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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BRAZILIANS AND TIREDNESS TO DEMOCRACY.

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Abstract

The text intends to make a brief analysis of the last election with the central question about what motivations led the Brazilian people to elect, for a second round, candidates that represent two ideological extremes and why they opted for the extreme right, giving up democratic ideals won in the last years in the history of Brazil. If, on the one hand, such a choice seems to signal a setback to a passing ideology, anchored in order, on the other, it reveals a weariness with democracy and left-wing governments that, in its view, would have betrayed the population by allying with powerful groups who took possession of the benefits of the State

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Introduction:-

In the presidential elections of 2018, the Brazilian people chose two opposing extreme ideological representatives, Jair Bolsonaro, with a strong right-wing ideology and Antonio Haddad, a representative of the Workers' Party (PT), who ruled Brazil for a 13-year period. Voters, by their vote, thus rejected candidates who presented themselves as moderates and ideologically more centered and less radical. For the Brazilian people, therefore, virtue is not in the middle, as Aristotle would say, but in extremes.

The extremist visions of the two candidates are revealed in their speeches regarding the Brazilian Constitution, to be just one example. Bolsonaro's vice-presidential candidate, in a September 13, 2018 press conference, called for the creation of a new constitution, made up only of "notables", chosen by the president and therefore without the participation of the population or its representatives elected. Also, on October 7 of the same year, the PT candidate, in his plan of government, proposed the convocation of a Constituent Assembly exclusively to change the Brazilian maximum law.

The 1988 Constitution became known as the "Citizen Constitution" for being a symbol of the conquest of democracy after several years in which the country lived under a hard and bloody military regime. Amongst many, it has restored the right to strike, granted freedom of association and has more than seventy items on the rights of citizens to life, liberty, equality, property and security. It protects motherhood, childhood, and the worker. Labor rights were extended to urban and rural employees; women workers were entitled to maternity leave for 120 days, the elderly and disabled were entitled to a monthly income for life; racism has been considered as an imprescriptible crime; torture, an unapproachable crime, and more, every citizen, by constitutional law, has a right of access to any information that the government may have about his or her life. The Constitution put an end to censorship and instituted freedom of expression.

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It seems, and indeed is, a counter-claim, to vote for a presidential candidate who promised to end various of these rights. In an interview with *Jornal Nacional* (08/28/2018), the television news channel with the highest audience in the country, the then candidate said that "the worker will have to choose between more rights and less employment, or less right and more employment." With regard to the new law passed by Congress extending rights to domestic servants, in this same interview, states: "I was the only one to vote against, to protect (sic). Many women have lost jobs because of these rights, too." In the newspaper *Zero Hora*, in December 2014, he said: "Between a man and a young woman, what does the businessman think? 'Wow, that woman has a ring on her finger. Get pregnant soon enough. Six months of maternity leave (...). That's why the guy pays less to the woman. It is very easy for me, who is an employee, to say that it is unjust, that you have to pay equal pay'"¹.

His contempt for human rights was evident in a great number of speeches, and he said he would not make funds available to the Union for human rights movements, which he considered "disservice" to the country. *Valor Econômico* newspaper recalled that in 2016, through twitter, the then candidate said that human rights are "the manure of vagabondage"²

Voters and Their Choices

What is the origin of such extreme speeches and why do voters lose confidence in democracy in a country that has barely gained it? Why does a military man, who represents the darkest page in history that the country has recently lived in the military regime, lack of freedom, persecution and torture, become the highest representative of the nation leading to the main government posts, other military?

Issues such as these are studied by Social Psychology and within this discipline by Political Psychology, which seeks to understand, for example, the relationship between social determinations and voting, as well as to analyze the conduct of individuals as a result of the interaction of cognitive, affective and evaluative variables in immediate social situations (YEDWAB, T., FLORES-IVICH, G., 2011). According to scholars at the Michigan School of Law, this relationship is possible because of subjective variables, when feelings contribute to forming opinion and determining the vote.

Voters who chose between two extremes and elected the most radical of the two, known for controversial ideas, signaled for "an all or nothing" or, to remind a candidate, the old clown of profession, Tiririca, who in the first election did not even know sign his own name, and has scored numerous votes with the motto: "Vote for me because worse can not be".

These facts and these words, however, do not mean, in any way, that the Brazilian is passive or little interested in the problems of the country. The 1980s dressed the streets of "painted faces" that demanded direct elections, openly opposing the Military Regime. In 1992, the people again took to the streets demanding the impeachment of the then president Fernando Collor; in 2013 the streets were taken by thousands of people demanding, at the beginning, the end of the 20 cents more that would be charged in the public transport of São Paulo and that turned into great mobilization and protests by all the country. The stripes wielded at the time exemplify well the paths that followed; they said: "It's not for \$ 0.20." The cohesion factor of those who were mostly students who did not live under any regime other than the ruling Workers' Party called themselves anti-petits and called for the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff.

The extremes were most likely born of these manifestations that took the streets of cities from north to south of Brazil. If, on the one hand, it called for an end to the PT government, an end to corruption, and therefore a shift to the Right, on the other, supporters of former President Lula cried that Dilma Rousseff's withdrawal from the Federal Government would be a coup they compared to the coup of 1964, which ended a democratically elected government, replacing the dictatorship in its place.

JairBolsonaro was not only elected but also acclaimed and followed as a new messiah (coincidental or otherwise, Messiah is one of his last names). His lines had the potential to alienate people from common sense from speeches

¹Cf. <https://gauchazh.clicrbs.com.br/politica/eleicoes/noticia/2018/08/confira-a-entrevista-dada-por-bolsonaro-em-2014-citada-pelo-candidato-no-jornal-nacional-cjkfd5op00ns01muzcwifyo8.html>. Access: 11/13/2018

²Cf. MARTINS, Luisa; PERON, Isadora. Bolsonaro está equivocado sobre direitos humanos, diz procurador. *Jornal Valor Econômico*. Política, 18/10/2018

that were repulsive, yet it was these same lines that brought together entire populations weary of corrupt political rulers. The messages of the elected candidate are marked by his authoritarian thinking in any democratic society, as recorded by the site Political Pragmatism³:

1. "The mistake of the dictatorship was to torture and not to kill." (Jair Bolsonaro, in discussion with demonstrators)
2. "Pinochet should have killed more people" (Bolsonaro on the Chilean dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, available in *Veja* magazine, edition 1575, December 2, 1998 - Page 39)
3. "I would be incapable of loving a homosexual child. I'd rather have a son of mine die in an accident than show up with a mustache around." (Jair Bolsonaro in an interview on homosexuality in *Playboy* magazine)
4. "Do not rape because you do not deserve it" (Jair Messias Bolsonaro, for the federal deputy Maria do Rosário)
5. "I do not take this risk, my children were very well educated" (Bolsonaro for Preta Gil, about what would do if his children were related to a black woman or homosexual)
6. "The police should have killed 1,000 rather than 111 prisoners." (Bolsonaro, on the Carandiru Massacre)
7. "I will not fight or discriminate, but if I see two men kissing in the street, I will beat." (Affirmation of Jair Bolsonaro after mocking former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso about holding a flag with the colors of the rainbow, iris)
8. "You're an idiot. You are an illiterate. She's censored!" (Jair Bolsonaro's irritated statement when interviewed by reporter Manuela Borges of Rede TV and the journalist decided to sue the deputy after the attacks)
9. "Parliamentarians should not ride a bus". (Declaration published by the newspaper *The Day* in 2013)
10. "Women must earn a lower wage because they are pregnant" (Bolsonaro justified the phrase: "when she returns [from maternity leave], she will have another month of vacation, that is, she worked five months in a year")

Why were such authoritarian and discriminatory ideas so well received among the Brazilian population? What is the meaning of this behavior of the Brazilian electorate?

The importance of religious discourses in Brazil

The motto of Bolsonaro's campaign was not chosen innocently: "Brazil above all else, God above all." The staff is an appropriation of the cry of the Army Parachute Infantry Brigade. The candidate himself and his deputy, Hamilton Mourão, served as paratrooper at the time they were military. The cry emerged in the late 1960s, during the military dictatorship and soon after the decree of Institutional Act No. 5⁴. The concept, behind the cry, was to resurrect values of non-xenophobic nationalism, of love for Brazil, and of creating means that would reinforce national identity and avoid the fragmentation of the people by the ideology and exploitation of dissent from society by dividing the people in terms of the old class struggle of Marxism⁵

In Brazil, the candidate who claims to be an atheist will most likely not win the election. In the debate of candidates for São Paulo City Hall, the largest and richest city in the country, with the largest number of best universities, then-senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a favorite of voters hesitated to answer the question of journalist Boris Casoy about whether he believed in God or not. The dialogue went like this:

Boris Casoy – Mr. Senator, do you believe in God?

Fernando Henrique Cardoso - You told me that you would not do it to me.

Casoy - I did not say anything.

Fernando Henrique - Excuse me, it was at this same debate.

Casoy: But I did not say if I would or not.

Fernando Henrique - It's a typical question of someone who wants to take an intimate issue to the public, who wants to use a trap to know the personal conviction of Senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who is not at stake. I must tell

³Cf.: <https://www.pragmatismopolitico.com.br/2015/08/as-10-frases-mais-polemicas-de-jair-bolsonaro.html>. Access 2/2/2018.

⁴The Institutional Act no. 5 (AI-5) was admittedly the hardest of all decrees, which provided for the loss of mandate of all parliamentarians opposed to the military and interventions in states and municipalities, in addition to the suspension of constitutional guarantees. It was from there that torture was institutionalized.

⁵According to Colonel Claudio Tavares in an interview with *Folha de São Paulo*. Available in: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/10/slogan-de-bolsonaro-foi-inspirado-em-brado-de-paraquedistas-militares.shtml?loggedpaywall>. In that same article, the colonel says that this cry is similar to the Nazi cry of "Germany above all else" (*Deutschland über alles*)

the journalist Boris Casoy that our people are religious. I respect the religion of the people and, in so far as I respect the various religions of the people, I am automatically opening a chance for belief in God⁶

Because of hesitation, the candidate was rejected by voters who said they did not vote for an atheist. In fact, in a survey commissioned by the CNT / Sensus, only 13% of Brazilians would vote for an atheist for the Presidency of the Republic. 84% of Brazilians accept a Negro as a candidate, 57% would vote for a woman or a homosexual (32%), but they do not support the idea of having an atheist as president⁷.

The presidential candidates learned this, and in the last elections, no one declared himself an atheist, and as for the winning candidate, God not only gave a face but also made up part of his slogan.

People who are disappointed with the economic direction of recent years and with alarming cases of corruption tend to seek God in the candidates' speeches. Researchers Kay, Shepherd, Blatz, Chua and Galinsky (2010) concluded that in times of insecurity and social and economic instability, people feel the need to believe in something external to them, someone who can take control of the world, whether God or a government.

Voters and Their Democratic Tiredness

As for the issue of voters' contempt for democracy, this may be related to the disillusionment of candidates who have strongly argued for it, but who have disappointed the expectations placed on them or by appropriating the economic advantages of power or - and more likely by the fact of the people have been ceaselessly removed from the very construction of democracy. The historic phrase of the republican propagandist, Aristides Lobo, fits well with the role of the people in building their democracy. The people would have, in Lobo's observation, assisted the transition from one regime to another, without having had any participation in it, "had witnessed everything bestialized, without understanding what was happening, thinking maybe to see a military parade" (CARVALHO, 2016, p.9).

For Charles Tilly, in his book "Roads from Past to Future" (1997, p. 196), people construct democracy in two different senses of the term: First, it creates a group of political arrangements with democratic effects, similar to the project of a carpenter who, in an erratic way, who disperses in the adventure of building a whole city, but refuses to concentrate on building a single large house, which produces and at the same time destroys the objective conditions for democracy.

In a second sense, democracy is understood as the construction of shared understandings, such as culture, that people create for themselves. The author sees, in this second model, extreme versions of linguistic skepticism that reduces all social reality to the construction of language; but if social existence can only be thought through language, it "will not exist independently of language" (196).

In one way or another, people will always be able to build and share understandings that will decide what direction the democratic process will take, depending, therefore, on how involved the people are willing to fight for democracy. But for this, it is necessary, according to the author, that there is a belief in the same democracy.

Faith in democracy depends, to a large degree, on the good faith of the people in their politicians. The numerous scandals, frauds, privileges, have undermined this faith over the years, so that the people do not feel represented in their politicians. And since the representative system is at the heart of democracy, it can not be said that there is full democracy, and in that case, there is "democratic exhaustion."

Jacques Rancière, in "The hatred of democracy", first published in the French language in 2005, states that one of the reasons for this hatred is certain "democratic individualism" when the system is plagued by the depredation of the public thing and public property by elect who are eternalizing in power and thus accumulate or alternate municipal, state, legislative or ministerial functions and see the population as the fundamental link in the representation of local interests; governments that make laws themselves (...); parties funded by public procurement fraud; entrepreneurs investing a colossal amount of money in pursuit of a mandate; owners of private media empires

⁶Debate em 1985 afetou candidatura. **Folha de São Paulo**. S. Paulo, 2 de abril de 1994. Índice Geral

⁷AZEVEDO, Reinaldo. Só 13% dos brasileiros votariam num ateu para presidente. **Revista VEJA**. 23/02/2017

seizing the empire of public media through public functions. In summary: appropriation of the public thing by a solid alliance between the state and economic oligarchy (2014, 60)

This, on the other hand, does not in itself explain such contempt for democracy, but as explained above, there is an individual component, which is proper to human nature, which tends to reject everything that attempts to equalize or diminish differences, and is so that "democratic government is bad when it is corrupted by a democratic society that wants everyone to be equal and that all differences are respected" (RANCIÈRE, 2014, p.7).

In this sense, distrust of politicians would result primarily from people's lack of trust in one another. In Brazil this is more visible. According to Swiss-based GfK Verein, which measured the reputation of different professions in 27 countries, only 6% of Brazilians trust politicians, which places the country in the last position in the ranking. It can not be mere coincidence that Brazil is also the country where the indicators of interpersonal trust are the lowest, less than 3% of Brazilians say they trust other people (MORENO, 2002, p.503). a "society of generalized mistrust" (ROSANVALLON, 2007, p.29).

Conclusion:-

The distrust of democracy, therefore, gives rise to dissatisfaction, a power of the people without representation. One phrase that marked the movement of the streets of 2013 was: "we are against everything that is there". It is not by chance that politicians with ideological divergences have mobilized to urge urgent reforms. We even talked about convening a New National Constituent Assembly with the sole purpose of making broad political reform, since the streets said that the current one would be so erosive that it would not be right to exist.

Distrust in democracy leads to mistrust in the future, which leads to fear, and finally, in an attempt at self-protection, leads to choices with authoritarian bias. Duckitt and Fisher (2003) conducted research that shows that the social threat is related to ideological shifts towards authoritarianism and social dominance. According to the authors,

When social situations change dramatically in a seemingly resilient way, becoming more dangerous or more like a competitive jungle, the beliefs of a worldview will then activate the motivational target of social control and security thereby increasing ideological beliefs social domination (p.202)

In another study, Susana Mizrahi (2004) researched the rejection of the different (either by race, culture or even by small differences). The author investigates how deepening, then, racist and/or ethnocentric feelings, activates prejudices. Based on a psychoanalytic reading, he affirms that the chosen leader represents the "ideal of the self", maintaining with him a relation analogous to that of the hypnotized with the hypnotist. This relationship makes individual inhibitions disappear, while brutal and brutal tendencies are awakened as waste of primitive times.

People vote for candidates with extreme ideologies because, deep down, they long for the stability represented by authority and the power it claims to represent. Bolsonaro brings to mind a past where it was believed that in times of military dictatorship, teachers were respected, bandits, punished, the law, obeyed to the letter, in short, there was "order" and the world seemed predictive.

For Simon Moss (2016), individuals like to perceive the world as predictive. According to him, the world sees it as predictive, "it makes them feel motivated to assume that society is fair and legitimate" and thus legitimize the choice of candidates representing fixed structures in society.

This feeling seems ultimately to be responsible for surveillance and control by the rulers, who find support among the population that sees them turn their attention to their demands. In this sense, "parallel democracies" are multiplied, smaller groups consisting of people known and organized in order to solve nearby problems; an example of this is the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). According to a study by IPEA (Institute of Applied Economic Research), Brazil closed the year 2017 with 820 thousand NGOs. These institutions are a form of rejection of a democracy that needs majorities to legitimize itself, something that sounds like unreachable. These groups are distinguished by forms of "unconventional participation", that is, without the force of the vote, but with a full search for citizenship, thus overturning the myth of the passive citizen. According to Rosanvallon (2007: 37), the contemporary problem is not that of passivity, but that of the "impolitic", that is, today there is a lack of a global apprehension of the problems of the common world and attention is paid to personal motivations and processes which involve sharing common problems and legitimating the status quo.

Jost and Hunyady (2002) use the term "ego justification" to refer to the tendency of some groups to maintain a favorable self-image and to feel valid and legitimate as individual actors. These groups, while maintaining a favorable image of themselves, defend and justify the actions of the group, and sustain favorable attitudes toward the social and political systems that affect them closely. This, therefore, seems to have been the main motivation of voters who voted on the extreme right in the last presidential elections: hopeless crowds looking for something that represents their deepest yearnings, in a word, something that has the force to justify their contempt for a type of democracy that judges them equal to everyone.

Figure 1:-People on the streets, on Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, asking for the return of the military (September, 2018)



Photo: Carla Bridi/Estadão

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