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3 Brazil’s popular awakening – June 2013

Accounting for the onset of a new cycle of contention

Mariana S. Mendes

Abstract

In a country that had not witnessed such a large-scale cycle of contention since 1992, the protests of June 2013 took everyone by surprise. What started as a relatively small protest against the rise of public transportation fares in São Paulo – organized by the Free Fare Movement (MPL) – rapidly escalated into a large wave of mobilization that swept Brazil from north to south. This article will take a close look at the onset of this new cycle of contention in order to trace how and why it came about. It will argue that the tactics of the MPL together with police repression – particularly its place and targets – were the triggering factors that provided the masses with a window of opportunity to join the protests and, in this process, publicly show their dissatisfaction with a variety of issues while (re)discovering the appeal of the streets. The June Journeys have shown that Brazil’s record in the reduction of social inequalities and economic growth was far from sufficient for a population that expected equally visible changes in the provision of public services, in a scenario where corruption and World Cup spending signaled that public money was not being efficiently managed.

Keywords: Brazil, June 2013, protests, Brazilian Spring, June Journeys, vinegar revolt, Free Fare Movement

3.1 Introduction

It came as a surprise to many that in June 2013, Brazil joined the group of states where massive popular uprisings swept the country from north to south. Its good economic performance over the previous decade left many analysts wondering where all the dissatisfaction had suddenly come from. When most of the world was being hit by the international financial crisis, Brazil’s economy was still growing, the minimum wage was increasing, and distributive social programs were contributing to reduce social inequalities and take millions out of poverty. Furthermore, the comparatively
extraordinarily high levels of government popularity prior to June 2013, together with a stable democratic regime, differentiated Brazil from the other dozens of countries where people took to the streets. The usual characterization (or, judging by the recent events, mischaracterization) of the Brazilian people as politically lethargic adds to this picture.

Indeed, in a country where hugely publicized corruption scandals – such as the “mensalão” affair in 2005 – failed to attract a substantial wave of popular indignation, a R$0.20 increase in public transportation fares would hardly have qualified as a possible trigger for large-scale protests. And yet it was. The June 6th mobilization of the Movimento Passe Livre – MPL (Free Fare Movement), gathering around 2,000 people in São Paulo – quickly spiraled into a massive social uprising, bringing more than 1 million people to the streets of Brazil on June 20th. Together with the Fora Collor movement of 1992 and the Diretas Já campaign of 1985, these were the largest demonstrations in Brazil’s history (now surpassed by more recent protests). But while the former two movements had one clear goal, the same cannot be said about the 2013 events. The cacophony of demands issued as the protests developed goes well beyond the reversal of the R$0.20 increase for which the MPL was initially fighting. This is why the June events – also known as June Journeys or Brazilian Spring (even though it was autumn in the southern hemisphere) – are best described as being catalyzed rather than caused by an increase in public transportation fares. After all, protests over this issue are far from new in Brazil – the MPL itself has been active since 2005 and took inspiration from previous revolts of the same type (such as Revolta do Buzú in Salvador, 2003; Revolta da Catraca in Florianópolis, 2004).

Despite being a resource-poor movement, the MPL proved to have an extraordinary capacity of mobilization, attaining levels of disruption hardly ever seen in the main streets of São Paulo. The transition from thousands to hundreds of thousands, however, appears to have been the direct result of disproportionate police repression and the diffusion of mobilizing calls through online platforms. Scenes of violence against the white middle class in the main business and shopping streets of São Paulo had an impact that the all-too-common scenes of violence in the peripheries do not have. Outrage was visible in both social and traditional media. The latter went

1 In March 2013, only 7 percent of the population considered that the government of Dilma Rousseff was doing a bad job, while 65 percent thought she was doing a good/very good one. These figures changed to 25 percent and 43 percent respectively during the month of June (Datafolha, 2013).
from a clearly hostile coverage of the protests to an almost sympathetic one, probably helping in the process of pouring people into the streets. The bigger the demonstrations became, the wider the breadth of the demands, generally targeting the poor quality of public services – such as health and education; the misuse of public money – particularly for mega-sporting events (the World Cup and the Olympics); corruption, police violence, and so on. The variety of demands is hardly surprising given the decentralized/uninstitutionalized way in which the protests came about, with social media networks and digital platforms proving to be, once more, a powerful mobilizing resource. But if repression played a crucial role in igniting the masses, this tells us little about the actual reasons why people took to the streets. The plurality of demands made clear that, far from being a grievance-free society, Brazilian people do have a lot to feel unsatisfied about.

In what follows, I will start by providing a brief overview of the socio-political context in Brazil over the years prior to 2013, highlighting that, beneath the apparent successes at the economic and social level, numerous anomalies remain. I will then proceed with a detailed account of the unfolding of the June events, focusing in particular on two key moments: (1) the start of the protests, to understand how a small movement like the MPL managed to gather thousands of people and provoke major disruptions in São Paulo; and (2) the period of massification of the demonstrations, in order to shed light on what brought so many people to the streets. In a subsequent section, I will focus on the goals and structure of the MPL, a movement without which the June Journeys would not have seen the light of day. I will finish by providing potential explanations for the timing and the emergence of these protests, putting into evidence the shortcomings of the main social movement theoretical approaches in this regard.

Besides a thorough examination of the existing literature, my considerations are based on media analysis, including traditional media – *Folha de São Paulo* (the newspaper with the highest circulation in Brazil) being the most extensively examined source – and social media, in particular the pages of the most active movements and groups. In addition, I carried out a dozen interviews, in a semi-structured fashion, with participants in the protests in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (including three active members of the MPL and two of Forúm de Lutas Contra o Aumento da Passagem [the most active group in Rio]). This was complemented by conversations with a few Brazilian academics and a journalist who accompanied the protests.
3.2 Brazil’s socio-political scenario: A real success story?

Brazil was, until recently, repeatedly depicted as a successful case of a fast-growing economy in which economic output had a largely positive effect in the development of the country as well as on the lives of many Brazilians. Indeed, the increase in the rate of economic growth has had a direct impact on the improvement of various social indicators such as the reduction of extreme poverty and income inequality, expansion of access to public health and education, and increases in life expectancy, among others. By way of example, extreme poverty declined from 16.4 percent in 1995 to 4.7 percent in 2009 while, in the same period, the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution scale saw an increase of about 127 percent in income (compared to an average of 54 percent for the top 20 percent) (Souza, 2012: 5-6). This was not only the direct result of favorable international circumstances that stimulated the Brazilian economy, but also of internal reforms in which a pro-poor growth strategy was purposely adopted (Souza, 2012). The real and significant increases in both the minimum wage and targeted social assistance benefits were part of this strategy. These changes in indicators were so significant that the Workers’ Party (hereafter PT [Partido dos Trabalhadores]) can proudly be credited with having transformed the class structure in Brazil. As shown in the graph below, the so-called “new middle class” – categorized officially as “class C” (any household with a per capita income between R$291 and R$1,019) – now represents over 50 percent of the population.

In short, one will not have a hard time finding the statistics that back up the picture of Brazil as a real success story. The confidence in this narrative will, however, depend on which aspects one chooses to emphasize. Indicators on the expansion of educational opportunities and better access to healthcare tell us little about the persistently poor quality of both public schools and the public healthcare system. The same applies to the focus on relative measures as opposed to absolute ones: while Brazil’s progress is uncontestable, a focus on the decrease in income inequality masks the fact that, in absolute terms, Brazil is still at the bottom of World Bank data on income disparities. Professor James Petras puts it bluntly: “The greatest indignity to those receiving subsistence handouts was to be told that, in this class-caste society, they were ‘middle class’ […] as they crawled home from hours in traffic, back from jobs whose monthly salary paid for one tennis match at an upscale country club” (Petras, 2013).

2 Based on data available between 2008 and 2013, Brazil ranks as the ninth most unequal country out of the 112 evaluated. See http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI.
Using income as the sole criterion for categorizing social classes has been a severely questioned method in Brazil precisely because it might be wrongly translated into life quality. Critics continuously point to the fact that the inclusion of a “new middle class” was based purely on a growth in income or subsidies and a consequent increase in access to consumer goods, a process that was not accompanied by a similar improvement in the quality of basic public services in areas such as health, education, transport, security, housing, or even leisure. As one interviewee has stated: “Brazil has now more people with means and access to consumer goods, but these same people take two hours to get to work, have their kids in low-quality schools, no access to good healthcare and few decent public spaces in the cities...” (Interview BR5).

For the economic journalist Patrick Cruz, the main problem lies with the quality rather than the quantity of public spending in Brazil. Despite having one of the highest tax rates in the world – the equivalent to 36 percent of its GDP – Brazil lags behind when it comes to the effective management of public resources. In a country where 9 percent of the GDP is directed to the health system, he says, it is hard to understand why hospital corridors continue to be overcrowded with people awaiting treatment (Cruz, 2013). Mismanagement and inefficiency seem to plague Brazil’s public administrative apparatus, a problem that can perhaps only compare to the diversion of funds. According to a study of the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo, it is estimated that corruption consumes between 1.38 and 2.3 percent of Brazil’s total GDP yearly (Cruz, 2013).
This, in turn, is connected to the all too common practices of patronage and patrimonialism in Brazilian politics and businesses – the former understood as the dispensing of favors and public resources to cultivate allies and the latter referring to elites’ perception of public resources as personal property (Montero, 2005). If the more recent Petrobras scandal has shaken Brazilian politics and society to the core – starting in 2014 and decisively contributing to the people continuously pouring into the streets afterwards –, in 2013 there were already several good illustrations of the pervasiveness of corruption, most notably the “mensalão” (“big monthly allowance”) scandal. Through this scheme, which first became public in 2005, large sums of public money were used to buy support for President Lula’s legislative program in Congress. It proved to be an endemic arrangement as it involved a total of nine parties and led to the resignation of several of the most important figures within the PT. Although it caused the Workers’ Party to fall from grace, Lula’s economic performance and social programs got the PT reelected in 2006 and again in 2010. For many of the PT’s supporters, however, it was the ultimate proof that, contrary to all that it had advocated before, the PT constituted no alternative to “politics as usual.”

This was particularly the case for vast segments of the Left, who saw with widespread disenchantment the transformation of the Workers’ Party from a large left-wing movement with socialist ideals into a catch-all mainstream party. By distancing itself from more militant sectors, significantly shortening its programmatic differences, making opportune alliances, and setting macroeconomic stability as its top priority, the PT practiced all that it had preached against before. As an ex-member of the party has put it, the PT seemed no longer to have a project for society, but only for power (César Benjamin, quoted in Flynn, 2005: 1250). Its traditional and distinctive emphasis on forms of participatory politics, leading to the creation of Councils of public policy and National Public Policy Conferences, has also been a source of disappointment since these mechanisms are generally deemed to be irrelevant. Even when it comes to social policies, its radical departure from the kind of structural reforms it used to advocate – land reform being a case in point – and its continuity with the previous incumbent government were widely noted (Hunter, 2008: 27). Some go as far as to suggest that the improvements in social indicators were part of a larger pre-Lula tendency, doubting whether there is something distinctively leftist to them (Samuels, 2008). The PT, however, has been generally credited with expanding social programs – such as Bolsa Família (a widely publicized conditional cash transfer program to the poorest families) – believed to be the source of the PT’s continuous electoral support (as it is now a party supported mostly by
the poorest layers of society, contrary to when it was initially elected). The fact that it has managed to take millions out of poverty without challenging the concentration of wealth in a few elites is a genius move for some and a source of disappointment for others.

In this scenario, it is far from surprising that the social movement scene in Brazil has witnessed an almost silent but significant shift. While during the 1980s and 1990s the PT gathered around itself the most significant trade unions and social movements – committed to the implementation of the ideal of participatory democracy at the institutional level – this relationship has naturally grown increasingly tense over the 2000s. On the one hand, Lula proved to be particularly efficient at coopting the major trade unions by granting them subsidies and positions inside the government.3 On the other, new kinds of social movements started to take over the streets (along with iconic ones that had always preferred non-institutionalized forms of protest, such as the Landless Workers Movement), claiming autonomy from institutionalized politics and attracting mostly the younger generation, who has no living memory of the period of democratization and its mass workers’ mobilization. Many of these belonged either to a “new social movement” (LGBTQ, feminist, environmentalist) or were akin to the anti-globalization movement and the idea that “another world is possible” (as in the case of the Free Fare Movement) (Abers, 2013). Part of an increasingly diversified social movement scene are also the voices coming from the periphery of large cities – emphasizing issues of race, police violence, housing, among others – or, on the other side of the political spectrum, conservative religious movements (Tatagiba, 2014). The June 2013 protests were a definitive confirmation of the greater potential of “anti-institutionalization” movements to attract larger numbers of people at a time when the PT’s detachment from the streets is more conspicuous than ever.

3.3 The June Journeys

First stage of the June Journeys

Rises of transportation fares in Brazil hardly ever come unchallenged. For every increase, small-scale protests triggered by diverse groups (mostly young people) are to be expected; even though they do not generally gather
massive popular support (at least prior to June 2013), there were a few cases in which the pressure of the protesters made political authorities revoke or postpone their decisions (e.g. Revolta do Busão in Natal, August 2012; Porto Alegre in March 2013). Scenes of violence between the police and the protesters accompanied by the burning of buses, tires, or garbage bins are not a new occurrence either. The discontentment with public transportation might partially be explained by the poor quality of public transportation services (often overcrowded), coupled with the fact that they are exceptionally high-priced: when adjusting public transportation fares to the minimum wage of different countries, São Paulo and Rio come up as the cities where the highest percentage of one’s income goes to public transportation (G1 Globo, 2013a). According to a Datafolha survey, 75 percent of the people in São Paulo consider public transportation overpriced, and 55 percent think their quality is “awful” (Oliveira, Costa, and Neto, 2013: 5-6).

In this light, the mobilization of the MPL in São Paulo and three other cities at the beginning of June, after the fare increased from R$3 to R$3.20, was far from unexpected. What perhaps was not predictable was its capacity to mobilize between 2,000 and 5,000 people in the first days of the protests, blocking the traffic in some of the most important avenues of São Paulo. Considering that it is a fairly small social movement, this was already quite an impressive achievement. The MPL took seriously the main slogan used in the rallies – _Se a tarifa não baixar, a cidade vai parar_ (“If the fare doesn’t go down, the city will stop”) – and called for almost consecutive protests, causing the police and the governor of São Paulo to lose patience. One of the key differences between these protests and the previously organized performances of the MPL lies in this tactic: to convene protests on an almost daily basis, without giving a truce to the police. This is an aspect pointed out by an activist who has been close to the MPL since its birth and who, in addition, highlights the difference in esthetics:

> At first the MPL went to the streets without much radicalism, with a more pacific posture, but in 2013 it adopted a more radicalized stance, which attracted the attention of the media and social networks. [...] There was no truce. Every other day there was a protest, between the 6th and the 13th of June – 4 acts, one bigger than the other. We used our own bodies to close the avenues of the city. [...] In Brazil, the police throws the first bomb at protesters and everyone runs away. This time we did not run away. The “black block” kind of esthetics was a great agitating and propagandistic factor (Interview BR3).
This, combined with the choice of a strategic and symbolic place – the main avenues of the city – was enough to create a level of disruption the MPL had not achieved before. In the words of an MPL member,

We stopped the main avenues of São Paulo for the first time. [...] We broke, literally and symbolically, some of the barriers imposed by the spatial segregation of the city. [...] The second protest took place in Marginal Pinheiros, a place that was never occupied by people before, only by cars, traffic, overcrowded buses and merchandise in circulation. There, we felt that it was possible to win, that the city could be not only of cars, but of people too. The symbolic element in the occupation of the Marginal in the process of resistance was essential to strengthen the struggle (Interview BR8).

Protests were organized by the MPL on the 6th, 7th, 11th and 13th of June, in what can be considered the first stage of the June Journeys. At this point, the demonstrations still had one specific aim – to revoke the fare increase – and were composed almost exclusively of young, educated people. The number of people protesting varied between 2,000-5,000 on the 6th of June and 12,000 on the 11th. The form of protest remained the same: the demonstrators would walk through the busiest avenues of the city, in a previously defined trajectory, creating as much traffic jam as possible while chanting and holding posters (stating, for example, “3.20 is robbery”; “for a public and decent transport”; “for a life without turnstiles”). The marches invariably ended in confrontations with the police while various objects were set on fire and bus, subway stations, shops, or banks vandalized by a few “agitators.” Even though the MPL distanced itself from those acts, traditional media and several politicians depicted the whole of the protesters as “vandals” or “criminals.” The major news outlets – Globo, Folha, and Estadão – invariably focused on confrontations with the police and vandalism: “Protesters vandalize the center of São Paulo” was the headline in Folha on June 12th, while Globo described the center of São Paulo as a “war zone” (Herdy, 2013). The following day the governor of São Paulo promised to be tougher against vandalism (Folha, 2013a). The editorial of Folha de S.Paulo leaves no doubt concerning its hostility towards the MPL, urging public powers to act:

Their demand of reversing the fare increase [...] is no more than an excuse, a vile excuse. These are young people predisposed to violence

4 According to estimates by the military police, Datafolha, and the MPL itself.
by a pseudo-revolutionary ideology, searching to take advantage of the general discontentment with the fare increase. Worse than that, only the central goal of this little group: free public transport. The unrealism of this banner already denotes the intention of vandalizing public property [...] It’s time to put a full stop to this. The municipality and the military police need to enforce the existing restrictions for the protests in Avenida Paulista (Folha, 2013b).

The demonstrations of June 13th would prove to be a game changer in this regard: because police repression was especially brutal and indiscriminate on this date, media coverage changed radically. The fact that there were a dozen journalists among the thousands of people injured and arrested has certainly contributed to this. The story of Giuliana Vallone – a journalist at Folha de S.Paulo who was shot in the eye with a rubber bullet at a moment in which there were no violent protests around her (and therefore no apparent reason for such an act) – was among the many videos and accounts that went viral on social media, denouncing both the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of violence and the arbitrariness of the detentions made. Particularly ludicrous in this regard was the fact that several people ended up being arrested for carrying vinegar with them (which allegedly attenuates the effect of tear gas), prompting all sorts of mocking cries on the web and during the following protests – “legalize vinegar,” “liberté, égalité, fraternité, vinaigré” and “V for Vinegar” were some of the mottos that made the June Journeys also known as the Vinegar Revolt.

An analysis of Folha de S.Paulo in the days following the June 13th protest is particularly instructive in detecting the change of mood and tone in regards to the protests. The focus was no longer on “vandals” but on the excessiveness of police violence and its consequences. Already on the 14th, an editorial piece had a radically different tone from the day before: “even rejecting vandalism, one should recognize that protests can strengthen democracy. It is necessary to guarantee that movements of protest occur without judging what motivates them” (Folha, 2013c). While the governor of São Paulo still tried to support the police, the mayor of the city criticized its actions and called for a meeting with the MPL. The day before the next protest (scheduled for June 17th), Folha’s Ombudsman wrote in the newspaper that Folha, together with other major news sources, had made a mistake when focusing only on the destruction caused by the protests, “not measuring which share of the protesters were there just to destroy and not giving due attention to all the others” (Folha, 2013d). The tremendous impact of the June 13th protests on social media was visible on the Facebook
page of the MPL, where hundreds of thousands of people signed up for the next protest on June 17th.

Even though the Brazilian military police has all too often shown itself to be violent and dysfunctional, it is used to applying such methods in territorial areas that are unworthy of media attention, most notably in the favelas. While police violence has been the focus of specific groups of activists for a long time, it rarely captured the attention of the masses. The difference, this time, was in space and targets. The heart of the city of São Paulo could not be more different from the areas where the military police is most used to acting. Avenida Paulista, where most of the protests took place, is the epicenter of business and consumerism for affluent classes. Passers-by who were affected by police violence, as well as most of the protesters, were white middle class, as opposed to the poor black people that are usually the target of the police. In an interview with a journalist who has covered the protests on the ground from day one, this difference is highlighted: “People got outraged because, this time, violence was exercised against the educated white middle class, which is not used to being repressed by the police [...]. Plus, it took place in a region that is not usually a scene of violence. [...] The whole of the white middle class felt victimized by the actions of the police, having a fundamental role in the next demonstrations” (Interview BR1).

Second stage of the June Journeys
As a result of excessive police repression, hundreds of thousands of people joined the demonstrations, widening their demands almost in the same proportion. While an estimated 5,000 people participated in the June 13th protest in São Paulo, the following demonstration – on June 17th – gathered 65,000 people in São Paulo and 100,000 in Rio de Janeiro, apart from a couple of thousand in other Brazilian cities. São Paulo was no longer the epicenter of the protests, which rapidly spread to every single Brazilian state capital, with Rio now taking the lead in the hundreds of thousands pouring onto the streets. Protests reached their peak on the 20th of June, one day after the mayors of São Paulo and Rio announced the revocation of the increase in public transportation fares, with almost 1,500,000 people demonstrating in more than 100 cities.

Beginning on June 17th, the protests took on a life of their own in the sense that, far from being controlled by the MPL or any other group/movement, they became exceptionally diffuse in organizational and spatial terms. Contributing to this was the fact that social media played a pivotal role as a mobilizing tool. Based on IBOPE’s data (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics), 62 percent of protesters learned about the demonstrations
through Facebook, and 75 percent used social networks to call other people to the protests. The fact that 46 percent had never participated in protests before (IBOPE, 2013) attests to the inclusive potential of “digitally enabled action networks.”

Indeed, following Bennett and Segerberg (2012), the second stage of the June 2013 events seems to have followed a “logic of connective action” more than the traditional logic of collective action, in the sense that technology platforms took the conventional place of established political organizations and assumed a preeminent role in mediating collective action. This contrast is consequential because, as Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argue, self-organizing digital networks (as opposed to organizationally brokered networks) grant room for the development of “personal action frames” and therefore have a greater potential for larger and more inclusive action, capable of scaling up more quickly and more flexible in terms of moving political targets and bridging different issues. Because, under this logic, action is not organized based on group identity and membership in previously established networks but rather forged through loose digital networks, the potential for personalization and inclusiveness is greater.

This was clearly reflected in the number of people pouring into the streets as well as in their broad range of demands, visible in the countless banners that thousands or hundreds of thousands of individuals drafted in their homes and brought to the streets. Despite their large diversity,
a significant share of them were in fact related to the management of public money and the quality of public services (the basic idea being that the political class – for the most part corrupt – is not using public money as it should). This was visible in the thousands of banners criticizing the diversion of public funds, the excessive spending for the World Cup, and the poor quality of the health and education systems (e.g. “We want hospitals and schools in FIFA standards,” “There is money for stadiums but not for education,” “If your son gets sick, take him to the stadium,” “If robbery does not stop, we will stop Brazil,” “Where does taxpayers’ money go to?”). When IBOPE asked the protesters, on June 20th, for the three main reasons that made them participate in the demonstrations, the most commonly mentioned were the following: (i) public transportation issues (mentioned by over 53% of the interviewees); (2) corruption/diversion of public funds (49%); (3) issues related to the health system (37%); (4) excessive spending on the World Cup (31%); and (5) concerns related to the education system (30%), among several others that did not achieve such high percentages (G1 Globo, 2013b). One needs to see these results in the context of the protests of June 20th, however, which is probably the point at which the breadth of the demands was larger. A difference of a few days in the administration of the surveys might have changed the results quite substantially: even though we cannot directly compare IBOPE’s survey with any other (since it was conducted in eight state capitals while the Datafolha surveys were restricted to São Paulo), it is quite interesting to see that three days earlier (June 17th) the São Paulo protesters hardly mentioned the costs of the World Cup or any issue related to the education and healthcare systems. At this point, the increase in bus fares was the most commonly mentioned demand (56%), followed by corruption (40%), police violence (31%), dissatisfaction with politicians (24%), and better quality transport (27%) (Datafolha, 2013).

The heterogeneity of demands also reflects the diversity of participants. While at the start it was clear that the demands were associated with a left-wing agenda (the MPL itself recognizes and it is well-known that many of its members are part of far left-wing groups), the magnification of the protests turned them into what Singer (2013: 34) defines as a “political rainbow.” For members of the MPL and several analysts/academics, this was part of a purposive attempt of the media and right-wing sectors to deradicalize the protests and bring them closer to their own conservative agendas (focused on corruption inside the PT). It seems to me that, no matter how influential their role, the enormous amplification of the protests through more or less decentralized means would almost inevitably lead to a diversification of
demands, especially considering that, at the time, there were more resonant issues in the country’s political scene than the transportation fare. Moreover, many of the demands might actually not be as out of context as it seems if one takes into account that the complaints initially made about public transportation – overpriced, offering poor service, badly managed by an oligarchy – are the same for other public services.

In fact, it is interesting to note how the most commonly cited demands match (or not) what Brazilians perceive as the main problems of the country. The quality of the health system has been at the top of Brazilians’ major concerns since 2008. In December 2012, 40 percent of Brazilians ranked it as the number one problem in the country, way above the second most commonly referenced problem (violence and security, indicated by 20 percent). It is hardly surprising, then, that it appeared as one of the main demands at one point, together with the quality of the educational system, which on average ranked as the third biggest source of anxiety from 2008 to 2013 (oscillating between 7 and 13 percent). Interestingly, corruption – which according to the above-mentioned surveys was the second most prominent issue in the 2013 protests – was not placed as highly on Brazilians’ list of concerns, varying between 4 and 7 percent before the protests. Tellingly, it went from the fifth to the third most often mentioned problem right after the biggest demonstrations in June. Because the “mensalão” trial was taking place beginning in August 2012, the corruption theme was often on the news and therefore ripe for salience-increasing effects. Moreover, corruption and inadequate spending in infrastructure for the World Cup were often closely associated. The latter was a particularly prominent theme in June 2013 (one year before the World Cup) since the Confederations Cup (a sort of World Cup rehearsal) took place at the same time as the protests and transformed the stadiums where matches were being played into an additional space for protests.

One should, however, be cautious not to overestimate the preciseness and fragmentation of people’s motivations to join the protests. Almost from the beginning of the demonstrations, there was a call for people to “come to the streets” and, particularly after June 13th, to show their overall dissatisfaction. The general feeling was that these were times of change, that it was time for people to take their own destinies in their hands and therefore come to the streets, fight for their rights, and build a better country, while sending a powerful message to political elites. Some of the most popular chants and banners simply said, “Come to the streets,” “The giant woke up,” “We are out of Facebook,” “Sorry for the inconvenience, we are changing Brazil,” or “We closed the streets to open new ways.” Vem pra rua (“Come to the streets”) and
The giant woke up (“The giant woke up”) were also two of the most popular Facebook pages created at the time, with the purpose of publicizing new protests and keeping “netizens” updated as to what was happening in the streets. This is to say that the act of protesting in itself – i.e., publicly showing dissatisfaction – might have been an end in itself for many.

Another important feature of the second stage of the June Journeys was the general rejection of political parties, a clear symptom of the rejection of the political class. Although it was possible to spot far left-wing parties from the beginning, hostility towards the presence of political parties in the demonstrations grew in the same proportion as the protests. This was visible not only in the treatment of party militants by some of the protesters (to the point of flag-burning and physical harassment), but most notably in the various banners denoting people’s discontentment with politics – “without parties,” “no right, no left, I just want to go ahead,” or “parties do not represent us” were some of the messages often heard. According to an IBOPE survey, 89 percent of the protesters said they did not feel represented by any political party (96 percent also declared lack of party affiliation, even though 61 percent said they were very interested in politics) (IBOPE, 2013).

The occupation of spaces representative of political power – such as the rooftop of the Brazilian Congress in Brasília on the 17th of June – is also quite symbolic in this regard. The rejection of the political class contrasted heavily with the nationalist tone that the protest acquired during this stage, both rhetorically and visually. The constant demonstrations of national sentiment, embodied in the widespread presence of Brazilian flags or Brazilian t-shirts, served to reinforce the media narrative (highly criticized by MPL members) that there were several types of protesters: the troublemakers (dressed in black), the partisans (with red flags), and the pacifists/patriots (carrying the national flag) (Tatagiba, 2014).

**Figure 3.3  Public perceptions of Brazil’s main problems**

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Third stage of the June Journeys
In a third and final stage – roughly corresponding to the last nine days of June – the number of people on the streets decreased quite significantly, even though it continued to be much higher than anyone would ever have expected before the start of the June Journeys. The distinctive feature of this stage was, besides the declining numbers of people, the fragmentation of the protest in terms of its targets, which were now quite more specific. This is the case of the mobilizations (1) against the PEC 37 – a project of constitutional amendment that would limit the powers of public prosecutors, specifically regarding the diversion of funds – overturned by Congress on June 25th; (2) against the legislative project “cura gay” (gay cure) – allowing psychologists to “treat” homosexuality – also vetoed; (3) denouncing political figures who were accused of corruption, such as the president of the Senate, Renan Calheiros, or the governor of Rio, Sérgio Cabral; (4) as well as the continuous protests against excessive spending with the World Cup taking place in the various cities where the Confederations Cup was being played. Moreover, the protests against the increase in public transport fares continued in several cities where they had not been revoked yet.

In total, as a result of the wave of mobilizations, more than one hundred Brazilian cities saw their public transport fares reduced, a major victory for the MPL and for the June Journeys in general. Although the President of Brazil was criticized for taking too long to react to the events, Rousseff handled them with political ability. Playing with the frame “the giant woke up,” she stated on June 18th “Brazil woke up stronger today. [...] The magnitude of the protests attests to the energy of our democracy, to the strength of the voices in the streets”, “Our government is listening to the voices of change. We are committed and engaged with social transformation. [...] People want more and so do we” (Mendes, 2013). In a more elaborate and longer speech, on June 21st, she promised to take advantage of the strength of the protests to produce more changes, proposing the elaboration of a National Plan of Urban Mobility and promising to make use of oil royalties to fund education. Significantly, the Brazilian Senate approved, on June 26th, a bill that increased the punishment for the crime of corruption, which is now considered a “heinous crime” (Neri, 2013). On June 24th, after meeting with state governors and the mayors of major cities, Dilma proposed five “national pacts” – (1) on fiscal responsibility, (2) political reform, (3) health, (4) transport and (5) education (Ladeira, 2013). One of the most significant was perhaps the call for a plebiscite on political reform, which intended to restructure the electoral system as well as the rules for party campaign financing; Congress, however, has continuously obstructed any significant
changes in this regard. Advances were produced mostly in the transport and education fields – with the apparent increase in public funds directed to both of them – and in the health sector, with the creation of the program “More Doctors,” increasing the number of health professionals and redirecting them to peripheral and rural areas.

Profile of the protesters
When it comes to the profile of the protesters, surveys clearly show that young, educated people were overrepresented. As this is the typical profile of most activists of the MPL, it is hardly surprising that this was the case at the beginning of the June Journeys. However, once mobilization expanded, and even though the heterogeneity of the demonstrators increased, this was still the dominant profile: on June 20th, about 63 percent of protesters were less than 30 years old, 52 percent were students, and 43 percent had completed a university degree (only 8 percent had not finished high school, while the remaining 49 percent had either completed it or were enrolled in university). The extent of educated people’s participation becomes even more evident when considering that, in 2010, only 8 percent of the Brazilian population had a university degree (Singer, 2013: 28).

Another characteristic that is frequently mentioned with a mix of astonishment and irony is the predominantly middle-class composition of the contenders, which raised doubts as to whether they even made use of public transport. An analysis of their family income suggests, nonetheless, a more complex picture: 15 percent have a low income (up to two minimum wages); 30 percent have a family income between two and five minimum wages; 26 percent get between five and ten minimum wages; and 23 percent are above ten minimum wages. Although there is indeed a predominance of the middle class (equally balanced between lower-middle and upper-middle class), the presence of the extremes is not marginal, a phenomenon especially significant when considering that in Brazil protests tend to be class-specific. Singer (2013: 32) goes so far as to talk about an “intersection of classes,” although admitting that the sub-proletariat is virtually absent from the protests. Indeed, if one considers that, in 2010, 65 percent of Brazilians had an income of up to two minimum wages and only 9.2 percent were above five minimum wages (UOL, 2012), the overrepresentation of the middle and upper classes appears to be massive. There is, however, a

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6 The minimum wage in Brazil is now fixed at R$724, the equivalent of €246.
world apart between the working-class families occupying the lower edge of the middle-class spectrum and the traditional bourgeoisie on the other end. Similarly to the left-right cleavage, the variety of demands appears to run roughly along the class cleavage – according to Ann Mische, those who have recently edged into the lower end of the middle class “are still feeling the strain of precarious infrastructure and ragged public services, as well as general insecurity and mounting urban violence. They want more effective state administration of services such as transportation, health care and education” – quite the opposite of the high bourgeoisie, who complained mostly about “high taxes, corruption, and swollen government spending. This sector wants less state, not more state” (Mische, 2013).

3.4 The Free Fare Movement (MPL)

Even though the June protests went quite beyond the control of the MPL in their second stage, it is fairly safe to say that Brazil would not have “woken up” if it were not for this movement. Even though it has officially existed since 2005, during June 2013 it gained enormous notoriety. While some of its members were utterly astounded by the result of their actions, others insisted that it was the product of the great amount of work they had done over the years. Indeed, an aspect that was constantly mentioned by members of the MPL was the importance, on the one hand, of the “grassroots” work they had done in schools and neighborhoods (in which they present and problematize the issue of transportation and insert it in wider debates connecting capitalism, urbanization, and social rights) and, on the other hand, the many initiatives of collaboration with other social movements dealing with issues such as housing, access to healthcare, or workers’ rights. The articulation with such movements together with its “grassroots work” seems to account for a large part of the MPL’s initial mobilizing capacity in the first days of June. In the words of an MPL activist, “in our first act in June, a lot of faces were known to us, from the innumerous schools, occupations and other initiatives of the movement, which were not a matter of dissemination on Facebook but rather of face-to-face contact” (Interview BR4).

Founded in a plenary session of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, the movement remains faithful to the principle that “another world is possible.” In particular, it fights for transportation that is, in their own words, “truly public,” i.e., that attends to the needs of the population and not to the profit of those who manage it. With an evidently anti-capitalist tone,
the MPL situates itself among the ensemble of urban social movements that fight against the urban exclusion of the poor. It campaigns for a “life without turnstiles” because these are considered to be a discriminatory physical barrier between those who can pay to circulate in the city and those who cannot (MPL, 2013a). Putting into evidence that the price of public transportation is prohibitive for the poorest layers of society, perpetuating old patterns of social exclusion, the MPL strives for a change in the general perception of what public transport should be – a right and not a merchandise – and which purpose it should serve – mobility for everyone. As its members constantly emphasize, free public transport is a right that enables other rights since it is needed to access other public services such as hospitals or schools. In this sense, the “zero fare” (Tarifa Zero) goal is not an end in itself but a means to ensure mobility and, ultimately, to return the urban space to the people who cannot make full use of it.

The MPL’s critique of the public transport system comes at a time of explosive automobile sales in Brazil, encouraged by the wider availability of credit and tax breaks to the domestic automobile industry (Saad-Filho and Morais, 2014: 241). This has led to major traffic gridlocks in large cities, which were not accompanied by any significant investment in collective transportation, increasingly in the hands of private initiative. MPL’s critique is therefore not only a matter of having a free and better public transport but also a plea for a more efficient system of circulation and mobility. This is a particularly pressing need in a city like São Paulo, where traffic jams rank among the worst in the world.

In terms of its own structure, the MPL is guided by four basic principles: (1) *autonomy*, meaning that it is self-managed and does not accept external financing; (2) *independence* from political parties, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and other institutions; (3) *horizontality* in the sense that it is a leaderless movement in which decisions are taken collectively; and (4) *non-partisanship* (different from anti-partisanship), meaning that parties are not allowed to participate in the MPL, while its individual members (as individuals and not as representatives of the parties) are. The various MPL local collectives, spread over several Brazilian cities, are also independent among themselves (provided that they respect their charter of principles). According to the movement, the decentralized and horizontal manner in which it is structured is a way to rehearse a new type of organization for public transport, the city, and the whole of society.

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8 “Carta de principios.” http://saopaulo.mpl.org.br/apresentacao/carta-de-principios/.
Ma riana S. Mende

(MPL, 2013b). Its project is therefore clearly inspired by libertarian socialist ideals and so are its methods: the MPL privileges “direct action,” i.e., to make politics by taking to the streets rather than using institutionalized settings. The city is not only seen as a goal, but it is also used as a weapon of disruption: knowing that the blockage of a street is enough to compromise its whole circulation, the MPL takes special advantage of this tactic, usually burning tires and turnstiles so as to halt traffic.

Knowing that the “zero fare” is an ambitious goal, the MPL also sets short-term priorities – such as the revocation of fare increases – while at the same time gaining enough visibility to promote its long-term goal. As one member put it, while a few years ago everyone would say they were insane, nowadays the idea of free public transport is out there, being debated in the media and civil society (Roda Viva, 2013): “The viability of the ‘zero fare’ was never as discussed as today; there is a proposal for a constitutional amendment that includes transport as a social right and there’s more and more groups and movements fighting to improve this sector” (Interview BR8). The fact that the MPL chooses to focus solely on the transport issue, and not on the many other ways through which social exclusion is perpetuated, is perhaps part of the tactic to be a “concrete utopian.” This is an opinion apparently shared by the renowned philosopher Vladimir Safatle, who states that “instead of presenting general proposals such as the end of capitalism, the MPL opts to touch upon one specific symptom that shows the irrationality of the entire system” (Weiner, 2014b). After all, free public transport would mean much more than that. MPL activists know better than anyone else that to achieve a “zero fare” would be to successfully subvert the current mercantile system and to privilege a different set of values, opening the way for the extension of similar demands to other public services.

3.5 A tentative explanation of the giant’s awakening

The spark that started the fire
A detailed overview of the June Journeys shows that the tactics of the MPL, followed by excessive police repression, were the key precipitating events that transformed what appears as a large dose of latent discontentment into one of the biggest waves of protest Brazil has ever experienced. One aspect that everyone seems to agree upon (interviewees and analysts alike) is that the fare increase and related protests were only the straw that broke the camel’s back. In other words, the various reasons for people’s discontentment were mostly not new. The levels of disruptiveness reached during the first
demonstrations and the images of disproportionate repression – hardly ever seen in the main streets of São Paulo – ignited and added to people’s sense of dissatisfaction. The next demonstrations (scheduled ahead by the MPL) provided a window of opportunity for hundreds of thousands to show their solidarity with the movement and publicly display their dissatisfaction too. In other words, while many of the grievances were not new, the actions of the MPL provided the masses with an appropriate setting to publicly express them, showing that the streets are a privileged space for voicing. Scheduling the next protest for the 17th of June – four days after the events of June 13th – was strategic in giving people and social and traditional media the time to prepare for the next demonstration. Police violence was key in increasing the salience of people’s grievances and convincing hundreds of thousands to join a movement that suddenly was not all about violence but a victim of violence. In this regard, the composition of the people affected by violence and the space in which it took place significantly contributed to produce the shock waves that reverberated through Brazil’s society. In addition, the development of “digitally enabled action networks” contributed to expand the basis of participation way beyond the initial MPL network, enabling the involvement of many who had never participated in protests before and who benefited from great freedom in the choice of targets and issues. The feeling that it was finally time for people to come to the streets and show political elites that the masses are “awake” and dissatisfied might do the rest in explaining the continuous growth of the protests during their second stage.

In addition to this, there are two temporal events in June 2013 that might have made a difference in attracting people to the streets. The first was the beginning of the Confederations Cup, opening the cycle of mega-sporting events in Brazil. In fact, the first game of the Cup was played only two days after the brutal events of June 13th and, even though on a smaller scale than the latter, the use of flash bombs and tear gas also injured dozens of people who protested outside the stadium against World Cup expenditures. This might have contributed to increase the sentiment of popular anger that would explode from the 17th onwards. Moreover, and even though there were already civil society groups doing an important job in monitoring public spending and denouncing abuses in World Cup-related works, the outset of the mega-events gave these issues a new visibility. As one famous Brazilian journalist points out, the magnitude of the stadiums that were being built and inaugurated at the time caused a big impression on people (Weiner, 2014a).

The second event that is impossible to miss when it comes to the timing of the Brazilian June Journeys is the fact that they started only a few days
after the onset of the Taksim Gezi Park protests in Turkey. Although I do not intend to establish a direct causal link between the two – it is fair to say that the MPL would have protested against the fare increase anyway – it is possible that the uprising in Turkey has encouraged and strengthened mobilization in Brazil or, using academic jargon, it might have resonated. This is the opinion of the political scientist Pedro Arruda, who asserted that “the Arab Spring and the events in Turkey stimulated the imaginary of young people” (Sobrinho and Peixoto, 2013). Banners stating “Turkey is here” or “Brazil will become another Turkey” could indeed be spotted during the protests. The MPL itself writes that these revolts provided a source of inspiration for its fight, which is visible in one of its chants: “if even Mubarak fell, there won’t be a fare that won’t fall” (MPL, 2013b).

This, in my opinion, is a more accurate story than any account social movement theories could back up. When looking at the conditions of the political environment at the time, they all seem contrary to the predictions of the political opportunity structure model since there were not any significant changes in institutional openness, elite divisions, or availability of allies. If anything, the political system was seen as closed and, rather than seeking allies, the protesters tried to distance themselves from traditional means of representation. The one dimension of the political process model that has unquestionably played a role in the June Journeys is the one referring to the expansion or contraction of opportunities as a result of changes in the repressive apparatus of the state. But even here, the literature is not entirely clear when it comes to the effects of repression on mobilization since there are contradictory empirical examples (the so-called “repression/protest” paradox). Brazil’s case, however, clearly belongs to the category in which large-scale and indiscriminate repression ended up backfiring, which is only natural when looking at its context. In a democratic state in which the masses are aware that further repression will only damage the image of the police and the government, people did not fear expressing their outrage.

As for the resource mobilization theoretical approach, the Brazilian case adds to the list of examples providing evidence that traditional mobilizing resources – such as money, activists, or organization – need no longer play a central role, and what Bennett and Segerberg (2012) termed “connective action” is replacing traditional forms of collective action. Social media – with all their advantages in terms of organization, personalization, inclusiveness, and flexibility – proved to be a powerful mobilizing resource, particularly when the protests transitioned from the first to the second stage. The initial capacity of mobilization of the MPL is already astounding given that it is a resource-poor organization, with no more than a few dozen activists.
Moreover, as Roman (2013: 17) has pointed out, it is remarkable that “Brazil has unions and social movements of impressive strength in both organization and membership size whose efforts at mass mobilization have never managed to reach such a scale.”

Last but not least, in terms of social movement theory, Roman (2013) argues that the use of universalistic frames (compatible with conditions of weak political polarization) was crucial for the growth of the movement. While it is hard to deny that the catch-all appeal of the anti-politics or anti-corruption frames might have contributed to attract such large numbers, it is also hard to argue for a causal effect. Looking attentively at the events, the extension of the range of demands comes together with the increase in the number of protesters, rather than preceding it. In addition, none of the issues in vogue was particularly new; demonstrations on corruption issues, the use of public money, or the quality of public services are not exactly a novelty in Brazil’s protest scene. In other words, there were previous instances in which those same frames were used and yet did not metamorphose into a mass movement.

Why was the prairie ready to burn?

All that has been mentioned so far tells us only about the timing of mobilization, i.e., about the reasons why Brazilian’s latent discontentment had suddenly and so powerfully come to the surface in June 2013. It tells us little, however, about where all the discontentment came from. In other words, and to paraphrase a famous analogy, even though a spark can start a fire, it cannot explain it; the explanation must lie in the conditions in which the spark found the prairie. Why, then, was the prairie ready to burn?

A review of the already quite burgeoning literature on the issue points to one deeper explanation, based on a perceived gap between the state and society – i.e., a disconnection between political structures and the people they allegedly represent, anchored on the commonly held idea that political parties are more concerned with looking after themselves than with society as a whole (Nogueira, 2013; Nobre, 2013; Saad-Filho and Morais, 2014). Marcelo Nobre (2013), a philosopher and professor at the State University of Campinas, sees the protests as a revolt for the opening of channels between society and the political system, which he describes as having become more and more blind to popular demands over the years. For Werneck Vianna, a Brazilian political scientist, the practice of “coalition presidentialism” is to be blamed – the constant give-and-take among parties, with the constitution of alliances regardless of ideological background, deprives them from legitimacy and depletes representation;
in addition, social movements were coopted and are mostly absent from the streets, leaving people without channels of expression (as cited in Silva, 2013). The idea of a representation crisis is far from new in political science and Brazil, despite having a president with surprising levels of popularity (prior to the protests), does not escape this rule. Trust in the Congress and in political parties is generally very low (Datafolha, 2012). The fact that 89 percent of the protesters say they do not feel represented by parties is illustrative in this regard.

The sociologist Marco Aurélio Nogueira (2013) agrees that the protests revealed people’s exhaustion concerning the way politics is exercised and adds that they reflect not only a failure in representation but also several shortcomings in governmental policies, which did not manage to produce the expected changes in the delivery of public goods. This goes in the direction of the previously mentioned argument that improvements in people’s income were not accompanied by a similar development in public services and infrastructure, which continue to be underdeveloped in a country that claims to be developing extraordinarily fast. This is sometimes framed as the “rising expectations” problem, i.e., as a country does better in economic and social terms, people’s expectations grow faster than the state capacity to satisfy them, particularly in a context of economic slowdown that “has created the impression that the cycle of prosperity which started with Lula has become exhausted” (Saad-Filho and Morais, 2014: 240). This argument is not new in the social movement literature and can be traced back to Tocqueville’s analysis of the French Revolution, the strongholds of which were precisely those regions with the greatest improvements in living standards (Gurney and Tierney, 1982). For John Burdick, rising incomes and higher expectations are intimately linked via a substantial tax burden. In other words, as people’s incomes increase, so does the considerable tax burden and therefore the sense of rightful entitlement to better public services (Burdick, 2013). While I do not wish to go as far as to say that protesters rationally weighed expectations against their personal or the country’s economic situation, frustrated expectations about what political institutions provide are very much what the idea of a political representation crisis is all about.

3.6 Conclusion

One of the most commonly heard catchphrases at the height of the June Journeys was, “it is not only for $20.” Indeed, it was not. The wave of mobilizations that swept the entire country resulted not only in the reduction of
public transport fares but also in the denunciation of countless other issues, pressing public authorities to quickly react to the voices of the streets. Catching them by surprise, the June events reminded the political class of the mobilizing power of the people in a way that had not happened in Brazil since 1992, imposing a new power relationship between state and society.

Protests against the fare increase – strategically organized in the heart of São Paulo during consecutive days – and the disproportionate response of the police provoked a significant change in media coverage and led to increasing calls for people to join the protests and to help “change Brazil.” Social media networks were key in spreading such calls and took over the role of MPL as the main mobilizing resource. Whereas the poor quality of public services and the mismanagement of public resources are far from novelties in Brazil, the organization of such protests and the increase in the number of calls to join them granted an invariable opportunity for many to (re)discover the potential of the streets.

While some show disappointment with the little concrete changes that the June Journeys have produced and with the rapidly declining number of people on the streets right after the events, others are unanimous when it comes to its most important legacy: Brazilians “woke up” and recovered the capacity to get outraged and involved in politics. Long-standing activists are unanimous in highlighting that the culture of social mobilization has gained a new impetus, both in numbers and in form – as it is more common and accepted to occupy central places in the city and to organize autonomously from unions or parties. Indeed, June did not end in June. Instead, it signaled the beginning of a new cycle of contention in Brazil. It not only propelled a series of specific protests in its aftermath – such as the mobilizations of the Homeless Workers Movement or the strikes of waste collectors, road transport operators, and others, giving them more visibility in the media and in politics. It is also fairly safe to say that the mass protests of 2015 – asking for the resignation of Dilma Rousseff and protesting against the corruption scandals that, once again, engulfed her party – would hardly have happened had Brazilians not rediscovered the power of the streets in June 2013.

All of this is symptomatic of an undergoing change in the Brazilian social movement scene, no longer dominated by the leftist project built up by the PT but disputed by new actors that have no faith in the latter and individuals who, since June 2013, see the streets as an effective source of public pressure. Despite the PT having won the 2014 presidential elections (by a very small margin), Brazil had not witnessed such an aggressive and polarized electoral campaign since 1989, with the theme of “change” at its very center. Similarly,
Brazil has experienced unprecedented levels of polarization at the societal level since 2013. These reached extraordinary dimensions when, on top of the political crisis provoked by the Petrobras scandal, Brazil fell into a deep economic recession in 2015, with Rousseff reaching rock-bottom levels of popularity. In sum, June not only transformed the 2013 autumn/winter into one of the hottest months of Brazil's history, but has also contributed to warming up its social and political scene ever since.

List of interviews

BR1  Photojournalist – coverage of the protests. September 19, 2014
BR2  No affiliation – regular participation in the protests. October 6, 2014
BR3  Movimento Passe Livre. October 6, 2014
BR4  Movimento Passe Livre. November 13, 2014
BR5  Scholar, specialist in participatory democracy. November 14, 2014
BR6  Scholar, specialist in media, deliberation and participation. November 15, 2014
BR7  No affiliation – regular participation in the protests. November 26, 2014
BR8  Movimento Passe Livre. November 26, 2014
BR9  Fórum de Lutas Contra o Aumento da Passagem. November 27, 2014
BR10 Fórum de Lutas Contra o Aumento da Passagem. November 27, 2014
BR11 No affiliation – regular participation in the protests. November 28, 2014
BR12 União da Juventude Comunista. December 17, 2014
BR13 No affiliation – regular participation in the protests. January 25, 2015

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