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## **The Right Wing in the Brazilian 2013 Cycle of Protests**

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Institute for the  
Study of  
Societal Issues

## The right wing in the Brazilian 2013 cycle of protests<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Brazil has seen two big cycles of protests between 2013 and 2016. The first, known as 'June 2013', is related to the post-2008 global cycle of protests, with collective actions and imaginaries associated with Occupy Wall Street, the Indignados and the Arab Spring<sup>3</sup>. The second, started in the end of 2014 and went on until mid-2016, centered on claims against corruption and on the demand to impeach President Dilma Rousseff (Workers' Party - PT, in Portuguese). In this second cycle, right-wing contentious politics gained more strength and a deep political polarization could be noticed in Brazil (GALLEGO, 2018; MESSENBURG, 2017; MACHADO, 2018; ROCHA, 2017; SILVEIRA, 2015; TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015; TELLES, 2015). Despite the temporal proximity between the first cycle of protests and the other, it is understood that the particularities of June 2013 and the impeachment protests should be observed in order to avoid simplistic causal relations between both. As an example of that, it will be seen that there was a presence of right-wing and left-wing protestors in the 2013 cycle. However, the diversity of demands at that time was much larger and less focused on the figure of President Dilma Rousseff, in the first cycle than in the second.

In any case, the presence of demonstrators identified with the political right was new in Brazilian protests, which were until then hegemonized by the left (AVRITZER, 2016). Thus, the understanding of the meanings of these actors' participation in June 2013 has become relevant for a better understanding of recent events in Brazilian contentious politics (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016; BRINGEL, 2018). Therefore, this article aims to investigate the narratives of the right-wing protestors that were present in June 2013 about their participation in that cycle

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<sup>3</sup> There has been a big academic production regarding the June 2013 protests, of which should be mentioned: Alonso, Mische, 2016; Silva, 2014; Avritzer, 2016; Braga, 2017; Bringel, Pleyers, 2015; Bringel, 2018; Oliveira et al, 2014; Dowbor, Szwako, 2013; Gomes, 2016; Maricato et al, 2013; Mendonça, Ercan, 2015; Mendonça, 2017; Mendonça, Costa, 2018; Judesnaider et al, 2013; Singer, 2013; Souza, 2015; Tavares, Benedito, 2018; Tavares, Roriz, Oliveira, 2016; Ricci, Arley, 2014.

and the following interpretations and actions that led them to the second cycle of protests. It should be said, however, that while this article focuses on right-wing protestors in the 2013 demonstrations, it is not claimed that this was a cycle of protests located at the right of the political spectrum. In fact, it is understood that June 2013 was a plural and conflictive event: interpreting it only as the expression of a right or left positioning takes away the chaotic complexity and diversity of the event under analysis (MENDONÇA, COSTA, 2018). What is intended here, as it will become clearer, is to focus on the right-wing narratives so that a closer examination can be made of this point of view, which is still little known. Such detail increasement is positive, but it should be understood only as an analysis of a portion of the plurality of June 2013.

Concerning the methodology, this paper adopts a case study investigation, which is understood as an empirical investigation of a contemporary event in depth, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident (YIN, 2010, p. 39). The case in question is the protests of June 2013, in the city of Belo Horizonte. This city was chosen because of its relevance, both in populational and economical dimensions, and was already a site of contentious politics, to the left of the federal government, with marxist and left-libertarian references, which gained strength and visibility during June 2013 (VELOSO, 2017; BERQUÓ, 2016; SANTOS, 2016; BITTENCOURT, 2016; OLIVEIRA, 2012; ALBUQUERQUE, 2013). With these characteristics, it is possible, firstly, to investigate an experience of the protests in a major city of the country, but that it is not São Paulo (a city that has been studied more, since it is considered the site there the June protests began). Secondly, it will be possible to understand the participation of the right in a city with a strong articulation of the left: that is, the entry of these new actors did not take place in a political vacuum, but in intense dispute and conflict. Finally, the author had been studying such left-wing configurations in the city (DOMINGUES, 2016; DOMINGUES, 2018), then she is more familiar with the protest events that occurred there.

The paper is based on interviews with 18 protestors in Belo Horizonte. Initially some interviewees were chosen to set out a multiple entry in the field of research and then the snowball method was used to identify new respondents (WEISS, 1994, p.25). The following selection criteria was used to identify the interviewees: having been present in June 2013; having used the national colors; or being identified with the right or being a member of right-wing organizations. The first criterion, that of the presence in June 2013, was chosen because it was necessary that the person had been involved in this cycle of protests in order to

know which practices were adopted. The second, the use of national colors, is justified by the recent identification of the national symbols with the political right (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016; TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015; SOUZA, 2015, p.147-148). Finally, the third, being identified with the right or having participated in right-wing organizations, was thought to specifically reach this point on the political spectrum - especially during and after the protests. It should be mentioned that the interviewees did not need to meet the last two criteria at the same time, since the use of national colors wasn't an exclusive characteristic of the right-wing during June 2013. As a result, the snow-ball method led to 16 right-wing protestors and 2 people identified with center-left, but who went to the protests dressed in the national colors. A qualitative analysis of content was used for the systematization and interpretation of the narratives, and will be presented through three main concepts, namely: actors, practices and grammars.

This article is divided into three sections, in addition to this introduction and the conclusion. The first presents, in general terms, the events of June 2013 and some relations with contemporary collective action. The second analyzes the interviews systematizing the right narratives in actors, practices and grammars. The third brings an analysis of the role of the protests under the view of the right-wing respondents, especially regarding the strength of the subsequent cycle of protests – in favor of the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff – in their lives. Finally, a brief conclusion will be made.

### **1. The June 2013 protests**

The June 2013 protests occurred in a context of the realization of the FIFA Confederations Cup, a preparatory event for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. This is also the year of the third consecutive term of the Workers' Party (PT) in the presidency, which despite some important social accomplishments, was already undergoing a process of corruption scandals and began to show signs of economic saturation (SINGER, 2013; TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015; RICCI, ARLEY, 2014). Since the beginning of 2013, there were popular irruptions in many Brazilian cities, mostly related to the local public transport policy, as was the case of Goiania, Porto Alegre and Natal (TAVARES, RORIZ, OLIVEIRA, 2016; BRAGA, 2017). However, it is the city of Sao Paulo and its claim against the increase in 20 cents in the bus fare that are taken as the beginning of the June 2013 protests in the country. On the 13th of that month, there was a brutal repression of protests in that city, which led to a change in the

narrative of the mainstream media coverage: from criticizing to supporting the cause. Adding the power of social networks, the protests have spread throughout the entire country. As they gained greater proportions, the protests, too, have expanded their claims and diversified their demonstrators' profiles (DWBOR, SZWAKO, 2013, SINGER, 2013, GOHN, 2014, RICCI, ARLEY, 2014, OLIVEIRA et al, 2014, SILVA, 2014).

The diffuse and diverse dimension of these protests is central to understanding them, as they didn't only gain great dimensions, but at the end of the cycle their claims were as many as one can imagine (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014a, p.14; RICCI, ARLEY, 2014, p.34; MENDONÇA, 2017). Thus, this section will address some elements considered relevant to the understanding of contemporary collective action, including its diffuse dimension. They are: the participation of the precariat in the protests; the weakening of the state in neoliberalism; the formation of more fluid and individualized collective action; the use of social networks for personalized communication and real-time sharing of the demonstrations. It will then be seen that in the midst of diffusion and diversity, there are proposals for dividing June 2013 protests into right and left-wing fields.

About the participation of the precariat, during the PT government, there was an expansion of the labor market characterized by high labor turnover, low pay, flexibilization and poor working conditions. The working force's increasing precarity is seen as an important source of dissatisfaction related to the June 2013 protests (SINGER, 2013, BRAGA, 2017). Looking at the profile of protestors in the main cities of the country, Singer (2013) identifies the presence of both the middle class and the precariat. Regarding the same date, Braga (2017) gives more prominence only to the precarious workers as key actors of June 2013.

Singer then seeks to understand what motivated the middle class and the precariat to be in the same demonstrations. He argues that, at the time, there was a concern with inflation having happened a topic price increase in the months prior to June 2013. Inflation would be a factor that would mobilize the middle class, but it should be added, to that sector's dissatisfaction, the criticism it already showed against Lulism and the PT government (SINGER, 2013, p.34). Now, closer to the precariat, he indicates the aggravating of living conditions in hyperurbanized centers to justify this class mobilization. Singer understands that the claims against the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, which took place in the protests, then, started from a critique of inequality. In that sense, the allocation of public resources to the host cities was questioned because of an understanding that the investment in the sporting

events did not help the poor population, and if that were not enough, it was making their lives worse (SINGER, 2013, p. 36).

In his turn, Braga invokes the idea of austerity and argues that there is a deterioration of the Fordist model, with the growth of informal employment and removal of labor protections. Parallel to this process of precariousness of the proletarian condition “new social movements [are formed,] carried out by unemployed – or underemployed – young workers [who] represent a challenge to the conflict between political regulation and economic accumulation” (BRAGA, 2017, p.31). This would be the case of the demonstrations in question, which would result from the rise of popular expectations brought about by PT policies, articulating their demands through the grammar of social and labor rights, but already in a deepening globalization crisis scenario, with impacts on the pace of economic growth (BRAGA, 2017, p.225-226) .

About the same period, Tavares and Benedito (2018) demonstrate the existence of a neoliberal fiscal policy developed during the PT governments. The authors use as evidence for this: the maximum prioritization of budget expenditures aiming the public debt payment; the deepening of the regressive taxation; the isolation of monetary policy control by the banking and financial sectors; the development of infrastructure projects imposing ethnic and ecological sacrifices for market prevalence (TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018, p.183). This neoliberal fiscal policy would lead to what Offe has identified as an emptying of the real powers of the state, characterized by an inversion of asymmetry: “markets set the agenda and (fiscal) constraints of public policies, but there is little that *public policies* in their turn can do in terms of constraining the realm and dynamics of the ever-expanding market” (OFFE, 2013, p.212 - italics in the original). Hence, it would be possible say that there is “a *dual control gap*: governments lose control over taxation and the financial sector, and in response citizens lose their confidence that the idea of democratic control over government policies is a credible one” (OFFE, 2013, p.214 - italics in the original).

Therefore, Tavares and Benedito understand, both about June 2013 and the global cycle of protests, that “there is at least an influence between the frustration of the electorate and the fiscal unfeasibility of its demands and the search for other forms of political action in their favor, such as demonstrations, strikes and boycotts” (TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018, p.187). Consequently, there would be the adoption of a “do-it-yourself” politics in June 2013<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The authors enumerate the consequences following the argument developed by Offe (2013) about the effects of the State’s loss of real power over public policies.

It would be a result of a disenchantment with the State, that “is associated, in Brazil, as in other countries under the rule of neoliberalism, with the growth of party and union organizations rejection” (TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018, p.189). The left-wing in the protests would be adept to doing politics without the traditional institutions. In its turn, the authors identify the growth of practices linked to the undemocratic right, which would have been present since June 2013, but would have gained greater strength in during the Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment cycle (TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018, p.190-191). Finally, concerning the government field, they perceived a proposition of procedural alternatives by the PT, with ideas for political reform, which were not implemented (TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018, p.189).

Overall, it is understood that there is a link between the lack of trust in the institutions and the weakening of the classic collective action, especially with respect to the ties of collective identity, the coordination of actions with strategic vision and subordination of the individual to more structured groups or organizations. Thus, what has been exposed in terms of economic policy, the weakening of the State and the precariousness of work, is also in resonance with contemporary communicative and organizational forms. Accordingly, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argue that the growth of collective action facilitated by digital networks is part of a context of structural fragmentation and individualization resulting from the pressures of economic globalization from the end of the last century. “These individualized orientations result in engagement with politics as an expression of personal hopes, lifestyles, and grievances” (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, 2012, p.743). Then, one can perceive the gain of strength of actions mediated by digital networks and of personalized frameworks of action.

For the authors, conventional collective action would have higher costs, requiring actors “to make more difficult choices and adopt more self-changing social identities than DNA [Digitally Networked Action] based on personal action frames organized around social Technologies” (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, 2012, p.748). It is true that traditional forms of collective action, based on strong collective identities and intensely connected networks continue to operate, but they have had to share space with new forms, which the authors call *connective action*, or with hybrid forms (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, 2012, p.760). Regarding connective action, the organization takes place in a more individualized way and through technologies that result in actions without a strong collective identity and without so many organizational resources. In this logic, “taking public action or contributing to a common good becomes an act of personal expression and recognition or self-validation achieved by sharing



ideas and actions in trusted relationships” (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, 2012, p.752-753), even if they come from across the world.

June 2013 is attuned to these changes in collective action and an example of this is the production of content based on amateur images from the perspective of the demonstrators (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014b). The very content in the digital social networks had as a characteristic the articulation between the events of the streets and the debates produced online with customized production of materials. The records of the demonstrators brought elements of commonplace: “their testimonial force goes hand in hand with the lack of technical and traditional standards, such as the definition of images or the stability of the camera” (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014b, p.16). This form of communication is intertwined with the possibility of communication at the same time massive and personal, for being able both to spread widely and to come from an individual perspective or profile. The protests communication would articulate amateur images, produced live, with strong emotional content (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014b, p.18-19).

In addition to the personalized content, there was the creation of Facebook pages understood as part of the “alternative media”. Based on collaborative content production, such pages disseminated materials that were received through demonstrators and, also, produced by their “journalists”. Still with a proposal of “real-time” monitoring and taking the demonstrators’ point of view, the collaborative media would be more concerned with a certain validation of the content produced, which had different origins and be produced very fast. At the same time, there would be a need for rapid response and content dissemination as close to the real time as possible, so that communication had the effectiveness sought in those days (OLIVEIRA et al, 2014).

It is notable, then, that not only the state institutions were criticized: the traditional media was in question too. “The demonstrations have opened up the incapacity of a journalistic model based on logic 'few speak for many' of accounting for the complexity, intensity and speed of an event of this magnitude” (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014a, p.17). Thus, the production of personalized and live content integrates well into the dynamics of the 2013 protests, because it brings with it a do-it-yourself perspective. With weakened institutions and increased individuality, the transmission and sharing of personalized information seemed more reliable than the monitoring of the large channels.

As a result, it is understood that June 2013 was organized through networks spread both online and offline with subjective expressions of demands visible in the plurality of causes. Such demands would be related to a neoliberalism crisis, characterized by the weakening of collective affiliations, the formation of the precariat and the loss of power of the state public policies. Then, political manifestations, discredited with this scenario, often express demands for state disintermediation, both on the left and on the right. That is how Dean understand as well:

Reading the protests and revolts of the last decade as the class struggle of the people proletarianized under communicative capitalism, we can account for the ubiquity of personalized media, the demographics of the people protesting, the economic position of the protestors, and the political ambiguity of the protests. New proles often have a strong libertarian bent. They may present themselves as post-political, even antipolitical (as in, for example, the Spanish movement of the squares). Their identities are so that they can be channeled in different directions simultaneously always exceed. They have a hard time uniting as a class even as their actions are the expressions of a class. (DEAN, 2016, p.18).

Therefore, it is possible to perceive the ambivalence of June 2013: in the protests there were side by side people and organizations that could be identified as right and left-wings. It must be said that there were, also, many others that can be understood as center, or as “independent” of political affiliations, who were participating for the first time in protests and had still a malleable perspective of their party or political views. However, some authors identify in the midst of the diversity this right-left ambivalence, proposing a division of the protests in different fields<sup>5</sup> (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016, BRINGEL, 2018), which will be discussed below.

### 1.1. The ambivalences of June 2013

In Belo Horizonte, as stated in the introduction, there was a relevant action of groups of marxist and left-libertarian thoughts, so that the protests began with a greater centrality in this left field. As the days passed and protests got larger the profile of protestors changed and new actors entered the protests. There were those that can be identified with the right. There were others who were new to contentious politics and even to the public expression of their views, making it precipitated to identify them in a fixed way with any point in the political spectrum. In any case, protestors with opposite political views marched side by side, even if in a non-

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to mention that there are authors who question this left and right-wing division, especially Mendonça and Costa (2018), who propose autonomism as the general framework of the protests.

harmonious way (SINGER, 2013; AVRITZER, 2016; SOUZA, 2015; DOWBOR, SZWAKO, 2013; RICCI, ARLEY, 2014; MENDONÇA, COSTA, 2018; ALONSO, MISCHE, 2016; BRINGEL, 2018).

Alonso and Mische (2016) understand that during June of 2013, there were three repertoires, which they conceptualize as tools available in tool box: the *socialist*, the *autonomist* and the *patriotic*. As the protests developed and the practices generated hybrid performances among the repertoires, two fields of strategic action were formed: the *patriotic* and the *autonomist*. According to them, they “can be considered as part of a macro-field in opposition to the government; however, they are in tension with each other, so we find it useful to consider them as separate fields” (ALONSO, MISCHE, 2016, p.10). In this proposal, the socialist repertoire ends up being present in each of these two fields, based on the demands for improvements in social services.

The *patriotic field* was identified with participants who had no prior experience in activism and took to the streets when they heard of the protests. They had no coordination, but:

Their actions were expressive and playful, without coordination. Their purpose was immediate and expressive. They were moved by vague nationalism and a strong anti-PT sentiment, and stood mostly to the right of the government. Posters, clothing, flags and face painting revived patriotic symbols from the Diretas Já and For a Collor cycles, echoing the latter’s slogans of opposition to corruption and ‘ethics in politics’. The patriotic repertoire was visible in its use of national colours (green and yellow); conventional symbols (the flag and national anthem); slogans (‘the giant has awakened’, ‘you will see that your child does not run from a fight’); and canonical spaces (such as the Avenida Paulista, used in the former cycles) (ALONSO, MISCHE, 2016, p.10).

In turn, the *autonomist field* would be easier to delineate and would be more cohesive, according to the authors, being guided primarily by the autonomist repertoire, characterized by:

Horizontal forms of organisation, rejection of gender hierarchy and formal political leadership, decision-making by consensus and the replacement of electronically amplified ‘sound-trucks’ by playful chants (the jogral), in which the first row of protesters shouts out short phrases repeated by consecutive rows. Global symbols were incorporated, such as the punk aesthetic (wearing black), the use of arts and music (percussion fanfares), performative actions (the burning of turnstiles), and the occupation of symbolic spaces (such as a fancy bridge in a São Paulo neighbourhood recently occupied by banks, businesses and major media outlets) (ALONSO, MISCHE, 2016, p.10-11).

In a critical dialogue with Alonso and Mische, Bringel (2018) presents another way of systematizing fields of action during and after June 2013. In comparison, these three authors understand that there was a process of enlargement and diffusion of the 2013 protests

that made possible the presence of actors with different perspectives in the same demonstrations. They also agree that it is possible to organize them within the spectrum of right and left policies for a better understanding of June 2013. However, Bringel (2018) disagrees with the other two authors regarding their use of the concepts: “repertoire” and “field”<sup>6</sup>. He also develops a typology, so that he proposes an alternative systematization. The author starts from a political analysis of Brazil in the last 30 years to carry out such systematization proposal, which identifies the action, during and after June 2013, of the fields: *democratic-popular*, *alter-activist*, *liberal-conservative* and *authoritarian-reactionary*.

First, the *democratic-popular field*, whose historical origins date back to the struggles against Brazil’s dictatorship and emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with references to the Workers’ Party (PT), the Landless Rural Workers’ Movement (MST, in Portuguese) and the Central Única dos Trabalhadores<sup>7</sup> (CUT, in Portuguese). Without developing an alternative proposal of rupture, this field “has a strong democratizing imaginary and a hegemonic perspective of politics, something that ended up coming to reality from the 1990s, when it consolidated itself as the main reference of the Brazilian left” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.14-15). Specifically on June 2013, the author states that this field was surprised by the rise of the protests and acted, at least in the beginning: “minimizing its importance or delegitimizing its emergence, since in many cases they saw themselves as having the ‘experience’ or as better acquainted with the logics of mobilization” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.15).

According to the typological proposal of Bringel, it would be the *alter-activist field* that had greater prominence, to the left, in the June protests. This second field of action would be the result of a construction of an alternative left to first one, characterized throughout the world by the struggle against neoliberal globalization. Its foundational reference is the Zapatista uprising of 1994, but has performances related “to the ecologism, feminism and other traditions of the most radical left” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.15-16). The author points to the Free Fare Movement (MPL, in Portuguese) and the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, as well as the renewal of student movements from the year 2010 as national references (BRINGEL, 2018, p.16). This field would be grounded on proposals of “a territorial, prefigurative and daily politics, marked by personal commitment, horizontality, autonomy, assembly, direct action and decisions by consensus” (BRINGEL, 2018, p. which individuals would gain greater centrality.

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<sup>6</sup> As the concepts of "repertoire" and "field" are not central in this work, these critics will not be reviewed.

<sup>7</sup> A national coalition of workers’ unions.

To the right, Bringel proposes a third, heterogeneous field: the *liberal-conservative*. What brings liberals and conservatives together to share a single field of action is “the defense of economic liberalism articulated with a procedural and restricted view of democracy. The defense of the *status quo* appears in the commitment to order and the defense of the law as an end in itself” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.17). This field has as positive references the liberalizations and privatizations of the neoliberal hegemony of the decade of 1990 and, although it has not had its privileges threatened by the PT government, it has difficulties in accepting the period. According to the author, institutional dialogue and secret rooms are their main spaces of political action, the experience of public demonstrations, then, are recent and they understand “the 2013 protests as the rebellion of society outraged against corruption and *petismo*<sup>8</sup>” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.18 - italics added by the author). The *Movimento Brasil Livre* (MBL, in Portuguese – Free Brazil Movement, in English), support for *Operação Lava Jato* (Operation Car Wash, in English) and the green-and-yellow marches for the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, as well as the fight against the popular-democratic field are recent references of it (BRINGEL, 2018, p.18 - 19).

The fourth and final field of action, as proposed by Bringel, is the *authoritarian-reactionary*, whose distinguishing characteristic is not to consider democracy as a value to be preserved, even in its narrower versions. The author points to Jair Bolsonaro, who was elected president of Brazil in 2018, as the most well-known figure. His guidelines mobilize nationalism and hatred and have become a reference for some of the Brazilian most authoritarian population (BRINGEL, 2018, p.19). To characterize the field, the author states that it has a strong critique of the left, identified, mostly, with the democratic-popular field. This brings it closer to the liberal-conservative field, but its idolatry to the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985) puts it in a different one. Moreover, “torture is often considered a legitimate practice, which brings it closer to fascist and extreme right positions” (BRINGEL, 2018, p.19).

Having presented Bringel's typologies, it is possible to say that his proposal has a better conceptual accuracy, although the ones of Alonso and Mische have a perspective more circumscribed to June 2013. As it turned out, Bringel proposes to think fields of action that acted in 2013 and after that, but which have origins quite prior to the period. The author does not, however, aim to think of the details of such fields in 2013, so that it is not possible to state that the characteristics he uses for delimiting the fields were expressed during that protest cycle.

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<sup>8</sup> *Petismo* is a term, in Portuguese, used as reference to policies developed by PT and the period in which the country was governed by such party.

In turn, Alonso and Mische seek to focus on the experience of 2013 to define their fields, which may not be as accurate for a more wide-ranging perspective but have an own empirical contribution of the moment. Both proposals, however, allow us to think about the ambivalence present in the middle of June 2013's plural diffusion. The protests under analysis, then, were not homogeneous. If there were fields on the left and right, it occurred in the form of tension and conflict, seeking to dispute the meanings of the demonstrations and their demands. With this understanding that, within the conflict and the plurality of June, there was an ambivalence, this article gets to the inquiry regarding one side of this diversity: the right-wing during the protests.

## **2. Actors, practices and grammars of the right-wing in June 2013**

In this second part of the article, the objective is to analyze the interviews conducted with actors who participated in June 2013 dressed in green-and-yellow, the Brazilian national colors, and/or took or started to take part in right-wing organizations after the protests in focus. As it can be seen, these are broad selection criteria that, as justified in the introduction, led to interviews with 16 people identified with the right-wing and 2 other people identified with the center-left. The focus here will be on the responses of the right-wing people, excluding then these two center-left respondents. It is not because such visions were not present in June 2013, but because of the aim of this article to present and analyze the right-wing demonstrators' views<sup>9</sup>. Concerning the systematization, three concepts were used to analyze the interviews: actors, practices and grammars. Firstly, the actors relate to the individuals or groups and organizations who were present at the demonstrations. Secondly, the practices are considered the forms of action adopted in the demonstrations. Thirdly, grammars are thought of as principles that structure actors and practices. Again, these are broad concepts used here due to the multiplicity of June and, in this article, only the experiences of the right-wing will be treated under these concepts.

Regarding *actors*, we found that most protestors went alone or with some friends to the protests, then without a group or political collectivity with which they identify. Among those interviewed, most did not participate in political organizations at the time of the protests. In fact, of the 15 people who responded to the questioning about participation in political

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<sup>9</sup> A complete analysis of actors, practices and grammars considering the greater constitutive diversity of June 2013 is being developed in the master's thesis of the author, which will be presented on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019..

organizations, only 3 were acting in a collective in 2013. In this case, all of them were part of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB, in Portuguese), a party that until then had been the reference for the right-wing in the country, in opposition to the PT governments. 2 interviewees also participated in a youth group of the PSDB, the *Turma do Chapéu*<sup>10</sup>. The others did not have significant experiences or had no experience with working in political groups. Of course, this cannot be generalized, because of the methodology adopted in this paper. However, if thought together with the literature and the narrative of the interviewees it gives some indications that the participation of right-wing people in the protests occurred in a disjointed way.

In fact, it was verified, by the interviewees that were part of the PSDB, at the time, that there was no proposal of the organization's actions in the protests. Even those who were affiliated to the party had an autonomous participation in the demonstrations:

**Interviewee 01: I went alone. Actually, I encountered some friends, but there was no Party organization [PSDB], let's say a deliberation to go.** Whoever wanted went [to the demonstrations]. And I met, in fact, people from several... several colleagues of mine from various parties were participating, but not [dressed] in party shirt, nothing like that, of course, each one was defending their own cause.

Among the people who did not participate in political organizations, the narrative was of an excursion to the streets coming from a desire to be present in a process that gained broad dimensions but was still quite disorganized (MENDONÇA, 2017). Interviewee 05 notes that one of his reasons for partaking in the June 2013 protests “was the belief that I was doing something important”. Similarly, Interviewee 14 stated that: “I have always found the Brazilian to be a very inert people politically. And when I saw the popular action, I wanted to be a part too”.

Thus, from conversations between friends and through virtual calls for demonstrations, these people chose to go to the streets, spontaneously. Among those who went with company to the protests, it was of friends or family, therefore no participation in specific political groups was constituted. Interviewee 08 says that: “Suddenly, the people were gathering there [on the street], you know? No arrangements. I went without arrangements and I found that my friend also was there”. In a similar way, Interviewee 14 says that he did not agree to go along with people, despite always meeting with someone known in the crowd and affirms: “I was there as a normal citizen, I did not know any [political] movements. I knew about the parties, but I did

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<sup>10</sup> To know more about this right-wing youth group, cf.: AZEVEDO, 2015; PSDB, 2011.

not know if they were there or not, because nowadays I do not think there was such a partisan involvement then”.

The practice of going alone to the demonstrations gives the aggregative dimension of June 2013, which led people to the streets independent of participating in political organizations or agreeing with everything that was happening and was being demanded. In this case, the idea of having to take part in the protests, even if one does not know exactly why, seems more central as a characteristic of this cycle of protest than the objectives and guidelines drawn by a specific collective identity. Identifying the strength of individualized participation, without affiliations, is important for understanding the multiplicity of June 2013.

Moreover, the importance of the digital social networks for the development of the protests should be noted, as stated before, being characterized by personalized action frameworks (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, 2012) and the intervention in digital content, introducing in them personal perspectives (GOMES, 2016; D'ANDREIA, ZILLER, 2014b). With this in mind, collective action in June 2013 had greater personalization and less a weaker sense of belonging to groups or organizations (BENNETT, SEGERBERG, DEAN, 2016), both in digital spaces and on the streets, with posters and songs indicating varied demands. This means an action with fewer bonds of belonging to collectivities. Moreover, the loss of strength of the State institutions for the development of public policies, because they have been in constant fiscal deficit, has eroded notions of community belonging (OFFE, 2013; TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018). In the protests under analysis, propositions that directly question such institutions could be seen, which also allowed for greater individual prominence. The participation of right-wing people in June 2013 appears to be part of this phenomenon of the diffusion and fluidity of collective action, which has caused a protest that started with a leftist agenda to expand to diverse individualized actors and demands. Within this diversity, each with their perspectives, right-wing people got together in the streets.

The discussion about the *practices* of June 2013 is already beginning. It should be noted that there were numerous practices that occurred and were transformed during the days of that month and several were carried out transversely between the political identities in place. For this reason, two practices considered as more distinctive of the right-wing in the protests were selected: the critique of violence and the use of national colors.

As for the first, it is evident that in the various days and places, regardless of the forces that mobilized people for the protests, there were moments of confrontation between



demonstrators (and, perhaps, potential infiltrators) and the repressive apparatus of the State. It is also the first time there is a wide presence of Black Bloc in Belo Horizonte and in Brazil. Another matter that generated such clashes was the attempt of demonstrators to enter the FIFA Territory: a space in which the entrance was limited only for people who would go to the football match and the police used its force to ensure that it would not be taken by demonstrators. These commonly named “violent” practices began to be identified with the left-wing field, however, it is understood to be a practice much more widespread and intrinsically part of protest than as an exclusive action of a political field. There are also records of patrimonial depredation on days when there were no protests called by the left and of the use of “violence” by extreme-right groups (RICCI, ARLEY, 2014, p.151-153; VELOSO, 2017, p.285; SOUZA, 2015, p.146).

Regardless of that, the narratives of the right-wing interviewees were to condemn “violent” practices in the protests. Interviewee 16, for example, stopped going to demonstrations due to clashes between protestors and police officers: “I did not want to go [anymore] when the protests became violent. That is, there were, obviously, a portion of the people who participated with the purpose of making [a mess]. They were not everyone, but I disagree, radically, with any violent protest”. Interviewee 07, for example, tells a remarkable moment in which some demonstrators understood that it was necessary to protect the police commander:

**Interviewee 07:** And at some point, Colonel Claudia was alone in the middle of the staff and some people sort of: “Oops, she’s alone”. Some people have somehow expressed an interest in wanting to assault her, to want... **And then the protestors themselves made a human-cord around her, protected and took her away.**

There were also those who understood that the police action was excessive, as was the case of Interviewee 01: “I did not really see, from the part where I was [...] [any] armed groups of society trying to attack police forces etc. But what I saw on the day and I can, I can tell you, was a brutal reaction from the police, trying to disperse the movement”. However, he also stopped going to the demonstrations: “because, then, it began to have the invasion of the Black Blocs too, it began to get even risky for you to stay in a place like that and people started to lose the desire to go too”. Thus, it is perceived that there was a division, shared by right-wing respondents, between groups of “peaceful” and “violent” demonstrators – which afterwards led to a selective repression of the latter.

As for the use of national colors, it has been a factor of identification of the right-wing in June 2013 (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016; SOUZA, 2015; TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015). Of the eighteen people interviewed, seven recall using national colors in the protests<sup>11</sup> and the narratives about this practice go in two opposed directions: most understand it as the expression of nationalism and popular sovereignty, but there are those who say they are ashamed of their use of these colors. In the first sense, Interviewee 14, who went to the two demonstrations dressed in the shirt of the Brazilian national soccer team, states:

**Interviewee 14: It was a moment to express nationalism.** That shirt was not to be worn only when there's a soccer match. I thought, "Gee... is the time for me to demonstrate myself as a national being". **And as I was there acting for what I thought was best for the country.** [There is] **nothing better to use than the colors of the country.**

On the other hand, interviewees 02 and 04 are ashamed to have worn the Brazilian soccer shirt in the protests. The first one says that: "they [the right-wing] ended up taking the green and yellow and the CBF [Brazilian Football Confederation] shirt to the demonstrations that led to Dilma's impeachment. And then I saw that, in fact, I had made that initial misreading [about wearing the shirt]" (Interviewee 02). In his turn:

**Interviewee 04:** Wearing the Brazilian shirt on that day of the big protest was **something that embarrassed me a little**, because I was already realizing, it was already clear to everyone what those colors were... The meaning that they would gain soon enough.

It is understood, then, that the use of national symbols was spread beyond left-wing during June 2013. However, as the protests got bigger, it started to gain an anti-political connotation and became more related to the right-wing. It is after 2013 that such relations between nationalist practices and the right-wing gained more strength, especially in the cycle of protests aiming Dilma Rousseff's impeachment (TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015). It is interesting to note also how this sense of shame brings elements of conflict within the right wing about the course that this field has taken in recent years in the country.

Finally, regarding *grammars*, they were related to a big moral change in politics. In the thesis in development the author has identified the existence of a transversal grammar to the diverse political perspectives acting in the protests: that of nationalism. In a right-wing perspective, it was possible to notice, from the interviews, that such demonstrators understand

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<sup>11</sup> In this case, one of the interviewees identified with the center-left (Interviewee 02) wore the Brazilian Soccer Team shirt to the protests.

the nationalist grammar as a defense of the country against forces they consider illegitimate, especially corruption and political elites, leading to a disbelief in state institutions. The nationalism was directed towards the protection of the country and the promotion of citizenship through civic protest, as it can be noticed in Interviewee 09's understanding: "I felt that I was being patriotic, I felt good to be there, playing my part, as a citizen". There was an identification of the "people" as the legitimate part of the demonstrations to say what is right for the country, in opposition to unethical representatives. The construction of the claims against corruption, therefore, comes with the idea of a resumption of national interest by the people, removing the ruling power from the party system and political elites.

In Brazil, the idea that corruption is an attribute of party elites is spreading, and for this reason, they are ineffective and illegitimate to perform governmental and representative functions. And, with this, the institutionalization of the party system is weakened, opening gaps for the birth of *outsiders* and neopopulist leaderships (TELLES, 2015, p.13).

Corruption was the third problem most mentioned by protestors in Belo Horizonte, on June 22, 2013: 15.8% of respondents said that corruption was the main problem of the country and is second only to education (26.9%) and health (26.9%) (RICCI, ARLEY, 2014, p.259). The context was of the *Mensalão* judgment<sup>12</sup>, which ended in 2012, with broad media coverage and some attempts of social mobilization (TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015, p.24). According to Interviewee 07, there were problems with: "The overpricing of construction works with contractors and embezzlement" and continued: "And, then, since I am here protesting against the World Cup then I will also protest against corruption as a whole". In the case of *Mensalão*, it is remembered in conjunction with the economic crisis: "There was a general dissatisfaction with the economy's direction, especially the politics' directions. This whole matter of corruption was already being brought to light, the great majority of the parties being involved with the *Mensalão*" (Interviewee 11).

About this relationship between the perception of economic crisis and the greater criticism of corruption, Telles states: "economic retraction tends to dilate popular dissatisfaction, giving way to intolerance to corruption, because citizens are inclined to blame the worsening of their personal situation to diversion of public resources promoted by the public power" (TELLES, 2015, p.11). This would also lead to dissatisfaction with the political system as a whole: "broadening the perception of corruption is one of the main reasons for the high

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<sup>12</sup> *Mensalão* is the popular name of a corruption scandal that happened during Lula's (PT) first term as president and its trial started on August 2012.

distrust of citizens regarding the political system's actors and the representative institutions" (TELLES, 2015, p.11).

It is understood, however, that this combination of anti-corruption and anti-PT sentiments with the right-wing polity goes through an intense process after the June 2013 protests. The hypothesis here presented is that, back in 2013, there was an approximation between the claims against corruption and a nationalist populist agenda. Only after it became a claim directly connected with the objective of ending PT's government. That is because an important feature in their grammar is that the right-wing protestors understand the June 2013 cycle as an important moment for their interest in politics, but too confused and diverse. It is with the second cycle – focused mostly on anti-corruption and anti-PT causes and in which they gained more centrality – that they show more enthusiasm and identification. That's what the next section is about.

### **3. After June 2013**

After June 2013, the left went through a short period, of approximately one year, in which it continued to hegemonize contentious politics, taking advantage of practices and grammars that gained relevance during that cycle of protests (BERQUO, 2016; VELOSO, 2017). However, these were selectively repressed and delegitimized as "violent". For example, there were many arrests of demonstrators in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Goiânia, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, culminating in a strong demobilization of protestors during the World Cup in June 2014 (DOMINGUES, 2016; SANTOS, 2016). On the other side of the political spectrum, it was possible to see a growth of the right-wing groups from the 2014 elections, when Dilma Rousseff (PT) was re-elected president of Brazil in October, after a heated electoral process. The defeated candidate, Aécio Neves (PSDB), did not accept the result and accused the electoral process of fraud. From then on, rumors of an impeachment request against Dilma started, with still small demonstrations in the end of 2014. These movements gained momentum around March 2015 and, along with other factors – such as Congress relations, judicial processes, media support and economic crisis – culminated in the deposition of the president in 2016 (TATAGIBA, TRINDADE, TEIXEIRA, 2015; TELLES, 2015, MESSENBURG, 2017).

Regarding the interviewees' interpretation of this moment after June 2013, those involved in the cycle of protests for impeachment give more importance to this experience than to that of 2013. About the organization of the protests against the PT, there would be a

perception, for these interviewees, that the diffuse wishes that “awakened” in 2013 gained an adequate direction in the claims against corruption, identified mainly with the PT. Terms such as “awakening”, “paradigm shift”, “spasm” and “kickoff” were used by the interviewees to show the openness that the protests of 2013 had in their lives. It would have been a power that took them out of an inertia or took them to a place other than the one before the protests. Interviewee 05, who did not participate in political organizations in 2013, understands that the protests were a “paradigm shift” and narrates that “It was a very important democratic learning, not only for me, as a political being, as a citizen, but also for everyone else”. In turn, Interviewee 11, who also started participating in political organizations only after June 2013, says that: “I think, that the great gain of Brazilian society, with all that is happening, with this unveiling, was really the [bigger] political involvement. That was much smaller [before]”.

The protests demanding the president’s impeachment had a strong impact and, somehow, they overlap the June events, not only for those who agreed with the cause and found themselves in front of the mobilization, but also for those who disagreed about the presidential removal. The strength of this new wave of mobilization is noticed on the speeches, when disconnections and overlaps occur in the interviewees' memory. Sometimes, such confusion makes it difficult to distinguish between what happened in June and what happened next. Interviewee 04, trying to summarize the use of social networks in June, expresses some mix-ups of elements in his memory: “It turns out that [...] these things in my memory, they have merged somehow”. Also, during the conversation with Interviewee 11, there were several moments in which she stopped talking about the protests of 2013 and began to talk about the pro-impeachment demonstrations, expressing more excitement and relevance about them.

The big popular mobilization and the large-scale demonstrations are important elements that are part of this memory confusion: the mass-protest experience would be a strong link connecting both periods.

**Interviewer 14:** Even if they did not have the same agenda, I might not have had so much involvement if it was not for the start of 2013. Because, as I said, it [June 2013] was the kickoff. **And with the emergence of some street movements in 2014, this ended up [...] getting a little more focused, having a little more defined guidelines, taking as its main agenda the impeachment of Dilma.** But really, without the initial engagement, there would not be engagement in 2014. **Because the population really started to enjoy going to the streets in 2013.**

Thus, if the demonstration in the streets approaches both cycle of protests, there are some significant differentiation between them. One of them is the degree of identification of

the protestors with the demonstrations claims and actions. The constitutive confusion of June 2013, with diffused guidelines and fragmentary and personalized participation, allowed the entrance of new protestors into contentious politics. This new participation was similar to the cycle's characteristics: without such deep commitment, it was also fragmentary, personalized and momentaneous. In the interviews, the right-wing protestors put into question several elements of June, showing a critical experience of such protests. The questioning of practices considered violent is an example of this only partial participation of the new protestors. Another example would be the lack of direction of the June protests, thought of as a demonstration "against everything and everyone" (Interviewee 04) and that it could not achieve concrete goals because of this. Similarly, Interviewee 05 perceived a lack of leadership in the protests as a problem and said: "I saw that lack of agenda, that lack of leadership, that lack of: 'what are we going to do? Where do we go? What agenda do you want?'".

For many, the direction and the concrete goals were found in the second cycle, pro-impeachment and against PT's government, so that they had more affinity with it. In this sense, the interviews saw themselves as central in this second cycle of protest, understanding themselves as protagonists for the demonstrations to have happened. This is what occurs when Interviewee 14 differentiates his participation in June 2013 as "a common citizen" from participation in the pro-impeachment demonstrations, as an "activist". And he states that: "I really started to participate, effectively, from 2016 on, because then I started working on the demonstrations". This experience of being "behind the scenes" created this stronger connection with the second cycle, be it in the organization of tents, selling the movement's shirts, speaking on stages, distributing pamphlets or producing communication contents. Interviewee 12 says that "sometimes I had to set up a stage, we would go there and help. Sometimes I needed to talk, I would go there and talk. I needed to sell some things to raise [funds], because we were not financed by anyone, so I went there and helped". Interviewee 10, who was not directly involved with the organization of the protests, said that on one occasion he was able to make a speech: "For me, [it was a] highly symbolic act [...]. I got on top of a truck, [...] and I quoted the Tancredo [Neves]<sup>13</sup> phrases". Thus, the images they had of themselves, in the pro-impeachment demonstrations, was of centrality, and the narrative they make of this cycle happen with greater excitement.

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<sup>13</sup> Tancredo Neves is a political reference in Minas Gerais and in Brazil, having been elected president of the country after the Military Dictatorship period, but he died before taking office.

However, it must be said that there were other right-wing respondents who disagreed with Dilma's impeachment and were critical of the extreme right rising in Brazil. Thus, they felt somewhat without a place in the politics developed in the years following June 2013. Interviewee 01 criticizes the lack of reflection of political leaders after 2013 and within the PSDB, in which was affiliated, questions the lack of measures for their internal democratization:

**Interviewee 01:** There was no reflection about 2013, like it was a moment that had not happened. **I was struck by the shortsightedness of the leaderships, of all parties, who tried to stage an election next, using the same methods, the same system, the same agenda....** So, this kind of thing has already been disappointing me in relation to political parties as an instrument of participation.

In turn, Interviewee 04 also perceived himself lacking a place in the political scenario after June 2013 and his own personal political plans were shaken:

**Interviewee 04:** **Before 2013 I looked at politics and I knew very well there to find myself in this universe, how to navigate this universe.** I knew very well what I wanted and which skills I should have and where I could go. I thought of being a candidate [...] and at until moment I felt like a kind of reference. [...] And after 2013, the feeling I had is that it was gone. **Now everyone can talk about everything, so I do not feel like a reference to anyone anymore** and I get disoriented [...]. And even my own idea of where I'd like to go has been changed. I do not know if I want to be a candidate for anything today, because I think politics has changed in a very deep way after these protests.

It becomes clear, then, that both among those who supported the impeachment and those who criticized it, the experience during June 2013 was of a weak bond with the protests. Some of the respondents were on the streets but did not feel totally comfortable with the course of the demonstrations or with their consequences. Whether as a result of a frustration or a disagreement with practices – or else because of finding greater affinity with the protests of impeachment – some marks are taken as a reference for a critical, detached participation in June 2013.

## **Conclusion**

The present article sought to understand the protests of June 2013 in Belo Horizonte, first from its characterization in line with the global cycle of protests, which started from 2008. In a scenario of neoliberal hegemony, with the precariousness of work and debilitation of state public policies, collective affiliations would be weakened. In this context, contemporary collective actions, based on personalized engagement and subjective expressions of demands,

both on the networks and on the streets, were analyzed (BENNET, SEGERBER, 2012; DEAN, 2016; SINGER, 2013; BRAGA, 2017; TAVARES, BENEDITO, 2018; OFFE, 2013). During June 2013, this would be visible in the demonstrations' great diversity and in the production of content based on the protestor's perspective, alternative media and online debates (D'ANDREA, ZILLER, 2014a, 2014b; OLIVEIRA et al, 2014; GOMES, 2016). Within such diversity, an ambivalence was identified in June 2013: there would have been the presence of demands, actors and forms of action on both the right and the left in June 2013 (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016; BRINGEL, 2018).

Two proposals of systematization were analyzed in order to understand the characteristics of the left and right-wing fields in this ambivalent scenario: the one of Alonso and Miche (2016) and the one of Bringel (2018). The first authors understand that there was a mixture of repertoires in the 2013 cycle of protests, which would have led to the formation of two strategic fields of action, to the right and left of the federal government: the patriotic and the autonomist (ALONSO, MISCHÉ, 2016). The last author identifies, during and after June 2013, the performance of four fields: democratic-popular, alter-activist, liberal-conservative and authoritarian-reactionary (BRINGEL, 2018). Such formulations made it possible to identify a tension between left and right-wing during the 2013 protests. This ambivalence should not be understood as a clear-cut division, especially during the chaotic and plural events in 2013, but as a helpful way to look at the protests today. Therefore, it helps with the objective to have a closer investigation about the right-wing experiences in that protest cycle.

With this understanding, the article proceeded to analyze the narratives of the right-wing interviewees who participated in June 2013 to identify who these actors were, their practices and their grammars in this cycle of protests. Regarding the actors, a participation was perceived without the coordination of political organizations, as the interviewees went to the streets alone or with friends. It is understood that this individual participation in the protests is attuned with the more fluid and personalized collective action in the protests, which took place both on the streets and in the networks. It is also consistent with the multiplicity of 2013 and with the weak and critical participation of the right-wing protestors. As for the critics against "violence", they were singled out as one of the reasons for the interviewees to feel detached from the protests, because they felt insecure or did not agree with the depredation practices that were widespread. The last practice analyzed was the use of national colors, which has been identified with the right in the country ever since. From the interviews, one can see that there were those who used such symbols because of a nationalistic ideal, but there were those who were ashamed of such



use, since they disagreed with the directions that the right-wing took after these protests. Finally, regarding the grammars, there was the identification of a nationalistic grammar, that expressed itself in the right-wing perspective as a defense of the country against forces considered as illegitimate, in this case, the state institutions and political elites, deteriorated by the corruption.

In the last section of the article, it was proposed to analyze some interpretations of the interviewees regarding the period after the 2013 protests. It was possible to identify that this cycle of protests was a “awakening” for them, a start of political engagement. However, there were overlaps in the memory of the demonstrators, between the cycle in analysis and the one that followed it – the one in favor of Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment. Some elements were mixed in their narratives, and they felt more central only in the second cycle. It could be identified an estrangement of the interviewees regarding the events of June: either by criticizing events during or after 2013, or by the greater affinity with the pro-impeachment protests, respondents show only a partial identification with the June demonstrations. In conclusion, this paper finds that the June protests were important for the right-wing, but both the demonstrations and the right-wing were too dispersed. It was the following events that made possible the actors’ continuous articulation and formation of collective actions and identities to gain space and strength to impeach the former president, and now, elect a right-wing-authoritarian president.

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## ABSTRACT

Brazil has seen two big cycles of protests between 2013 and 2016. The first, known as ‘June 2013’, is related to the post-2008 global cycle of protests, with collective actions and imaginaries associated with Occupy Wall Street, the Indignados and the Arab Spring. The second, started in the end of 2014 and went on until mid-2016, centered on claims against corruption and the demand to impeach President Dilma Rousseff. In this second cycle, right-wing contentious politics gained more strength and a deep political polarization could be noticed in Brazil.

This article aims to investigate the narratives of the right-wing protestors that were present at June 2013 about their participation in that cycle and the following interpretations and actions that led them to the second cycle of protests. The paper is based on interviews made with 18 protestors in Belo Horizonte city, who were selected through multiple criteria: presence on June 2013, use of national colors, identification with the right or being a member of right-wing organizations. The snow-ball method led us to 16 right-wing protestors and 2 people identified with center-left, but who went to the protests dressed in the national colors – the use of national colors has been mostly associated with the right-wing in Brazilian recent polarized history.

We start with an overall view of June 2013 protests, articulating its economic dimension – the austerity measures in Brazilian cities and the precariat – with the new organizational elements, such as the use of social media and non-hierarchical forms of collective action, and the pluralities and ambivalences of the protestors and their demands. The second part of the article aims to look closer at this right/left ambivalence in the 2013 cycle and analyze the interviews. We systematized their narratives in three directions: i) the right-wing actors who took part of the protests; ii) their practices; iii) the grammars framing these practices. In regards to actors, we found that most protestors went alone or with some friends to the protests, without a group or political collectivity with which they identify. As for the practices, they were against violence (seen as part of the left practices or of bad-intentioned people) and they used the national colors – but it was more widespread than only in the right-wing field. Finally, regarding grammars, they were related to a big moral change in politics. However, an important feature in their grammar is that the right-wing protestors understand the June 2013 cycle as an important moment for their interest in politics, but too confused and diverse. It is with the second cycle, the one in which they gained more centrality, that they show more enthusiasm and identification. In conclusion, we find that the June protests were important for the right-wing, but both the protests and the right-wing were too dispersed. It was the following events that made possible their continuous articulation and formation of collective actions and identities to gain space and strength to impeach the former president, and now, elect a right-wing-authoritarian president.