Ethnic-racial discrimination in Brazil: Bolsonaro era

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Abstract

This paper critically reflects on a series of social and political changes in Brazil, the impact of Labor Party erosion after twelve years in power, the deviation of public money, the deteriorating of civil-law jurisdictions, it follows the analytical method and is structured in real facts. The analysis uses contemporary bibliography to explain the growing protests of the organized civil society in Brazil since 2013, bringing the idea of transforming the system with a far-right political candidate, a former military officer Jair Bolsonaro. The movement known as the Brazilian Spring, advocates for new contemporary aspirations and patterns of political alliances, the environmental protection of the Amazon. My findings suggest that questions have been put to the fore concerning political corruption, defense and security focused on gangues in shanty towns in Rio de Janeiro, showing changes brought by the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil. Bolsonaro’s challenges encompass a devastating recession, massive corruption among the country’s business and political elite, an ailing economy that is grappling with mounting debt, slow growth, and high unemployment. In the aftermath of the latest presidential elections, the president failed to make true his promises to crackdown on crime and corruption, as well as facing civil protests by members of the defeated Labour Party. The debate is focused on political theories encompassing the statutory provision of social services and questioning the confidence in institutions, especially the police. Bolsonaro’s solution is zero tolerance, the use of police torture on drug traffickers and kidnappers. Brazil is a majority non-white country, a multicultural mix of ethnicities, religious, gender and sexual minorities, facing daily hostility against them and threats to social inclusion and the promotion of human rights. Institutional changes should promote equitable patterns of economic growth, especially education, employment, and

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transportation. Human rights reforms should not only be rooted in a transnational legal culture, but approach local social situations in which human rights have been accentuated after the presidential elections, promoting a cohesion, eliminating violence.

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism; Democracy; Public Opinion; Presidential Elections in Brazil.

**Discrimination étnico-racial no Brasil: Bolsonaro era 2019**

**Resumo**
Este trabalho reflete criticamente sobre uma série de mudanças sociais e políticas no Brasil, o impacto da erosão do Partido Trabalhista após doze anos no poder, o desvio do dinheiro público, a deterioração das jurisdições civis, segue o método analítico e é estruturado em fatos. A pesquisa usa uma bibliografia contemporânea documentando e explicando os crescentes protestos da sociedade civil organizada no Brasil desde 2013, trazendo a ideia de transformar o sistema com um candidato político de extrema direita, o ex-oficial militar Jair Bolsonaro. O movimento conhecido como a primavera brasileira, defende novas aspirações contemporâneas, padrões de alianças políticas, e a proteção ambiental da Amazônia. Contextualiza-se a Constituição brasileira de 1988, o Direito Internacional Público, e questões evidenciadas em relação à corrupção política, defesa e segurança focadas em gangues nas favelas no Rio de Janeiro, mostrando as mudanças trazidas pelas eleições presidenciais de 2018 no Brasil. Os desafios de Bolsonaro abrangem uma recessão devastadora, corrupção maciça entre as empresas e a elite política do país, uma economia claudicante, que está enfrentando dívidas crescentes, crescimento lento e desemprego elevado. No rescaldo das últimas eleições presidenciais, o presidente falhou em cumprir suas promessas de repressão ao crime e à corrupção, bem como enfrentar protestos civis de membros do Partido Trabalhista derrotado. O debate centra-se em teorias políticas que abrangem a prestação estatutária de serviços sociais e questiona a confiança nas instituições, especialmente a polícia. O Brasil é um país de maioria não-branca, uma mistura multicultural de etnias, minorias religiosas, de gênero e sexuais, enfrentando diariamente a hostilidade contra elas e as ameaças à inclusão social e à promoção dos direitos humanos. As mudanças institucionais necessitam promover padrões equitativos de crescimento econômico, educação, emprego, transporte e direitos humanos.

**Palavras-chave:** Multiculturalismo; Democracia; Opinião Pública; Eleições Presidenciais no Brasil.

**Discriminación étnico-racial en Brasil: Bolsonaro era 2019**

**Resúmen**
Este trabajo refleja críticamente una serie de cambios sociales y políticos en Brasil, el impacto de la erosión del Partido Laborista después de doce años en el poder, la
apropiación indebida de dinero público, el deterioro de las jurisdicciones civiles sigue el método analítico y está estructurado en hechos reales. La investigación desafía este punto de vista al utilizar bibliografía contemporánea para documentar y explicar las crecientes protestas de la sociedad civil organizada en Brasil desde 2013, trayendo la idea de transformar el sistema con un candidato político de extrema derecha, el ex oficial militar Jair Bolsonaro. El movimiento conocido como la primavera brasileña, aboga por nuevas aspiraciones contemporáneas, patrones de alianzas políticas y protección ambiental de la Amazonía. La Constitución brasileña de 1988, el Derecho internacional público y los temas destacados en relación con la corrupción política, la defensa y la seguridad centrados en las pandillas en las favelas de Río de Janeiro, se contextualizan y muestran los cambios provocados por las elecciones presidenciales de 2018 en Brasil. Los desafíos de Bolsonaro abarcan una recesión devastadora, una corrupción masiva entre las empresas y la élite política del país, una economía deshonesta que enfrenta una deuda creciente, un crecimiento lento y un alto desempleo. A raíz de las últimas elecciones presidenciales, el presidente no tuvo éxito en cumplir sus promesas de tomar medidas energéticas contra la corrupción, así como enfrentar las protestas civiles de los miembros del Partido Laborista derrotado. El debate se centra en las teorías políticas que cubren la prestación legal de servicios sociales y cuestiona la confianza en las instituciones, especialmente la policía. Los cambios institucionales deben promover patrones equitativos de crecimiento económico, educación, empleo, transporte y derechos humanos.

**Palabras clave:** Multiculturalismo; Democracia; Opinión pública; Elecciones presidenciales en Brasil.


**1 INTRODUCTION**

This research analyzes the Labor Party government in Brazil from 2003 to 2016, follows the analytical method (WOODY, 1924; SLESINGER, STEPHENSON, 1930), uses contemporary documents; and is structured in real facts. The relation between State and society in the mobilization process for the implementation of rights will be the main objective of the paper, specifying that it reckons on the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), their contribution derives an important part of their legitimacy from the claim that they are able to have an open dialogue with governmental institutions. This ability, it is argued, contributed to aid effectiveness and efficiency in human rights demands (ARENDT, 1997, ASTON & GOODMAN, 2013, AXT & SCHWARZ, 2006). Donnelly (2013) says that rights are actually used,
and foresees an assertive exercise, activating the obligations of the duty-bearer and through the contractual right defends its rights as a political legitimacy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, presents itself as a “standard achievement for all peoples and all nations”, and the governments protect human rights, and legitimate the citizens’ demands for security. Joel Feinberg calls rights in a “manifesto sense” (1980, p. 153). Human rights do imply a manifesto for political change, including liberty, democracy, law (justice) (DWORKIN, 2011), which implies education, employment, habitat, and health.

In this context, it is with some distress that we examine the Brazilian governance and its democratic institutions during the twelve years the Labor Party (PT) was in power. Lula’s Government shows the victory of an ex-worker to become president of Brazil, defeating the candidate of the Social Democratic Brazilian Party (PSDB) Jose Serra, a very renowned politician. Lula assumed the presidency of the republic after his victory with 61.2% of the valid votes and ruled the country in two terms (2003 to 2006, and 2007 to 2011). The dream of the excluded came true and simple laborers realized they had a voice through someone without a university degree, who assumed the highest position in a democratic country.

Notwithstanding speaking for the poor and illiterate citizens, he took advantage of his position to strengthen his party, his foundation (Fundação Lula), and deviate public money, deteriorating the civil-law jurisdictions, inserting into his government only co-religionaries.

He nominated Dilma’s Rousseff as his successor in the presidency of the republic, using the governmental financial resources and the media to elect her, as she was his Chief of Cabinet. Though being an economist, she had no political ability to deal with the Congress and interact with a myriad of political parties in the country, being shielded by them, showing high evidences of the party erosion, the corrupted projects, starting her impeachment in 2016. The vice-president, Michel Temer, a lawyer, and politician (MDB), assumed the government, as a constitutional principle, without the agreement of most of the Brazilian citizens.

This work aimed to elaborate a bibliographical review on the subject, analyzing its history, laws, and the political mechanisms used by the Labor Party to assume power in a developing Latin America country. The methodological results showed corruption, bribery, by documenting and explaining the deteriorating of the quality of a promising democracy, many years after the renewal of a constitutional system (1988), which followed a twenty-three years of military government. It highlights the growing protests of the organized civil society in Brazil since the inauguration of the Soccer Stadiums in 2013, a money laundry scheme to benefit leaders of the government. It points out how democracies die from subtle and systematic attacks on institutions, betraying peoples hopes and benefitting from governmental budgets which should be invested in education, employment, housing and health systems.
2 PROTEST AND DISSENT IN BRAZIL

The reflections bring to the fore the political system, the decision-making process in public theories, and the question of corruption, a common plague in Latin America, and with an exceptional exacerbation in Brazil (ALMEIDA, 2018).

Due to this glooming scenario, some political analysts (LEVISTKY; ZIBLATT, 2018) have diagnosed a crisis of representative democracy, the derrocade of democratic institutions, the repeated lie and argued for a stronger role of civil society. Understanding such perceptions, young Brazilians left their houses and occupied the streets in protests.

The movement gained the media, attracting the international attention of academic and political activists in a multicultural society. Citizen action, citizen initiatives, and protest movements revealed its importance and became a key issue for governments, with a plethora of different meanings attached to it (ARNDT, 1987), as the recent cases of Brazil, that summoned in the arrest and imprisonment of former President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, serving a 12 year-prison sentence for corruption conviction. Federal Judge Sergio Moro wrote in the arrest warrant offering him a special cell, outside the general prison population, in consideration of the “dignity of the office he held” (DARLINGTON, 2018). It is difficult and a long way to legally prove that the top leader of a nation is engulfed in scandal, as President Fernando Collor de Mello in 1992, who had to step down to avoid being impeached, and Ms. Dilma Rousseff who was impeached on charges of manipulating the budget to hide the nation’s economic problems, including oil company Petrobras bankruptcy on fraudulent actions.

Furthermore, the question of what civil society can bring to the table in attempting to attack the global challenges of the 21st century, with demands for political democratization, economic recovery, social democratization and educational reformulation has become a point of attention to presidential candidates on ballots during October 2018.

2.1 Military Government in Brazil: 1964 – 1985

Historically, Brazil as other Latin American countries was immersed in more than two decades of authoritarian government, marked by repression, disguised by a progressive democracy, but evidencing state corporatism. The authoritarianism allowed a minimum population access to the arena of political decision, which became a turn point for the citizens’ struggle for a political subjectivity more difficult.

Deep colonialism brought by Portuguese colonizers in 1500, left an inheritance of slavery, indigenous genocide, a highly stratified society that emerged in a hierarchical context of classes, race, and gender. Social elite of ‘decent people’
emerged, acting as central models for the poor and afro-descendant communities, which were from 1500 to 1888 under iron shackles.

This legacy gave to the region a series of characteristics which have been refaced by political exclusion: “caudillismo” a peculiar system in the Northeast of Brazil, especially in the State of Bahia, immersed in personal systems, clienteles’ and centralism bureaucratic organization. Claims for political and democratic inclusion were evident in Brazil, in which the citizens demanded for free elections, the right for strikes and popular protests, which surged during the 1960s and 1970s.

Military interventions in politics were a characteristic in Brazil and neighbor countries in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru during the XXth century. This political exclusion rose to the highest level when the National Security System which started investigating and arresting supposed members of communists associations, torturing, killing and deporting suspects, among them members of professional associations as the Brazilian Barrister’s Association, the Brazilian Association for the Progress of Science, the Brazilian Press Association, academic professors, who publicly criticized the economic political measures, as well as the reduction or elimination of civil and human rights.

2.2 Women’s Movement in Latin America: 1960 – 1970

The women inserted themselves in organizational nuclei to protest the severe government repression of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Activists women helped galvanize revolt waves that received the adhesion of all representative segments of the population. Thousands of women were involved in these and other collective struggles, as members of the leftist parties, and inserting groups of students (ALVAREZ, 1994, p. 14). They became members of the mother’s clubs and housewives’ associations, which sprang up throughout Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, as militants trying to find out their husbands and children disappearances into the military subterranean prisons. They were the first to protest the authoritarian regime’s regressive social and economic policies. They organized against the rising cost of living. Women militants demanded adequate schools, day care centers, running water, sewers, electrification, and other urban structural necessities; and clamored for their right to adequately feed their families, school their children, and provide them with a decent life.

3 The term is often associated with the military leaders that ruled countries in Latin America in the early 19th century when the political conditions were unstable, there had been a long-armed conflict prior to the gain of power, and in some cases did not win a democratic election. The leader who came into power after a country had won independence or ended a civil war had to be charismatic because the control that they held over their armies and civilians depended on how they held themselves in front of the people. The Caudillo brings order to the country but does not always exert their power in a non-violent manner. In some cases, Caudillos would use force to gain the changes they wanted and to ensure that the people under him knew who was in command. BIJOS, Leila. Mulheres Sul-Americanas: o presente mais que imperfeito, Brasilia: EdUCB, 2013, p. 117.
For twenty-four years the Brazilian population lived under the authoritarian regime, establishing middle-class women clandestine networks, supporting the student movement activities in the mid- to late 1970s. By the later 1970s, panoply of social and political movements, all vocally opposed to the continuation of military rule, began remapping the terrain of Brazilian civil society. Sonia Alvarez (1994, p. 27) emphasized that “women of the popular classes also pointed to the inadequate living conditions of the urban periphery and to the exhausting labor that they and their spouses performed”, as well as social conditions aggravated by material problems.

A series of questions have been raised concerning the challenges that Latin American faced during the military governments in the region (1964-1985), and its successive process of democratization, with the perspective of new social actors, as well as old challenges entrusted in syndicalism. It is important to highlight the theoretical and conceptual investigation of its reality, to receive a wider explanation of Latin America reality, and the way military governments behaved to make use of a very heavy popular subconscious ideological mechanisms, linked to an intellectual elite, who was at the same time personalities of the political world, building personal representativeness in the sociopolitical world, which also leaded a very intensive social mobilization. Those were political discourses from ideological members in Latin American, imbedded of notions of nationalism, anti-imperialism, revolutionary nationalism, and socialism. The incumbent presidents and respective co-leaders have delivered their sociopolitical speeches which turned into the genesis of a social mobilization and scientific explanation of Latin America reality (ZAPATA, 2016). The main question was based on new directions for vulnerable societies which dreamed of a new ideological identity, inserted into a democratization process that did not occur. The result was a continent immersed in a deep decay brought by the end of the military regimes in the region.

The population requested the return of democratic elections which grew out in crises and protests of civil society, and demise of militarism which pervaded Latin America from the mid 1960’s to the end of the 1980’s. Their demise was hastened by a string of popular uprisings which propelled the ascent of new politicians as Tancredo Neves in Brazil (1985).

Due to healthy problems, he died and was replaced by his vice José Sarney who took power as a Democratic leader and assumed the government from 21 April 1985 up to 15 March 1990.

2.3 Corruption: The Impeachment of Collor in 1992

José Sarney was replaced by Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992), who became the first Latin America president impeached by corruption in 1992.

Youths from all over the country marched to the streets in protests for the high-level index of ‘commissions’ paid to executives, summing up to two billion dollars
(GEDDES; RIBEIRO NETO, 1992). Collor, it was stated, used phantom checks, or checks opened by his personal adviser Paulo Cesar Farias and his associates, to make deposits into his bank account. Collor used these checks for personal use, namely, to make upgrades to his home “Casa da Dinda” and buy an expensive car. The evidence presented by the CPI showed that Collor and Farias created a fake organization that could take in large amounts of cash and investments in the form of kickbacks and mediation taxes. Due to the corruption charges, Collor was officially removed from office by the Senate on 29 December 1992 and was charged with corruption in June 1993.

In a strange twist of irony, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, who openly criticized him in 1992, did the same thing during his two-terms government (2003-2011). He was replaced by Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), who also suffered an impeachment due to corruption, being replaced by her vice, Michel Temer, who has recently been indicted on corruption and money-laundering charges, which he denies.

2.4 Dilma Rousseff’s Social Programs and Impeachment: 2016

When President Dilma Rousseff took office on 1st January 2011, she continued consolidating the social programs launched during the eight presidential term of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula), which combined an array of cash transfer programs, sharply expanding his version of the model, named Family Grant. The Family Grant was instituted aiming at breaking the cycle of poverty in Brazil, giving the poor small electronic cash transfers directly to their bank accounts, in exchange for keeping their children in school and taking them for regular medical checkups. Mothers also had to fulfill the governments’ requirements of attending workshops on nutrition and disease prevention. The payments were given to women, as they are most responsible for the care of children and family health decisions. Each month the poor families used to receive an amount of about US$ 35.00. The target was to reach at least 11.4 million of families – more than about a quarter of Brazil’s population. The program had been launched with the support of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank who were putting up US$3 billion in loans for the program. Its total cost over the president’s four-year term would be closed to US$7 billion. Its annual cost – about a third of 1 percent of Brazil’s gross domestic product – would be more than offset by savings during President Lula da Silva’s administration, and due to its success, it had squeezed out of the civil service pension system ((San Diego Union-Tribune: 2004; KLUGER, 2018).

The idea of the cash transfer program in the world was spread out to Mexico 2002, named as program Oportunidades, and now is in use in 40 countries (14 countries in Latin America and 26 other countries (GAUDING, 2011).

According to statistical data, in Mexico, malnutrition, anemia and stunting have dropped, as have incidences of childhood and adult illnesses. Maternal and
infant deaths have been reduced. Contraceptive use in rural areas has risen and teen pregnancy has declined. But the most dramatic effects are visible in education. Children in Oportunidades repeat fewer grades and stay in school longer. Child labor has dropped. In rural areas, the percentage of children entering middle school has risen 42 percent. High school inscription in rural areas has risen by a whopping 85 percent. The strongest effects on education are found in families where the mothers have the lowest schooling levels. Indigenous Mexicans have particularly benefited, staying in school longer (GAUDING, 2011).

The question that emerged was: “is the family grant program (Bolsa Família) an effective instrument for social inclusion and reduction of inequality or was it a mere instrument to win votes from citizens in the lower class”? Instead, the focus was on the political clout of approximately 41 million people (around 20% of the Brazilian population) who benefited from the government program. Lula used the program to conquer the poor citizens, especially those of the Northeast of Brazil, who live in extreme poverty. Women are illiterate and not able to find a job in the formal sector of the economy. Since the first term of Lula’s in the presidency, the debates have continued, and the program has been viewed as a leftwing Bolivian philosophy, more than a serious policy for social inclusion.

The Bolsa Família program has been compared to the United States’ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), one of ten U.S. assistance programs (MACHADO, 2015). As in Brazil, SNAP assists families that are considered extremely poor according to U.S. standards – those whose gross monthly income is 130% or less of the national poverty line. SNAP assistance is calculated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Thrifty Food Plan, which in 2013 estimated that a four-person family could be properly fed with US$18.24 a day. In this context, during the 2008-2014 financial crisis in the U.S., it was estimated that the SNAP program covered approximately 15% of the population (MACHADO, 2015).

These social programs have a profound impact on poor families. However, despite its impact and importance, both the program in Brazil, Mexico, and other countries, have been receiving harsh criticism during the last fourteen years, from opposition parties and the country’s wealthy citizens. In summary, these groups are questioning Bolsa Família and stating that it does not reach its long-term goals for the country because it encourages people not to look for a job and instead rely on government support. Their thought is that the country’s taxes are being used to support a non-productive crowd who is “settled in their comfort zone”. Most citizens say that poor families want to bear a lot of children to receive the governmental grant, and they do not agree of seeing the taxes being redistributed to poor people, instead of being used in infrastructure improvements.

Specialists from the economic area typically liberal or neoliberal, argue that by cutting off social incentives, those who chose not to work would be “strongly encouraged” to be productive for society and themselves (MULLIGHAN, 2013).
Based on a controversial paradigm of positive facts, showing that it was the most important and effective anti-poverty program the world has ever seen; and the point of view that if encourages idleness.

Notwithstanding the social cash grants to lower classes families, the government started building all infrastructure for 2014 32-nation World Cup, a polemic issue.

3 THE SCANDAL OF SOCCER STADIUMS IN BRAZIL: 2013

Civil society movements upraised in all country as a reaction to the inauguration of the Soccer Stadiums in 2013. It was also known as the Brazilian Spring, and it initiated by the Free Fare Movement, a local entity that advocates for free public transportation. The demonstrations were initially organized to protest increases in bus, train, and metro ticket prices in some Brazilian cities, but grew to include other issues such as high corruption on the government, in fact a crisis of representative democracy (RAWLS, 1971). Since then, social relations have been tensing in Brazil and the civil society became a customs inspector over the State actions. Effective changes in the juridical order (ANNONI, 2002) was a request from the society, as well as in the Congress rules, including the effective use of the Federal Budget aiming to changes concerning a participative budget, transparency in all accounts, and benefits to every population segment.

The movement started in May 2013 when President Dilma Rousseff kicked the first symbolic ball on the newly laid pitch of the brand-new Mane Garrincha Stadium in the Brazilian capital of Brazil. At a cost of 1.2 billion reais ($590.1 million), the colonnaded stadium was the most expensive of the 12 that Brazil built for 2014 32-nation World Cup and turned into a white elephant in a city with no major soccer club.

Entering the competition to the World Cup in 2014, demanded a lot of infrastructure in building new soccer stadiums, hotels, roads, communication, and security. By mid-June 2013, violent protests followed the announcements about fare increases in São Paulo, and like dynamite spread over to major cities and to remote towns throughout the country.

The smaller scale protests the 2013 Confederations Cup and the 2014 World Cup changed to a bigger nationwide protest, through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, emails, motivating all segments of the population. Protesters decided to demonstrate their anger in public arenas, which led to dozens of persons being shot and wounded by the police. Workers at the Brazilian world cup stadiums have threatened strikes, slamming their conditions as unsafe, as construction employees died at the site, as in the northern city of Manaus. In Brasilia, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and other places the citizens complained that hosting these tournaments is a luxury that the country cannot afford. Brazil rage spilled onto the streets of more than 107 cities across the
country, with over a quarter of a million people demonstrating their discontent with the government. The Brazilian newspapers and TV channels showed that dozen people have been killed and hundreds injured during the protests in cities like Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador from a peaceful movement to violent one, as activists clashed with the police, setting fire to public buildings, vandalizing shops, signposts and traffic lights. On Friday 21st of June 2013, about 3,000 people were rallying in front of the National Congress in Brasilia demanding the resignation of several police members; while others entered into the ministerial offices throwing out computers, tables, and setting fire into the buildings.

On Sunday, June 23, 2013, a group of protesters decided to camp in front of the residence of Mr. Sergio Cabral, Governor of the city of Rio de Janeiro, demanding better public services; resulting in his imprisonment, charged as corruption.

Due to the complaints, the Brazilian authorities opened new channels for public discussions, meeting the youth representatives and listening to their demands.

4 ANALYZING THE AMUSEMENT OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

Following the violent protests for free transportation tickets, the young generation joined the demonstrators, with special requests for the improvement of social policies, education, extra-curricular activities including cultural entertainment, public libraries, theatres, and also expressing their anguishes concerning race and ethnic discrimination, getting together in mass at shopping malls to have some fun, what frightened the owners and managers. Shopping centers owners reacted to it with a mixture of fear, admiration, and heavy-handed repression. New youth slang was created “rolar” or “rolezinhos” which means to go out with friends on a leisurely stroll.

It started in December 2013, when a group of young people used Facebook to plan a “rolezinho” (little outing) at a Shopping Centre in the southern city of São Paulo, “to have a bit of fun” in a country where entertainment and cultural events are expensive. Remarkably, that day, six thousand youngsters showed up.

In Salvador, a major shopping mall Iguatemi closed its doors in the afternoon of Saturday June 22, 2013, the same happening at Iguatemi Shopping Center in Brasilia, a very sophisticated fashion place, as a preventive closure. The police decided to disperse the younger’s using tear gas against the crowd. Meanwhile some protesters set fire on vehicles, at bus stops, also to public buildings across Bahia state, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasilia. The situation started to get out of control, as other protesters joined the crowd adding demands against corruption and prices hikes.

Although the great majority lives in a “favela” (shanty town) the younger’s wanted to prove that they represent the new Brazilian middle class, who received “quotas” to study at public universities and have access to the internet, credit and purchasing power, thanks to a decade of leftwing governments under former

The social meetings were met with tear gas and police beatings. The younger’s feel discriminated by the society because they are Afro-Descendants from the periphery, who are out of place in the luxurious sophistication of the shopping malls. Besides tear gas the militarized police used rubber bullets and pepper spray against thousands of young people engaged in “rolezinhos”, arresting most of them, to thwart the movement.

In interviewing these younger’s, they said that: “A dark-skinned person at a shopping center is immediately targeted for close watching by the security staff, who think we are probably going to steal something”, cargo assistant Diego Meier told us, adding that he regards these malls as “palaces of the bourgeoisie and capitalism”. Moreira (2019) calls the attention to the fact that “the relationship between racism and humor is deepened” in the Brazilian society, he breaks down the concepts of racism and racial injury, explaining the racist bias of the Brazilian Justice when he ruled that cultural productions, such as humorous programs, that reproduce racial stereotypes are not discriminatory by promote people’s relaxation, but on going out, afrodescendants notice they are not welcomed in sophisticated places, even in a club, if they decide to use the swimming pool.

“At times I am badly served by staff and I notice that it is dark-skinned Afro-Brazilians who work the security shifts or clean toilets. We must have the same rights, independently of skin color, social class and purchasing power,” said Anderson, an Afro-Brazilian like Meier.

A mall security guard who asks black men if they need help may be motivated by the image of the black man’s dangerousness (MOREIRA, 2018).

At the time, President Rousseff herself criticized the harsh police response and prejudice against poor young people. Minister for Racial Equality Policies Luiza Bairros, an Afro-Descendant from the State of Bahia, our Africa, said that rolezinhos were “peaceful demonstrations” and that black people should not automatically be associated with the idea of crime, as is customary. “The problems arise when white people are afraid of young black people,” she said (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2014).

Davis (1981) narratives show the tragedy of slavery and how women and black men are struggling to insert themselves into society, in an intersectionality of issues concerning class, gender, race, civil rights, education, employment, fighting against bias.

Brazilian middle and upper classes associate the presence of overwhelming numbers of poor black youngsters in public spaces like the beaches, with the danger of “dragnet” attacks by mobs of thieves. But rolezinhos do not loot or steal or destroy.

The government, on the other hand, views them as “an expression of dynamism, social mobility and the changes that have occurred in Brazilian society in recent years” (SANT’ANNA, 2017, p. 212).

The transformation from a social class that up until recently had no future, into another that has dreams, is expressed in the music that young people taking
part in *rolezinhos* listen to at top volume in the shopping centers. The lyrics and videos of “ostentation funk” proclaim that the road to happiness involves climbing the social ladder, marked by the possession of luxury goods and, afterwards, going out with blondes. “This kind of funk was a preview of the *rolezinho* phenomenon. It shows a desire, conscious or unconscious, for social integration. But it is also part of the culture,” film student Gonzalo Gaudenzi, who studied the history and origins of the genre, told the interviewer (2015). Brazilian funk (inspired by U.S. rap music) was born in the urban peripheries with lyrics on everyday topics such as drug trafficking, narcotics, police repression or sex. But with the spread of social welfare, it began to reflect the aspirations of many of the 30 million people, in this country of nearly 220 million people, who were lifted out of poverty thanks to an economic model based on domestic consumption as the springboard for growth.

“If the music they listen to all day is telling them that to get the best girls and the highest social status they have to have the best cars, clothes and watches, even if they can’t buy them, they will want to get close to that world and feel its presence. And where can they do that? At the shopping malls,” said Gaudenzi (2015).

Brazilians also complained that the 2014 World Cup turned entire cities into spectacle venues, complete with soaring prices. Suddenly, the owners of bars and restaurants at the seaside in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador (Bahia), Fortaleza (Ceará), Natal (Rio Grande do Norte) were surprised by the arrival of *isoporzinhos* (styrofoams). Medium class and poor black people decided to go to the popular and renowned bars with picnic baskets full of beverages and sandwiches, gaily affronting the restaurants’ clients with goods bought at the supermarket. The cost of lifestyle products (beach-related services, restaurant food and booze, for example) rose well above the inflation rate (5.9 percent during 2013-2014). Statisticians say that the prices for some food items such as shrimp omelets and pastries were higher than comparable items in New York or Paris. As the young generation has no financial resources to go to modern and sophisticated bars and restaurants, they just get together in front of them. Sometimes those are peaceful and innocent meetings, but they really annoy a lot of people with their noisy and talkative way of behaving and verbal disagreements arise.

By end of June 2013, the Brazilian Government called in the military force to help police monitor and ensure safety during the soccer games in Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, and Salvador, as protests continued to spread. Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff tried to calm down the protests via a televised address, promising new plans for public transport, the health care system and pumping oil royalties into education, but the citizens did not trust her promises.

Her image was deteriorated as citizens became aware of the corruption scheme of operation “Car Wash” (“Lava a Jato”), the biggest corruption scandal in history, involving the national oil company Petrobras, and money laundering uncovering a vast web of political and corporate racketeering, involving businesses executives, and foreign firms, with illegal payments of more than US$5 billion (WATTS, 2017), escalating in her impeachment in 2016.
Her successor and vice-president Michel Temer faced the same problems with the denounces of corruption, money laundry and benefits to high executives in governmental projects through corrupted biddings.

5 THE CROSSROADS OF BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY: 2018

Brazilians did not accept a president that was not elected in a democratic way and never demonstrated sympathy to Michel Temer. Leaders of the Left Party started denouncing his previous mandate as Dilma Rousseff’s vice-president, and protests increased as CEO Brazil’s state-controlled oil company “Petrobras” started increasing prices every week.

A nation trucking strike over fuel prices mobilized all country, paralyzing services. For ten days all roads were blockaded, supplies were out of shops, and nobody could drive its car as fuel was out of the gas stations, and South America’s biggest economy suffocated (THE GUARDIAN, 2018).

Brazilians were shocked how the truckers mobilized themselves and stopped all deliveries leading the population to despair and demanding for “military intervention”. The strike showed that the country has extreme fragilities (LEITÃO, 2018), and there has been little debate over why the country is so dependent on road transport. Instead, Brazilians argue over when and how state-controlled oil company Petrobras should set fuel prices – the cause of the strike – and whether it should make money for its shareholders or swallow losses for the benefit of the nation.

Brazilian citizens supported the strike and rejected tax rises or spending cuts to pay for the fuel subsidies that eventually resolved it. It was an astonishment to realize that the cash-strapped conservative government of Michel Temer found the money by cutting investment elsewhere, including health and education, which increased social tension in a country where poverty was on the rise. Michel Temer tried to explain the situation, but him and his ministers were even more involved in spectacular scandals. During Rousseff’s administration forced Petrobras to sell gasoline and diesel below international prices to keep inflation down, costing it billions of dollars in revenue. Under Temer, the company swung in the opposite direction and started raising prices daily as the international cost of oil soared.

Although going to TV to explain the situation, the population watched the news, but concluded that it was impossible to accept prices going up daily, what dragged the government to a complete disbelief; bringing the idea of transforming the system with the return of the military regime.

As in the political arena no lacunae are acceptable, Jair Bolsonaro, an extreme rightwing lawmaker, who has praised the military regime, but has not faced serious graft allegations, decided to support the strike and was nominated as a presidential candidate.
6 SOCIAL POLICIES AND THE YOUNG GENERATION: BOLSONARO ERA 2019

The day after presidential elections in Brazil, for a four-year term on 28 of October 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right Social Liberal Party, former army captain, has won the runoff as the new president of the country (01/01/2019-2022).

As a winner candidate as the President of the Republic of Brazil for the next four years, means facing a devastating recession, massive corruption among the country’s business and political elite, an ailing economy that is grappling with mounting debt, slow growth and high unemployment (BLOOMBERG, 2018).

Bolsonaro must make true his promises to crackdown on crime and corruption, as well as facing civil protests by members of the defeated Labour Party. But what are Bolsonaro’s positions on the key issues confronting Brazil?

Seven key areas are the most important to tackle: social security reform, privatizations, the environment, public security, private property, and family values. From these seven items, five depend on the Congress. Following these main issues, we may add, school without party, new National Secondary School Examination (ENEM), control of universities, home teaching, revision of the Amnesty Law, the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation, support for agribusiness and the responsible exploitation of natural resources; the resumption of the comprehensive development project stripped of ideological bias.

Environmental issues are a priority for specialists, first concerning the Amazon Rain Forest. Brazil is the guardian of the world’s largest rain forest, in the Amazon basin, and it needs to be protected from business hazardous exploitation. Brazil shall retain sovereignty over indigenous lands and the rain forest, and the new president cannot follow in the footsteps of President Trump and pull Brazil out of the global Paris accord to fight climate change.

Besides that, comes the economic sector, as he wants to privatize or shut down state companies, cut down on public spending, ease international trade and pass austerity reforms (FAIOLA; LOPES, 2018). This is the VIP Nucleus, with Minister of Economics, Paulo Guedes, promoting the economic recovery, which uphold an index of 14 million unemployed in the country. The corporate debt has turned sour following the usual cycle of over-optimism, inflated asset prices and cheap debt going into reverse (FINANCIAL TIMES, 2016).

Secondly, with Minister of Justice, Sergio Moro, who was working with the social security reform, allied to public security, curbing high crime rates, including crimes against women (until April 2020).

The civil society knows the country is unquestionably amid a horrendous crime wave, fueled in large part by gangland turf wars for commercial rights to sell drugs and other contraband in Brazilian cities. Homicides hit a record high of 63,880 last year (FAIOLA; LOPES, 2018), nearly twice the number in the United States and the European Union combined.
Women should know where their children are, if they are safe in the schools or walking by the streets. They have the right to go out, amuse themselves, without any fear.

Presently, the debate is focused on political theories encompassing the statutory provision of social services and questioning the confidence in institutions, especially the police. Bolsonaro's solution is zero tolerance. He has called for police to use more lethal force and wants to relax gun laws so that average citizens can defend themselves. In the past, he has defended the use of police torture on drug traffickers and kidnappers. But citizens criticize the police, as one of the deadliest police forces in the world, responsible for more than 5,000 deaths last year, according to government figures (FAIOLA; LOPES, 2018).

Brazil is a majority non-white country, a multicultural mix of ethnicities, 47% of the population according to the 2016 census (IBGE, 2016), that deserve respect, and no one should reveal discrimination against people of color, who feel marginalized in the slum cities. They should be trusted as well-beings and honest laborers. Almeida (2020) highlights that “Thinking about racism as part of the social structure does not remove individual responsibility for the practice of racist conduct and is not an alibi for racists”.

Racism as an ideology shapes the unconscious. In this way, the action of individuals, although conscious, ‘takes place within a framework of sociability endowed with a historically unconscious constitution’. Being aware that racism […] does not need an intention to manifest itself, even though keeping silent in the face of racism does not make the individual moral and/or legally guilty or responsible, silence makes him ethically and politically responsible for maintaining racism (ALMEIDA, 2018).

Trust is no longer seen as a regulatory mechanism but rather as a public good; these theories do not dismiss interpersonal trust but investigate its changing role, especially concerning politics, the future of society and the active citizen participation (BIJOS, 2014).

Bolsonaro intended to approve the Gun Carrying Law but received a lot of criticism in his project. While security issues seemingly dominate government action, more and more nation states are coming under pressure from their own citizens, which demand the ban on guns, as in the United States of America, where buying a gun is a daily routine habit. Some political analysts have diagnosed a crisis of representative democracy and argued for a stronger role of civil society.

Criticizing the government infers citizen action, citizen initiatives, and protest movements that should gain the streets, the social media, and become a key issue for governments, with a plethora of different meanings attached to it (ARNDT, 1987), as the recent cases of Brazil. Furthermore, the question of what civil society can bring to the table, presenting a constitutional reformulation as in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, has become a point of close attention.
Some governments and the corporate sector avoid meeting the civil society representatives, mainly because they know the facts and are increasingly aware of the political mandate of civil society (HALL; MIDGLEY, 2008).

Human rights mean respecting multiculturalism, and ethnic minorities, where people should be proud to live in, and can hail it as a unique “racial democracy”. People should view one another as a unique community, which lives in peace (BIJOS, 2018, p. 11).

Bolsonaro was elected not only to govern Brazil, but especially to change it completely, as a cultural transformation. It is an ideological government of confrontation with the opposition and liberal and left-wing organizations. It aims at a higher economic growth, with popular support, but mostly focused on cultural warfare.

Private foreign capital will be welcome in infrastructure and privatization projects, as emphasized by Chief of Staff of the Presidency, Onyx Lorenzoni. On November 2016, in an interview in the Brazilian TV show Roda Viva, Deputy Lorenzoni affirmed being against the legal immunity. “There is, in the country, a feeling of impunity. I hope the Congress take this moment to make a conciliation with the streets. The parliamentarians need to have capacity and humility to listen to the voice of the streets” (RODA VIVA, 2016). The voice of the streets means development and new jobs opportunities.

In this context, Brazil’s development throughout the last three decades and along with its increasing involvement in the great international themes, are supported by a foreign policy that aims at an increasing inclusion in the international scenario, breaking up with the political secularism of the past. Consequently, the number of international partners grows exponentially every day showing the need to consolidate old partnerships, as well as to attract new ones, particularly with the Bloc Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS); USA, Mexico and Canada; European Union, Mercosur allied countries; Asian countries, which have a remarkable cultural richness, as Japan, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines, and Iran, countries immersed in thousands of years of history, diversity and religious syncretism.

Facing a national policy of economics adjustment, it becomes necessary even more the establishment of a Brazilian foreign policy to reaffirm an economic and political space aiming at South America reunification.

The Brazilian foreign policy should reflect the desire for change expressed by the ordinary people in the streets, changing their miserable lives into a dignified one.

The Brazilian goals of social policy must include poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and the promotion of human rights.

The implementation of these goals will prove it to be of limited effectiveness in addressing mass poverty and promoting human welfare in urban areas, as well as in the most remote rural villages. Institutional changes must promote equitable patterns of economic growth especially education, employment, and transportation.
These long-term lacunae have undoubtedly helped to perpetuate serious problems of poverty, vulnerability, powerlessness, and exclusion.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The adverse social impacts of the Brazilian policies show that welfare provisions have not been inserted into sectors as health, primary education, transportation, and employment. The governmental authorities have not discussed medium and long-term policies for dealing with the adverse social impacts of the World Cup in the country, as well as the building of dozens of soccer stadiums. The perspectives discussed in a narrative format and showing the chronology of facts, consider social policy as being concerned primarily with social and welfare services, of offering safety nets to alleviate immediate crises, as the Family Grant which is offered by the Brazilian government to maintain children at school and supervise their health conditions, such as vaccination.

Another conceptualization of social policy is concerned essentially with more fundamental questions of sources and stability of employment, and the creation of jobs for the young generation. Social policy is also a wider spectrum of collective interventions, as cultural rights. People may have access to libraries, theaters, shows, music performances, and feel integrated and be involved in participatory planning, so that they can speak of their concerns and hopes. The government should reformulate the social policy agenda periodically, showing its evolution in thinking inspired by several factors. One of these factors is the extreme poverty and deprivation of a developing country, like Brazil, to provide context-specific solutions to be devised based on local capacities and needs. The idea of alleviating the absolute poverty of particularly vulnerable groups, like the inhabitants of shanty towns (favelas) in Brazil should give priority to the maximization of the potential of the poor by increasing labor productivity. Basic social services in health care, education, family planning, nutrition and primary education must be provided, but targeted transfers and safety nets, such the Family Grant or social funds, are seen as an essential complement in order to protect those who may not benefit directly from economic growth or social service provision. As emphasized by the civil society movements in Brazil, as well as with the phenomenon of “rolezinhos” are a combination of exclusion and marginalization, which affect large sectors of the population that are landless, jobless, and illiterate, factors associated with social class, caste, ethnicity, religion, culture, age or gender, which have been trapped by situations of poverty, violence and vulnerability.

On discussing violence and discrimination, improvements should be done in women’s life, indigenous populations, the old and those at the bottom of the social ladder such as scheduled castes, Afro-descendants, and street children, who need governmental intervention. Emphasis should be put on the rights stipulated for
the older persons in international instruments stem from the principles of dignity and nondiscrimination. The rights of older persons can be divided into three main categories: protection, participation, and image. Protection refers to securing the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of older persons regarding their unique vulnerability to abuse and ill treatment. Governmental representatives should think that older men and women have the same rights as everyone else: we are all born equal and this does not change as we grow older, and up to 2050, will have more elderly than young people, who should not be affected by age discrimination.

As a point of conclusion, we foresee that the public sector should have mechanisms to offer a worthy life for each of its citizens, and in the absence of this effectiveness, it will be filled in with the participation of the civil organized society, which will demand to the State the right to life, social rights as education, habitat and health.

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