# DIGITAL MOBILIZATION MANUAL

## THE JANONES METHOD

# 51.8%

How the Exército do Lula (Lula's Army) organized the comeback in the 2026 runoff, why it worked, how it compares with the Bolsonarist machine, and what it takes to repeat it in another place or another election.

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November 2026

IPSE

# THE STUDY ON ONE PAGE

## THE DATA

**5,128**

posts from 9 WhatsApp channels of the two campaigns, collected by IPSE and coded one by one, with 15.2 hours of audio and video transcribed. The Exército do Lula accounts for 3,744 of them, from Oct 2 to Oct 31, 2026.

The echo of 154 missions measured in the IPSE Orikom® database, the social media profiles of Janones, Lula, Flávio and Nikolas Ferreira, 53 press texts and the studies IPSE published before the result.

## THE QUESTIONS

- What exactly did the channel tell people to do, and at what pace?
- Were the orders carried out on social media, or did they stay on WhatsApp?
- Why did it work, and why did the same tactic fail on the other side?
- What political context does the tactic require?
- How can it be repeated in another place or another election?

## THE LENSES

- Synchronization (Kuramoto, 1975; Firmino, 2022)
- Organizationally enabled connective action (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012)
- Collective efficacy and ritual (Bandura, 2000; Collins, 2004)
- Two-step flow and complex contagion (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Centola, 2010)
- Moral foundations and MAPAM® roles, measured with the IPSE Orikom® catalog

# THE ANSWERS, STRAIGHT

### DID THE CHANNEL PRODUCE THE COMEBACK ON ITS OWN?

## NO.

Lula left the first round 1.9 points behind, and the polls never put him ahead. The comeback came from people outside the race between the two: 3.8 million who had not voted and 3.1 million who had cast blank or spoiled ballots. The channel set these people in motion; the context gave them the reason.

### WERE THE ORDERS CARRIED OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

## YES.

The 121 missions of Lula's camp added up to 48.6 million interactions on social media, and the first post appeared a median of 1.4 minutes after the order. On Flávio's side, an order took 2.3 hours to show up.

### WAS THE SECRET THE SIZE OF THE CHANNEL?

## PARTLY.

The size came later, and the method itself produced it: subscriber targets, a channel closed until the target was met, "bring one more". What sets the Exército apart is synchrony: thousands doing the same thing in the same minute.

# THE ANSWERS, STRAIGHT

### WAS THE TONE AGGRESSIVE?

## NO.

Only 1.7% of the Exército's messages were attacks, against 17.4% in the Tropa do Flávio (Flávio's Troop). The channel talked about us, the task and the score; the attack came built into the hashtag of the day.

### DOES IT WORK ANYWHERE?

## NO.

It requires an opponent who concentrates fear, a beloved leader who lends authority, a camp that felt defeated on social media and a short deadline. Without these, it becomes a notice board.

### WHAT COMES FIRST?

## BUILD THE COMMAND.

A channel with a single voice, public targets, verifiable missions with a set time and a score returned within minutes. The rest of the manual shows each piece and the context it needs.

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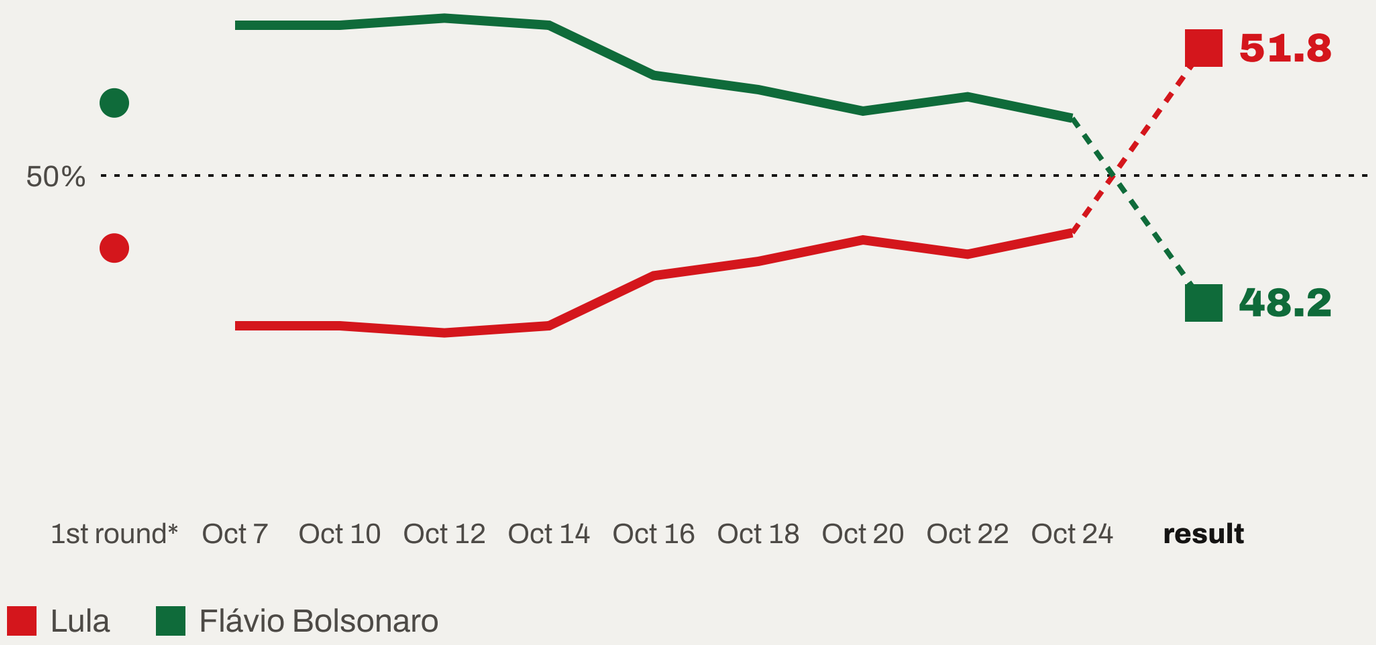
**METHOD** 59
Collection, coding, echo, simulation and references

# THE RESULT

Lula left the first round behind, trailed in almost every poll and won with 51.78% of the valid votes. The question of this manual is what the mobilization had to do with it.

**51.8%**

# BEHIND IN THE POLLS, AHEAD AT THE BALLOT BOX




In the first round, Flávio had 47.03% and Lula 45.16%. Across the 55 runoff polls registered with the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), Lula's average rose slowly, from 47.9% to 49.2% of valid votes, without ever passing 50%.

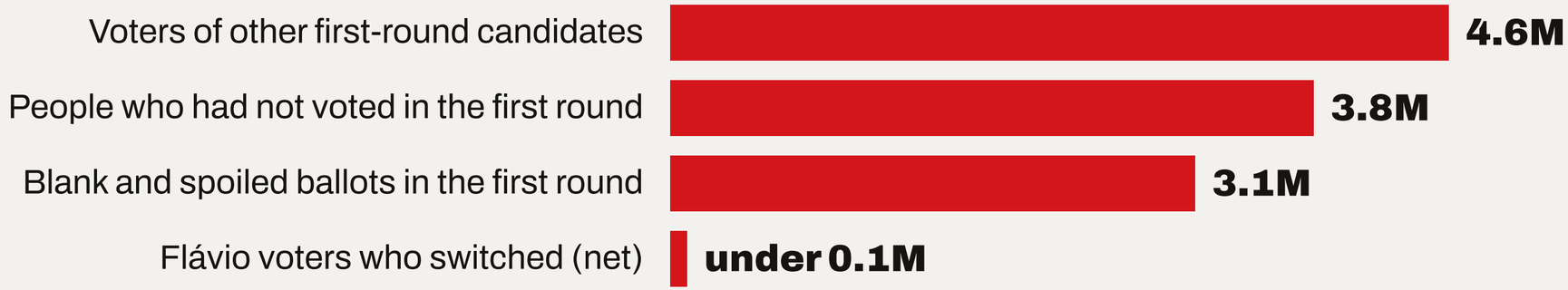
The ballot box gave him 51.78%. The gap between the final average and the result, 2.6 points, is larger than in any week of the campaign.

The IPSE model, published the day before the vote, gave the comeback the highest chance, 47%, because it was the only one to factor in the mobilization. Even so, it weighted communication 3.4 times less than the ballot box showed.

Polls: 7-day moving average of the polls registered with the TSE, in valid votes (IPSE, predictive study of Oct 24, 2026). *First round as a share of the two candidates. Result: TSE.

# THE COMEBACK CAME FROM PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE RACE

Where Lula's new votes in the runoff came from, in millions of voters.




Almost nothing came from direct switching with Flávio. What decided the race was bringing to the polls people who had stayed home or spoiled their ballots, and abstention fell from 21.08% to 19.22%.

This is the ground on which mobilization acts. The campaign literature shows minimal persuasive effects and real effects on turnout (Kalla and Broockman, 2018; Gerber and Green, 2000). **The channel did not convert opponents; it set its own people in motion.**

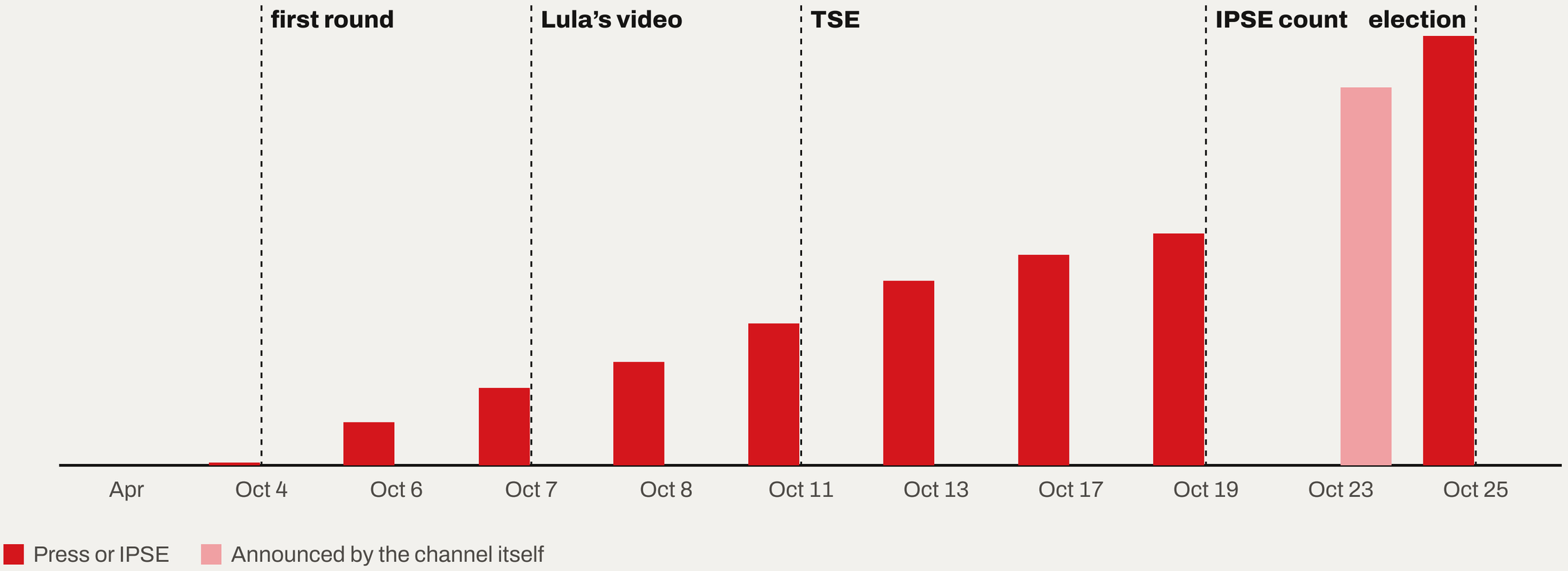
Source: origin of the votes estimated by IPSE with King's ecological inference (Rosen, Jiang, King and Tanner, 2001) over the TSE polling stations, version of Oct 28, 2026, at ipse.global/apuracao.

# THE MACHINE

A WhatsApp broadcast channel, where only the administrator speaks, created in April and nearly idle until the first round. In three weeks it went from tens of thousands to more than 10 million subscribers.

CHANNEL.

# 60,000 TO 10 MILLION IN THREE WEEKS




Subscribers in millions: press series (Poder360, Metrópoles, Congresso em Foco, O Tempo) up to Oct 17; 5.42 million measured by IPSE in the collector on Oct 19–20; 8.8 million announced by the channel itself on Oct 23; 10 million on Oct 25. The published series diverge after Oct 20.

# 71,000 TO 1 MILLION IN 29 HOURS

The size the channel announced, in text, at each step, always with the next order:

**DON'T STOP! Everyone bring 3 more people here!**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OCT 5 · 11:01<br>**71k** | OCT 5 · 13:31<br>**110k** | OCT 5 · 14:39<br>**142k** | OCT 5 · 16:52<br>**199k** | OCT 6 · 10:09<br>**600k** | OCT 6 · 12:03<br>**700k** |
| OCT 6 · 14:07<br>**800k** | OCT 6 · 15:55<br>**1M** | OCT 7 · 00:32<br>**1.5M** | OCT 8 · 09:30<br>**2.3M** | OCT 8 · 17:24<br>**2.6M** | OCT 12 · 20:18<br>**4M** |

The arithmetic adds up. The audio message on the morning of Oct 5 asked each of the 60,000 subscribers to bring three people. Two rounds of that give 60,000 × 4 × 4 = 960,000, and the channel announced 1 million at 3:55 p.m. the next day.

After the first million, the target became a reward: 5 million for Lula to join the channel (Oct 13), 6 million "as fast as possible" (Oct 20) and 10 million by the 24-hour livestream (Oct 22).

Source: text messages of the Exército do Lula saying "we are N thousand/million", Brasília time; targets taken from the channel's audio and text messages. These are numbers announced by the channel, not audited.

**“Where did we lose these elections? It wasn’t in the streets. You know where we lost? On social media, *nas redes*. […] Every one of you listening to this audio is going to bring three people here.”**

André Janones, audio message in the Exército do Lula, Oct 5, 2026, 9:43 a.m., forwarded seven times in 31 hours

### WHAT THE QUOTE SHOWS

The founding speech of the runoff: a diagnosis (we lost on social media), a credential (“I got the date right” for the turnaround in the polls), a task sized for each person (three people) and the admission that the messenger is disliked: “you may not like me, you may hate me”. The cause stands above whoever leads it.

# THE TASK CHANGED EVERY WEEK

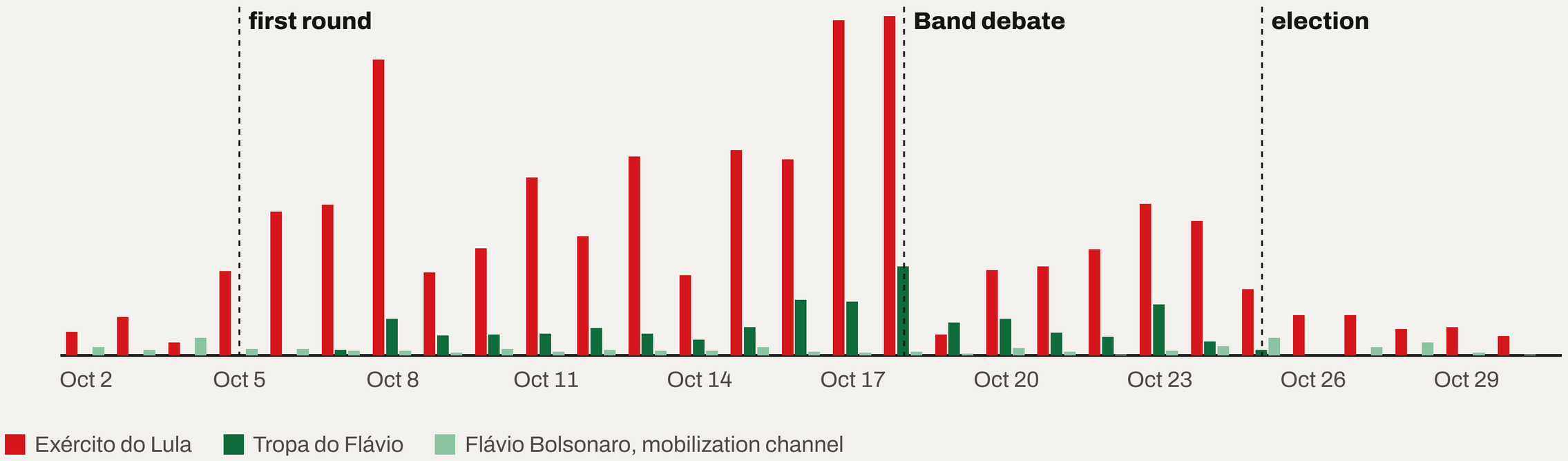
Half of the messages were missions in every week; what changed was what they asked for.

| WEEK | MESSAGES PER DAY | MOST REQUESTED TASKS | HALLMARK OF THE WEEK | INTERACTIONS FROM MISSIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Before the wave**<br>Oct 2 to Oct 4 | **27** | share 39% · like and follow 13% | Hope in 31% of the messages; the task was Lula's and Janones's Instagram. | — |
| **Recruiting**<br>Oct 5 to Oct 11 | **164** | share 25% · bring people to the channel 18% | Audio in 28% of the messages; persecution as a theme in 21%. | **979,000**<br>**7 missions** |
| **The hashtag machine**<br>Oct 12 to Oct 18 | **232** | share 20% · push a hashtag 16% | A hashtag with a set time every night; praise for the troops in 15% of the messages. | **29.5 million**<br>**54 missions** |
| **Final stretch**<br>Oct 19 to Oct 25 | **103** | share 22% · push a hashtag 15% | Deadline and urgency in 19% of the messages, spoken register in 62%; the 24-hour livestream. | **17.0 million**<br>**47 missions** |
| **Afterwards**<br>Oct 26 to Oct 31 | **28** | push a hashtag 15% · share 12% | Affection for the leader as a theme in 27%; the channel says thank you and stays on its feet. | **1.1 million**<br>**12 missions** |

Source: 3,744 posts of the Exército do Lula, from Oct 2 to Oct 31, 2026, coded by IPSE; echo in the IPSE Orikom® database. Shares computed over the messages with readable content in each week.

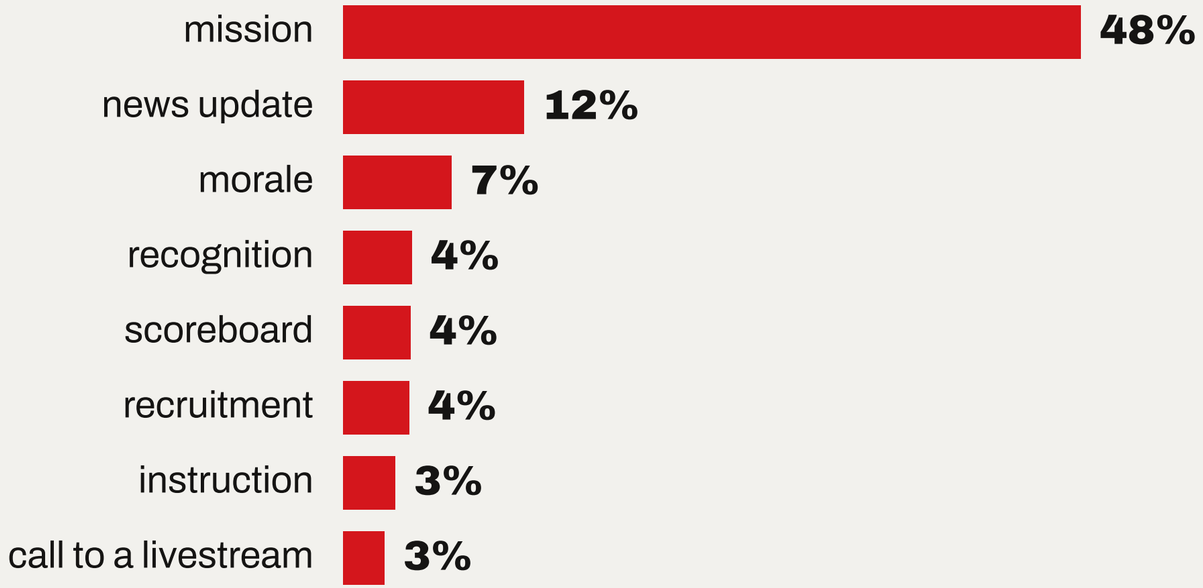
# A CHANNEL THAT NEVER STOPPED

Posts per day in the three main campaign channels, from Oct 2 to Oct 30. The history of the Tropa do Flávio starts on Oct 7.




Source: channels collected by the IPSE collector (WhatsApp), Brasília time. The Exército posted 125 messages per active day; 79% came out within 5 minutes of the previous one.

# HALF OF THE MESSAGES WERE ORDERS




The channel was not a news board. The main function of 48% of the messages with content was a mission: push a hashtag, blow up a video, bring in more people, send it to the family.

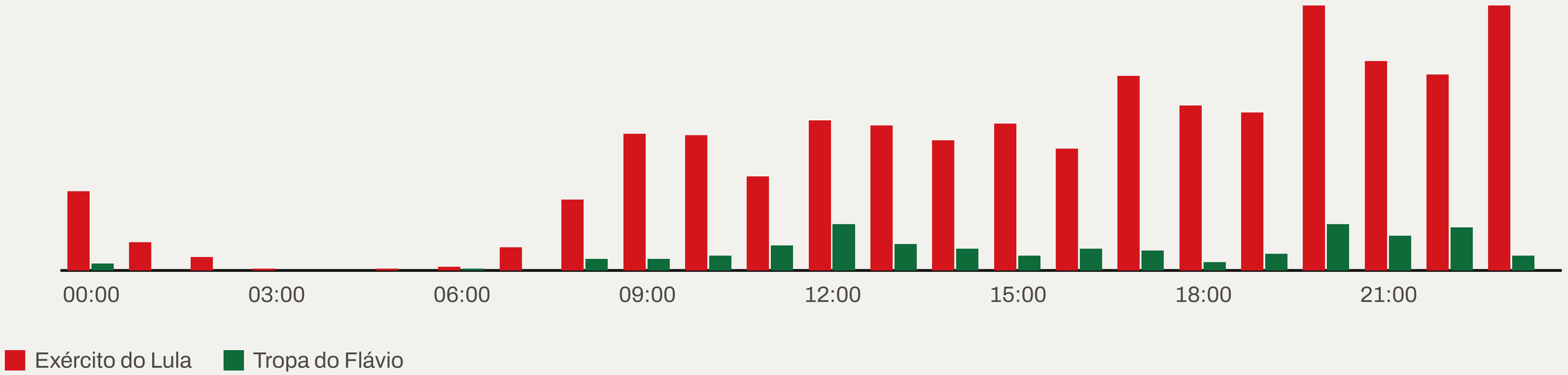
The most frequent tasks were sharing content (21% of the messages), pushing a hashtag (13%), bringing people to the channel (8%) and sending things privately (7%).

In Flávio's channel, the most common main function was the **news update**: 44% of the messages.

Source: 2,976 readable posts of the Exército do Lula coded by IPSE with the mobilization codebook. Share of each message's main function.

# THE TROOPS' CLOCK

Missions by hour of the day, Brasília time. The Exército peaks between 9 and 11 p.m., after work and the evening news, when the audience on social media is largest.




Orders came in bursts: the median interval between two messages of the Exército was 0.4 minutes. A task was broken into several short messages, each one with its own notification on the phone.

Source: channels collected by the IPSE collector; messages coded as missions.

**“I can’t step out, go to an event with the president, because when I come back everything’s a mess. The pace slowed down, nobody’s bringing anybody in, nobody’s doing the *missão*, nobody’s liking the link.”**

André Janones, audio message in the Exército do Lula, Oct 21, 2026, 9:15 p.m.

### WHAT THE QUOTE SHOWS

The channel depends on a voice that holds people to account. Discipline was not automatic: it was kept up hour by hour, with praise when the troops delivered and public reproach when they slacked off.

MISSION

# THE TACTICS

Twelve actions the channel repeated throughout the campaign. For each one: what it did, the evidence that it was carried out, the theory that explains why it works and the context it needs.

# A HASHTAG AT A SET TIME

01

The order carried the exact term and the time. The first post on social media appeared a median of 1.4 minutes later.

### WHAT IT DID

A new hashtag for each mission, everyone in the same minute, swapped when two similar ones cancelled each other out: “I took out the word army, otherwise one knocks down the other”.

### THE EVIDENCE

The 121 missions of Lula’s camp added up to **48.6 million** interactions on social media, a median of 116,000 per mission. The largest, **#AbreOSigiloFlavio** (“Flávio, lift the secrecy”), gathered 14.5 million on its own. In Flávio’s camp, the median was 9,800 per mission.

### WHY IT WORKS

Thousands doing the same thing in the same minute is what the trending algorithm reads as an event: Kuramoto’s synchronization (1975) applied to framing (Firmino, 2022). And journalists treat the topic of the moment as news (McGregor and Molyneux, 2020).

**IT NEEDS** A base that trusts the command, and an opponent with a weak flank that fits in four words.

Source: channels collected by IPSE; echo measured in the IPSE Orikom® database, posts with the hashtag variant from t0−6 h to t0+72 h.

# BLOW UP THE VIDEO

02

The channel sent a video link and a single word: **EXPLODE** (blow it up). Like, comment and share right away, all together.

### WHAT IT DID

Of the links the channel told people to blow up, 38 belonged to Lula and to Janones himself. The others went to allied profiles, artists and even press stories about the Exército.

### THE EVIDENCE

On Janones's Instagram, the median likes per post went from **43,000** before the runoff to **1.41 million** on the posts the channel told people to blow up. Those the channel did not promote stayed at 847,000. Comparing videos only: 1.64 million against 0.89 million.

### WHY IT WORKS

Recommendation algorithms measure the speed of the first interactions. A spike in the first minutes carries the video beyond its followers' bubble. Liking before watching got around Meta's 2024 rule that removes political profiles from recommendations.

**IT NEEDS** Ready-made, good-quality content from the leaders: the channel does not produce video, it gives speed to what already exists.

Source: posts by @andrejanones in the IPSE Orikom® database (August to October 2026, likes from the latest collection); links sent by the channel, with the owner of each one checked on Instagram.

# SEARCH ON GOOGLE

03

During the debates and after each accusation, the channel told people to search for a term, so it would rise among trending searches.

### WHAT IT DID

8 search missions in Lula's camp, against 1 in Flávio's. Search turns the question into news: "what is this thing everyone is searching for?".

### THE EVIDENCE

On the night of the debate on TV Band, negative searches about the opponent passed 500,000, up more than 1,000%, and became a news story (Poder360). Janones himself told the troops to read the story "to understand what we did today".

### WHY IT WORKS

Whoever searches for a little-covered topic finds what has already been published about it, and the data void favors whoever arrives first (Golebiewski and boyd, 2019). The order of search results shifts the preferences of undecided voters (Epstein and Robertson, 2015).

**IT NEEDS** A live event with a large audience, such as a debate, and a topic about the opponent with little prior coverage.

Source: channels collected by IPSE; Poder360 coverage (Oct 19, 2026) in the IPSE press survey.

# GROWING THROUGH TARGETS AND SCARCITY

04.

The channel announced a subscriber target and even shut itself down until it was met: “no news, link or mission will be sent until we reach 7 million”.

### WHAT IT DID

Every member became a recruiter: “bring one more”, “I want to see if we reach 10 million after the debate”. The number was announced out loud at each milestone, like the score of a match.

### THE EVIDENCE

8% of the messages told people to bring others into the channel. The largest jumps in subscribers coincide with the targets, the livestream with Lula and the attempt to take the channel down at the TSE, not with the calendar.

### WHY IT WORKS

Scarcity and social proof are two of the most studied compliance triggers (Cialdini, 1984). A public target creates commitment, and the collective count turns the channel’s size into a victory each member helped win.

**IT NEEDS** A figure with an audience of their own for the first push, here Lula’s video asking people to join, on Oct 7.

Source: channels collected by IPSE; subscriber series from the press and from IPSE.

# THE LIVESTREAM THAT NEVER ENDS

05

Long livestreams at a set time, and a 24-hour one right after the last debate, with guests, reactions and Lula himself.

### WHAT IT DID

The channel called people to the livestream and, during it, dictated what to do: “go in there and keep hammering the like button, like crazy, then the algorithm delivers the content as relevant”.

### THE EVIDENCE

One million people at the same time on the pages of Janones and Lula on Oct 22, according to the channel; a peak of 773,000 simultaneous viewers on the 24-hour livestream. In the stream chats, 229,000 people in Lula’s camp against 7,000 in Flávio’s.

### WHY IT WORKS

Being together live produces what Collins (2004) calls the emotional energy of interaction rituals: shared attention, shared rhythm, a sense of belonging. The livestream gave a body to an army that, in the channel, was only a number.

**IT NEEDS** A calendar of events that justifies the broadcast: a debate, the vote count, a visit by the candidate.

Source: the channel’s audio messages (transcribed by IPSE); stream chats collected by IPSE; press for the peak of the 24-hour livestream.

# THE VOICE IN YOUR EAR

06

The audio messages were short, spoken like a note from a friend, almost always opening with the same catchphrase: **Pessoal, urgente!** (Folks, urgent!)

### WHAT IT DID

472 audio messages in the period collected, adding up to 354 minutes. Slang, laughter, fatigue, backstage stories told as secrets: “this is the first time I’m going to reveal something from behind the scenes”.

### THE EVIDENCE

56% of the Exército’s messages carry marks of speech, against 12% in Flávio’s channel, which wrote like a bulletin, with emoji in 93% of the messages.

### WHY IT WORKS

The voice creates the illusion of face-to-face conversation that Horton and Wohl (1956) called parasocial interaction: the listener feels they know the speaker. A request from a friend weighs more than an order from an organization (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955).

**IT NEEDS** A messenger with a recognizable voice and the willingness to speak every day, at any hour, with no apparent script.

Source: channels collected by IPSE; audio messages transcribed and coded by IPSE.

# THE SCORE HANDED BACK

07

Every completed mission came back to the channel as a collective victory: screenshots of trending topics, subscriber numbers, press stories about the Exército.

### WHAT IT DID

Score and recognition together make up 20% of the functions of the messages. Pride appears in 27% of them, the most frequent emotion in the channel.

### THE EVIDENCE

“Our army made news all over the world.” “You are taking part in the history of Brazil.” The channel told the troops to blow up stories in Folha, O Globo, Metrópoles, g1 and The New York Times about the troops themselves.

### WHY IT WORKS

The belief that the group can succeed is what sustains collective action (Bandura, 2000). Showing the result within minutes closes the gamification loop, in which the task is worth its score (Deterding et al., 2011).

**IT NEEDS** A way of measuring the result in real time: trend monitoring, subscriber counts, press coverage.

Source: channels collected and coded by IPSE; links sent by the channel.

# PERSECUTION BECOMES AMMUNITION

08

When the opposing campaign asked the TSE to suspend the channel, the Exército turned the case into proof that it was a threat.

### WHAT IT DID

The channel was suspended and reinstated on the same day, Oct 11, and again on Oct 13 and 14. The response was to rally: “they want to silence us”, “the Exército do Lula stays”.

### THE EVIDENCE

Persecution appears in 12% of the channel’s messages. On Oct 23, the hashtags against taking down the channel reached the top of X with no order given: “I didn’t ask you to push any hashtag”.

### WHY IT WORKS

Trying to silence a message usually gives it more visibility, the so-called Streisand effect (Jansen and Martin, 2015). And an external threat strengthens group cohesion, the moral foundation of loyalty, which appears in 43% of the messages.

**IT NEEDS** A clean channel: the fact-checking agency Lupa read 721 messages and the TSE found no fake news. Without that, persecution turns into evidence against you.

Source: channels collected by IPSE; court timeline and fact-checks in the IPSE press survey (Lupa, TSE).

# THE READY-MADE TEXT

09

The channel supplied the text each person was to send privately: to the family, to group chats and to one undecided voter.

### WHAT IT DID

“Write a little text, a *textinho*, and send it on WhatsApp, like that ready-made one I send you.” 7% of the messages told people to carry the message outside the channel. On election eve: “you’re going to call your mother at 1:20 in the morning”.

### THE EVIDENCE

Monitoring itself guided the tactic: “we’re winning everywhere, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, X, TikTok; there’s only one place we’re losing, WhatsApp. So now that’s my priority”.

### WHY IT WORKS

A message that arrives from someone you know is the one that changes behavior: the two-step flow (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) and the contagion that needs reinforcement among close ties (Centola, 2010). In the experiment by Bond et al. (2012), mobilization came from close friends.

**IT NEEDS** Troops with personal networks outside the bubble. This is where mobilization meets the voter who does not follow politics.

Source: the channel’s audio messages transcribed by IPSE (Oct 23 and 24, 2026).

# TAKING BACK THE SYMBOLS

10

Green and yellow, the national team jersey, the flag: the channel called on the troops to use the symbols Bolsonarism had claimed for itself.

### WHAT IT DID

“First we took their streets, then the networks, then our symbols, green and yellow, the flag, the Seleção jersey.” The mission on election eve was a photo voting in the jersey and making the L sign: **#EuVotoFazendoL** (I vote making the L).

### THE EVIDENCE

**#EuVotoFazendoL** added up to 627,000 interactions on social media. On election eve, Avenida Paulista was packed with yellow jerseys, according to Lula’s own profile.

### WHY IT WORKS

The national symbol activates the foundation of loyalty to the larger group, which belongs to no party (Haidt, 2012). Reclaiming the symbol disarms an opponent who presented himself as the only patriot.

**IT NEEDS** An opponent who has appropriated a common symbol, and a date that offers the photo.

Source: the channel’s audio and text messages; echo in the IPSE Orikom® database.

# THE LEADER JOINS THE CHANNEL

11

Lula began recording for the Exército and doing livestreams with Janones. The channel announced it as an event.

### WHAT IT DID

“I just got a call from the first lady asking how to put the president in the channel, because he already wants to start sending missions straight to you.”
“You’ve created a monster.”

### THE EVIDENCE

20 of the links sent to be blown up came from Lula’s profile, more than from any other. Affection for the leader is an explicit theme in only 9% of the messages because it did not need saying: the troops already liked Lula. The channel saved the leader for the weightiest moments.

### WHY IT WORKS

The leader’s authority is lent to the command and returned as affection: followers feel they receive the order from someone they admire. Closeness to the leader is the highest reward the channel can offer.

**IT NEEDS** A candidate with an emotional bond with the base and the willingness to appear in a channel he does not control.

Source: the channel’s audio messages (Oct 22, 2026), transcribed by IPSE; links sent by the channel.

# THE COMMAND THAT LETS GO

12

The stated goal was for the troops to learn to act without orders: “I threw the knowledge out into the world, and once it leaves me, there’s nothing they can do”.

### WHAT IT DID

The end of the campaign announced as continuity: “The army will carry on after the elections”. A call to produce “every kind of content on every network”, with their own creativity.

### THE EVIDENCE

Profiles of fans, members of Congress, artists and anonymous users repeated the missions in their own words. In the IPSE Orikom® database, fan-club profiles and humor pages are among those that echoed the orders most.

### WHY IT WORKS

This is the organizationally enabled connective action of Bennett and Segerberg (2012): the organization provides the frame and the time, and each person acts in their own voice. Central command and decentralized action are not opposites; each feeds the other.

**IT NEEDS** Training time: autonomy only appears after weeks of explicit missions.

Source: the channel’s audio messages (Oct 23, 2026); echoing profiles in the IPSE Orikom® database.

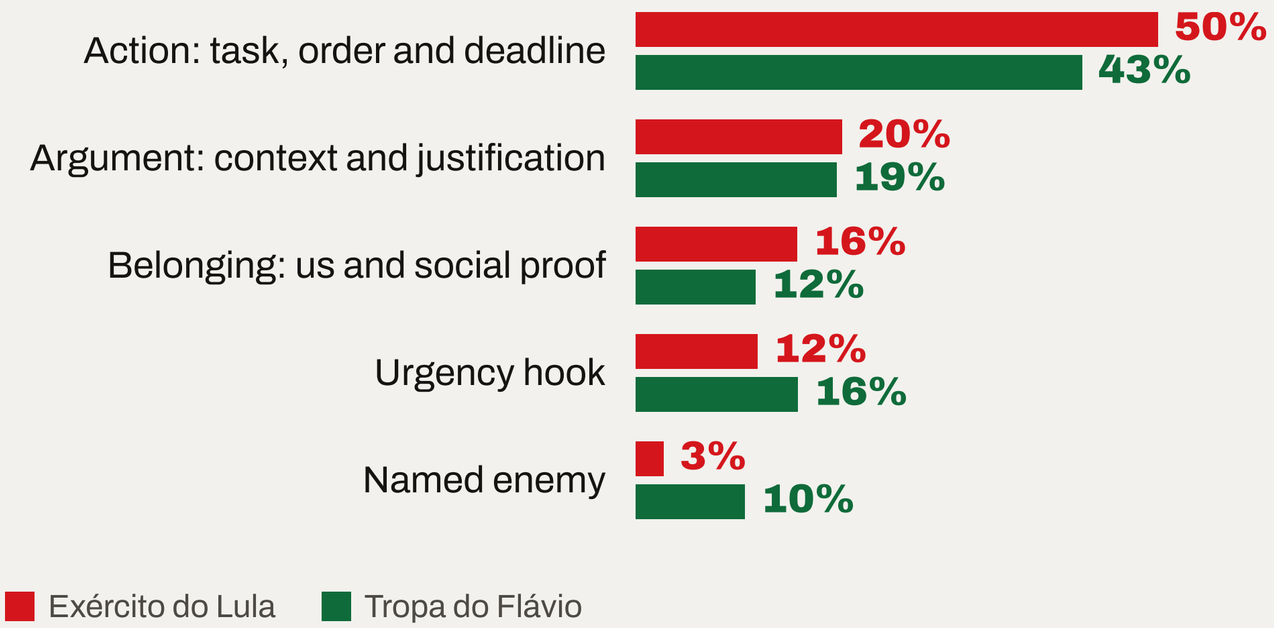
# THE GRAMMAR

How the messages were written: the order of the blocks, the tone, the emotion, the morality and the role each actor plays in the story.

SCRIPT

# SHORT, AND THE TASK FIRST

**COMPOSITION: EACH CHANNEL'S BARS ADD UP TO 100%**




Rhetorical blocks per message, on average: 2.3 in the Exército, 3.4 in the Tropa and 4.6 in Flávio's channel.

Half of the Exército's blocks were action: the task, the order, the deadline. In the Tropa, 43%; in Flávio's channel, 33%, with 30% argument.

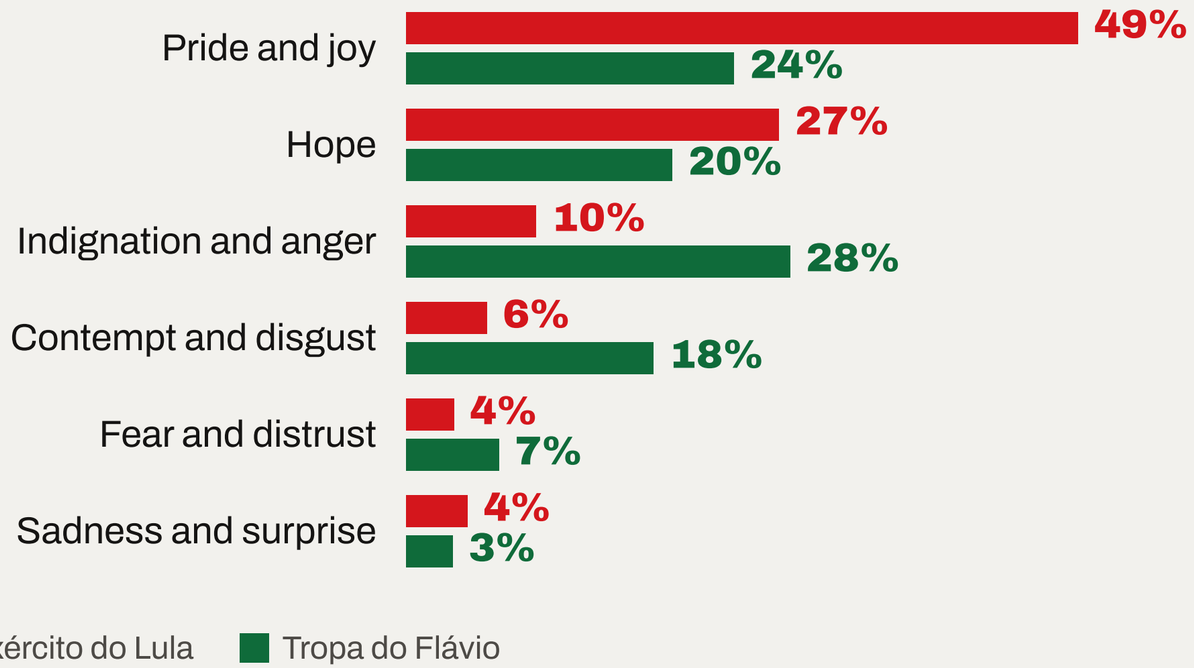
The most common script in the Exército is the shortest: **task → close**. "Everyone push: #…". The justification, when there is one, comes later, in audio.

The Bolsonarist messages had more blocks because they were longer, not because they applied the method better. The longer the message, the more it looks like a bulletin and the less like an order.

Source: posts coded by IPSE; composition of the rhetorical blocks of each channel. Action: task, imperative close, step by step and deadline; argument: context, justification and proposal; belonging: identity, social proof, reward and recognition.

# PRIDE INWARD, INDIGNATION OUTWARD

**COMPOSITION: EACH CHANNEL'S BARS ADD UP TO 100%**




Emotions per message, on average: 0.7 in the Exército, 1.4 in the Tropa and 1.6 in Flávio's channel.

In the Exército, 76% of the emotions were team emotions: pride, joy and hope. In the Tropa, 44%; the rest was indignation, anger and contempt.

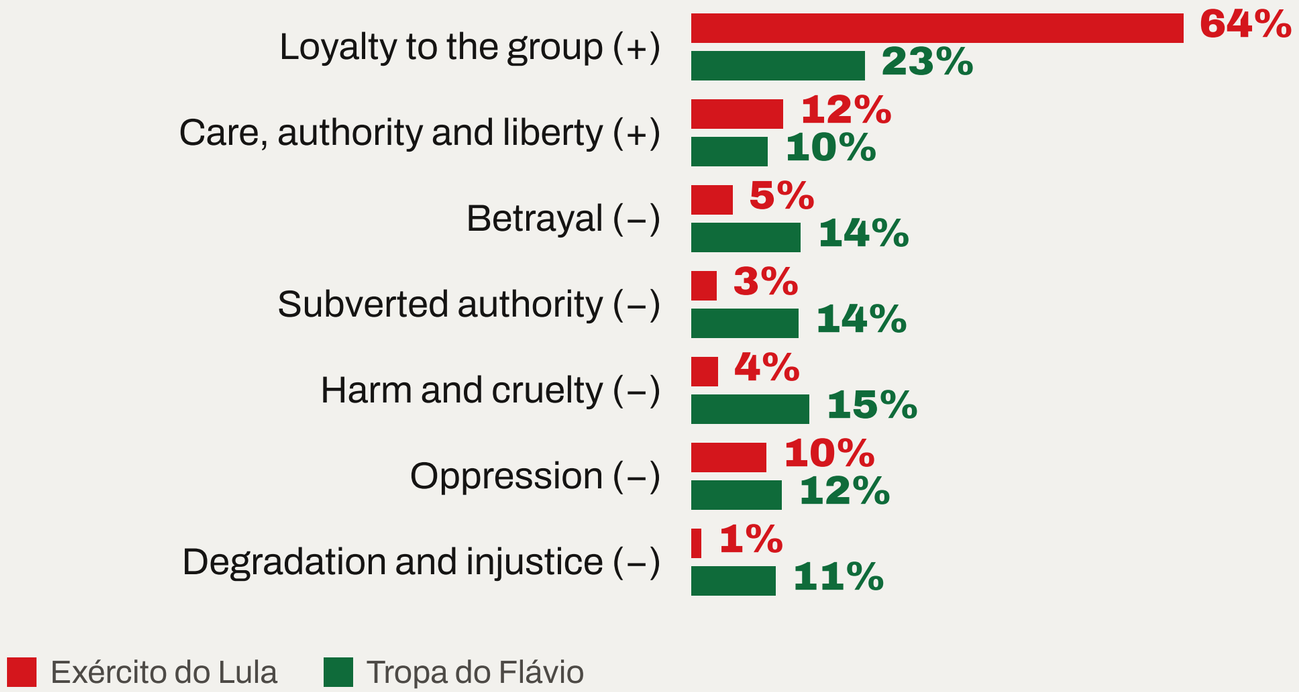
The Tropa also carried twice as much emotion per message. That is not a sign of strength: it is the troops being persuaded every day of what they already felt and already knew. It burns energy and poisons the group itself.

The indignation of Lula's camp went outward, into the hashtag: on social media, it rose from 16% to 40% of the camp's interactions in the runoff. Inward, the channel gave the task and the score.

Source: posts coded by IPSE (emotions from the IPSE Orikom® catalog), composition of the emotions of each channel; indignation on social media: indicators from the predictive study of Oct 24, 2026.

# A MORALITY OF BELONGING

**COMPOSITION: EACH CHANNEL'S BARS ADD UP TO 100%**




Moral foundations per message, on average: 0.7 in the Exército, 1.6 in the Tropa and 1.9 in Flávio's channel.

In the Exército, 64% of the morality was a single one: loyalty to the group, at the positive pole. We are many, we are Lula's, no one lets go of anyone's hand.

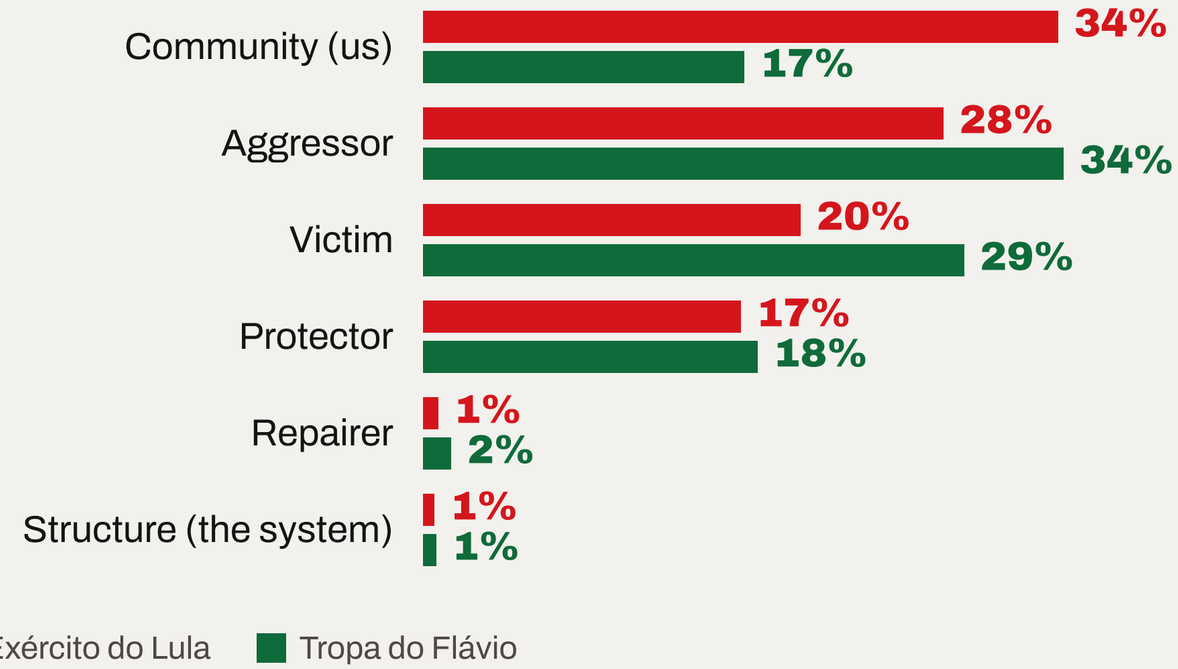
In the Tropa, loyalty is 23%; the rest spreads across the negative pole. In Flávio's channel, subverted authority (the Supreme Federal Court, STF, the TSE, Moraes) weighs more than loyalty: 19% against 16%.

A siege morality has to be repeated to stay standing. A morality of belonging confirms itself every time the troops complete the mission and see the score.

Source: moral foundations (MFT-7, Atari et al., 2023) coded by IPSE, composition of each channel; the pole is the moral state invoked in the text. Degradation and injustice: purity, proportionality, equality and fairness at the negative pole.

# WHO IS WHO IN THE STORY

**COMPOSITION: EACH CHANNEL'S BARS ADD UP TO 100%**



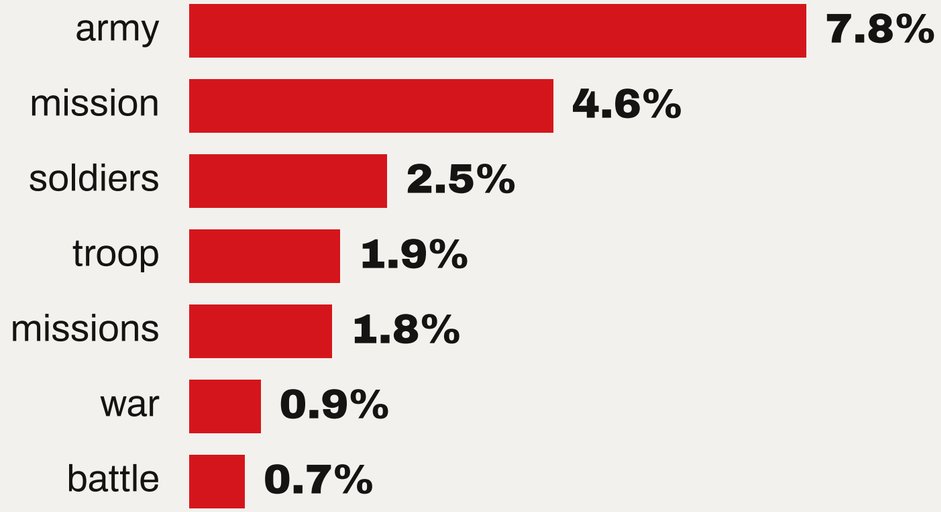

Narrative roles assigned (victim, aggressor, protector, repairer, community) per message, on average: 0.3 in the Exército, 1.2 in the Tropa and 1.6 in Flávio's channel.

MAPAM® is the IPSE model for identifying, in each text, who is presented as victim, aggressor, protector, repairer or community.

Flávio's channels told a story of harm in almost every message, with Lula as the aggressor and the people as the victim: they spent energy persuading those already convinced. The Exército was executive, and the role that appears most in it is the community, the us. What the channel wanted the troops to feel, they already felt, and it surfaced on its own when they acted. That is why the troops tired less.

Source: actantial-moral roles (MAPAM®; Greimas, 1966; Jones and McBeth, 2010) coded by IPSE, composition of each channel.

# THE METAPHOR CASTS THE ROLES




Army, soldiers, mission, general, marshal: military vocabulary hands out roles that everyone understands without explanation. Janones is the general, Lula the marshal, each subscriber a volunteer soldier.

The metaphor says who is in charge, what is expected of each person and when the task is over. The war frame appears in 23% of the Exército's messages, against 9% in the Tropa, which calls itself a troop but speaks like a court.

It also engages. Posts with metaphors get about 21% more comments (Prabhakaran, Rei and Shutova, 2021), and each word about the opposing group raises the odds of sharing by 67% (Rathje, Van Bavel and van der Linden, 2021). In covid-19, war was the top metaphor on Twitter (Wicke and Bolognesi, 2020), and conflict dominated the conversation about the pandemic (Firmino, 2022).

Source: military words used literally (counted in Portuguese: exército, missão, soldados, tropa...), as a share of the Exército do Lula's messages; generic frames from the IPSE Orikom® catalog; literature cited.

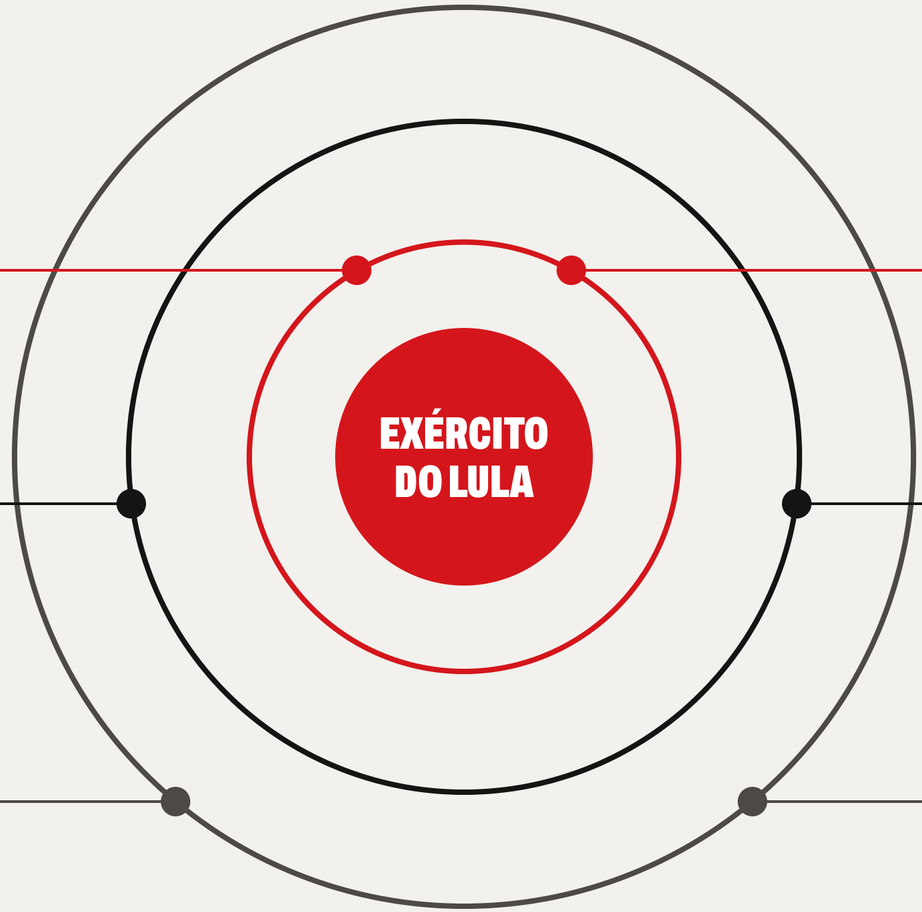
# THE ECOSYSTEM

The channel was the command center. The noise came from profiles of every kind: the candidate, allies, artists, collectives, fan clubs, the press and millions of anonymous users.

NETWORK

# ONE COMMAND, THREE RINGS

The farther from the center, the more a profile acted on its own, with its own voice and its own audience.




**CANDIDATE AND GENERAL**
@lulaoficial
@andrejanones

**PARTY AND POLITICIANS**
@ptbrasil
@gleisihoffmann
@guilhermeboulos.oficial
@simonetebet
Erika Hilton, with her own channel
Ana Elisa, deputy-elect (PT-MG)
PT deputies on X

**FAN CLUBS AND HUMOR**
fan-club accounts
humor and “reality show” pages
anonymous activist profiles

**SATELLITES OF THE EXÉRCITO**
@exercitodolulaoficial
@janones.apoio
@exercitodaesquerda.oficial
@brasilcomlula

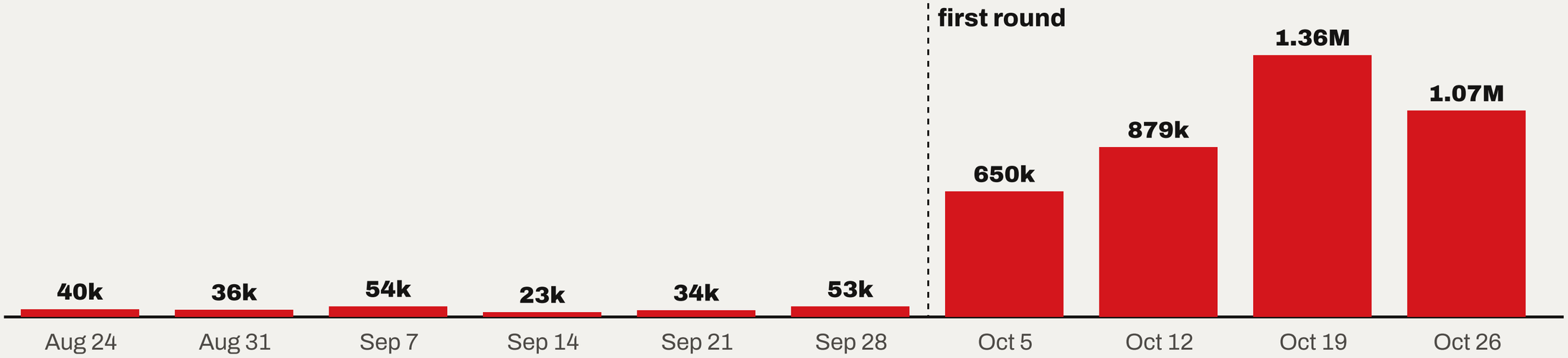
**CULTURE AND COLLECTIVES**
@342artes
@342amazonia
@midianinja
@caetanoveloso
@gildovigor

**PRESS**
Folha, O Globo, g1, GloboNews
Metrópoles, UOL, Fantástico
The New York Times

Source: owners of the links the channel told people to blow up (checked on Instagram) and profiles that most repeated the missions in the IPSE Orikom® database. Personal profiles of anonymous users are not named.

# THE CHANNEL MULTIPLIED THE GENERAL'S INSTAGRAM

Median likes per post of André Janones on Instagram, by week (k = thousand, M = million).




From about 43,000 likes per post before the runoff to more than 1 million in the final stretch: a reach 33 times larger on the posts the channel told people to blow up. The channel and the profile worked as a pair: the profile produced, the channel accelerated.

Source: posts by @andrejanones in the IPSE Orikom® database, likes from the latest collection; weeks starting on Monday.

# THE CONTEXT

The same tactic failed on the other side. What made it work in Lula’s camp was the moment, made of the climate of opinion, the common sense of the campaign, the morality at stake and the map of leaders.

## CLIMATE

# CLIMATE OF OPINION: A CAMP THAT FELT DEFEATED

### AFTER THE FIRST ROUND

Lula 1.9 points behind, the highest abstention since 1998 (21.08%) and a camp that blamed the defeat on the voters: regionalism, values, social media. IPSE put the chance of a comeback at 20% on Oct 13.

### THE SPIRAL REVERSED

Those who feel they are a minority fall silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). The channel gave Lula's voters daily proof that they were the majority on social media: trending topics, millions of subscribers, the press talking about the Exército. Silence turned into voice.

### FEAR HAD A TARGET

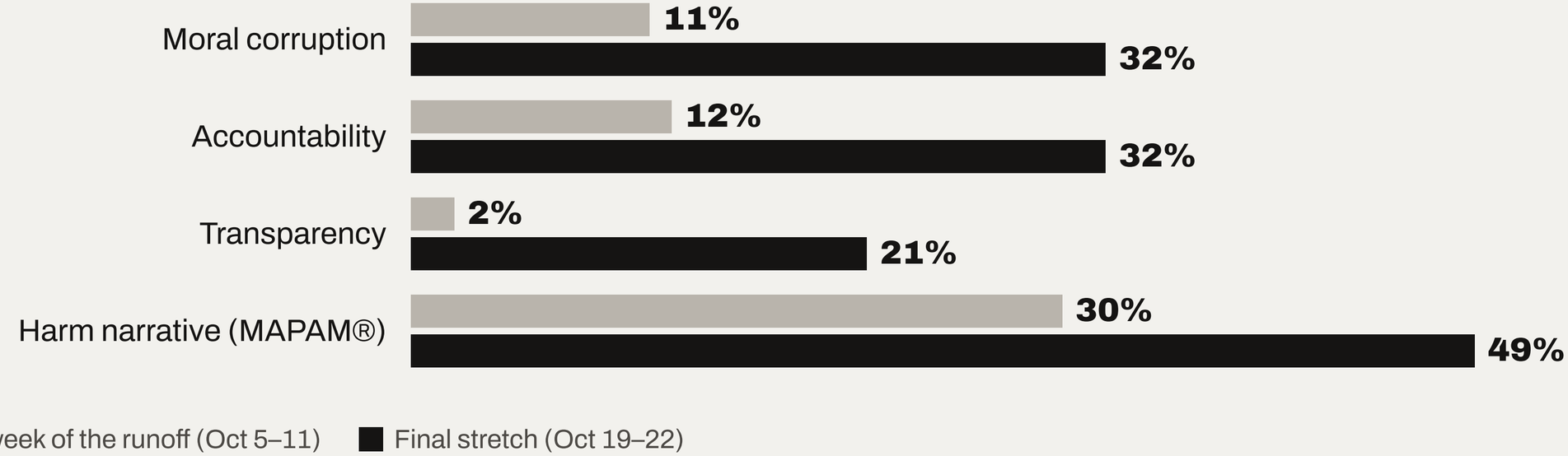
In the Quaest poll of Oct 10–13, fear of each side was tied at 43%, and fear of the Bolsonaros was rising among young people, from 39% to 45%. There was material to mobilize against, without having to convince anyone to like anyone.

Without a wounded and fearful camp, the call finds no one to answer it. The tactic is the spark; the climate is the fuel.

Sources: TSE; Quaest (BR-08729/2026); IPSE studies of Oct 5, Oct 13 and Oct 14, 2026.

# COMMON SENSE: THE WEEK OF CORRUPTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Share of the interactions about the election, both camps combined, that mobilized each frame on the social networks monitored by IPSE Orikom®.




The Exército's missions rode this common sense: **#AbreOSigiloFlavio**, the mission with the largest echo, demanded transparency. Lula's camp led the thematic turn, with accountability rising from 10% to 36% of its interactions. The tactic does not invent the topic; it accelerates the topic the public is already ready to discuss.

Source: indicators by camp and time window, final predictive study by IPSE (Oct 24, 2026), IPSE Orikom® database.

# ANGER CHANGED SIDES

| SHARE OF EACH CAMP'S INTERACTIONS | FLÁVIO'S CAMP | LULA'S CAMP |
|---|---|---|
| Anger | 32% → 4% | 2% → 4% |
| Conflict | 71% → 55% | 34% → 42% |
| Pride | 7% → 13% | 22% → 26% |
| Indignation | 31% → 33% | 16% → 40% |
| Accountability | 12% → 18% | 7% → 36% |
| Moral corruption | 12% → 20% | 16% → 35% |

Before the first round, anger was present in 32% of the interactions of Flávio's camp and in 2% of those of Lula's camp. In the final stretch, it fell to 4% and drew level with the other side. Lula's camp went the opposite way: it grew indignant (16% → 40%), began to demand accountability (7% → 36%) and to denounce the opponent's moral corruption (16% → 35%), and it rallied people, with civic participation going from 4% to 13% of its interactions, against 1% on Flávio's side. The asymmetric mobilization changed sides, and the Janones method fit into that shift.

Source: indicators by camp on the social networks monitored by IPSE Orikom®, as a share of interactions, from Sep 27 to Oct 3 (before the first round) and from Oct 19 to 22 (final stretch); final predictive study by IPSE (Oct 24, 2026).

# AGAINST THE ALGORITHM, THE TROOPS

## WHAT IS KNOWN

On Oct 15, the TSE ordered Meta to treat both campaigns equally, under a fine of R$ 500,000 a day, after the company's artificial intelligence generated artwork for "Flávio 22" and refused identical requests for Lula. The full court upheld the order the next day. On Oct 21, independent UN rapporteurs asked Meta to check whether moderation, recommendation and AI had restricted one side, citing interrupted campaign accounts, altered reach on Instagram and differences in the search for WhatsApp channels.

Meta denies any preference, speaks of technical failures and says that about 70% of the restrictions on Lula's accounts came from decisions by the TSE itself. The justice in charge of the case also saw no proof of intent. Nothing has been proven.

## WHAT THE DATA SHOW

Even with the contested distribution, and with the 2024 rule that removes political profiles from recommendations, the Exército's 121 missions added up to 48.6 million interactions, with the first post 1.4 minutes after the order.

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**Thousands acting in the same minute do not wait for the algorithm to recommend them. They create the spike that the algorithm is then forced to read.**

Sources: TSE (tse.jus.br); Correio da Manhã and O Liberal, Oct 15 and 16, 2026; Poder360, Bloomberg Línea and Congresso em Foco, Oct 21, 2026; SBT News (Meta's response). Echo in the IPSE Orikom® database.

# THE MAP OF LEADERS

## LULA

The marshal. Four decades of accumulated affection, the authority to ask. He joined the channel in the final stretch and gave the troops the ultimate reward: speaking to them directly.

## JANONES

The general. A coordinator, not a broadcaster: from Oct 18 to 24 he published 23 posts and gathered 34.9 million interactions, about 1.5 million per post. He coordinates other people's audiences.

## NIKOLAS

The broadcaster. In the same period, 212 posts and 63.6 million interactions, about 300,000 per post. He speaks to his own audience, which is huge, but does not set it in motion together.

## FLÁVIO

The candidate who concentrated fear. A 54% rejection rate, the highest in the race in the October Quaest poll, and a run of scandals that offered the opposing troops a hashtag a day.

To persuade, what counts is the speaker's audience. To mobilize, what counts is the network that acts together. Nikolas won the contest for reach; Janones won the contest for coordination.

Source: official profiles in the IPSE Orikom® database (Oct 18 to 24, 2026), final predictive study by IPSE; Quaest (BR-08729/2026).

# BOLSONARISM

WhatsApp was the territory of the Brazilian right for almost a decade. In 2026, the left used the tool better, and Bolsonarism repeated a model that no longer worked.

2018

# THREE ELECTIONS, TWO MODELS

### 2018 · THE DIFFUSE NETWORK

Hundreds of WhatsApp groups, content produced at scale and passed on from group to group, the candidate's "good morning" audio messages to activists. A decentralized distribution machine, built on fear and indignation (Evangelista and Bruno, 2019; Cesarino, 2020).

### 2022 · THE MIRROR

Janones called his own method "reverse Bolsonarism", and it earned the nickname **janonismo cultural** (cultural Janonism), a play on the right's "cultural Marxism" (Cesarino, 2022): fighting relentlessly for attention on social media by turning the weapons of the radical right against it (De Paiva, 2024). Janones adopted the name for a book (2023).

### 2026 · THE COMMAND

A broadcast channel with a single voice, verifiable orders, set times and a score handed back. It no longer copies Bolsonarism: it inverts the tone (belonging instead of anger) and the structure (central command, distributed voice).

Sources: IPSE press and literature survey (53 sources, Oct 30, 2026); Evangelista and Bruno (2019); Cesarino (2020, 2022); Janones (2023); De Paiva (2024).

# 2026 BY THE SAME YARDSTICK

| | EXÉRCITO DO LULA | TROPA DO FLÁVIO | FLÁVIO, MOBILIZATION CHANNEL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscribers on Oct 19–20, measured by IPSE | 5.42 million | 2.04 million | — |
| End-of-campaign subscribers, per the channel | about 10 million | about 2 million | — |
| Messages per day in the runoff, Oct 7 to 25 | 171 | 33 | 6 |
| Messages whose main function is a mission | 48% | 42% | 14% |
| Interactions per mission, median | 116,000 | | 9,800 (both channels) |
| Median delay until the first post | 1.4 min | | 2.3 hours |
| Attack as the main function | 2% | 17% | 18% |
| Dominant format | short text and audio | video (44%) | long text and image (43%) |

From Oct 20 to 25, the Exército grew by closing the channel until each target was met: 6 and 7 million on Oct 20, 8.8 million on the morning of Oct 23, “only 100,000 to go” to reach 10 million that same night. The Tropa kept repeating “we are 2 million” on Oct 21 and 23.

Source: channels collected and coded by IPSE; echo in the IPSE Orikom® database; end-of-campaign subscribers as announced by the channels themselves. The comparison holds for public action; closed groups are not measured here.

# HOW BOLSONARISM DIFFERED

### DISTRIBUTING, NOT SYNCHRONIZING

The Tropa sent videos to be forwarded (44% of the messages). This is the 2018 model, which no longer works. WhatsApp limited forwarding in 2019 and 2020, and the TSE banned mass messaging. And after two elections of quarrels, half of users avoid talking politics in the family group chat and 29% have already left groups because of it: only positive content gets through.

### ARGUING, NOT ORDERING

Flávio's channel wrote long, didactic bulletins that explained the reason before asking. Whoever receives a bulletin reads it; whoever receives an order acts.

### DEFENDING, NOT BELONGING

The Bolsonarist morality of 2026 is a siege morality: the STF, the TSE and Moraes as subverted authority, Lula as the aggressor, the people as the victim. It is the morality of those who feel cornered. The camp that fought the most in family group chats reached 2026 entrenched, and without a sense of moral superiority after the Banco Master and Dark Horse cases.

### A BROADCASTER, NO GENERAL

Nikolas, the right's largest broadcaster, created the Tropa but concentrated the reach on himself. The Tropa followed the Exército's calendar, peaking on the night of the Band debate (98 messages on Oct 18, against 374 in the Exército), at a level 5 times lower, and stopped on election day. The Exército kept posting.

Sources: channels collected and coded by IPSE (Oct 7 to 25, 2026); WhatsApp (Jan 21, 2019; Apr 7, 2020); TSE Resolution 23.610/2019; InternetLab and Rede Conhecimento Social (2025), interviews from 2024.

# WHY IT WORKS

Five mechanisms explain the result. None is new; what was new was bringing all five together in one WhatsApp channel, with one command, in three weeks.

## SYNCHRONY

# SYNCHRONIZATION: COUPLING, SYNCHRONY, EXPLOSION

Kuramoto (1975) showed that a population of oscillators, each at its own pace, suddenly falls into phase when the coupling between them crosses a threshold. In his doctoral thesis (PUC-Rio, 2022), Leonardo Magalhães Firmino, CEO of IPSE, carried the model over to framing: synchronization is the collective adjustment of the frequency with which a network activates the same frame.

The Janones channel is a coupling machine. IPSE measured the three signals: coupling (the share of missions carried out), synchrony (the delay until the first post) and explosion (the spikes of echo).

The most important lesson came after the vote. At the model's pace, the comeback would have taken 70 days; it happened in 21. Synchronization is a threshold phenomenon: nothing happens for a while, then everything happens at once.

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**Whoever replicates the method has to plan for the threshold, not for linear growth.**

Sources: Kuramoto (1975); Firmino, L. M. (2022), *Comunicação política, métodos computacionais e pandemia*, PhD thesis in Communication, PUC-Rio (maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/58015/58015.PDF); Firmino, L. M., "Não é foto, é projeção", *Intervalo de Confiança*, Oct 28, 2026.

# THE OTHER FOUR MECHANISMS

## ORGANIZED CONNECTIVE ACTION

**Bennett and Segerberg (2012)**

The organization provides the frame and the time; each person acts in their own voice. Command and autonomy feed each other.

## COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AND RITUAL

**Bandura (2000); Collins (2004); Páez et al. (2015); Lindström et al. (2021)**

A score handed back within minutes triggers the reward circuit, like a like does, and emotion felt in synchrony strengthens group identity. Each person believes the group can succeed, and comes back the next day.

## CONTAGION AMONG CLOSE TIES

**Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955); Centola (2010); Bond et al. (2012)**

Voting is decided by reinforcement from people you know. The ready-made text sent privately carries mobilization outside the bubble.

## AGENDA ACROSS MEDIA

**McGregor and Molyneux (2020); Epstein and Robertson (2015)**

What rises in trends and searches becomes a story for the press, which hands the story back to the public that does not follow politics.

# WHAT THE PRESS SAID, AND WHERE IPSE DISAGREES

| CLAIM | WHO HOLDS IT | IPSE'S READING |
|---|---|---|
| **Janones is the engine of the comeback** | Part of the press (FGV, Agência Pública, UOL) | The channel set in motion those who were outside the race; the reason came from the context. Mobilization acts on turnout, not on persuasion. |
| **The mobilization ran out of steam after the Band debate** | Readings of the polls in the week of Oct 19 | It lost volume, not reach: the channel posted less, but the missions of the final stretch still added up to 17.0 million interactions, the second-largest total of the campaign. What slowed down was voting intention in the polls. |
| **The Tropa do Flávio was idle** | Left-wing press | The comparison holds for public action. Flávio's base mobilizes in closed groups, which no public study measures. |
| **Nikolas won on social media** | Right-wing press | He won on reach. To mobilize, what counts is the network that acts together, and there the Exército won. |
| **The phenomenon is unprecedented** | Part of the press | It is not. Obama's 2008 campaign already gave volunteers tasks, points and a score (Kreiss, 2012; McKenna and Han, 2014), and the 2012 campaign swapped enthusiasm for data, with voter modeling and message testing (Kreiss, 2016). Janones did the same with the tools of 2026. |

Sources: survey of 53 press and analysis texts (IPSE, Oct 30, 2026); studies and texts published by IPSE from Oct 18 to 29, 2026. Where they disagree, this manual follows the reading published by IPSE.

PROTOCOL.

# HOW TO REPLICATE

The method in steps, the schedule of a campaign day and the contextual conditions that must be in place before starting.

# THE PROTOCOL IN EIGHT STEPS

**1**

### BUILD THE COMMAND

A broadcast channel with a single voice, registered by the campaign from day one.

**2**

### FIND THE GENERAL

Someone with a recognizable voice, available all day, who is not the candidate.

**3**

### SET A PUBLIC TARGET

A subscriber count announced and counted out loud; the channel grows through the target.

**4**

### GIVE ORDERS WITH A TIME

Every mission with an exact term, a time and a target. Never a vague order.

**5**

### SEPARATE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

Pride and hope for the troops; indignation goes into the hashtag, outward.

**6**

### HAND BACK THE SCORE

Within minutes, with a screenshot, a number and a news story. The task is worth the result people see.

**7**

### TAKE IT TO PRIVATE CHATS

A ready-made text for the family, group chats and one undecided voter per person.

**8**

### BRING IN THE LEADER

In the final stretch, the candidate speaks directly to the troops.

# A CAMPAIGN DAY

| | |
|---|---|
| **8 a.m.** | Good-morning audio message, the previous day's score, the morning's missions |
| **11 a.m.** | Blow up the candidate's video of the day |
| **1 p.m.** | Ready-made text for family and work group chats |
| **5 p.m.** | Subscriber target of the day, recruitment |
| **7 p.m.** | Livestream or broadcast, like before watching |
| **9–11 p.m.** | A hashtag at a set time, a burst of orders and the score |
| **Late night** | Only on decisive days: call those who are asleep, keep the livestream going |

Schedule built from the actual times of the Exército do Lula's missions (IPSE collector) and from the transcribed audio messages.

# BEFORE STARTING, CHECK THE CONTEXT

- [ ] **CLIMATE OF OPINION**
  A camp that feels defeated or silenced, and a short deadline before the decision.
- [ ] **MORAL FOUNDATIONS**
  Loyalty to the group inward; harm and injustice against the opponent outward.
- [ ] **MAP OF LEADERS**
  A beloved leader who lends authority, a general who coordinates and an opponent who makes mistakes.
- [ ] **COMMON SENSE**
  A topic the public is already ready to discuss, preferably about the opponent, that fits in a hashtag.
- [ ] **MAPAM®**
  An aggressor with a face, who concentrates fear, and a community that can be the victim.
- [ ] **RULES**
  A registered channel, nothing deleted, no invented facts, no bots. Clean troops are the ones that survive a lawsuit.

# THE TACTIC IS THE SPARK. THE CONTEXT IS THE FUEL.

IPSE Global measures mobilization as it happens: it collects the channels, transcribes the audio, codes every message, measures the echo of every order on social media and reads the context with the same catalog of indicators. That is what this manual does with 2026, and what we can do with the next campaign.

IPSE

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ipse.global

# METHOD AND SOURCES

**Channels.** Nine WhatsApp channels of the two campaigns followed by the IPSE collector since Oct 18–19, 2026, with earlier history retrieved through the platform itself (the Exército's since Oct 2, the Tropa's since Oct 7 and the others' since late September, the oldest messages WhatsApp returns); text, audio, video and image of each post, with audio and video transcribed. The Jair Bolsonaro channel, with 1.25 million subscribers, was also followed, but WhatsApp does not return its history.

**Coding.** Each post coded with the mobilization codebook (function, mission, structure, script, narrative, register) and with the categories of the IPSE Orikom® catalog for emotions, frames, moral foundations and MAPAM®.

**Echo.** For each hashtag and search term sent by a channel, the social media posts in the IPSE Orikom® database containing the term, from 6 hours before to 72 hours after the order. It is a floor: it only measures what is public and what the platform collects.

**Context.** Polls registered with the TSE, results and origin of the votes by polling station (TSE; IPSE), IPSE Orikom® indicators by camp and week, and a survey of 53 press and analysis texts.

**Simulation.** Tekoá®, the IPSE synthetic population: 7.1 million agents anchored in the polling stations (TSE, IBGE and the 2022 Census), linked in a five-layer network (polling station, municipality, church, state and digital networks), with Kuramoto synchronization between neighbors. Calibration ran 320,000 simulations; on the eve of the election, 500 runs used the whole population.

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