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## **THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE JUNE 2013 PROTESTS AND THEIR REMNANTS**

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### **Resumo:**

Given the influence exerted on both Brazilian recent history and on mega sporting events governance, the comprehension of the June 2013 protests is key for those who intend to better understand their consequences and act upon the resulting scenarios. And the unveiling of their historical roots is particularly relevant if we really want to take on such tasks appropriately. In this vein, the paper presents the reconstruction of the processes that led to the June 2013 protests in Brazil, proposing a true "genealogy of the demonstrations cup".

# THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE JUNE 2013 PROTESTS AND THEIR REMNANTS

## INTRODUCTION

In early June 2013, Brazil was to once again host a major global football event. This would be the first in over 60 years. The Confederations Cup – a competition organised by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) as a final test for the staging of the Football World Cup – was scheduled to begin on June 15th. Expectations were high. The president of the Local Organising Committee for the World Cup said at the time, “The Confederations Cup is much more than our big dress rehearsal for the World Cup. The Festival of Champions is a chance to show the world we can deliver an unforgettable tournament for the fans, participants and the media” (FIFA, 2013).

Ultimately, the Confederations Cup indeed came to be an unforgettable tournament, but for very different reasons to those originally intended. As the competition proceeded, attention turned from what was happening inside the stadiums to what developed into Brazil’s largest wave of popular discontent in decades. In the space of three weeks, more than 2 million people took to the streets of around 350 Brazilian cities in what one national newspaper described as an “outbreak of demonstrations” (Manso and Burgarelli, 2013) to express their dissatisfaction with the political system and the insufficient provision of urban services, while also highlighting the contrasting high public expenditures on mega sporting events (Globo, 2013). On June 17th, as the Tahitian and Nigerian teams were playing in Belo Horizonte, demonstrators broke into the national parliament building in Brasília. Three days later, protesters started a fire in the headquarters of the Ministry of External Relations. In an attempt to calm the population, the president made a special statement which was broadcast on all the major TV networks. Soon referred to as the ‘demonstrations cup’, the unexpected protests that ran parallel to the football caught the world’s attention and, for a moment, dwarfed the football stars.

A few weeks later, most of the protests ceased. Nevertheless, the historical importance of the “demonstrations cup” goes way beyond that somewhat ephemeral disruption. Hitherto several studies had been showing how mega sporting events can be used to consolidate urban reconfigurations of a neoliberal character, based on instruments of commodification of space and of privatization of public assets (Andranovich, Burbank & Heying, 2001; Greene, 2003; Short, 2008). Often the ideological appeal of these events served to build a broad consensus around such projects, particularly through the disclosure

of images and discourses void of their inherent contradictions (Roche, 2000; Peck and Tickel, 2002; Hall, 2006). In many ways, such analysis has been confirmed by scholars dealing with most of the latest Olympic Games (Broudehoux, 2011; Hayes and Horne, 2011; Shin, 2012) and FIFA World Cups (Volker Eick, 2010; Bolsmann, 2012). But the Brazilian experience contradicted such previous findings. This has both impacted on how FIFA and the IOC choose bidders and how host city/country populations see mega sporting events, with several bids cancelled because of local protests and referenda in recent years (Kassens-Noor and Lauermann, 2017).

Not only this: the June 2013 protests have also shifted the tectonic plates of Brazilian politics, creating a watershed in the history of the country. Since then, public sphere changed rapidly and substantially. In the backdrop, social media interactions gradually became widespread in tandem with the erosion of the legitimacy of political institutions and professional politicians. In the foreground, Brazil has been through a deep economic crisis and political turmoil, with a fiercely contested presidential election in 2014 and its winner later impeached in 2016. Altogether, despite many contradictions, this process has foremost resulted in the emergence of ultraconservatism and the *déba*cle of the main left-wing and incumbent party, the Workers Party (PT), culminating more recently with the election of a far-right candidate, the pro-military dictatorship and reformed captain Jair Bolsonaro.

Given the influence exerted on both mega sporting events governance and on Brazilian recent history, the comprehension of the “demonstrations cup” is key for those who intend to better understand their consequences and act upon the respective resulting scenarios. And the unveiling of their historical roots is particularly relevant if we want to take on such tasks appropriately. In this vein, it is presented below the reconstruction of the processes that led to the June 2013 uprisings in Brazil. Or, in other words, the construction of a genealogy of the “demonstrations cup”.

## IMMEDIATE AND DEEPER CAUSES

The immediate cause of this historical uprising is well-known: on June 2nd, the Municipality of São Paulo hiked bus fares by 20 cents. The Movimento Passe Livre (hereafter MPL) – a young social movement, with autonomist inclinations, demanding free public transportation – initially reacted with protests on June 6th and 7th, demanding a reversal of the hike. These were relatively small demonstrations of no more than 2,000 people each. However, the MPL did manage to block the Avenida Paulista - the main city thoroughfare. The consequent disruption, and the clashes with the police in particular, caught the attention of social media users and of some mainstream commentators. From then on, momentum was built through a combination of heavy-handed and escalating police violence, increasing mainstream media attention and online engagement through social media and livestreaming. After larger demonstrations on June 11th and 13th, which also began to mobilise a few other cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, the movement reached its climax between June 17th and 20th, when the local governments of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro finally reversed bus fare hikes. From this point, the original demands

were widened to encompass much broader issues, with the number of demonstrators on June 20th reaching more than 1.5 million across the country (Solano, Manso and Novaes, 2014; Santini et al, 2017). Although the sequence of events discussed above has been widely known and hardly ever disputed, the same cannot be said about the deeper conditions that triggered the nation-wide demonstrations.

On the other hand, the multiple long-term triggers for the protests are much more complex than the few existing narratives have stated. The “demonstrations cup” was neither simply the result of an urban crisis (Maricato, 2013), nor of the mobilisation of social movements (MPL, 2013), nor of the claims for improvements in public services (Braga, 2013), nor of the erosion of the legitimacy of media and politicians (Lima, 2013), nor of the innovation brought by the internet (Sakamoto, 2013). Rather, the unique convergence of all these and other elements that made the ‘demonstrations cup’ possible. The multi-causality of the ‘demonstrations cup’ cannot be simplistically subsumed as a by-product of the success of the PT ‘inclusive’ policies either, as some authors have suggested (Ubide, 2013; Saad-filho, 2013; Haddad, 2017).

A much more complex genealogy is necessary, here defined as an “attempt to restore the conditions for the appearance of a singularity” - in our case, the ‘demonstrations cup’ – “born out of multiple determining elements of which it is not the product, but rather the effect” (Foucault, 2007, p. 64). Foucault emphasises that the genealogical approach does not take for granted “a principle of closure” in such historical processes - as the proposition of demonstrations inevitably being propelled by a rise in expectations driven by “inclusive policies” seems to suggest. Rather, they involve interactions between individuals or groups, as subjects who exercise agency. In other words, these are not processes which are decided a priori, but are instead contingent on agents’ actions. Bearing this in mind, the genealogy of the “demonstrations cup” can be summed up in three different phases, as shown below.

## FIRST GENEALOGICAL PHASE (LATE 1980’S TO MID-2000’S)

From the aftermath of the military dictatorship until the mid-2000s there were slow but continuous improvements in the socio-economic conditions of most of the population, underpinned by mild economic growth coupled with some intermittent income redistribution. Over the 1990s, the average annual growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (hereafter GDP) remained close to 1.7%, whilst the Gini index – which measures inequality of income – dropped from 63.3 in 1989 to 58.1 in 2002.

Concomitantly, some counter-hegemonic groups of civil society – i.e. movements who aim at disseminating their worldviews in such a way as to render them hegemonic in civil society, sometimes sympathetic to Marxist tendencies, but not limited to them, and often calling for direct participation in the State apparatus (Graeber, 2004; Day, 2006; Purcell, 2012)- gradually constructed inter-sectoral and inter-territorial networks. This trend has allowed cohesive collective actions demanding more participation in public policies,

eventually achieving relative success at different governmental scales. In practice, this meant a greater participation of social movements and associations in local policy councils, such as healthcare and education boards and the construction of participatory budgets, particularly fostered by local governments run by the then emergent PT. Later at the end of this period, with the PT winning presidential elections, this participatory ethos initially tended to be extended to the federal government, creating great expectations among grassroots movements.

Moreover, non-hegemonic groups – usually influenced by anarchism and autonomism and not aiming to become hegemonic, but to permanently resist domination through anti-hierarchic practices, and hence defending disavowal of any struggle for the State apparatus and for domination over other groups (Graeber, 2004; Day, 2006; Purcell, 2012)- began to grow under the inspiration of the international anti-globalization movements. The Seattle protests in 1999 particularly motivated Brazilian groups to get organised around the People's Global Action (PGA) – a network that brought together movements from all continents in order to resist globalization via direct action - and collaborate with anti-capitalist demonstrations in Europe and the USA. As such, a growing number of Global Days of Action were organised in several cities in Brazil in the year 2000.

However, the experience proved to be short-lived. In 2001 and 2002 the movement lost momentum, with the last attempts to revive PGA activities failing in early 2003 (Ortellado, 2004). Despite the dilution of the anti-globalization movement in Brazil, the brief experience of the Global Days of Action generated new exchanges between old and new activists, propelling several other local and national initiatives. In the midst of these new self-managed experimentations, two groups stood out due to their strength and longevity: the Centro de Mídia Independente (CMI) and the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) (Liberato, 2006). Whereas the former represented a new form of activism, based on the non-mediated self-expression of activists - which later became a particularly important feature of the 2013 protests - the latter was based on the promotion of transportation as a fundamental human right, which was later recognised as the initial spark for the “demonstrations cup”.

## SECOND GENEALOGICAL PHASE (MID-2000’S TO THE VERY EARLY 2010’S)

The second phase, stretching from the mid-2000’s to the first years of the 2010’s, involved an intensification of economic development - the average rate of GDP growth jumped to 3.3% in the 2000’s, a level that was maintained into the early 2010s (IPEADATA, 2014) - and greater redistribution of income, with the Gini index falling from 58.1 in 2002 to 52.6 in 2012. This has been combined with a rapid expansion of the domestic consumption market, helped by a more progressive minimum wage policy, a broader formalization of labour and regulatory changes that led to an increase in the supply of credit (ANEFAC, 2014). The combination of these conditions drove significant gains in purchasing power for a large part of the population.

However, as a consequence of this rapid insertion into the consumer market and of market-led urban policies, the already precarious infrastructure was heavily burdened, particularly transportation systems and housing supply, eroding the living conditions of most of the urban population and causing severe and generalized dissatisfaction. Car ownership more than doubled between 2001 and 2012 in the country whilst the number of motorcycles in the streets quadrupled (Rodrigues, 2013). Average commuting times increased rapidly and widely in the same period, with a quarter of the working population of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo taking more than a hour to get to their workplace in 2012 (Pereira and Schawanen, 2013; IPEA, 2013). There was also an abrupt rise in real estate prices, especially in the metropolises of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Recife, Belo Horizonte and Fortaleza. Between January 2008 and June 2013 the average price of rental accommodation increased by 88% in São Paulo and 131% in Rio de Janeiro whilst the national minimum wage only grew by 78 % (IPEADATA, 2014). Consequentially, the number of poor who spend more than a third of their income on rent increased 35% between 2007 and 2012 across the country (FJP, 2014), soaring the housing deficit indexes.

The same process of consumption incentives paved the way for the exponentialization of grievances through their unprecedented exposure in new communicational channels. The percentage of Brazilians 10 years of age or older with internet access increased from 20.9% to 46.5% between 2005 and 2011 (IBGE, 2013). This was accompanied by the rapid growth of mobile broadband access from 8.6 million in 2009 to 103.11 million in 2013 (MC, 2014). Following the rapid expansion of internet access, there was also an accelerated growth in access to the so-called social media. Between February 2011 and June 2013 alone, the number of Brazilian users of Facebook, for example, jumped from 10 million to 76 million , an increase of 660% (Veja, 2013).

This phenomenon presents quantitative and, above all, qualitative changes. Wider access to the internet and social media means that the expression of popular dissatisfaction is significantly less dependent upon mainstream media intermediaries, who historically played the role of gatekeepers for information dissemination in support of particular class interests. That does not mean that intermediation was automatically and fully eliminated by the internet but rather that new methods of appropriation and intermediation were still being elaborated by dominant sectors, albeit in a manner that then remained less defined that was the case for mainstream media .

Meanwhile, within the associational field, counter-hegemonic groups became increasingly disappointed with the limitations found in the participation mechanisms previously established by the State. Despite the innovations brought by the various forms of articulation between mobilising agents, the formation of new spaces for negotiation also tended to exacerbate tensions between the State and civil society, as the balance between autonomy and participation in negotiations with public officials became potentially delicate (Scherer-Warren, 2006). From a qualitative point of view, participation tended to be restricted to consultative arrangements, often with a small popular representation, and consultation processes transformed into formalities intended to legitimate decisions already taken (Omena de Melo, 2013). Also, there was increasing co-option of leaders of traditional unions and social movements, creating a division between leadership and the rank-and-file (Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011). The grassroots of social movements and NGOs that used to

demand the deepening of democracy in the direction of more participatory practices hence began to question outcomes. Their demands did not find a satisfactory answer in Government, which had itself compromised with neoliberalism and its corresponding urban entrepreneurship (Harvey, 1989). This disappointment is expressed, for instance, by the sharp decline in the number of participants in important new participatory institutional mechanisms, such as the National Conference of Cities, which went from 200,000 people in 2005 to 140,000 in 2010 .

Established non-hegemonic groups, in turn, who inherited the tradition of the late 1990's anti-globalisation movements, grew in importance, expanding their inter- and intra-network connections. In the face of concrete urban problems and unsatisfactory governmental answers, the MPL sought to combine autonomy and horizontal organisation with precise interventions into the functioning of the State through negotiations with public officials, demanding free bus pass to every citizen. This involved a departure from a radical disavowal of the State. Similarly, the CMI sought to act under the slogan "Hate the media? Be the media!", emphasizing methods of non-representation and direct action in the informational field, to strengthen the influence of social movements of various kinds – including counter-hegemonic - over public policies.

At the same time, a new generation of non-hegemonic groups also sprang up in 2011, introducing new methods of direct action inspired by another round of international mobilisations, such as the Occupy, Indignados and Arab Spring movements. The Brazilian version of the Occupy movement was formed mainly by young students and middle-class artists who used the internet to organise themselves and later assemble face-to-face meetings for consensual decision-making. Their purpose was to project anti-capitalist and non-institutional solutions to contemporary problems of representativeness, embodied in the phrase "direct democracy now!". This experience was, however, fleeting. By the beginning of 2012, Brazilian occupation camps had already been destroyed by the police. Despite not growing to more than a few thousand participants, the Brazilian Occupy movement was able to combine a growing dissatisfaction with the search for innovations. This was particularly augmented by the novelty of live broadcasts via the internet - also known as livestreaming. The transposition of the virtual and diffuse discontentment to an incipient political organisation focused on public squares contributed to other renewed local actions and their dissemination, such as the occupation of the entrance of the residence of the Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro in the first half of 2012 (Jornal do Brasil, 2012).

The development projects related to mega events were announced at the very end of this second phase, boosting both trends of socio-economic-urban changes and associational transformations. They became the "straw that broke the camel's back", as they deepened the general erosion of urban living standards by fueling the urban crisis with more real estate investment, cosmetic interventions, large-scale relocations of poor people to the metropolitan peripheries and very limited transportation projects. Furthermore, they also became a target around which several counter-hegemonic and non-hegemonic groups could converge, especially via the creation of new thematic networks, such as the Popular Committees for the World Cup, which managed to gather several social movements, NGOs and academic groups. The MPL and the CMI both collaborated with the Popular Committees. And several of those who had previously engaged with the failing participatory mechanisms

promoted by the State became members of the same committees. The main result of the work of thematic networks associated with mega sporting events was the collective and systematized dissemination of critical subjectivities on the projects designed for the World Cup and Olympics, which would conveniently merge with the general mood of dissatisfaction among the population caused by the erosion of living standards mentioned above.

## THIRD GENEALOGICAL PHASE (2012-2013)

It all led to the very short third phase, which is marked by an abrupt radicalization of part of the organised civil society between 2012 and the first half of 2013. This is illustrated by a rapid increase in the number of street protests promoted by the new thematic networks and union strikes, some of them directly targeted the construction of stadiums. For instance, only in the first five months of 2013, the Popular Committee for The World Cup and the Olympics of Rio de Janeiro doubled the total number of street demonstrations that the organisation had organised in the whole previous year, as shown in the table below (CPCMO-RJ, 2014). And registered annual union strikes skyrocketed from 446 to 873 in the first three years of the 2010's (DIEESE, 2013).

Activities	2011	2012	2013
Street protests	6	7	14 (6 before June)
Organization of public debates	1	7	3 (2 before June)
Publishing of documents and manifestos	3	18	7 (6 before June)
Meeting with government representatives and other institutions	2	7	3 (2 before June)
Educative actions in poor communities	3	2	4 (3 before June)

Table 1: Activities developed by the Popular Committee for the World Cup and the Olympics of Rio de Janeiro. (CPCMO-RJ, 2014)

Besides, if the mainstream media tended to temporarily lose its legitimacy as the main communicational channel thanks to the rapid dissemination of social media, institutionalized politics also tended to lose its legitimacy as the main political channel. In 2012, the number of people who declared themselves nonpartisan was unprecedented. Between 2007 and 2012, self-declared "nonpartisans" went from 33% to 56% of Brazilians



(Duailibe and Toledo, 2013). This indicated an acute delegitimation of the political parties as traditional links between the population's political demands and the political institutions.

Thus, the general prioritization of direct action and the delegitimation of institutions converged with the usual mobilisation of non-hegemonic groups, traditionally permeated by a "do it yourself" ethos. The MPL's demonstrations against the increase in bus fares - generally considered as the catalyst of the June protests - happened in a context particularly inflamed by the issues brought by mega sporting events, which were surrounded by an urban crisis and an intensified illegitimacy of government and media amongst various social movements and, more broadly, the population. The spread of new communication technologies, especially the video broadcasts via mobile telephony, which gained relevance since the occupations of public squares in 2011, expanded the repertoires of action and substantially increased the reach of the general collective escalation toward the June 2013 protests.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study of the seminal experience of the Brazilian "demonstrations cup" and its genealogy brings forward some relevant conclusions, which can be summed up in the three following points below:

- National and urban contexts matter: if we intend to better understand the latest changes related to the governance of FIFA and the IOC at a global level we have to look at the particularities of the national and local contexts and their interaction with such institutions. The combination of severe democratic, social and urban deficits in Brazil with the well-known transparency and legacy issues associated with mega sporting events may have played a key role in exposing the deep contradictions embedded in the relationships between host countries and global sports organisations. Until then they had not come to the surface, at least not with such intensity and clarity to the general public. This exposure may have resulted in the identification of the high risks and costs involved in hosting mega sporting events by many potential bidders and their populations. And that would have not been possible without the unique convergence of historical factors that were peculiar to the urban and national contexts in Brazil and that led to the "demonstrations cup".

- Considering multicausality is of essence to understand historical processes: it is not possible to explain highly complex phenomena such as the June 2013 protests in Brazil through monocausality. The genealogical approach, in this case, enabled a clearer view of the multiple factors that conformed the scenario in which the "demonstrations cup" took place. Rather than taking for granted simplistic explanations - such as the idea that people only protested after having their expectations risen thanks to the PT "inclusive policies", the scrutiny of long-term trends associated with urban, socio-economic, political and civic transformations provided much firmer ground for analysis.

•The genealogy of the “demonstrations cup” is essential to read and act upon the contemporary scenario in Brazil and beyond: most of the characteristics found at the historical roots of the June 2013 protests did not vanish after people left the streets. On the contrary, disillusion about failed development models and degraded urban living conditions – as much as their stark contrast with pharaonic white elephants left behind after mega-events; the erosion of links between political representatives and those represented by them; frustration due to unmet promises of greater participation of the population and movements in the design of public policies; and the growing usage of new technologies such as the internet and social media to express dissent and intervene politically; they all became a very relevant part of the current socio-political context. In fact, these issues are more present than ever in the public sphere. Addressing them is of essence for movements and political forces aiming at greater social justice both in the post-2013 Brazil and in the next host countries. Denying them, on the other hand, may only deepen the current crisis.

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