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Nara Pavão, a researcher on public opinion and voter behavior, says that fake news is used as a campaign strategy - and needs to be punished as such.

Nara, a political scientist and professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco (**UFPE**), worked on a study that analyzed the belief in fake news and the success of its corrections before and during the 2018 elections. The results, she said, bring some encouragement.

Although a third of people believe in fake news, and so-called “fact-checking” has little impact, those most influenced by fake news are those who already have solid political convictions. Thus their vote will not be affected by the news, whether true or false.

The majority of the population is made up of non-partisans, who are the most suspicious of adulterated information and who most believe in fact-checking.

“These are the people who could be manipulated by false news, but they are the ones with the lowest rate of belief. The others already know who they are going to vote for,” she said.

Although she believes that society is still far from finding a solution to the dilemma, Nara believes that Brazilian institutions are better prepared to react to the phenomenon in the coming elections.

“In 2018 [the phenomenon] took everyone by surprise. The thing took on a dimension that no one believed. In 2020, institutions will already be more aware of the problem, of the peculiarities of the Brazilian case,” she said.

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