



## TEMER GOVERNMENT: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN PT GOVERNMENTS AND THE RISE OF BOLSONARO

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**Abstract:** The article lists the main aspects of Temer's mandate that contributed to changing the direction of Brazilian politics to a more right-wing orientation, and with a program different from the guidelines of the slate previously formed with President Dilma Rousseff, forming the "bridge" that led Brazil to elect Bolsonaro. In the first months of his term, President Temer announced austerity measures of great impacts - such as labor reform and the spending cap, which were not part of his predecessor's government program. Temer's plans would possibly have gone further, with possible approval of the pension reform, had he not been implicated in several corruption investigations. Fearing, however, with a government with a strong pro-market orientation, ended up being a transitional government between the PT governments and the Bolsonaro government.

**Keywords:** Temer; PT; Bolsonaro; Coalitional Presidencialism; Congress

### 1 Introduction

The 2014 elections resulted in increased polarization between right-wing and left-wing in Brazil, with an even more conservative Congress in comparison to the previous configuration, referring to the 2010 election, and a scenario of established crisis that affected the political, economic, and social fields. A series of demonstrations that took place in 2013 - known as the June Journeys - contributed to the destabilization of that administration, triggered by the announcement of bus fare increases in the city of São Paulo. As a result, at the end of that month, the popularity of President Dilma fell 24 points with the protests, from 54% to 30% (MENDONÇA, 2013). Still, in October, Dilma was re-elected, beating Aécio Neves, from PSDB, in the second round, with 51.6% of the valid votes.

The beginning of the second Dilma Administration was highlighted by a severe political crisis, with the government losing its support base in the Congress, and the then President of the Chamber, Eduardo Cunha (declared enemy of President Dilma), despite being involved in several corruption scandals, actively acting for her overthrow.

Another source of crisis for the Government was the outbreak of Operation Lava Jato in March 2014, which directly affected Dilma's party, the PT, in addition to the strong increase in political discussions over the Internet, especially Facebook and massive presence in protests in

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the streets, organized by various civic movements.

In this context, there was a strong increase in conservatism and hate speech against the PT, in addition to the growth in the number of parliamentarians linked to conservative sectors. The Dilma government faced serious difficulties in sustaining itself.

In April 2016, the Chamber approved the opening of impeachment proceedings against President Dilma, with 367 votes in favor and 137 against. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Senate decided to install the process, which led to the immediate removal of the President. On the following day, Temer took over as interim president and on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 100 days later, the process was approved by the Senate, and Dilma was permanently removed from the presidency.

When he became president, Temer already had a government plan in place, whose main guidelines consisted of comprehensive reforms, including labor, social security, and the spending cap - and he needed to garner the votes necessary for their approval. To this end, he shared the command of the portfolios among the coalition parties in a balanced proportion.

Temer's first decision, issued on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, his first day in office, as a Provisional Measure, MP 726, reduced the number of Ministries from 39 portfolios to 24 (Provisional Measure # 726 of 2016 converted into Act # 13,341 of 09/29/2016). The action decreed the end of the Ministries of Social Security, Agrarian Development, Science and Technology, and Communications, and thus their attributions were incorporated into the then-new Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovations, and Communications. The Ministry of Culture, which was to be extinguished, would later be recreated after pressure from artists and cultural producers (Provisional Measure # 729 of 2016, which revokes provisions of MP # 726 and restores provisions of Act # 10.683 of 28/05/2003). The Federal Comptroller General (CGU) also ended up extinguished to make way for the new Ministry of Transparency. The measure also provided for the loss of the status of minister for the Federal Attorney General and the president of the Central Bank and linked Social Security to the Ministry of Finance.

On the same May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Temer issued a second MP, creating a Partnership and Investment Program (PPI) dedicated to streamlining public concessions and enabling the interaction between the State and private initiative to generate infrastructure investments in Brazil. This measure also promoted changes in the Concessions Act (Act # 8.987, 1995) for the preparation of projects. A survey conducted later in January 2019 by the G1 portal (ALVARENGA, 2019) points out that the program had so far resulted in 69 ongoing privatization projects, including Eletrobras, the Brazilian Mint, the sale of Infraero's stake in the Guarulhos, Brasília, and Confins airports, and dozens of other undertakings in highways, railroads, and port terminals.

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Temer Administration achieved the approval of the spending cap by the Senate, which limited public spending for 20 years. Despite the progress of the austerity measures that ensured Temer the support, at least temporarily, of the financial market in the

political aspect, accusations of corruption complicated the President's situation.

The beginning of 2017 marks the outbreak of Operation Weak Meat (Carne Fraca) by the Federal Police (PF) in March, and later, in May, the disclosure of conversations recorded by Joesley Batista, in which the executive tells the President that he was paying bribes to Eduardo Cunha in jail. Soon after, Temer's former special advisor, Rodrigo Rocha Loures, is recorded by the Federal Police leaving a pizzeria with a suitcase of money, creating the suspicion that he was Temer's intermediary. From then on, the Fora Temer (Get Out Temer) protests - led by the left-wing - were intensified with a high degree of violent repression in several Brazilian capitals.

During this period, the President begins a long political process in his defense. In June, Temer was acquitted by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) in the process of annulling his 2014 election plaque with Dilma, but the following month he was indicted by Janot for the crime of passive corruption. Even so, he sanctions the Labor Reform Bill - strongly neoliberal in nature, promoting more austerity measures for workers and more facilities for employers.

In August 2017, the plenary of the House of Representatives approved the filing of the complaint in the JBS case. In October, another Janot indictment, in which the President was accused of obstruction of justice and participation in a criminal organization - the President would be the leader of the scheme involving Petrobras, Caixa, and Furnas. His popularity in the period is 5%.

Still, in an attempt to improve its image, the year 2018 marks a turn of the Temer Administration toward the security agenda. On February 16th, the President signed a decree of federal intervention in the public security of Rio de Janeiro. The measure, expected to last until December 31st of the same year, prevented the vote on constitutional amendments, including that of the pension reform. It was during this same period, or more precisely on March 14th, 2018, that PSOL councilwoman in the capital and human rights activist Marielle Franco and her driver, Anderson Gomes, were brutally murdered - an attack in which the car carrying her had been shot by a gunman unknown to date. The killers are believed to be linked to militias in Rio de Janeiro, although the authorship and command remain unknown (MORI, 2018).

In May and June 2018, the truckers' strike deepens the political crisis in the country and causes the Government to approve measures to benefit the category. During this period, Temer gives up the idea of running for reelection.

The last months of his government are highlighted by a melancholy end: the Federal Police concluded an investigation into bribery in the port sector, indicting the President for passive corruption and money laundering. The indictment, made official by Attorney General Raquel Dodge in early December, would result in his preventive detention for a few days in March 2019. The former President is still responding to several lawsuits resulting from investigations from this time (TEMER É ABSOLVIDO EM ACUSAÇÃO DE CORRUPÇÃO NO CASO DOS PORTOS, 2021).

## **2 Temer's Administration as a "bridge" between Petitioner's administration and Bolsonarism**

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, even before publicly breaking with the Dilma Administration and the PT, the PMDB released the document "A Bridge to the Future", in which it presented supposed ways out of Brazil's crisis, diagnosing problems in the economic and sociopolitical scenarios, and proposed guidelines for their resolution.

The programmatic content intended to "[...] preserve the Brazilian economy and make its development feasible, giving back to the State the ability to execute social policies that effectively combat poverty and create opportunities for all (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO (A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE, 2015, p. 2)). However, what was evident and was already in the document was a clear foreshadowing of a coup (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 2):

In this hour of truth, when what is at stake is nothing less than the future of the nation, it is necessary to form a political majority, even if transitory or circumstantial, capable, in a short period, of producing all these decisions in society and the National Congress. We have no other way but to seek understanding and cooperation. The nation has already shown that it is capable of facing and overcoming great challenges. Let's submit it to a new and decisive test.

And Temer's party continued its "declaration of intent" (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 2):

To be functional it must distribute the right incentives for private initiative and manage in a rational and balanced way the distributional conflicts that proliferate within any society.

[...]

Even if we completely changed the way we governed day today, with moderation and responsibility, even then the fiscal problem would persist. To face it we will have to change laws and even constitutional rules, without which the fiscal crisis will always return, and increasingly intractable until we finally reach a kind of collapse.

The first point addressed manifests the intention not to increase taxes, because "[...] any long-term adjustment should, in principle, avoid tax increases, except in situations of extreme emergency and with broad social consent" (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 6).

And, even though it is still part of the Government's base, PMDB wove serious criticism to the political command, when it mentions that in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016,

[...] Brazil was ranked 75th among 140 countries, losing 18 positions concerning the previous report, from 2014, being overtaken by the emerging countries - Russia, South Africa, India and Mexico, which shows that something very wrong is happening with our country in recent years (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 6).

The same document also mentions the need to break down the factors that make up the

index related to taxes and tax complexity. In the authors' view, these parameters combined account for 25% - the largest factor - of the problems in doing business in the country. The second obstacle would be the labor laws (sic), with 14% responsibility; followed by the burden of corruption, with 12% in the hierarchy of impeditive causes.

On social security, the document states that "[...] unlike almost every other country in the world, we have made most of the rules for access to and enjoyment of social security benefits a constitutional norm, making it very difficult to adapt them to demographic changes" (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 7).

The text also foreshadowed the future deep cuts in health and education with the arrival of Temer and his party to the presidency, on an interim basis, as of May 2016. According to Uma Ponte para o Futuro (A Bridge to the Future), it was necessary to:

[...] end the constitutionally established ties, as in the case of spending on health and education, due to the fear that the Executive could contingency, or even cut these expenses in case of need. [...] because in Brazil the budget is not binding and the Executive Branch may or may not execute the budgeted expenditure (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 9).

In the social field, the program proposed zero-based budgeting, which means evaluating every year all state programs through an independent committee, with autonomy to suggest the continuation or the end of each measure, according to its costs and benefits. The justification: "Today programs and projects tend to last forever, even when conditions change completely. In any case, Congress will always be sovereign and will have the final word on the continuation or end of each program or project" (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 10).

According to the document, Brazilian GDP spending on social security at levels close to 12% was unsustainable, because the country had other issues such as "young people to attend to, [...] problems of health care, of education, of security" (A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE, 2015, p. 12)". Another argument compares the figures here with those of countries that have similar spending and much older populations than Brazil, such as Germany and France, and countries that spend half of what Brazil spends, such as the US, Japan, and China.

Still regarding the economy, the program criticized the high-interest rates in the country, indicating that inflation was far above the target of 4.5% and was already threatening to get out of control, because "[...] any voluntarism on the interest rate issue is the sure path to disaster" (A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE, 2015, p. 14). The formula suggested by the document combined budget reform, the adaptation of social security to demographic changes, and reduction of public debt, which would result in more predictability in the economic environment, normalization of productive activity, and recovery of public investment capacity.

The document also hinted at more openness to privatization by citing among its objectives that of

[...] execute a development policy centered on the private initiative, through transfers of assets that will be necessary, broad concessions in all areas of logistics and infrastructure, partnerships to complement the supply of public services (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 18).

Concerning Petrobras, the plan was to return to the previous regime of concessions in the petroleum area, even if giving the company the right of preference.

For international trade, it proposed "[...] greater trade openness and the pursuit of regional trade agreements in all relevant economic areas - the United States, the European Union and Asia - with or without the company of Mercosul, although preferably with them" (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 18).

This document still included the promise to obey democratic institutions, although it spoke of "reconstituting the State":

The country needs all Brazilians. We promise to rebuild a modern, prosperous, democratic, and just state (UMA PONTE PARA O FUTURO, 2015, p. 19).

After Dilma Rousseff's departure, Temer's rise to power, largely following the premises of Uma Ponte para o Futuro the direction of Brazilian politics to the right. The President has promoted reforms that were not in the original government plan of President Dilma Rousseff - which was the program elected in 2010 - thus aiming to count on the support of the Brazilian private sector. Temer, however, did not foresee that this shift would: 1 - not make him popular; and, 2 - cause part of the Brazilian population to search for a more extremist candidate, who would satisfy the desire to fight corruption that prevailed at that time. And so, the Brazil that elected Dilma in 2014, would choose Bolsonaro in the following election. But what is the conjuncture that led to such an abrupt turn in Brazilian politics? The answer is not simple and includes several factors. In the first place, the economic crisis that struck the Dilma Administration both increased the population's level of indebtedness - and consequently their purchasing power - and increased unemployment. The unemployment rate went from 8.1% between March and May 2015 to 11.2% between March and May 2016 - the period coinciding with the coup, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). In the second quarter of 2014, the index was at 7%, with the index peaking in 2017 in the first quarter at 13.7%.

Moreover, still in the economic field, President Dilma suffered severe criticism for the rise in the dollar, which began the year at R\$ 2.65 and ended at R\$ 3.94 (DOLLAR INCREASES IN ALL DILMA'S 5 YEARS AND INCREASES 137%, FROM R\$ 1.666 TO R\$ 3.948, 2015), causing great discontent in the population. In this period, the approval of the Dilma Administration oscillated between 11% and 12%, according to Datafolha (64% REPROVE DILMA'S ADMINISTRATION, 2016). Temer, however, would not achieve better approval ratings, becoming known as the most unpopular president in history. Upon entering government, Temer started with a similar approval rating to Dilma, with 14%, ending his government in 2018

with a record low at 7% (MOST UNPOPULAR SINCE COLLOR, TEMER CLOSES WITH LOWER REPROVAL, 2019), especially after the corruption scandals.

At the end of his term, Temer already represented the dissatisfaction of much of the population that supported the 2016 coup. There was never, however, any major break from the administration with the sectors that represent the financial market and industry. The politician, somehow, always remained representative of the interests of capital, and even though he failed to approve the pension plan, he continued to defend the flag of privatizations and spending cuts. Not by chance, Temer did not take forward issues such as taxing large fortunes and remittances sent abroad. The president even proposed a timid project in this regard, which was not voted by Congress (PIERRY, 2017) at the end of 2017 and would not return to the agenda until the end of Temer's mandate.

The market's support was directly linked to the promise of reforms, which in turn guaranteed him the support of several media outlets. The owner of SBT, Silvio Santos, even hosted Temer on one of his Sunday late-night shows. In a jocular tone, on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the president appeared on the show to explain the reform that was also defended by the host, and at the end, Temer simulates a "prize" to Silvio Santos with a R\$ 50,00 bill for defending social security (PROGRAMA SILVIO SANTOS, 2018). The Government even spent R\$ 110 million between January 2017 and February 2018 on advertising for the reform - which ended up failing during Temer's administration (MACEDO, 2018).

Bolsonaro's administration would use the same tactic in 2019 by allocating public funds from the Special Secretariat of Communication (Secom) to run reform advertisements on radio, TV, newspapers, and the Internet, including YouTube channels for children (MACIEL; FONSECA, RUDNITZKI; SCOFIELD; CORREIA, 2020).

Another characteristic that at first sustained Temer and then ended up costing him dearly was to assign positions to parties in the base of support in a design similar to the composition of the Government's base. To this end, he shared the command of the portfolios among the coalition parties in a balanced proportion. As noted in the survey by the Public Policy Analysis Directorate of the Getulio Vargas Foundation (GRAÇA, 2016) at the time,

[...]only 9.4% of the authorized resources (or R\$ 106.56 billion) and 11.6% of discretionary resources (R\$ 15.39 billion) of the total allocated to ministries are managed by the PMDB. In terms of the number of portfolios, the party has seven, but, in budgetary terms, it shares with the allied parties the command of ministries with greater resources [...].

The study follows his observations (GRAÇA, 2016):

In terms of management of the total authorized budget (including mandatory and discretionary amounts), the PSD leads, with R\$ 547.94 billion. This is because the Ministry of Social Security (now integrated into the Ministry of Finance), which had Henrique Meirelles, affiliated to the PSD in 2011, as a

Minister, obtained the largest budget of all, with most of it, earmarked for mandatory spending. Followed by the PP, in portfolios totaling R\$ 131.16 billion of resources and the PMDB itself, which manages R\$ 106.56 billion.

It is worth mentioning that, in the second Dilma administration, the PT was responsible for the largest authorized budget, with R\$ 772.3 billion available, followed by the PROS, with R\$ 109.6 billion; while the PMDB was left with "only" R\$ 26.5 billion. The jurist Paulo Ricardo Schier, in his book *Presidencialismo de Coalizão*, points out the implicit logic in the distribution of the cake:

Positions that represent access to more substantial portions of the budget are usually the most sought after, as is the case of the Ministry of Health, through which a large part of the Brazilian budgetary resources pass [...]. The logic of the distribution of these positions and functions is not random. Political parties that obtained the highest success rate in the parliamentary elections will, as a rule, have access to the most relevant positions and functions, both by the economic-financial criterion and by the criterion of political importance. These parties will be the guarantors of governability, stability, and, therefore, of the president's victories in parliament (SCHIER, p. 115).

It is important to point out that the Congress elected under Dilma in 2014 had become more conservative compared to the previous election. According to a survey by the Departamento Intersindical de Assessoria Parlamentar (Inter-Union Department of Parliamentary Advice) (*RADIOGRAFIA DO NOVO CONGRESSO: LEGISLATURA 2015-2019*, 2014), 257 of the 513 deputies elected in 2014 had their campaigns financed by agribusiness, another 55 were linked to the police, and 82 deputies were representatives of churches, forming a significant evangelical caucus. In the same election, deputies defending social causes fell from 83 to 46. Jair Bolsonaro was the most voted deputy in Rio, with 464,572 votes. As Brugnago and Chaia observe (2014, p. 101):

With the defeat of Aécio Neves, the right-wing militancy went into despair. Democratic values were cast aside and immediately they began to discuss solutions to get rid of the PT. The solutions went through waves of separatism to disconnect from the Northeast, immediate desire for impeachment, and even a military coup.

In 2014, the configuration of the Chamber after the elections increased the number of represented political parties - 28 parties compared to 22 parties in the 2010 dispute, which tends to make the dialogue more complex. Of the total number of elected representatives, 238 were new, while 275 were reelected. The PT won the largest bench, with 70 deputies, but lost 18 seats compared to the previous election (MARTINS, 2015). The PMDB elected the second largest bench, but shrank five seats in comparison with the previous administration, remaining with 66 deputies. The PSDB elected the third-largest bench, with 54 deputies. Still, women remained underrepresented, with 51 elected deputies, compared to 47 in 2010.

The coalition that led Dilma to victory and her second mandate included nine parties: PT,



PMDB, PSD, PP, PR, PRB, PDT, Pros, and PCdoB - totaling 304 deputies (REIS; ARAGÃO, 2014).

In the Senate, whose election renewed one-third of the House, the PMDB was confirmed as the largest bench in the same election, totaling 19 members. The PT came second, with 12 senators, followed by the PSDB, with 10 senators. There were a total of 15 parties represented.

The presidency of the House was with Congressman Eduardo Cunha (MDB), who had become a declared enemy of Dilma, between February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - when he had to leave office by decision of the STF when an injunction signed by Teori Zavascki considered that the congressman was hindering the investigations of the Lava Jato Operation. Days earlier, on April 17<sup>th</sup>, Cunha had commanded the impeachment voting process. His successor was Waldir Maranhão, of the Progressive Party (PP) - since 2017 Progressives - who took over on an interim basis until July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. In the same month, to replace Cunha, the House elected Rodrigo Maia (DEM), who remained in the post until the end of the Temer Administration, being reelected already in the Bolsonaro Administration, in 2019. In this same interval, the Senate had the presidency of Renan Calheiros (PMDB), who remained from 2013 to 2016, followed by his party colleague Eunício Oliveira for the 2017-2018 biennium. Chaia (2018, p. 23) sees this composition and the conjuncture as follows:

A new conservative wave has taken over the Brazilian political scene. Evangelicals and Catholics, of a conservative matrix, have entered the political-party sphere and consolidated their forces on the national scene. Representatives of the armament industry are among the most voted congressmen in the most conservative post-1985 Congress. Today, these are relevant political actors that have the power to interfere in parliamentary decisions, and it is no longer possible to ignore their presence in the public space. Moreover, social movements that are morally conservative and economically liberal have gained sympathy from the Brazilian population. The movements "Movimento Brasil Livre", "Vem pra rua", "Revoltados on-line", "Movimento endireita Brasil", among others, managed to mobilize, through social networks, large anti-PT demonstrations and articulated themselves in defense of moral agendas, also working for the growth of conservative parliamentary representation in the House of Representatives.

Sérgio Abranches (1988, p. 20) defined the term coalition presidential as the "[...] need, more or less frequently, to resort to inter-party coalitions for the formation of the Executive (cabinet)". His observations on the subject go further:

The frequency of coalitions reflects party-electoral fragmentation, itself anchored in sociocultural differentiation; the systematic emergence of governments sustained by a single majority party is unlikely. This correlation between party fragmentation, social diversity, and greater likelihood of grand coalitions borders on a truism. It is in the most divided and conflictive societies that governance and institutional stability require the formation of alliances and greater bargaining capacity (ABRANCHES, 1988, p. 20).

Abranches also points out that Brazil is the only country to combine proportionality,

multipartism, and imperial presidential, besides organizing the ministry based on large coalitions. The country, as the same author understands it, in the group of democratic nations, is the only case of coalition presidential.

The logic of coalition building has, therefore, two axes, the partisan and the regional (state level). And so, the calculation regarding the political support base for the Government is not only partisan-parliamentary but also regional. Therefore, Abranches points out that "[...] it becomes necessary for the Government to seek to control at least the qualified majority that allows it to block or promote constitutional changes" (ABRANCHES, 1988, p.22).

The Brazilian presidential system has characteristics such as the fragmented nature of the party system and open list proportional representation, in which each party will receive the number of seats proportional to the number of votes obtained in the elections in which the vote for the party determines the number of seats it will have in the chamber and the vote for the candidate will indicate his/her position on the list of preferences<sup>3</sup>.

According to Santos (2002), the combination of the same factors leads the President to distribute ministerial portfolios among members of the main parties and thus try to obtain support from Congress in the implementation of his/her public policy agenda.

An important legal brake is that the 1988 Constitution imposes a monopoly by the Executive on-budget execution, generating a scenario that can be a strong incentive for congressmen to organize themselves into parties that vote with discipline and in a more predictable way.

On the other hand, the Executive is the only source of benefits, which grants it great bargaining power. Parliamentarians receive, in exchange for their support, benefits to be shown in their electoral strongholds.

Limongi (2006, n. p.), on the other hand, understands that nothing authorizes treating the Brazilian political system as singular. The author points out that coalitions obey and are governed by the party political principle - Brazil's characteristics such as federalism, the power of the Governors and the diversity and heterogeneity of Brazilian society make coalitions imperative. The formation of the parliamentary base to support the President, therefore, cannot be strictly partisan. The author goes into more detail on this issue:

The fact is that the Brazilian President is powerful from a legislative point of view, not because he/she usurps legislative power, but because the 1988 Constitution has so established. The President has the exclusive prerogative to initiate legislation in the main areas of policy: taxation, the budget, and the establishment of civil service positions, to name the fundamental areas. So the President is not just any legislator (LIMONGI, 2006).

In this sense, Temer has valued negotiation with Congress throughout his presidency.

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<sup>3</sup> The system is opposed to the closed list system, in which voters vote only for the party, and not for the candidates.

Were it not for his involvement in corruption cases, the President would have benefited from the configuration of the post-impeachment Congress and, possibly, in the wave of support that made him approve the labor reforms and the spending cap, both through PMs, he would also have passed the pension reform. Remembering that a good part of the congressmen who supported the impeachment of President Dilma formed the base of the Temer administration. The politician himself defended the link between Congress and the Senate, in a 2010 article, stating that "[...] the coalition presidentialism is the closest to parliamentarianism, extremely democratic signaling" (TEMER, 2010).

The accusations of corruption involving Temer, however, changed the scenario of relative ease he had found to approve his reform project. Also, the approach of the next election, in 2018, as many parliamentarians did not want to be associated with austerity measures that could impact their electoral results.

Regarding his government's agendas, it is important to emphasize that the approval of the Labor Reform in 2017 did not significantly reduce the unemployment problem. Brazil ended 2018 with an unemployment rate of 11.6%, compared to 12.7% in 2017 - the year the Labor Reform was approved, according to IBGE data. The main change observed refers to agreements between employees and employers, which now prevail (although vacation and 13th salary are granted), in addition to the union contribution, which is no longer mandatory. Even, according to specialists, these measures brought great unbalance to labor negotiations, added to a scenario of increased informality (LESSA, 2019). Regarding the working hours, previously limited to eight hours per day, the regime of 12 hours of work followed by 36 hours of rest is now accepted, which made intermittent work possible, whose provision of services occurs on a non-continuous basis (APPROVED IN 2017, THE LABOR REFORM CHANGED RULES TO FLEXIBILIZE LABOR MARKET, 2019).

Regarding the spending cap, already in early 2019, members of the Government began discussions to make the measure more flexible, alleging difficulties to sustain the rule. In September 2019, economists Fabio Giambiagi and Guilherme Tinoco, from the National Bank for Economic Development - BNDES, published the article "The public spending ceiling - change to preserve" (2019), already predicting that the dynamics of expenses will make it impossible to comply with the established value. The article points out:

It was one thing to have a stable cap rule, with the prospect that the Pension Reform would be approved in 2017 to be effective as of 2018 and the economy would resume a moderate growth between 2.5% and 3% already as of 2017, which would help leverage revenues and lead to a quick reversal of the primary deficit. Another very different thing is that the Reform has not been approved so far, with pension expenditure having continued to grow continuously these years and the economy going into its third consecutive year with a growth rate of barely 1% per year (p.a.). In this depressed macroeconomic environment, the flattening of several expenditure items is beginning to seriously affect government policies that depend on the existence of adequate funds. It is this

reality that motivates the need for reflection in the search for alternatives that maintain the commitment to fiscal sustainability (GIAMBIAGI; TINOCO, 2019, p. 9).

The proposal approved by the Temer's Administration provided for avoiding any real growth in public spending from 2017 to 2026, with a possibility of changing the rule by Supplementary Law for the period from 2027 to 2036. However, the Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19), the outbreak in early 2020, is also expected to push discussions for the revision of the limit.

Finally, it should be noted that the Pension Reform had been approved in November 2019, already in Bolsonaro's Administration, which maintained the neoliberal agenda in the economy and the policy of reducing rights.

Added together, Temer failed to meet the demands of a population that went to the streets to demand the impeachment, both for answers to the corruption schemes and a more prosperous economy - even if this meant a shift to neoliberal-oriented policies. In other words, the President did not become a symbolic power capable of freeing Brazil from corruption and getting the country out of the crisis.

Meanwhile, a strong atmosphere of polarization gripped the country, and in the 2018 election, candidates from more traditional parties, such as Geraldo Alckmin from PSDB, failed to meet these demands. Thus, the conjuncture that brought Bolsonaro to the power contained certitude of rupture with traditional politics. And even though Bolsonaro had been a Congressman for several terms, his figure managed to represent the demand for radical change.

In this same election, the left-wing experienced a power vacuum caused by Lula's arrest in April 2018, which took time to be filled by his successor in the election, Fernando Haddad. Other candidates such as Ciro Gomes (PDT) and Marina Silva (Rede), tried unsuccessfully to establish a third way and did not reach the second round. The 2018 election was atypical in several senses. Besides the replacement of Lula, who was then the leader in the polls, by Haddad, in September of that year, Bolsonaro would suffer an attack - the stabbing by Adélio Bispo during the rally in Juiz de Fora (MG), and thus he did not participate in the main television debates. This absence, however, did not harm him, since his campaign was largely built on social networks.

Bolsonaro built a communication system that did not pass through traditional media - a phenomenon that was not perceived by by-election scholars. By adhering to the conservative agenda, Bolsonaro gained the support of evangelicals, who already represent a significant portion of both the votes and the Congress.

The final force Bolsonaro lacked were the elites - who, with the arrival of the neoliberal Paulo Guedes to form the economic team, secured the support of various sectors of the economy, both in the financial field and in industry.

### 3 Conclusions

The period in which Michel Temer headed the Brazilian State represented the bridge that changed the guidelines of Brazilian politics from Petism to Bolsonarism. The document A Bridge to the Future, released by his party, the (still) PMDB, in October 2015, already announced the premises of a national project with a neoliberal orientation - even though, at that time, the acronym was still part of the support base of President Dilma Rousseff. This was one of the first big signs from outside the backstage that there was an ongoing articulation to abandon the ruling wing, leaving the "petistas" to deal with the political crisis on their own. Thus, by leaving the Government, the PMDB managed to get Temer to take over after the coup.

Temer's arrival in power in May 2016 was followed by a new programmatic content, based on a series of austere economic reforms, especially the spending cap and the Labor Reform, which were approved that year by the Congress, and the Pension Reform, which only succeeded in the following term of office, of Jair Bolsonaro.

Despite good political influence, Temer, especially after his involvement in corruption scandals, did not meet the demands of a population that was clamoring for change. Under his government, economic reforms were initiated that caught the attention of neoliberals, who, in turn, desired a deeper turn in terms of privatization and reduction in the size of the State. The market personified this desire for more austerity policies in Paulo Guedes.

In the social field, Bolsonaro managed to symbolically fulfill the desires of a population that wanted an end to corruption, besides establishing a dialogue with leaders of the Evangelical bench.

These forces allied themselves with Bolsonaro and contributed massively to his victory, even in the absence of a government plan with concrete proposals. The government plan presented by Bolsonaro was composed of a poorly elaborated PowerPoint presentation, without much data or depth. This same lack of a plan and preparation to govern reflected, for example, in the absence of an effective policy to combat the Covid-19 Pandemic, which led Brazil to be among the countries with the largest number of victims alongside the United States and India (ALONSO, 2021), to name just one of the problems.

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