Abstract

What makes populist rhetoric on social media, especially when coming from populists in power, so engaging? The study proposes that populists engage with citizens thoroughly by relying on divisive and plebiscitary rhetorical elements. These two dimensions of populist rhetoric help populists in power to advance their agenda, manipulate public opinion, and even dismantle democratic institutions. Through a comparative analysis of an original collection of 136,141 tweets from 24 Latin American presidents, the study reveals that tweets from populist presidents contain significantly more divisive and plebiscitary content than those from non-populists. The findings show evidence of a substantial positive correlation between divisive content and increased online engagement. This study contributes to the understanding of how populists in power use social media to advance their political strategy, with the potential implications for democratic erosion, especially in emerging democracies.

Key Words

Populism, rhetoric, social media, polarization, Latin America

Populists in Power and Their Online Engagement: Evidence from Presidential Twitter in Latin America

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Introduction

Questions surrounding how populists gain, keep, and lose power have fueled an explosion of research over the past two decades. Scholars tend to agree that the ways in which populists connect with citizens—through their messaging, distinctive language style, and use of coded language—give them a distinct advantage over their rivals (Gerbaudo 2018). In particular, populists have highly integrated social media into their communications toolkit. Although most public officials have a significant social media presence, populists tend to shine on these platforms. Indeed, populist messages often generate high levels of online engagement (Cassell 2021; Hameleers 2020). What makes populist rhetoric, especially when coming from populists in power, so engaging?

Answering this question is theoretically relevant to understanding the specific rhetorical resources that populists in power use to create engagement and advance their policy objectives. Furthermore, a better understanding of the rhetoric of populists in power, and how effective they are in attracting engagement can shed new theoretical light on its potential consequences, including heightened polarization and threats to democratic stability. Considering that populists in power often challenge democratic norms and in-

stitutions. Thus, practical and normative benefits of unpacking their rhetorical resources on social media include the potential to strengthen democratic resilience by developing effective counter-narratives and digital interventions to promote democratic values.

Populists are known to leverage unique rhetoric to advance their agendas (Pappas 2019), manipulate public opinion (G. J. Love and Windsor 2018), and even dismantle democratic institutions (Cole and Schofer 2023). On social media, their strategies have received less attention. I propose that populists engage voters thoroughly by relying on specific rhetorical elements they employ. Building on the ideational approach to populism by Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) and Urbinati (2019)'s notion of direct representation in the context of populists in power, I test the effectiveness of populists in power usage of divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric on Twitter[1] for creating user engagement.

Relying on a unique dataset of tweets (N=136,141) sourced directly from Latin American presidents, this study conducts a comparative analysis of tweets from both populist and non-populist presidents while in office, focusing on their respective levels of engagement. The results reveal that tweets from populist presidents exhibit a greater presence of divisive and plebiscitary content compared to those from their non-populist counterparts. Although both forms of rhetoric are present in populists in power's social media communication, other kinds of content are proportionally higher. However, the paper finds evidence suggesting that in most cases, tweets with divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric are positively correlated with higher levels of online engagement.

The paper begins by offering a theoretical discussion on the divisive and plebiscitary dimensions of populist rhetoric. It then assesses our current knowledge of how populists use social media and the impact of their rhetoric on online engagement. The third section details the data collection process for presidential tweets and the inclusion of variables from other sources, enhancing the robustness of the analysis. This is followed by an explanation of the relative frequency analysis used to identify divisive and plebiscitary content in populist presidents' tweets, the development of dictionaries for observing the proportion of tweets containing these elements, and the specification of a series of mixed-

[1]It is of public domain that Twitter has officially changed its name to X, for consistency I will keep calling it Twitter.

effects negative binomial regressions. The results section presents the main findings of the paper. The study concludes with a discussion of these findings and their theoretical and practical implications, and it offers recommendations for future research on the topic.

Populist in Power Rhetoric: Two Faces of the Same Coin

Populism, still a contested term, is frequently defined as a "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the pure people versus the corrupt elite, and argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of "the people" (Mudde 2004:23). This definition is frequently associated with the communicative style employed by populists, shaping the concept of populist rhetoric. According to Busby, Gubler, and Hawkins (2019), a politician is characterized as populist if he/she adopts a rhetoric that encompasses some or all of these elements. Scholars have primed an ideational approach to populism, defining it as a set of specific ideas commonly found in populist discourse. Accordingly, Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018:3) have identified three key elements within populist rhetoric: a) a Manichean and moral cosmology; b) the portrayal of the people as a homogeneous and virtuous community; and c) the depiction of the elite as a corrupt and self-serving entity.

In addition to the ideational approach present in populist discourse, Urbinati theorizes that populists claim to be a direct representation of the people (Urbinati 2019). Thus, populists—especially those in power—adopt rhetoric that emulates a state of a permanent electoral campaign (Mazzoleni 2008: 58), asserting that they are the only ones who genuinely represent the people; the very same people who have given them their full support; and also making calls to strengthen and expand that support. Following Urbinati's theoretical contribution, Carlin and G. Love n.d. have identified this dimension of populist rhetoric as a plebiscitary one. This dimension of populist rhetoric serves to consolidate their majority but also to exclude those who oppose their policies.

Rhetoric in the case of populists in power is more than words, it is a key element of their political strategy to move their agenda forward. Populists aim to achieve their goals through a two-fold strategy of dividing and excluding. As noted by Pappas (2019), populists in power "see advantages in pressing conflict rather than pursuing consensus" as it makes more evident and stronger the cleavage between the people and the elite. Capitalizing on these perceived disparities is crucial for them. Populists leverage every resource to amass support and solidify a majority, whether real or perceived. This tactic allows them to readily downplay and dismiss opposition to their policies. From their viewpoint, any disagreement with their agenda is seen as an assault by the elite on the virtuous people. They contend that defending the people against such perceived threats necessitates consolidating a majority behind them, thus self-proclaiming themselves as the genuine representative of the people (Urbinati 2013).

I argue that to understand better how populists in power move forward with their agenda, we must delve further into this two-fold strategy. On the divisive side, those who agree with them are part of the 'true people' who often have to face the threats of the corrupt elite. Populists resort to praising the good people that they claim to represent and berating the corrupt elite. This dividing dimension creates a dynamic that permeates society and divides it along a single dimension into two visible camps: 'Us' versus 'Them' with the potential for eroding democracy in what McCoy, Rahman, and Somer (2018) have identified as pernicious polarization.

Once populists have made clear who belongs to each of these camps, they initiate a permanent campaign to garner support from 'the people'. This aspect of their strategy aims to consolidate an electoral and popular majority, as identified by Urbinati (2019), characterized by a state of permanent campaigning (Mazzoleni 2008). For populists in power, while amassing support is crucial, creating a perception of widespread popular support is essential to their strategy. Such a perception enables them to advance their policy agenda with minimal opposition and often without accountability (Pappas 2019).

Divisive and plebiscitary dimensions feed into each other. Promoting division creates two distinct camps. The populist then calls for support from the 'pure people' camp.

Since populists are effective at public opinion manipulation (G. J. Love and Windsor 2018), the critical aspect of this strategy is not necessarily the actual support gained but the claim of representing the people. Armed with this alleged support, populists can dismiss opposition to their policies by denouncing the 'corrupt elite' and extolling the 'pure people.' If feasible, populists in power might bypass institutional channels, as Webb (2013) notes, by asserting that their policies serve the people's best interests. When institutional channels are an insurmountable barrier, populists may turn to direct democracy instruments like referendums, public consultations, and popular initiatives (Olivas Osuna 2021). Alternatively, they might focus on building a majority to secure enough institutional support (e.g., loyal judges, representatives, or senators) to pass their policies. In extreme cases, they might attempt to use the alleged popular support to dismantle democratic institutions that limit their power (Pappas 2019; Cole and Schofer 2023).

Throughout the processes of bypassing institutions, filling them with loyalists, implementing direct democracy instruments, and dismantling institutions, populists employ the dual strategy outlined above, which is particularly evident in their rhetoric. Scholars have extensively analyzed the divisive component of populist rhetoric (Çinar, Stokes, and Uribe 2020; Donadio 2017; Hawkins 2009; Hawkins, Aguilar, et al. 2019), yet the use of rhetoric by populists to claim direct representation of the people remains underexplored. This study aims to uncover the presence and prevalence of both the divisive and plebiscitary dimensions in the rhetoric of populists in power, specifically focusing on digital communication. While populists in power may not consistently employ populist rhetoric, I hypothesize that their messages will exhibit more divisive and plebiscitary characteristics compared to those of their non-populist counterparts. In contrast, non-populists in power typically strive for consensus among different societal sectors. They do not resort to berating the people or excessively praising the elite, maintaining a more moderate stance towards these groups. It is also expected that non-populists in power will not attempt to portray themselves as embodying the direct representation of the people.

Populist on Social Media: The Shape of their Rhetoric and Online Engagement

The increased use of social media platforms by politicians has provided them with additional channels to disseminate their rhetoric. As a result, several scholars have directed their attention to the use of social media by populist executives, leaders, legislators, and parties. Social media has been shown to assist populists in power in establishing unmediated communication with the public (Boucher and Thies 2019; Gerbaudo 2018; Urbinati 2019)—even when this communication perpetuates other forms of top-down relations between the populist and the people (Waisbord and Amado 2017). Some scholars have demonstrated that populist actors, such as candidates and party leaders, consistently exploit social media to disseminate their rhetoric (see Blassnig et al. 2019; Cassell 2021; Engesser et al. 2017; Gründl 2020; Hameleers 2020; Krämer 2017; Waisbord and Amado 2017) in most cases showing anti-elites and people-centric discourses.

Populists in Power and Social Media Communication

Although social media as a political communication tool and populism in office are both growing phenomena with significant political consequences, there remains a scarcity of scholarship exploring their intersection. Much of the existing literature focuses on populists in general—especially parties and party leaders—, often overlooking the significant advantage that a direct communication channel with citizens provides for populists in power, enabling them to disseminate their rhetoric and advance their policies. However, it is valuable to consider the contributions of previous work in examining the relationship between populism and social media communication.

Ernst et al. (2017) propose three dimensions to assess the use of populist rhetoric on social media. In their analysis of populist parties in six Western countries, they observed that people-centrism and anti-elitism were not commonly present on social media. However, these findings were nuanced by the fact that people-centrism and anti-elitism were more prevalent among extreme parties on both the left and right ends of the political spec-

trum. Conversely, Engesser et al. (2017), who analyzed party leaders' messages on social media, found that people-centric discourse is prevalent across various types of politicians. However, right-wing populists show more animosity against media elites, whereas left-wing attacks are directed at economic elites. Gründl (2020), studying German-speaking social media messages from parties, leaders, and parliamentarians, revealed a prominent use of people-centric and anti-elitism messages among populist parties in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Krämer (2017) suggests that right-wing populists specifically use the internet as a communication tool. The author contends that for right-wing populists internet communication is used to circumvent traditional media while erecting themselves as representatives of 'the people,' and excluding the outgroups.

These works have greatly contributed to our understanding of the use of social media by populist actors and parties. However, the majority of these studies focus on Europe, where the rise of populism is intertwined with the reconfiguration of party systems (Vachudova 2021). In regions like the US and Latin America, where populism tends to be more personalistic, its growth aligns with the emergence of individual populist figures—Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Donald Trump in the US, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and Javier Milei in Argentina are examples of the highly personalistic shape that populism adopts. This distinction is perhaps best encapsulated by a response given by Bolsonaro to a journalist's inquiry about potential political party alliances during the 2018 Brazilian presidential election: *Meu partido é o povo* (The people are my party). Furthermore, none of these studies analyze social media messages from chief executives. I posit that populists in office differ fundamentally from populist candidates or party leaders. Once elected, populists utilize the previously described twofold strategy to advance their policy agenda. Given the direct communication channels social media provides, these platforms could present an extraordinary opportunity for populists in power to amplify their strategy.

Much of the literature analyzing social media use by populists in power originates from American Politics, and is largely influenced by the 'Trump phenomenon.' Kreis (2017) analyzes about a month's worth of tweets (N=200) from Donald Trump, identifying attempts to portray homogeneous people and cast negative images of out-groups. Ott and

Dickinson 2020 demonstrates how Trump employs Twitter to spread impulsive and uncivil messages, often repetitively. These messages frequently target to discredit perceived adversaries, including journalists and media outlets, whom Trump labels as 'enemies of the American people.' Additionally, his tweets employ what these authors define as 'demeaning'—derogatory statements (Ott and Dickinson 2020:615) intended to belittle political elites. Adopting a comparative approach, Cervi, Garcıa, and Marın-Lladó (2021) analyze tweets from Donald Trump (N=1,044) and Jair Bolsonaro (N=698) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings indicate that, even amid the health crisis, these populists maintained rhetoric that glorified the people while denigrating the elite.

The study by Waisbord and Amado (2017) represents the only systematic attempt to analyze the rhetoric of populists in power on social media from a comparative perspective and beyond Western democracies. These authors offer valuable insights into the objectives of populist leaders when using social media. They highlight how populists use these platforms to perpetuate a top-down broadcasting-like type of communication with citizens. They also find that populists in power display aggressive rhetoric against political rivals and portray the media as biased against them.

Online engagement with populist rhetoric

Previous research has shown that digital media might have an impact on democracy by hindering political trust, fostering populism, and increasing polarization. While such effects have been observed in established democracies (Lorenz-Spreen et al. 2023), we cannot ignore similar effects on emerging democracies where populist leaders are in power, such as those in Latin America. Therefore, it is relevant to learn how effective populists are at engaging with users on social media in order to assess the effects of their rhetoric more broadly. If populists, especially those in power, are effective at heightening online engagement, their divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric might gain more traction among users and extend its influence further.

I define online political engagement as any reaction to digital content that has the potential to generate broader political consequences, regardless of the effort or resources

required. These activities can range from low-effort actions, such as liking or sharing a post, to high-effort activities. Examples of high-effort activities include writing an email to a representative or contributing to a blog Groshek and Koc-Michalska 2017. The political consequences of such engagement are equally diverse. They range from feeding social media algorithms, which may lead to content going viral, to mobilizing thousands to protest against a dictator, as observed during the Arab Spring.

In a valuable scholarly piece on this topic, Cassell (2021) uses tweets to test levels of online engagement with a populist frame. In this context, the populist frame is characterized by an antagonistic division between the glorified 'people' and the evil 'elites.' Through a content analysis of both populist and non-populist party leaders and candidates, Cassell (2021) finds that social media users engage more with populist rhetoric than with technocratic and pluralistic alternatives. These findings are in line with those of Bobba (2019), who analyzed Facebook usage by the Italian right-wing populist party, *Lega Nord*. Bobba (2019) reveals that populism, especially from the party leader, is often expressed in an emotional style that is positively correlated with higher levels of 'likeability.' These observations raise significant concerns. As Hameleers 2020 highlights, the inherent characteristics of populist rhetoric, along with the continuous interaction between populists and their supporters on social media, may exacerbate the risk of widespread polarization.

Populists in Power and Online Engagement

Following these works, I argue that populists in power use social media communication to generate online engagement. Previous scholarship showed that populists use social media to generate online engagement, even in its simplest forms like likes and retweets (Nahon 2015). This study argues that populists in power, in particular, use divisive and plebiscitarian rhetorical resources to achieve this objective. Based on the idea that populists look to increase their visibility (Cassell 2021) due to the algorithmic nature of social media (Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic 2015; Barberá 2015; Groshek and Koc-

Michalska 2017; Hong and Kim 2016) and to foster the perception of widespread support, I expect that populists in power would resort more on divisive and plebiscitarian rhetoric than their non-populists counterparts. This argument is presented in the following two hypotheses:

H1: Populists in power will display more divisive rhetoric in their social media communications than their non-populist counterparts.

H2: Populists in power will display more plebiscitarian rhetoric in their social media communications than their non-populist counterparts.

Creating division and a sense of broad support align with the populists' strategy in power: to delineate a clear division between 'the pure people' and the 'evil elite' and to display an apparent direct representation of the people. Given the findings of Cassell (2021) and Bobba (2019), and considering the prominent position of populists in power, it is likely that their social media communications will attract significant online engagement. While these studies have often treated populist rhetoric as a monolithic artifact, I propose a different approach. A nuanced understanding of its effectiveness on social media, particularly for those in power, can be achieved by viewing it as inherently dualistic. Hence, online engagement with divisive and plebiscitary messages is likely to differ from that with other types of messages, and even among the messages themselves. Divisive messages, due to their emotionally charged nature, are expected to draw more engagement than other communication forms. However, plebiscitary messages, which explicitly claim or solicit support for the populist in power, are likely to garner even higher levels of engagement than their divisive counterparts. These expectations are translated into the following hypotheses:

H3: Messages with divisive rhetoric will generate more engagement than other messages.

H4: Messages with plebiscitarian rhetoric will generate more engagement than other messages.

H5: Messages with plebiscitarian rhetoric will generate more engagement than divisive rhetoric.

Previous works have also called our attention to the fact that populists often resort to nationalistic rhetoric to elicit support (Jenne, Hawkins, and Silva 2021). As such, I would expect this kind of rhetoric to generate more online engagement. This expectation:

H6: Messages with nationalistic rhetoric will generate more engagement than other messages.

Data

To empirically test the theoretical claims above, I use data and meta-data from an original collection of tweets (n = 136,141) published by 24 Latin American presidents—6 populists and 18 non-populists—while in office between 2009 and 2022[2]. Although Twitter is not the most used social media platform in Latin America, it is the preferred outlet for politicians and those interested in discussing political matters[3] (Ausserhofer and Maireder, 2013). For instance, presidents from the largest Latin American countries, such as Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, Gustavo Petro, Gabriel Boric, and Alberto Fernández, have more followers on Twitter than on Facebook—the most popular platform in the region. In some cases, the difference is nearly double. Furthermore, Saldaña et al. 2017 found that Latin American journalists use Twitter more than Facebook for daily newsgathering and journalistic work.

I focus on Latin America because it presents an opportunity to examine the rhetoric of populists in power across the political spectrum. Populism in Latin America has typically been left-wing, economic, and inclusive (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013); however, figures like Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil illustrate instances of right-wing and exclusionary populism in the region (Hunter and Power 2019). The region also has many examples of non-populist presidents on both sides of the political spectrum. Social media platforms are widespread in Latin America, with approximately 70 percent of adults in the region

[2]Note that for some presidents, it took several months or even years after taking office before they started using Twitter. For presidents who were still in office, I stopped collecting tweets on December 31, 2022. In the case of Nicolás Maduro, collection stopped in December 2021 due to the lack of presidential approval data, a variable needed for the analysis

[3]Recent changes in the ownership of Twitter may alter this trend in the future. However, it is likely that politicians will use any new dominant platform for political discussion in a similar manner, particularly populists in power.

having social media accounts, according to the AmericasBarometer (Lupu, Zechmeister, and Bustamante 2019).

The collection of tweets was gathered through the Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) using the R package academictwitteR (Barrie and Ho 2021) . Chief Executives were classified as non-populist or populist according to the 'Global Populism Database (GPD): Populism Dataset for Leaders 1.0' by Team Populism Hawkins, Aguilar, et al. 2019. The GPD evaluates the degree to which chief executives adopt discursive elements of the ideational approach to populism, as described by Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018. The speeches are categorized as 'not populist,' 'somewhat populist,' 'populist,' or 'very populist,' based on their content. To ensure consistency, I only included executives whose speeches were classified as 'populist' or 'very populist' in the GPD. However, the only exception was Jair Bolsonaro, whose speeches are classified as 'somewhat populist' but who is described as a populist elsewhere (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2023; Smith 2020; Kestler 2022). Including Bolsonaro in the analysis offered more gains than losses. Firstly, he is the only right-wing president from a major country with a grade of at least somewhat populist in the GPD. Secondly, although beyond the scope of this study, his inclusion is an opportunity to compare and contrast the GPD classification against the content analysis of tweets presented here. Although only methodologically relevant, including Bolsonaro allows for testing the methods in Portuguese as well as in Spanish. Finally, since the analyses below are individual, including Bolsonaro does not introduce any bias. Table 1 presents a list of the executives' names, their classification, country, years in office while active on Twitter and the number of tweets collected. The list shows good variation in terms of location and levels of activity on Twitter.

Table 1: Populist and Non-populist Executives and their Twitter Activity

President	Type of Leader	Country	Years	No. Tweets	Handle
Michelle Bachelet	Non-populist	Chile	2016-2018	527	@mbachelet
Jair Bolsonaro	Populist	Brazil	2019-2022	9,417	@jairbolsonaro
Felipe Calderón	Non-populist	Mexico	2010-2012	2,500	@FelipeCalderon
Horacio Cartes	Non-populist	Paraguay	2013-2018	1,201	@Horacio_Cartes
Hugo Chávez	Populist	Venezuela	2010-2013	921	@chavezcandanga
Laura Chinchilla	Non-populist	Costa Rica	2010-2014	3,887	@Laura_Ch
Rafael Correa	Populist	Ecuador	2011-2017	4,358	@MashiRafael
Cristina Fernández	Non-populist	Argentina	2010-2015	8,500	@CFKArgentina
Pedro Pablo Kuczynski	Non-populist	Peru	2016-2018	795	@ppkamigo
Andrés Manuel López Obrador	Populist	Mexico	2018-2022	2,464	@lopezobrador_
Mauricio Macri	Non-populist	Argentina	2015-2019	3,126	@mauriciomacri
Nicolás Maduro	Populist	Venezuela	2013-2021	14,490	@NicolasMaduro
Evo Morales	Populist	Bolivia	2016-2019	13,097	@evoespueblo
Jimmy Morales	Non-populist	Guatemala	2015-2019	1,211	@jimmymoralesgt
Lenin Moreno	Non-populist	Ecuador	2017-2021	3,549	@Lenin
Enrique Peña Nieto	Non-populist	Mexico	2012-2018	3,880	@EPN
Otto Pérez Molina	Non-populist	Guatemala	2012-2015	3,117	ottoperezmolina
Sebastián Piñera	Non-populist	Chile	2011-2014, 2018-2020	2,663	@sebastianpinera
Dilma Rousseff	Non-populist	Brazil	2013-2016	5,974	@dilmabr
Juan Manuel Santos	Non-populist	Colombia	2011-2018	15,148	@JuanManSantos
Porfirio Lobo Sosa	Non-populist	Honduras	2011-2013	533	@PEPE_LOBO
Luis Guillermo Solís	Non-populist	Costa Rica	2014-2018	14,531	@luisguillermosr
Michel Temer	Non-populist	Brazil	2016-2018	6,319	@MichelTemer
Juan Carlos Varela	Non-populist	Panamá	2014-2019	13,933	@JC_Varela
Total				136,141	

The collection of tweets includes text and metadata associated with them. For the purposes of this study, the only metadata used are the date, retweet count, and like count. For the first part of the analysis, I only added a dichotomous variable to differentiate populists and non-populists based on the data from the Global Populist Database (Hawkins, Aguilar, et al. 2019).

To conduct the first analysis in the study, I included only original tweets or retweets with quotes from all 24 Latin American executives, encompassing both populist and non-populist. I excluded replies and retweets without quotes, as these types of tweets do not reflect a proactive effort to disseminate the executive's rhetoric.

For the second part, I focus solely on the populist cases to determine whether the adoption of populist rhetoric is associated with increased online engagement. Again, I only use original tweets and retweets with a quote posted by populist presidents. The total number of tweets for this analysis is 35,534, comprising 2,668 for Andrés Manuel López Obrador, 13,097 for Evo Morales, 4,358 for Rafael Correa, 921 for Hugo Chávez, and 14,490 for Nicolás Maduro. For this part of the analysis, I also include the dependent variables 'retweet count' and 'like count' as measures for online engagement, as this has become a standard practice in political science research (e.g. Cassell 2021) and elsewhere (e.g. Zhan, Zhao, and Ma 2023). As for independent variables, the analysis includes dichotomous variables to indicate the presence of three types of content: 'divisive', 'plebiscitary', and 'nationalistic' (see Methods section for details on how these variables were obtained). Additional variables in the analysis are 'Electoral Period' and 'Approval.' Major electoral events might influence levels of online engagement with chief executives. Thus, the 'Electoral Period' is a dichotomous variable indicating whether a tweet was posted within the three months before a major electoral event (e.g. national election, presidential election, legislative election, or plebiscite). Levels of approval might as well have an impact on whether citizens engage or not with executives. The 'Approval' variable represents the monthly measure of support, as reported by the Executive Approval Project (EAP, Carlin, Hartlyn, et al. 2023), which includes data for the populists in the

study up to 2022[4]. Previous research has demonstrated the potential impact of Covid-19 on support for chief executives (see Hegewald and Schraff 2022; Pignataro 2021; Schraff 2021; Tagina 2021), which could ultimately influence online engagement. To account for these effects, I have included a dichotomous variable indicating whether a tweet was posted during the Covid-19 pandemic, applicable to those presidents who were in office during this period.

Methods

This study is divided into two main analyses. The first analysis aims to identify the presence of words theoretically associated with the two proposed dimensions of populist rhetoric—divisive and plebiscitary—in the tweets of both populist and non-populist executives and to compare the prevalence of these words across both groups. Based on the identified prevalent words, I utilize a combination of theory-driven and data-driven approaches to develop dictionaries that represent 'divisive' and 'plebiscitary' content. With these dictionaries, the second analysis examines the relationship between the presence of this content in tweets and their subsequent online engagement levels.

Identifying divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric in Executive's tweets: Combining theory-driven and data-driven approaches

The objective of identifying words associated with the two dimensions of populist rhetoric serves two purposes. On one hand, it assesses whether words connected with populist rhetoric are indeed more prevalent in the tweets of populist executives. The second purpose is to establish a base dictionary for classifying tweets according to their content. This base dictionary will then be enriched with terms identified through manual examination of a sample of the classified tweets. In the end, the final dictionary is the result of both theory-driven and data-driven approaches.

[4]Despite attempts to collect Maduro's approval ratings from alternative sources, reliable data for that time period were not available.

On the data-driven side, I analyze the language used by each populist president using relative frequency analyses. I identify the top 10 most frequent words used by each of the six populist presidents in comparison with their non-populist counterparts. The tweets of each populist president are compared with those of non-populist presidents[5] in separate analyses to capture the specificity of each context. For instance, elites might be referred to with different terms (e.g. *os comunistas* in Bolsonaro, *mafia del poder* in AMLO, *los escuálidos in Maduro*, etc.); the same is true for the names of populist movements (e.g. *Revolución Bolivariana* in Venezuela, *Movimiento al Socialismo* in Bolivia, *Cuarta Transformación* en México, *Revolución Ciudadana* in Ecuador). For each analysis, I employ the Quanteda R package (Benoit et al. 2018) to create a corpus. In doing so, I remove Spanish stopwords (and Portuguese for Jair Bolsonaro), special characters, numbers, and punctuation. All words are stemmed and transformed to lowercase. Specific country names and demonyms are transformed to "country_name" and "country_demonym" to prevent them from becoming falsely prevalent. Similarly, variations of references to populist movements are categorized under "reference_to_movement" to facilitate more general and meaningful inferences. Generally, common or non-meaningful words are removed from the corpus. National heroes' names are categorized as "national_hero." Lastly, as at least three populist executives were in office during the Covid-19 crisis, compared to presidents who were not, words referencing this crisis were removed if they appeared excessively frequent (e.g. covid-19, pandemic, vaccines, coronavirus).

After completing each frequency analysis, I reviewed the results for terms theoretically linked to divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric. For divisive rhetoric, I focused on words like 'people', 'elite', and 'corruption'. For plebiscitary rhetoric, I sought terms that imply support for the leader or their movement, call for additional support, or suggest true representation of the people. For instance, mentions of the president's movement or self-references using the president's name were categorized as part of the plebiscitary dimension. Using these terms, I conducted an initial classification of tweets to identify those containing one or more of these terms.

[5]These comparisons required several preprocessing steps. I removed numbers, not meaningful characters (e.g. https, a.m., AM), symbols, punctuation, stop and words in Spanish and Portuguese.

After identifying the top 10 words through the relative frequency analysis, I employed the Quanteda package once again to generate base dictionaries containing these terms. Then, I manually inspected a sample of tweets (10%) to find additional terms that might have been missed by the dictionary. This step helped to ensure that short expressions, which can sometimes alter the meaning of words, were not overlooked. It also aided in identifying terms whose frequency may not be high compared to non-populists or other terms but are nonetheless indicative of divisive or plebiscitary rhetoric. After this manual inspection, more terms were added to the final dictionaries (See Table A1 in the Appendix Section) based on the theory described above. To illustrate what different divisive and plebiscitary tweets in the data set look like, Table 2 shows six examples of tweets, three divisive and three plebiscitary.

In addition to the divisive and plebiscitary dictionaries, I developed a nationalistic dictionary. This dictionary was also created based on terms found during the relative frequency analysis, and the manual inspection of 10% of the tweets for each populist president. The terms included in this dictionary can be referred to in Table A1 in the Appendix Section.

After creating the divisive and plebiscitary dictionaries for each populist executive, I developed an additional dictionary for nationalistic terms. Previous studies have suggested a possible correlation between populism and nationalism (Jenne, Hawkins, and Silva 2021). The extent to which this actually occurs is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is recognized that chief executives often mention their country and its citizens' demonyms in attempts to establish common ground and gain sympathy. This usage of nationalistic terms might, in turn, translate into increased online engagement. Therefore, to account for the effects of nationalistic rhetoric, the creation of a dictionary with nationalistic terms is necessary. With these three final dictionaries, I use the Quanteda package to classify tweets as having divisive, plebiscitary and/or nationalistic content.

Table 2: Divisive and plebiscitary Rhetoric

Tweet	Author
Divisive Tweets	
I understand why Lula tries to flee. The truth bothers, but it needs to be told! Those who are friends with crime and socialist dictators are enemies of the people!	Jair Bolsonaro
we have gold, silver, copper, oil, gas, water, electrical potential, good lands and, the main resource, a good and hard-working people	Andrés M. López Obrador
Bravo my dear comrade Diosdado! With those arguments, the weak [escuálidos] ones are pulverized! Bravo!	Hugo Chávez
Plebiscitary Tweets	
Attention.... Attention. Long live the Working Class... Long live the Ribas Mission... Long live the Bolivarian Revolution... Long live Chávez	Nicolás Maduro
From March 8 to 14, they will try to destabilize us with all media, economic, oligarchic support, but without the main thing: the support of the people.	Rafael Correa
As a Plurinational State, we greet and claim World Day for Cultural Diversity. We have an enormous cultural wealth and thanks to the struggle of the people, now our CPE recognizes the rights of the 36 original nations that make up our beloved #Bolivia	Evo Morales

The prevalence of divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric on Twitter

I begin by presenting the results of relative frequency analyses conducted separately for each populist president, comparing the ten most frequently used words in their tweets to those of non-populist presidents. The results indicate a higher prevalence of words associated with divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric among populist presidents, aligning with the study's expectations. This suggests that divisive and plebiscitary content is indeed more prominent in the social media usage of populist leaders.

Figure 1 displays the results of these relative frequency analyses for the six populist chief executives. The relative frequency in Figure 1 compares the frequency with which a term is used by a populist leader to its expected usage if no difference existed between populist and non-populist leaders. The chi-squared statistic for each term quantifies the degree of divergence in its use between the populists and the group of non-populists. Notably, references to their movements were among the most frequent for four populists, ranking in the top spot for two presidents: AMLO and Correa. The term "pueblo"

(the people) featured among the top five most frequently used words for three presidents and appeared within the top ten for another. While not as prominent as references to populist movements or the people, the analysis also revealed the presence of terms like "corruption", "neoliberal", and "right-wing", commonly associated with the concept of a corrupt elite. For Jair Bolsonaro, the term "esquerda" (the left-wing) emerged as the sixth most frequently used term. Bolsonaro often characterizes the Brazilian left wing on social media as a corrupt elite or a dictatorship. The rallying cry "venceremos" (we will prevail), suggesting a future victory for the populist and the people, was the most relatively prevalent word in Hugo Chávez's tweets and also appeared within the top 10 for Rafael Correa.

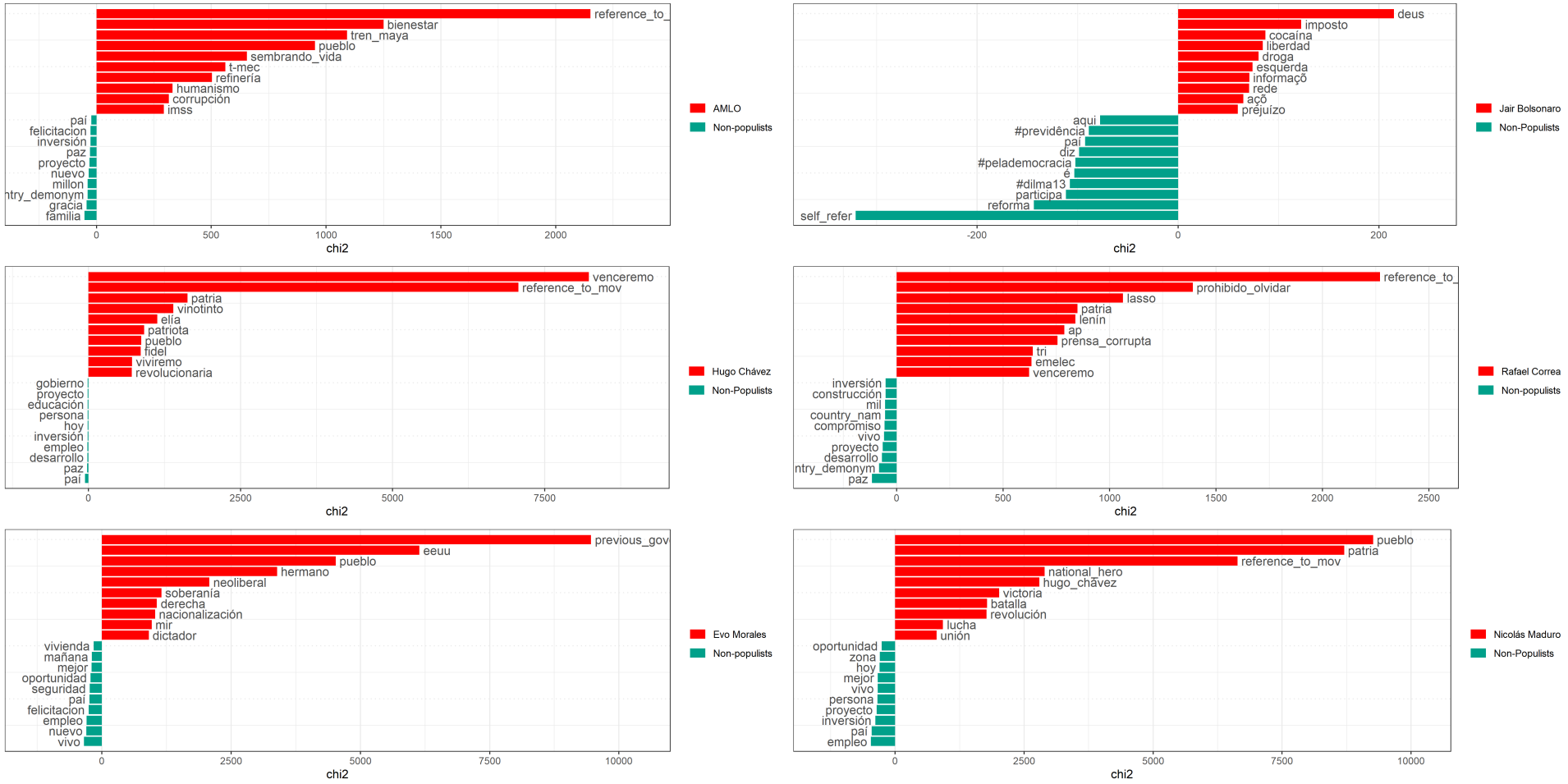


Figure 1: Relative Frequency of terms used by populist executives vs terms used by non-populist executives

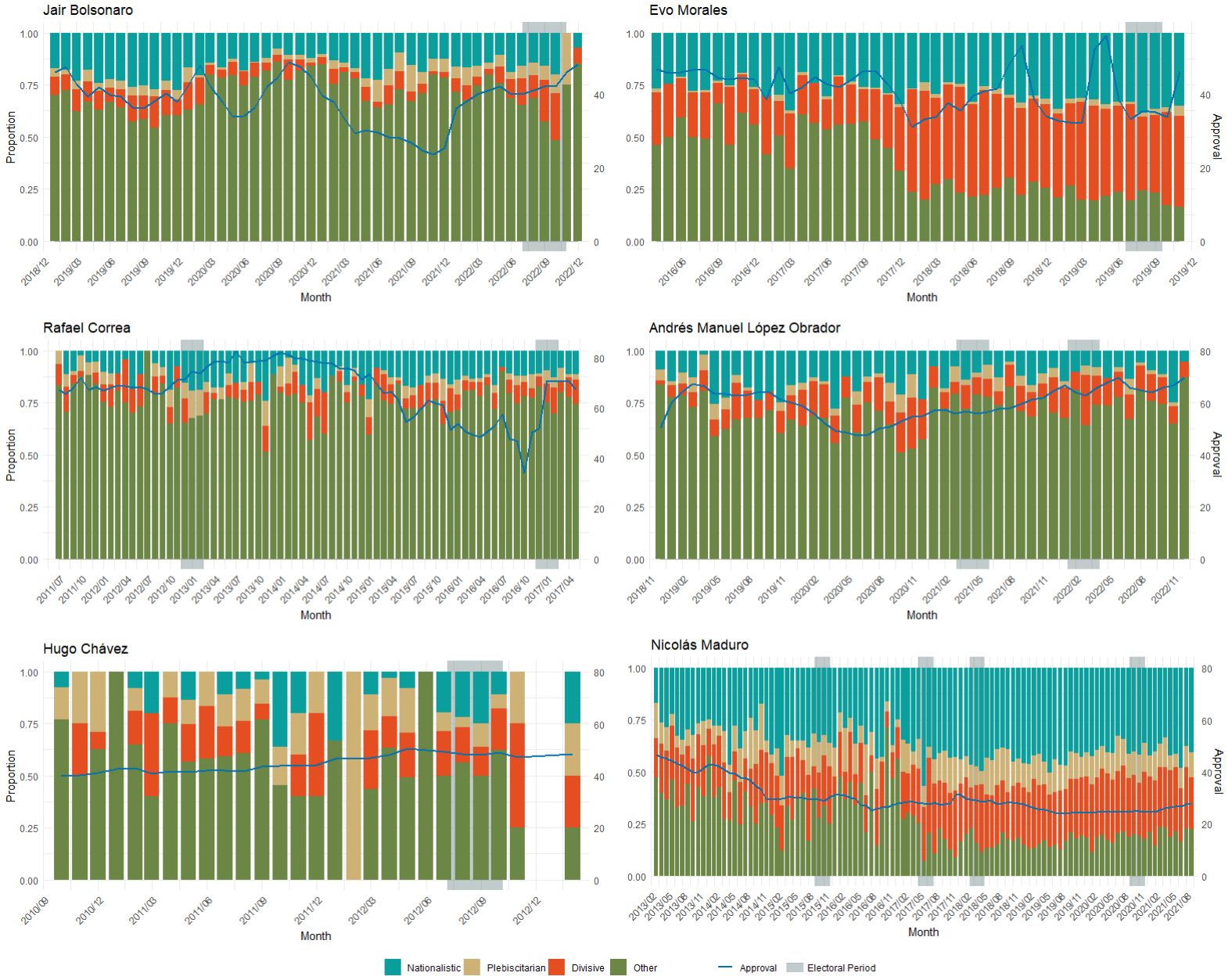


Figure 2: Proportions of Tweets with one or more types of content, level of approval and electoral periods

To gain a clearer understanding of the extent of divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric in each populist's Twitter usage, Figure 3 displays the proportions according to the message content over the period analyzed. This figure also presents the monthly levels of approval and identifies months with electoral periods, defined as the two months leading up to a major electoral event. Generally, the figure indicates that populists more often use their Twitter accounts for communication without divisive and plebiscitary language. However, some exhibit higher levels of such content than others. Divisive language appears in 45% of Evo Morales' tweets and in 35% of Maduro's, while Correa shows the least divisive rhetoric, at 7.7%. Plebiscitary language is found in 15% of tweets by both Nicolás Maduro and Hugo Chávez. López Obrador and Correa have the lowest levels of plebiscitary rhetoric, at 3.8% and 4%, respectively.

Electoral periods seem to amplify divisive rhetoric in some cases. This trend is evident in Bolsonaro's tweets during the months leading up to the two rounds of the 2022 Presidential election and in López Obrador's tweets prior to the 2021 Legislative election. Notably, for Nicolás Maduro and Evo Morales, divisive language became more consistent towards the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018, respectively. In Bolsonaro's case, both divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric appear to have declined from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 until April 2022. Regarding presidential approval, the data does not exhibit any clear pattern.

To assess the relationship between tweets with divisive and plebiscitary content and online engagement, I rely on two mixed-effects negative binomial regression (NBR) models for each populist included in the analysis. Considering the overdispersion of count variables such as 'like count' and 'retweet count', using an NBR model was the most suitable alternative. Since the analysis also includes the variable 'Approval', which is measured monthly, I have specified a random slope for this variable by month.

The model is represented with the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}\log(\mu_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Divisive}_i + \beta_2 \text{Plebiscitary}_i + \beta_3 \text{Nationalism}_i + \beta_4 \text{Electoral Period}_i + \\ \beta_5 \text{COVID-19}_i + \beta_6 \text{Approval}_i + b_{\text{month}_i} \text{Approval}_i \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Where μ_i is the expected number of likes (or retweets) for the i-th observation. The natural logarithm of μ_i is used as the link function to indicates that the number of likes (or retweets) follows a Negative Binomial distribution. The terms $\beta_1 \text{Divisive}_i$, $\beta_2 \text{plebiscitary}_i$, $\beta_3 \text{Nationalism}_i$, $\beta_4 \text{Electoral Period}_i$, $\beta_5 \text{Covid-19}_i$[6], and $\beta_6 \text{Approval}_i$ are independent variables with fixed effects on likes and retweets counts. I include a random effect for the monthly approval of the populists using the term $b_{\text{month}_i} \text{Approval}_i$. This term allows for different slopes for Approval in different months, capturing the varying influence of this predictor across time.

Since the estimates from the NBR model represent changes in the natural logarithm of the expected count of likes and retweets, respectively, exponentiating the coefficients provides a more interpretable measure of the observed effects. The coefficients in the NBR model have been transformed to present Incidence Rate Ratios (IRR) for each predictor. The next section presents the results of the analyses described above and is followed by a discussion of the findings in the paper.

Results

To assess the effectiveness of populists in power using divisive and plebiscitary language on social media, I present the results of 12 mixed-effects negative binomial regressions. Figure 3 shows the results for six models where online engagement is measured by 'like count.' These results suggest that 'divisive' rhetoric has a positive and significant relationship with like count in four out of six cases: Bolsonaro, Correa, López Obrador, and Maduro. In the case of Evo Morales, this relationship is negative and also statistically significant. The only case where divisive rhetoric shows no statistically significant relationship with 'like count' is Hugo Chávez. On the other hand, 'plebiscitary rhetoric' has a positive and statistically significant relationship with 'like count' in three cases: Correa, Maduro, and Evo Morales.

[6]This variable is only present if the populist president was in office during the Covid-19 pandemic

Figure 3: Effects of Populist Rhetoric on Online Engagement in Likes

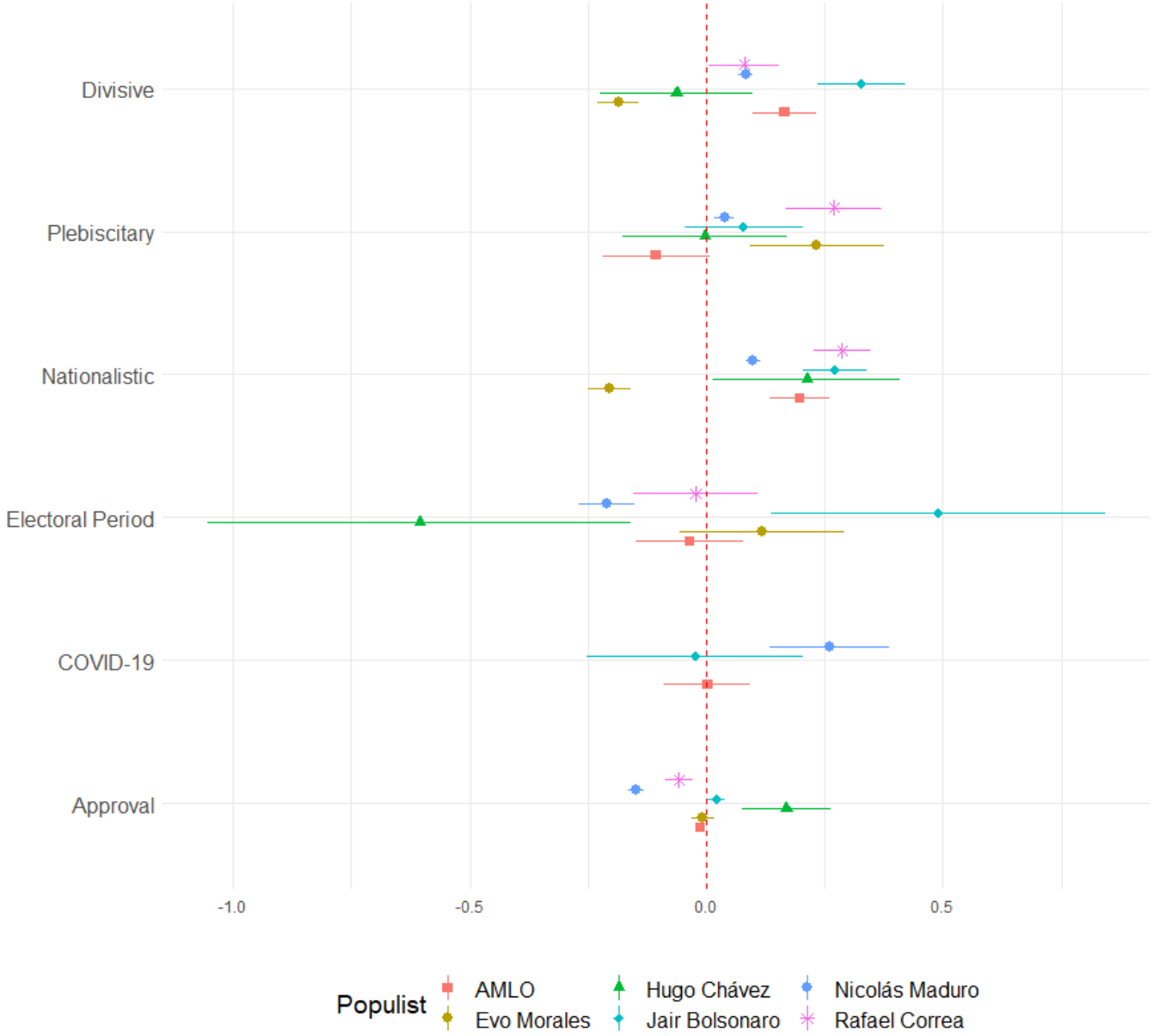
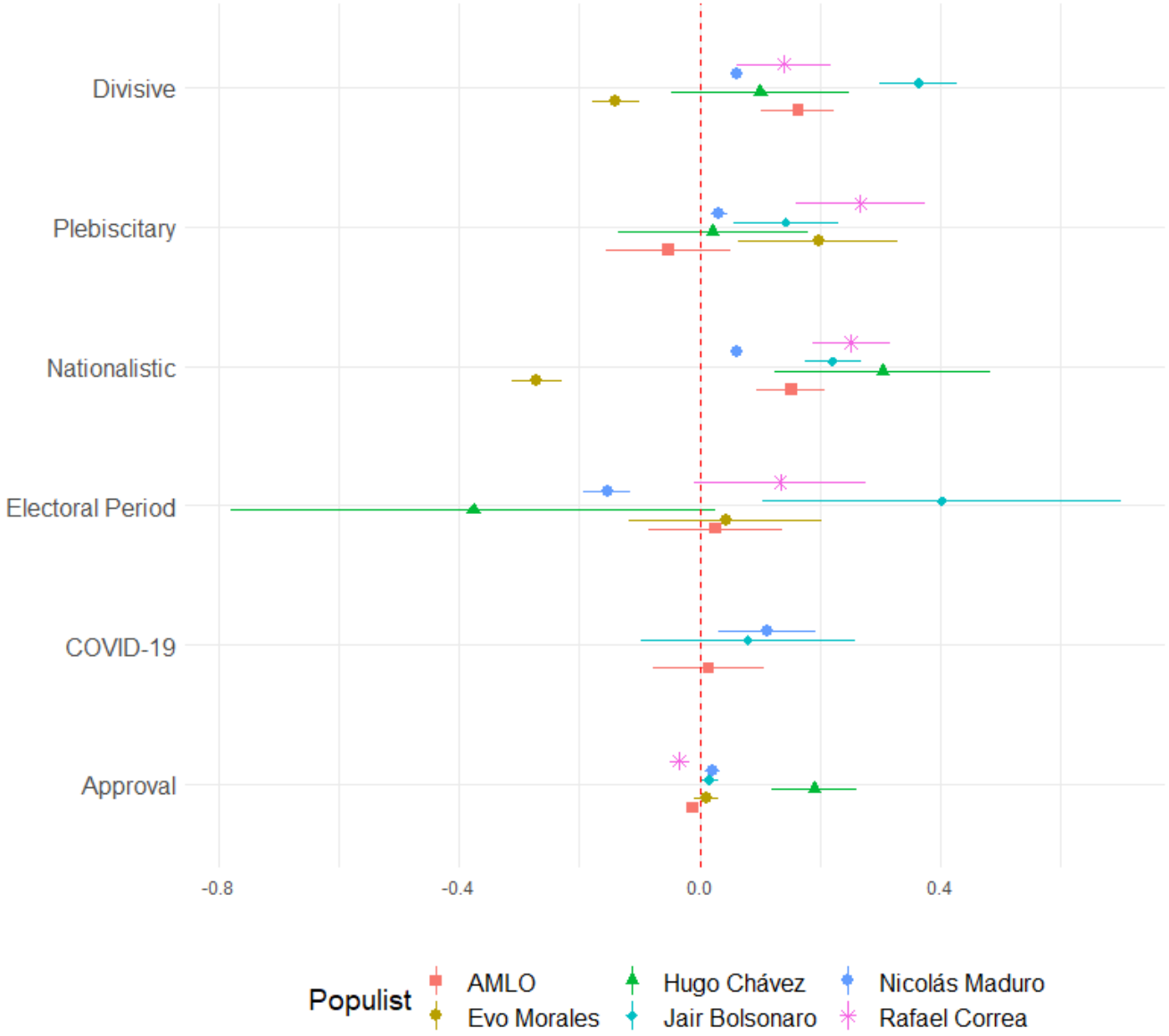


Figure 4: Effects of Populist Rhetoric on Online Engagement in Retweets



In the cases of Chávez and López Obrador, the relationship is negative, whereas, in the case of Bolsonaro, it is positive, but in all these three cases, the relationship is not statistically significant. Nationalistic rhetoric displays a positive and statistically significant correlation with like count across all cases, except for Evo Morales, where a negative and statistically significant relationship is observed. Regarding the effect of the electoral period on driving online engagement, the results are mixed. In the two Venezuelan cases, electoral periods led to a negative and statistically significant relationship with 'like count.' The only case where the relationship was positive and statistically significant is that of Jair Bolsonaro. For the three cases in office during the COVID-19 pandemic, only Maduro shows a statistically significant relationship with like count, which is positive. Lastly, the 'approval' variable shows statistically significant relationships with 'like count' in five cases, being positive only for Bolsonaro and Chávez and negative for Correa, López Obrador, and Maduro. In the case of Evo Morales, a negative but not statistically significant relationship is observed.

Figure 4 presents the results for models where online engagement is measured in terms of 'retweet count.' In these models, divisive rhetoric holds a statistically significant relationship in five cases; however, it is positive in Bolsonaro, Correa, López Obrador, and Maduro, and negative for Evo Morales. 'plebiscitary' rhetoric and 'retweet count' have a positive and statistically significant relationship in four cases: Bolsonaro, Correa, Maduro, and Morales. In the cases of Chávez and López Obrador, the relationship is not statistically significant, although it is positive in the former and negative in the latter. Nationalistic rhetoric results in a statistically significant relationship across all cases. However, in the case of Morales, the direction of the relationship is negative. Electoral periods show statistically significant relationships only in the cases of Bolsonaro and Maduro, being positive for the former and negative for the latter. For the three populists in office during the Covid-19 pandemic, again, only Nicolás Maduro drove statistically significantly more online engagement. Approval, on the other hand, shows mixed results, as its relationship with 'retweet count' is statistically significant and positive in the cases of Bolsonaro, Chávez, and Maduro but statistically significant and negative in the cases

Table 3: Comparison of Incidence Rate Ratios (IRRs) for 'Divisive' and 'plebiscitary' across two sets of models

	Likes Count		Retweets Count	
	Divisive	Plebiscitary	Divisive	Plebiscitary
Bolsonaro	**1.39**	1.08	**1.44**	**1.15**
Chávez	0.94	0.997	1.11	1.02
Correa	**1.08**	**1.31**	**1.15**	**1.31**
López Obrador	**1.18**	0.90	**1.18**	0.95
Maduro	**1.09**	**1.04**	**1.06**	**1.03**
Morales	**0.83**	**1.26**	**0.87**	**1.22**

Note: Bold font represents statistically significant estimates in the mixed-effects negative binomial models.

of Correa and López Obrador.

Since Negative Binomial Regression (NBR) uses a log-link function, the coefficients in NBR represent the change in the logarithm of the expected count of the dependent variable. To facilitate a more intuitive interpretation of the effects of the 'divisive' and 'plebiscitary' variables on 'online engagement', Table 3 presents the Incidence Rate Ratios (IRRs) for these variables of interest. These IRRs were obtained by exponentiating the NBR coefficients. For the 'divisive' rhetoric variable in the 'likes count' model, we observe that the presence of this kind of rhetoric is associated with a 39% increase in engagement for Bolsonaro, 8% for Correa, 18% for López Obrador, and 9% for Maduro. Conversely, for Morales, divisive rhetoric is associated with a 17% decrease in likes. In the 'retweet count' model, the presence of 'divisive' rhetoric correlates with a 44% increase in engagement for Bolsonaro, 15% for Correa, 18% for López Obrador, and 6% for Maduro, while for Morales, it correlates with a 13% decrease. Regarding 'plebiscitary' rhetoric, in the 'retweet count' model, its presence is associated with a 15% increase in engagement for Bolsonaro, 31% for Correa, 3% for Maduro, and 22% for Morales. Similarly, for the 'likes count' model, 'plebiscitary' rhetoric is linked to a 31% increase in engagement for Correa, 4% for Maduro, and 26% for Morales.

These results offer mixed support for the hypotheses proposed in this paper. While it is evident that populists in power tend to use more divisive and plebiscitary language compared to their non-populist counterparts, it is noteworthy that the proportion of tweets containing such messages is relatively small when compared to other types of

messages. In terms of online engagement, this study provides some evidence suggesting that these types of rhetoric can drive increased engagement. Although divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric generally appear to enhance online engagement, there are instances where specific contextual factors may mitigate this effect. The following section will further interpret these results, linking them with existing literature. It will also discuss the broader implications of these findings and propose avenues for future research.

Discussion

This study examines the use of social media by populist presidents in power in Latin America. It proposes that social media serves as a means for these presidents to advance their political strategies by disseminating divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric. The study also analyzes the extent to which these types of rhetoric translate into online engagement. Employing a combination of computational content analysis, descriptive statistics, and quantitative analysis, the paper finds evidence in line with the theoretical expectations. Divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric are more frequent in tweets from populist presidents than from their non-populist counterparts. However, this rhetoric is not the most prevalent content in the tweets analyzed. The presence of divisive rhetoric varies between 8% and 45%, and plebiscitary rhetoric between 4% to 15%, depending on the president. Online engagement also shows mixed results, with divisive rhetoric associated with increases in likes ranging from 8% to 39%, and in retweets from 6% to 39%. However, for some presidents, there is no statistically significant relationship, or it is even negative, as in the case of Evo Morales. The presence of plebiscitary rhetoric increases online engagement in terms of likes between 4% and 31%. The relationship with retweets shows a similar increase.

The variation in the study's results is likely due to contextual factors. For instance, the lower proportions of divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric in tweets by Rafael Correa or López Obrador might be related to their use of Twitter as an institutional tool. Populist presidents, given their dual political and institutional roles, are likely to balance

institutional information with their political strategy. This balance might differ between presidents and over time. The lack of significant relationships or decreases in online engagement with divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric can have various explanations. In the case of Hugo Chávez, limited Twitter activity due to the platform's nascent stage in political debate might be a factor. Although a deeper analysis might be required, in the case of Evo Morales, the low penetration of Twitter in the country could explain the decreasing online engagement with divisive rhetoric. According to the Americas Barometer, only 5.8% of the population has a Twitter account, which is the second lowest penetration rate in Latin America (Lab 2018). As a result, Twitter users in Bolivia likely belong to a social sector that opposes Evo Morales.

These results resonate with previous work on populism and social media use. The presence of people-centrism and anti-elitism found by Ernst et al. (2017) in extreme populist parties is also present in Latin American populist presidents. Generally, the divisive aspect of populist rhetoric observed in this study confirms the findings of Engesser et al. (2017), Krämer (2017), and Gründl (2020) among others. Some findings in this study align with research on populists in power and social media. For instance, Kreis (2017) and Ott and Dickinson (2020) identified divisive rhetoric in Donald Trump's tweets. While not entirely contradicting Cervi, Garcıa, and Marın-Lladó (2021), this study suggests a proportional decrease in Bolsonaro's divisive rhetoric from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic until the 2022 electoral year. Concerning online engagement, the results here suggest that the relationship with divisive rhetoric is more complex than indicated by Cassell (2021) and Bobba (2019). This complexity may be due to the unique challenges faced by populists in power in using social media communication and the varied reactions of citizens.

Despite the mixed findings, the presence of divisive and plebiscitary rhetoric in the tweets of Latin American populist presidents might have concerning implications. These forms of rhetoric, especially when they increase online engagement, could lead to what McCoy, Rahman, and Somer 2018 identify as pernicious polarization, potentially eroding democracy.

The study has limitations that future research could address to broaden our understanding of how populists in power use social media. For instance, focusing only on Twitter, a popular platform for political debate, does not encompass the full spectrum of platforms where populists might disseminate their rhetoric. Future research could include platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or even TikTok to assess how populists use these platforms and how citizens engage with their rhetoric. Another limitation is the geographical scope of the study. Expanding the analysis to include other regions, especially emergent democracies, could provide further insights.

This study contributes to the ongoing debate on populist rhetoric, advancing our knowledge of how populists in power use rhetoric as a strategic tool to divide and claim direct representation of the people. It represents the first systematic analysis of the rhetoric of populist chief executives in five or more political contexts. Additionally, it provides insights into the extent to which these populists use social media to disseminate various forms of rhetoric and generate online engagement among users.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available in the "Data for Populists in power and online engagement with populist rhetoric components on social media: Evidence from Latin America" repository: https://figshare.com/s/48d36acd56066733c507.

Appendix A. Dictionaries for Populist Executives

Type	Terms
	Jair Bolsonaro
Divisive	*esquerda, fakenews, nosso governo, nós, Lula, traidores, bandid*, governoanterior, socialistas, popular, radica*, imprensa tradicional, velha política, bons cidadãos, cidadãos de bem, comunis*, povo, corrup*, elit**
plebiscitary	*self reference, todos nós, apoio de todos, ajuda de todos, estar unidos, todos vocês, confiança do povo, apoio do povo, maioria do povo, interesses do povo, lado do povo, voz do povo, temos uma missão, me apoiarem, nossa luta*
	Hugo Chávez
Divisive	*pueblo, conspiradores, escuálidos, fascist*, apátridas, golpist*, pitiyanqu*, popular, imperialist*, nosotr*, patriota*, hipócritas, puntofijistas, la extrema derecha, traidores, vendepatrias, el poder económico, oligarcas, conservadores, oligarquía, corrup*, élit*, elit*, neoliberal**
plebiscitary	*reference to movement, self reference, aliado, nuestro movimiento, apoyo de todos, apoyo de todas, ayuda de todos, venceremos, representar al pueblo, apoyo del pueblo, confianza del pueblo, mayoría del pueblo, intereses del pueblo, lado del pueblo, voz del pueblo, gobierno del pueblo, servicio del pueblo, mandato del pueblo, voluntad del pueblo, voluntad soberana del pueblo, nuestra lucha, la lucha de muchos, la lucha del pueblo, hemos avanzado, representar a todos, ayuda de todas, sumamos, movilizarse, defenderemos*
	Rafael Correa
Divisive	*pueblo, pelucones, prensa mercantilista, prensa corrupta, popular, imperialistas, nosotr*, patriota*, hipócritas, sin vergüenzas, la extrema derecha, traidores, vendepatrias, el poder económico, oligarcas, conservadores, oligarquía, corrup*, élit*, elit*, neoliberal**

Appendix A. Dictionaries for Populist Executives (cont.)

Type	Terms
plebiscitary	*reference to movement, self reference, aliado, nuestro movimiento, apoyo de todos, apoyo de todas, ayuda de todos, representar al pueblo, apoyo del pueblo, confianza del pueblo, mayoría del pueblo, venceremos, intereses del pueblo, lado del pueblo, voz del pueblo, gobierno del pueblo, servicio del pueblo, mandato del pueblo, voluntad del pueblo, voluntad soberana del pueblo, nuestra lucha, la lucha de muchos, la lucha del pueblo, hemos avanzado, representar a todos, ayuda de todas, sumamos, movilizarse, defenderemos*
Andrés Manuel López Obrador	
Divisive	*pueblo, dueños de country name, popular, nosotr*, patriota*, la extrema derecha, traidores, oligarcas, conservadores, oligarquía, corrup*, élit*, elit*, mafia del poder, fifí, fifís, prian, neoliberal**
plebiscitary	*reference to movement, self reference, aliado, nuestro movimiento, apoyo de todos, apoyo de todas, ayuda de todos, venceremos, representar al pueblo, apoyo del pueblo, confianza del pueblo, mayoría del pueblo, intereses del pueblo, lado del pueblo, voz del pueblo, gobierno del pueblo, servicio del pueblo, mandato del pueblo, voluntad del pueblo, voluntad soberana del pueblo, nuestra lucha, la lucha de muchos, la lucha del pueblo, hemos avanzado, representar a todos, ayuda de todas, sumamos, movilizarse, defenderemos*
Nicolás Maduro	
Divisive	*pueblo, conspiradores, escuálidos, fascist*, apátridas, golpist*, pitiyanqu*, popular, imperialist*, nosotr*, patriota*, hipócritas, puntofijistas, la extrema derecha, traidores, vendepatrias, el poder económico, oligarcas, conservadores, oligarquía, corrup*, élit*, elit*, terroristas económicos, neoliberal**
plebiscitary	*reference to movement, self reference, aliado, nuestro movimiento, apoyo de todos, apoyo de todas, ayuda de todos, venceremos, representar al pueblo, apoyo del pueblo, confianza del pueblo, mayoría del pueblo, intereses del pueblo, lado del pueblo, voz del pueblo, gobierno del pueblo, servicio del pueblo*

Appendix A. Dictionaries for Populist Executives (cont.)

Type	Terms
	mandato del pueblo, voluntad del pueblo, voluntad soberana del pueblo, nuestra lucha, la lucha de muchos, la lucha del pueblo, hemos avanzado, representar a todos, ayuda de todas, sumamos, movilizarse, defenderemos
	Evo Morales
Divisive	*pueblo, la derecha, colonizadores, mir, soberan*, previous governments, popular, imperialist*, fascist*, nosotr*, patriota*, la extrema derecha, traidores, el poder económico, oligarcas, conservadores, oligarquía, corrup*, élit*, elit*, neoliberal**
plebiscitary	*reference to movement, self reference, aliado, nuestro movimiento, apoyo de todos, apoyo de todas, ayuda de todos, representar al pueblo, apoyo del pueblo, confianza del pueblo, mayoría del pueblo, venceremos, intereses del pueblo, lado del pueblo, voz del pueblo, gobierno del pueblo, servicio del pueblo, mandato del pueblo, voluntad del pueblo, voluntad soberana del pueblo, nuestra lucha, la lucha de muchos, la lucha del pueblo, hemos avanzado, representar a todos, ayuda de todas, sumamos, movilizarse, defenderemos*