

FLOWS OF PROTEST CONTROL IN SÃO PAULO (2013-2014)¹

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the dynamics of protest control in São Paulo, from June 2013 to June 2014, focusing on coalitions between actors, arenas and institutional repertoires. We argue that the police crackdown on June 13 in São Paulo encouraged ordinary citizens to join the demonstrations, as well as spurred changes in local and federal government responses to protests and in repressive repertoires of social control.

KEYWORDS: *protest control; protest policing; protest repression; June 2013; anti-World Cup demonstrations*

Fluxos de controle de protestos em São Paulo (2013-2014)

RESUMO

O artigo analisa a dinâmica de controle dos protestos em São Paulo, de junho de 2013 a junho de 2014, focalizando as coalizões de atores, arenas e repertórios institucionais. Argumentamos que a repressão policial em 13 de junho, em São Paulo, encorajou cidadãos comuns a se juntarem às manifestações, bem como impulsionou mudanças nas respostas dos governos local e federal aos protestos e em repertórios repressivos de controle social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *controle do protesto; policiamento do protesto; repressão ao protesto; Junho de 2013; manifestações contra a Copa*

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INTRODUCTION

On June 13, 2013, a protest against the increase in public transportation fares took place in São Paulo. It was led by Movimento Passe Livre (the Free Transport Movement, hereafter MPL), an autonomist group. Before the demonstration started, the police searched people and arrested 100 protesters and journalists. Disagreement between protesters and police over the route of the march was responded by the latter with a hail of tear gas bombs — thrown by the police every 7 seconds — and the firing of rubber bullets. People were chased and attacked. The result of police repression was 128 people wounded and 235 arrested. After June 13, the protests quickly

spiraled into large-scale mobilizations that reached their peak on June 20 — one day after the revocation of the increase in public transportation fares — with almost 1,500,000 people protesting on the streets of more than 100 cities.

Some Brazilian scholars take police violence as an explanatory factor for the impressive speed with which large numbers of people joined the protest after June 13 (Dowbor; Szwako, 2013). Although it was certainly a trigger, the repressive response to MPL's early protests does not fully explain the protesters' motivation, given the diversity of claims and grievances that were expressed in Brazil in 2013. In a national survey conducted by Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics, Ibope), on June 20, the main reasons appointed by the protesters for taking part in the demonstrations — from the most to the least mentioned — were issues related to: the public transportation; corruption/diversion of public funds; public health system; excessive spending on the World Cup; and education system.² In addition, the massification of the protests was accompanied by different political actors and repertoires related to the activism fields of autonomists, traditional left, right and far right.

However, it is also true that widespread public repudiation to the tough government's response to the "early rise movement" worked as an immediate trigger event (Alonso; Mische, 2016). Indeed, it is widely recognized that when state violence is perceived as disproportionate, it can lead to greater mobilization (McAdam; Tarrow; Tilly, 2001). Repressive events can generate a "backfire": a public reaction of outrage to actions or situations that is publicized and perceived as unjust (Hess; Martin, 2006). This social mechanism is at the origin of mass protest waves which Tarrow (2011) defined as cycles of contention: a sequence of escalating public demonstrations, with greater frequency and intensity than usual, which spread socially and geographically among both those who are well organized and others who are less so, and also involve new forms of protesting and organizing.

Based on Tarrow's definition, we analyze the state control of the protests in the first year of the Brazilian cycle of contention.³ This period was crucial for institutional learning and adaptations/innovations of repertoires of state agents to deal with the return of the masses and new forms of protest. We argue that the repressive event on June 13 was not just a trigger event but was also a "transformative event"; in other words, a turning point which radiated political and symbolic effects in the trajectory of contention (McAdam; Sewell, 2001; Hess; Martin, 2006). For dissatisfied groups, the broad public criticism was an incentive to join the demonstrations. For local and federal governments, the fear of new peaks of protest during the World Cup matches led them to change control strategies.

br/pesquisas/controle-do-protesto-e-processo-politico-em-sao-paulo-2013-2016/>. Accessed on: Oct. 7, 2020.

[2] See: <<http://g1.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2013/06/veja-integra-da-pesquisa-do-ibope-sobre-os-manifestantes.html>>. Accessed on: Oct. 7, 2020.

[3] In the ongoing project, this Brazilian cycle is analytically delimited as beginning with the protests in June 2013 and running until President Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in August 2016. During this period, the demonstrations reached peaks in June 2013, March 2015 and March 2016. For a detailed analytical description of these three peaks, see: Alonso (2017).

In the next section, we summarize our analytical framework. Then, we describe the dynamics of protest control in demonstrations' phases in São Paulo — outbreak, massification, and decline —, connecting them with the national political process triggered by the outbreak of protests amid Fifa Confederations Cup (June 15-30) and preparations for the 2014 World Cup.

STATE CONTROL OF PROTEST IN CONTENTION CYCLES

We adopt an analytical lens based on recent debates about state, political repression and cycles of contention. First, what is formally known as the state is a heterogeneous strategic field formed by arenas and actors (Fligstein; McAdam, 2011; Duyvendak; Jasper 2015; Jasper; Duyvendak, 2015). Second, states react to protest as governments and as social control agencies (police, courts, prisons) (Earl, 2006). Governments typically respond to protests through political concessions to demands (public policies) and/or selective or generalized interventions in mobilization processes: repressing and increasing costs of collective action; or by facilitating protest events and reducing costs of collective action (Tilly, 1978). We adopt the expression “state control of protest” to refer to actions/reactions of political, police, and legal authorities that aim to handle protests; and we adhere to a broad conception of state repression as actions/reactions which aim to constrain, suppress or prevent protests through strategies that may be coercive (physical, penal/legal and acts of intimidation, threats, harassment) or non-coercive (disqualification, stigmatization, bargain, cooptation). Third, just as social movements use contention repertoires to confront authorities (Tilly, 2006; 2008), state agents use what we call *institutional repertoires* to control contention actions, such as *police repertoire* (set of strategies and tactics of protest policing) and *legal repertoire* (set of norms, formal procedures and institutional practices). Four, cycles of contention are critical junctures which exacerbate perceived threats by political and social elites, and accelerate political processes through intensive state responses to protest. The intense interaction between protesters and authorities generates learning and interactive changes in contentious and institutional repertoires (McAdam, 1983; Della Porta; Tarrow, 2012; Della Porta, 2020).

Systematic research on protest control in the Brazilian cycle is still lacking. There are case studies on protest policing that focus, as we do too, other forms of repression, in addition to direct violence, such as the police investigation in São Paulo (Almeida, 2020), and the use of new surveillance technologies, in Porto Alegre, on the eve and during the 2014 World Cup (Fernandes, 2020). Yet, we analyze protest control as a political process involving both governments' responses

TABLE I
Flows of protest control (São Paulo, 2013-2014)

Protest Phase	Government Response	Coalitions	Arenas	Repertoires
Outbreak June 6-13	Repression (coercive)	Local governments (Mayor/Governor) Local police forces Military/Civil ⁴	Street policing Police stations	Reproduction Use of escalated force
Massification June 17-24	Concession Selective facilitation Repression (non-coercive)	Local/federal governments	Street policing Police stations Social media Intelligence services (local/federal)	Adaptation Communication/monitoring via social media
Decline 2013 June 2014 June	Coordinated control Repression (coercive/non-coercive)	Local/federal governments Police Forces Army	Street policing Police stations Police investigation Intelligence services (local/federal) Courts	Adaptation Police investigation Innovation Legislation Operational forces Street policing tactics

Source: Elaborated by the Authors.

and uses of social control repertoires by law enforcement agencies. Aytaç, Schiumerini and Stokes (2017) adopted a similar analytical perspective. However, they interpret what happened in Brazil, after June 13, as a case of non-repressive solution to a backfire, considering the concession of public policies by the federal government and the containment of the Military Police by the São Paulo Governor. Based on a broader conception of political repression, we argue that the crisis generated by the backfire led to adaptations/innovations of repressive repertoires: from physical confrontation with protesters to more covert and institutionalized strategies (surveillance, police investigation, criminal proceedings). The metaphor “flow” of protest control aims precisely to highlight the processual dimension of these changes by mapping up state-actor coalitions, arenas and uses of repertoires in different phases of the protests in São Paulo. The table below summarizes the flows, and the later sections analytically describe them.⁵

**THE CONTROL FLOW OF THE PROTEST OUTBREAK:
SURPRISE EFFECT AND USE OF FORCE**

MPL originated in anti-globalization protests (2001), mobilizations against fare increases in public transportation in Brazilian

[4] There are two types of police in Brazil: the military police, as ostensive police, and the civil police as the judiciary police, in charge of conducting police investigations. Also, a particularity of the Brazilian criminal justice system is the existence of a preliminary investigative criminal procedure, of administrative nature, conducted by the civil police and overlooked by the criminal prosecutor, aiming to collect data and instruct the prosecutor’s decision to offer charges. Hereafter, we refer to this preliminary investigative procedure as “police investigation”, “police inquiry” or “criminal investigation”.

[5] The empirical sources come from databases (Protest Event Database, Court Cases Database, Protest Rights Campaign Network Database), interviews and chronology of institutional events. The Protest Event Database was developed in partnership with Angela Alonso’s research project “Performances políticas e circulação de repertórios nos ciclos de protestos contemporâneos do Brasil”: <<https://cebrap.org.br/pesquisas/>

performances-politicas-e-circulacao-de-repertorios-nos-ciclos-de-protestos-contemporaneos-do-brasil/>. Accessed on: Oct. 7, 2020.

[6] Since the World Trade Organization (WTO), in Seattle 1999, *black bloc* is associated to direct action adopted by decentralized anarchist networks and based on radical protest tactics, such as: the destruction of things as a symbolic act against the states/corporations' power; urban guerrilla forms; and clashes with the police.

[7] In 2013, protests against the increase in public transportation fares took place in other four other cities: Manaus and Porto Alegre (March), Goiânia and Natal (May).

cities (2003-2005, in Salvador and Florianópolis), and World Social Forum meetings (Spina, 2016). Since then, increases in transport fares have been regularly challenged by local and small-scale protests based on decentralized networks, intensive use of social media, the blocking of roads and traffic, occupation of bus terminals, and “black bloc” tactics.⁶ Scenes of violence between police and protesters have also become usual, followed by the burning of buses, tires, or trash bins. Prior to June 2013, local campaigns did not attract massive support, and in very few cases protests succeeded in revoking or postponing fare increases.

In June 2013, São Paulo activists adapted their protest tactics to produce surprise effects on political authorities and police forces.⁷ They had learned from police reactions and from the logic of the media coverage: demonstrations with harsh police responses appeared on the front pages of major newspapers. One of the tactics was announced in the slogan: “if the fare doesn’t go down, the city will stop”. MPL called for consecutive protests on weekdays, during peak traffic times, truceless (June 6-13). In addition, other tactics were adopted. First, the occupation of urban zones with restrictions on protests and heavily controlled by police, such as highways and avenues with a large volume of traffic, for example Paulista Avenue. Second, the loose planning of the marches routes in order to adapt them, according to police counteroffensive tactics. Third, the use of black bloc tactic and esthetic as a kind of “protest troop” willing to respond hand to hand to the police tactics of dispersal and/or blocking of the demonstrations.

In the first three days (June 6, 7 and 11), the MPL was successful in drawing public attention to the protests, in taking the authorities by surprise, and in attracting new adherents. The number of participants in the demonstrations rose from 2,000-5,000 to 12,000, and protesters blocked major traffic lanes. The support of the Mayor, the Governor and news outlets of a tough police response was univocal. On June 12, Mayor Fernando Haddad and the Federal Minister of Justice José Eduardo Cardoso — both from the leftist Workers’ Party (hereafter PT [Partido dos Trabalhadores]) — condemned the protests. The former refused to negotiate or consider revoking the fare increase, accusing activists of not being willing to engage in democratic dialogue. São Paulo Governor Geraldo Alckmin — from the center-right Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB [Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira]) — called the protesters “vandals”, and defended the harsh reaction of the police under his responsibility.

The mainstream media reduced the protests to uncontrolled acts of fury by vandals and presented scenes of injured policemen. On June 13 — the day of the fourth protest — two major newspapers

demanded harsher control of the streets by the police in their morning editorials: *Folha de S. Paulo* demanded that restrictions on protests in the Paulista Avenue be enforced by governments and police (the editorial title was “Retomar a Paulista”, or “Retake Paulista [Avenue]”), while *O Estado de S. Paulo* urged them to decimate the protest with the headline “Chegou a hora do basta” (“It’s enough time”). National news programs on television also condemned the protests and criticized the protesters. These calls for a harsh policing were also successful. The police contingent doubled in relation to the previous days: 900 policemen and 500 officers from Military Police Shock Troop (Tropa de Choque), the Brazilian public security force specialized in crowd control and prison riots. The Governor Alckmin and São Paulo State’s Secretary of Public Security, Fernando Grella, mounted a military operation whose political order was to avoid at any cost the occupation of Paulista Avenue and to contain localized depredation acts that had been taking place since the beginning of the demonstrations.

In the outbreak flow, political authorities in São Paulo did not realize the changes in the protest profile in June 2013. Mass demonstrations were returning to the Brazilian public space through a new combination of peaceful marches, disruptive tactics and black bloc violence. Mayor and Governor, although political opponents, agreed not to comply the claim to revoke the fare increase, and responded to protests combining disqualification of protesters with escalated force. The police forces coalition improvised a connection between the street policing and temporary arrests in police stations. Old repressive tactics were reproduced for confronting a new protest profile: dispersal of demonstrations through the use of less-lethal weapons and arrests “for investigation”.⁸ Protesters were taken to police stations and temporarily held for alleged criminal practices based on testimony from the police officers themselves and not on evidence. In this phase of the protests, the arrests worked more as an intimidation mechanism than as a mean of police investigation for formal punishment of illegal conduct. They generated a loose flow between two central arenas, the streets and the police stations, because they were immediately challenged by public defenders and social movement lawyers.⁹

THE CONTROL FLOW OF THE PROTESTS’ MASSIFICATION:

CONCESSION AND SELECTIVE FACILITATION

The war-like scenario set up by the authorities on June 13 to decimate the protest was widely propagated. Shocking scenes of police brutality against middle-class protesters, journalists, and pedestrians, were broadcast on primetime television and through social

[8] This kind of prison is called, in Brazil, “prisão para averiguação”. It was widely used by military regime against political opponents.

[9] Information collected in interviews with social movement lawyers and public defenders.

[10] Protest Rights Campaign Network Database (2013-2016).

[11] The Brazilian cities hosting the World Cup matches were distributed in the five regions of the country: North (Manaus, Natal), Northeast (Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador), Midwest (Brasília, Cuiabá), Southeast (Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo) and South (Curitiba, Porto Alegre).

[12] Before the protests (March 2013), President Rousseff had 63% of the rating Excellent/Good for her government and only 7% of negative rating with Bad/Very Bad. After the June protests, President's popularity rates dropped to 31% approval. At the end of 2013, the rating of Excellent/Good rises to 43%. In June 2014, the President's popularity declined again, with 31% of Excellent/Good. See "Popularidade da Presidente Dilma Rousseff", *Folha de S.Paulo*. Available at: <https://arte.folha.uol.com.br/graficos/zzXby/?>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020.

[13] "'Brasil acordou mais forte', diz Dilma sobre os protestos". *O Estado de S. Paulo*, Jun. 18, 2013. Available at: <https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,brasil-acordou-mais-forte-diz-dilma-sobre-protestos,1043907>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020.

media, the internet, and instant message apps. Traditional Brazilian police violence left the backstage of poor and black peripheral areas to reach Paulista Avenue. Declarations of repudiation swept the country and the world through professional associations, universities, human rights institutions and movements' organizations.¹⁰

The perceptions of the protests by the mainstream media and political authorities changed. The initial chorus in defense of order was replaced by differentiation between ordinary citizens in their legitimate exercise of political protesting and small groups of vandals. The major newspapers and TV channels condemned the attacks on and arrests of journalists by police, and celebrated protests as a "party of democracy". PT politicians — Mayor Haddad, the Minister of Justice, José Eduardo Cardoso, and party leaders in São Paulo — criticized the excessive use of police force against peaceful citizens. Mayor Haddad invited the MPL for a negotiation meeting, but he did not give in to their pressure to revoke the fare increase.

As of June 13, Dilma Rousseff's government became the target of protests that criticized corruption (Mensalão Scandal), excessive spending on sporting mega-events (2013 Confederations Cup, 2014 World Cup, 2016 Olympics) and inefficiency of social policies (education, health, urban mobility). In the opening ceremony of the Confederations Cup, on June 15, in Brasília, President Rousseff was booed during her speech. Protests against 2014 World Cup spread across the twelve cities that would host the matches.¹¹ The fifth protest, on June 17, gathered 65,000 people in São Paulo and 100,000 in Rio de Janeiro, the two main host cities of the World Cup matches.

In this new scenario, the protest was no longer an exclusive issue for local authorities. In three weeks of protests, the President's popularity rates dropped extraordinarily.¹² On June 18, President Rousseff made the first favorable statement about protests, regarding them with expressions like "the energy of our democracy", "the strength of the voice from the streets", the "civility of our population".¹³ Then, the local and federal governments sealed a political pact in order to try to dampen the protests through concessions to demands. On June 19, under pressure from PT national leaders and Rousseff's government, the mayors of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro revoked the increase in public transportation fares. On June 21, one day after the protest's peak, President Rousseff announced a package of public policies and funds that would be implemented jointly by local and federal governments.

The policy concession was accompanied by strategies to facilitate protest rather than simply trying to stop it by force. After June 13, Governor Alckmin still tried to support the military operation, but in response to national and international pressures he adopted new

measures for upcoming demonstrations: rubber bullets would no longer be used, and further, the deployment of the Shock Troop was ruled out, and the police force should maintain communication with protesters, negotiate routes and only intervene as a last resort.¹⁴

The political limitations imposed on the use of force led the police to the use of the internet. On the one hand, the institutional Twitter account of the São Paulo Military Police, which is commonly used to inform about routine police actions, was adapted as a strategy and space for the protest policing for various purposes: i) to convey information about the traffic on the streets and surroundings where the demonstrations were taking place; ii) to disseminate a public police narrative of protest violence through real-time reports and images of illegal and violent acts by protesters; iii) to create a communication channel with protesters and encourage them to report acts of vandalism to the police.¹⁵ On the other hand, traditional strategies of information collection, such as intelligence and monitoring, were adapted to control the protests. Local and federal agencies began to monitor the scheduling of demonstrations and to map up protester profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp.¹⁶

In the outbreak phase of protests, political authorities did not calculate that harsh repression could spread the protests. The backfire led to a new flow of control based on a combination of strategies: policy concession, selective facilitation for “orderly” protests carried out by “good” protesters, and covert repression through the use of new technologies to monitor protest movements and groups.

From the massification phase onwards, strategic choices to contain the protests were based on fear that the uncontrolled police repression could provoke a new massification of demonstrations during a month of matches (from June 12 to July 13) in the twelve Brazilian cities that would host them. In the next flow of control, the tactical adaptations and innovations in institutional repertoires aimed at a more coordinated and preventive protest control model.

THE CONTROL FLOW OF THE DECLINE: COORDINATED REPRESSION FOR THE WORLD CUP

After the June’s peak, the protest fragmented into small demonstrations of professional associations and unions, traditional leftist movements, autonomists, and right-wing groups. Despite the diversity of collective actors and demands on display in public space, from July 2013 to June 2014, the state control aimed at two main targets: black bloc groups and the demonstrations against the 2014 World Cup.

The presence of black blocs in protests spread mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, producing repeated sequences of peaceful

[14] “Alckmin diz que bala de borracha está proibida em protestos em SP,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, June 17, 2013. Available at: <<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2013/06/1296500-alckmin-diz-que-bala-de-borracha-esta-proibida-em-protestos-em-sp.shtml>> Accessed on: October 28, 2020.

[15] São Paulo Military Police Tweet Database (2013-2016), produced by the Undergraduate Research of Vitória Nascimento (Unifesp).

[16] See “Abin monta rede para monitorar internet”. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 19/06/2013. Available at: <<https://sao-paulo.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,abin-monta-rede-para-monitorar-internet,1044500>>. Accessed on: Oct. 8, 2020.

[17] Since June 2013, black bloc groups had generated 50 Facebook pages, 74,000 posts, 160,000 comments and almost 1.5 million likes (source: *Folha de S.Paulo*, Oct. 10, 2013). On July 1st, the *Black Bloc Manifesto* was launched on the Facebook page *BlackBlocBrasil*, which opposed the political sense of symbolic violence against the system to acts of depredation devoid of ideology.

[18] The campaign was based on World Cup Popular Committees (CPC [Comitês Populares da Copa]) in the twelve host cities, which were nationally connected by the National Articulation of the World Cup Popular Committees (Ancop [Articulação Nacional dos Comitês Populares da Copa]). Comitê Popular da Copa SP, “Manifesto Copa Pra Quem?”. Available at: <<https://comitepopularsp.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/manifesto.pdf>>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020. Comitê Popular da Copa e das Olimpíadas do Rio de Janeiro, “Dossiê Megaeventos e Direitos Humanos no Rio de Janeiro: maio de 2013”. Available at: <https://comitepopulario.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/dossie_comitepopularcoparj_2013.pdf>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020.

[19] “Quem grita ‘Não vai ter Copa’”. *Agência Pública*, Feb. 17, 2014. Available at: <<https://apublica.org/2014/02/quem-grita-nao-vai-ter-copa/>>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020.

[20] Fifa’s requirements for the World Cup encompassed public policies for three themes: urban infrastructure works (public transportation, large traffic routes, hotel chains and sporting stadiums); public order measures (restriction of the right to strike from three months before the event, the delimitation of prohibited areas either for street commerce or for protests near the stadiums) and national laws for criminal organizations and terrorism. These public policies were regulated by the so-called Cup Law, General Law n. 12.663, Jun. 5, 2012.

[21] Bond, David. “Copa não é hora de protestar, é para aproveitar, diz Valcke”. *BBC News Brasil*, Dec. 5, 2013. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2013/12/131205_valcke_protestos_copa_rm>. Accessed

marches ended with depredation, confrontation with the police, and arrests.¹⁷ Demonstrations against the 2014 World Cup had been taking place since 2012, when the project of the mega-event began to be implemented (Machado; Maciel; Souza, 2021). Until June 2013, the campaign had been exclusively led by traditional urban movements, one of the PT’s historical social base, and public demonstrations as contention strategy had been used sporadically. The outbreak of the protests at the same time the Confederations Cup event boosted the campaign to the streets, bifurcating the protest network. The traditional left’s protests aimed to pressure authorities to negotiate urban public policies and to legally repair populations affected by infrastructure works (“World Cup for whom? Cup without people, I’m on the street again”).¹⁸ The protest network of the autonomists, black blocs and cyberactivists threatened to stop the games and to reproduce the successful “June Effect” of crowded streets (“Without rights, there will be no World Cup”).¹⁹

During the Confederations Cup, the stadiums in the cities hosting the matches became spaces of demonstrations in defiance of the requirements made by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (Fifa), itself one of the targets of the protests.²⁰ Between June 15 and June 30, autonomists and black blocs tried to disrupt the Confederations Cup with demonstrations in the vicinity of the stadiums in Brasília, Fortaleza, Salvador and Belo Horizonte. Police squads largely used rubber bullets and tear gas to block the protesters access to the stadiums.

Fifa’s Secretary General Jérôme Valcke publicly criticized the protests in Brazil, demanded the use of the Army to ensure the security in the stadiums and threatened to withdraw the 2014 World Cup from the country if the Brazilian government did not contain the protests during the matches.²¹ While the Fifa’s spokesman called out a tough response from security forces to protests, a coalition of human rights activists and organizations pressured the Brazilian government with legal defense of protesters in police stations and courts, and litigation against state agents.²² From the first half of 2014, on the eve of the World Cup, international denunciations increased. In response to them, the United Nations (UN) and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) began demanding measures from the Brazilian government to reverse restrictions on protest rights, such as use of less-lethal weapons, surveillance and monitoring of activism networks, arrests and police investigation, restrictive legislation of civil rights.

From January 2014, the Anti-Cup demonstrations returned to the streets in all host cities. They were small, reaching no more than 5,000 participants,²³ but the threat perceived by political authorities

was not low. The new political scenario after the June's peak led to a third flow of protest control based on both greater coordination of state-actors and law enforcement arenas, and innovations in policing tactics of demonstrations.

The São Paulo government adopted a dual strategy against black bloc groups after attacks on police officers in demonstrations that took place in October 2013. On the one hand, the police force tried to isolate radical activists through communication with protesters via internet and before the demonstrations started. On the other hand, a state task force of criminal investigation gathered prosecutors, police chiefs and the heads of Military Police. Then, the Minister of Justice Cardozo gathered the general director of the Federal Police and the secretaries of Public Security of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in a federal task force, based on four fronts of action: 1) formation of an intelligence group gathering the Federal Police, the Military Police and Civil Police to investigate the *modus operandi* of the black bloc movement; 2) creation of operational groups involving the Public Prosecutors Office and Civil Police authorities; 3) creation of a group of jurists to assist in the formulation of bills by federal ministries aimed at hardening criminal punishment for acts against public and private property and violent actions against police officers; 4) creation of a protocol for unified rules of conduct for state police forces.

From the second half of 2013, new laws related directly or indirectly to the black blocs protests were enacted, such as municipal legislations prohibiting the use of masks in public demonstrations, and the Law on the Criminal Organizations (Lei de Organizações Criminosas, LOC). The original goal of this new legislation was to regulate the state control of organized forms of political violence (terrorism) and crime (drug trafficking, corruption), complying with Fifa's requirements. But the LOC was adapted by the police to frame civil disobedience and violence in the protests as a case of "criminal organization". In early November, the so-called Black Bloc Police Inquiry officially started, simultaneously, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The LOC new legislation allowed individual cases to be brought together in a single investigation based on the assumption that circumstantial events of depredation and violence against police officers were part of an orchestrated plan of infiltration in peaceful protests by a "criminal organization", the Black Bloc.

The police investigation in São Paulo brought together several police reports and minor investigations that had been opened separately in different police stations since the beginning of the protests (Freitas, 2018; Almeida, 2020). It was coordinated by the State Department of Criminal Investigations (Deic), which is a police branch specialized in combating criminal groups that operate in an

on: Oct. 28, 2020; "Jérôme Valcke responde lema de protestos: 'Claro que vai ter Copa'". *Hoje em Dia*, May 19, 2014. Available at: <<https://www.hojeemdia.com.br/esportes/j%3%A9r%3%B4mevalcke-responde-lema-de-protestos-claro-que-vai-ter-copa-1.259080>>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020.

[22] Protest Rights Campaign Network Database (2013-16).

[23] Protest Event Database (2013-16).

[24] The empirical references to police investigation in São Paulo are based on data from the *habeas corpus* case demanding the closure of the investigations (HC 55157). *Habeas corpus* consists of a judicial remedy to prevent or stop the constraint on freedom of movement due to illegality or abuse of power. In the preventive modalities we found claims of safe conduct to protest without abusive repression; in the liberating modality we found claims for closure of criminal investigations and criminal cases, revocation of prisons and judicial contestation of acts of authorities in the justice system.

[25] The black blocs were said to act “in an organized manner by practicing acts of vandalism with the objective of questioning the current system”, which caused the breach of the “parameters of normality and security of society” (HC 55157, pp. 175, 176). The stated objective was to investigate groups defined as “individuals (who) act in an organized manner with the purpose of questioning the current system”, and “infiltrate among the demonstrators and promote criminal acts”, such as the “destruction of headquarters of private companies and businesses, amongst others” (Records of HC 55157, pp. 169-70).

[26] In São Paulo, on February 22, 2014, Deic summoned 40 regular participants in the protests at the same time as the protest. Many of them had never been arrested. The tactic was repeated until the end of the World Cup. On June 23, 2014, the Military Police arrested Fábio Harano Hideki and Rafael Lusvargh, and the Civil Police summoned MPL members to testify. HC 55157; Court Cases Database (2013-16). See also the publications by Artigo 19: *Protestos no Brasil — 2013*. Available at: <https://protestos.artigo19.org/Protestos_no_Brasil_2013.pdf>. Accessed on: Oct. 9, 2020; *As ruas sob ataque: protestos em 2014 e 2015*. Available at: <<https://2015brasil.protestos.org/>>. Accessed on: Oct. 9, 2020; *Nas ruas, nas leis, nos tribunais: violações ao direito de protesto no Brasil 2015-2016*. Available at: <<https://artigo19.org/2017/02/10/nas-ruas-nas-leis-nos-tribunais-violacoes-ao-direito-de-protesto-no-brasil-2015-2016/>>. Accessed on: Oct. 9, 2020.

organized manner.²⁴ In the institutional rhetoric, acts of depredation of public and private assets were considered as constituting a deliberate and organized association of individuals to commit a crime.²⁵

The adaptation of investigative routines for common crimes to policing protests expanded the flow of control from the streets to police stations to IP-Black Bloc to state and federal intelligence services and to criminal justice agencies. Arrests made by Military Police were combined with generalized collection of information about groups, organizations, activists and also ordinary citizens; infiltration of undercover policemen; and the monitoring of social movements’ and activists’ social media.

Police investigations lasted from November 2013 to September 2015, and more than 300 people were added as suspects. While the homologous case in Rio de Janeiro resulted in convictions, the “Black Bloc Investigation” in São Paulo did not result in any criminal charges. The case did not gain traction, for the fragility of attempts to define black bloc protesters as a case of a criminal organization. Rather than detecting and punishing perpetrators of localized acts of vandalism, the Policy Inquiry worked as an institutional space for policing protests, involving a broad coalition of state actors and arena-repertoires articulation. Symbolically, the police investigation served as a moral and legal language to classify the “bad demonstrator”. There were court cases in which protesters became suspect of criminal acts and were investigated both due to their black costumes and for carrying suspicious artifacts with “offensive potential”, including “a manifesto-like poem with a connotation of protest”.

Strategically, the criminal procedure was used both to dismantle activists’ groups and to demobilize the Anti-Cup protests. When the demonstrations returned to the streets in January 2014, individuals under investigation were systematically summoned to testify on the days protests were scheduled and which were widely publicized on social media.²⁶ In June 2013, mass arrests of protesters generated a very temporary flow of the containment of protesters between the streets and police stations and often did not even generate police records. They functioned mainly as an improvised and intimidating reaction to defuse protests.

The Police Inquiry was part of the main control strategy before and during the World Cup matches: trying to avoid the occurrence of demonstrations by arresting protesters in advance and without hurting them.²⁷ To achieve this goal, it was also necessary to invest in innovations in street policing tactics. After June 2013, the police force itself recognized its difficulty of reconciling political pressure to contain protests with the lack of training to deal with mass demonstrations and black bloc groups (FGV DAPP, 2014). The protests on the descent

of the June's peak catalyzed the intertwining of the public security policy for the World Cup with the protest control. (Machado; Maciel; Souza, 2021). Since 2012, the police forces had been being trained for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Based on an extensive cooperation program with the US government, the courses and workshops addressed issues related to the public image of the police (social perceptions and journalistic coverage of public security actions) as well as technical ones regarding policing (operational planning, crowd management and control, civil disturbances, use of less lethal weapons, collection of data and images of people through new technologies — internet, cell phones, drones — etc.).²⁸

The Brazilian protests intensified the transnational exchanges between state polices and security forces from countries, especially those with experience in dealing with major events, radical political groups and terrorist threats, such as Germany, United Kingdom, Spain and United States. The North American Embassy offered to state governments a “improvement course” of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) about “Disorder Containment”. From January to May 2014, FBI teams from Chicago and Los Angeles circulated in the eight of the twelve host cities of the games.²⁹

Repressive innovations in street policing tactics appear in Anti-Cup demonstrations from January 2014. One of them was a special uniform, nicknamed “Robocop” by Brazilian press, because of their black exoskeletons, helmets, and armors. This innovation aimed both to protect policeman from fireworks and stones thrown by protesters, and to intimidate them with new police units heavily equipped. The other two innovations aimed to immobilize demonstrators and the protest itself. First, the São Paulo police created the so-called “Ninja Platoon” or “Troop of Arms”, a special detachment of jiu-jitsu to physically contain protesters. It was a complementary operational force to the Riot Police. Second, kettling was used as an alternative strategy to the traditional dispersing of demonstrations through less lethal weapons.³⁰ The tactic consists of confining protesters in a circle or corridor formed by a large contingent of security forces to prevent the protest from taking place outside the area delimited by the police cordon. In order to avoid the direct confront and the excessive use of force, innovations in the policing of Anti-Cup protests produced a preventive repressive model wherewith protesters were contained and marches prevented from taking place before any illegal action or breach of order.

This third flow of protest control was based on a narrower articulation between state arenas and changes in repressive repertoires through two combined processes: first, adaptations of known tactics, intelligence services, police investigation, criminal proceedings;

[27] In the words of the Commander of the Riot Police, André Luiz Vital: “Nobody is going to throw a stone, commit a crime and not be arrested. The idea is to always arrest and bring them to justice. Normal arrests are already made, with immobilization and driving the aggressive element [...]. The tactic that should be adopted is to arrest the protesters, without hurting them”.

[28] “EUA treinaram policiais para conter manifestações na Copa”. *Agência Pública*, Jun. 11, 2014. Available at: <<https://apublica.org/2014/06/eua-treinaram-policiais-para-conter-manifestacoes-na-copa/>>. Accessed on: Oct. 28, 2020. For a detailed analytical description of the new technologies` policy for Word Cup, see Fernandes (2020).

[29] Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Fortaleza, Natal, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and São Paulo.

[30] Kettling was used by German police in the 1980s. This tactic was also named by the Brazilian press *envelopamento* (enveloping). Although condemned by international human rights bodies, the tactic still appears in manuals against crowd disturbances of local polices in New York and Germany.

second, innovations in the protest policing with use of new surveillance technologies, special police units, and preventive spatial control techniques of public demonstrations.

Fearing that uncontrolled police violence in the streets could provoke a new protests' peak during the World Cup matches, local and federal governments bet on training and technological modernization of the Brazilian police forces, as well as on extending the flow of control to the judicial arena. At the domestic politics level, legal state actors were crucial to legitimizing the adaptations and innovations in the repressive institutional repertoires. Based on the police investigation reports, Public Prosecutors proposed criminal suits against activists. In São Paulo, they did not result in court conviction of protesters,³¹ but neither judicial decisions accepted allegations against the state repression in *habeas corpus*/ court cases proposed by Public Defenders/cause lawyers, such as: violence and abuse of authority by police, and restrictions imposed on the exercise of the right to protest through punitive legislation, use of kettling, and the online surveillance of individuals and groups.³²

[31] In Rio de Janeiro, the criminal investigation was initiated by the Cybercrime Police Department (DRCI), from the Civil Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro. There, criminal charges against protesters resulted in court conviction.

[32] Court Cases Database (2013-2016).

CONCLUSION

State control of protests involves both strategic government choices between concession, repression, facilitation, and the selection of forms of social control to manage demonstrations. Mainly in democracies, the repressive tactics used to suppress them matter. Public scenes of overt and direct violence against early risers can attract more protesters and supporters, as well as can attract criticism to governments at national and international levels. Then, cycles of contention stimulated by backfire requires of political authorities new strategic calculations and choices to deal with mass protests.

The first year of the Brazilian cycle was crucial in experimentation and institutional learning in dealing with the return of mass protests and new contentious repertoires. The repressive event in June 13, in São Paulo, was a turning point in the contention trajectory, generating new political opportunities for protests, and limiting both the police response to the political protest and the use of direct and overt repression. The critical juncture formed by massification of the demonstrations compelled governments to combine responses to protests, as well as to coordinate actors, arenas and repertoires of different law enforcement agencies. The transnational mega-events were crucial in this change process. They generated resources and opportunities, as well as pressure and constraints, for diffusion of legal and police models of repressive control of order.

Historically, the cycle of contention started in the Brazilian June changed interactively protest politics and state control. In the two previous national cycles — pro-democracy (1978-1982) and impeachment of President Collor de Mello (1992) — protest networks and opposition parties were connected, and large marches crossed the country from North to South without repressive state intervention. From 2013 onwards, decentralized, disruptive and violent forms of collective action and peaceful marches have been mixing in the streets. The political process between the outbreak of the cycle and the 2014 World Cup matches produced longer-term changes in the capacity of the state to contain public demonstrations in Brazil.³³

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