive statistics.**

Religion

| N | Valid | 1482 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 16 |
| Mode | | 1 |
| Range | | 1500 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 1501 |

**Figure 25: Control variable 'PT identification' frequencies.**
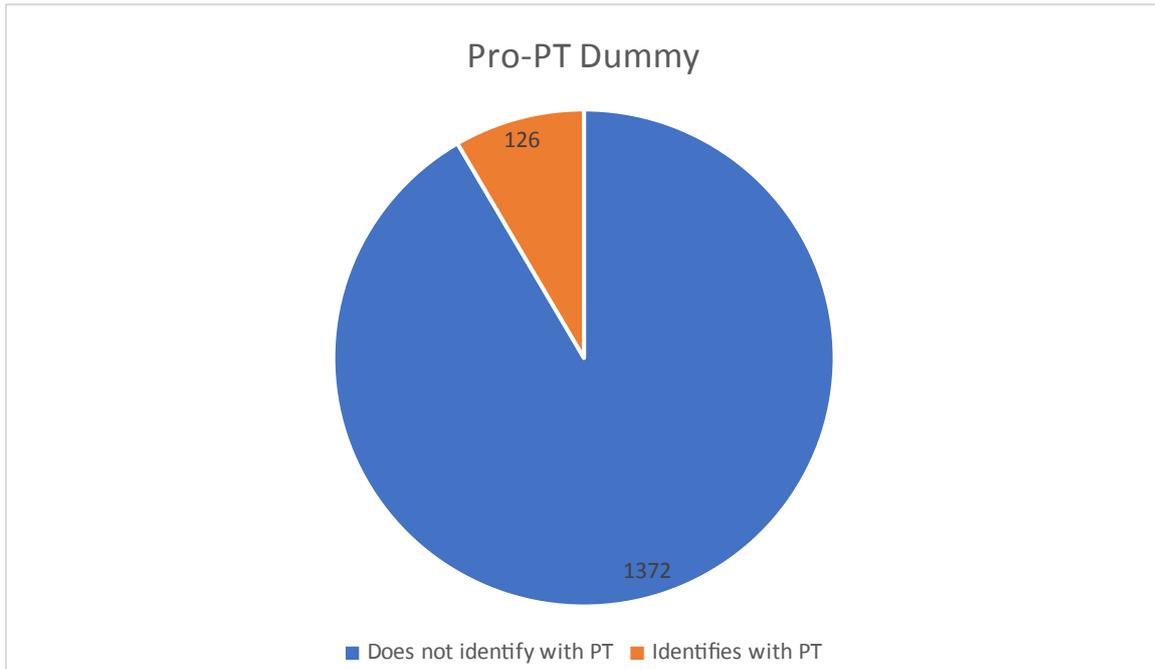
**Figure 26: Control variable 'PT identification' descriptive statistics.**

**Statistics**

Pro-PT Dummy

| N | Valid | 1498 |
|---|---|---|
| | Missing | 0 |
| Mode | | 0 |
| Range | | 1 |
| Minimum | | 0 |
| Maximum | | 1 |

## Results

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings based on the results from the two separate models I have developed and conducted multivariate logistic regressions on. Based on whether or not the moderation effect tested in my second model turns out to be significant, I will decide which model is the most capable of explaining the variance in the outcomes of the dependent variable, being whether respondents voted for Bolsonaro or not. As a result, I will

offer a full variable-by-variable analysis of the model I deem to be most fitting, while only briefly assessing the effects found in the other model.

## Unconditional model

### General findings

Before going into the results for each separate variable in the unconditional model, it is useful to first briefly discuss how well the model fits the data, as well as the portion of variance in the dependent variable it can explain. For goodness of fit of the data, I have used the Hosmer and Lemeshow test, which is more suited to the nature of my models than, for instance, chi-square-oriented tests. As the significance score of 0,348 by far exceeds the common $p$ of 0,05, the model is confirmed to be a good fit. As for the variance, the Cox & Nell R Square value in Figure 27, which I have chosen to use over the Nagelkerke R Square based on what is common in political science research, reveals that 14,8% of the variance in the vote choice dummy can be explained through the variables included in the unconditional model.

### Pro-army sentiments

For the first hypothesis, regarding the effect of pro-army sentiments on vote choice, the results support the theoretical assumption that the more an individual respondent trust the Armed Forces, the more likely that respondent is to have voted for Bolsonaro. The significance level of 0,000, combined with an alpha of 10%, prove that there is a significant relation between this independent variable and the vote choice dummy that has been used as the dependent variable. Furthermore, the beta coefficient of 0,255 indicates that as an average respondent's score for trust in the Armed Forces increases by 1 unit (out of a possible 7 different scores), that respondent's likelihood of having voted for Bolsonaro increased by 0,255. These results therefore lead me to conclude that the original hypothesis is proven to be correct, and that the more an individual voter supports the armed forces, the more likely that voter indeed is to vote for Bolsonaro.

### Anti-democratic sentiments

As for the effect of anti-democratic sentiments, the results from the unconditional model rule out the notion that an individual respondent's likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro can be partially explained by that respondent's stance on democracy as a political system. The significance level of 0,480 effectively make any further interpretations of the results found in the unconditional model on this independent variable redundant. Therefore, since no significant effect was found, the theoretical assumption that the less an individual voter values democracy as a political regime, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro, can be disregarded.

### Aversion against political corruption

In the theoretical chapter, I explained the explanatory factor of aversion against political corruption would be divided into three sub-hypotheses; two of these sub-hypotheses, being hypothesis 3a and 3b, were tested in the unconditional model. These hypotheses looked at the effects of an individual respondent's perception of how corrupt politicians were, and their personal economic situation, respectively, on vote choice. The results show that the variable used for hypothesis 3a does not have a significant effect. This leaves me with no choice but to conclude that convincing evidence for the notion that the more an individual voter perceives politicians to be corrupt, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro could not be found in the present research design.

As for hypothesis 3b, I already discussed in the methodological chapter how I would mark this variable as being categorical, prior to executing the multivariate logistic regression on the model. That way, I would be able to identify differences between different categories of respondents in terms of their response to the question used for hypothesis 3b, in order to examine whether these different responses also led to different likelihoods of voting for Bolsonaro. The model shows that compared to those who chose the 'better' response, which was used as the reference category, respondents who rated their personal economic situation as being 'the same' as 12 months prior were significantly less likely to vote for Bolsonaro. The beta coefficient of this effect was -0,290, which means that respondents who answered 'the same' had a likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro which was 0,290 lower than respondents who answered 'better'. This finding actually contradicts my original hypothesis, as it indicates that an improvement, rather than a deterioration, of respondents' economic situation makes it more likely for them to vote for Bolsonaro. Also, when looking at the response category of 'worse', the significance score of 0,225 indicates that respondents who rated their personal economic situation to be worse than 12 months prior were not significantly less likely to vote for Bolsonaro than those who rated it to be better. Based on these results, I can safely conclude that the mechanism proposed in hypothesis 3b is disproven, while a portion of the data actually suggests that the hypothesized effect may in fact work opposite to how it was expected.

## Tougher punishments

Lastly, the effect of respondents' level of agreement with Bolsonaro's tough stances on crime was tested through a dummy variable measuring an individual respondent's support for the death penalty. The results from the model show that this variable had a significant effect on an individual respondent's likelihood to vote for Bolsonaro. This turned out to be a positive effect, with a beta coefficient of 0,229; this indicates that the likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro was 0,229 higher for respondents who supported the death penalty, than for those that were against capital punishment. Since the variable used for this hypothesis was a binary dummy, the log odds score provides further information on this difference between supporters and opponents of the death penalty: supporters were 1,257 times more likely to vote for Bolsonaro than opponents. These findings lead me to conclude that the assumption that the more an individual voter agrees with Bolsonaro's tough proposed measures on crime, the more likely that voter is to vote for Bolsonaro, is proven to be correct through this model.

## Controls

As for the controls, most of them proved to have a significant effect on a respondent's likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro. The effect of age turned out to be positive, meaning that for every increase of 1 year in a respondent's age, that respondent's likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro increased by 0,023. As for education, there again proved to be a positive effect: for every extra year a respondent was educated, their likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro increased by 0,105. Gender was also an important factor, as men were 1,403 times more likely than women to vote for Bolsonaro. As I mentioned in the methodological chapter, like the variable concerning the development of respondents' personal economic situations in the last 12 months, the newly constructed variable measuring income category was treated as a categorical variable in my models. It was found that only those respondents whose income was rated as 'higher' differed significantly from the respondents with a 'lower' income, which was the reference category. The beta coefficient indicated that respondents with a higher income' likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro increased by 0,359 compared to the likelihood for respondents with a lower income. Religion turned out to have an insignificant effect on vote choice. Lastly, the dummy constructed to measure the effect of sentiments regarding the PT

produced an odds ratio indicating that those who identified with the PT were 0,103 times more likely to vote for Bolsonaro than those that did not. In other words, those that did not identify with the PT were 9,709 times more likely to vote for Bolsonaro than those that did.

**Figure 27: Explanatory power of the unconditional model.**

| Step | -2 Log likelihood | Cox & Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1465,804[a] | ,148 | ,200 |

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because

parameter estimates changed by less than ,001.

**Figure 28: Goodness of fit of the unconditional model.**

| Step | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8,934 | 8 | ,348 |

**Figure 29: Results for all variables in the unconditional model.**

| | | B | Exp (B) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1[a] | Trust in the Armed Forces | 0,255*** (0,039) | 1,290 |
| | Democracy is better than any other form of government | -0,027 (0,038) | ,974 |
| | Trust in the National Congress | 0,035 (0,035) | 1,036 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development | | |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development(1) | -0,290* (0,155) | ,748 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development(2) | -0,208 (0,172) | ,812 |

| | | |
|---|---:|---:|
| Capital Punishment Dummy | 0,229*<br>(0,128) | 1,257 |
| Age | 0,023***<br>(0,004) | 1,023 |
| Years of education completed | 0,105***<br>(0,020) | 1,111 |
| Gender Dummy | 0,338**<br>(0,129) | 1,403 |
| Income Category | | |
| Income Category(1) | 0,045<br>(0,159) | 1,046 |
| Income Category(2) | 0,359*<br>(0,170) | 1,431 |
| Religion | 0,000<br>(0,000) | 1,000 |
| Pro-PT Dummy | -2,269***<br>(0,381) | ,103 |
| Constant | -3,689***<br>(0,412) | ,025 |

**Notes**

N = 1235.
Standard errors are in parentheses.
* *p* < 0,10; ** *p* < 0,01; *** *p* < 0,001.
Reference categories: 'Better' (Perception of personal economic situation development),
'Lower' (Income category).

### Conditional model

The conditional model differed from the unconditional model on only one aspect: the variable constructed to measure the size and direction of the hypothesized moderation effect was added to the model as an independent variable. Looking at the results for that specific variable as displayed in Figure 28, it becomes pretty clear that the conditional model does

not add anything to the explanatory value of the unconditional model. The effect of the interaction variable is anything but significant, meaning hypothesis 3c can be conclusively ruled out. As the testing of the hypothesis, which was the sole purpose of the conditional model, revealed an insignificant effect, I have no choice but to accept the unconditional model as being the most capable of explaining vote choice in the Brazilian presidential elections of 2018. Furthermore, the -2 Log Likelihood score for the conditional model, displayed in Figure 30, remained virtually the same in comparison to the -2 Log Likelihood score for the unconditional model, as displayed in Figure 27. As the inclusion of the interaction variable clearly does not positively or negatively affect the way the model fits the data whatsoever, the conditional model itself can also be ruled out.

**Figure 30: Explanatory power of the conditional model.**

| Step | -2 Log likelihood | Cox & Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1465,407[a] | ,149 | ,201 |

**Figure 31: Goodness of fit of the conditional model.**

| Step | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|------|-----------|-----|------|
| 1 | 9,750 | 8 | ,283 |

**Figure 32: Results for all variables in the conditional model**

| | | B | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1[a] | Trust in the Armed Forces | 0,255*** (0,039) | ,000 |
| | Democracy is better than any other form of government | -0,028 (0,038) | ,464 |
| | Trust in the National Congress | ,088 (0,091) | ,335 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development | | ,184 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development(1) | -0,388* (0,219) | ,076 |
| | Perception of personal economic situation development(2) | -0,396 (0,344) | ,250 |

| | | |
|---|---:|---:|
| Capital Punishment Dummy | ,226* | ,078 |
| | (0,128) | |
| Interaction H3 | -0,026 | ,529 |
| | (0,042) | |
| Age | 0,023*** | ,000 |
| | (0,004) | |
| Years of education completed | 0,105*** | ,000 |
| | (0,020) | |
| Gender Dummy | 0,339** | ,009 |
| | (0,130) | |
| Income Category | | ,065 |
| Income Category(1) | 0,046 | ,771 |
| | (0,159) | |
| Income Category(2) | 0,360* | ,035 |
| | (0,170) | |
| Religion | 0,000 | ,123 |
| | (0,000) | |
| Pro-PT Dummy | -2,266*** | ,000 |
| | (0,381) | |
| Constant | -3,586*** | ,000 |
| | (0,442) | |

**Notes**

N = 1235.
Standard errors are in parentheses.
* $p < 0,10$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.
Reference categories: 'Better' (Perception of personal economic situation development),
'Lower' (Income category).

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out the identify and statistically test the core explanatory factors behind
Jair Bolsonaro's 2018 election as president of Brazil. Plenty of academic literature has
already been produced focusing on different aspects of Bolsonaro's political identity, such as
studies into his and his campaign's social media usage, as well as articles addressing the

question to what extent Bolsonaro can be classified as a populist. Different analyses were also conducted to identify the crucial elements of Bolsonaro's electoral appeal; however, none of these studies actually conclusively proved their assumption regarding which factors were the most influential. Therefore, I felt that the quantitative approach which I intended to use in order to test my theoretical assumptions would produce valuable insights into which factors could be considered to have significantly contributed to Bolsonaro eventual electoral success, as well as providing a foundation for future research into the same or similar topics to be based and elaborated on.

In my theoretical chapter, I discussed various pieces of both scientific and non-scientific literature, in order to distinguish the most prevalently mentioned reasons behind Bolsonaro's election. Four different hypotheses were formulated, which were based on each explanatory factor's role in Bolsonaro's campaign on the supply side; this was then linked to common sentiments among the Brazilian electorate. Next, each individual factor was related to academic sources that lent credibility to the notion of how it might have resonated with voters, affecting their vote choice in favor of Bolsonaro. The hypotheses focused on pro-army sentiments, anti-democratic sentiments, aversion against corrupt politicians, and support for Bolsonaro's proposed tough measures against crime in general and criminals in particular. For the third factor, aversion against corrupt politicians, a moderation effect was hypothesized: the assumed-to-be positive effect of a voter's perception of the amount of politicians they believed to be involved in corruption on their likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro was thought to be positively moderated by that voter's experience of economic difficulties.

In the methodological chapter, I first addressed the data I would use to test my hypotheses. I used the 2018/19 LAPOP dataset for Brazil, consisting of a representative sample of 1498 Brazilian citizens and their responses to various questions of both demographic and political nature. I then went on to explain which questions from the original questionnaire I would use in order to test my hypotheses, as well as control their effects for five core demographic variables, being a respondent's age, education, gender, income, and religion. I explained the reasoning behind my choices with regard to which questions were included, as well as constructing a dummy variable that would control for certain sentiments regarding the PT, as discussed in the theoretical framework for the corruption-related third hypothesis. Lastly, I explained I would test my hypotheses by constructing two different models, one unconditional and one conditional, on which multivariate logistic regressions would be carried out.

My results produced conclusive evidence for two of the four hypotheses. Pro-army sentiments turned out to indeed have a significant positive effect on a respondent's likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro. Anti-democratic sentiments, as well as all three sub-hypotheses constructed in order to test for the full scope of respondents' aversion against corrupt politicians, turned out be insignificant explanatory factors. Support for Bolsonaro's tough stances on crime, measured through respondents' support for the usage of the death penalty, however did produce results confirming the hypothesized positive effect.

Needless to say, my thesis has its shortcomings. Most prominently, the fact that some of the questions I used to measure the effects of my independent variables did not fit their corresponding hypotheses as much as might have been desired may have affected the reliability of my findings. This is especially the case for the explanatory factor of aversion against corrupt politicians; my most important recommendation therefore would be to test the three sub-hypotheses associated with the factor again, if a different dataset can provide variables aimed more directly at the hypothesized effects. Also, since the LAPOP dataset, compared to the Brazilian population at large, seems to understate both the amount of

Bolsonaro voters in the first round of elections and the amount of voters that identify with the PT, questions can also be raised regarding the representativeness of the sample as a whole.

Notwithstanding these limitations, I would argue that my findings still have some consequences for the current discourse on the reasons behind Bolsonaro's electoral success. As two out of the four hypotheses I constructed produced significant results which were consistent with the theoretical assumptions behind it, the academic world may have to reevaluate its current beliefs on which type of voters Bolsonaro attracted. Specifically, my findings indicate that voters were more likely to be influenced by current issues and plans (crime and punishments), than by issues that were more relevant in the recent or distant past (corruption and the autocratic military regime, respectively). Lastly, the fact that most control variables actually had significant effects on vote choice suggests that these factors may have to be explored further, in order to determine which elements of Bolsonaro's campaign may have been more enticing to men than women, for instance.

Based on the consequences of my findings, combined with the research design's shortcomings, my first recommendation would be to carry out another similar study once it becomes possible to measure the effect of the explanatory factor of aversion against corrupt politicians through variables more closely resembling the hypotheses. New studies should also aim to find other explanatory factors for Bolsonaro's success, as the effects of the independent variables I outlined in this thesis partially failed to support the assumptions outlined in the theoretical framework. A good starting point may be the control variables, as age, education, and gender were found to play significant roles. I would therefore argue that any future studies should definitely include a demographic analysis of Bolsonaro voters, which may then serve as a basis for the composition of new hypotheses that can explain why this group tends to be predominantly male, relatively old, and has a relatively high level of education.

## Appendix: LAPOP questions used

**Dependent variable: VB3N:** Who did you vote for in the last presidential election of 2018? (p. 16).

**Hypothesis 1: B12:** To what extent do you trust the Armed Forces? (p. 8).

**Hypothesis 2: ING4:** Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (p. 10).

**Hypothesis 3a: B13:** To what extent do you trust the National Congress? (p. 14).

**Hypothesis 3b: IDIO2:** Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago? (p. 2).

**Hypothesis 4: CAPITAL1:** Are you in favor or against capital punishment for those guilty of murder? (p. 7).

**Control variable age: Q2:** How old are you?  _____ years (p. 1).

**Control variable education: ED:** How many years of schooling have you completed? (p. 20).

**Control variable gender: Q1:**  Sex **[Record but DO NOT ask]**: (1) Male (2) Female (p. 1).

**Control variable income: Q10NEW:** And into which of the following ranges does the total monthly income of this household fit, including remittances from abroad and the income of all the working adults and children? (p. 22).

**Control variable religiosity: Q3CN:** What is your religion, if any? (p. 20).

**Dummy control variable PT identification: VB11:** Which political party do you identify with?  (p. 16).

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