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SAIBA MAIS



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FOLHA DE TEXTO

High suspense in Brazil's general election

September 28, 2018

The vote is vital. The outcome is harder to predict than usual



IF BRAZILIAN politics were a telenovela, the general election in October would make for a riveting finale. A motley cast of suitors is vying for the hand of a disappointed electorate. They include an old flame, who is pressing his suit from a jail cell, a swain who has all the attributes brides normally want but is a bit of a bore, and a rascal who promises excitement and danger. Unlike the plots of past political dramas, this one is building up to an ending that is impossible to guess.

That is because this election, in which voters will choose Brazil's president, all members of the lower house of congress and two-thirds of the 81-seat senate, plus governors and legislators in the 26 states and the capital, is different from any that has come before. The voters are more disgusted than at any time since the end of the military dictatorship in 1985. More than a quarter are undecided, an unusually high share just two months before the first round on October 7th; 31% say they might spoil their ballots or leave them blank.

Disillusionment makes voters unpredictable. Will they opt for one of the establishment candidates, who retain the customary advantages of backing by strong parties and the lion's share of advertising time? Or will they choose one of the radicals, who must get their message out mainly through social media? Complicating the picture further are a new political-finance regime and new rules for electing members of congress. The fragmented presidential field means that a candidate could enter a run-off, to be held on October 28th if needed, with just 15% of the vote. The safest bet may be that the election will not produce the conditions for political and economic renewal that Brazil needs.

The sour mood comes from two traumas that Brazil has suffered over the past four years. One is the country's worst-ever recession, which began in 2014 and from which the economy is recovering slowly. The other is the *Lava Jato* ("Car Wash") corruption investigations. These began as a probe into bribe-paying by construction companies to win contracts from Petrobras, the state-controlled oil company, and have implicated scores of politicians from all the main parties. The current president, Michel Temer, has avoided prosecution only because congress voted to protect him from it. Last year just 13% of Brazilians said they were satisfied with their democracy, a lower share than in any other Latin American country, according to Latinobarómetro, a pollster.

The line-up of presidential hopefuls is unlikely to rekindle enthusiasm. The front-runner was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who was president from 2003 to 2010 and remains the country's most popular politician. But

he is also the most important scalp claimed by the *Lava Jato* investigators: he is serving a 12-year sentence for corruption in a jail in Curitiba. His substitute running presidential candidate, Fernando Haddad, a former mayor of São Paulo, has formed an alliance with the Communist Party.

In polls that do not mention Lula, the leader is Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right congressman who has made a career of insulting gays, women and black people, extolling the dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985 and advocating violent repression as the best way to fight crime. His running mate is a retired general who said last year that a military coup could solve the country's political crisis.

Lagging behind is Geraldo Alckmin, a centrist former governor of the state of São Paulo, who has run for president once before, in 2006. Others in the second tier are Ciro Gomes, a former governor of the state of Ceará who is battling with PT for the left-wing vote, and Marina Silva, an environmentalist with a compelling life story (she is the daughter of a rubber-tapper). She has run twice before.

The new rules may change the shape of congress, though probably not as much as reformers hope. Public financing will benefit big parties at the expense of small ones. A "barrier clause" enacted last year eliminates money and media time for parties that get less than 1.5% of the vote in at least nine states, a threshold that will eventually rise to 3%. That will put pressure on politicians from small parties to join bigger ones. With fewer, more disciplined parties, congress may be less prone to the grubby deal-making that helped create the *Lava Jato* scandals.

However, 91% of the lower-house deputies under investigation plan to seek re-election, according to *O Estado de S. Paulo*, a newspaper. Some are surely doing so to keep their immunity from prosecution. "Congress won't be substantially different," said Pêrsio Arida, Mr Alckmin's economic adviser, at a recent conference. "Change must come from the president." Brazilians can only wait and wonder what sort of change that will be.

Fonte: adaptado de <<http://discovery.economist.com/latinamerica/high-suspense-in-brazils-general-election?kw=all&csid=ppc&ref=latinamerica&aid=&qq=ok02>>

1 – De acordo com o texto, por que a eleição deste ano no Brasil é diferente de todas que já tivemos antes? (1,5)

2- Quais são os traumas recentes citados no texto que hoje trazem um gosto "azedo" ao processo eleitoral brasileiro? (1,5)

3 – De que forma as novas regras nessas eleições podem alterar a configuração do congresso nacional? (3,0)

4 - Traduza o parágrafo abaixo. (4,0)

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