

Representatives and the Represented: Political Parties, Participation, and the Brazilian Protests in 2013

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Introduction

In 2013, the Brazilian political landscape was marked by protests that simultaneously occurred in various cities. The initial cause of this movement was the increase in prices of public transportation services. Suddenly, they widened to incorporate the agendas of diverse demands for improved public services, from economic performance to corruption. In a general sense, the movement was a novelty in terms of citizen participation. It was the first time since the impeachment in 1992 of the President Fernando Collor de Mello in which such large number of people mobilized in the streets for political reasons.

In Brazil, the incremental process of public participation occurred and developed solely along the twentieth century. This is a process that coincides with the movement of individuals from rural areas into urban settlements, in which conflicts were mediated by syndical organizations that originated from the Brazilian industrialization process of this period. This process was also intensified by the social inequities and situation of misery of the population following this mass migration process, especially the mobilization of ecclesiastical communities that served as the base of the progressive catholic society. Nevertheless, although there has been non-electoral political participation during this time, the reach of political participation in Brazil is still weak.

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In this sense, what is notable about the current reality in Brazil and in other contemporary democracies is the low rate of participation of citizens in political issues. This encompasses mass movements such as street mobilizations and social movements as well as more traditional forms of public participation linked to political parties. The changes observed in recent years partially help explain low levels of participation, new forms of communication, the ascension of nongovernmental organizations in defense of certain causes, the distancing of political parties from social bases, and others. The most recent behavior of parties, which consists of reaching the government and distancing themselves from citizens, diminishes the ability for citizens to identify themselves with certain parties (Albala and Vieira 2014). In Brazil, despite mandatory voting laws that lead to high voter turnout, it is possible to observe the low level of identification of citizens with political parties.

In a context in which the grand majority of parties offer little or no clarity on their ideological positions and uneven coalitions of parties in which each has preferences that diverge from other parties form a governing base, the ability of electors to identify themselves with one group or another is muddled. With low ideological identification and low levels of confidence in political parties as representatives of societal interests, the citizens that took to the streets in 2013 rejected the presence and participation of parties in the protests.

In this chapter, we aim to discuss the Brazil's protests in June 2013 in light of discussions surrounding the low level of party identification, weak linkages between parties and society, and the history of low levels of participation observed in the country. For this, we will utilize different survey sources carried out in recent years, namely, the ESEB,¹ Datafolha,² and NUPPS.³ Our analysis of these sources pertains specifically to questions on democracy, political participation, and partisan identity.

¹“The ESEB [Brazilian Electoral Study] is a study linked to the international project *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES), coordinated by the University of Michigan (www.cses.org) and other participating institutions of various countries. The CSES project is based on the general premise and thesis that sociopolitical contexts and in particular institutional arrangements that structure electoral dynamics affect the nature and quality of democratic choice. Thus, its principal objectives are to identify which contextual variables, principally those relating to electoral institutions, shape beliefs and behavior of citizens and define the capacity or quality of the democratic regimen through elections; to understand the nature of social and political alignments and cleavages; and to understand how citizens that live under different political arrangements and rules evaluate political processes and democratic institutions.”

²Research institute linked to the *Folha de São Paulo* group, which also administers the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*.

³Two surveys are used: “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas” [“The Distrust of Citizens in Democratic Institutions”] (2006) and “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia” [Brazil: 25 Years of Democracy”] (2014).

Multiparty Politics and Party Identification in Brazil

Historically, the Brazilian party system has suffered changes due to modifications of the rules of the political system. The system was originally multi-partisan before the military regime came to power in 1964. Following the coup d'état of 1964, a specimen of bipartisanship took form. Upon the dissolution of the authoritarian regime and the return to democratic rule, multiparty system was reinstalled. At the root of the Brazilian multiparty system is the fact that no single party obtains an absolute majority. In this sense, the priority of leaders is to form coalitions with other parties to form majorities and guarantee governability. Systems with these characteristics have great complexities, since the multiplication of parties makes it difficult to understand the position of each one in the spectrum (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997).

The number of parties can vary in each country and along time. In the period of “redemocratization” in Brazil, it is possible to observe an increase in the absolute number of parties and in the number of parties that present candidacies at each level. In 1980, the first election since the return to a multiparty system included races for state governors and deputies, and five parties had candidates for open seats. In 1989, which included the first direct election for president 9 years after the dictatorship period, there were 27 total candidates from separate parties. This number increased to 30 in 1998 and returned back to 27 in 2010. However, 32 parties had candidates in the election of 2014, which can be observed in Graph 1.

The increase in the number of parties in the political arena also leads to an increase in the number of effective parties represented in the legislature. In recent years, the ENP (effective number of parties) has varied from 6.7 in 1997/1998 (Araújo 2014) to 11.5 during the elections of 2010. Nevertheless, in the most recent



Graph 1 Absolute number of parties in Brazil – 1979–2014 (Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Tribunal Superior Electoral [Superior Electoral Tribunal] – TSE)

elections of 2014, the ENP reached its highest rate in history, at 13.1. As a result, we have the most fragmented congress since 1946.⁴

It can be observed that a context of a highly fragmented multiparty system generates grand challenges to parties in a general sense and to the electoral coalition more specifically, since the winning coalition in elections will have to develop a strategy to amplify their support base among parties represented in the National Congress.

In order to gain a wider base, the main party or victorious coalition in the election⁵ has to reach agreements with many other actors to guarantee a majority that will then permit carrying out an effective agenda. In this sense, the “loosening” of the political agenda becomes necessary so that actors in the governing coalition approve the executive’s projects. Another important question is related to the distribution of ministries and/or secretaries among the allied parties of the governing base. In general, this confirmation is characterized by generalized and heterogeneous coalitions with a diverse ideological identity, which complicates the ability of voters to ideologically identify the government or the parties that compose its support base.

Given the large number of parties and the formation of heterogeneous coalitions, it is now possible to turn our attention to the representation and the partisan identity of the Brazilian voter. More specifically, one can question if parties create links with voters or if they identify themselves with existing parties. Based on the changes observed, one may infer that in new democracies there is a notable difficulty in the construction of party identity.

This phenomenon has occurred due to two factors: (1) the time horizon of existence of parties is brief, and (2) consequently, parties are young and voters do not have a profound knowledge on them, which hampers identification. An additional factor is the constant movement of parties, which can be seen by their emergence, disappearance, or fusion into new groupings. With such a large number of parties and constant movements, citizens are not successfully able to follow these systematic transformations. In a country where many parties exist in the political sphere, a voter will have difficulty identifying differences between them. Consequently, linkages between voters and parties are not established. This does not mean that all parties are the same, as many try to differentiate themselves by emphasizing specific issues.

In a general sense, party identification is decreasing in all contemporary democracies, which is associated with the changes observed in modern society. Among others, we emphasize the advancement of social media and new forms of communication, the emergence of civil society organizations that focus on specific demands, etc. (Montero et al. 2007). What is most notable is the manner in which civil society is related with political parties has changed in all democracies (Mair 2003). In the case of new democracies, this element is intensified by the fact that parties have emerged in the political realm following dictatorships, in which very few links between society and party structure were maintained from the previous period. As

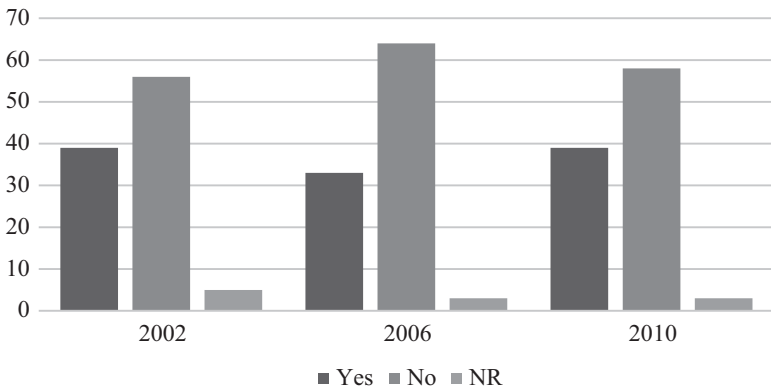
⁴<http://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/noticias/o-saldo-das-eleicoes-em-2014/>.

⁵It is important to clarify that there is more than one type of coalition. One is the electoral coalition, which supports the given candidate, and the other is the post-electoral coalition, which is broader.

such, in the case of Brazil, these linkages between voter and party began developing from scratch⁶ in a moment of important social change, namely, the increased size of the electorate and new forms of communication. With respect to party identification in Brazil, one can observe two trends: (1) the weak relationship between partisan preference and voter behavior and (2) despite low party identification of voters, parties in Brazil continue to be responsible for structuring voter behavior (Paiva and Torouco 2011). This phenomenon is proven by recent survey data, such as the ESEB, the surveys of the *Datafolha* Institute titled “The Distrust of Citizens in Democratic Institutes” (2006) and “Brazil: 25 Years of Democracy” (2014). Based on the ESEB data from 2002 to 2010, the percentage of voters who identify with any party, in the three rounds observed, is close to 40% and with a drop to 30% in 2006, as the graph below shows (Graph 2).

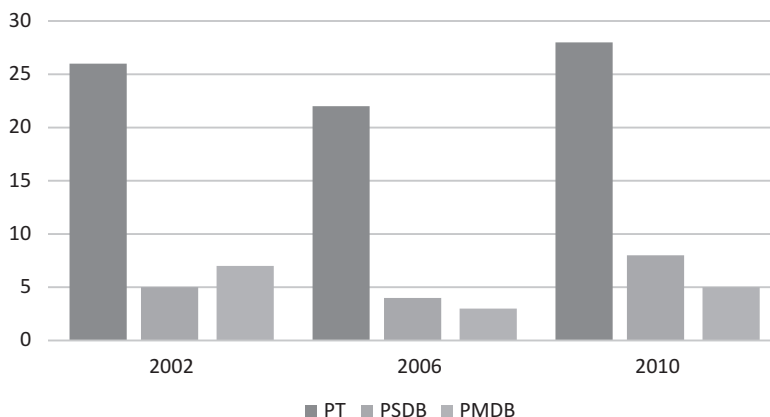
When asked about the party with which they most strongly identify, the most common response in all three survey editions was the *Worker’s Party* (PT), which concentrates the preference of almost 30% of voters that expressed sympathy for any party. The next most common responses were the *Brazilian Social Democratic Party* (PSDB), which hovers around 4–8%, and the *Brazilian Democratic Movement Party* (PMDB), which falls between 3 and 7%. All other parties received less than 3% of the total (Graph 3).

Despite the presence of multiple parties in the Brazilian political system for over 30 years, what can be observed in this graph is that only the PT, PMDB, and PSDB successfully obtain a significant part of voter support. In other words, when participants are spontaneously asked this question, the parties that come to mind of voters are these three large parties. In this graph, it is possible to observe that voters reveal their preference spontaneously, which suggests a strong link between voters and their preferred party. This is different from what we find in Graph 5 (on page 7),



Graph 2 Party identification ESEB voters that identified with a party (Source: Vieira (2012) based on ESEB Research 2002, 2006, 2010; database ESEB – NUPPS (http://nupps.usp.br/index.php?option=com_jdownloads&view=viewcategory&catid=4&Itemid=38&lang=pt); and Tendencias ESEB 2010)

⁶In the Brazilian case, the exception is the PMDB, which has origins in the MDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement], the old opposition party during the military dictatorship.



Graph 3 Party with which voters identify (spontaneous) (Source: Vieira (2012) based on ESEB Research 2002, 2006, 2010; database ESEB – NUPPS (http://nupps.usp.br/index.php?option=com_jdownloads&view=viewcategory&catid=4&Itemid=38&lang=pt); and Tendencias ESEB 2010)

where the voter manifests his proximity based on a list of parties provided. In this case, the link between party and voter is considered weaker. The very use of the term “identification” results in a stronger link between voter and party than the term “proximity” does.

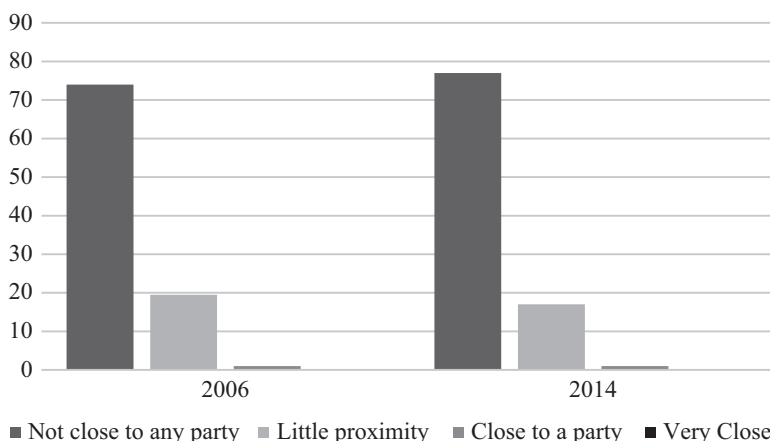
Observing the historical data series of *Datafolha* on partisan identity in Brazil, Samuels and Zucco (2013) argue that there is no relation between Brazilian voters’ party identity and a specific party. As is the case in the ESEB survey, the data from *Datafolha* suggests that on average 40% of voters identify with a party and between those 25% identify with the PT. The PSDB and PMDB are mentioned by approximately 4% of the electorate. Nevertheless, they state that “only one party – the PT – can gather a considerable proportion of the electorate as supporters of the party” (Samuels and Zucco 2013: 07). The authors argue that the low level of identification occurs due to the large number of parties, especially small ones that do not present a clear ideological identity or make their preferences known in terms of public policy, which generates confusion among voters as a whole.

Despite the low level of party identification observed within the Brazilian electorate, on questions related to the importance of voting in the survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas” [“The Distrust of Citizens in Democratic Institutions”] (2006), 47% of participants consider voting as an influential factor on the developments in the country, and 63% believe that without political parties, there would be no democracy. Nevertheless, in the 2014 edition of the same survey, 64% believe that political parties contribute to dividing people, while 29% believe they are indispensable to democracy. Furthermore, 66% believe that parties represent their own politicians and, only 12% believe that they represent the interests of the population as a whole.

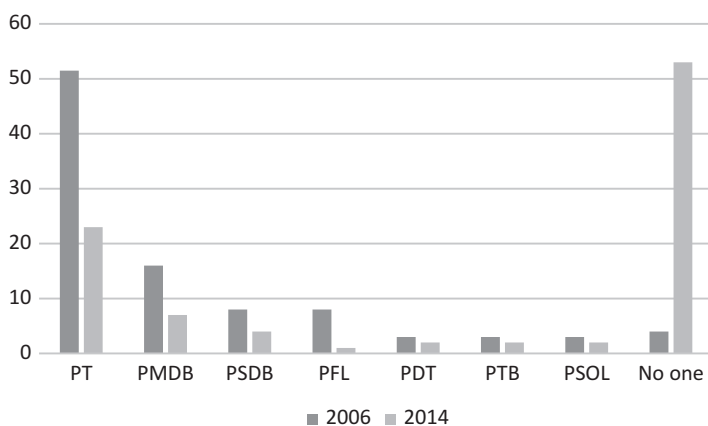
On questions regarding the relationship between democracy and multiparty systems, 42% of respondents stated that they consider democracy to be related to hav-

ing a diverse number of parties, although within this group 42% does not believe there should be only one party (Graph 4).

When asked about their proximity to political parties, a slight increase in the number of electors that don't feel close to any party between 2006 and 2014 can be observed, from 74% to 77%. The number of sympathizers of the large parties has also decreased. Nevertheless, those that previously sympathized with one of the large parties have not had greater proximity with another party. Instead, the percentage of those who stated not feeling close to any party increased significantly, as observed in the Graph 5 below.



Graph 4 Proximity with political parties (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp). 2014: Survey “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP))



Graph 5 Proximity to parties (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp). 2014: Survey “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP))

The decrease in party identification occurs within the context of the political protests of Brazil in 2013. One of the principles of the protests was to resist against political parties. In fact, the protestors rejected party symbols and their organized militancy. The protests were not directed against the governing party, the PT, or their own government, as we will see in the following pages.

One topic that must be stressed is that the majority of voters do not identify with the governing party nor do they have established relations with the opposition party. In other words, the main opposition parties have not been able to answer the preferences of voters unsatisfied with the government. These votes are dispersed among a diverse group of smaller parties, as previously mentioned. In this context, the number of parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies has increased in the previous elections, and the effective number of parties has changed along this time period, which reached 11.5 in 2010 and 13.1 in the most recent election.

Political Participation in Brazil

The widening gap between representatives and the represented in the Brazilian political system has already been recognized by previous studies (Fernandez et al. 2014). Although this gap is not as wide as one may think, a common belief is that this separation was one of the indicators that led to the emergence of the protests that took place in many cities throughout Brazil in the middle of 2013. This topic will be addressed in the following section. Although it cannot be said that the principal cause of the protests was this separation between representatives and the represented, it is possible that it was one of them.

In a political context marked by formal mechanisms, political defection, distancing between representatives and represented, and asymmetry between resources available to citizens, political participation holds a central place in political debates directed at the current workings of democratic systems.

Political participation⁷ emerged conjointly with the sovereign state in the period of revolutionary movements in Europe during the eighteenth and fourteenth centuries. The consolidation of the sovereign state provided the possibility that each individual could demand his or her rights. In this process the right to vote for working classes was a tool used to increase participation (Avelar and Cintra 2004). This along with the possibility of political organization allowed individuals to successfully climb many steps in the process of becoming citizens, as they now had a path to transform themselves into active political participants. Specifically, political parties, social movements, and interest groups are current examples that resulted from

⁷By “political participation” it is understood the actions of individuals and social groups whose objective is to influence the political process (Avelar and Cintra 2004). In other words, this definition encompasses all activities in which citizens partake that are directed at intervening in the designations of their governors or influence in the formation of state politics.

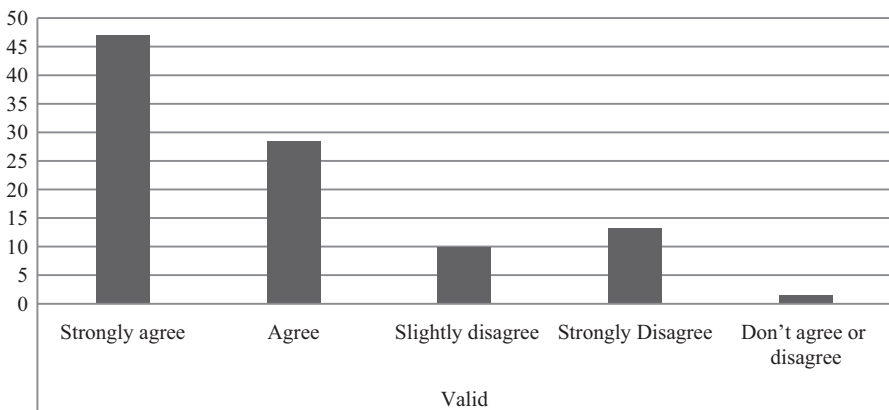
the widening of participation and strengthening of organized society that took place at the end of the seventeenth century.

The process of incremental participation occurred only in the twentieth century, as it coincided with the movement of people from rural to urban areas. Syndicate organizations mediated this process and were formed as a result of the new industrialization of Brazil during this period.

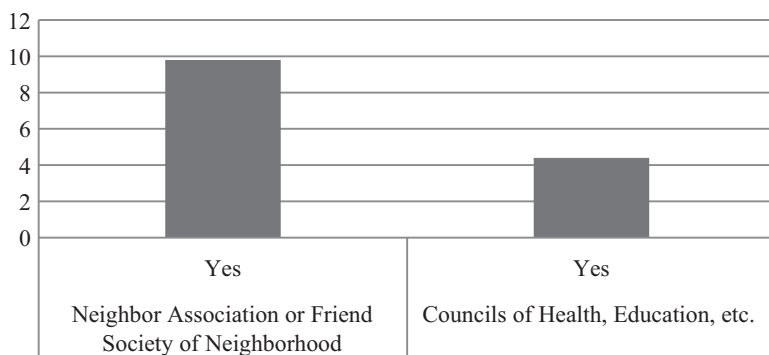
However, Brazilian participation has slowly developed along time. While neighboring countries of the Southern Cone, such as Argentina, have a dense history of non-electoral political engagement and participation, Brazil has been characterized as a country of weak participation outside of elections. The data presented in the graphs that follow outline the character of Brazilian political participation in the past 10 years compared to other nations. Brazilian citizenship at the beginning of the twenty-first century considers the “useful vote” as a very important tool that can influence in the political happenings of the country. The two groups of citizens that responded “agree” and “strongly agree” combine to represent 75.4% of the total amount, as shown by Graph 6.

Voting is still considered by Brazilians to be the most important form of political participation, based on observing the other forms of participation presented below. This becomes more evident when citizen engagement is observed in other forms of participation in Graph 7. In 2006, less than 10% of all citizens participate in neighborhood associations and a little less than 4% participate in councils. These two graphs confirm the tendency of increasing use of voting as Brazilians preferred method of political participation in detriment to other types of participation.

Observing non-electoral data on political participation in Brazil in two separate points of time, it is notable that there is minimal variation in the culture of participation, with the exception of participation in protests. This tendency indicates that the culture of participation in non-electoral political events in Brazil changed in the



Graph 6 Does voting allow individuals to influence national events and occurrences? – 2006
 (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp) 2014)



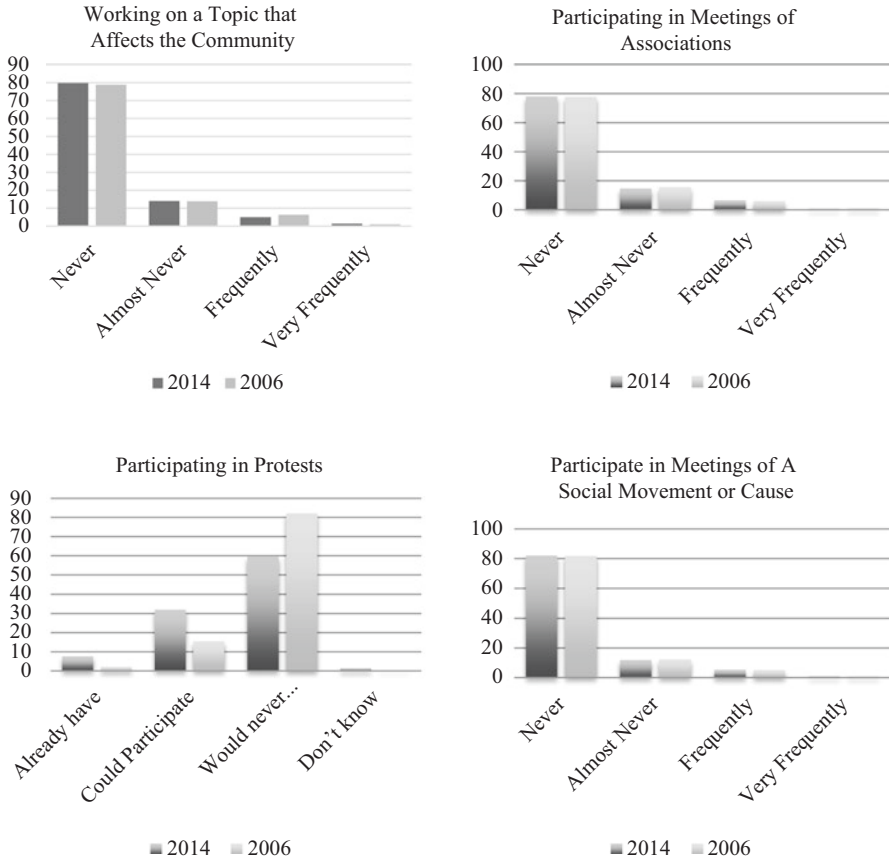
Graph 7 Other types of participation in 2006 (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp) 2014)

most recent years. Nevertheless, the data does not support this affirmation. In Graph 8, it can be seen that participating in work on topics that affect the community, association meetings, and meetings related to movements or social causes has maintained the same levels without variation between 2006 and 2014. On the other hand, there is a notable and significant difference related to participation in protests during the same 2006–2014 period, as the percentage of citizens who declared having participated in protests increased. Additionally, the percentage of individuals who stated that they never participate in a protest decreased by almost 20%. As such, the increase in participation in protests does not indicate a change in the culture of participation in non-electoral political events among Brazilians.

The argument previously made is confirmed when observing Graph 9. In this graph, with data from 2014, all forms of non-electoral participation reached low percentage levels of total responses.

Social protests are forms of collective action utilized by civil society to reach their determined objectives. Through collective action, people participate in politics and exercise their power against the established authorities. These practices, although not completely successful, are important because they produce long-reaching effects and put in movement important political changes (Tarrow 1997). With the previously mentioned data, it becomes clear that in the Brazilian political arena, cultural participation is not deeply engrained in society. Therefore, the protests of 2013 do not signal a change in Brazilian culture, but they represent isolated facts in the panorama of participation of Brazilian citizenry.

In a political arena in which citizenship does not see itself represented by parties, it opens space for the participation of civil society through social manifestations. When society finds itself without channels through which to express itself, without a public voice, they go out to the streets. Under a scenario of crisis of representation, expressing one’s own demands in the streets becomes the only road for citizens to engage in politics. This road can become the first step toward the consolidation of non-electoral political participation in Brazil.

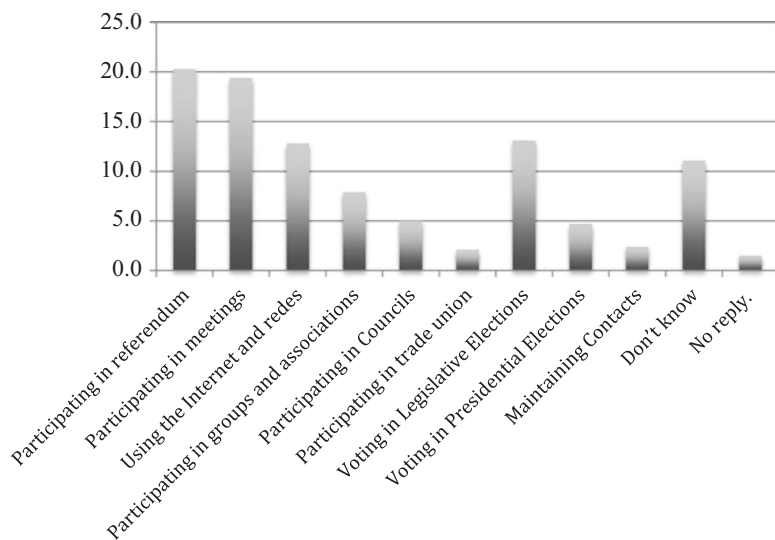


Graph 8 Forms of participation in 2014 and 2006 (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp). 2014: Survey “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP))

The Protests of June 2013

As previously mentioned in the introduction, a series of popular protests occurred in June 2013 in the largest cities of Brazil. They began in the city of São Paulo, whose objective was to protest the increase of the price of public transport. In the first half of June, a small group of people that notably included youths led by the “Movimento Passe Livre,” a group organized with special interest of ending public transport tariffs, were invited by social media to occupy central parts of the city, such as the Paulista Avenue. Local newspapers spoke of only a few thousand people, but it was a sufficient number of people to create traffic problems in the city.

On the 11th, a protest occurred with a large confrontation between protestors and police authorities, with scenes of destruction of public spaces shown in the media,



Graph 9 Ways of influencing the public decision-making process – 2014* (Source: 2014: Survey “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia,” *Question: What are the following actions that constitute the best way for individuals to influence public decisions in 2014?)

which caused greater apprehension of authorities for the following protest on the 13th of June. The inability of public authorities to adequately address the protests, which had been violently repressed by the police, completely changed both the meaning and dimension of the protests. The population rejected the actions of the police, which indiscriminately attacked protestors and journalists that reported on the event.

Following this moment, the protests continued in the first half of June but with two important changes. First of all, the protest went from a few thousand people to hundreds of thousands. Spontaneously, other sectors of society took to the streets and protests began to occur in other parts of the country. At the peak of the protests, 1 million people protested in 25 capitals in the country (e.g., with 300,000 people in Rio de Janeiro).⁸

The profile of the protestors⁹ remained predominantly young, with almost half of the protestors being between 14 and 24 years of age. Despite this noteworthy characteristic, older groups were not entirely absent. Almost 20% of all participants in the protests were 40 years of age or older. Another notable characteristic is the high level of educational attainment in the group, with only a small percentage of participants not having begun high school. The two largest groups were those with high school or higher education initiated (49%) and those with higher education com-

⁸The numbers, although inexact, have been disseminated by the media and serve as a reference (<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2013/06/1298755-manifestacoes-levam-1-milhao-de- pessoas-as-ruas-em-todo-pais.shtml>).

⁹This data is on protestors of eight cities (IBOPE) that participated in the protests on June 20th. Other surveys in specific cities or on other days show little differences.

pleted (43%). This data becomes particularly interesting considering that the national index shows only 8% of the population with university studies (IBGE 2010) (Table 1).

With a high proportion of youths and higher levels of education, one could imagine that the level of income of participants would also be relatively higher. Nevertheless, the data on economic background shows a much more equilibrated picture. A total of 45% of participants had income of at least five minimum salaries (a level considered low). Although a more elevated education level of participants relative to the Brazilian population as a whole may suggest the prevalence of the most elite sectors of society in the protests, the high level of participation of people from the lowest income levels does not confirm this hypothesis.

The second important change is closely related to the multiplication of protestors and cities where protests occurred, in which the demands made by protestors became more diffuse, thereby reflecting a more general sense of dissatisfaction with the situation of the country instead of a protest related to a specific objective. There have been various motives mentioned by the protestors (see Table 2) for taking to the streets. The two most common reasons provided were public transportation (the initial reason of the protests) (27.8%) and corruption (24.2%).

Considering the reasons cited, the worries of citizens can be divided into two large dimensions. The first is related to public services. A little over half of all protestors (56.4%) mentioned dissatisfaction with some aspects related to transportation, health, education, or security policy offered by the Brazilian state.

In the second grouping, topics related to the political spectrum (including corruption) appear, as well as police brutality, costs related to the World Cup, and the legislative proposal to strip investigative power from several state agencies (added together these equal over 40% of the total). All of these responses relate to disapproval with activities taken on by the state that do not correspond with the aspirations of citizens.

Table 1 Profile of the protestors

Family income	<2 minimum salaries	2–5 minimum salaries	5–10 minimum salaries	>10 minimum salaries	No response
		15%	30%	26%	23%
Age	14–24 years		25–29 years	30–39 years	40+ years
	43%		20%	18%	19%
Education			High school initiated	High school completed or higher education initiated	Higher education completed
			8%	49%	43%
			Yes	No	
Work			76%	24%	
Study			52%	48%	

Source: Ibope. Manifestación de 20 de Junio, 2013. 2002 interviews in seven capitals of the states (SP, RJ, MG, RS, PE, CE, BA) and in Brasília.

As of June 2013 the minimum salary in Brazil was equivalent to approximately \$300.00 USD

Table 2 Reasons indicated for participating in the protests

	Total responses grouped by topic	Most cited demand within the topic	Second most cited demand within the topic
Public transportation	37.6%	Against the increase in tariffs (27.8%)	System improvements (7.7%)
Political scenario	29.9%	Against corruption (24.2%)	Need for change (2.1%)
Healthy	12.2%	System improvements (12.1)	Others (0.1%)
PEC 37	5.5%		
Education	5.3%	System improvements (5.3%)	
Expenses on world cup of soccer	4.5%	Money should be spent on other priorities (1.8%)	Against misuse of funds (1.6%)
Against violent action of police	1.3%	Against violent action of police (0.8%)	Others (0.5%)
Justice and public security	1.3%	System improvements (1.1%)	Other (0.2%)
Others	2.4%		

Source: Ibope. Protest of June 20th, 2013. 2002 interviews in seven state capitals and in Brasília Constitutional amendment proposal to take away investigative powers of several state agencies, such as the Ministerio Publico [Public Ministry]

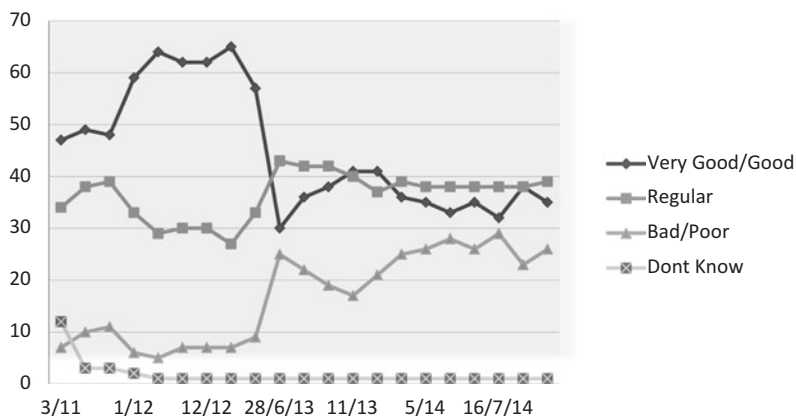
Question: What are the main reasons that led you to participate in the protests? Consider the first response given

Moreover, the two largest concerns expressed by Brazilian relate to *results* of state services offered to the public, as well as *procedures* of the state in the public's eye. These two dimensions translate to a certain extent into measures of the quality of democracy.¹⁰

In the recent democratic period, Brazil has only seen large concentrations of protestors in 1992, against President Collor de Mello, who was involved in a corruption scandal that led to his impeachment at the end of the same year. Different from other countries such as Argentina, which has a deeper history with protests, Brazil is not familiarized with the presence of protests of such a large dimension. Therefore, it is possible that the discontent was associated in equal parts with the *results* of public policy as implemented by the state and with the *procedures* that have been a result of situational factors relative to the specific moment through which the country was passing.

One of these factors may be the discontent with governments of different levels (national, state, and municipal level). The evaluations of the national government are located in Graph 10. As the data shows, there was no critical evaluation of the government on behalf of the population *before* the protests. Favorable evaluation of

¹⁰ Following the academic debate surrounding democratic transitions, the discussion regarding the quality of regiments gained traction. Morlino (2010), for example, mentions three meanings that the quality of democracy can have and that are useful for measuring it: procedures, content, and results.



Graph 10 Evaluation of Dilma government (%) (Source: Datafolha)

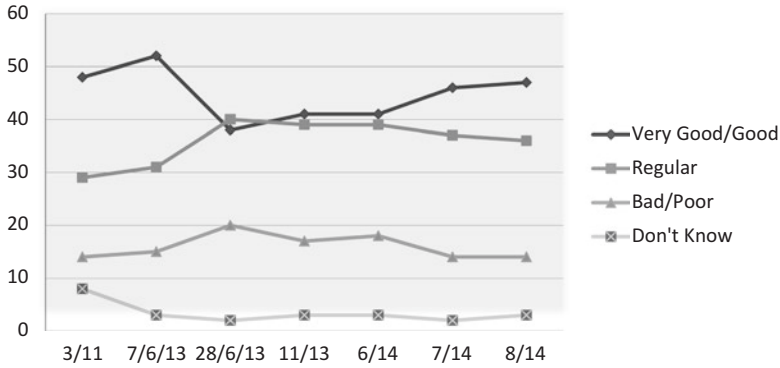
President Dilma (PT) increased between March 2011 and April 2012, maintaining a steady level until the beginning of June, before the national protests took place. Polling done at the end of June, after the largest protests had occurred, a considerable decrease in her favorability ratings can be seen. These ratings never returned to their previous levels before June 2013.

Based on these trends, it becomes clear that discontent with the performance of the federal government was not the specific cause of the protests. To the contrary, it was the protests that contaminated the perception of the population on the performance of the federal government, which would lead to one of the closest disputes of presidential elections in Brazilian democracy. Despite the triumph of the president a little more than a year later, it was a tight race. Undoubtedly, it was the opposition who came out stronger following the elections as well.

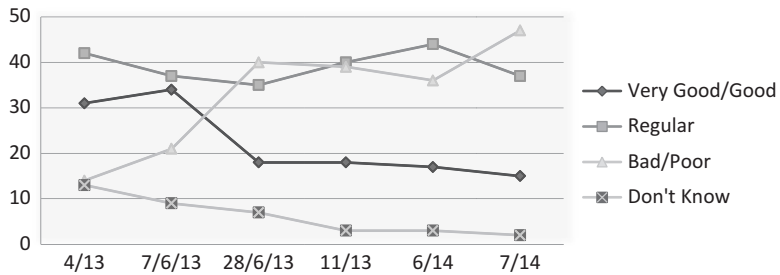
A similar trend can be seen with the evaluation of local governments. In the case of the government of the state of São Paulo (Graph 11), the fall of approval ratings after the protests was not as high as those of the federal government. In this case, Governor Alckmin (PSDB) succeeded in recovering his levels of favorability to those prior to the protests. Similar to President Dilma, he obtained victory in his reelection during the elections of October 2014.

In the case of Mayor of the city of São Paulo, Fernando Haddad (PT), his approval ratings were inferior to those of the federal and state governments. Nevertheless, also following the protests, his ratings suffered a significant fall. In the case of São Paulo, where the protests began, the percentage of responses classified as bad/poor overcame favorable responses in the end of June (Graph 12). There were no elections at the municipal level in 2014, which differs from the presidential and state governor races.

Similar to evaluations of governments, economic matters also may have fueled discontent with the population, as seen in protests in Spain and Portugal during the same time period as the protests in Brazil. In the Iberian countries, dissatisfaction with the severe economic crisis in Europe and government performance led to the



Graph 11 Evaluation of Governor Alckmin (state of São Paulo) (%) (Source: Datafolha)



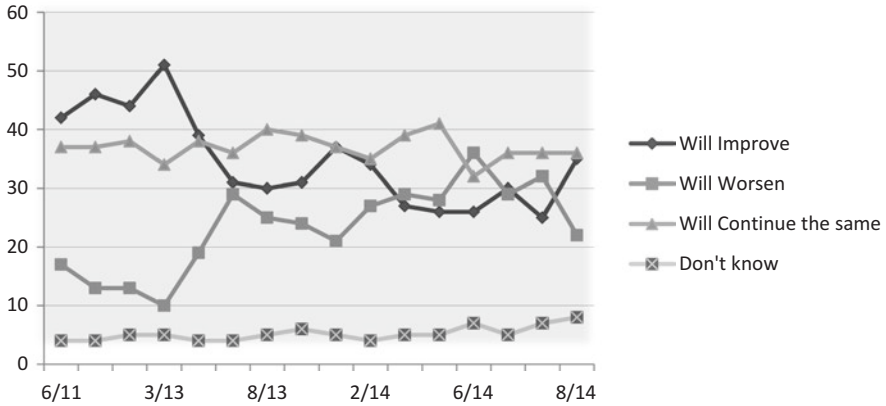
Graph 12 Evaluation of Mayor Fernando Haddad (city of São Paulo) (%) (Source: Datafolha)

mobilization of individuals in the streets. Although government approval in Brazil did not have the same levels that might indicate deep discontent of the population, it could be possible that a change in the economic scenario was effecting perceptions of individuals and consequently promoting dissatisfaction that was manifested in the streets.

In Graph 13, it can be seen that until the beginning of March 2013, the economic expectation of the population surrounding the country was positive, with over 50% believing that the situation would improve and only 10% believing that it would worsen. Although this optimism decreased in the beginning of June (before the protests), with 39% having positive and 19% negative expectations, this trend would also not be sufficient to be considered a wave of pessimism surrounding the economy.

Similar to the evaluations of governors, the expectations surrounding the Brazilian economy also deteriorated following the protests. In the case of the economy, greater fluctuation can be perceived until 2014. Despite less optimistic levels compared to before the protests, they also do not appear as determinants that explain the discontent of the population.

Excluding reasons related to economic unease and discontent with the local and national governments, suggestions can be made related to motivations more deeply



Graph 13 Evaluation of expectation of future national economic performance (%) (Source: Datafolha)

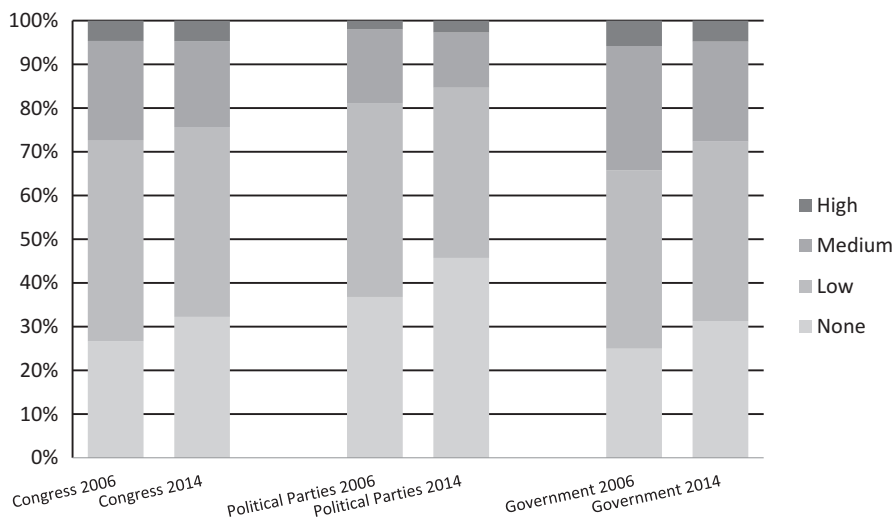
rooted in the culture of Brazilian politics to understand the events that took place in June 2013. The complex and fragmented party system, as previously shown, has not been able to successfully form a link between Brazilians and parties. Additionally, Brazil has very high levels of distrust in its institutions. In 2006, these ratings were not already very high, but they got even worse in 2014, as can be seen in Graph 14. Political parties are the institution that has the lowest level of confidence among Brazilians. If the responses of little or no trust in parties are added together, they reach almost 85% of the population in 2014.

Trust in democratic institutions translates in a certain sense to the perception of the incapacity of the state to respond to the expectations of citizens. Motivations provided by the protestors (Table 2) in almost their entire totality expressed that institutions – including mechanisms of democracy – have failed the country. In general, the protestors requested an improvement in public services, particularly transportation, in addition to making explicit references to a fundamental topic that affects the quality of institutions: corruption.

The interpretation that is proposed here is that this loose sense of discontent related to the performance of Brazilian democracy and its institutions created an environment of suppressed dissatisfaction that found an escape valve. The violent reaction of the police to a local protest and a specific objective was the detonator to these protests of discontent.

The Brazilian political system, despite gaining institutional stability in the recent era, has not been able to create wide linkages between citizens and their principal institutions. The Brazilian political parties do not only have a very negative evaluation, they also have not been able to create linkages with citizens. Provided this, it seems that the protests of June were largely representative of a symptom of a deficit of representation of society.

However, as previously signaled, the recent protests do not indicate a change in the political culture of participation of Brazilians. Other forms of participation are



Graph 14 Trust in institutions, 2006–2014 (%) (Source: 2006: Survey “A Desconfiança dos Cidadãos das Instituições Democráticas,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP) and Rachel Meneguello (Unicamp). 2014: Survey “Brasil 25 anos de Democracia,” coordinated by Prof. José Álvaro Moisés (USP))

still seldom utilized by citizenry for political engagement, aside from the protests of 2013.

A little more than a year after the protests – in October 2014 – general elections took place for president, state governorships, federal deputies, deputies for state assembly, and one third of the senators of the republic. Given the high level of dissatisfaction manifested in the previous year, it was possible to imagine that this discontent would affect the electoral results. In part, this sentiment was reflected by one of the presidential candidacies in the first round.

Following the death of presidential candidate Eduardo Campos of the PSB during a flight accident, the vice-presidential candidate, Marina Silva, took his place. Marina, previously of the PT, left the party in 2009 and held a place in the presidential race in 2010, with the Green Party (PV). In 2013, Marina Silva tried to create a new party, *Sustainability Network (Rede Sustentabilidade)*, with a discourse strongly based on environmental causes and renovation of partisan structures. Her party did not obtain the necessary number of signatures before the deadline to run for president in 2014 and as such opted for joining forces with Campos. Following the death of Campos, Marina Silva took his place with the expectation of being a competitive candidate, as she had obtained a strong level of support in previous elections (19.3% in 2010). Additionally, her personal image, coming from humble origins in the North region of the country, as well as her message against the political practices of the country found greater resonance with the unfulfilled expectations of June 2013.

She achieved expressive levels of support in the first surveys following the official recognition of her candidacy. She achieved first place in voting intentions, but was unable to resist a strong negative campaign launched by her adversaries, particularly from the candidate of the PT contesting reelection, Dilma Rousseff. Ultimately, she ended up repeating her performance in previous elections (19.3% in 2010 and 21.3% in 2014), which indicates a polarized electoral contest of presidential elections between the PT and PSDB, that has dominated national politics for almost 20 years (Table 3).

Accordingly, the executive power at the national level continues to be competitively disputed by only two parties, despite party fragmentation at the legislative and local levels. On the one hand, this may indicate that only these two parties are capable of creating political projects that are consistent with the visions of the electorate. On the other hand, it may mean that the protests have not been capable of producing changes in the political arena of Brazil, which could generate changes in relations between representatives and the represented.

Concluding Points

In the recent democratic period of Brazil, the political system achieved unforeseen institutional stability. However, during this period, the principal Brazilian political institutions have not been able to gain the confidence of its citizenry. Political parties in particular do not represent the majority of Brazilians, in the opinion of citizens. A certain level of criticism of the political system and its main institutions can be healthy for democracy. Nevertheless, the general distancing of politics and political parties, the principal institution that links citizens to the political system, can create conditions that affect if not the maintenance of democracy at least its quality.

Political participation in Brazil in organized movements has been historically low. Brazilians give greater importance to electoral participation, although mandatory voting is partially responsible for high levels of turnout. It is important to emphasize that the level of blank and null voting and abstinence is relatively low, despite low levels of party identification. Based on the information provided, it remains clear that in Brazil participatory culture is still not engrained in society. Thus, the protests of 2013 do not signify a change in the culture of political participation but rather isolated events in the panorama of participation of Brazilian citizenship.

The large protests that took place in the streets of main cities in June 2013 surprised many, especially since there was not considered to be great levels of dissatisfaction or economic pessimism at the time. There was also not an excessive level of unpopularity of the federal government, nor the state and city governments of São Paulo (where the protests began). Instead, it was after these protests that individuals more critically evaluated the government. How then does one explain the movements of June 2013?

Table 3 Results of presidential elections (Brazil 1994–2014)

	1994 ^a	1998 ^a	2002 1st round	2002 2nd round	2006 1st round	2006 2nd round	2010 1st round	2010 2nd round	2014 1st round	2014 2nd round
PT	39.9% Lula	31.7% Lula	46.4% Lula	61.2% Lula	48.6% Lula	60.8% Lula	46.9% Dilma	56% Dilma	41.5% Dilma	51.6% Dilma
PSDB	55.2% FHC	53% FHC	23.1% Serra	38.7% Serra	41.6% Alekmin	39.1% Alekmin	32.6% Serra	43.9% Serra	33.5% Aécio	48.3% Aécio
3 ^o Place	2.1% Eneas (Prona)	10.9% Ciro (PPS)	17.8% Garotinho (PSB)		6.8% H. Helena (PSOL)		19.3% Marina (PV)		21.3% Marina (PSB)	

Source: Tribunal Superior Eleitoral

^aIn 1994 and 1998, Fernando Henrique Cardoso obtained over 50% in the first round, and as a result, there was no second round

The low sense of linkage of Brazilian citizens with the representative system can be in large measure the result of the flexibility of the political-electoral system that facilitates the creation of more political parties and follows a logic of facilitating the formation of coalitions or negotiating electoral and political support¹¹ instead of the logic of representation of segments of the electorate and their interests. This high level of fragmentation of groupings has lowered the intelligibility of the system, thereby having an even greater effect on partisan linkages.

Without closing the discussions on this topic, it can be suggested that the sense of general discontent with the Brazilian political situation has been created throughout the years. The low sense of representation could have been responsible for creating a potent fuel for the protests. In addition to this, the critiques of the quality of public services and the vices of politics led citizens to manifest their opposition to the system, in a general sense. In this scenario, a specific protest located in the city of São Paulo, with an underwhelming response on behalf of public authorities, particularly the police force, became a crucial factor in unleashing the suppressed feelings of frustration of society, as we have indicated.

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¹¹ In Brazil, even small political parties have the right to free propaganda time on television and radio, which encourages larger parties to want to form coalitions with these smaller ones in order to increase their total airtime during electoral campaigns.

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