

ARTICLES

Political formation of activists and party-affiliated activists in the 2013 protests: experiences and political subjectivation

Formação política de ativistas e militantes nas Jornadas de 2013: experiências e subjetivação política

Formación política de activistas y militantes durante las Jornadas de 2013: experiencias y subjetivación política

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Abstract

This article analyzes the meanings attributed by party-affiliated activists and activists to their experiences during the 2013 protests in Brazil, and how these experiences impacted their political formation. Based on Jacques Rancière's perspective, it investigates how these lived experiences express politics as disagreement and processes of political subjectivation. The methodology is based on semistructured interviews with 37 participants from seven states. The results indicate that the collective actions of 2013 reveal the movement's power and depth, leaving a mark on its participants despite the repression. However, the diversity of demands and ideological ambiguity lead some of the interviewees to contextualize the historical importance of 2013, an assessment influenced by the political developments that followed from 2016 onward.

Keywords: 2013 protests, political formation, political subjectivation, activism, party activism, experiences.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa os sentidos atribuídos por militantes e ativistas às suas experiências nas Jornadas de 2013 no Brasil e como elas impactaram suas formações políticas. Com base na perspectiva de Jacques Rancière, investiga-se como essas vivências expressam a política como dissenso e processos de subjetivação política. A metodologia baseia-se em entrevistas semiestruturadas com 37 participantes de sete estados. Os resultados indicam que as ações coletivas de 2013 revelam a potência e a profundidade do movimento, marcando seus participantes apesar da repressão. Contudo, a diversidade de pautas e a ambiguidade ideológica levam parte das pessoas entrevistadas a relativizar a importância histórica de 2013, influenciada pelos desdobramentos políticos a partir de 2016.

Palavras-chave: jornadas de 2013, formação política, subjetivação política, ativismo, militância, experiências.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza los significados atribuidos por los militantes y activistas a sus experiencias en las Jornadas de 2013 en Brasil y cómo estas impactaron en sus formaciones políticas. Desde la perspectiva del Jacques Ranciere, se explora cómo estas vivencias expresan la política como desacuerdo y procesos de subjetivación política. La metodología se basa en entrevistas semiestructuradas con 37 participantes de siete estados. Los resultados indican que las acciones colectivas de 2013 revelan la potencia y profundidad del movimiento, marcando a sus participantes a pesar de la represión. Con todo, la diversidad de pautas y la ambigüedad ideológica hacen que las personas entrevistadas relativicen la importancia histórica de 2013, influenciada los desarrollos políticos a partir de 2016.

Palabras clave: jornadas de 2013, formación política, subjetivación política, activismo, militancia, experiencias.

Introduction

This article focuses on the political formation of activists and party-affiliated activists during the 2013 protests, aiming to interpret the meanings these individuals attribute to the experiences they had in this context, and how these experiences impacted their political formation—understood as a combination of political socialization processes (carried out by family, school, and other institutions) and political subjectivation. The 2013 protests in Brazil are part of the global cycle of uprisings that marked the 2010s, the so-called “movements of the squares,” as termed by Gerbaudo (2017). This cycle was set against the backdrop of the economic crisis that began in 2008 and the subsequent crisis of legitimacy within political systems, which was exacerbated by the inability of governments to respond adequately to the social impacts of the crisis.

Among the main movements that make up this international scenario, the following stand out: the Arab Spring (Tunisia, 2010), the *Geração à Rasca* (Portugal, 2011), the *Indignados* movement (Spain, 2011), Occupy Wall Street (United States, 2011), *Nuit Debout* (France, 2016), the *Estallido Social* (Chile, 2019), and, in Brazil, the 2013 protests (widely known locally as the *Jornadas de 2013*). In the Brazilian case, the demonstrations were triggered by urban issues, particularly the increase in public transportation fares and the impacts of construction works for mega sporting events, such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games. These issues had guided the actions of the *Movimento Passe Livre* (Free Fare Movement – MPL) since 2004 and

motivated the creation of the Popular Committees of the World Cup (CPC) starting in 2010 (Dowbor & Szwako, 2013).

The research methodology initially involved a literature review of 144 academic works (articles, books, book chapters, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations) that addressed the educational dimensions of the *Jornadas* (referred to as protests from now on): youth participation, school influences, political formation, the use of social networks, and the meanings attributed by the subjects involved. Noting the scarcity of studies directly addressing these educational aspects, 18 interviews were conducted with researchers in the Human Sciences who had relevant publications on the topic in order to deepen the hypotheses that emerged during the review.

The third stage of the investigation, which is the focus of this article, consisted of 37 semistructured interviews with individuals who, at the time, acted as party-affiliated activists and activists in progressive organizations, movements, and collectives that organized or actively participated in the 2013 demonstrations. Based on the concept of politics as disagreement proposed by Jacques Rancière (1996), we start from the premise that the 2013 protests can be understood as a moment of irruption of political subjectivation.

The question that guides this study is: to what extent do the experiences of activists and party-affiliated activists in the protests, most of whom were young people, allow us to describe the 2013 protests as a moment of politics as disagreement, and as a process of producing political subjectivation? This question entails considering how much the experiences lived during this cycle of contention impacted their political formations and, consequently, their social trajectories. The recruitment of interviewees was conducted through academic and political contact networks established by the research team, which relied on the collaboration of researchers from various states. The interviews were conducted between 2023 and 2024 with participants from seven Brazilian states: Rio Grande do Sul (RS), São Paulo (SP), Minas Gerais (MG), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Ceará (CE), Goiás (GO), and Pará (PA).

Methodology

The priority for the interviews was to include young people who were students in 2013. However, throughout the research process and fieldwork, we established contact with individuals who were already adults during the protests and showed availability to participate.

Given the relevance of these subjects' actions in the demonstrations, we chose to include them to provide an intergenerational perspective to the research and to enable the comparison of different experiences according to their respective age categories.

The selection criteria for the individuals invited to be interviewed were: acting as activists, party-affiliated activists, independent activists, or supporters of collectives, organizations, and movements that were present in the preparation and organizing of the initial demonstrations of the 2013 protests. In this sense, people from the progressive spectrum were recruited, informed by autonomist and socialist repertoires of contention—repertoires that also guided the collectives and organizations that structured the initial rallies. The presence of organizations, individuals, and demands from the liberal and conservative ideological spectrum, which grew after the mass mobilization in the second half of June 2013, is approached only from the perspective of our interviewees from the progressive spectrum.

To draft this article, a Working Group (WG) was formed, composed of the article's authors, who analyzed the themes described below based on some of the crucial questions from our interview script:

- *Motivation: Trigger question* (“What led you to participate in the 2013 protests?”);
- *The experience of participation in the protests, with the following questions:*
 - 6 – How did you participate in the protests?
 - 7 – What did this participation mean to you back then, in 2013? Has this meaning changed for you over time?
 - 13 – What were the main difficulties that you and the collective or organization in which you worked faced during the 2013 protests?
 - 14 – Did you face police repression during the protests? Please elaborate.
 - 17 – Do you assess that the movement was victorious where you operated? Why?
 - 21 – Define, in one word, what the 2013 protests represented to you.

The first stage of the analysis involved data processing—that is, selecting the information and excerpts of accounts considered most relevant, and organizing them into charts, tables, and lists. Each member of the WG was responsible for processing one or more

questions, and the results were discussed and collectively revised in group meetings under the guidance of more experienced members. In a second stage, the same members who conducted the initial processing carried out the first data analysis, deepening the interpretations through the proposed thematic categories.

Political subjectivation

The research observed various formative processes that contribute to the political formation of subjects, including youth collectives, social movements, and participation in protests. To consider political formation, the study adopts a conception of education that includes school, informal education, and non-formal education (Trilla, 2008; Groppo et al., 2020). Such processes span different moments in life, although the field of political socialization tends to privilege the most prominent institutions of formal and informal education, such as the family and the school.

Political formation is a broad concept aimed at observing and understanding the different formative processes experienced by people, which entail the constitution of their conceptions regarding politics, as well as different values, conceptions, skills, and practices that insert them—in numerous ways—into the field of politics. This field is understood not only as formal institutions but also as the realm of social movements and protests (Groppo et al., 2020).

Studies on political socialization highlight the importance of cumulative processes that form ideas, values, and habits considered essential by political institutions for acting in public life (Tomizaki, Carvalho-Silva, & Silva, 2016). These studies have also considered other instances of socialization, such as social movements, which enable access to alternative ways of perceiving social and political reality. Rosa (2015), writing on the *Bloco de Lutas* (Struggle Bloc) in Porto Alegre, and Haddad (2016), on the Free Fare Movement of São Paulo (MPL-SP), demonstrate that the notion of political socialization helps to understand how participation in demonstrations influences the political formation of subjects.

Without disregarding the importance of these cumulative processes, the concept of political subjectivation helps us conceptualize that participation in collective actions entails a rupture in the linear processes of political socialization. According to Rancière (1996), political subjectivation emerges during politics as disagreement, a moment when subjects challenge the established social order and its assumptions about natural or acquired inequalities among people.

Politics as disagreement exerts a profound and radical impact on the subjectivities of its protagonists, placing these individuals in a questioning position regarding who does or does not have the right to speak and engage in political action. By making themselves seen and heard, subjects experience a process of disidentification in relation to subordinated roles, producing a shock to the social and institutional order. The political act provokes dissent and reveals political equality among people, constructing political subjects through contesting actions carried out by those who, until then, had been labeled as incapable of acting politically. The politics of disagreement provides individuals to whom this space was denied with a unique experience of political participation, constituting them as social and political subjects (Reguillo, 2017).

For Rancière (2016), politics as disagreement triggers processes of political subjectivation; in other words, it constitutes “political subjects” in its radical affirmation of equality. The notion of “the people,” originating from the rebellions of the plebeian masses in ancient Rome, as well as the “proletariat” since the labor movements of the 19th century, are examples provided by Rancière. We can add other examples, such as the feminist movement in the 20th century, the Black civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, and the high school occupation movement in Brazil in 2015 and 2016. In all of these, the constitution of political subjects occurs through the resignification of exclusionary social identities, which then becomes the sign of political equality, gathering around it not only those who bore that identity, but also supporters and allies: the people, the proletariat, women, Black people, adolescents, and high school students (who transfigured themselves into “*secundas*,” a Brazilian term for secondary students that became a political identity):

Every subjectivation is a disidentification, a tearing away from the naturalness of a place, the opening of a subject space where anyone can count themselves because it is the space of a counting of the uncounted, of the relationship between a part and an absence of a part (Rancière, 1996b, p. 48; our translation).

Brought from political philosophy to sociology, Rancière’s concept of political subjectivation goes beyond describing the constitution of political subjects as collectives or “communities of equals” (Rancière, 2010); it can also enable an understanding of the personal impacts experienced by the singular individuals who make up these collectives in the time of politics as disagreement. This is especially true when these individuals are experiencing their youth, a crucial moment in their constitution as social and political beings (Mannheim, 1982). It

can allow for this understanding in two ways. First, through the knowledge of the meanings attributed by young people to exceptional experiences during social movements and protest cycles—experiences that can redefine trajectories that had been shaped by cumulative socialization processes. According to Rancière:

By subjectivation we shall mean the production, through a series of actions, of an instance and a capacity for enunciation that were not identifiable in a given field of experience, an identification that thus goes hand in hand with the reconfiguration of the field of experience (Rancière, 1996, p. 47; our translation).

Second, because they allow us to interpret the extent to which trajectories more or less predetermined by a person's social belonging (class, gender, ethnicity, among other factors) are—or can be—shaken, relativized, displaced, or completely overturned by exceptional political experiences, namely those of the time of politics as disagreement. In other words, how much the experiences afforded by political subjectivation, which are contingent in nature, can reorient the itineraries that were more or less predicted by cumulative political socialization processes.

The year 2013 was a cycle of protests that constituted a moment of dissent and political subjectivation, despite the complexity of the events, which were marked by a diversity of social groups, demands, and ideologies that, especially during the large demonstrations at the end of June, proved contradictory to one another (Groppo et al., 2023). The analyses and interpretations developed in this article seek to demonstrate how the political experiences of these individuals unfolded, and the meanings they attributed to the year 2013. In this sense, the analytical categories derived from Rancière's concept of political subjectivation are fundamental to this article: the politics of disagreement, the instruments for guaranteeing equality of speech and action, the formation of collectivities, disidentification, reidentification, and the influences on trajectories are essential for interpreting these experiences in the context of protest cycles.

A bibliographic search conducted in the first phase of the research found several works that address the political formation processes fostered by the 2013 protests, especially for young people, as analyzed in Groppo et al. (2023). Only one work utilized Rancière's concept of political subjectivation (Portugal, 2016), emphasizing the interpretation of the protests as a moment of politics as “disagreement,” which aligns with our own interpretation.

There are other works that employ the notion of political subjectivation through post-structuralist perspectives based on Deleuze and Foucault. Among these, Mendonça (2017) stands out, alongside the fruitful theoretical dialogue that precedes his analysis of interviews with party-affiliated and non-party activists from the protests in Belo Horizonte, regarding the effort of these individuals to find a place for—and give meaning to—multitudinous demonstrations of an ambiguous and polyvalent nature. Our work differs from Mendonça's (2017) by being based on interviews conducted 10 or 11 years later, and therefore even more resignified by the work of memory and the influences of our country's past political history. Although these interviews do not deny the ambiguity of the 2013 protests, even in the face of the conservative drift and the rise of the far right in the following years, they tend to offer a highly optimistic and progressive reading of the meanings of the 2013 protest cycle.

Characterization of activists and party-affiliated activists and political subjectivation

The research interviewed 37 people who, in 2013, participated as party-affiliated activists and non-party activists in organizations and movements involved in that cycle of contention, distributed across seven Brazilian states: Pará (3), Ceará (4), Goiás (5), Rio Grande do Sul (6), Minas Gerais (6), Rio de Janeiro (7), and São Paulo (6). Among these 37 individuals, 10 were adults at the time and 27 were young people (aged between 16 and 29), which enabled a comparative intergenerational analysis of the protest experiences.

Regarding gender identity, 16 young people and 3 adults identified themselves as men; 12 young people and 6 adults identified themselves as women; and there was one non-binary adult. Regarding sexual orientation, 7 young people declared themselves bisexual; 17 young people and 9 adults were heterosexual; 1 young person was pansexual; and 1 adult was non-binary.

The mode of action of the subjects who participated in the protests in 2013 reveals different ties to political and social organizations. Among the interviewees, 17 were party-affiliated activists—that is, participants in youth wings of political parties, political parties, and student entities (including student councils in basic education)—organizations with a repertoire of contention linked to the socialist tradition. Table 1 provides a description of the party-affiliated activists and their organizations.

Table 1

Party-affiliated activists during the 2013 protests who granted an interview

Organization in 2013	Pseudonym	n.
Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL)	Amiel/CE, Conceição/PA, Dandara/SP, Emanuel/MG, Luís Gama/RJ, Rosa/SP, Santiago/CE, and Tales/CE	8
Union of Socialist Youth (UJS)	Honestino/GO, Jorge/PA, and Márcia/RS	3
United Socialist Workers' Party (PSTU)	André Rebouças/RS and Joana/MG	2
Union of Revolutionary Youth (UJR)	Wanda/PA	1
Workers' Party (PT)	Marcos/MG	1
Popular Youth Uprising (LPJ)	Karine/RS	1
Trade union and student movement	Hugo de Leon/RS	1
Total		17

Source: Dimensões Educacionais das Jornadas de 2013 survey.

Activists, on the other hand, presented more diverse forms of engagement. In total, 11 participants were autonomists due to their connection to collectives and movements with repertoires inspired by autonomism and anarchism. The description of the autonomists and their affiliations are listed below:

1. André Martins/SP: Along with a friend from Facebook, he created the *Pula Catraca* (Jump the Turnstile) event, which gave rise to the collective of the same name.
2. Antônio/GO: Activist of the *Frente de Lutas* (Front of Struggles) for Transportation in Goiânia.
3. Carlos/GO: Activist of the Front of Struggles.
4. Chiquinha Gonzaga/RS: Participated in the independent student movement.
5. Emílio/SP: Activist of the Free Fare Movement – São Paulo (MPL-SP).
6. Juliana/SP: Through covering the demonstrations, she engaged in *Ocupa Alckmin*.
7. Luan/MG: Anarchist. Acted alongside the *Coletivo Mineiro Popular*.
8. Lucimar/RJ: Protester in the 2013 demonstrations and in the teachers' strike. Activist in the Sanitation Workers' Strike in March 2014.
9. Luis/SP: Activist of the MPL-SP.

10. Pedro/MG: Activist in the Horizontal Popular Assembly (APH) and the Popular Committee of those affected by the World Cup (COPAC) in Belo Horizonte.
11. Zumbi dos Palmares/RJ: Leader of the Sanitation Workers' Strike in March 2014.

Independent activists, five in total, were people without formal ties to organizations, but who actively participated in the rallies. They are described in the list below:

1. Artemis/RS: Participated in the protests based on her proximity to the student movement.
2. Irma/MG: Acted through the student movement and her proximity to the Popular Youth Uprising (LPJ).
3. Marta/RJ: Supporter of the *Redes e Ruas* (Networks and Streets) collective.
4. Samantha/RJ: Acted as a media activist in the live broadcasts of the protests.
5. Teresa/GO: Participated in rallies held by Brazilians in Australia in support of the protests.

Finally, among the activists, two people were involved in territorial movements: Carolina Maria/RJ, who fought against police repression in the favelas; and Rita/CE, who mobilized against World Cup construction works that threatened to remove the population from her neighborhood. In total, two other participants were classified as supporters, acting in the defense of protesters' rights: Jota/GO, through the Human Rights Center of Goiânia, and Patrícia/RJ, a member of a network of lawyers.

The analysis of the answers to the script questions selected for this article aims to understand the participants' experiences in the 2013 protests, covering both the collective and subjective dimensions of political action.

We begin the analysis by addressing what, in the script, is actually the last question, question 21: "Define the 2013 protests in one word." In the search for signs of political subjectivation, a word cloud was created, presented in Figure 1. Of the 37 interviewees, two cited two words; another two cited expressions. Only one person did not answer (André Rebouças/RS).

Figure 1

Word cloud based on the answer to the question: “Define the 2013 protests in one word.”



Source: Dimensões Educacionais das Jornadas de 2013 survey.

The word “hope” was the only one to be repeated (four times). Words like “possible” and “possibility” present proximity in both their signifiers and meanings, as do the pairs “mobilization” and “movement.” For the most part, the words and expressions have a positive connotation. They primarily address emotions, feelings, and qualities attributed by the participants to the lived experience: besides hope, courage, inspiration, persistence, reflection, resilience, and vivid were cited. They also provide descriptions of the protests: development, experience, *foda* (Brazilian word for “fucking awesome” in this context), insurrection, intensity, struggle, political organization, resistance, revolt, and rupture. In three cases, the terms refer to the consequences of 2013, such as ideas of opening, learning, maturation, and the “struggle is not over.”

Words with ambiguous or negative connotations are in the minority, but they are relevant, as they indicate the complexity of the 2013 events; they describe 2013 using the terms: chaotic, complex, confusion, contradiction, crossroads, explosion, and dangerous. In the case of “exhaustion,” it could refer either to the consequences of the cycle or to the emotions experienced after the events.

The word cloud reveals that the 2013 protests were experienced by the majority of the research participants as a significant rupture from institutional political “normality”—

challenging the powers of the “police,” in Rancière’s (1996) terms—and as an experience of political subjectivation, expressed in the emotions and feelings mobilized by the memory of the events. Alternatively, the terms refer to the ambiguity, complexity, and even the negative aspects of 2013, pointing to other dimensions that must be considered when characterizing the cycle as a possible experience of politics as disagreement and its power to generate processes of political subjectivation.

In any case, as Emílio/SP reveals in the expression he chose—“The unbearable lightness of being”—the protests had an effect on him and several other interviewees similar to that of the Prague Spring and the “normalization” imposed by the Soviet Union on the characters in Milan Kundera’s novel: “trampled lives” (Emílio/SP).

Motivations and meanings of 2013

To understand the participants’ motivations, the following question was analyzed: “What led you to participate in the 2013 protests?” As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the interviewees already had some political trajectory, even if they were just beginning their involvement in political parties, youth wings, organizations, collectives, student councils, and/or social movements. Of the 37 people, 25 attributed their motivation to their political trajectory, especially organizing in parties and youth wings (15), in social and student movements (6), student councils (2), and in previous protests (1). These political experiences were relevant in guiding their participation in 2013, making the protests also an intersection of struggles and a constellation of organizations and repertoires.

Various demands also motivated these subjects’ participation, such as the fight against housing evictions due to World Cup construction (Rita/CE, Santiago/CE), the quest for justice for the death of the bricklayer Amarildo (Carolina de Jesus/RJ), the right to the city (Irma/MG), and “support for Brazilians” (Hugo de León/RS). Other motivations were tied to organizational strategies (four participants): expanding the movement (André Martins/SP), building an organization to defend rights (Zumbi dos Palmares/RJ), forming a group of lawyers to protect protesters (Patrícia/RJ), and media coverage of the demonstrations (Juliana/SP). Finally, two people pointed to an emotion or feeling as their motivation: the “awakening of political interest” (Rosa/SP) and “the encounter between old and new movements” (Marta/RJ).

In the question “How did you participate in the protests?”, elements also emerge that allow us to analyze the motivations for participating in the demonstrations. Among the 17 party-affiliated activists, almost all with multiple engagements, youth wings and political parties predominate, as shown in Table 1. Among the parties, PSOL stands out (with 7 mentions), followed by PSTU and PT; among the youth wings, the UJS (3 mentions), followed by Juntos!, LPJ (linked to the *Consulta Popular* party), and UJR (the youth wing of the Revolutionary Communist Party).

Next, participation in the student movement and student representative entities stands out (7). In the party-affiliated activists’ accounts, the importance of deepening, or even initiating, participation in mobilizations promoted by their affiliated organizations is evident. Activists from the student movement considered it natural to participate in protests with a massive youth presence, even though in some cases—like that of activists from the Campo Popular (the broad left coalition, guided by the PT)—they developed a more disenchanted (Jorge/PA) or strongly critical (Hugo de León/RS) view regarding the 2013 protests.

Finally, a fundamental question arises: to what extent did participants who seemed to be solely carrying out a party task constitute their experiences as political subjectivation?

Politics as dissensus or disagreement and the processes of political subjectivation initially seem more suited to those who participated as activists in autonomist collectives and organizations, and in territorial movements. The condition of being an ally or advocate can also imply a more distanced position, similar to that of party-affiliated activists. However, perhaps their status as youth and students was more important than the form of participation for the personal impacts of political subjectivation.

Indeed, regarding the questions analyzed so far, the greatest impacts are observed in cases that combine their status as youth and/or students with the activist (especially autonomist) form of participation in the protests. The cases of André Martins/SP—creator of Pula Catraca in Americana—and Carlos/GO—an important activist of the Front of Struggles for Transportation in Goiânia—are illustrative, particularly when they more clearly reveal the negative impacts of this political subjectivation process: in the form of police and judicial persecution that fell upon them and other individuals after the 2013 events. This issue is addressed below.

Participation in the 2013 protests brought both positive and negative meanings to these subjects, as noted in the responses to the questions “What did this participation mean to you back then, in 2013? Has this meaning changed for you over time?” The answers provide important elements for analyzing these meanings¹. Most of the interviewees (30) evaluated their participation positively, while only 2 people evaluated 2013 solely negatively (Amiel/CE and Hugo de León/RS), and 5 considered the protests partly positive, partly negative (Marta/RJ, Carlos/GO, Emílio/SP, Jota/GO, and Santiago/CE). Amiel/CE, who was active in Fortaleza starting from the student movement and continuing his involvement in the “Occupy Cocó” movement, came to believe that 2013 “opened Pandora’s box,” giving vent “to all kinds of craziness”—referring primarily to the rise of the far right in Brazil and other setbacks in institutional democracy in the following years. In this, Amiel/CE is accompanied by a good portion of the people who raised negative aspects in their assessment of 2013, even when accompanied by positive signs. This also occurs among some of the people who altered their interpretation of the 2013 protests over time, as will be seen.

The lack of political direction is mentioned by two people. Other negative meanings are worth mentioning, as they will appear at other moments: the heavy police repression (Jota/GO) and, due to a lack of care with security, the criminalization of the *Frente de Lutas* in 2014 (Carlos/GO).

In total, 16 responses attribute personal meanings to the 2013 protests—among which, 12 make the link with political experience explicit. For Emanuel/MG, 2013 is a “profound generational milestone that will still unfold into other meanings throughout our political trajectory” (our translation). Meanwhile, for Pedro/MG, the long-awaited popular “insurrection” was finally happening; the conviction of the importance of self-organization and self-management was certified for Antônio/GO; and “the expectation of a revolution” was rekindled for Karine/RS. More frequent were the answers that alluded to a moment of deep political formation, in the form of “political construction” (Luan/MG), “maturation” (Wanda/PA) or “party activism experience” (Jorge/PA), in the opportunity to meet political leaders such as Marielle Franco (“a turning point in my personal life, also political [...]”, Samantha/RJ) and in the metaphor of “awakening” (Luís Gama/RJ and Dandara/SP). While

¹ We adopt here the definition of meaning by González Rey (2010), for whom meanings are part of a more stable and lasting zone of senses; senses are symbolic-emotional orientations constructed by people through social relationships and cultural mediations.

Irma/MG became convinced of the need to “organize politically,” Márcia/RS developed a more critical view of traditional political organizations.

Two of the four responses that allude to strictly personal aspects carry an impactful existential dimension: for André Martins/SP, 2013 was a kind of “death” and “rebirth” that “completely changed my life”; according to Juliana/SP, she experienced a “personal turning point” at a time that offered her “a world of possibilities.” For Artemis/RS, then an independent activist and high school student, 2013 “inflamed” her feelings and led her to “position herself as a citizen,” while Patrícia/RJ, an adult and supporting lawyer, lived the demonstrations as “moments of happiness.” Pedro/MG merges the existential and political dimensions of these personal meanings in his answer: “It might sound *corny*, but I think it was the happiest period of my life. Because of that, you know, that feeling of waiting many years for an insurrection to appear, and it appeared” (Pedro/MG; our translation).

Contrary to expectations, there was not a wide predominance of autonomists and independent activists in this category of more personal responses, given the importance for the autonomist repertoire (which has also guided the actions of independent activists) of personal attachment to causes and the organization’s consideration of individualities (Pleyers, 2024). Within this subset (16 people in total), 4 were autonomists and 4 were independent activists. In other words, the meanings of the protest experience for individual life also appear strikingly in the responses of party-affiliated activists (7 people) and even in an adult supporter. The conclusion is that the decisive factor was their status as youth. Mannheim (1982) points out that youth is the decisive moment for the formation of social consciousness. In the case of the 2013 protests, the condition of youth, coupled with being a student, was more significant than the form of participation in attributing meanings to the events, since out of the 16 people mentioned here, 14 were young people.

Conversely, the majority of the responses—18 in total—attributed social, collective, and historical meanings more directly to the protests. Among these, on one hand, are those that value the political importance of organization for mobilization (8), and on the other hand, those that hail popular mobilization in itself (6), while three responses allude to the historical meaning of the 2013 protests, and only one recalls the achievement of the most immediate demand, the revocation of the public transportation fare hike (Carlos/GO).

The predominance, in this category, of responses that value political organization and popular mobilization is due to the significant number of party-affiliated activists from youth wings, parties, and student entities among the research participants. Party-affiliated activists were the ones who most highlighted these organizational elements. Sometimes, the individual seems to dissolve their subjectivity into the organization, when the meaning attributed is that of “ideological affirmation” of the means of political action classically defended by their party; in this case, popular mobilization (André Martins/SP). At other times, the meaning seems more personal, as in Honestino (GO), who states that “it was the dream of any party-affiliated activist to see the people taking to the streets” (our translation). More characteristically, an objective or impersonal assessment is sought, when 2013 revealed the possibility of mobilizing people “to do things” (Joana/MG; our translation).

As an exaltation of popular mobilization as something positive in itself, the responses value the “mass of people on the streets” (Chiquinha Gonzaga/RS; our translation) and their “impetus for confrontation” (Marta/RJ), which, according to Luís/SP, allows the very people who experienced the 2013 protests to convince themselves that “it is possible to mobilize to make transformations” (our translation)—shifting the mobilizing role, like a staunch autonomist, from organizations to the people themselves.

Regarding the responses that highlight the historical scope of the 2013 protests, for Emílio/SP, quoting Paulo Arantes (2014), 2013 meant the “opening of the political horizon,” which promoted a “change of course” in the country’s political history (Tales/CE). Recall that this protest cycle was connected to a broader cycle, the movements of the 2010s, which began with the Arab Spring (Zumbi dos Palmares/RJ).

The processing of the data regarding the alteration of the 2013 protests’ meanings over time indicated that, of the 37 interviewees, 15 stated there were changes, 11 said there were not, and 11 did not answer or their answer was unclear regarding whether there was an alteration.

Regarding the alterations, six bring a more negative assessment of the 2013 protests, related to the rise of the far right in the following years: they range from the extreme position of Hugo de León/RS, who sees them as part of a kind of international plot, through Karine/RS, who describes the entry of contradictory demands throughout the large demonstrations, to Emílio/SP, who explains that it was not possible during June to gauge the magnitude of what could unfold from it in the ensuing years. Conversely, four responses reinforce the positivity of

the 2013 protests, with Marta/RJ's account standing out: "It changed meaning. Back then it was a superficial meaning, for a while, as if the dynamics of 2013 had caused the political crisis afterward. And I don't believe that, because it's not linear" (our translation). Three accounts criticize the organizations' actions, two of them from autonomist activists, either because the opportunities opened up during the demonstrations were not seized (Luís/SP), or because the movements should have continued to "occupy the streets" (Pedro/MG). Finally, two accounts, despite pointing out some negative aspects that complicate the meanings of the 2013 protests, did not radically alter their views on 2013.

Therefore, the motivations and meanings attributed to the 2013 protests allow us to consider this protest cycle as a moment of politics as disagreement. In the first instance, we observe the disconnects between political institutions—designated by Rancière (1996) as "police"—and the social movements that, since the latent phase of the protests (like the MPL and the CPC), had already pointed out contradictions and limits in the apparent national consensus surrounding the class pact established by *Lulismo* (the political phenomenon associated with Lula's PT governments) (Singer, 2018). The triggering of the demonstrations led the police forces to resort to traditional control mechanisms, such as repression, negotiation, and co-optation. The sheer indignation provoked by the excessive use of force contributed to the growth of the movement and the expansion of its support among public opinion, surprising and disorienting the various political bodies and their representatives.

The protests took on a multitudinous character in the second half of June (Cava & Cocco, 2014), coming closer to the definition of "revolts of the multitude" proposed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2005). For the activists and party-affiliated activists we interviewed—especially those linked to socialist repertoires—this broadening of demands and the arrival of social groups with diverse and sometimes contradictory motivations and ideologies generated feelings of estrangement. The streets became a space marked by a kind of political cacophony that left some of the interviewees in a state of perplexity, revealing that while the notion of disagreement helps capture the central aspects of the 2013 protests, it is still insufficient to fully grasp their complexity.

The account of Rita/CE describes the mutual estrangement during the protests in the second half of June between members of a territorial movement (composed mostly of peripheral and Black individuals) and the multitude, swollen by middle-class sectors and marked

by a nationalist discourse and anti-corruption demands. The latter group did not understand the presence of the movement protesting against the evictions caused by the World Cup works. In turn, despite her involvement since the latent phase of the 2013 protests, Rita/CE does not recognize herself as an effective part of “June,” precisely because of this episode of disconnect.

Politics as disagreement also manifested itself in the contestation of the supposed internal consensuses of social movements and, above all, of socialist-oriented parties—many of which exerted influence over student entities. As seen, the majority of the interviewees were party-affiliated activists in parties or entities with this profile. This tensioning of traditional forms of contention initially offered greater leeway for autonomist activists, who felt more at ease amidst the fervor of the 2013 protests, which challenged both the “police” of institutions and the consensus forged around Lulismo—supported by socialist parties of the Campo Popular (PT, PCdoB, and Consulta Popular) and, to a certain extent, also by socialist parties critical of this camp (such as PSOL, PSTU, and PCR). However, these same autonomist subjects reported difficulties in continuing their activism in the subsequent years, despite some successful campaigns, at least up until the student occupations of 2015 and 2016. The closing of political opportunities and, in certain cases, judicial persecution generated a sense of mourning in their accounts: even among those who evaluate 2013 positively, there is lament for the lost opportunities due to the discontinuation of mass mobilization.

Difficulties and police repression

The question “What were the main difficulties that you and the collective or organization in which you were involved faced during the 2013 protests?” revealed a series of obstacles encountered. Police repression, already mentioned in the previous section, was the most cited in the interviews, with 14 mentions, and was present in the accounts from all the states where the interviews were conducted (in the case of Pará, this mention appears only in the specific question on the subject). Police violence was referenced by participants from all forms of engagement.

This repression instilled a climate of fear, particularly during the demonstrations, but also as a result of the movement’s organizing activities. Accounts highlight difficulties such as providing support to detained protesters (Patrícia/RJ), episodes of “persecution” (Karine/RS) and “surveillance” (Tales/CE), as well as the “criminalization” of organizations following the

protest cycle (Chiquinha Gonzaga/RS). For Carolina de Jesus/RJ, police violence in the Rio favelas constituted the main mobilization demand in 2013: “understanding my body as a killable body in the 2013 protests” (our translation).

Following police repression, organizational difficulties stood out (10). These can, alongside the difficulty of accessing the demonstrations (2 responses) and exhaustion (2), form a single category of difficulties related to the internal dynamics of the mobilizations. Chiquinha Gonzaga/RJ, an autonomist, points out that the movement’s inexperience in not considering the risks of criminalization was also tied to the repression. Something similar appears in the account of Carlos/GO, albeit at another point in his interview, when he recounts that the fact that decision-making and organizational assemblies were open allowed for the presence of many infiltrators from security forces. These infiltrators gathered information to file criminal charges against autonomist leaders in 2014, including Carlos, effectively preventing a new protest cycle in Goiânia against the fare hikes.

More frequent among the organizational difficulties were the disputes between different collectives and organizations: this is mentioned by three party-affiliated activists (Lucimar/RJ, Amiel/CE, and Karen/RJ, who speaks of “internal division and sectarianism”) and one autonomist (Antônio/GO). Two people cite financial difficulties, both for maintaining the student movement (Honestino/GO) and for media activism (Samantha/RJ). André Martins/SP reports the difficulty of communicating with authorities, on one hand, and the difficulty of controlling the actual demonstrations organized by Pula Catraca, on the other. Similarly, Rosa/SP cites the difficulty of controlling “vandalism.” Finally, Marcos/MG (our translation) expresses his disillusionment with the movement for being unable “to provide continuity to the demands beyond the street protests.”

In the two accounts about the difficulty of accessing the demonstrations—something closely related to the urban mobility demands at the root of the 2013 protests, as well as the themes of free fares and the right to the city—Rita/CE describes the long distance that had to be walked from the periphery to the city center to participate in the protests, since the main access road was closed by the police. Artemis/RS highlights the economic impact: for poor students from the periphery, participating in the protests meant bearing the cost of two extra bus fares. The accounts of exhaustion came from members of the MPL-SP’s core leadership: Luís/SP (our translation) states that his greatest difficulty was “going without sleep, going without eating,” while Emílio/SP reports that “we were caught up in this whirlwind, ... pulling

all-nighters in meetings or at police stations.” The intense action of the MPL-SP in organizing almost daily demonstrations until the fare hike was revoked explains this overload. Luís/SP associates this exhaustion with the group’s decision to step away from the large, multitudinous protests after June 20th.

However, for this decision, a much more significant factor might have been that activists carrying flags and wearing t-shirts of socialist parties—including those who participated in the demonstrations called for by the MPL-SP from the beginning—were attacked by a segment of the crowd, incited by far-right groups that began to participate in the rallies from that point onward. Paradoxically, the MPL-SP, which preached the intention to “lose control” of the protests, effectively lost it from then on, but not in the way perhaps desired (such as a popular uprising). What was witnessed in the second half of June, and not just in the capital of São Paulo, was the arrival on the streets of diverse social groups, political movements, and demands that were, at times, contradictory to one another.

Related to this shift in the protests is the third most mentioned category: anti-partisanship (6), cited by party-affiliated activists from youth wings, parties, and socialist-leaning student entities—notably, the three interviewees from Pará, two from Minas Gerais, and one from Ceará. These groups reported challenges to their presence in assemblies and demonstrations, even facing attacks, as happened in São Paulo on June 20th, with attempts to snatch their flags or force them to lower them.

Our analysis suggests, however, that this anti-partisanship originated from the non-partisanship of autonomist collectives, like the MPL-SP and the Frente de Lutas in Goiânia, which sought to open up space for the participation of all people, organized or not, through consensus. This non-partisanship was critical of the socialist currents that positioned themselves as a “vanguard” and, through the Campo Popular, were linked to the political-institutional system. At a certain point, influenced by commercial media, non-partisanship shifted toward radical anti-partisanship, with a strong anti-PT bias, articulated with the nationalist and anti-corruption discourse embraced by middle-class sectors.

A relevant portion of our interviewees, including party-affiliated activists, do not believe that this shift, or the nationalist tone that part of the mass mobilization acquired, is sufficient to describe what might have been the “essence” or ultimate truth of the 2013 protests. Four people indicated that the biggest difficulty was precisely understanding the complexity of that moment,

especially while they were in the “eye of the hurricane” (Honestino/GO). The idea of a loss of control reappears: “Understanding this contradiction that the process was out of control in a general way” (Emanoel/MG; our translation); “The process was broader, it was out of our control” (André Martins/SP; our translation). Marta/RJ refers to the difficulty of “understanding the whole dynamic,” a feeling that, for her, was expressed as anguish over the movement’s inability to present itself as a concrete political alternative.

In the “Others” category, various types of difficulties appear. First, personal issues: family opposition (Juliana/SP), the difficulty of participating in the protests due to pregnancy (Marta/RJ), and being out of Brazil, thus unable to take part in the large demonstrations in her country (Teresa/GO). Second, difficulties related to organizational ones, especially the first two: a lack of records of the protests, such as photographs (Irma/MG); not understanding the dynamics of internet social networks (André Rebouças/RJ); and the discrimination faced by environmental health agents, pejoratively referred to as “*garis*” [sanitation workers] (Zumbi dos Palmares/RJ).

Of the 37 people interviewed, only two—Irma/MG and Teresa/GO—reported having neither suffered nor witnessed police repression. Irma/MG, because the protests against the public transit fares in her small town in the interior of Minas Gerais were supported by the military police itself, whose vehicles helped organize the acts. Teresa/GO, because she participated in rallies held by Brazilians in Australia, which were small and conflict-free. However, the other 35 interviews recount experiences or testimonies of police repression. Most accounts refer to the actions of the riot troops of the Military Police, the Municipal Guard (in Belém/PA), and the National Guard (in Belo Horizonte/MG) in repressing the demonstrations.

Two deaths were reported during the protests: two young men fell from overpasses in Belo Horizonte during repressive actions, and in Belém, a sanitation worker died from inhaling tear gas.

In Rio, violence in the favelas spurred intensified protests after the death of Amarildo, a bricklayer who disappeared in July 2013 following a police approach in Rocinha. One of the interviewees in Rio, Carolina Maria de Jesus, participated in a movement from these communities. Like her, Black interviewees testify that the violence fell especially hard on Black people.

The account by Carolina Maria de Jesus also demonstrates that other repressive tactics began to be employed, such as detentions, undercover police, wiretapped phones, and judicial proceedings.

Some accounts highlight that, during the protests, part of the demonstrators assumed a confrontational stance against the police. Hugo de León/RS and Márcia/RS, from Caxias do Sul, expressed discomfort and even estrangement regarding this confrontational posture. There are accounts from autonomists, like Antônio/GO and Pedro/MG, who understand this confrontational stance, especially from young people from the periphery, sometimes under the labels of punks and black blocs. Alongside autonomists Luan/MG and Luís/SP, the party-affiliated activist Amiel/CE highlights the combative popular attitude against police repression as one of the hallmarks of the 2013 protests.

If, on the one hand, the 2013 protests revealed the power of mass mobilization, on the other hand, they were marked by intense repression, followed in some cases by judicial criminalization. These experiences reverberated in other protest cycles, such as the school occupations of 2015 and 2016, in which young people also reported repression and persecution as constitutive marks of their political trajectories—often accompanied by traumas and negative memories.

The 2013 protests, however, hold as a differentiating factor the paradoxical complexity of the multitudinous demonstrations in the second half of “June” and the ambiguity of their legacies, especially due to the strength gained by the Campo Popular’s version, which claims that 2013 was the “serpent’s egg” responsible for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and the far right’s victory in the 2018 presidential elections. Analyzing how the non-party activists and party-affiliated activists who participated in the interviews assess 2013 becomes important—that is, checking whether they consider the 2013 protests to have been victorious or not.

The success of the 2013 protests

The interviewees’ perceptions regarding the 2013 protests reveal different ways of evaluating the effects and unfolding of this protest cycle. Far from a univocal interpretation, the meanings attributed to the experience vary according to the political repertoires, local contexts, and personal trajectories of the subjects involved.

Below, we present data that highlights perceptions of success, considering both political achievements and transformations in subjectivity and life trajectories. For 23 participants, the 2013 protests were considered victorious, which reinforces a predominantly positive perception of this protest cycle—as already indicated in the analysis of the keywords (Figure 1). Another 10 people assessed that the protests were not victorious, while 4 stated that they were partially victorious. These figures corroborate the interpretations discussed previously. However, the fact that a movement is not perceived as victorious by those who participated in it does not necessarily imply an absence of impact. For some people, it is precisely the subjective and political impact that gives a sense of victory to the experience lived within the movement.

Among the 23 people who considered the protests victorious, 10 identify as autonomists, 9 as party-affiliated activists, 2 as supporters, 1 as an independent activist, and 1 as an activist in a territorial movement. Of the 10 adult interviewees, 6 evaluated 2013 as successful; among the 27 young people, 17 shared this perception.

Among the 10 people who evaluated the protests as not victorious, party-affiliated activists predominate (7), followed by 1 autonomist, 1 independent activist, and 1 activist in a territorial movement; in this group, 3 were adults and 7 were young people. Among the 4 interviewees who considered the protests partially victorious, there are 3 independent activists and 1 party-affiliated activist; 3 are young people and 1 is an adult.

At first glance, the form of participation in the 2013 protests seems to weigh more heavily on the positive evaluation of the event: only one autonomist (Chiquinha Gonzaga/RS) considered that the protests were not victorious, while another 10 expressed a positive assessment. Even so, there were more party-affiliated activists who considered them successful (9) than defeated (7). Proportionally, the evaluation among youth (17 out of 27) and adults (6 out of 10) shows balance.

From a geographical standpoint, all the people interviewed in Ceará (4) considered that the protests were not victorious. Among the five interviewed in Rio Grande do Sul, three also did not consider them victorious, and two stated that they were only partially successful. Among four independent activists, three evaluated the 2013 protests as partially victorious.

In the case of those who adopted this ambiguous position—predominantly independent activists, plus one party-affiliated activist—the arguments oscillate between valuing certain advances and criticizing subsequent developments. On the positive pole, the strengthening of

political organization, the entry of new actors into the political scene, the stimulus for political formation, and the occupation of the streets by the population are highlighted. On the negative pole, they pointed as a consequence of the 2013 protests to a conservative backlash that culminated in the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and the rise of a regressive political agenda. This ambivalence synthesizes, to a certain extent, the ambiguity present in the collective answers about the legacy of 2013.

Among those who evaluated the 2013 protests as victorious, the arguments can be grouped into two large blocks. On one hand are those who understand the mass mobilization and occupation of the streets as a victory, especially by peripheral youth, who brought their demands to the public stage and challenged power structures. From this perspective, the formation of political consciousness and the strengthening of processes that politicize society are emphasized.

In turn, among autonomists, the positive assessment is associated, first, with the achievement of reducing public transit fares. In addition, they highlight the movement's repercussion in the media and its ability to place the issue of urban mobility on the agenda, contributing to significant advances in public transportation policies.

Among the 10 people who considered that the 2013 protests were not victorious, the arguments focused primarily on criticizing the intense political violence that marked the period and the perception that there were no significant advances in social policies. In many cases, the negative evaluation is related to the developments following the cycle, such as the strengthening of the far right and the absence of a lasting political organization by the sectors that took to the streets.

The justifications provided revisit, in part, the meanings attributed to the 2013 protests: on the one hand, the capacity for mass mobilization, political formation, and the articulation of significant demands; on the other, police repression, the difficulties in maintaining mobilization, the advance of the right wing, and the setbacks in institutional politics in the ensuing years.

Final considerations

The analytical categories derived from the notion of political subjectivation that stood out most in this study were: politics as disagreement, followed by disidentification and, to a lesser extent, instruments for guaranteeing equality. On the other hand, the research also revealed significant limits to the subjectivation processes in the 2013 protests.

Politics as disagreement, by challenging the boundaries of social space maintained by the powers of the “police,” was already evident in the interpretation of the keywords, many of which associated the 2013 protests with ideas such as rupture, resistance, and revolt. The meanings attributed by the interviewees to the protest cycle reinforce this element, especially considering that 30 of them evaluated the protests positively, while only two evaluated them negatively. Those who attribute a positive meaning exalt the “popular insurrection” (Pedro/MG), envision “a revolution” (Karine/RS), and celebrate the “mass of people on the streets” (Chiquinha Gonzaga/RS) and their “impetus for confrontation” (Marta/RJ).

Such meanings reveal a series of disconnects between political institutions (“police”) and social movements—and even among the movements themselves, particularly regarding the actions and positioning of socialist parties. It is no coincidence that the autonomist repertoire played a leading role in the initial demonstrations, making it recurrent in the interviews for autonomists and independent activists to appear more at ease in their narratives of the 2013 protests.

The success of the 2013 protests was affirmed by 23 people, in addition to four who considered them victorious only in part. The justifications evoke rupture and resistance, especially from young people from the peripheries who challenged established powers and reacted against police violence.

The category of disidentification appears in different forms, especially in the 16 people who attributed personal meanings to the 2013 protests. Twelve of them linked the lived experience to political transformations—such as “maturation” (Wanda/PA) and “awakening” (Luís Gama/RJ and Dandara/SP)—and four highlighted the existential dimension of the experience, referring to the event as a “rebirth” (André Martins/SP) or a “personal turning point” (Juliana/SP), or even associating the 2013 protests with happiness (Patrícia/RJ and Pedro/MG).

As for the instruments to guarantee equality of speech and action, they appear occasionally in the analyzed questions, mainly in the recognition and welcoming of progressive demands—the main motivation for six interviewees. Participatory democracy, experienced in decision-making assemblies, is pointed out as the strength of autonomist organizations, such as the Frente de Lutas in Goiânia (Carlos/GO). Also notable is the account of Wanda/PA, who mentioned her youth wing's effort to handle the demands of consensus during the protests: “There was a generational maturation; it was an important experience to combat sectarianism, because there was no room for sectarianism in the protests” (our translation).

As expected, processes of political subjectivation are more evident among young people and autonomist activists: positive meanings were attributed more frequently by young people than by adults and, considering the set of answers (keyword, meaning, and success), predominated among activists, especially autonomists. We conclude that the 2013 protests represented a particularly striking process of political subjectivation for young people involved with collectives and mobilizations with an autonomist profile.

However, limits to these processes also became evident, affecting even young people and autonomists. Only 17 of the 37 interviewees presented all the indicators of subjectivation (keyword, meaning, and feeling of success), which reinforces the importance of analyzing the main difficulties faced. The primary difficulties refer to the “police” responses to politics as disagreement, especially the actual repression of the demonstrations by security forces. As was also observed in the high school occupations, repression left deep scars in the memories of the participants of the 2013 protests, paradoxically forming part of their political subjectivation (Groppo, Sallas, & Sofiati, 2022). Experiencing borderline situations and feeling indignation were central to a deeper understanding of how institutions and state violence function. Yet, when accompanied by persecution and judicialization, these experiences turned into traumas that, for a portion of the interviewees, acted more as hindrances than as resources for their political trajectories.

Organizational factors also appear among the challenges faced. Accounts from party-affiliated activists point, first, to a sense of estrangement in the face of the radicalism of the early rallies, when youths from the peripheries confronted the police—while their party youth wings adopted retreat tactics to protect the demonstrators. Second, there was discomfort with the multiplicity of voices and demands in the multitudinous protests, sometimes interpreted as a cacophony. Wanda/PA sought to dialogue with this diversity, but our analysis suggests that the

non-partisan tendency evolved into a radical anti-partisanship, which demanded the lowering of party and student flags—something many saw as a harbinger of the far right’s ascent.

Indeed, the negative evaluations pointing to the rise of the far right and other institutional political deviations in the ensuing years held great importance among the limits of the 2013 protests. It is not necessary to adopt the “serpent’s egg” theory. Six people altered the meanings of the 2013 protests, once strictly positive, because of these setbacks: for them, the protests opened something akin to a “Pandora’s box”—an unexpected and undesired effect for those movements that initiated the protest cycle around the demand for fare reductions or denouncing the impacts of mega sporting event construction works.

The 2013 protests contained important processes of political subjectivation—not just one, but several, as they constituted a protest cycle that sheltered heterogeneous social movements, despite their origins being heavily guided by autonomist organizations. Our research included autonomists who engaged early and deeply in this protest cycle, even when, like Luís/SP and Emílio/SP of the MPL-SP, they withdrew from the protests at the exact moment they became a mass mobilization. Nevertheless, the majority of our interviewees were party-affiliated activists influenced by the socialist repertoire, who were not always engaged from the first hour of the protests, and who felt varying degrees of estrangement and discomfort with the tactics adopted and the direction the large demonstrations took in June. These two paths of political subjectivation were the ones most clearly delineated here: in both, police repression crosses their paths, and the unraveling of representative democracy in the following years obstructs their horizons.

The results presented in this article open avenues for new analyses, which the research intends to conduct. Of particular note is the analysis of the social trajectories of the non-party and party-affiliated activists we interviewed, with the possibility of cross-referencing the meanings they attributed to their experiences in 2013, their past political formation processes, and their subsequent paths in their political itineraries. The forms that political subjectivation took during the 2013 protests are also permeated by the complexity of this protest cycle: just as much as their scale and spread, the ambiguity of the protests left social and political institutions bewildered.

In the memories reported by the non-party activists and party-affiliated activists we interviewed, guided by autonomist and socialist repertoires, positive elements of that disruptive

power of 2013 tend to stand out, though never forgetting the many contradictory and negative aspects. There is mourning in the autonomists' accounts, following enthusiastic narratives of the movement's early days. In turn, party-affiliated activists tend to replace the somewhat stunned tone of their narratives—especially in the face of the anti-partisan wrath of parts of the crowds—with descriptions of the continuity of their political trajectories, which, in several cases, included entering institutional politics.

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