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Introduction

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Grappling with the question of democracy in Brazil is far from straightforward, not least in the country's contemporary history. In 2016, then President Dilma Rousseff, of the PT (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) or the Workers' Party, was impeached and evicted from office midway through her second term after being found guilty of breaking budgetary laws for deferring payments on public accounts, a long-standing practice common to previous governments. Two years later, her predecessor, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, the most popular ruler in Brazilian history, was incarcerated for 12 years, an act carried out ostensibly on grounds of corruption and money laundering, yet one that as recent reporting has uncovered was part of a conspiracy to prevent him and the Workers' Party from returning to power in the 2018 election.[1] With Lula out of the way, that election was won by the right-wing candidate Jair Messias Bolsonaro, a former military officer who has extolled the country's most notorious torturer; declared that the military dictatorship should have shot thirty thousand opponents; told a congress woman that she was too ugly to merit raping; announced he would rather his son be killed in a car accident than be gay; avowed open season on the Amazon rainforest, pledging to take land away from indigenous communities; declared that indigenous and Afro-Brazilian peoples are not fit for anything, not even procreating; and promised to rid Brazil of red riff-raff.

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In 1991 Brazilian philosopher Marilena Chaui, a contributor to this volume, declared 'Brazil is an authoritarian country,' since it has yet to 'fully realise the principals of liberalism and republicanism' (2011, p. 169) Brazil is a nation, Chaui stated 'where there is no distinction between public and private, in which there is an inability to tolerate the formal and abstract principle of equality before the law, in which social and popular forms of struggle are repressed and in which racial, sexual and class discrimination are pervasive' (2011, p. 170). Chaui's words seem especially prescient today. Since taking office in January 2019, Bolsonaro's right-wing government has intimidated and arrested journalists investigating possible illegalities in his cabinet, accusing them of criminal activities and of spreading fake news; it has appointed Bolsonaro's own son, Eduardo, Brazil's ambassador to Washington DC, in spite of his lack of political experience, and hired another son Carlos, as head of communications; it has slashed funding for social initiatives, including science- and public-education programmes, that enabled poorer and Afro-Brazilian students to enter university; and it has made severe cuts to FUNAI, the National Indian Foundation, curtailing the rights of indigenous people, a move that has precipitated increased deforestation, as well as land invasions by loggers and miners and led to a rise in homicides. Bolsonaro himself has called for security forces and citizens who shoot alleged offenders to be shielded from prosecution, stating that he hopes that criminals will 'die in the streets like cockroaches.' At the time of writing, with the country suffering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, experiencing one of the highest mortality rates in the world, Bolsonaro has dismissed the disease as nothing more than 'a little flu;'[2] has rejected media 'hysteria' over its dangers; and sacked his health minister, Luiz Henrique Mandetta, after he publicly challenged the president's behaviour.

More than mere words, Bolsonaro's fondness for authoritarianism shapes his actions, policies, and his very government. He has filled his government with more than 100 serving and retired military officers, including several of his own cabinet ministers, forcing many commentators to fear for the country's democracy. Celso de Mello, Brazil's longest serving judge of the supreme court, for example, has stated that the nation now resembles Weimar Germany with its president bent on destroying democracy and replacing it with 'abject dictatorship.'[3] And for Oscar Vilhena Vieira, dean of the Law School at the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas*, 'Brazilian democracy is under serious threat. The president is not just trying to create institutional conflicts, (but also) trying to stimulate violent groups.'[4] Such fears are compounded by Bolsonaro's frequent and enthusiastic attendance at rallies, at which demonstrators, often wearing paramilitary uniforms, call for Congress and the Supreme Court to be shut down and replaced with military rule.

With the country now led by an authoritarian, it certainly seems that the question of democracy in Brazil needs to be reassessed and revived.

The chapters in this volume venture back to, and analyse, a moment in the country's recent history when such revision and reassessment of democracy was indeed taking place and was at the forefront of Brazilian society. That moment began in 2013. On 6 June of that year, nine days before FIFA's Confederations Cup was due to kick off in Brasilia, the first of a series of public protests – or '*manifestações*' – began in the city of São Paulo. The protests quickly swept across Brazil, and over the next two weeks they expanded to more than 350 cities and towns, bringing millions into the streets. São Paulo became the scene of some of the largest *manifestações*, with upwards of 65 000 people taking to the city's streets on 17 June (Figure 1.1). Initially organized by São Paulo's *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL), the Free Fare Movement, the *manifestações* began as opposition to a 20-cent increase in public transportation costs. Thousands took to the streets demanding zero fare transport. This occurred at a time when conspicuous spending on upcoming mega events was taking place: the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and the 2016 Olympic Games. As Carlos Vainer (2013) notes, these mega events were key to the protests; they catalysed them and provided a global stage for the *manifestações*. Propelled by this initial movement, protestors' demands soon became more diverse, encompassing a variety of issues – urban displacement, restricted forms of urban mobility, neglect of public-service investment, corruption – that for many were tied to the country's relation-

Figure 1.1 Protests in Brazil, 2013.

ship with FIFA and ensuing mega-events. As they grew, the *manifestações* also began to include a broad demographic range, as well as a wide spectrum of ideologies, from both the left and right. The *manifestações* have remained a feature of Brazil's urban political landscape, and significantly throughout 2015 they emerged as a key tactic for a dissatisfied upper middle class and a so-called 'new right.'

The unprecedented magnitude of the 2013 *manifestações* and the wave of urban protests they sparked led many in Brazil to dub them – half jokingly, half seriously – as Brazil's *jornadas de junho* or June Days, referring to the 1848 French workers' uprisings against Napoleon and his reforms. Karl Marx, described the original 1848 June Days as 'the most colossal event in the history of civil wars,' arguing in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that though the proletariat's uprising was crushed by General Cavaignac, at least it was 'defeated with the honours of attaching to a great world historical struggle' (2008, p. 23). 'Not just France,' he wrote, 'but the whole of Europe trembled in the face of the June earthquake' (2008, p. 7). Brazil's June days also produced a tremor, but not what could be called an earthquake. Class and property were not at the heart of demonstrations and the framework of the country's socioeconomic order was not called into question. Politics was also only targeted in a diffuse way and produced little change. Yet the protests acquired such magnitude that it was clear that something had happened, and was happening, deep inside Brazil.

Exactly what was happening was unclear. The 2013 *manifestações* were new, dynamic, and difficult to grasp. The protests perplexed politicians, analysts, and critics alike, many of whom found themselves without solid references to interpret their novelty, and oscillated either between silence or old discourses. As Emir Sader (2013) put it at the time, any attempt to explain them would have been tantamount to a form of reductionism. In fact, the difficulty to easily 'deal with' the *manifestações* was part of their political and cultural vigour, and their significance. What was clear, though, was that the protests raised important issues regarding the politics of urban space and political agency, and foregrounded the uneven neoliberal developmental politics of Brazil's new identity as an 'emerging economy.' They also indicated shifts in Brazilian society, particularly in terms of political mediation and representation, urban subjectivities, mobilities, and political enactment, although as the 2015 protests and Brazil's current political landscape foreground, these shifts were problematically limited or were capitalized on by an authoritarian thinking. The struggle to interpret the 2013 protests, then, was not just an epistemological struggle, the struggle for theorists and analysts to pinpoint the true content of the *manifestações*. It was also about a struggle within Brazilian politics and society itself, with the country's June Days

the result of wider political processes. Focusing on different aspects of the 2013 protests, such as urban planning, public transport and mobility, and social media and journalism, the chapters collected here seek to understand, from a variegated lens, this ongoing struggle with in Brazil, a struggle that, as country's contemporary politics highlights, continues today.

It is, however, important to stress that while the protests that erupted in 2013 were new and unprecedented in their dynamism, the urban centre where they began, São Paulo, was and is by no means a stranger to protest (see Chapter 3). The *manifestação* is an integral component of the city. In the three months leading up to the June protests, for example, the *Movimento sem teto* (Homeless movement), and the *Sindicato dos trabalhadores das universidades federais no estado de São Paulo* (Union of Federal University Workers in the State of São Paulo) led marches through the city, voicing demands and highlighting deficiencies in state provision. And, popular manifestations in São Paulo take the form not just of direct protest. The city's streets are the stage for varied forms of popular participation. The metropolis is home to politically inflected graffiti and tagging – *pixações* (Figure 1.2). It is also striated by skateboarding and parkour, rap and breakdancing. Since the 1990s, these practices have embedded themselves in the urban landscape, marking it, re-signifying it, and taking it over. Such urban mobilizations, and the subtle forms of political expression in Brazil they signal, challenge long-held stereotypical views of the population's passivity and the country's spirit of 'cordiality' that position conflicts in public space as anathema to national identity.

All of this is relatively normal in the only country in the world that, since 2001, has constitutionally guaranteed the right to the city.[5] A term first coined by Henri Lefebvre (1996, pp. 63–184), the right to the city is an abstract formulation denoting an imperative for the city's marginalized to become part of its production, and for urban development to meet basic social needs before serving in the interest of capital accumulation. In Brazil, however, this urban theoretical abstraction has been putatively grounded by an alliance of social movements, squatters, NGOs, and academics that ensured it was enshrined in the 2001 City Statute of Brazil's constitution – a statute emphasizing democratic urban management, the city's 'social' function as a priority for urban development, and the well-being of urban inhabitants. As utopian as this sounds, this constitutional protection of the right to the city emerged from the strange collision of neoliberalism and democratization that has been key to Brazilian developmentalism since the 1990s (Harvey 2012, p. xiv).

The expansion of political expression through Brazilian urban space took root much earlier, however, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when social movements in São Paulo and beyond brought residents

Figure 1.2 Political graffiti in São Paulo, 2013.

from the peripheries into the political arena. Their appearance followed the 'opening up' or *abertura* of political debate in Brazil, where, after the 1964 military takeover, citizen groups disappeared. The process of *abertura* began in 1977 and mobilized diverse sectors of the population, including women's groups and trade unions, to make their demands heard and generate spaces for opposition movements. Their mobilizations took to city squares, their claims for rights were incorporated in the constitution, and their ways of organizing became central to insurgent forms of citizenship that enabled a transition towards Brazil's modern political landscape (Holston 2009). Social movements also provoked qualitative changes to urban space, forcing the expansion of infrastructures and public services.

Despite the ubiquity of urban political expression, as Caldeira (2012) affirms, such spatial movements have by no means been mainstream. Practitioners of these tactics typically constitute a minority of São Paulo's residents, and by and large stem from the working class. In this regard, 2013 was quite different. Many saw the June protests as an inheritor of earlier urban movements and their spatial tactics, and some even believed that the *manifestações* were a prelude to a new workers' struggle and movement in Brazil. However, the demographics of those taking part in São Paulo's 2013 protests were radically different and counter this perception. According to Datafolha statistics, the relative majority of protestors were under the age of 25 (53%), over 88% were under the age of 35, 43% held a university degree (in a city where only 18% have been to university), and 80% were currently studying for a degree. Furthermore, about half of the protestors had a family income of more than 5 times the minimum salary and over 20% received more than 10 times the minimum salary. The *manifestações'* agents were not the city's marginalized and working class, but young professionals and students; they were part of Brazil's expanding middle class forged by the social and economic reforms implemented during the two decades before before the protests by the Workers' Party (see Chapter 9). The *manifestações* and their particular urban interventions, therefore, represent different class and generational participation than those previously associated with spatial and social tactics in Brazilian cities. As Sader (2013) wrote at the time, while Brazil's social movements have traditionally been linked, primarily and above all, to the working class and marginalized, the 2013 *manifestações* 'reveal a new generation and a new challenge.'

It must be stressed, however, that these demographics were not uniform throughout Brazil. As Chaui asserts, 'the demonstrations were not homogeneous.' Indeed, André Reyes Novaes and Mariana Lamego (Chapter 4) reveal that many students participating in the protests in Rio were not middle class but rather from poor, working-class backgrounds. Students from their own university who took part in the *manifestações* were born and raised in underprivileged areas of the city. As members of the *Movimento Estudantil Popular Revolucionário* (Popular Revolutionary Student Movement), these students had already taken part in numerous protests before 2013 and regarded the June Days as the 'product of previous actions and mobilizations.' The *manifestações*, then, were not a bolt out of the blue for all Brazilians. For some it was the outcome of dissatisfactions felt especially amongst young people, including the young working class.

In the early stages of the *manifestações*, the MPL's demands were dismissed and their protests largely condemned. Journalists especially

attacked the protests and labelled the demonstrators as terrorists. Politicians too denounced the demonstrations, with Geraldo Alckmin, the PSDB (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasiliera* – Brazilian Social Democracy Party) governor of the state of São Paulo, describing participants as 'vandals' and 'troublemakers.' Such condemnation exposed an authoritarian streak running through the Brazilian establishment. For many, this was confirmed on 13 June, when the state's military police reacted to the mostly peaceful demonstrations with extreme violence. Using pepper spray, plastic bullets, tear gas, and stun grenades, the police indiscriminately attacked fleeing protestors and bystanders. They arrested demonstrators and hunted stragglers through the streets, injuring many, including several journalists, some of whom were shot. Police brutality fuelled protest on the streets, which escalated to incorporate grievances about the impunity of police and politicians, as well as a lack of investment in basic urban services – transport, health, education – at a time when overspending on mega-events was all too visible (Figure 1.3). The Brazil as an 'emerging economy' narrative was not incidental here, as

Figure 1.3 'When your child gets ill take him to the stadium.' São Paulo 2013.

people expressed frustration that they were not benefiting economically, thus connecting these global events to predatory forms of accumulation by dispossession that people, including the middle class, were beginning to feel (Harvey 2003).

The protests thus became diffuse and leaderless, coordinated largely via social media, thereby raising important issues around politics and representation in Brazil. Unlike the 1970s and 1980s, protestors were not united by party-political agendas or an ideology. In fact Brazil's June Days signified a move away from party political organization. As Barbara Szaniecki (2013) has written, they articulated a collective desire for 'direct democracy' versus 'representative democracy.' They expressed popular discontent at an electoral politics that had alienated a 'political class' from the people. Given that the then governing Workers' Party has a history of political organization that is so tethered to the street, this is significant. In 2013 the people on the streets were turning their backs on the government, on traditional party politics, and on representative democracy.

This rejection of traditional party politics, including the PT, was exacerbated by political corruption. In 2005, while Lula was in office, reports surfaced of payments made to deputies in return for a pledge to support the government with their votes in Congress. The votes-for-cash scandal, dubbed the *Mensalão* (big monthly payment), led to an investigation that uncovered a number of construction companies who had bribed or given kick-backs to politicians from numerous political parties in return for profitable contracts. In 2012, 25 politicians, business executives, and operatives were convicted of fraud, with 12 of them receiving prison sentences. By 2013 however, most of those convicted had yet to start their prison sentences, fuelling anger regarding political impunity. The ongoing trial for the *Mensalão* reached its zenith in the early months of 2013. The trial, which was widely televised, especially in its final stages, fed public unrest over fraud in Brasília, with anger particularly pronounced amongst the more educated Brazilians. In the first six months of 2013, the number of Brazilians who said they viewed corruption as the country's most pressing issue tripled. This anger played a part in the protests of that year. Political corruption was cited as a key reason for the *manifestações*, with three-quarters of the 4,717 protestors interviewed by Datafolha on 7 July that year declaring that they wanted the prison sentences against the people convicted in the *Mensalão* scandal to take effect immediately.

Protestors' dissatisfaction with traditional politics and politicians was capitalized on by the far right, who attempted to kidnap the June Days, seizing on the opportunity to criticize the PT government and fomenting an *anti-petismo* (anti-PT-ism). The 2013 protests thus set the stage for the formation of a new activist right in Brazil, which eventually found a front man in Bolsonaro. These right-wing activists adopted the methods

and tactics of mobilization from the 2013 *manifestações* – notably using social media to channel the anger of the protests away from social and political issues and towards a villainous depiction of the PT and towards the valorization of anti-PT activists like Bolsonaro and his conservative, nationalist agenda.

Two of the most active anti-PT groups – *Vem Pra Rua* (Take to the Streets) and *Movimento Brasil Livre* (MBL – Free Brazil Movement) – funnelled general unrest into specifically partisan attacks. As their names highlight, these groups adopted the very language of the original *manifestacões*. *Vem Pra Rua* was the key slogan of the 2013 protest, and *O Movimento Brasil Livre* was named after the *Movimento Passe Livre*, the movement that called the initial demonstrations. Like the MPL, both groups also relied heavily on social media – WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter – to disseminate their ideas and especially to call people to the streets. In doing so they presented the *manifestações* as a chance for the middle classes to reclaim their space in Brazilian society. On its Facebook page, *Vem Pra Rua*, for instance, referred to the protests as an 'avenue for the middle classes to repossess what had been taken away from them.' And, in one of the MBL's online videos Bolsonaro was referred to as the only person who could protect Brazil from 'rabid communists who are trying to destroy the foundations of the country's property rights.'

Both right-wing movements in this way capitalized on concerns about losses of middle-class status. Distributive economic strategies and programmes introduced by the PT (see Chapter 9), such as the incorporation of millions of workers into formal labour markets, the diffusion of higher education, and the expansion of employment rights to the domestic workers, led to an unprecedented reduction in inequality in Brazil. The established middle class resented the loss of their position and privilege in society as members of a new lower-middle class began accessing services and spaces once reserved for them. Furthermore, with the inflation of wages it was harder and more expensive to hire household help. These factors created a marked sense of frustration amongst Brazil's middle class, convinced that welfare policies and cultural erosion were undermining their privileged place in Brazil. Despite being enshrined in the country's constitution since 1981 it is clear that the right to the city with its promise of freedom of space and mobility was been highly and unevenly truncated.

Right-wing groups like *Vem Pra Rua* and the MBL tapped into this frustration offering the middle class a politics of resentment that was based on the vilification of left-wing politics and politicians. Videos and postings by the movements cast the PT, as well as left-wing activists, high-school teachers, members of the lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer

community, and other marginalized groups, as threats to the established order and to the traditional foundations of Brazilian society, foundations that as Chaui has noted are far from based on equality. In doing so these groups did not just foster a conservative consolidation of the demands of the 2013 June Days into an *anti-petismo*, they decoupled ideology from historical and empirical reality, fostering an idea of the middle class as an oppressed people subject to the will of the state, something that was evident in the rejection of party politics and that gave rise to an authoritarian populism.

Some commentators were tempted to see the rejection of party politics and the call for 'direct democracy' in 2013 as 'the return of the [authentically] political;' to see Brazil's *manifestações* as an act of political subjectivation, the emergence of productively antagonistic and embodied decisions 'to act, to interrupt, to stage' (Swyngedouw 2014, p. 129); whose vitality resides in their refusal to observe the proper place allocated to people and things in a social landscape where the coordinates of democracy are well proscribed. In this capacity the June protests represent a rupture in the historical fabric of Brazilian society, a society in which, as anthropologist Roberto Da Matta (1991) has argued, each individual knows their place and in which a social contract of cordiality has traditionally diffused conflicts in public space. In this rupture, many saw 2013 as representing a hopeful renewal of past political struggles. Raquel Rolnik, for instance, wrote that the Brazilian *manifestações* 'renewed the dream of a utopia' (2013, p. 8). For her, 'the right to have rights that fed the struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, that inspired the constitution and saw the emergence of new actors on the political stage, all of which had appeared to have vanished' suddenly reappeared (2013, p. 9).

Such utopian feelings about Brazil's June Days keyed into wider enthusiasm sparked by other contemporary international protests. Indeed, while the 2013 *manifestações* dumbfounded many in Brazil at the time, some international commentators soon began to underscore commonalities between the Brazilian demonstrations and global movements: protests across the Arab world, Occupy in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, student demonstrations in Chile, the *Indignados* in Spain, and other flash points throughout the world. The uniting thread of these international protests was their anti-capitalist thrust (privatizations of public space and public services), an awareness that market freedoms do not bring about universal freedoms.

Such links between Brazil's *manifestações* and other heterodox international protests can then be understood as evidence of a 'return of the political,' to use Erik Swyngedouw's (2014) phrase. Much of this broadly

post-Marxist work has attempted to theorize such mass movements as a reawakening of the political in anodyne 'post-political' or even depoliticized contexts. The idea of the post-political, along with notions such as the post-democratic (Crouch 2004) and post-politics (Mouffe 2005), speak of a contemporary democratic condition in which real contestation and conflicting claims about the world are not apparent. Such theorizing rests on the understanding that the post-Cold War period has witnessed a new political and economic settlement centred on the norms and interests of the global market, and governance structures in which consensus has foreclosed proper political debate (Žižek 2008). The general thrust of this post-political literature is that the political realm has been hollowed out or that the political itself has disappeared (Mouffe 2005), that the parameters of political discussion and political action have narrowed to preclude alternatives to neoliberalism (Crouch 2004). Today's consensual times have thus eliminated genuine political disagreement.

These discussions have impacted thinking about cities. For Swyngedouw (2010) urban politics has been excavated of the truly political and are constructed through empty signifiers such as the 'global city.' All that is left of the formerly political realm is the management and policy-making of consensus, in which political decisions are led by global public–private administrative elites, whose the outcomes are known in advance. Urban governance now operates 'beyond the state,' (Swyngedouw 2005, 2008) through a range of geographical scales, mobilizing a wide assortment of social actors, including architects and planners, corporations, non-governmental agencies, and the more traditional forms of local, regional, and national government. This regime exposes what Jacques Rancière (2005) calls the 'scandal of democracy:' while promising equality and the right to the city, it produces a form of governing in which political power fuses with economic might and an arrangement that consensually shapes the city according to the dreams, tastes, and needs of the transnational economic, political, and cultural elites.

For Swyngedouw, as for Rolnik, Brazil's urban protests, along with those that took place elsewhere in the world, reveal the possibility of the revitalization of political agency and enactment and the possibility of formulating new ways to counteract the end of the political. This revitalization, though, should not be thought of as a step back in time. The post-politics thesis is clear that the interruption afforded by 'the return of the political' is a moment, and one that requires the subsequent slow materialization of new democratic and egalitarian practices going forward, not the imitation of an old order. To this extent, the phrase 'political enactment' is useful because it allows us to see that what has emerged

since 2013 is not a new ontology of politics in Brazil, but instead new methods for the staging, or manifesting, of politics. It is important though to bear in mind, as noted earlier, that the new manifesting of politics that emerged in Brazil has been capitalized on by the right, which, rather than calling for the return of the political, aims to preclude it. If the original protests and protestors demanded a new way of doing politics and a new democratic order in Brazil, the right clamoured to go back to an authoritarian past, using the demonstrations to effectively reject democracy. So while the June 2013 Days revealed emancipatory possibilities, they were taken over by what Alain Badiou (2013) calls 'a logic of negativity' and 'a will to destruction.'

The emergence of the right in these demonstrations serves as a reminder that for all the similarities between Brazil and other international protests, the uncanny and ominous thing about the 2013 *manifestações* was that, unlike Egypt, they took place in a context of democracy not authoritarianism. While Egyptian protestors demanded freedom and democracy, this was already in place in Brazil. And in contrast to Greece and Spain, the Brazilian *manifestações* exploded in a context in which the country, according to the media at least, was in the midst of an economic boom, enjoying confidence in its future. Indeed, Brazil in 2013 was experiencing high numbers of employment, financial stability, and the emergence of a middle class. As Rolnik has written, the Brazilian June Days 'disrupted and shook the order of a country that was seemingly going through a period of peace and prosperity' (2013, p. 8). This was a country in which the last thing one would have expected was widespread protests, hence the inability to make sense of them at the time.

These divergences and differences between Brazil and other global movements of dissention serve as a reminder to avoid the essentialism that can result in homogenizing different international protests. Moreover, the adoption of the *manifestações* by the right in 2015, reminds us that we cannot have a simple utopian metanarrative about Brazil's protests. Returning to the scene of 2013 and exploring distinct aspects of Brazil's June Days, the chapters in this volume analyse and seek to understand the protests, and in doing so question their utopian metanarrative, a narrative that essentially decontextualizes the Brazilian demonstrations and their class-specific politics – a politics evident and foregrounded by the adoption of the *manifestações* by an authoritarian contingency. Each of the chapters zooms in on a particular context and expression of the June Days, situating distinct aspects of the protests in specific historical and geographical contexts. Written by scholars from different disciplines (philosophy, history, geography, political economy, urban planning, and cultural studies) and also by social activists, the volume brings together the often-divided realms of scholarship and

activism to offer a variegated lens with which to understand and reflect on the 2013 *manifestações* and more broadly the question of democracy in Brazil.

This volume adds to what is surprisingly (given their magnitude) the sparse literature about Brazil's June Days. The protests brought much immediate academic attention and critical commentary, not least in the country itself, as an attempt to comprehend what was occurring in Brazil (see, for example, the collection of essays in Rolnik 2013). Since 2013, however, there has been relatively little scholarly engagement with the *manifestações*. Social scientists have discussed the context and triggering events of the protests, noting, for example, the deep popular dissatisfaction with the quality of state services (Bucci 2016; Mendes 2017; Vicino and Fahlberg 2017). Others have examined the adoption of neoliberalism and changes in class as well as forms of class struggle (Purdy 2017; Saad-Filho 2013). The media and use of social media in convening the *manifestações* has also received interest (Martinez 2020; Landesman and Davis 2018; Porto and Brant 2015). This volume complements these studies; it also adds new dimensions to this small body of literature, with a rare focus, for instance, on urban planning, history, political philosophy, geography, cultural production and practices, as well as first-hand testimonies of the June events and accounts from social activists involved on the ground. Indeed the chapter that opens the volume, by social activists Marina Capusso and Matheus Preis, focuses on the role of the MPL which initiated the protests. In their chapter, the authors trace the roots of the MPL's *manifestações* linking them to a broader history of urban struggles over public transport in Brazil. In a country where over 80% of the population lives in cities, the majority in urban peripheries, public transport is key to the daily lives of Brazilians, yet it is expensive and unreliable, something that people have historically protested against. As Capusso and Preis note, protests over transportation began as early as 1897 in Rio de Janeiro and took place again in 1947 in São Paulo, with similar demonstrations also occurring in various cities during the years of the military dictatorship. The start of the twentieth century too witnessed a number of battles over the right to public transport led by social movements in different regions of the country, namely the *Revolta do Buzú* (The Buzú Revolt) in 2003 in Bahia and the *Revoltas da catraca* (The Turnstile Revolt) in Florianópolis in 2004 and 2005. The opening chapter, therefore, foregrounds a history of urban struggle over the right to free public transport in Brazil that the MPL inherited. It also carefully notes that the MPL's own particular struggles have global connections, linking the formation of the Brazilian collective in 2005 to the emergence of anti-capitalist movements that opposed economic globalization in the

1990s and early 2000s, notably the Zapatista uprising in Mexico and the protests in Seattle, which had a significant impact on 'organizations that sought to strengthen social struggles outside the State.'

Capusso and Preis's chapter thus allows readers to see the local and global roots that sparked Brazil's June Days. It additionally and crucially foregrounds the importance of the urban context for the 2013 *manifestações*, something that is drawn out and analysed by other contributors. Marilena Chaui, for instance, analyses demonstrations that took place exclusively in the city of São Paulo, noting that the *manifestações* in Brazil were not homogenous but rather were determined by the social and historical circumstances of particular cities. The key ignitor for the São Paulo protests was what Chaui terms an 'urban hell,' caused by a rise in the use of private cars, a rapid real-estate boom that caused the boundaries of the city to exponentially widen, social exclusion and inequality, and an inadequate public transportation system. While noting São Paulo's history of urban struggles, Chaui also draws attention to differences between 2013 and previous protests in the city. Key here is a rejection of politics amongst demonstrators, meaning a broad criticism of political institutions. This criticism, Chaui says, is not unfounded given the hierarchical and exclusionary nature of Brazilian society, where political parties tend to be the private clubs of local and regional oligarchies that use public funds for their own private interests. Included in this critique is the Workers' Party (PT), then governing, which Chaui says abandoned its relationship to social struggles and movements to become a bureaucratic, electoral machine. While Chaui highlights protestors' rejection of politics, she also foregrounds the dangers of this, noting that the rejection of government and of institutional mediation can give rise to reactionary and even dictatorial manifestations, something that was palpable in the 2015 right-wing protests and that is clearly evident today in Brazil. A rejection of politics unarguably boosted Bolsonaro's popularity in the 2018 elections, with many Brazilians preferring to vote for an outsider who openly spurned government and state institutions. In returning to 2013 then, Chaui presciently forecasts the present. Nevertheless, she carefully highlights the real possibility that the *manifestações* revealed, writing that 'symbolically … protestors carried out a *political event*: they said *no* to the status quo, contesting the actions of government. They modified the common meaning of conservative discourse and words and, via inverting meanings and irreverence, they illustrated a possible form of political praxis with which to rethink power.' For Chaui, then, while the June Days did not lead to tangible changes, they nevertheless revealed a new political possibility that could open up to Brazilians; that is, they showed the potential of 'a new democratic invention,' one that could put an end to what she says is Brazil's authoritarian foundations.

What Chaui's chapter makes clear is that while the country was united in demonstrating, their expressions had distinct roots and took on different forms in different cities and different parts of the country. This is patent in André Reyes Novaes and Mariana Lamego's chapter, which focuses exclusively, and very particularly, on the political activism of geography students at the public university where the authors both studied and now teach, namely the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ). Using interviews conducted with the geography department's student activists, the chapter maps out and explores the role of the students in Rio's *manifestações*. While most of these young demonstrators were dismissed as vandals by the mainstream media and, in some instances, were arrested by police, Novaes and Lamego's interviews foreground the meanings and especially the hopes and aspirations the 2013 protests held for the young activists. The chapter shows how these hopes and aspirations were linked to, and culminated in, a personal awareness of wider social and urban inequalities related to education and housing, and the individual narratives recounted by the authors reveal the profound and positive impact the June protests had on the lives of the working-class students. The chapter in this sense counters the dominant narrative that the 2013 protestors were, across the nation, from white and middle-class families by underscoring the role that working-class students from Rio's peripheries had in the city's June Days and in turn the significance that these particular *manifestações* held for them. Indeed, what is clear for the students interviewed by Novaes and Lamego is, that Rio's demonstrations were more than a mere moment, they were an important social and political event that emerged from and were tied to the very fabric of their everyday lives, a fabric mired in hierarchies and inequities.

The personal narratives that underlie Novaes and Lamego's chapter contradict dominant stories of the 2013 protests in Brazil, in particular those disseminated by the mainstream press and media. Such contradictions were disseminated at the time by social-media outlets. As with other international protest movements of the time, social media was an important catalyst for the Brazilian demonstrations, with Facebook, Twitter, and other citizen-journalism platforms driving the gathering momentum. Social-media outlets also became a key space for disseminating information and news about the *manifestações*. Key here was the online news collective *Mídia NINJA* (an acronym for *Narrativas Independentes, Jornalismo e Ação*; Independent Narratives, Journalism, and Action). Broadcasting live from the sites of protest and often incorporating protestors' tweets, *Mídia NINJA* provided instant visibility of the protests and disseminated protestors' own voices and political points of view, in ways that often questioned the credibility of the country's biggest media organizations in

their reporting of the *manifestações*. This live reporting made *Mídia NINJA* one of the main news outlets for the protests, challenging the dominance of Brazil's mainstream media. Marianna Olinger's chapter traces *Mídia NINJA*'s historical links to key alliances with other social-justice and activist movements and provides an overview of its role in the 2013 protests. Her chapter shows how it was part of a new virtual landscape that fostered a new collective imaginary that can engage thousands of people in the creation of a 'new' media and a new politics. Indeed, *Mídia NINJA* and other social-media outlets have given a new generation of Brazilians direct and quick access to 'the political' in its ontological dimension (Mouffe 2005), in the process short-circuiting the formal channels of politics with which politicians are more familiar.

The *manifestações* can thus be interpreted as evidence of social-media's role in the very production of new kinds of participatory spatialities in late modernity. This is at the core of Pedro Erber's chapter, which explores the large gatherings of youths from impoverished urban peripheries in the shopping malls of São Paulo and Rio, known as *rolezinhos* (little strolls), which took place at the time of the protests. Erber examines historical parallels of the *rolezinhos*, ranging from nineteenth-century Paris to colonial Korea, situating the *rolezinho* phenomenon in a transnational history of urban strolling. Whilst doing so Erber's chapter draws attention to the ambiguous politicality between ostentatious consumerism and political practice. As Erber says, the *rolezeiros*, or young people from the urban peripheries who took to urban shopping malls, cannot simply be dismissed as enthralled by consumerism, they were reclaiming a contemporary spectatorship that is denied to them and were taking to spaces that are closed off to them.

In his chapter Erber interprets the *rolezinhos* as urban political happenings, seeing them as heirs of practices undertaken by artists in 1960s Brazil who carried out public performances in urban spaces. While artists were at the forefront of urban political performances in the 1960s, today such artistic happenings are undertaken by young people from the peripheries. The performative aspect of urban protests is explored by Barbara Szaniecki in her chapter, which discusses the strike by refuse workers in Rio de Janeiro that took place during carnival in 2014, examining it as 'a site-specific art form.' As the strike went on, refuse accumulated in the streets of Rio, turning the city into a morass of rubbish and a grotesque space. The strike visibly challenged the public image of Rio as a marvellous city and brought to light a different visual aesthetic, one in which the labour of refuse workers was brought into light. It is this visibility and its visualities that Szaniecki analyses, seeing them as an aesthetics of urban and political participation that for her is reminiscent of the environmental

art of the 1960s performance artist Hélio Oiticica. The tropicalist artist privileged interaction with spatial and environmental concerns over pure aesthetics. Seeing the refuse workers' strike as analogous to what Oiticica termed 'ambient art,' Szaniecki shows how popular manifestations participate in the creative, as well as political, field.

The dynamics of political participation is thoroughly engaged with by Renato Anelli and Ana Paula Koury, whose chapter discusses participatory urban planning and politics in São Paulo, especially as it relates to urban mobility. The authors outline the institutionalization of forms of participatory urban management initiated during the PT government of 2003–2006, when socially inclusive policies gave many the opportunity to play a role in formulating and implementing public policies. Key here was attempting to include social movements via participatory policies to improve urban circulation and the city's public transport network for workers. Improving circulation around the city was, and is, of course, a key concern for the MPL. Yet for Anelli and Koury, the *manifestações* of 2013 represent a rupture from the past that highlights a tension between urban politics and administrative planning methods. The authors state that the protests revealed how the institutional channels for social movements to convey their demands were no longer suitable. Instead, movements like the MPL use public protests to assert their demands, bypassing the traditional form of political mediation. Their chapter thus illustrates the rejection of politics, stressed by Chaui and points to a shift in Brazil's political landscape.

Alfredo Saad-Filho examines this shift in depth in his chapter, which offers a political-economy interpretation of the 2013 *manifestações*. He bases his interpretation on a review of two development strategies: import-substituting industrialization and neoliberalism, and the class structures associated with them. As Saad-Filho shows, examining these helps to locate the sources of social and political conflicts Brazil and the demands of distinct and rival social groups. Saad-Filho analyses these strategies in light of the forms of protest that have emerged in late capitalism and under neoliberalism, which 2013 is an example of, and explores the importance that social media have played in these. Saad-Filho's chapter thus provides a political-economic framework for understanding 2013 seeing the *manifestações* as examples of new forms of protesting.

If Saad-Filho points to changes in Brazil's political landscape, specifically in terms of new ways of enacting protests, the concluding chapter by historian Francisco Foot Hardman reflects on how in the country's June Days and the demands made by protestors exposed the historical-cultural roots of persistent inequalities engendered, expanded, and consolidated

since Brazil was officially granted its Independence in 1822. His chapter examines these historical inequalities from 'five distinct but interconnected and mutually inter-referential themes and issues,' namely: the country's regions and ecosystems; its indigenous and Afro-Brazilian communities; the city-countryside; education system; and community identities, including churches and the media. For Hardman, 2013 was a moment in which Brazilians came together to try to overcome such inequalities, and he sees the failure of the protests to do precisely that as revealing the darker side of Brazil, which has never experienced full democracy. Hardman notes that this has been extremely evident in recent times, with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the imprisonment of Lula, and the election of the authoritarian Bolsonaro. Hardman's chapter thus goes beyond focusing only on 2013, as it seeks to account for and understand the continuation of Brazil's political past in its political present. Many of the chapters echo this historical assessment. Indeed while this volume harks back to a more hopeful time when people were visibly expressing, and materializing, that is, when they were openly manifesting for democracy in the streets of Brazilian cities, it also assesses from different viewpoints why this was not successful. This should not be taken as a negation or dismissal of Brazil's June Days. Indeed, as the chapters show, 2013 is testimony to the potential of political possibilities, possibilities that can be (re)opened. The *manifestações* and their staging of protesting as a political event and activity were about much more than about the right to express individual indignations and frustrations; they were about the right to visibly express and materialize in the streets, thereby (re)claiming public space that in a democracy pertains to the people.

The chapters, then, point to 2013 as revealing key shifts in Brazilian society, particularly in terms of urban subjectivities, mobilities, and political enactment, although as 2015 and the present conjuncture show, these have been problematically limited. All of these issues prompt a reassessment of Brazilian democracy, notably in urban space. So whilst this volume focuses on a single event that took place in 2013, it raises and explores in different ways, and from different disciplinary concerns, a number of questions relating to Brazilian politics and society: questions of political mediation and representation, the uneven and hierarchical politics of the country, class concerns, social media, the politics of urban space, and political agency. In doing so it demonstrates that exploring Brazil's *manifestações* of 2013 entails more than thinking about one moment in the country's history; it entails considering how democracy has been, is, and can be, manifested in the country, something that given current threats to the country's democratic system is urgent. In this regard, it

is worthwhile foregrounding the wave of protests taking place right now in numerous Brazilian cities, calling for the impeachment of Bolsonaro whose popularity has fallen amidst claims that his government has sought to profit from the Covid vaccines. These protests against continued political corruption and Bolsonaro's inadequate response to the Coronavirus suggests that the political frustrations and anger present in the initial 2013 *manifestações* have not subsided and that the underlying ideals of Brazil's June Days have by no means dissipated. As Szaniecki says in her chapter, 'June 2013 is far from over.'

Notes

1 See *The Intercept*, 6 September 2019. https://theintercept.com/2019/06/09/brazil-car-wash-prosecutors-workers-party-lula (accessed 18 October 2021).
2 *Euronews*, 6 April 2020. https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/06/a-little-flu-brazil-s-bolsonaro-playing-down-coronavirus-crisis (accessed 18 October 2021).
3 See *Folha de São Paulo*, 1 June 2020. https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/brazil/2020/06/supreme-court-justice-compares-brazil-to-hitlers-germany-and-says-bolsonaro-supporters-want-abject-dictatorship.shtml (accessed 18 October 2021).
4 See *The Economist*, 11 June 2020. https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2020/06/11/does-jair-bolsonaro-threaten-brazilian-democracy (accessed 18 October 2021).
5 For more on the legal construction of the right to the city in Brazil see Fernandes (2007).

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