

Experiences and Trajectories of Young People: collective actions in the 2010s

Luis Antonio Groppo¹

¹Universidade Federal de Alfenas (UNIFAL), Alfenas/MG – Brazil

ABSTRACT – Experiences and Trajectories of Young People: collective actions in the 2010s. The theme of this study is the political experiences and expectations of young people who participated in collective actions in Brazil in the 2010s. The results of three recent studies in the field of Sociology of Education are analyzed. The political trajectories of these young people are also analyzed, constructing two trajectory models, with the support of the autonomist and socialist contestation repertoires as categories of analysis.. The methodology used interviews with young activists and militants. The results include: a preference for the collective format and elements of the autonomist repertoire; the importance of identity politics; and the difficulties faced by these young people and their organizations in recent years.

Keywords: Student Movement. Youth Collectives. Student Occupations. 2013 Journeys. Trajectories.

RESUMO – Experiências e Trajetórias de Jovens: ações coletivas nos anos 2010. Tendo como tema as experiências e expectativas políticas de jovens que, nos anos 2010, no Brasil, atuaram em ações coletivas, analisam-se os resultados de três pesquisas recentes no campo da Sociologia da Educação. Analisam-se também as trajetórias políticas de tais jovens, construindo dois modelos de trajetória, com o apoio dos repertórios de contestação autonomista e socialista como categorias de análise. Na metodologia, destacaram-se entrevistas com jovens militantes e ativistas. Entre os resultados, temos: a preferência pelo formato de coletivos e de elementos do repertório autonomista; a importância das políticas identitárias; as dificuldades de tais jovens e suas organizações nos anos mais recentes.

Palavras-chave: Movimento Estudantil. Coletivos Juvenis. Ocupações Estudantis. Jornadas de 2013. Trajetórias.

Introduction

This article focuses on the experiences, expectations, and political trajectories of young people who, in Brazil during the 2010s, participated in progressive organizations and collective actions. The article analyzes the results of three recent studies coordinated by the author, which addressed the experiences of young people in organizations and collective actions in the following contexts: the 2013 Journeys; the 2015 and 2016 high school student occupations; and youth collectives at a public university in southern Minas Gerais between 2016 and 2019. The three studies in question are:

1) “The Educational Dimension of youth organizations: Study of non-formal educational processes and political formation in youth organizations at a public university in Minas Gerais”: conducted between March 2016 and February 2019 (Groppo et al., 2020);

2) “High school student occupations in Brazil in 2015 and 2016: Formation and self-formation of the occupants as political subjects”: conducted between March 2019 and February 2022 (Groppo; Sallas; Sofiati, 2022);

3) “Educational dimensions of the 2013 Protests: Educational agendas, school experiences and political training of young people in protest”: in progress (started in March 2022) (Groppo et al., 2024)¹.

These studies address education in its broadest sense, considering, beyond school-type institutions and their teaching, the formative practices provided by experiences in collective action and political organizations, highlighting political formation and its influences on the educational, political, and professional trajectories of young people. This article records and analyzes the experiences, expectations, and trajectories of people from a generation that lived their youth between 2013 and 2019. Some of them ceased to be young at some point during these years, while others entered adulthood and the challenges inherent in this life cycle. Therefore, this text addresses a group of people we investigated individuals who were young at least between 2013 and 2019, as activists and militants in student organizations or participants in youth collective actions, from the progressive field, especially what we identify as the left – that is, parties, movements, and other organizations guided by the pursuit of social transformations that aspire to increase equality among people (Bobbio, 2001).

The questions this article seeks to answer are formulated as follows: What did young activists and militants from the 2013 Journeys and youth collectives active at a public university in southern Minas Gerais between 2016 and 2019, as well as adolescents active in the high school occupations of 2015 and 2016, experience in these organizations and collective actions? What expectations did they have? What can these experiences and expectations reveal about the political trajectories of a generation of young people in Brazil and its different generational units²?

These studies used a common data collection methodology: a literature review and semi-structured interviews with young activists

and militants, or, in the case of the Journeys, interviews with people who were young in 2013. Twenty-three interviews were conducted with young people from youth collectives at the University of Southern Minas Gerais; 80 interviews with young people who occupied their schools in 2015 and 2016, in ten different states of the country; and 37 interviews with activists and militants in the 2013 Journeys. The research "The educational dimension of youth organizations" also included participant observation of six youth collectives.

Repertoires of contentious

The category of repertoires of contentious constitutes an interesting element for analyzing the expectations of this activist and militant generation of the 2010s, as well as for interpreting their political trajectories. Charles Tilly (2012) coined the term "repertoires of contentious" within the Theory of Political Processes. According to Alonso (2012), the category of repertoires of contentious was originally structuralist. Over time, however, Tilly reinterpreted it in a more interactionist manner, intending for the category to allow for an understanding of the experiences and relationships between people in situations of political contention.

The word repertoire identifies a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and enacted through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle. (Tilly apud Alonso, 2012, p. 26).

Each repertoire is like a toolbox that individuals and organizations wield in collective action. The repertoire possesses internal coherence in the form of organizational forms, action tactics, and political conceptions. Alonso and Mische (2017) identified three main repertoires of protest present in the 2013 Journeys, aiming to make more sense of the enormous complexity of this cycle of protests: autonomist, socialist, and patriotic repertoires.

Autonomism, which originated from the encounter between socialism and anarchism in the 1970s, was reconstituted in the anti-globalization movement at the turn of the last century. Autonomism reclaims the typical anarchist stance of rejection of leadership and centralized authority, and adopts as its values and tactics horizontality, assemblyism, direct democracy, consensus, direct action, and prefigurative action. Prefigurative action proclaims that, as important as the outcome of the action, is its form, its conduct: collective action cannot deny, in the name of the action's objectives, the society or social relations that one wishes to build in pursuit of the strategy; rather, the action itself announces the kind of society one wishes to build as a result of it.

Socialism is another repertoire of protest arising from the progressive camp that participated in the Journeys. It was present in 2013, particularly in the form of left-wing parties critical of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT) and the Popular Field led

by the PT itself. In some cases, even youth from the more openly socialist leanings of the PT itself participated in the Journeys. The socialist repertoire considers the organization and discipline of organic militants fundamental, often through the adoption of Leninist-inspired democratic centralism. This repertoire values strategic action and the interpretation of the "meaning of history" as seen as a kind of guide for the struggles of the working classes toward socialist revolution.

As for the third repertoire, the patriotic one, it is practically absent among the young people we interviewed in our research. However, it is relevant, having managed to gain relative hegemony at a certain point during the 2013 Journeys, during the mega-demonstrations in June. The patriotic repertoire uses values such as people and homeland to preach the unity and greatness of the nation, as well as symbols such as the national flag and anthem. The patriotism of the 2013 Journeys utilized an increasingly conservative nationalism, associated with moralizing agendas against corruption and liberal criticism of the supposed gigantism of the state.

Youth Collectives

I begin with a widely shared observation among those who research youth political participation. It is present in Olivia Perez's article (2019). The finding is that, since the 2008 occupations of rectory buildings, and with greater emphasis since 2013, new youth and student movements have criticized "political parties and traditional organizations for their hierarchies and inefficiency" (Perez, 2019, p. 577), while advocating instead for collective organization.

The values and practices associated with the collective format are quite important to the autonomist repertoire, such as autonomy, horizontality, absence of formal leadership, direct action, prefigurative action, personal adherence, and fluidity (Perez, 2019). Among these values, fluidity appears to be the most ambiguous: for those who criticize fluidity, it is seen as an inconsistency or fragility in the forms of engagement; for those who praise it, it is an adherence that respects individual freedom, better considers the interests of individuals, and allows for greater organizational flexibility.

The criticism of collectives about the inefficiency of traditional political organizations, seen as incapable of transforming social reality, is striking. Consider prefigurative action, that is, the belief that action should never be merely strategic, but also reveal the type of society or social relations one wishes to disseminate. Outside the autonomist field, prefiguration tends to be judged as another weakness or inefficiency of autonomist collectives and movements. However, from the outset, analysts closer to the autonomist field, such as Pablo Ortellado (2013), emphasized the enormous effectiveness of the Free Pass Movement São Paulo (Movimento Passe-Livre São Paulo – MPL-SP) during the 2013 protests, when the tactic of demonstrations and avenue blockades achieved the sole objective of repealing the increase in public transportation fares (a victory repeated in hundreds of other municipalities that year). For autonomism, the inefficiency of tradi-

tional parties and organizations is caused by their bureaucracy and inertia, since they coexist with the current political and economic system, thus seeking to achieve the organizations' objectives, which are more internal, aimed at gaining positions and posts in political institutions, rather than social transformation, moving away from the very essence of the left's actions, according to Bobbio (2001), which is the fight for more equality in society.

Young people and students who joined progressive collective actions from 2013 were increasingly attracted to elements of the autonomist repertoire, which were brought to the collectives formed at the public universities I researched in southern Minas Gerais, between 2016 and 2019. The same phenomenon was observed by Olivia Perez at the public university she researched in Teresina, Piauí, in 2018 and 2019. The various studies analyzed by Sposito, Almeida and Corrochano (2020) reached similar results, as summarized in this conclusion:

Analyses of the types of struggles led by students in the university space are already beginning to make these new formats more visible, such as collectives, which can dialogue with traditional student representations, but are not confused with them, emerging, in many cases, from the perception of the limits of the latter (Sposito; Almeida; Corrochano, 2020, p. 6).

This preference for collectives and the attraction from elements of the autonomist repertoire seem to indicate the formation of a new activist subjectivity, present even in the university nuclei of traditional student organizations and youth parties. Flávia Ginzel (2024), based on Breno Bringel, disputes the thesis that the individual value of joining collectives, or the personal meaning that participation in organizations should have for young people, is necessarily linked to neoliberal individualism. The expression of individuality in collectives may be, rather, the manifestation of a new activist subjectivity:

Another example is the trend toward increasing individualization of society, something that, in general, has been misinterpreted by the left because it has been associated almost exclusively with individualism, neoliberal rationality, and processes of social differentiation. This is undoubtedly one side of the coin. But the other is how this trend toward individualization should also be interpreted [...] based on a reconfiguration of emancipatory subjectivities. This is expressed, among other aspects, in the need for greater personal commitment on the part of critical subjects (who demand for themselves greater individual coherence between everyday practice and discourse); or in the growing personalization – which also does not necessarily imply personalism, although it can lead to it – of struggles and a greater assertion of the role of individuals and their "marks" (biographical, class, gender, experience, etc.) within collectives. As a consequence, a growing appreciation of singularities emerges, which can have very diverse implications that are not only the 'praise of the self', but also a greater densification and embodiment of the collective/community plot, in addition to a renewal of criticism on freedom and power (Ginzel, 2024, p. 31-32).

We can infer that the progressive youth generation's attraction to the autonomist repertoire expresses the aspirations of a significant portion of the youth, as it allows for political experiences more aligned with their interests and demands. Among these aspirations is the appreciation of so-called identity politics, which, in the view of these young people, especially women, Black people, and LGBTQIAPN+ individuals, are, above all, politics of existence – a topic discussed below.

Perez (2019) also presents the tension between hierarchy and horizontality in collectives active in universities, something I also encountered in my research in southern Minas Gerais. Most of these collectives are, in fact, local youth groups from socialist parties or political tendencies (generally from outside the Popular Field, though sometimes also within it the same field, such as the PT and the Popular Youth Uprising (Levante Popular da Juventude - LPJ)). Horizontality is most effective at the local level, in decisions made by activists within their universities. Hierarchy becomes evident in relationships with the regional, state, and national leadership of these youth groups and political tendencies. Some tendencies adopt socialist ideologies very close to so-called democratic centralism, stemming from Leninism and present in Trotskyism and Maoism, such as Juntos! and the LPJ; but, in the practice of their local nuclei, which even refer to themselves as collectives in Olívia Perez's research, this socialist ideology has to coexist with elements of the autonomist repertoire, making the day-to-day functioning of these organizations in an assembly-like, participatory manner, deeply engaged with identity-related themes.

Two years ago, I would have said that relationships within the collective were horizontal, that we could resolve things democratically, but, unquestionably, some policies are put forward. [...] We discussed politics, but sometimes I feel like we discussed politics based on the bias of what was put forward for us to discuss. So, many things were completely democratic, in the sense of our choices of action. We were able to put that into practice in a very collective way. But we never chose the centrality of the policies put forward democratically. And I would venture to say that no collective democratically chooses the policies to implement. (Irma, militant of Juntos!, interview, 2017 apud Groppo et al., 2020, p. 128-9).

Perez (2019) also describes the tension between partisanship and nonpartisanship, even in groups linked to politically motivated youth groups. In my research in southern Minas Gerais, I observed this tension in groups linked to the Socialism and Liberty Party (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade - PSOL) and the LPJ, formed by a significant portion of students without party affiliation, and even without interest in such affiliation. The group was not the beginning of an activist career for a significant portion of them, and tensions with party leadership even led several people to disengage from the group. One leader's decision to have his group serve as campaign workers for his failed municipal campaign led to the disbandment of the group itself.

Perez (2019) also argues that the collective form is not new as a type of organization. What is new is its recent growth and the prefer-

ence of young people who seeking to organize or engage in political activity. Most of the people Perez (2019) interviewed explicitly stated that this preference emerged as a consequence of the 2013 Journeys.

The research we have carried out on the 2013 Journeys also reinforces another finding by Perez (2019), namely, that the 2013 cycle of protests, in its progressive aspect, which extends at least until the student occupations of 2016, was an important source of new members for left-wing parties. It's true that 2013 was a moment of significant political subjectivization, bringing some relief to traditional left-wing party organizations, even those criticized by the Journeys. Even party youth organizations linked to the Popular Field was benefited. We interviewed militants and ex-militants of the Socialist Youth Union (União da Juventude Socialista - UJS) and the Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil) who confirm this, despite the Popular Field systematically denying the Journeys and, thus, denying the legacy that favored it.

This renewal, or at least this breathing space in organizations linked to progressive parties, through new youth membership, also manifested itself in tactics and agendas, something explicit in the university collectives that Perez (2019) and I researched – she in Teresina, I in southern Minas Gerais. We discussed their forms of organization and action. Now, we will address the agendas, in which so-called identity politics stands out.

Existence Policies

At public universities, quota policies are part of a broader set of social processes for recognizing identities related to gender, race, and affective/sexual orientation. What we have often called identity politics tends to be seen by those who join public universities and their movements as policies of existence. They don't necessarily use this term – politics of existence – but they do effectively present, through actions and discourse, agendas that are not only about recognition, but also about survival. This is especially true in the Black movement, which gained renewed momentum after 2013.

The Black movement's idea was to highlight that the police violence experienced in June, blatant in São Paulo's major centers, was already, to a large extent, already experienced in the daily lives of the city's peripheries. This did not cause the Black movement to withdraw from the political process of June 2013; on the contrary, it also turned the moment into a way to denounce the violence suffered, especially that caused by the repressive apparatus of the State – hence the fight for Amarildo and Rafael Braga. This, in my view, is the greatest legacy of June for the Black movement and of the Black movement for June. (Nunes, 2023, p. 43).

The strengthening of the Black movement since 2013 was evident in our research, in interviews with Black activists and militants from the Journeys who became members of parliament in the Municipal Chambers of Fortaleza and Porto Alegre and in the Legislative Assembly of Rio Grande do Sul. Others, like Amarildo's niece in Rio de

Janeiro, explicitly practice "activism for life"; their political formation stems from "carnal suffering."³ In the occupation movement of 2015 and 2016, however, awareness of the presence of young Black women and men, as well as the specificity of their agendas within the larger context of the struggles for the right to education, was significantly pronounced.

I discovered myself as a being, I discovered myself as Black, poor, gay, as a person screwed up in society, outside of any required standard. And, through this, I saw that I am invisible not only to the State, but to everyone. I only exist when I cause discomfort, and from that moment on, I began to cause discomfort because I began to say that I exist. So, it was in the occupations that I began to build myself, and it was in the occupations that I discovered: "I am Have!" And, from that moment on, every day of my life, I will have to affirm myself as Have, and if I don't, I will not live or survive, I will die. It's not what I want. (Have, high school occupation, Minas Gerais, interview, 2019 apud Groppo; Silva, 2022a, p. 121).

Regarding feminist struggles and gender issues, within the university collectives I researched, feminism became a central theme and a driving force for many women's activism. Political youth groups needed to open themselves up to these issues – and not just to women – to sustain themselves. At university, I observed women from various rival left-wing collectives uniting in feminist-related actions: in the Feminist Spring in 2015, against Eduardo Cunha's bill that made abortion more difficult in cases covered by law; and in activities during Women's Week. Regarding the occupation movement, it can be said that it was both a high school feminist movement and a movement in defense of educational rights, as evidenced by the majority presence of girls at the grassroots and in the leadership of the occupations, and by the importance of feminist issues and gender issues, which prevailed in the educational activities in the occupied schools.

I think a central point for feminism is these experiences we women go through. It's these experiences we go through in life that make us realize that things aren't right, that this isn't normal, this can't happen. [...] I experienced rape...[...]. I didn't know I wasn't to blame for it, of course I felt guilty. [...] And then I realized that it wasn't just me that this happened, participating in a self-organized space, just for women, where we talked about these things. I realized that all the girls there had been through a similar situation, or a worse situation, or a similar situation, and I said: 'I'm not alone!' (Laís, LPJ, interview, 2018 apud Groppo et al., 2020, p. 123-124).

[...] the occupation itself gave me exposure to feminism; it was the first time I realized that women can lead. But after the occupation, with the student movement, I came into contact with diverse sexualities and gender identities, which in my previous experience, I didn't even know existed. I didn't know such a possibility existed, and it was in the student movement, and with the people who are part of it, that I also discovered my sexuality. Today, I consider myself bisexual. At the time, I considered myself heterosexual, that's it. (Movement, woman, bisexual, Chapecó-SC, apud Nubo; Simões, 2022, p. 351).

While Movimento's account suggests that the experience of a student movement allowed her to rethink her gender identity, other accounts have shown similar influences of this experience in relation to sexual and affective orientation, as well as the LGBTQIAPN+ movement. We found that, of the 80 people interviewed in 10 states who occupied schools in 2015 and 2016, 46 identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The perception is that, today, there is a prevalence of activists in left-wing university collectives with orientations other than heterosexuality. In local university chapters, there is a kind of colonization of party youth collectives by subjects and agendas that, at times, more traditional left-wing activists pejoratively refer to as identity politics.

In a conversation circle, you end up discussing the issues of machismo, feminism, racism, and homophobia, but you end up not practicing them. And then, when it was the occupation, we saw the diversity, and within that diversity, we had to work together. There were women, there were Black people, there were LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Transsexual, and Transgender] people, and this whole group worked together. So we made mistakes and learned together, and they ended up teaching us in practice. (Gabriel, high school occupation, Pará, 2019 apud Groppo; Silva, 2022a, p. 131).

I think it would even be contradictory for me to be interested in politics before the occupations, because I think that my condition as a person, both in social issues and in the personal issue of sexual orientation, I think that [...] it wouldn't be up to me to not like politics and not get involved in politics. Because I think it has to be within the people who suffer prejudice, within minorities, to fight for their rights. If I didn't fight, it would be as if I didn't want to exist. (Kamilo, high school occupation, Chapecó/SC, 2019 apud Groppo; Silva, 2022a, p. 111).

From the perspective of these young black and LGBTQIAPN+ women, it is of existential policies. A dignified life for these groups, and even their physical survival, depends on much more than redistributive economic policies – without disregarding the very positive effects they have had, with impacts beyond the reduction of economic inequalities themselves.

Emptying of Collectives and Political Loneliness⁴

I bring to the table two less positive findings. On the one hand, the emptying of the university collectives I researched; on the other, a certain political loneliness among a significant portion of high school students from working-class backgrounds.

First, research has demonstrated the fragility of student collective life at a small university in an interior region of the country. Even though the latency after the general demobilization of collectives beginning in 2017 was small, there was little left to restart the history of student collectives since then. Larger universities, and capitals with richer political life, offer more opportunities to maintain active collectives, even during periods of decline in collective action.

Some organizations have kind of disappeared in these processes of action within the university. Today, I still see Quilombo [...] as the only organization that still maintains an organizational agenda, meetings, that is growing. [...] We see, not a collapse, but we see a bit of a disappearance of these other organizations, largely due to this fatigue. (Manuela, militant of Quilombo, interview, 2018, apud Groppo et al., 2020, p. 145).

Second, research has demonstrated the difficulties of a relatively large group of adolescents and young people in remaining in activism and militancy after 2016, especially from more popular groups – and most of those we interviewed were members of these groups. These difficulties are explained, first, by their inherent socioeconomic status and the demands of adulthood, which have reduced the time and opportunities for political activity. They are also explained by the shrinking political opportunities for left-wing organizations and collective actions, affecting not only the Popular Field but also the socialist organizations outside of this field and, especially, the autonomist collectives. Finally, it was observed that the tendency of the remaining organizations, precisely the more traditional parties and institutions, was to invest in new activists who possessed more political, cultural, and economic capital. A large contingent of popular youth was left in a certain organizational isolation, although it remained a latent social force that would become important in collective actions such as *Ele Não!*, in 2018, and in the victory of the progressive candidate, Lula, in 2022.

Activism is a consequence, it is an extremely important part of my life, I can't live without it, but... it's not what pays my bills, it's not what puts food on the table in my house, in my republic. (Luana, militant of Quilombo, interview, 2018, apud Groppo et al., 2020, p. 60).

After the occupation, we didn't want to do anything because of the threats. [...] Maria and I, who were the leaders, always faced with many eyes and threats; we wanted to retreat. [...] If we want change, we will only achieve it over time, because it wasn't out of nowhere that we achieved what we have today. It won't happen, we will achieve more little by little. I work on this in my work, in my life, with my sister, with my family, and I pass it on to people [...] this movement of wanting to change, of wanting to evolve, to improve our country. (Carolina de Jesus, interview, Poços de Caldas/MG, 2019 apud Groppo; Oliveira, 2021, p. 5).

Research on youth collectives at universities and high school student occupations tends to yield more pessimistic analyses regarding the ongoing political activity of this activist and militant generation. The accounts above indicated that, for a considerable number of the people we interviewed, the period following the mobilization and collective action was marked by the depletion of collectives at the southern Minas Gerais university and the political loneliness of teenagers who had occupied their schools. However, interviews with young activists and militants in 2013 have revealed more positive aspects, while still addressing the difficulties mentioned above. The next

section seeks to explore these aspects further, addressing their political trajectories.

Political Trajectories

In this section, I outline two models of political trajectories followed by young people active in collective actions and progressive organizations in the 2010s. These models were constructed based on analyses of 37 interviews with activists and militants for the research "Educational Dimensions of the 2013 Journeys". These interviews were conducted between July 2023 and March 2024, in six states, with individuals who, during the 2013 Journeys, were young students and active in collectives that organized the first demonstrations, still of a clearly progressive nature, generally with the agenda of repealing public transportation fare increases in large cities.

The models of political trajectories are closely related to the two repertoires of protest that predominated in the initial and progressive phase of the Journeys – the autonomist and the socialist. (Alonso; Mische, 2017). Two interviews in particular guide the construction of these models. They were conducted in Goiânia, Goiás, in March 2024: one with Carlos, a journalism student in 2013, an anarchist activist, and a leading figure in the Front for the Struggle against the Increase in Tariffs in Goiânia (Frente de Lutas contra o Aumento das Tarifas em Goiânia); and one with Honestino, a high school student in 2013 and vice president of the Goiás Union of Secondary Students (União dos Estudantes Secundaristas de Goiás), a socialist activist.

Carlos and Honestino's own accounts of 2013 in Goiânia diverge at times. Honestino, a member of the UJS and, therefore, also of the PCdoB Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil – PCdoB) in 2013, does not mention the Front of Struggles by name. Honestino highlights traditional student organizations as protagonists of 2013. Carlos, in turn, emphasizes how the rejection of the traditional actions of these student organizations, within the UJS and PCdoB, enabled the formation of the Front of Struggles itself, an alliance between students of diverse political persuasions at the Federal University of Goiás (Universidade Federal de Goiás - UFG): independents, anarchists, and socialists critical of the Popular Field (the Field to which the PCdoB belonged).

Honestino and Carlos converge, however, when they describe the moment when the demonstrations grew in Goiânia, beginning on June 20th, encouraged by the mainstream media, with diffuse agendas, that gradually converged into a moralistic critique of corruption, increasingly adopting the patriotic repertoire. If Carlos understands this moment as an attempt by conservative forces to take control of the Journeys, Honestino believes that it expressed one of the faces of 2013, the one that would later lead to Lava Jato, Dilma's impeachment, and the election of a far-right president.

Carlos was 29 years old, white, and single. He graduated in Journalism from the UFG, a profession he has practiced a few times in re-

cent years. Currently, however, he owns a bar in downtown Goiânia. He comes from, in his own words, “a middle-class family”, whose father was a member of the Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista Brasileiro - PCB). Carlos believes his most consistent political activity began when he became involved with an anarchist collective, the Combative Classist Student Network (Rede Estudantil Classista Combativa), while still at the UFG, where he entered in 2011. He emphasizes that the Goiânia Zero Fare movement (Movimento Tarifa Zero de Goiânia) and its consistent studies on public transportation re-oriented the protests against fare increases, especially in 2013, when the Front for the Struggle was formed. The Front held open meetings at the UFG, based on the autonomist principles of participation and horizontality. According to Carlos, when the UJS realized it couldn't control the Front, it “quickly leaked”, leaving even more room for the largely autonomous organization of the demonstrations. Carlos describes how the Front took “organization to another level”, not only by abandoning institutionalization but also by abandoning the traditional format of peaceful demonstrations led by sound trucks along a stretch of the avenue.

Carlos reported that the Front was able to generate significant funds through a music festival with cheap tickets and well-known bands playing for free; this fund paid the bail of activists and militants not only in Goiás but also in other states in 2013. The Front organized demonstrations in 2013 in the form of committees. There was even a committee responsible for resisting police repression – a repression that, as in other capitals that year, was very harsh against the demonstrations in the first half of June. However, the Front's greatest failure was its lack of attention to internal security, as infiltrators gathered information that greatly aided the judicial persecution that occurred in May 2014 – thus preventing the Front from participating in further protests against the fare hike.

The judicial retaliation led to several members of the Front being imprisoned, including Carlos. The experience of repression and judicial persecution left a severe scar on these activists, according to Carlos, leading to cases of depression, alcoholism, addiction, and even suicide: “[...] of everyone who participated in 2013, I know very few who are sane.” Despite this, the group of people who participated in the Front, even after the collective's dissolution, remained active in social struggles in Goiânia in the following years, such as the teachers' strikes and high school student occupations in 2015/2016.

While still an undergraduate, Carlos worked in a radio activism group and excelled in graphic arts, a skill that was very useful for creating the Front's posters. Regarding the influence of the Journeys on his life, he says, “It was everything to me”. Without 2013, he would have “followed a standard professional life”. After graduating, he worked in traditional media but never abandoned activism. Currently, he considers himself a “support activist”, as he continues to lend his graphic art to left-wing movements for their posters. Even his current occupation as a small business owner, owning a bar, carries this lega-

cy: the establishment has a cultural dimension and is a meeting point for progressive activists.

Honestino is 28 years old, Black, and married. He is studying law at a private higher education institution with a scholarship from the University for All Program (Programa Universidade Para Todos – PROUNI). He currently holds a commissioned position in the Goiânia municipal administration. Coming from a working-class background, with a bricklayer father and a cleaning lady mother, in 2013 he was attending high school at a public school on the outskirts of Goiânia. His political involvement began in 2008, when he participated in stages of the National Education Conference and joined the Youth of the Democratic Labor Party (Partido Democrático Trabalhista – PDT). In 2012, he participated in the Congress of the Goiás Union of Secondary Students (União dos Estudantes Secundaristas de Goiás) and was elected its vice president, rising to the presidency in 2013, by which time he had already moved to the UJS: “and then we were in the eye of the storm”. High school students reportedly took the first steps in the fight against the 2013 fare increase, “until we were embraced by university students, especially from UFG”, who presented a “more combative” form of protest, going beyond the traditional peaceful marches. Even without being named, the Front effectively appears as a protagonist of the Journeys at this time. However, Honestino then associates the rejection of parties and student organizations “by anarchists” with the “nonpartisan and anti-political” climate of the mass phase of the Journeys, in the second half of June 2013, when party and even student union flags were ripped from students’ hands and torn by the crowd. Revealing his political background, Honestino repeatedly emphasizes the importance of “organization for popular and student mobilization: “If it’s not politically motivated, it doesn’t move forward”. Another revealing element was the importance of financial support from unions and parliamentarians for student organizations in their struggles – a classic form of financing, in contrast to the way the Front managed to create its cash flow (via music festival).

As part of his political career, Honestino transferred to a prestigious public school in downtown Goiânia in 2013, where he struggled to adapt and failed to complete his third year of high school. He obtained his high school diploma via the National High School Exam (Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio – ENEM) in 2015. He enrolled in the Social Sciences and Forestry Engineering programs, respectively, without completing them, while also migrating to the university student movement, even serving as president of the Goiás State Student Union (União Estadual dos Estudantes de Goiás – UEE), already affiliated with the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB). However, in 2019, he left the PCdoB. According to Honestino, the PCdoB, “like other ideological parties”, except the PT, “are tiny” and therefore incapable of providing political careers in the form of elected or appointed positions for a large portion of their members. He returned to the PDT, embracing a new political and personal project: “I had been putting aside my personal life [...] for a dream of activism, for an ideal of soci-

ety [...] and then there came a time when I had to choose to take some time off to consolidate my family”. He supported his wife's candidacy for federal deputy for the PDT, which was not elected, but through this, he became closer to a political group of that party that is strong in Goiás, which earned him the nomination for the commissioned position he currently holds in Goiânia.

Carlos and Honestino have social markers that are not exclusive to their political groups. That is, young autonomists aren't just middle-class higher education students, nor are young socialists just low-income high school students. Strictly speaking, Honestino's persistent political trajectory – whether institutional or through collective action – seems less common among young people in the working class, considering our research data and the fact that middle-class youth have greater opportunities to convert economic, cultural, and even political capital into investment in their activist careers throughout adulthood. This data is relevant to determining whether or not young people like Honestino managed to maintain political trajectories, whether as activists or as institutional officeholders, after the 2013 Protests.

The trajectory models constructed focus on the repertoires of contentious in which our interviewees developed their most consistent political formations: autonomism in Carlos; socialism in Honestino. Autonomism led to an interpretation of the Journeys that valued horizontality, personal participation, combativeness, and the denial of institutions in this cycle of protests. Socialism, in turn, led to an interpretation that sought to reclaim the importance of “organization” for mobilization – valuing the form of party and traditional student organizations – even though the spirit of confrontation originating from the university movement (i.e., the Front) was valued, but concluding with the need to bring the movements' demands to institutional level, establishing policies and electing representatives. Carlos recounts the hardships of repression and judicial persecution, which affected his professional and personal life for several years, leaving traumas in him and in the others who were alongside him in the Front. Honestino's trajectory represents a certain decline in the autonomist repertoire in the following years, although it had enough momentum to influence and fuel social struggles closer in time, such as the high school student occupations of 2015 and 2016. Honestino describes the closure of institutional spaces within the partisan socialist left, a left that, despite this, survived years of extreme right-wing growth and the COVID-19 pandemic itself. This left has remained a highly relevant instrument for those who wish to remain politically active, having led many people to migrate from independent and even autonomist positions to socialist parties—although this was not the case for Carlos and most of his colleagues in the Front, nor even for Honestino, who had to migrate to a political group distant from the socialist pole to which he belonged.

These examples help to create two models of the political trajectories of young activists and militants in the 2010s. It is true that neither Carlos's nor Honestino's examples fully fit the models they

helped create. But this does not invalidate the intellectual effort, since the objective, following Max Weber's (1979) proposal for the creation of ideal types, is to construct analytical categories that will be compared with empirical data.

Thus, we have, first, the model of the political trajectory stemming from sources distinct from those of traditional left-wing parties (and their socialist repertoire). Among these sources, autonomism stands out, but there are also "independent" and, as we found in the research on the 2013 Journeys, territorial movements (against forced evictions due to World Cup construction and against police violence in Rio's communities). The people politically shaped by these sources found themselves, in the following years, somewhat isolated in their spaces of action, including due to severe repression and judicial persecution. The fears and traumas stemming from repression and judicial persecution led many of these individuals to re-politicize everyday practices, such as studies (including university extension projects), work, culture, and their personal lives.

In the second model, the trajectory of those who were politically formed within the socialist repertoire encountered, in the final years of the last decade, a series of difficulties related to the field's own crisis of legitimacy. However, the socialist field, including the Popular Field, managed to remain active and serve as an institutional space for those who, despite these difficulties, committed to maintaining political activity, whether in militant form (in social struggles) or in institutional form (through elected office or appointment).

Final Considerations

Interviews with young people active in university collectives between 2016 and 2019 and in the occupations of 2015 and 2016 revealed the extent to which these youth and student movements were fueled by a autonomist repertoire of contentious, with values such as distrust of traditional party structures and other official institutional organizations; an anti-systemic impetus; a certain taste for collective type organization; and values such as autonomy, horizontality, the absence of formal leadership, direct action, fluidity, prefiguration, and personal involvement. However, these same studies demonstrated the difficulties faced by a relatively large group of adolescents and young people, especially from working-class backgrounds, in remaining activism and militancy after 2016.

The three studies have demonstrated the importance of so-called identity issues, which should be called existential issues, as they refer to ontological elements considered fundamental by these young people: gender issues and feminism; sexual orientation, affectivity, and the LGBTQIAPN+ movement; racial issues and the Black movement. These issues are central to most of the young people who participated in the organizations and collective actions we studied. The research on the 2013 Journeys has indicated how much the Black movement has strengthened since 2013. We can even conclude that left-wing political organizations outside the Popular Field, especially

autonomist ones, have weakened, but the same cannot be said of Black movements. This is also evident in the significant number of Black parliamentarians who began or strengthened their political activity in 2013, elected, in many cases, under the innovative format of collective mandates, another growing practice in recent years.

Finally, the article presented, in the form of analytical categories inspired by the construction of ideal types, two models of political trajectories of the progressive youth generation of the 2010s. Each model derives from the formation and political activity experienced within a given repertoire of contentious: the autonomist and the socialist. However, other sources of formation and political activity in the 2010s must be considered, such as independent groups (typically more inclined to autonomist practices) and territorial movements (such as those in Rio de Janeiro communities suffering from police violence and those in working-class neighborhoods affected by World Cup construction). According to interviews conducted during the 2013 Journeys, young people trained in these other sources tend to follow a trajectory similar to that of young people who came from the autonomist camp.

In the autonomist model, young people find it difficult to continue their political activity due to the depletion of their collectives and the intense repression and judicial persecution that has befallen them. These young people still seek to participate in collective actions, but tend to avoid institutionalization. As they enter adulthood, they seek to redefine political activism. Their daily lives are thus re-politicized by their activities in spaces such as the arts, work, studies, and even private relationships. In the socialist model, young people encounter similar difficulties due to the loss of legitimacy of parties and organizations within the socialist political field, but these institutions survive and become an important foundation for the activities of a significant portion of these young people, even if they do not absorb all of them. These young people, in early adulthood, maintain their political activity through institutionalization, holding elected or appointed positions.

These models constitute theoretical constructs or ideal types that offer valuable insights into the analysis of empirical data on the political trajectories of young activists and militants. They are expected to be relevant categories for understanding the actual trajectories of this progressive youth group, which, in Karl Mannheim's (1968) terms, remains, in their early adult lives, an important source of social renewal, whether through their effective actions (in the trajectory of socialists) or as a latent force (in the trajectory of autonomists).

Received on September 25, 2024
Approved on August 5, 2025

Notes

- 1 I would like to express my gratitude for funding this research from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), the Minas Gerais State Research Support Foundation (FAPEMIG), the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), and the Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL-MG).
- 2 Generational unity is a concept developed by Karl Mannheim (1982) that describes the possibility that, within a given generation of young people, different conceptions, values, and commitments may emerge. In other words, a single generation of young people may constitute a progressive generational unity and a conservative or even reactionary one.
- 3 I would like to thank Gislene Silva, my Master's student in Education at UNIFAL-MG, for bringing the terms "activism for life" and "carnal suffering" to the research.
- 4 I thank Luiz Carlos Felizardo Jr. for recommending the term "solitude" instead of the original "orphanhood".

References

- ALONSO, Angela; MISCHÉ, Ann. Changing repertoires and partisan ambivalence in the new Brazilian protests. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, v. 36, n. 2, p. 144-159, 2017. Disponível em: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/blr.12470>. Acesso em: 25 jul. 2024.
- ALONSO, Angela. Repertório, segundo Charles Tilly: história de um conceito. *Sociologia & Antropologia*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 2, n. 3, p. 21-41, 2012. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752012v232>. Acesso em 10 maio 2022.
- BOBBIO, Norberto. *Direita e esquerda*. Razões e significados de uma distinção política, 2.ed. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2001.
- GINZEL, Flávia. *A insurgência da crítica e a crítica da insurgência* – resistência, autonomia e desafios pós-ocupações secundaristas. 2024. 220 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, 2024.
- GROPPO, Luís A. et al. Interpretações das dimensões educacionais das Jornadas de 2013: debates, sentidos e legados. In: *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 22, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-7746-ojs2837>
- GROPPO, Luís Antonio; SALLAS, Ana Luísa Fayet; SOFIATI, Flávio Munhoz. (orgs.). *A presença da felicidade: ocupações estudantis no Brasil em 2015 e 2016*. Curitiba: CRV, 2022, p. 95-120.
- GROPPO, Luís Antonio; SILVA, Gislene. A participação de jovens negras e negros nos movimentos secundaristas de 2015 e 2016 no Brasil. In: GROPPO, Luís Antonio; SALLAS, Ana Luísa Fayet; SOFIATI, Flávio Munhoz. (orgs.). *A presença da felicidade: ocupações estudantis no Brasil em 2015 e 2016*. Curitiba: CRV, 2022a, p. 121-150.
- GROPPO, Luís Antonio; SILVA, Gislene. Jovens LGBTQIA+ e as ocupações estudantis de 2015 e 2016: pautas, experiências e subjetivação política. In: GROPPO, Luís Antonio; SALLAS, Ana Luísa Fayet; SOFIATI, Flávio Munhoz. (orgs.). *A presença da felicidade: ocupações estudantis no Brasil em 2015 e 2016*. Curitiba: CRV, 2022b, p. 95-120.

GROPPO, Luís Antonio; OLIVEIRA, Mara Aline. Ocupações secundaristas em Minas Gerais: subjetivação política e trajetórias. *Educação & Sociedade*, v. 42, e240770, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1590/ES.240770>

MANNHEIM, Karl. O problema sociológico das gerações. In: FORACCHI, Marialice M. (Org.). *Mannheim*. São Paulo: Ática, 1982. P. 67-95.

MANNHEIM, Karl. O problema da juventude na sociedade moderna. In: BRITTO, Sulamita de (Org.). *Sociologia da juventude*. Vol. I. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1968. P. 69-93.

NAIBO, Gerson Junior; SIMÕES, Willian. Ocupações secundaristas e subversão da identidade de gênero no oeste catarinense. In: GROPPPO, Luís Antonio; SALLAS, Ana Luísa Fayet; SOFIATI, Flávio Munhoz. (orgs.). *A presença da felicidade: ocupações estudantis no Brasil em 2015 e 2016*. Curitiba: CRV, 2022, p. 331-356

NUNES, Paula. Sobre Junho de 2013 e movimento negro contemporâneo. *In: ALTMAN, Breno; CARLOTTO, Maria* (Org.). *Junho: a rebelião fantasma de 2013*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2023. P. 37-47.

ORTELLADO, Pablo. Reflections on The Free Fare Movement and Other. *Mediações - Revista de Ciências Sociais*, Londrina, v. 18, n. 2, p. 110-117, 2013. Disponível em: <https://ojs.uel.br/revistas/uel/index.php/mediacoes/article/view/17666>. Acesso em 23 jun. 2024.

PEREZ, Olivia Perez. Relações entre coletivos com as Jornadas de Junho. *Opinião Pública*, Campinas, v. 25, n. 3, p. 577-596, 2019. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-01912019253577>. Acesso em: 10 maio 2024.

SPOSITO, Marília Pontes; ALMEIDA, Elmir de; CORROCHANO, Maria Carla. Jovens em movimento: mapas plurais, conexões e tendências na configuração das práticas. *Educação & Sociedade*, Campinas, v. 41, e228732, 2020. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1590/ES.228732>. Acesso em: 10 maio 2023.

TILLY, Charles. Movimentos sociais como política. *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, Brasília, v. 3, p. 133-160, 2012. Disponível em: <https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/rbcp/article/view/1677>. Acesso em: 23 jun. 2024.

WEBER, Max. A “objetividade” do conhecimento nas Ciências Sociais. In: COHN, Gabriel (Org.). *Weber. Sociologia*, Col. Grandes Cientistas Sociais –13, São Paulo: Ática, 1979. P. 79-127.

Luis Antonio Groppo He is a teacher at the Federal University of Alfenas (Universidade Federal de Alfenas – UNIFAL-MG), a researcher at the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico – CNPq) and holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the State University of Campinas (Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Unicamp).

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9324-7672>

Email: luis.groppo@gmail.com

Availability of research data: the dataset supporting the results of this study is published in this article.

Editor in charge: Elizabeth Macedo

