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# DEMOCRACY, THE LANGUAGE OF RIGHTS, COALITIONS AND POLITICAL SYSTEM IN BRAZIL

**Abstract:** The Brazilian political system is organized according to a complex popular sovereignty: the 1988 Citizen Constitution is the landmark language of human rights in the country. It establishes a multi-party congress aimed at the expression of minorities, in coexistence with the executive and judiciary powers. At the same time, it coexists with an electoral system of direct representation, and indirect representatives in an open list, which imposes difficulties on the formation of a majority and the need for coalitions. The recent universal suffrage and the longtime standing historical social inequality is combined with a federative system of unequal units, in which local, regional, and international economic groups and land ownership weigh on the national political situation and decisions. Understanding recent crises involves analyzing the ways in which the country incorporates or does not incorporate social demands to mitigate these systemic inequalities.

## Negotiating elections and coalitions to survive over time

Brazil is a country whose history is intertwined with elections in a paradoxical way – despite being the first place where elections were held on the continent<sup>1</sup> – it took the country four centuries to guarantee the full exercise of universal, systematic and democratic suffrage for its entire population. Anyone interested in Brazil is familiar with the challenges regarding its continental size, wealth, environment and cultural diversity. As a matter of fact, it is a hard work to present the complexities of how different societies and cultures have interacted over time and how economic, political, and social structures have developed, without reducing their dynamics.

Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that, at the time of the arrival of European colonizers in 1500, Brazil was originally populated by an Indigenous population of several million people, belonging to thousands of different societies (Santos et al., 2019). Since the arrival of the colonizers, war, diseases and massive violence was the mood of the centuries. Historical narratives about the conquest of Rio de Janeiro, for example, have always included indigenous groups and tried to describe their political practices with their own colonizer lens:

*The Tupinambá live arranged in villages; in each one, everybody recognizes one person as their leader, or chief, so that in war he directs them; this is the only act in which they offer him any demonstration of obedience. They elect him by the proof he has given of having more power and valor than others; yet outside of instances of war, he does not receive better treatment, esteem, or respect than the rest, from whom he is not distinguished (Anonymous, 1587, apud Schwarz et al, 2019).*

As Almeida (2010) remarks, to study those groups and their survival strategies of resistance along time, it is important to notice that the Brazilian territory was invaded and conquered through a very violent war in which all social segments of the colony participated: authorities, missionaries, settlers and native people of different ethnicities. To the focus on the latter, seeking to understand their relationships with Europeans from their own interests, we suggest here the uncovering of a complex and dynamic panorama about future political tendencies involved.

The identification of the different ethnic groups that responded to the contact with Europeans in different ways dismantles simplistic schemes that presented

<sup>1</sup> Less than a year after his arrival in São Vicente, Martim Afonso coordinated, on August 22, 1532, the first popular elections in Brazil and the Americas, installing the first City Council in American territory. <https://www.camarasaovicente.sp.gov.br/copia-berco>

combatants in monolithic blocks and crystallized in the roles of allies or enemies. In Rio de Janeiro, instead of French and Tamoios from one side, and Portuguese and Temiminos on the other, we perceive a complicated network of interactions in which the different Tupi subgroups circulated, in a back and forth of agreements and disputes among themselves and with the foreigners. They changed sides frequently, according to circumstances and their interests, which changed with contact experiences (Almeida, 2010).

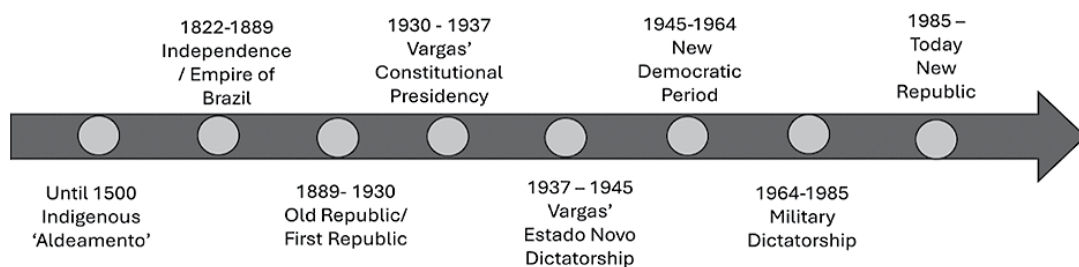
Remembering our original peoples' practices, we highlight more complex conceptions that value the internal dynamics of societies in social structures, including the agencies of the most diverse actors. The construction of laws and their varied forms and possibilities of application and use for different social agents are another theme that has been renewed under new perspectives of analysis. Understood as resulting from negotiations and clashes between interested agents and their respective capabilities to make serve their interests, they are no longer seen solely as instruments of legitimizing unequal relations<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, to providing gains to the most powerful, their legacy contains possibilities of mediation through loopholes that allow demands from the least favored (Thompson, 1987). The countless studies on the multiple forms of indigenous action, Africans and their descendants in the colony in defense of their anchored interests these conceptions and, at the same time, contribute to reinforcing them. Analyzing all these groups together therefore allows us to understand how their actions of alliance or rebellion with the constituted powers provided, to each other, greater or lesser possibilities for negotiation and survival (Alonso, 2021).

Challenges, pressures and agreements exerted by subordinates influenced decisions of agents from different levels of power and the laws themselves that were constructed, adapted or annulled, depending on pressures and circumstances. Fundamental to these analyzes are current theoretical and conceptual trends of political history (Maia & Faria, 2024) which, incorporating the ideas of pact, negotiation and political culture, complexify power relations.

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2 This is for example the initiative of Maia & Faria (2024) when analyzing the development of dependency theory as a specific form of interpretation of Latin American history and political critique. Taking Fernando Henrique Cardoso's writings as a reference, they analyze the (meta) theoretical environment in which he formulated his approach, the substantive historical interpretations and the normative elements in his thinking. They show how historical-structural analysis underwent a "political turn" due to clashes with theoretical competitors and criticism of political authoritarianism.

**Figure 1- BRAZILIAN POLITICAL REGIME TIMELINE**

*Source: elaborated by the author*

So, as remarked by literature, Brazil was the last independent state in the Americas to abolish slavery (1888), and the last to declare itself a Republic in 1889 (Bethell, 2018). If we observe the different moments along the country history listed in the Brazilian Political Regime Timeline (Figure 1) above, one can observe it was no accident that the republic was finally proclaimed in 1889, the centenary year of the French revolution. The ideology of republicanism, especially radical republicanism, supported by progressive urban middle-class intellectuals, was profoundly French inspired (Carvalho, 2012).

On the other hand, the absence of popular participation is a long time characteristic of Brazilian politics and connects with the fact that there was no revolution in Brazil in 1889, nor in 1822. The number of Brazilians legally enfranchised was severely reduced because of the Saraiva law of 1881. As Bethell remarks, by the time, as the coffee economy expanded and the shift from slave to free labour finally started to be seen, abolition was inevitable. There was a growing fear amongst the dominant political class – shared by many liberal reformers – that ex-slaves, in the rural areas but more particularly in the rapidly expanding urban areas, would readily acquire the low income sufficient to secure the right to vote.

To avoid this possibility, 'elections for the Chamber of Deputies were made direct; the property/income qualification for eleitores was removed; and non-Catholics, naturalised citizens (though not resident foreign immigrants) and ex-slaves (freedmen) were eligible to become voters' (Bethell, 2018, p. 150). However, these apparent liberal/democratic advances were followed by a new requirement for future voter registration that was introduced for the first time: namely, education as measured by a literacy test or rather a capacity to sign one's name. In a country in which 80–85 per cent of the population was illiterate, this law made most Brazilians consciously and deliberately excluded from political participation. This effective restriction lasted until 1985.

In this manner, the Brazilian First Republic came out of a military coup born of a conspiracy between a small number of army officers and representatives of the rising coffee-producing landed oligarchy of the state of São Paulo. Like the transition from colony to empire, the transition from empire to republic was marked more by fundamental social and economic continuity than by change (Bethell, 2018, p. 151).

Thus, the history of the rupture with the colonial pact, the process of independence and the formation of a new nation-state, differed from the experience of Hispanic colonized places in the continent. While across Spanish neighbors' former colonies were becoming republics, Brazil would adopt neither a republican nor a presidential form of government. On the contrary, the elites, especially those from Rio de Janeiro, preferred a monarchy, judging a royal figure to be a strong symbol that could prevent the disintegration of the country after independence<sup>3</sup>.

As it is presented in the classic thesis about the "Brazilian passive revolution" by Luiz Werneck Vianna (1996), in Brazil, there was never, in fact, a revolution. Vianna described how political authoritarian movements and elites classified themselves as revolutionary along time, and self-named as 'Revolution of Independence', the 'Revolution of 1930', the 'Revolution of 1964'. Werneck highlighted a language of paradoxes in which conservation, to fulfill its role, needs to claim what should be its opposite - revolution. In this Brazilian dialectic in which the thesis seems to always be naming itself as a representation of the antithesis, avoiding revolution has consisted, in some way, in its realization.

But how historical processes and inequalities shape this political system? Nowadays, more than ninety-eighth percent of the Brazilian population descends from people who arrived in the country, willingly or forced, during the last five

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3 Pedro I heeded the advice of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, one of his closest advisors, who affirmed that the people already knew the term "emperor" because of the popular Feast of the Divine, which each year elected an emperor. At the same time, it reflected Pedro's secret admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte, who had also been acclaimed emperor. Thus, Brazil became an independent constitutional monarchy surrounded by republics on all sides. After his coronation in 1822, he convened a constitutional convention to write a new national charter. The body quickly found itself divided between those delegates who wanted a liberal document that would limit the powers of the emperor and those who supported granting the monarch greater authority. Frustrated by the proposed limitations on his rule, Pedro dissolved the convention and appointed a new commission to draft the document. The final version, the Constitution of 1824, established the usual three branches of government— executive, legislative, and judicial— but added a fourth power, known as the 'moderating power'. This 'poder moderador' granted additional authority to the emperor in order to moderate conflicts between the legislative and judicial branches. Through this moderating power, the emperor could convene or dismiss the legislature at will, appoint lifetime senators from a list of three nominees, choose members of a Council of State, select and remove judges without restrictions, and approve ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church. While the charter adopted some liberal elements, such as the inherent right of citizens (a status denied to slaves) to liberty, individual security, and property, elections for the legislature were indirect, and the moderating power deposited considerable control of the government in the hands of the monarch. (Schwarz et al. 2019, p.163)

centuries (Moya, 2020)<sup>4</sup>. Initially populated by indigenous peoples, it's important to recall that most of those worlds vanished without their disappearance being seen as an elimination (Krenak, 2020). This multiple immigration processes along time engendered a multicultural society, with patterns of cultural violence, racism and inequalities to surpass (Ribeiro, 2014, Gonzalez, 2023, Almeida, 2019).

As observed by Maia & Faria (2021) it was forged in such imaginations of crisis and objectives of structuring a power parallel to the European one, on the other side of the ocean, that the federalist engineering found the figure of the president of the republic. It was meant to safeguard the parallelism with the figure of executive power in the hands of the king (*à la Montesquieu*). In this manner, asymmetric relations among the powers many times create a crisis environment, as analyzed by Vianna (2002), about the relations between the democracy and the three powers in Brazil. The president of the Republic nowadays is head of both state and government, holding executive power and appointing the council of ministers. The president is elected by universal suffrage, together with the vice-president, for a four-year mandate.

We can observe these trends of negotiating to survive along time, we suggest here, as an impact for future trends in Brazilian contemporary political coalitions.

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4 Although French and Dutch Calvinists established colonies during the 1500s and 1600s, the Portuguese, including Jewish conversos, later expelled these imperial rivals. Close to four-tenths of the eleven million slaves trafficked across the Atlantic landed in Brazil, giving the country the largest Afro-descendant population in the world outside Nigeria (Moya 2020). The large numbers, the traffic's long temporal span, and the country's close connection to Portuguese Africa distinguishes Brazil with intense and varied African ethnic cultures that shaped both the slaves' strategies of adaptation and resistance and the national resistance against racism (Gonzalez 2023, Almeida, 2019). Still according to Moya (2020) Brazil also received over five million immigrants after its independence in 1822, most of them between the 1880s and the 1920s. Others came from elsewhere in Europe and beyond. One can observe nowadays that the country has the largest population of Japanese descendants in the world outside Japan, and the largest of Lebanese descendants outside Lebanon. Just after the United States, Brazil also has the second largest of German descendants outside Germany.

## Understanding coalitions in the contemporary democratic Brazilian system

A democratic state under the rule of law established by the representatives of the Brazilian people<sup>5</sup>, Brazil is today a country where the constitution provides for the concomitance of participatory forms and political representation based on universal suffrage. Therefore, a pluralistic conception of society is already outlined in its principles, under the prescription of politics as a space that must be open to a plurality of organizations – parties, unions, councils and social associations.

The Constitution of 1988 – also named the ‘Citizen Constitution’ – defines Brazil as a federative republic, formed by four types of autonomous federated entity: the union, 26 states, 5 570 municipalities and the federal district (the capital, Brasília), according to official statistics from IBGE<sup>6</sup>. The exercise of these entities’ autonomy is regulated by the constitution. The authorities and bodies of the union represent the Federal State at international level.

The states and the federal district have their own elected governors and legislative chambers and can pass legislation on matters within their competence. Municipalities have their own legislative, governmental and administrative capacities within the powers reserved to them by the constitution (Brazil, 2013). According to the fundamental principles in article 1, ‘The Federative Republic of Brazil is formed by the indissoluble union of the states and municipalities and of the Federal District, is a legal democratic state and is founded on: I – sovereignty; II – citizenship; III – the dignity of the human person; IV – the social values of labour and of the free enterprise; V – political pluralism’.

From 1979 to 2013, Brazil witnessed an intense political participation of minority groups that had previously been invisible and silenced. The return of exiles and the advance of democratization occurred together with civilian mobilization for *Diretas Já* [Direct Elections Now] and were followed by the Constituent Assembly and the approval of the new Constitution (Werneck et al, 2003).

After, the control of inflation with the Real Plan let space for the adoption of reparation policies, although limited. As Tatiana Maia (2023) observed, the advancement of identity agendas and the presence of diverse social movements in the public sphere together with increased educational attainment, access to higher education through the expansion of technical schools and federal universities,

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5 Brazil, 2013, p.10: ‘We, the representatives of the Brazilian People, convened in the National Constituent Assembly to institute a democratic state for the purpose of ensuring the exercise of social and individual rights, liberty, security, well-being, development, equality and justice as supreme values of a fraternal, pluralist and unprejudiced society, founded on social harmony and committed, in the internal and international orders, to the peaceful settlement of disputes, promulgate, under the protection of God, this Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil. (our italics).

6 IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística]) available at <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/>.

redistributive policies and economic growth during the PT governments (2003-2016) generated a belief in a new and qualitatively better future with greater social equity.

Thus, Brazil is a presidential federated republic, in which the constitution gives extensive powers to the government. 'All power emanates from the people, who exercise it by means of elected representatives or directly, as provided by this Constitution'. Art. 2 of the Brazilian constitution establishes the principle of the separation of powers of the union into legislative, executive and judiciary as 'independent and harmonious to each other'. The president must obtain an absolute majority of the votes to win in the first round, or a simple majority in a second round; and can be re-elected only once to a four-year mandate. Presidents do not need the support of the legislative to stay in power but can be impeached by Parliament. Although the wide powers given to the president by the Constitution have led some to qualify the executive as 'imperial presidentialism' (due to the before explained "poder moderador" and dictatorship tendencies of the past), the president's need for support in Congress and at state level has also led the classic thesis of Sérgio Abranches to consider it rather as a 'coalition presidentialism':

*Brazil is the only country which, as well as combining proportionality, a multisystem and an 'imperial presidentialism', organizes the Executive based on large coalitions. I will call this peculiar trait of the concrete Brazilian institutional, for lack of a better alternative, 'coalition presidentialism' (Abranches, 1988, p. 5).*

Presented as a peculiar feature of the Brazilian concrete institutional, 'coalition presidentialism' concept was named to distinguish it from the regimes of Austria and Finland and France, technically parliamentary, but that could be called 'cabinet presidentialism'. As Marcos Nobre (2022) observes, throughout the 1990s, Abranches recognizes that coalition presidentialism began to appear as a more generalized form of governance in Latin America, and the Brazilian model of coalition presidentialism had become normalized.

As Marcos Nobre (2022) remarks, the emphasis in coalitions means that the mediations are crucial to understand the Brazilian case. We also suggest here that the very idea of human rights is among Brazilian constitutional democracy, and a cluster that can aggregate coalitions and mediations, as it is seen above. The Constitution is a mandatory, historical, collectively agreed and a foundational document, that operates as a guide to Brazilians, where the Constitutional legislators of the past agreed in terms about the Brazilian political system, and for what the political programs of different parties must be accountable to the principles once established in it.

As the classic study of O'Donnel & Schmitter (1986) once observed, the "negotiating pacts" and political moments, can be described as "consociational" solutions to deep-seated ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious conflicts, and tends to be regarded as a stable, quasi-permanent form of democratic rule' (O'Donnel & Schmitter, 1986, p.41).



Trying to study the challenges of Brazilian political system, Tarouco (2023) highlights that debates on the Brazilian electoral system usually concern its combination with the government system. Being an emblematic case of coalitional presidentialism since the regime transition in the early 1980s, there were controversies on the inadequacy of its political institutions.

As described before, its electoral system is based on open list proportional representation, that allows for a highly fragmented party system (Nicolau, 2022). Some authors argue that combining an open list with a presidential system would explain the lack of governability and would create difficulties to the Brazilian party system's institutionalization (Tarouco, 2023, Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997).

Despite keeping the main features of the electoral system, after redemocratization, minor rules were changed (such as financial regulation of campaigns, for example) that affected electoral competition (Fisch & Mesquita, 2022). Furthermore, the judiciary has given new interpretations of old rules that work in practice as new rules of the game (Tarouco, 2023, Marchetti, 2022). The Workers Party (PT) and the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) disputed presidential elections from 1994 to 2014.

One remarkable pattern to understand Brazilian politics is Marcos Nobre's well known thesis that it is possible to identify in Brazil a historical disconnect between a 'Pemedebist political culture'<sup>7</sup> (mostly embodied in what is known as 'Centrão'<sup>8</sup>), which dominates the political system, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a new model of possible society, which requires renewal in terms of political culture. Both PT and PSDB, when elected, faced difficulties and even were blocked by Centrão parties.

Such renewals are observable throughout the post-1988 Constitution in Brazil, and concern far-reaching transformations, partially assimilated, whether by the political system or the economic system. Nobre points out that the unity of the post-Real period in relation to the previous period is observed in two major phases, namely, the Fernando Henrique Cardoso - FHC (1995- 2002) government on the one hand, and Luis Ignacio da Silva - Lula (2003 -2011) government and Dilma Rousseff government (2012-2016), on the other. The point of connection between the two would be the common objective of trying to control Pmedebismo and failing to radically reform the political system (Nobre, 2022).

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7 'I have called pemedebismo, in honor of the party that, for at least three decades, was the leader of the cartel of companies selling parliamentary support, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB). As of 2018, it changed its name to Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), the name it had when it was the official opposition party during the military dictatorship (1964–1985)', (Nobre, 2022, p. 2).

8 'In its first version, during the Constituent period, between 1987 and 1988, the Centrão was a defensive strategy of the conservative majority in Congress. During almost a year of constituent work, the progressive alliance had demonstrated sufficient unity, support, and strength to impose relevant defeats on conservatism. The Centrão organized itself in reaction and opposition to that progressive front. Between the promulgation of the Constitution and the crisis of Dilma Rousseff's second term, starting in 2015, the Centrão dissolved into a broader archipelago, that of the pemedebismo of the political system'. (Nobre, 2022, p. 109)

In other words, despite the differences in his political projects, FHC, by achieving control over inflation and stabilizing the economy with Real Plan, made the country's absurd inequality explicit, making it clear and bringing the issue to the center of political disputes. In this sense, the fundamental project undertaken by the Lula governments was to mitigate inequalities and thus promote a new model of society. The great turning point that this debate provided on the national scene was that it began to discuss how and at what speed to reduce inequality.

The social-developmentalism that was sustained in the country from then on, constantly dealt with the obstacles and barriers of *pemedebismo* against a change in the model of society, or the process Nobre calls *immobilism in movement*. There was, therefore, an identifiable process based on the constitutional parameters of 1988, which takes into account the social metrics, the distributive issue, economic development that does not mean environmental devastation or a structurally corrupt political system.

But the country was surprised by the winning of Bolsonaro, a former military backbencher from a then irrelevant political party (Tarouco, 2023), after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (2016). Under the flag of "*Bandido bom é bandido morto*" ("A good thief is a dead thief") and a political agenda against human rights, Bolsonaro was elected president in 2018 in Brazil. Under those circumstances, we can observe a transformation on the public debate about human rights in the country. Faria, Silva & Jorge's (2022) study about the elections presents Bolsonaro as a right-wing candidate. They highlight his advocacy of a military-run education can be assigned as an indicator of extreme right political position.

In Brazil, the defense of the participation or intervention of the military in civil affairs is clearly done by authoritarian and far-right actors. The apology for the period of civil-military authoritarianism (1964-1985) appears when the candidate identifies the military as "heroes" who, in 1964, "prevented the taking of the power by leftist forces planning a communist coup in Brazil" (Bolsonaro, 2018: 33, apud Faria, Silva & Jorge, 2022).

Simultaneously, it disqualifies the current democratic period by describing it as a phase in our history in which "the left corrupted democracy and stagnated the economy" (Ibid). By employing anti-Communist rhetoric and praising military intervention, he wanted to appear to be a "true democrat" and a "genuine liberal". However, this same strategy allowed the conclusion that he was the one who best fit the extremist profile. At the same time, we can notice that there were statements in the public scene for and against the protection of rights, something that was not observed this way before.

Tarouco (2023) observes that beyond the electoral system, electoral governance institutions are also crucial for democracy because they rule the electoral process itself. The Brazilian electoral governance body is TSE (Superior Electoral Court [Tribunal Superior Eleitoral]) which owes both management and adjudication functions. At the management level it organizes and conducts the elections, and at the adjudication level it judges electoral litigations and resolves disputes concerning the electoral competition. TSE is independent of the executive branch, does not have any partisan

representative in its higher council, being autonomous also from political parties.

TSE was very important to deal with the crisis of 2022 elections. The disconnection between the society of the 1988 Constitution and the Pmedebismo of Brazil's long transition to democracy becomes the main characteristic of the political system. Bolsonaro became famous with Dilma's impeachment in 2016 (Faria, Rivetti & Butterby, 2023). Described as a coup by many sectors, Bolsonaro even being a candidate for reelection, acted with his supporters to spread distrust in the voting system and the judiciary as a whole. As Tarouco (2023) remarks:

*Military, who had been granted many civil offices in the government (Couto, 2021; Passos, 2021), repeatedly confronted electoral authorities criticizing their work, demanding superfluous justifications, raising mistaken questions, requesting sudden meetings, and claiming for extra legal roles in the certification of electoral procedures' (Tarouco, 2023, 157).*

The consistent threat to democracy and the principles and values guided by the Constitution, took shape in the coalition between the center and the extreme right, which was an obstacle to be overcome in 2022 elections.

In this sense, the national way to defeat the Centrão and its support for fascist tendencies in an effective – and democratic – way, with support at the polls in 2022, consisted of an alliance between Lula and Alckmin. Not just because it marks the two main political party projects with electoral success in Brazilian democratic context of the recent past, not especially because Alckmin had to leave the PSDB and go to the PSB to carry out the alliance, but because of the political principles that such moves suggest. It was a Brazilian Geringonça to be explained<sup>9</sup>.

As André Freire reminds us, when dealing with Lisboa's case and the dominant doxa in the treatment of left and right forces in Portugal, the term Geringonça arises from a political implication. This type of schism, in Brazil in 2021, could give rise to memes about it, perhaps. Something like the pet peeves between 'coxinhas and mortadella'. The term was originally used in a pejorative way by Vasco Pulido Valente, historian and columnist for the newspapers Observador e Público, and by the leader of the CDS-PP in the Portuguese Parliament. It was a way of criticizing the "governmental alliance of the lefts" in the political fight over the 21st Portuguese Constitutional Government. (Freire, 2017, p.26)<sup>10</sup>

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9 This expression was first coined in a conjuncture analysis published by Ateliê de Humanidades, before 2022 elections in Brazil : <https://ateliêdehumanidades.com/2021/12/18/fios-do-tempo-geringonca-a-brasileira-por-alessandra-maia/>

10 This observation aims to deal with the naturalization, in general, of the chronic "disagreement" of progressive sectors, considered insurmountable. To deal with this dilemma, Freire bets on solutions that come from cities, in this case, Lisboa: 'the solution of the type of left-wing government found in Portugal is a minority government of socialists, but supported in Parliament by parties of the so-called radical left – Bloco de Esquerda (BE), Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Ecologist Party 'Os Verdes' (PEV)' (FREIRE, 2017, p. 11). In Portugal, Freire argues that from 1987 onwards there was only one coalition, and throughout democratic history parties to the left of the PS never entered government. When it did not govern alone, the PS governed with the CDS or PSD.

The main idea when asymmetries are broken is that there is a gain for the quality of democracy. Multiplying opinions and support to overcome inequality and undemocratic issues in a sustainable way, despite divergences, can improve governance, make the political scene more inclusive and guarantee greater diversity of solutions. Checking out where the Brazilian-style Geringonça has now been driving us: a coalition for democracy.

## Final Observations

According to TSE, approximately 156.4 million Brazilians were eligible to vote directly for president in the country and abroad in 2022. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Geraldo Alckmin, president-elect and vice-president-elect, respectively, were sworn in on January 1, 2023 for a four-year term. In one of the fiercest elections in the country, Lula da Silva from the Workers' Party was elected for the third time as president of the Republic, with a little more of 60 million direct votes, surpassing his own record in 2006. He is the most directly voted person ever elected in the country. A four-year term government began on January 1, 2023 and will end on January 5, 2027. It was the ninth presidential election in the country held under the Constitution promulgated in 1988.

But the inequalities are still a great path towards a democratic society that seeks to guarantee the democratic constitutional principles established in 1988. As observed by Prusa and Picanço (2019), the status of women in Brazil is emblematic of the country's internal tensions. In Brazil, at the same time, a woman can become president; yet it also has one of the highest rates of femicide (the killing of women due to their gender) in the world.

The 2022 election was a challenging test for the young Brazilian democracy. As the populist wave is being pointed as risky in many countries, Brazil has been added to the roll of worrisome cases on backsliding track. According to Tarouco (2023), the Brazilian 2022 election brought along the spread of distrust, violence, high electoral volatility, high party fragmentation, and low presence of women.

As Faria, Rivetti & Butterby. (2023) remark, the figure of women as vices gained more visibility in the Brazilian political scene last years. This occurs, above all, after the impeachment process against Dilma Rousseff (PT) in 2016, when the vice-president assumed the presidency of the country. They identified that in the following elections there was a significant increase in women's candidates as vices on electoral lists, whether at the national, state or municipal level.

Observing data obtained by the Superior Electoral Court and outlining an analysis of this "phenomenon" in female political representation, they describe women as the "others" in Brazilian politics. They suggest that after the impeachment it becomes strategic for the conservative field to recruit women candidates representing their vision of the world, that is, in the ostensible sense of combating what these sectors

classify as feminist approaches. We can see that for one side women organize, but on the other hand, in history the hegemonic group of men in power resist to concrete changes.

Finally, Brazil achieved a record number of candidates from women, black people and indigenous people in 2022 general elections. According to data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), of the 26,398 candidacies registered, 49.3% are from black people and 49.1% from white people. Indigenous candidacies represent 0.62% of the total. The percentage of women in the dispute totals 33.4%.

Brazil also elected a record number of women and black people (men and women) to the Chamber of Deputies in 2022. The Chamber now has 91 federal deputies and 135 black parliamentarians – (brown or black [pardos e pretos], according to the IBGE name). It is the greatest representation in history, in both cases. For each group of six parliamentarians, on average, one is a woman. One in four federal deputies is black. In both cases, representation remains well below the proportion found in the population. Brazil has 56.1% of self-declared brown and black inhabitants, and 52.8% are women.

Nevertheless, resistance is also a remark of original peoples in Brazil. In 2022 elections, for example, it was the first time in the history that an indigenous caucus disputed the general elections in a coordinated manner, based on recommendations from grassroots indigenous organizations. They supported the elected coalition of Lula and Alckmin against Bolsonaro and the Centrão parties. The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Apib) presented 30 applications from all regions of the country and 31 people<sup>11</sup>. They were able to elect two representatives, both women.<sup>12</sup> As remarked by Schwarz et al. (2019) it is crucial to understand the complex social hierarchies that developed in a society based on extracting labor from the indigenous population, enslaved Africans, free people of color, and immigrants. It is also remarkable to recognize the legacy of slavery, the ideologies that have justified it, and their relationship to notions of race, equality, and democracy in Brazil. The roles that women of all social classes have played in Brazilian public life and the importance of ideas about masculinity and femininity that undergird relationships of power, also influence the patterns mentioned above.

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11 For more information see the official page of APIB (Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil [Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil] <https://apiboficial.org/2022/08/29/apib-lanca-bancada-com-candidatos-indigenas-pela-primeira-vez/> .

12 The number of votes for representatives of indigenous peoples broke at least two records in 2022. For the first time in Brazil's history, two people linked to the indigenous movement entered the Chamber of Deputies at the same time. In addition, they are two women: Sônia Guajajara and Célia Xakriabá - both from the PSOL, one from São Paulo and the other from Minas Gerais. The two representatives of the indigenous movement will share the Federal Legislature with three other deputies who declare themselves as such. For the PT, they will be Juliana Cardoso (SP) and Paulo Guedes (MG). In addition to them, the Bolsonaroist Sílvia Waiãpi (PL-AP). For more details see <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2022/10/06/com-votacao-inedita-em-eleicoes-gerais-nove-indigenas-ocuparao-cargos-legislativos-no-brasil>



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# ДЕМОКРАТИЈА, ЈЕЗИК ПРАВА, КОАЛИЦИЈА И ПОЛИТИЧКИ СИСТЕМ У БРАЗИЛУ

**Апстракт:** Бразилски политички систем организован је према сложенем народном суверенитету: Устав грађана из 1988. је оријентирни језик људских права у земљи. Њиме се успоставља вишестраначки конгрес чији је циљ изражавање мањина, у коегзистенцији са извршном и судском влашћу. Истовремено, коегзистира са изборним системом директног представљања, и индиректних представника на отвореној листи, што отежава формирање већине и потребу за коалицијама. Недавно опште право гласа и дугогодишња историјска друштвена неједнакост комбиновани су са федеративним системом неједнаких јединица, у којем локалне, регионалне и међународне економске групе и власништво над земљом утичу на националну политичку ситуацију и одлуке. Разумевање недавних криза подразумева анализу начина на које земља укључује или не укључује друштвене захтеве за ублажавање ових системских неједнакости.