

Information disorder on land use: the power of agribusiness in Brazil

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Abstract

This paper investigates how the Brazilian rural caucus, the Parliamentary Agricultural Front, employs digital communication to legitimize its political project and lobby for a specific set of laws. Drawing on the conceptual framework of information disorder, which encompasses misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, our qualitative methodology combines Critical Discourse Analysis and thematic analysis of 335 videos published on the Parliamentary Agricultural Front's YouTube channel between July 2020 and March 2025. The findings reveal how their discourse on YouTube operates through sophisticated strategies of information disorder articulated around two dominant arguments: legal certainty and digitalization/modernization. The legal certainty argument mobilizes misinformation to shape the interpretation of the Constitution, as well as malinformation, including hate speech and moral panic, to criminalize Indigenous people and socio-territorial movements, thereby legitimizing extractivist legislation such as the "Time Frame Law". Conversely, the modernization argument draws on disinformation, in the form of greenwashing, to portray Brazilian agribusiness as "the most sustainable in the world", and misinformation that frames digital tools (e.g., the Rural Environmental Registry) as purely technical solutions, obscuring processes of land grabbing and dispossession. Our study concludes that the rural caucus' digital discourse naturalizes rural expansion and legal deregulation, while concealing environmental degradation and violations of social and territorial rights under the rhetoric of sustainability and development.

Keywords

information disorder; discourse analysis; YouTube; greenwashing; agribusiness

1 Introduction

The Parliamentary Agricultural Front (in Portuguese, Frente Parlamentar da Agropecuária [FPA]) is the institutional expression of the so-called “rural caucus”, the most powerful coalition in Brazilian Congress, and a major actor in global value chains. Businessmen from various economic sectors, sharing a common interest in land use and exploitation, including mining and agribusiness, compose subgroups with a wide range of agendas and varying degrees of alignment (Bruno, 2022). In November 2025, the FPA was formed by 303 federal deputies and 50 senators, representing more than half of each legislative chamber (FPA, 2025b).

This paper examines how the FPA’s digital communication on YouTube portrayed rural expansion, deregulation and infrastructure projects, while masking environmental degradation and social rights violations under narratives of “sustainability” and “development”. A milestone for the FPA occurred during Jair Bolsonaro’s government (2019-2022), when an explicit strategy to loosen environmental laws was conducted by former Minister of Environment Ricardo Salles. The set of infralegal deregulatory reforms promoted by the FPA was called by the media and activists as the “Death Combo” and “Destruction Package”, which advanced swiftly along the far-right government (Rajão *et al.*, 2020).

We observe how the FPA’s communication reflects dynamics that go beyond traditional lobbying, applying what scholars have identified as information disorder (Wardle; Derakhshan, 2017): intentional campaigns to shape political opinions and push on private economic interests, in this case, mostly on land use and environmental laws. Their agenda advances through strategies encompassing fake controversies, resulting in a profitable legal framework (Rajão *et al.*, 2022). Such content circulates within a hybrid system, across legacy media and digital platforms, now amplified by algorithms.

To investigate the FPA’s online strategies, we employed a qualitative research design combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1993) and thematic analysis (Drummond; Costa; Gonçalves, 2024). The corpus comprised all 335 videos published on the FPA’s YouTube channel between July 2020 and March 2025. This methodological approach addressed the following research question (RQ): How does the FPA’s digital communication on YouTube legitimize its political project?

First applying and then expanding Wardle and Derakhshan (2017)'s conceptual framework on the videos, we identified overlapping instances of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. Further clarification is provided by implementing the information disorder framework to the Brazilian case, when new hybrid features emerged, such as strategic confusion, manipulation with hate and knowledge dispossession. Finally, we discuss the results based on the political economy (Mosco, 2009; Santos; Silva; Maciel, 2019; Bombardi, 2019; Figueira, 2023; Távora, 2024; Figueira; Távora, 2025), showing a variety of political and financial actors intertwined in the conflicts. All these strategies relate to what we conceptualize here as information disorder on land use.

2 Information disorder as a framework for analyzing land use in Brazil

Communication is at the heart of any society, but only in recent centuries has it become a commodity, structured by market toward profit, rather than a basic routine for communal dialogue. Since the beginning of capitalism, political groups have employed communicative strategies to establish hegemony in the economic system (Mosco, 2009).

The context has become more complex with the datafication of society and transformations in the media landscape. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) describe the contemporary scenario as an information disorder, an ecosystem connecting false, misleading, and harmful content, especially in, but not limited to, the digital landscape.

They conceptualized three forms of “problematic information”. The first one is the notion of misinformation, related to incorrect or incomplete data, as well as establishing false connections between factual content. The second is disinformation, widely discussed in political communication nowadays, which involves false information deliberately created and spread to cause harm or confusion. Finally, malinformation refers to partially true information shared maliciously to cause harm and confusion, like hate speech or harassment.

By proposing a typology that distinguishes different forms of problematic information, the framework offered an important conceptual tool for early efforts to map and categorize misleading content online. However, the model maintains a narrow focus on the problems of truth, explicit intention and characteristics of the content itself. Such approach overlooks the broader socio-technical infrastructures and power relations that influence how information is produced, amplified, and circulated in digital environments. Due to a policy-

driven orientation, one limitation of the framework lies in the insufficient attention to structural conditions and long-term political consequences that do not fit in simplistic polarizations.

Bennett and Livingston (2018, p. 124) show that disinformation has a broader objective in advancing political and economic goals by “[...] systematic disruptions of authoritative information flows due to strategic deceptions that may appear very credible to those consuming them”. The authors address the implications of disinformation created by public/State sectors, when politicians promote opposing versions of reality.

Information disorder poses a threat to democracy, considering the growing distrust in traditional institutions and the confusion among society, aimed to suspend the notion of truth and trustworthiness. It culminates in an epistemic distrust for authority – delegitimizing scientists, professors and journalists – that functions as a key strategy to spread conflicting messages, so citizens perceive there are too many versions of the same event for the truth to be known (Neuberger *et al.*, 2023).

Throughout Brazilian history, politicians, public officials, and legacy media have spoken on behalf of authoritarian regimes, disseminating misleading narratives about socio-environmental conflicts. Valente *et al.* (2022) emphasize that, in Latin America, information disorder did not emerge with digital platforms but has deep roots in a regime of information control that predates contemporary media convergence.

The process of territorial titling has legalized illegal land grabbing, especially in regions marked by socio-environmental conflicts. Since colonial times, official records of land ownership and use – *sesmarias* and the 1850’s Land Law – have presented numerous irregularities, such as poor descriptions, duplicate registrations, fraud and criminal associations. Information on national land tenure has never been reliable, to this day still closed and scattered across public and private databases, registries, and thematic cadastres from different agencies, often with conflicting criteria and lacking interoperability. The multitude of laws and policies governing land and territory remain uncoordinated, creating legal and administrative fragmentation. Not even the federal government has a unified or comprehensive view of the country’s land tenure (Figueira, 2023). Land titling has often served to legitimize dispossession, erasing Indigenous, Quilombola,¹ and peasants from maps

¹ Quilombolas are Afro-Brazilian communities formed through resistance against colonialism and slavery. Like Indigenous peoples in Brazil, they have secured constitutional rights to land, cultural autonomy, and collective identity recognition.

and collective memory (Figueira, 2023), while promoting the destruction of entire knowledge systems. Such knowledge dispossession has been a recurrent and effective way towards hegemony. Based on the information disorder framework we are developing (Figueira; Távora, 2025), this phenomenon can be interpreted as an intersection between misinformation, derived from incomplete and inaccurate land data, and malinformation, as it contributes to processes of epistemicide.

Brazil has long been guided by landowners and agribusinessmen who use features of information disorder to advance their private interests. According to Távora (2024), strategic confusion was used in the 1990s to destabilize the early struggles of social movements, like the Small Peasants Movement (in Portuguese, Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores [MPA]). Robust research agendas, like the ones presented by Chã (2018), Bruno (2022), and even Freire (1983), have evidenced historical infocommunication strategies to advance agribusiness interests in the country. Their discourses mobilize lobbying with influence in institutional channels and traditional media, now also operating online narratives, data infrastructures and geographic information systems.

A prevalent misinformation strategy promoted by the FPA inflates their share in the national economy. According to the “alternative” calculation of the Brazilian Agribusiness GDP (CEPEA, 2022), in 2021, 28.9% of the value chain corresponded to primary agricultural production – meaning that a minority of the sector is “within the farm gate”, the stage involved in raw production. The largest segment is “beyond the farm gate”, with agri-services accounting for 42.9%, agribusiness industry at 22.6%, and inputs “before the farm gate” (fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery) at 5.7%. This shows significant articulation of the agro-industrial complex, but the role of primary producers has been overemphasized.

Ana Chã (2018) argues that the agribusiness has adopted tactics within the cultural industry to establish itself as a model of success and a socioeconomic pillar for Brazil. The sector’s hegemony relies heavily on investments in communication, advertising, art events, and educational projects. These are multimillion-dollar campaigns in which the agribusiness presents that “Agro is everything”, enclosing the “agro” prefix itself as a brand to encompass all related economic sectors. The campaign crossed into discourse capture and symbolic appropriation by calling itself “Quilombola” and “agroecological”, co-opting a history of resistance to whitewash its role in land dispossession.

Santos, Silva and Maciel (2019) highlight how the “Agro is tech, agro is everything” discourse is closely tied to major broadcasters like TV Globo. And Budó (2018) frames this as greenwashing, combined with information control about socio-environmental impacts, concealing harmful practices to gain market legitimacy. Confirming this strategy on digital platforms, Medeiros *et al.* (2024) show the use of paid advertisements to promote greenwashing and disinformation on META, while Regattieri (2023) provides evidence of automated bots on Twitter supporting bills that dismantle environmental protections.

Another communication strategy by the agribusiness linked to information disorder is the use of hate speech targeting scientists, journalists, NGOs, and social movements fighting for environmental preservation, traditional communities and access to land. According to Mercuri and Lima-Lopes (2020), hate speech in Brazil uses digital tactics like stigmatization, moral judgment, and personal attacks to frame opponents as enemies and discredit them.

Finally, Rajão *et al.* (2020, 2022) evidence threats to democracy, once there is a relation between fake controversies, like climate and science denialism, and flexibilization of environmental law. They note that, during Bolsonaro’s government, a manufactured dispute was designed to raise doubts on well-established scientific and legal consensus about environmental issues, resulting in flexibilization of the environmental regulatory framework. Under the far-right administration, corporate/private capture of environmental and agricultural policy-making intensified with the FPA’s support.

3 Methods and data sampling

To examine the relationship between the FPA’s political-economic interests and its communication strategies, we adopted a qualitative approach combining thematic analysis (Drummond; Costa; Gonçalves, 2024) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1993). Thematic analysis was used to identify the main recurring themes and patterns across the corpus, while CDA enabled us to examine how these themes were discursively constructed to legitimize the FPA’s projects. Accordingly, we understand social discourses as situated within specific political-economic contexts, reflecting underlying interests, positionalities, and conflicts.

Our data consisted of videos published on the FPA's YouTube Channel (FPA, 2025a) from July 2020 to March 2025 (n = 335 videos), extracted by the application YouTube Data Tools (Rieder, 2015). Publications were exported and read in full.

We adopted both deductive and inductive approaches to examine whether and how land use issues were addressed. Deductively, content related to land use was selected when relating to bills, projects, or legal frameworks about: (a) land tenure regularization; (b) infrastructure development and associated environmental licensing; (c) regulations related to sustainability; (d) food or energy production; (e) regulations on land use based on international trade agreements.

Content addressing land use together with a variety of other topics were not included in the final sample, since they serve as a summary or reiteration of issues already present in separate videos. Conversely, we identified that content was not related to our RQ when it referred to: (i) the FPA's general daily activities or institutional announcements; (ii) climate crisis due to Rio Grande do Sul floods in 2024; (iii) other legal frameworks discussed, such as tax reforms, credit and funding lines.

Videos focused on topics exclusively related to land use, according to the deductive classification, summed 140 (42%) out of 335 total published, and consisted of the data sample analyzed below. After we applied an inductive analysis, videos were classified into two main categories that emerged from the data: legal certainty and digitalization/modernization.

In regard to *legal certainty*, this category includes videos that explicitly mentioned the term *legal certainty* (*segurança jurídica*, in Portuguese) or referred to related concepts, such as protection of private property, normative stability, or legal predictability. Concerning *digitalization/modernization*, this category comprises videos that explicitly mention terms such as digitalization, modernization, technology, innovation, as well as references to the development of new laws, or transformation of previous ones, aiming at "modernizing" the State.

Then, another deductive step was performed to analyze whether the content related to land use employed discursive strategies associated with information disorder and its overlaps (Wardle; Derakhshan, 2017; Bennett; Livingston, 2018; Figueira; Távora, 2025). Rather than focusing solely on what differentiated misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, we applied a previous hybrid categorization from the authors (Figueira;

Távora, 2025), and examined how these three original forms are combined by the FPA, which led to the identification of three additional categories that enriches the interpretation.

Besides threads of disinformation (e.g., greenwashing), malinformation (e.g., hate speech), and misinformation (e.g., problems in official data), the FPA's narratives involve intersections, like *strategic confusion* (misinformation + disinformation, e.g. science denialism, and legalized land grabbing in official systems), *manipulation with hate* (disinformation + malinformation, such as false accusations, and armed rhetoric) and *knowledge dispossession* (misinformation + malinformation, e.g. coercion, and epistemic erasure).

Finally, we applied to discuss the results triangulating with the “State Plan for Agribusiness 2018–2030”², as well as related legislation, scientific evidence, reports and publications from the federal government, social movements, environmental organizations and activists (Brasil, 2021; Packer, 2021; IBAMA, 2022; APIB; FGV Direito SP; Comissão Arns, 2024).

4 Results

The FPA's YouTube channel serves as a platform for communicating the group's political agenda and positions on agribusiness-related legislation in Brazil. It features a range of thematic playlists that reflect their communication strategy, including media appearances by members, profiles of agribusiness leaders, legislative updates, weekly briefings with the press, connections between rural development and congressional activity, etc. In the following, we present the results about discourses, grouping the video content into two main categories – *legal certainty* and *digitalization/modernization* –, while looking for expressions of information disorder on the content.

² The State-corporate directive and official document by ruralist sectors in Brazil produced by the Agribusiness Council (Conselho do Agro, 2018), an institution that represents the FPA. The long-term strategy outlines a national plan to strengthen agribusiness across multiple dimensions, from infrastructure and logistics to communication, environmental legislation, and international trade.

4.1 Legal certainty

Videos using the expression “legal certainty” are associated with terms such as “right to property”, and in opposition to “rural violence” and “property invasion”. A prominent plea pressures for changes in the legal framework governing land tenure intended for agrarian reform, and public or protected area settlements. The FPA portrays land tenure regularization as a mechanism to ensure legal certainty for rural producers, facilitating access to rural credit and government programs, and reducing bureaucratic barriers in the titling process.

Two sets of bills stood out on the promotion of information disorder using the legal certainty argument: the *Marco Temporal* (Time Frame Law), Law 14.701 (Brasil, 2023a), and the “Zero Invasion Package”, a set of regulations related to the Agrarian Reform, Law 8.629 (Brasil, 1993). In the next sessions, we analyze the videos to verify whether and how strategies of information disorder were used to promote, advance or transform those laws.

4.1.1 The Time Frame Law

The Time Frame Law was frequently cited as a mean to provide legal certainty not only for rural landowners but also to Indigenous groups, although its implications for traditional peoples remain highly contested (APIB; FGV Direito SP; Comissão Arns, 2024). The bill represents a milestone in the relation between Brazilian government and Indigenous communities, having received great effort for approval by the FPA during Bolsonaro’s government.

As new guidelines for the demarcation of Indigenous territories, the Time Frame Law conditions the recognition of Indigenous land on the proven physical occupation of the territory as of October 5th, 1988, the date of the Constitution’s enactment. The argument states that, without such legal definition, land conflicts are likely to intensify, undermining property rights and the economic stability of rural producers, and even of Indigenous communities.

We labeled content as malinformation, expressing hate speech, when resorting to the Time Frame Law to criminalize activists or Indigenous organizations, adopting defamatory

language and stereotyping them as dangerous and violent. In a video published on November 7th, 2023, titled *Almost 'orchestrated' actions of invasions on small properties in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul* (FPA, 2023a, our translation), the discourse adopts manipulation with hate (disinformation + malinformation). This argument casts doubts about the legitimacy of Constitutional rights, while portraying the Indigenous activists as trespassers.

Videos were labeled as containing disinformation when suggesting Indigenous land demarcations would unjustly threaten the rights of family farmers, creating polarization between Indigenous groups against small land owners, and even low-income urban populations. The video *Time Frame Law and Indigenous land demarcation: everything you need to know!* (FPA, 2023e, our translation), published on May 24th, 2023, infers on consequences to urban areas, where the middle-class could lose their houses if the law was not approved, claiming the bill is a matter of justice and equality, supposedly an economic opportunity for low-income, Indigenous and small farmers.

Resorting to more extreme disinformation tactics, a video published on November 23th, 2023, titled *We defend the country's progress and, therefore, seek legal certainty in the sector* (FPA, 2023c, our translation), claims that members of rural families are driven into suicide, because the law "forces people to leave their lands, in name of Indigenous communities". They suggest that anyone could falsely claim Indigenous identity to gain land rights, questioning the legitimacy of traditional rights.

The FPA refers to Indigenous movements as ideologically manipulated by outsiders, as seen in a video published on August 25th, 2021, titled *Interview with Congressman Sérgio Souza on Jovem Pan about the demarcation of Indigenous lands* (FPA, 2021b, our translation). The *Acampamento Terra Livre* (Free Land Camp), a demonstration organized by the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) against the time limit trick, was portrayed as a "politically ideologized space serving hidden agendas".

Figure 1 - The FPA leader conveying misleading representations about Indigenous groups



Source: Screenshot of the FPA (2021b).

Description of Figure 1: Screenshot of the interview with Congressman Sérgio Souza with an image of the Free Land Camp performed by Indigenous communities.

4.1.2 Zero Invasion Package

The Zero Invasion Package, a set of regulations related to the Agrarian Reform Law, is another recurrent content under the legal certainty argument. It proposes to restrict social security benefits and public service eligibility for individuals participating in land occupations and social movements (FPA, 2024b), amid a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (CPI, in Portuguese) in 2023 investigating, in their words, the “land invaders”, called “*CPI dos invasores de terras*”.

Figure 2 - YouTube thumbnail promoting the Zero Invasion Package



Source: Screenshot of the FPA (2024b).

Description of Figure 2: a peasant holds a sickle, with a red band covering his eyes like a blindfold, in front of a plantation.

The package was promoted in opposition to “Red April”, a national mobilization carried out by the Landless Workers’ Movement (in Portuguese, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra [MST]) to honor the memory of the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre. In a video broadcasted live on April 23rd, 2024, titled *Anti-invasion package against the Red April* (FPA, 2024a, our translation), the FPA claims that the month should be called “Yellow and Green April” instead, in reference to the Brazilian flag, a typical symbol mobilized by the far-right.

In this subtopic, videos were labeled as containing disinformation when they portray the agrarian reform as political manipulation, as evidenced in an interview for the CNN TV channel, published on April 13rd, 2023, titled *CNN Arena highlights the FPA’s request for an investigation against the MST leader* (FPA, 2023b, our translation). The FPA claims that land regularization and redistribution policies are politically manipulated by social movements and left-wing governments. According to the content, many rural properties remain unregularized, small farmers are not prioritized, and the current government (now left-centrist president Lula da Silva) is using agrarian reform as a political bargaining tool. Additionally, one publication from August 19th, 2024, titled *Committee blocks decree that favors social movements* (FPA, 2024d, our translation) falsely states that the Brazilian Constitution promotes social movements.

Content was labeled as using malinformation, in the format of hate speech, when narratives criminalize and stigmatize social movements and their representatives, particularly the MST. The defamatory language portrays activism and protests as terrorism or crime. As a case of manipulation with hate, we see an intersection between malinformation and disinformation in claims that the alleged terrorists are “political operatives”, while calling for repression and the use of firearms against social movements. The live broadcast on May 21st, 2024, titled *Report against property invasions and overturning the veto to the National Security Law* (FPA, 2024e, our translation), is a literal demonstration of armed rhetoric.

4.2 Modernization and digitalization

The second relevant set of publications about land use embraces the notion of modernization/digitalization related to infrastructure and legal framework. For the FPA, Brazilian law should be modernized and public infrastructures digitalized, to reduce the

excessive bureaucracy that “hinders development”. Regarding the information disorder promoted by this modernization argument, two sets of institutional apparatus relevant to our RQ stood out: the Environmental Licencing and the Rural Environmental Registry (in Portuguese, Cadastro Ambiental Rural [CAR]).

4.2.1 Environmental licensing

Environmental licensing is a mandatory process in Brazil for authorizing projects that may cause an impact on nature. The goal is to assess, mitigate, and monitor environmental risks before the installation and operation of activities such as infrastructure works, resource extraction, or industrial projects, ensuring the protection of the environment and the rights of affected communities (IBAMA, 2022).

Videos in this category were labeled as containing disinformation, in the format of greenwashing, when presenting a selective and overly positive portrayal of Brazilian agribusiness, often regarded as a global model of sustainability. For example, some videos claimed that Brazilian agribusiness is “the most sustainable in the world”, as *The truth they didn't tell you about Brazilian agribusiness* (FPA, 2023d, our translation), published on July 18th, 2023. Such assertion aims to justify regulatory flexibilization, as if aligned with sustainability and national development goals. This was also mentioned in a video from February 20th, 2025 (FPA, 2025c), where Pedro Lupion, the FPA's current president, talks about food production, and the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30). Their narrative typically emphasizes the country's large share of native vegetation, robust environmental laws, and technological innovations, while downplaying or omitting ongoing deforestation, land conflicts, and insufficient environmental oversight.

In this subtopic, videos were labeled as disinformation when they portray environmental licensing as a barrier to economic development, simplifying facts – like delays in assessments – to justify lobbying efforts aimed at accelerating infrastructure projects and loosening regulations, despite potential socio-environmental consequences, as referred in the video *How does the current Environmental Licensing hold Brazil back?* (FPA, 2021a, our translation), published on May 7th, 2021.

The debate about environmental licensing also focused on the Amazon region. Based on the Bill 467 (Brasil, 2023b), they argue that facilitating land regularization in the Amazon

is a benefit to family farmers and Indigenous peoples, who would gain access to cultivate in forested and public land areas. In the following thumbnail promoting the video *Project approved to facilitate land regularization in the Amazon* (FPA, 2024f, our translation), published on June 13th, 2024, the Amazon forest appears as cropland.

Figure 3 - YouTube thumbnail promoting the Bill 467/2023



Source: Screenshot of the FPA (2024f).

Description of Figure 3: Screenshot of the Amazon as cropland.

We also identified disinformation content with conspiracy theories that “international forces” are behind the regulation of environmental licensing in the country. This claim is echoed by Pedro Lupion (FPA, 2025c) in the video published on February 20th, 2025, where he refers to the situation as a “narrative war” aimed at influencing the global trade arena, and weakening Brazil’s economic competitiveness. For him, the agribusiness sector must actively dispute public opinion against environmentalists and social movements.

4.2.2 Rural environmental registry

The last relevant component of the FPA’s information disorder related to our RQ is the application and support for the Rural Environmental Registry (in Portuguese, Cadastro Ambiental Rural [CAR]). The cadastre is mandatory for rural properties in Brazil, established under the Forest Code, Law 12.651 (Brasil, 2012), to monitor and manage land with georeferenced data on property boundaries and native vegetation. Besides, CAR registration is a requirement to access agricultural credits and incentives, functioning as a traceability tool for sustainable standards in the local and international trade markets.

In this subtopic, videos were labeled as containing misinformation when they simplify the notion that digitalization is a solution to compensate for insufficient public servants and delays in land registration, as seen in a video (FPA, 2021c) from October 5th, 2021. Another publication considers the CAR a final solution to registration and regularization of land use in Brazil, as identified in a publication exclusively about this, published on June 7th, 2024, titled *Seminar seeks to bring solutions for the Rural Environmental Registry* (FPA, 2024c, our translation).

Such discourse promotes the idea that the CAR implementation is not being prioritized due to a deliberate attempt to “restrict the economic productivity” of rural properties. The FPA promotes interpretations that subordinate the Brazilian Forest Code to ministerial decrees and administrative ordinances, weakening environmental regulation in practice. According to this claim, agribusiness opponents are influencing the system, so Lula’s government would be intentionally failing to process CAR registrations due to a lack of political will.

Videos in this category were labeled as strategic confusion, intersecting misinformation, as digitalization is excessively simplified as a solution, as well as disinformation in the form of greenwashing, when the CAR or digitalization, through enhanced monitoring, were portrayed as tools to reduce deforestation and expand Legal Reserves (portions of rural properties that must remain under native vegetation to ensure conservation and sustainable use). This is the case for a video published on July 18th, 2023, titled *The truth they didn’t tell you about Brazilian agribusiness!* (FPA, 2023d, our translation). The content claims that, by enabling satellite-based traceability and property georeferencing, producers would be able to comply with international and sustainable trade agreements. For them, once the CAR is fully implemented, Brazil will be “ready to meet international environmental demands”.

Figure 4 - YouTube thumbnail promoting the Rural Environmental Registry



Source: Screenshot of the FPA (2024c).

Description of Figure 4: seven parliamentaries from the FPA stand in a seminar in front of the image of a farmer.

5 Discussions

The FPA's videos confirm infocommunicational patterns aligned with previous findings from different researchers in Brazil (Budó, 2018; Santos; Silva; Maciel, 2019; Rajão et al., 2020, 2022; Medeiros et al., 2024) and also foreign studies based on the information disorder framework (Wardle; Derakhshan, 2017; Bennett; Livingston, 2018). The findings shed light on a complex context that goes beyond the three main information disorder categories, and gain interpretability when intersections emerge.

Regarding the research question – How does the FPA's digital communication on YouTube legitimize its political project? –, our analysis evidenced two main topics, legal certainty and modernization/digitalization of agriculture, used to carry out their agenda. Different features of information disorder on land use can influence and transform social, environmental and territorial justice in the country.

Confronting the first finding with The Future is Agro: 2018 – 2030 State Plan, a major document from the FPA, the legal certainty argument is strongly reinforced. The idea that the law should regulate social conduct in a stable manner is invoked as a core principle for the sector (Conselho do Agro, 2018, p. 39). Thus, land occupations linked to agrarian reform and the demarcation of Indigenous and Quilombola territories are portrayed as threats, as evidenced in the videos. The “[...] right to property and peace in the countryside” (Conselho do Agro, 2018, p. 37) uses malinformation to establish an opposition to socio-territorial movements. On the other hand, social movements alert that land tenure regularization in the

country was politically captured and lacks governance, reinforcing historical land grabbing, social inequalities, and environmental degradation (APIB; FGV Direito SP; Comissão Arns, 2024).

The FPA malinforms by using hate speech against socio-territorial movements. Part of the content spreads hostility and reinforces structural violence by portraying violent dispossession as legality. When malinformation overlaps with disinformation, it produces what we describe as manipulation with hate. Through the legitimization of illegal occupations by large landowners, information disorder fulfills the appropriation of public land, with serious consequences for agrarian justice, human rights, and the environment (APIB; FGV Direito SP; Comissão Arns, 2024). The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) withdrew from the negotiation table of the Time Frame bill, a legal mechanism to try to find consensus between social groups, in April 2025.

The discourses on the videos and in the State Plan express their institutional project. The FPA frames regulatory frameworks as bureaucratic obstacles that undermine Brazil's international competitiveness, and proposes to make environmental licensing more flexible, described as "[...] difficult or impossible to comply with", alongside a "[...] complete rejection of the zero deforestation proposal" (Conselho do Agro, 2018, p. 120). Nonetheless, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office from Brazil warns about the risk of compromising the State's ability to oversee the impact on the environment and on traditional communities (Brasil, 2021). In May 2025, despite large opposition from civil society, the Senate approved what was coined as the "Devastation Bill", a framework to weaken environmental licensing (Fasolo, 2025).

The second finding is the digitalization and modernization discourses. Georeferenced data on land and natural resources functions as a treasure map available online, facilitating both legal and illegal land grabbing. According to Packer (2021), the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (in Portuguese, Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária [Incra]) reveals a virtual land structure disconnected from material reality: only 41% of rural Brazil is "registrable" private property, while entries on the CAR already claim over 76% of national territory.

For Packer (2021), there is a "digital land dispute" underway, given Brazil's legacy of illegal land grabbing. Fraudulent manipulation of official State registries is an intersection between misinformation and disinformation, what we describe as strategic confusion, since

partially factual records and non-intentional inaccuracies leave room for actors to fabricate land origins and mask a cycle of violent dispossession, slave labor, and deforestation.

The FPA refers to the CAR as a modern tool to align agricultural production with ecological preservation, and the system has recently started automatizing the registration analysis. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the CAR poses significant risks by automating territorial classification based on self-declared, often inaccurate data, potentially reinforcing land grabbing and environmental injustice. Without robust oversight, AI systems may normalize irregularities, obscure contested claims, and entrench existing power asymmetries under a veneer of technical neutrality.

Figueira (2023) analyzed how official information on land tenure in Brazil is not reliable, as different public and private data systems have closed access and lack interoperability, which can be seen as a misinformation system. Not even official documentation on land use follows the basics of information integrity (United Nations, 2024), another concrete case of institutions marginalizing traditional forms of producing spaces.

Long story short, Prieto (2020) states that land grabbing is the foundation of Brazilian territorial formation, where genocide leads to epistemicide. Official land titles have historically been plagued by information disorder, overlapping misinformation (since incomplete, incorrect and uncoordinated), aggravated by disinformation (involving intentional deceit, such as greenwashing and denialism), and malinformation (resorting to violence, intimidation and hate speech). Information disorder on land use in Brazil reveals a deeply entangled and powerful phenomenon, at the intersection of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.

6 Conclusions

Our investigation into the digital communication of the Parliamentary Agricultural Front (FPA) confirms informational patterns aligned with previous studies on information disorder and agribusiness in Brazil. We sought to show how the FPA employs sophisticated informational disorder strategies to legitimize its political project within the context of globalized agribusiness and advance an agenda centered on agricultural policy, influencing the transformation of environmental and socio-territorial laws in the country.

The results demonstrate that the FPA's discourse revolves around two dominant arguments: legal certainty and digitalization/modernization. The legal certainty argument mobilizes disinformation and malinformation (manipulation with hate), including hate speech and moral panic, with the aim of criminalizing Indigenous and landless movements. Their strategy aims to legitimize extractivist legislation, such as the "Time Frame Law" and the "Zero Invasion Package". Meanwhile, the digitalization/modernization argument resorts to strategic confusion: misinformation and disinformation in the form of greenwashing, portraying Brazilian agribusiness as "the most sustainable in the world". In reality, these narratives obscure processes of land grabbing and expropriation, reinforcing the private accumulation of land and natural resources.

This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating how information disorder on land use operates not only through overt disinformation but also through forms of strategic communication embedded in institutional discourse. Messages framed as credible public information – often adopting elements associated with policy expertise and mediatic authority – can function within broader ecosystems of disinformation. We seek to advance a systemic perspective that connects infocommunication practices, institutional power, and territorial governance, offering new analytical tools for understanding how narrative disputes shape the politics of land in Brazil.

Regarding limitations of our study, qualitative and thematic analysis are relevant to capture the main nuances of discourse and contexts, but can not provide statistical validation on the FPA's communication strategy. This paper is part of a broader research agenda from the authors focused on how information disorder on land use is a weapon aimed at shaping public opinion in favor of agribusiness, undermining popular sovereignty, environmental protection, and democratic debate.

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Desordem informacional sobre o uso da terra: o poder do agronegócio brasileiro

Resumo

Este artigo investiga como a Frente Parlamentar da Agropecuária, também conhecida como bancada ruralista, utiliza a comunicação digital para legitimar seu projeto político e defender um conjunto específico de leis. Baseada no referencial conceitual de desordem informacional, que abrange desinformação, informação incorreta e informação maliciosa, a metodologia qualitativa combina Análise Crítica do Discurso e análise temática de 335 vídeos publicados no canal da Frente Parlamentar da Agropecuária no YouTube entre julho de 2020 e março de 2025. Os resultados revelam que o discurso da Frente no YouTube opera por meio de estratégias sofisticadas de desordem informacional articuladas em torno de dois argumentos dominantes: segurança jurídica e digitalização/modernização. O argumento da segurança jurídica mobiliza desinformação, manipulando a interpretação da Constituição, e informação maliciosa, incluindo discurso de ódio e pânico moral, para criminalizar povos indígenas e movimentos socioterritoriais, legitimando assim legislações extrativistas, como o Marco Temporal. Por outro lado, o argumento da modernização recorre à desinformação e ao *greenwashing*, retratando o agronegócio brasileiro como “o mais sustentável do mundo”, e à informação descontextualizada que enquadra ferramentas digitais (por exemplo, o Cadastro Ambiental Rural) como soluções puramente técnicas, obscurecendo processos de grilagem e desapropriação de terras. Nosso estudo conclui que o discurso digital da bancada ruralista constrói narrativas para naturalizar a expansão rural e a desregulação jurídica, enquanto oculta a degradação ambiental e as violações de direitos socioterritoriais sob os enquadramentos retóricos de sustentabilidade e desenvolvimento.

Palavras-chave

desordem informacional; análise do discurso; YouTube; Greenwashing; agronegócio

Data availability statement

The dataset supporting the results of this study can be requested from the authors (see corresponding author).

Authorship and Responsibility Statement

Conception and design of the study: Monique Figueira and Bruna Távora

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