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## **The 2018 elections and the Brazilian political scenario**

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### **The 2018 elections and the Brazilian political scenario**

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Thinking about the surprising results of 2018 general elections, the renewal of the National Congress, and the first three months of Jair Bolsonaro's tenure as president. These are the themes of this edition of the International Forum of Ideas with our guest Edson Sardinha. Graduated in Journalism from the Federal University of Goiás and editor-in-chief of the *Congresso em Foco*, certainly the main political news website in Brazil in the past few years. Other than Edson, we also have today our own José Medeiros da Silva – one of the co-founders of the Forum – streaming live from the city of Hangzhou, China. José is a professor at Zhejiang International Studies University. Also, I, Antonio Marcelo Jackson, from the Federal University of Ouro Preto, will be the final member of today's conversation.

Edson, I would like you to synthesize this more than awkward 2018 election and these first three months of the Jair Bolsonaro administration. The floor is yours, my friend.

**Edson Sardinha:** The 2018 elections surprised many, in the sense that there was a certain expectation given the new electoral rules. Members of Parliament (MPs) that were in office had a larger campaign budget to receive from their party. What we saw however was an election which brought major parliamentary turnover in the Senate (Brazil's upper house) – the largest since the first democratic election in 1989 – and in Congress, the second largest in the same period. Many of the elected parliamentarians bandwagoned on Bolsonaro's candidacy with that hard-line discourse. Congress became much more conservative, there was major right-wing growth, and the centre practically ceased to exist, it shrunk considerably. The Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB)<sup>\*1</sup>,

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\* Across the whole text, all parties will be designated by the English translation of their Portuguese name, and then by their Portuguese acronym in parentheses. All further references to the party will be made by their Portuguese acronym unless when stylistically required otherwise. Also, footnotes will be added along the text with information about particularities of Brazilian politics and its party system. These will not be referred to as Translator Notes (Translator's Note [TN]).

<sup>1</sup> The *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement) was the permitted opposition party during the military dictatorship. Since the re-democratization, it became one of the most important

for example, became quite worn-out in this election. The Senate, on the other hand, begins its current legislature composed by various senators that have no political past whatsoever. In the lower chamber, this phenomenon was much more interesting because there are 130 MPs who never held public office before. So, we have a Congress that is still fumbling for solutions. The majority of these rookies were elected with an anti-establishment discourse, but they are having problems acting or pointing towards solutions, that is, what exactly they want to do differently.

This is also an issue being faced by President Bolsonaro himself. He says he wants to do things differently, but he does not know what to do. These first three months show that he is completely lost. It is a very confused government because it is formed by many sectors: you have the financier sector coordinated by Paulo Guedes (Minister of Economics 2019-present), religious sectors – especially the evangelical Christians – that poured 10 million votes in excess to Bolsonaro in comparison to (Fernando) Haddad. You have the military sector, an important part of the government, which is perhaps the more qualified among the ones that occupy cabinet positions.

Finally, you have some characters that exude a certain messianic trait, polemicists. Anyway, it is a bit of a patchwork government composed by heterogeneous conservative sectors that are not “clicking”. The military, for example, have formed an important nucleus in the core of the government, but they have been conflicting with Bolsonaro himself – trying, somewhat, to mitigate his boisterousness. The discourse of the evangelicals, for example, does not please the financier sector, the markets or the military. That is to say that these evangelical sector are still, it seems, campaigning. They have this enmity against the left, the Workers’ Party (PT), communism and so on... and they seem not to have a purpose for the country itself, since they are leaving strategic sectors (like education) aside. These first three months were completely lost for the government.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Professor José, any comments? I have a few questions here, but, democratically, I can give you the floor.

**Professor José Medeiros:** Professor Antonio, I would like to please hear your questions first.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** First of all, about this fragmentation in the 2018 elections. I am thinking mainly about the Chamber of Deputies where – as well said by Edson – there was this deflation of the centre and, at the same time, a brutal turnover in favour of the extreme right, or of the right, plain and simple. This turnover has, in my view, created some anomalous and atypical situations. This is what I would like to discuss here. For example, the acceptance, in both houses, of a speakership being

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parliamentary parties in Brazil, retaining an average of 83 seats out of 513 from 1994-2014. Remarkably, the party was always in government regardless of the party during that 20-year period.

conceded to a party like the Democrats (DEM)<sup>2</sup>, that has only 29 out of 513 seats in the lower house. In normal conditions, a party with 29 MPs would never manage to win the speaker position. This is completely atypical. This creates a situation that, with this inexperience of a good chunk of the incumbent MPs, this makes them accept the leadership of someone who know how to “press the button” – this is the expression I have always used. As such, Rodrigo Maia<sup>3</sup> fits the bill perfectly: he know how to press the button. Now, his party is completely insignificant nowadays.

In the other hand, there is the absence of a governmental project. If the whole government plan is reduced to a pension reform – that was somewhat done by every government – that was in discussion also during the Temer Government (since the reform that Paulo Guedes wants will not happen). Not to mention the lack of consensus even among the military.

That being said, I would like to put the discussion of party fragmentation forward, because that allows an insignificant party to occupy the control of both houses of parliament. Also, this perception that there is no governmental project. It seems they have won “accidentally”, and that even they did not expect this to happen.

**Professor José Medeiros:** Let us listen to Edson since he is in Brasília inside of the National Congress. He not only has analytical capacity, but also a sensitive perception about the groups, the current political trends, and a better feel about how this legislature will be.

**Edson Sardinha:** Three months are past and so far the government has failed to construct a parliamentary base: the government is restricted, basically, to its own party, the Social Liberal Party (PSL), which is, in its own right, fragmented in internal divisions. Some of its figures were politically borne out of the pro-impeachment movements, and the social unrest of 2013 and 2015. There are many people from the military and others originating from the “School without Party<sup>4</sup>” movement. In this juncture, the president made a risky bet: his discourse was a departure from old practices and, to prove his point, he pointed party leaders in the lower and upper house that were first-term parliamentarians. This also creates noise for the government because these leaders do not have the *savoir-faire* of their more seasoned colleagues.

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<sup>2</sup> The DEM is one of the offshoots of the former ARENA (the government party during the years of the military dictatorship). Nowadays, the party composes what is called the “centrão”, or the big centre. The party was formerly known (1985-2007) as Liberal Front Party (PFL), and it has been in a stark right-wing position in economic policies since the re-democratization, being affiliated to the Centrist Democratic International together with the German CDU, the Mexican PAN, and the French Republicans.

<sup>3</sup> Rodrigo Maia (Santiago de Chile, 1970) is the current speaker of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. He is currently in his sixth term as a Congressman, being in office since 1999.

<sup>4</sup> The movement has become a crusade of conspiracy theorists and certain names in the Bolsonaro cabinet. The premise is that Brazilian public schools are rife with “Marxist indoctrination” and they should be taken back to teach a ‘neutral’ point of view. The movement is widely contested. See more here: <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2018/11/29/brazils-classrooms-become-a-battleground-in-a-culture-war>

In practice, the more seasoned politicians rule the houses because they have their established alliances. So, when these newcomers take office they are enthusiastic – some just to make noise, other with some policy intentions – but they cannot do much, be it because they are incapable, inexperienced, or because they lack the clout in congress.

So, it turns out Rodrigo Maia became a viable option for a government base reference because there was no other name. Bolsonaro had no other option inside his own party, or some closely aligned party to have an ally in that position. There was Maia, who was already presiding the house, and who allotted parliamentary positions to help in his re-election – but who now is having a tough time allocating all the positions he promised to his many allies. Anyhow, he managed to be re-elected as speaker with the support of over 15 parties even if he is from the DEM. Here in Brasília everybody knows he does not have a good relationship with the Minister Chief of Staff<sup>5</sup> Onyx Lorenzoni because, although they come from the same party, they have a long-standing dispute. Thus, in a certain way, Maia's election weakened Onyx, who, in principle, would be the government's main political articulator, the man who would intermediate the dialogue between the executive and legislative branches. He wound up not having such a leading role, however.

Onyx's revenge came with the election for President of the Senate. Onyx contributed for the election of a completely unimportant Senator (Davi Alcolumbre) – one with rare speeches, and very few bills written –, but one who, also with the support of the DEM, managed to rally the senators who did not want the return of Renan Calheiros<sup>6</sup> to the speakership of the Senate. Some Senators were new arrivals and they wanted to mark their position against the system that was established. The movement of promoting an open-vote policy for the Speakership was instrumental to guarantee Alcolumbre's victory; that is, votes were secret, but senators opened their vote collectively. If this was not done, Alcolumbre would probably not be elected.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Just a quick parenthesis. The election for Senate Speaker would deserve a chapter of its own in any conversation, because at some point 82 votes were counted where the possible total was 81. This went over any limit of good sense.

This reminds of contemporary political theory that works with the idea that institutions have limited elasticity. That is, you can stress its limits up to a point. If the pieces are more or less in its place, the institution can be stretched to a great tension. Of course none of us has a crystal ball, but the idea of a Chamber of Deputies being controlled by

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<sup>5</sup> In Brazil, the Chief of Staff position has a ministerial status. In Portuguese, the official title is “Ministro/a da Casa Civil” (Civil House Minister in the literal translation), but the position has the same attributions of an executive chief of staff.

<sup>6</sup> Renan Calheiros (Murici, 1955) has held some kind of public office continuously since 1979. He has been a Senator since 1995 and had a short stint as Justice Minister in 1998-1999. He occupied the Speaker of the Senate (or President of the Senate) position from 2013 to 2017 and was the frontrunner for re-election.

a man whose only merit is that he knows how to “press the button” and that he knows the formalities without having a large part to back him makes things very fragile. Thus, without a governmental parliamentary base, I wonder to what point we can stretch out these institutions or if it is going to break in the short run. I have never seen a Congress like this, fragmented and with its control in the hands of someone who does not have the control, or whose control is tenuous at best. And I am not even talking about the lack of projects coming from the Bolsonaro government.

**Edson Sardinha:** This is another reason why the legislative branch is paralysed. The leaders of the DEM are very engaged in distributing positions, but the government is slower in its own distribution. The positions that *are* being offered are often unwanted by parliamentarians. This is the great difficulty faced by Bolsonaro: he says he does not want to govern in the same way others have governed before, but he does not know how to govern. That is, he does not know how to do it differently. Despite his experience as a parliamentarian – he stayed in the lower chamber for almost 30 years – his posture is, to say the least, weird.

When it comes to the pension reform proposed by him, he says that this is now the Senate’s responsibility. He claims he has done his part, but in practice we know things do not work like this. The Government is represented by the President of the Republic and he *does* have the responsibility to get involved with congress, to articulate and make his agenda come through. Distributing positions does not necessarily amount to corruption. Power is often about this practice: sharing power, knowing how to negotiate. If you cannot do that, it is not going to pan out.

Recent history shows that presidents who were unable to that – such as Dilma<sup>7</sup> in her second tenure. Bolsonaro has adopted a discourse that is even more radical than other ex-presidents who were less keen to negotiate. Dilma, for example, although she did not have personality or was very effective in negotiating, she had ministers and other leaders who played the part. Now Bolsonaro comes with an intransigent discourse and does not know where he is headed.

He tried to negotiate with the parties who compose the so-called “Big Centre” (like DEM, the Social Democratic Party [PSD], and so on), but even those parties are not, today, keen on being part of the government. First because, as things stand, they are not in contention for the first echelon of government<sup>8</sup> positions. Also, they do not trust this government. They feel they are more powerful than the government itself, and that it was elected with a single-party and has not been able to widen its basis.

If you look at the Senate, for example, Bolsonaro’s party has only 4 out of 81 Senators. What support does the Government have there? Formally it has none, because, in there,

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<sup>7</sup> Dilma Vana Rousseff (Belo Horizonte, 1947) was Brazil’s president firstly from 2011-2014. Re-elected for a second term, she suffered a controversial impeachment process in 2016. In the 2018 elections, she ran for Senate in her home state Minas Gerais, but did not succeed.

<sup>8</sup> The first echelon or first tier of government positions are those ministries that are deemed as most important in Brazilian politics: economics, justice, foreign affairs, education, and the minister chief of staff position are all coveted and considered first echelon positions.

senators are either in opposition or self-declared independents, with the latter being the majority. How do you govern with such a Senate? You need to negotiate, converse, receive people. This is another criticism that has been directed to the Government: that he has not received parliamentarians not even for one meeting. Thus, parliamentarians react negatively. Even those that are affiliated to the President's party are complaining of how they are being treated by ministers. Many of these ministers also do not have a past in politics, so they do not know how to deal with MPs.

So, as you have said, we do not have a crystal ball to predict anything, but it is a government that has given worrying signals, it is a government that has itself as main opposition. That is, the very government is the originator of all major crises so far. In three months, the government has been handed over two defeats in the lower house, and its popularity – when compared to other governments in the same period – is quite low. Bolsonaro has to be very careful so this popularity drop does not become another asset for Congress if it eventually wants to get rid of him.

Nowadays the government does not have the full support of the market – that were very disappointed at him, especially with all of these dissensions. They managed to bring together a strong economic team, with liberal, market-friendly names, but market agents feel that the lack of articulation and command coming from the president is making this strong team fragile.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Several analysts consider Jair Bolsonaro to have originated from the lowest-of-clergies (he was not from the lower clergy<sup>9</sup>, he was of the lowest-of-clergies: was never a part of any committees or any internal groups in Congress that participated in debates of any sort). He also demonstrates a clear incapacity to understand that, for example, in a “coalitional presidentialism<sup>10</sup>”, the Chief of the Executive needs to negotiate with the Legislative branch. This “Frankenstein Monster” was created by the 1988 Constitution, and, until *it* changes, this is how it will work. He does not understand because he was never part of anything, he never set foot in a governmental palace to listen to a negotiation.

I believe that the whole problem is that, when Bolsonaro won the election, he brought with him the lowest-of-clergies that inhabited other areas of Congress. People devoid of a minimum capacity to or understanding of negotiation. Perhaps this is not an extreme situation as the one presided over by the late Severino Cavalcanti (see footnote 9) who, upon winning the Speakership of the Lower House, said he wanted the Directorship of Petrobras, the company that “drilled oil wells”. I am not saying we have reached such a low extreme – when there was a debauchery of distributing public posts – as proposed by Cavalcanti. However, I do agree with you that distributing positions, negotiating, is a

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<sup>9</sup> In Brazilian politics, a “lower clergy” MP is one who is not part of governmental appointed positions, is not on important Committees and, as a rule, does not yield much power vis-à-vis their peers. This changed a bit with the election of Progressive Party's (PP) Severino Cavalcanti (João Alfredo, 1930) to the speakership of the house in 2005, which marked a phenomenon called “the revolt of the lower clergy”.

<sup>10</sup> The term was first utilized by Political Scientist Sérgio Abranches to describe the political system in Brazil, characterized by a presidential system with an elevated amount of parties in congress that demands presidents to often act like Prime-Ministers vying for coalition partners.

part of politics, even as a product of the political system we have. Be that as it may, what can be demanded are people with more technical capacity. Or, perhaps, that you have, like Lula did in his government, the capacity of talking to *every* parliamentarian in office. A good whiskey at the Palácio do Planalto and he convinced everybody.

I remember having met some politicians of the right and the centre-right who were enamoured with Lula back in the day. It was very surprising coming from people I would never imagine acting in such a way. However, he had that which you talked about, that capacity to say: “look, let’s talk about this”. So, since Bolsonaro does not do that, since he does not distribute – or distributes very poorly – positions in government (it is not as bad as the Cavalcanti fiasco, but it does not go anywhere), this opens up space for the Military sector, who does not have a large amount of votes. There is an enormous quantity of generals in cabinet, and generals do not vote in the legislative – at least, not in the quantity he would like and that he needs.

**Edson Sardinha:** He always had this personality of not debating. Of not going to debates. He had a confrontational stance as an MP, but he never accepted diverging opinions. During the campaign as well. He was already dodging the televised debates and, after the attempt against his life, he did debate at all. So, he governs to his more fanatical base. There is a good chunk of his electorate that did not vote for him because they were in love with the prospect of having him as president, but because they wanted to defeat the PT. Today, many of these voters are disappointed at him, especially after seeing the Government’s incapacity. There was also a certain expectation that he would be more moderate as soon as he was elected, and that is not happening, he is repeating a lot of what he was already saying. He is being himself: a politician without proposals, without a project, with no capacity to talk, to listen to others, to compromise. Thus, in a certain way, what is happening was to be expected, but perhaps not to this extent. There was an expectation that these centre and centre-right parties would migrate to his supporting base, which did not happen. That is really hampering him.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** By the way, Edson, just as a joke we can say that he is, in the end, and much to the opposite of his more traditional counterparts, fulfilling his promises. He is doing absolutely nothing.

**Edson Sardinha:** Precisely.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** He is doing it; no one can complain (laughter).

**José Medeiros:** I am observing these ponderings as hypotheses, because here this is the most we can expect to do. There is no way to accurately describe what is really happening in the beginning of this new government.

Sometimes I wonder if I am not using my old analytical tools to understand a new reality that is now unfolding. If this is actually happening to me, it might be that I am not capable of pin-pointing the phenomenon that I am would like to understand. It is not about liking or disliking; agreeing or disagreeing, but understanding, truly, what is going on. I think that is our task.

So, for example, if we look at this matter of the distribution of positions to the groups mentioned by Edson: the financier, the religious, the military etc., this distribution was done in the first echelon of government. What happened was that the distribution of positions happened without parliamentary mediation and through large groups that supported and enabled the president's election.

We should not disregard the important support of parts of the armed forces for the new form of governance now being attempted. That is, in a situation of acute political crisis, in a scenario of profound social conflict, a cohesive military core would secure the government's permanence, as it is now happening in Venezuela. These are possibilities of political calculations that should not be discarded.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to see the strong support this government enjoys coming from the United States and Israel, two large players in global geopolitics. This can make a big difference in the conveyance of our internal politics.

It is also important to highlight the relevance of the military commitment with the current government. If this government fails, the legitimacy of our armed forces will also be compromised for, whether we want it or not, it re-entered the centre of our political struggle.

Coming back to the initial hypothesis, this matter of suffocating parliament can be seen as a part of the governing strategy. If it will work or not, we will see. The problem with this formula will be the parliamentarians' reaction, which can perceive that they are losing relevance.

The frailty of a large group of parliamentarians may lie in the uncertainty, especially when it comes to the reaction from large part of groups in society "organized through social media. An example of this is when the speaker of the house Rodrigo Maia acted brashly against the Justice Minister Sérgio Moro<sup>11</sup>, who was pressuring him to put forward his proposal about public safety. The repercussion in social networks – from this group that enabled Bolsonaro's election was immediate, and immediately Rodrigo Maia backed down.

So it is important to consider Bolsonaro's base of social support, who acts strongly in social media, and their significant weight in the current political process, as well as declarations given by generals.

I would like to hear from Edson his perceptions about some of these factors. The relationship among powers, and also this perception about the role of Parliament itself

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<sup>11</sup> Sérgio Moro (Maringá, 1972) was a local judge who became famous for being one of the central figures in the anti-corruption "Operation Car Wash". He was appointed as Justice Minister by Jair Bolsonaro late in 2018 few days after election results were in.

and the parties. Parliamentarians are important, but it seems political parties have lost some of their importance in this new political moment Brazil is living.

**Edson Sardinha:** There was an expectation that the president would govern not with the parties, but with the thematic caucuses, especially the evangelical Christians, the so-called “bullet caucus” (connected to the military industrial complex), and the ruralist caucus, the three largest benches in parliament. This has not come to fruition so far.

The evangelical caucus, for example, has internal rifts, there is a dispute for power there, and not everybody feels represented – see the case of the Minister Damares Alves (current minister of Family, Women and Human Rights). There is a group there who would prefer having the more important Education Ministry.

In the matter of agribusiness, you have the ruralists who are somewhat at odds with the Economics Ministry. They have a historical habit of policy-induced debt rollovers, of refinancing, of guaranteed margins – policies that the current Economics Ministry rejects. So, there is a certain tug-of-war, and this makes it difficult for Bolsonaro to attain support.

Finally, there is the “bullet caucus” that grew considerably in this legislature, but it still does not have the capacity to tilt the scales in passing a bill like the ruralists or the evangelicals do. That is, it remains involved in their own matter of security, while other benches have the capacity to overreach beyond its niches.

On the other hand, you are right when you say that there is something of a calculus coming from Bolsonaro. He always used the figure of an enemy in his speeches, and it has been and it always will be the left, but it also the Congress. He will pit the population, or at least his electorate, against the Congress: “oh, I am doing my part, but the Congress is not.”

I believe that the parties are weakened – also because of the number of parties (more than 30 in Congress) – and there is no party with a super number of parliamentarians, as we have had in the past with the (P)MDB, the PT, and the PFL. Today we might not have these large numbers, and this weakens parties for power becomes more pulverized. Despite that fact, parliamentarians still hold a lot of power.

As I was saying before, there are ministries connected to the military, the evangelicals, to Olavo de Carvalho<sup>12</sup>, to the financiers etc. However, to put his proposals through he will need the votes of those people in the legislative branch who are not feeling appreciated by the actions of this government.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Even those international supports that Bolsonaro wants, they are also very tenuous. They depend on political realities that do not necessarily work in the way he would like them to work. Thus, we come back to the problem that Edson called attention to: in the end, politics is what it always was, this retail

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<sup>12</sup> Olavo de Carvalho (Campinas, 1971) is a self-proclaimed conservative philosopher who nowadays yields much influence in defining governmental policies especially when it comes to education.

negotiation. And when I say retail, that is what I mean; each in their side of the bargain pulling to one's own side, to one's own party. Of course there is tension. On the one hand he wants to govern in a different fashion, but there is a reality that conflicts with that. These two factors may converge and form a third new thing, but none of us has a crystal ball.

**José Medeiros:** It is comprehensible that a completely new government does not understand the full functioning of the machine. There is a clash between what they wish the machine to do, and how the machine actually functions.

All of that is understandable. However, the deciding factor is whether the economy will get better in a very short-term or not. If employment will be generated and if there will be some relief to the lives of people. Another factor is if the government will have credibility when it comes to public safety.

The Government also has a base of popular support that should not be disregarded. Perhaps this is only around 25% of the population, but it is a significant number, because at present there is a fragmentation of popular preference. 25% today is not bad in such a divided country. Nowadays, no isolated political force has more than that.

The most important question for political stability at the moment is not about harmony with the legislative branch, but if the government will be capable or not to respond to the problems of security and unemployment. That is the "it" moment, because we have currently 13 million people unemployed.

We should not think that people were satisfied with the way Brazil was going before Bolsonaro's election. There was economic growth, high employment, especially during the Lula years. In 2014, during Dilma Rousseff's tenure we reached had only 5% of the economically active population unemployed. But the feeling of corruption and unsafety deconstructed these achievements.

To conclude, I would like to call attention to the possible consequences of the deepening of political struggle in course. For example, certain parts of society are already hypothesizing the fall of Bolsonaro. In this case, the presidency would be exerted by General Mourão, which could unravel a terrible process with grave risks for our still fragile democracy. Responsibility is necessary. We should not fall into this temptation, no matter how much we dislike President Bolsonaro.

We are in a moment where embarking in the deconstruction of a Bolsonaro Government will push Brazil to dreadful political times. Perhaps a man like Mourão would be the dream of the financier sector, or of groups like the Globo Broadcasting Group etc., but this would be a tremendous backslide for Brazil. Thus is the large responsibility that falls upon this political sector that is self-proclaimed more democratic, or is a left-wing opposition.

Caution is extremely necessary in the current stage of the game. Perhaps strengthening debate in parliament, strengthening parties, a more serene debate, more respect and rationality in discussions could be the fundamental weapons to distance Brazil from certain pitfalls. We cannot feed this wave of irrationality and messiah-like discourse that are recurrent in Brazilian politics.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** I would like to say something, but, unfortunately, the time we have is coming to an end. That said, I would like to ask you both for your final considerations so we can wrap-up this edition of the Forum. Also I would like to say that it is inevitable that you, Edson, should come for more editions. By the way I am seriously thinking in including you as one of the permanent members of the Forum.

**Edson Sardinha:** It would be an honour. I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to talk to and learn from you. I am always at your disposal. In fact, it is a very complicated and unpredictable moment, and this comes from many years, it is not now. We have been living crisis after crisis, one supersedes the other without us solving the previous crisis, and this has become a blob of crises in a moment of great uncertainty, a weak government, a malformed Congress that does not show to where it is headed, although it has this massive conservative base.

This Congress did not even have a successful “honeymoon” phase with the government, it was a very short one. As a rule, it usually lasts 100 days; but with 80 days you already had an awkward feeling among Rodrigo Maia, Bolsonaro and Sérgio Moro.

And this is not just between the Legislative and Executive branches. The Judiciary is also in a bad moment. Parliamentarians are now very brutish towards the Supreme Court. Anyhow, we still do not know what will be the Court’s reaction to this. They are the third force in the equation, but they have been very political for quite some time, influencing elections, political decisions... this is another factor for us to take into account: the role of the Supreme Court in all of this. Also, there is the matter of “Operation Car Wash” in all of this, because there is an elephant in the room among MPs. There is always that expectation: “will I be the next one?”. Even Rodrigo Maia is being investigated under Car Wash, so some news may come from that end, which would change the political climate decisively.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** José, your final considerations.

**José Medeiros:** My final considerations are just to thank Edson, because his participation seriously enriches our Forum. You are an analyst almost like a photographer: you highlight the central points of the frame, which is what we need to do analysis. I believe that today’s challenge is to have photographs that capture the elements composing reality so we can project trends with more certainty and, perhaps, more caution, so we can better prepare and position ourselves facing these possible scenarios. So, I once again thank you, Edson, for your participation at the International Forum of Ideas enriches this platform even further.

**Edson Sardinha:** I am the one who is thankful.

**José Medeiros:** I do not even have to compliment Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson because without him and the Federal University of Ouro Preto, none of this would exist.

**Edson Sardinha:** It is a pleasure to participate with you.

**Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** My best regards to everybody, and until the next time in our International Forum of Ideas.