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Punishment, Virtuousness and Political Renewal: the Electoral Campaigns of Federal Police Officers to the Chamber of Deputies in Brazil

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Introduction

During the 2000s, several "anti-corruption" legislations were passed in Brazil. Among several others, we have the *Crime Against Public Finances Law* (Law No. 10.028/2000), the *Plea-Bargaining Law* (Law No. 12.850/2013) and the *Anti-corruption Law* (Law No. 12.846/2013), which offered to institutional actors new tools to investigate and prosecute white-collar crimes, adopting an international anti-corruption model (Tourinho, 2018). Parallel to that and, in part, because of this new legal reality, a *field of scandals* expanded and brought closer together legal, political and media spaces in the country, causing a spread of anti-corruption operations against politicians (such as former presidents and ministers of state), and entrepreneurs of large construction companies (Grün, 2018). A significant case was the *Operation Car Wash* (2014-2021), which impacted Brazil with the arrests of high-ranking politicians and directors of the Brazilian oil company Petrobras[1].

Within this context, the fight against corruption in Brazil allowed actors in the justice system to reposition themselves in the national political context. The Federal

[1] For more details, cf. Lima, 2021.

Public Prosecutor's Office, after a prolonged period of internationalization in which they established connections with institutions (such as NGOs) and foreign universities, sought to leverage the contacts and expertise acquired into corporate investments associated with greater autonomy of their institution in relation to the government and the political space (Engelmann; Menuzzi, 2020). Another important case is the one of business lawyers, who, in the same context of fighting corruption in Brazil, converted their activities towards consulting practices and dissemination of models through different modalities of events and services related to *compliance* (Engelmann; Oliveira, 2022). However, these different legal profession modalities in Brazil have different meanings when it comes to the "fight against corruption". On the one hand, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office constructs the problem of corruption as a state problem and is focused on its economic impact. On the other hand, criminal lawyers criticize punitive practices and the violation of criminal procedures in anti-corruption operations based on the idea of *garantismo* (Cornelius, 2018).

During this period, the Federal Police Department, or simply the Federal Police became a key institution in the "fight against corruption"[2]. Since 2003, the institution received large amounts of investment from the federal government, increasing its resources and expanding the number of operations carried out (Azevedo; Pilau, 2018). The media gave considerable visibility to political scandals, which caused the federal police officers to become daily emblematic figures of procedures authorized by the justice against politicians and big businessmen, constantly in the news and conducting arrests and searches and seizures in wealthy neighborhoods and gated communities. Over time, the institution gained even more recognition, and consequently started calling itself the "police of the elites" (Bajotto, 2009) becoming one of Brazil's most trusted institutions, ahead of the Federal Supreme Court and the political class and on an equal footing with the Fire Department, the Church, and the Armed Forces (Aberje, 2019).

This work is a result of an ongoing research on the relationship between the Federal Police and politics in Brazil. We explore the candidacies of federal police officers for political positions[3] from 2010 onwards, where they began emphasizing their activities

[2] In Brazil, there are state and federal police. As established by art. 144 of the Federal Constitution, the civil and military police are assigned the functions of investigation and repression of crime and their performance takes place in the federal states. The Federal Highway Police is responsible for patrolling the highways, and the Federal Police, the guarding of borders and airspace, the investigation of international crimes and crimes against the public administration.

[3] According to Federal Law No. 8.112/1990, art. 86, federal civil servants will be able to license themselves for political activities, being removed from their functions after registration of their candidacy. In

in anti-corruption operations in their campaign speeches. In the 2010 elections, the social imaginary was still focused on two political and/or corruption scandals famous nationwide: the *Mensalão* (2005-2014), which targeted the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), and *Operation Satiagraha* (2008-2013), which arrested and prosecuted bankers and money dealers, despite being later overturned by the Brazilian court for irregularities in the conduct of the investigation. In the following elections, the anti-corruption discourse turned into an electoral asset of this group. Prior to the 2010 election, federal police officers presented themselves as candidates with experience in the criminal justice system and combating drug trafficking, as well as the solution to high crime rates and feelings of insecurity. But what explains this change in the campaign plan of the federal police? How do these candidates use the fight against anti-corruption as an electoral asset to be elected to political office?

Our hypothesis in this research is that the corporate increase of the Federal Police in the fight against corruption made possible the accumulation of institutional capital, later converted into an electoral asset by candidates linked to the institution (Bourdieu, 1989). That was possible due to the creation of specialized departments, circulation in national and international groups focused on the theme and acting in political-financial scandals. The different meanings attributed to the fight against corruption in their campaigns has varied over time. Therefore, we argue that, based on the empirical material of the research, the image of the Federal Police was consolidated as "police of the elites", and three types of electoral resources originated from that: punishment, which allowed Federal Police candidates to stand in favor of measures against "corrupt politicians"; virtuousness, which allowed the Federal Police offices to position themselves as "clean record" candidates; and political renewal, which intended to portrait their candidacies as "technical" and outside the political sphere.

To carry out this investigation, our research objective is the candidacies of federal police officers to the Chamber of Deputies in four Brazilian elections: 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018[4]. Firstly, we identified the candidacies from data collected in the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) repository, highlighting their main transformations over time. After that, we analyzed the candidates' electoral campaigns from various sources, such as

comparison with other Brazilian police forces, the rules for federal police officers to leave are lenient, given that these actors can leave the corporation to run for office and, elected or not, return to their duties in the Federal Police on the tenth day after the end of elections.

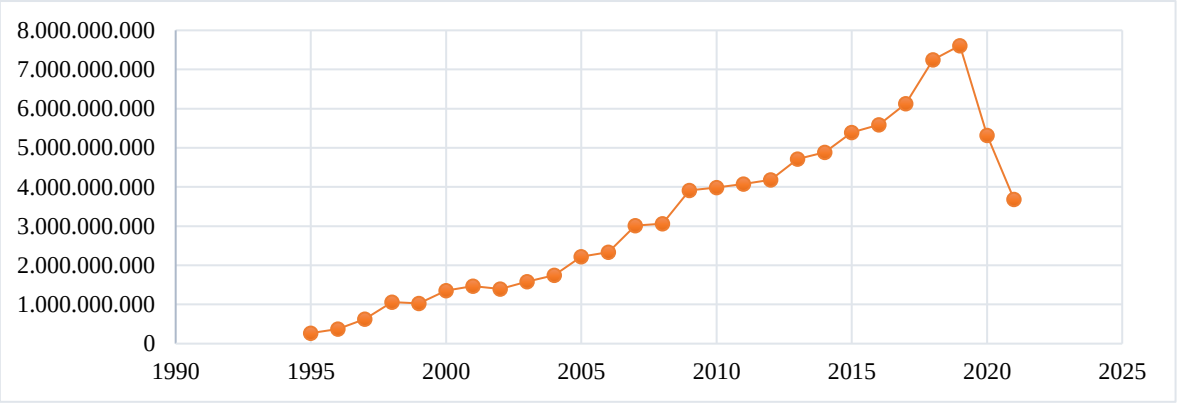
[4] In these elections, held every two years, the candidates ran for the positions of President of the Republic, Governor, Senator, and Federal Deputy.

YouTube videos and media interviews, among others. Consequently, this working paper is structured in three sections. In the first section, we briefly revisit the corporate strategies and political reconfigurations through which the Federal Police went through since the country's re-democratization in the 1980s. In the second section, we detail the methodological steps, specifically data collection procedures and the construction of empirical research material. Finally, we examined qualitative data related to the positions taken by candidates in electoral campaigns and the different meanings of anti-corruption found in their speeches.

1 Corporate strategies and the political power of the Federal Police after the country's re-democratization in 1988

With the 1988 Federal Constitution enactment, Federal Police commissioners had an internal dispute over the command of department. Ever since the body gained its current nomenclature, in 1967, only military personnel had held the position of Director-General. It was only when Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2001) was elected President of the Republic that the career federal commissioners began to oversee the command of the institution. At the same time, another power conflict took place within the agency: between federal commissioners and other positions – agents, clerks, experts and papiloscopists. Due to their different attributions in everyday activity, these positions constitute corporate identities and have distinct meanings about the role of the Federal Police in society and in the justice system. The 1990s were also marked by a lack of resources in the Federal Police (Rocha, 2004; Silva, 2018).

It was only in 2003 that the federal government began to invest in the Federal Police. In that year, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, from the Workers' Party, was elected president. His government, fulfilling campaign promises, was marked by financial and structural investments in control institutions, such as the Comptroller General of the Union, the Financial Activities Control Council (COAF), the Asset Recovery Department of the Ministry of Justice and the Federal Police itself (Hage, 2010). It was under these circumstances that there was a significant growth in the budgets approved by the National Congress for the agency and in the number of operations carried out (Azevedo; Pilau, 2018). Graph 1 illustrates the annual budget dedicated to the Federal Police by the Brazilian National Congress.



Graphic 1 Annual Budget Law (LOA) - Federal Police Department (1995-2021)

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the Annual Budget Laws of the Brazilian National Congress.

With these investments and the structuring of the Federal Police, a series of corporate strategies were implemented by the federal commissioners. They simultaneously sought to increase their power within the agency, and to approach other legal careers, in the Federal Prosecution Office and in the Federal Justice Office. Table 1 illustrates the main strategies of this group in the last decade. On the one hand, there was the enactment of Provisional Measure n. º 657/2014 during Dilma Rousseff's mandate, that established the position of Director General exclusive of federal commissioners as the final stage of the career, preventing other positions within the corporation from ascending to positions of power. On the other hand, there are bills and lawsuits that wanted the agency's autonomy from the political space (PECs 412/2009 and 101/2015); the exclusivity of federal commissioners in the production of research (RE no. 593.727/2015 and PEC 37/2011); and the possibility of these actors to sign award-winning collaboration agreements (ADI 5508). Many of these attributions' struggles occurred in dispute with the Federal Prosecution Office, which in Brazil has the role of initiating and sustaining accusations in criminal proceedings in the justice system, as the accusatory body par excellence.

Table 1: Corporate Strategies of Federal Commissioners (2009-2018)

Objective	Medium	Description
Autonomy (Functional, administrative, and budgetary)	Draft Constitutional Amendment (PEC) No. 412/2009	Legislative proposal that sought to alter the Federal Constitution, allowing the Complementary Law to prescribe rules on functional, administrative, and budgetary autonomy for the Federal Police.
	Draft Constitutional Amendment (PEC) No. 101/2015	It sought to amend the Federal Constitution to state that it is the President of the Republic exclusive responsibility to appoint, after approval by the Federal Senate, the General Commissioners of the Federal Police, coming from a

		triple list among members of the last functional class, over thirty-five years of age, with a mandate of three years, with one renewal allowed.
Exclusivity in the production of the police investigation	Extraordinary Appeal No. 593,727, judged by the Federal Supreme Court in 2015.	Action with general repercussion on separation of powers over the investigative powers of the Public Prosecutor's Office, having prevailed the theory that this institution has competence to promote investigations.
	PEC 37/2011	It sought to amend the Federal Constitution to make criminal investigations private to the Federal Police and the state police.
Sign award-winning collaboration agreements	Direct Action of Unconstitutionality No. 5508, judged by the Federal Supreme Court in 2018.	Action brought by the Public Prosecutor's Office before the Federal Supreme Court that sought to declare §§2 and 6 of art. 4 of Law No. 12,850/2013, which allows police commissioners to sign agreements for award-winning collaboration.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

These disputes for autonomy and for more attributions and legal instruments allowed the federal commissioners to claim more space in the Brazilian legal field. The idea of agency autonomy is a representative case since it has been presented as a demand for shielding political interference both in investigations and in the choice of key actors in the institution – such as the Director-General[5]. At the same time, it allows federal commissioners to situate themselves outside the political logic, as the institutions of the justice system do when positioning themselves as neutral (Vauchez, 2017). In this sense, another dynamic that brought the Federal Police closer to institutions of the justice system was the corporate accretion around the "fight against corruption". As summarized in Table 2, the Internal Regulations of the Federal Police demonstrate the different top internal departments (Directorial and Coordination) created between 2003 and 2018, focused on combating financial crimes, corruption and money laundering, in addition to pointing out the participation of the Federal Police in agencies that conform to norms and practices of action at a national and international level (Sherrer, 2006), such as the National Strategy to Combat Corruption and Money Laundering (ENCCLA), the Financial Action Group (GAFI/LAFT) and the Latin American Financial Action Group (GAFILAT).

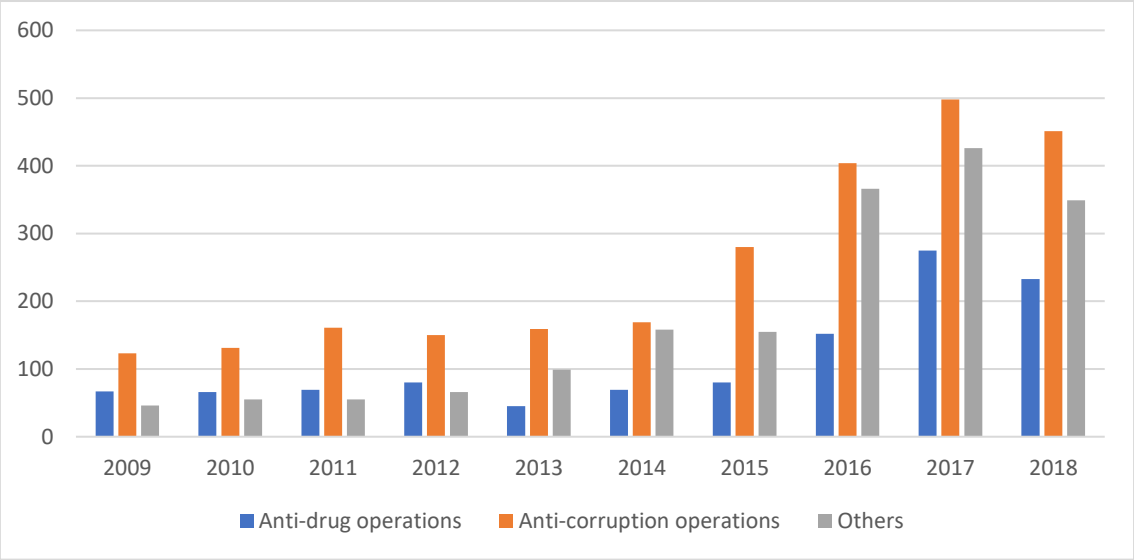
Table 2: Corporate increases by the Federal Police in the "fight against corruption" in the 2000s

[5] According to two delegates, in a co-authored book on corruption in Brazilian governments: "The second group of proposals requires legislative changes, it is more difficult to implement, but it has a much more structuring effect on the reform of the Brazilian State, and would have as a first measure establish a four-year term, with no possibility of extension, for the director-general of the PF [Federal Police], to be always started halfway through the term of office of the head of the Executive Branch. This change will lessen the influence of the President of the Republic who appointed the head of the PF, since he will always serve in two different presidential terms. The choice of director-general must also obey the triple list presented by a superior college of PF [Federal Police] delegates" (Pontes; Anselmo, 2019, p. 234).

Objective	Medium	Description
Creation of Specialized Departments	Changes to the Internal Regulations	Creation of the Board of Investigation and Combat to Organized Crime (2003); the Financial Crimes Repression Division (2003); of general coordination's of Repression of Corruption (2017) and of Repression of Corruption and Money Laundering (2018).
Participation in National Thematic Groups	National Strategy to Combat Corruption and Money Laundering (ENCCLA)	It is an articulation network between several Brazilian institutions, such as the Comptroller General of the Union, the Public Ministry, the Judiciary, among others. Regularly holds meetings and determines "Actions" to be carried out/incorporated by its institutions.
Participation in International Thematic Groups	Financial Action Group (GAFI/FATF); Latin America Financial Action Group (GAFILAT).	The GAFI/FATF is an intergovernmental group created in Paris during a G7 meeting. According to its own website, is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. The inter-governmental body sets international standards that aims to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society. As a policy-making body, works to generate the necessary policy will in order to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas. GAFILAT is the Latin American branch of GAFI/FATF.
National anti-corruption operations	Banestado (1995-2003), Anaconda, Carne Fraca, Castelo de Areia, Satiagraha (2008-2013), Mensalão (2005-2014), Operação Lava Jato (2018-2021).	As investigative police, the Federal Police carries out investigations and court orders (such as arrests and search and seizure warrants) to the detriment of nationally recognized political and business actors. On these occasions, this branch worked together with the Judiciary and the Federal Public Ministry, sometimes grouping police officers into task forces that sought to concentrate efforts on a specific case.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Between 2009 and 2018, we noticed that these internal transformations were reflected in the number of police operations of police stations specializing in financial, social security, treasury crimes and the mishandle of public resources. We see clearly in Graph 2, that there was a considerable increase in these operations that could be classified as anti-corruption, with only a slight decrease in 2018. As an inflection point, we consider that 2014 hosted the beginning of Operation Car Wash, which can be inferred to have generated a greater demand for a significant number of search and seizure warrants and arrests carried out by the branch in several Brazilian states. This would contribute to an increase in police operations from that period on. If, during the 1990s, the Federal Police's performance was marked by anti-drug operations, including cooperation with the American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) (Vilella, 2021), in the period described in Graph 2, anti-corruption becomes the institution's new main focus.



Graphic 2: Federal Police Operations (2008-2018)[6]

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data available by the Federal Police via the Access to Information Law (n.º 08850000120201926).

From this brief overview, we noticed that the political power of the federal commissioners and of the Federal Police itself grew during the 2000s, especially due to corporate investments that bet on the agency's performance in the criminal justice system and in the logics of the legal field. In the foreground we have Lula's government's investments in the institution from 2003 onwards. Different strategies that sought to position the corporation as neutral to the conjunctural aspects of politics and outside the logics of this space also contribute to the consolidation of this power. Finally, the increased number in specialized departments, the connection with networks of cooperation and compliance of "actions" (such as ENCCLA in Brazil and GAFI/FATF in France) with other institutions and participation in anti-corruption operations with great national repercussion also contributed. Our hypothesis is that this set of elements plus the result of an historical and conjunctural processes of the Federal Police, helps explain the change that occurred in the electoral campaigns of the candidates from 2010, in which symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2014) around the idea of "elite police" was converted into an electoral asset.

[6] In order to construct the categories shown in the graph, data from operations from the following internal sectors were grouped: (i) in anti-drug operations, from the Drug Repression Department (DRE); (ii) in the anti-corruption operations of the Financial Crimes Police Station (DFIN), Social Security Crimes (DPREV), Finance Crimes (DFAZ) and the Service for Repression of Misappropriation of Public Resources (SRDP); (iii) in others, the Divisions of Social and Political Affairs (DASP), the Division of Human Rights (DDH), the Division for Repression of Crimes Against the Environment and Historical Heritage (DMAPH), the Division for Repression of Crimes against Heritage and Arms Traffic (DPAT) and the Cyber Crime Repression Service (SRCC).

2 Methods and data collected

To build the empirical material for this research, we employed multiple sources and data collection techniques. We began by carrying out an exploratory phase to find out who the federal police candidates were. We identified candidates with ties to the Federal Police who ran for the following elections: 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018. We then carried out a survey of these candidates' campaign materials (those that were available). We built a database with information from the candidates and campaign materials found on the YouTube videos and other sources.

In the first phase, we carried out a survey in the *Electoral Data Repository* of the Superior Electoral Court and in news articles. This repository is a system, powered by the Brazilian electoral justice[7], in which the candidate data from all regions that hold municipal, state, and federal elections in Brazil are available. Implementing this strategy, we found 75 federal police candidates for the Chamber of Deputies in the investigated period. Before collecting campaign material from this group, we mapped the availability of data for each candidate on the internet. As shown in Table 3, out of the 75 we found information on only 47. However, if when we searched by election, we found a high surge in the availability of material, reaching 80 and 73.6% in the 2018 and 2014 elections, respectively, for only 16 .6% in the 2006 elections. Although there are some, data from the 2002 and 2006 elections are scarce. We attribute this difference to the increased use of social networks in the last decade and, predominantly, to the fact that candidates have created individual and personalized channels on YouTube.

Table 3: Candidates with available campaign materials

Year	Total candidates	Number of candidates with available material	% of candidates with available material
2002	9	2	22,2%
2006	6	1	16,6%
2010	10	5	50%
2014	19	14	73,6%
2018	30	24	80%

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the research database.

We consequently focused our efforts on analyzing the campaign proposals of the Federal Police candidates, focusing on the mentions that these actors made to their

[7] Access through the link: https://dadosabertos.tse.jus.br/.

corporation, to understand how they turned their participation in anti-corruption operations into an electoral asset. Finally, we clarify that the option to investigate only candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and not at other levels of the federation was taken based on the volume of federal police officers who aimed to become federal deputies, but mainly because we could access their campaign materials easily, probably because of the greater visibility of candidacies for national positions.

The empirical research provided significant data for a better understanding of federal police candidacies in Brazil, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Federal Police Candidates for the Chamber of Deputies (2002-2018)

Year	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
Candidates	9	6	10	20	30
Elected	0	1	2	4	5

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the research database.

The information collected allows us to affirm that the adherence of this group of actors to the space of representative politics increased, tripling between 2002 and 2018. During this period, the 75 candidacies for the Chamber of Deputies were distributed in the following proportion, as shown in Table 4: 09 candidates and none elected in 2002; 06 candidates and 01 elected in 2006, 10 candidates and 02 elected in 2010; 20 candidates and 04 elected in 2014; and 30 candidates and 05 elected in 2018. However, if we make a relative analysis of these five elections, we see that there is no growth in the number of elected officials. These numbers are in line with the vertiginous increase in civil and military police candidacies in the last decade (Berlatto; Codato; Bolognesi, 2016; Lima, 2019). In the following section, we will analyze the speeches of these candidates in their electoral campaigns.

3 The uses of anti-corruption as a political asset

When the Federal Police began incrementing a corporate growth in the “fight against corruption”, federal police officers mobilized institutional capital through their experiences in anti-corruption operations to ensure influence in the Brazilian political space. If in the 2002 and 2006 elections the idea of anti-corruption was not included in the analyzed campaign proposals, from 2010 onwards it became present in some candidacies. Before that, federal police officers considered themselves as those who, if

elected to the position they were running for, would implement tougher sentences against street crime and, mainly, against drug trafficking – a case that illustrates that was a federal commissioners' campaign that had as the slogan "A child's place is at school and a criminal's place is in jail". After examining the electoral campaigns of the 2010, 2014 and 2018 elections, we grouped the uses of anti-corruption into three main groups: punishment, virtuousness, and political renewal. Table 5 presents proposals/positions taken by Federal Police candidates who are significant in the use of anti-corruption in their campaign platforms.

Table 5: Dimensions of the Uses of Anti-Corruption in Electoral Campaigns (2010-2018)

Dimension	Proposals/Position-taking
Punishment	"When I was Superintendent of the Federal Police, deputies and other politicians were removed and arrested as operations were carried out. As a Federal Deputy, I will draft bills that make the penalties for crimes committed by politicians tougher, ending the privileged forum and severely punishing those who rob public safes".
	"Corruption fuels violence, drug trafficking, prostitution, abandoned of minors and robbery. The money embezzled is needed for security, health, and education. For a Brazil with justice and without corruption. I ask for your vote. Together we will win."
Virtuousness	"We are the majority of the people who are honest, honorable, and are actually fulfilling our duties. However, in Brazil, two justices operate: one destined for the poor and unassisted; another for the rich criminal who always finds a way out and doesn't get punishment. It is against this that we fight, that we are developing this work of rescuing ethics and respect for the Constitution of the Republic. Why? Justice must be the same for everyone."
	"[...] most of the problems that the Federal Police investigates, arrests and at the same time acts on is the diversion of public resources and the misappropriation of people's money. This goes through corrupters and corrupted. To disassemble this process, we need to replace these actors. And the only way to replace them is to put new politicians in power. It is always the State and the people who are most violated in this issue of embezzlement of public money, who lose their money. So, we thought that we could: put candidates to the people's judgment and if the population thinks it's time, they will make the change. The military did the same, we have other social classes that are trying to put serious and honest people in key positions. This is the intention [...] to replace the people driving the democracy boat with serious and honest people".
	"[..] The problem in Brazil is not the lack of resources, it's the lack of management. So, I believe that our *expertise* [...] we have very solid values in the Federal Police. Hierarchy and discipline [...] So, you will oversee a department, a public office, or else you will go to parliament, to the Chamber, to the Senate. You have to take that, hierarchy and discipline, because if it doesn't it become a riot [...] Parallel to that, our day to day at the Federal Police is to fight corruption, so we are hardly deceived as managers [...] I believe that our experience in the Federal Police, and lately the focus of the Federal Police has been on fighting corruption, qualifies us as good candidates for both the executive [power] and the legislative [power]".

	"[...] I leave public security, the Federal Police, which is one of the most respected institutions we have in Brazil today, I leave it because I believe that change must happen in the political field. If you change in the political field, if you change the representatives, then you will be able to change the way of using resources, you will have a better say on where our police officers will stay".
Political Renewal	"So, our work to fight crime, our work to arrest these corrupt people, whether in this operation or in several others, it is a work that arrives later. My intention in participating in this election now is to arrive earlier, to replace this old policy that is there, and that has already proved to be ineffective many times, so we have the possibility at this moment now, in the renewal that Brazilians longs for, we see it on social networks, in the media, on television, everyone talking about renewal. For me, renewal must be accompanied by seriousness and honesty".
	"Federal police officers are essential in the fight against corruption. And now, they have also decided to make their contribution within the National Congress. I'm a candidate for Federal Deputy, and I represent the National Front of Federal Police here in the state. Strengthening the work of federal police in the fight against corruption is essential to prevent further embezzlement of public resources. Like you, we want concrete and immediate measures in the fight against corruption, with the penalization not only of the corrupt, but also of corruptors. We need to moralize Brazil and your vote will be fundamental in this renewal process".

Source: Authors' elaboration, based on the research database.

In the first dimension, we found several speeches in which federal police officers are focused on positioning themselves as candidates who, once elected, will be more severe with corrupt politicians, proposing tougher sentences. Therefore, we will refer to this axis as *punishment*. Here, the campaign speeches focus is on promises to end the "privileged forum" and punish politicians more severely, replicating what appears in the rhetoric of other more expressive candidacies identified with "operations to moralize politics". Although centered on the political class, this rhetoric is also identified with the broader punitive rhetoric recurrently utilized by police deputies in Brazil. In some of these cases, the language of police culture – based on war or the crusade of "good" against "evil" – expands through a punitive-moralizing logic of society (Novello; Alvarez, 2022). In the case of federal police officers, moralization is directed at "corrupt politicians" and the solution to this generalized state of impunity comes from the expertise that these actors can exercise in the political space based on their identity with the Federal Police.

In the second dimension, we have the idea of "probity", or the appeal to the virtue of honesty that belonging to a corporation brings to the candidacy – which we will summarize in the word *virtuousness*. While the rhetoric of "rescuing ethics" is present, in the analyzed candidacies the federal police officers sought to protect their positions with the Federal Police to claim a virtuousness that, generally placed, would not exist in the

political space. There is a federal commissioner who, even after being elected, presented himself as follows on his official website: "I have worked directly in operations to combat organized crime and corruption for the last two decades, in the position of Federal Commissioner of the Federal Police. Deputy I am, Federal Commissioner I am!". The use of public probity (Heartaux, 2009) as a means of capitalizing on an electoral campaign is nothing new and, in the specific case of federal police officers, is presented here as a link between their activities in the "fight against corruption" as part of the justice system and a presumably honest candidate. Although this axis is autonomous, it regularly appears when candidates express the reasons for their candidacy, which brings us back to the idea of policy renewal.

In the last dimension, *political renewal* is one of the meanings attributed to anti-corruption in federal police campaigns. This axis also groups together the reasons why these actors intend to run as candidates for elective positions. On the one hand, there are those who see their candidacy as an opportunity to renew the political space and reinforce the approval of anti-corruption laws, thus proposing to voters their migration from acting in the police to acting at the level of legislation production. On the other hand, there are those who make use of this discourse as an operation to discredit a corrupt political class that no longer deserves to occupy powerful positions and, therefore, their candidacies are placed as the solution. The strengthening of this discourse occurred mainly in the context of the 2018 elections. In these elections, the five Federal Police candidates elected were from the same party as Jair Bolsonaro – Liberal Social Party (PSL) – who was elected president, one of them being his son.

Conclusion

In this work, our main objective was to provide data to explain why federal police officers started to use anti-corruption in their electoral campaigns from the 2010 elections. In addition, we seek to situate how these actors converted the anti-corruption idea into an electoral asset in these elections. To do so, we investigated who these candidates were and analyzed their campaign material. The empirical research allowed us to affirm that in the elections of 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018 there were 75 candidates linked to the Federal Police. We looked at each year of candidacy and noticed that candidacies tripled in this period – from 9 in 2002 to 30 in 2018. Qualitative data on the corporate growth of federal commissioners in the Brazilian legal space and in the "fight against corruption"

demonstrate that the power of these actors grew as the Federal Police was identified as "police of the elites". In the final part of the article, we propose three axes capable of grouping the uses of anti-corruption in federal police candidacies: punishment, virtuousness, and political renewal.

In this sense, it is curious to note that despite the corporate re-compositions and institutional roles attributed to judicial institutions and the Federal Police in the post-re-democratization period, the parameters that ensure political autonomy and independence can also be used for credit operations aimed at electoral attempts. That is, while federal commissioners claim the exteriority of their activities and their corporation in relation to the logics of the political game, their candidacies bring out other connections with Brazilian politics through their participation in political campaigns and in the occupation of elective positions. In fact, these are points that deserve to be further explored. After occupying a political position, how do federal police officers see their role when they return to the corporation and in which positions are they allocated? How are police officers who work in anti-corruption operations and then run for elective positions seen by their peers within the corporation? These are just a few open questions that remain to be further explored.

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