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## HISTORY

# Student Mobilization, Higher Education, and the 2013 Protests in Brazil in Historical Perspective

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This article analyzes student mobilization and public discourse on higher education during the June 2013 protests in Brazil in an effort to situate the protests historically. I argue that higher education was a major, yet overlooked, component of the 2013 protests, and that concerns over the failings and shortcomings of Brazil's university system had deeper roots in institutional problems and student discourses on education, society, and democracy. These historical inequalities combined with institutional memories that offered students models and examples of past mobilization and allowed them to tie their present-day concerns to past examples of student politics. I consider the ways in which the often-overlooked question of educational reform offers insights into ongoing social inequalities in Brazil, the failure of various regimes to address structural issues, and how students in 2013 looked to the past while simultaneously drawing on their own particular educational contingencies. This article situates 2013 historically while exploring the ways in which higher education in the twenty-first century has transformed, even as it remains an important part of political and social struggles between society and the state. Finally, this article explores how the 2013 protests in Brazil reflect ongoing struggles to define the role of the state in society, not just in Brazil but in the Americas more generally.

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## Introduction

In June 2013, over one million Brazilians took to the streets in a paroxysm of political mobilization that began over an increase in bus fares. Disgusted by the sudden hike, the latest in a series of fare hikes in recent years, Brazilians peacefully demonstrated in an attempt to make their voices heard. Protests spread throughout the country after police forcibly and violently interrupted the initial protests, fueling public resentment of what many perceived to be the state's abuse of power and disregard for its citizens, symbolized economically in the bus fare hikes and physically in police violence. While the protests began over bus fares, they soon included concerns ranging from political corruption to health and education, from gay rights to the economic and social costs of hosting the 2014 World Cup. Though covering a variety of issues and spanning the ideological spectrum, these protests collectively criticized the state for its perceived failure to provide adequate services for the general public.

The largest protests in a generation, 2013 had three common historical referents: the 1968 protests against military rule, mobilizations amid the return to democracy in the early 1980s, and student-led protests in 1992. The first of these three referents occurred as hundreds of thousands of Brazilians demonstrated against an authoritarian and repressive military regime that further eroded already limited political and social liberties. With students at the forefront, Brazilians took to the streets to demand a return to democracy and an end to repression, culminating in the military entering its most repressive phase at the end of 1968. The second referent occurred as the military regime began to offer a limited political liberalization in the late 1970s. In this gradually opening context, Brazilians again mobilized to demand an end to the military regime and the economic turmoil its policies had created. These protests grew in the early 1980s as the military regime made clear its intent to step down and to return the country to civilian rule through indirect elections. Dissatisfied at the top-down nature of this limited democratic reopening, millions of Brazilians participated in the *Diretas Já!* or Direct Elections Now! campaign of 1983–1984, demanding the right to directly elect a president in 1985. This was one of the largest social mobilization since 1968, one that again

hinged on political democratization. The final referent occurred in 1992, as evidence of massive corruption in Fernando Collor's administration became public. In response, tens of thousands took to the streets to demand his impeachment, with students once again leading the charge.

Given the number of Brazilians in the streets in 2013, commentators and scholars alike could not help but recall past moments of popular mobilization, nationally or globally. Pointing to unrest in Brazil, as well as in Turkey and in Bulgaria in 2013, Immanuel Wallerstein saw echoes of the global 1960s in Brazil's June 2013 mobilization, proclaiming the June demonstrations as part of "the continued process of what began like the world revolution of 1968" (Wallerstein 2013, n.p.). Throughout that month, over one million people mobilized over social and political issues in an effort to shape the policies and politicians whose decisions were directly affecting their lives. The protests reminded politicians and the world of the deeper roots of social unrest and inequality and of the ongoing limits of the democratic state in Brazil. To many commentators and participants, the twenty-first century finally had its major generational mobilization.

Beyond the sheer numbers of Brazilians in the streets, the 2013 protests recalled the public mobilizations of 1968, the 1980s, and 1992 in two particular ways. In each case secondary and university students were catalysts of and active participants in these protests. Furthermore, higher education and calls for educational reform were important, if often-overlooked, components of these discourses that challenged the government. The debates around education in 2013 were also debates about democracy, society, and the role of the state. Highlighting ongoing inequalities in Brazil's higher education system, students in 2013 worked to address issues of social inequalities in the twenty-first century even as they pointed to the ongoing need for educational reform—issues that made them the descendants of those who had mobilized in the 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s. By examining the 2013 protests and placing them in a larger historical context of educational reform and student activism, 2013 appears less an eruption of social unrest and more a part of a longer and broader struggle to reform education in order to form a more democratic society.

The 2013 protests also demonstrate how higher education in the twenty-first century has transformed socially, even as it remains a fulcrum to challenge the failures of democratic and postauthoritarian regimes not just in Brazil, but in the Americas more generally. Education continues to be an important part of political and social struggles against inequality in Brazil. Ongoing structural issues in higher education combined with long-term institutional and cultural forms of mobilization to provide students in 2013 with a shared identity and history of mobilization. As a result, students had both the material causes and the politico-cultural institutions in place to mobilize, ultimately challenging and shaping (and being shaped by) state policies and actors. While mobilizations over educational inequalities have ebbed and flowed over time, the discursive and political struggle over the role of higher education in society has been a key part of spasms of social protest throughout the latter part of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, with education operating simultaneously as a politicized issue even as the demand for educational reform socializes political questions and policies.

### The Roots of the June 2013 Protests

While the seemingly abrupt eruption of protests in June 2013 surprised many both in Brazil and internationally, the demonstrations did not emerge out of the ether, a sudden spasm in an otherwise tranquil social arena. In some ways, the protests had their origins at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2005. It was there that "the democratic process of occupying the streets" began,<sup>1</sup> as students and grassroots activists, building on protests over bus fare hikes in Bahia in 2003 and Florianópolis in 2004, created the Movimento Passe Livre (Free Pass Movement, MPL) (Vainer et al. 2013). The MPL remained active in sporadic demonstrations in cities throughout Brazil from 2006 up to the beginning of 2013 (Vanden 2014). These protests responded to a very real issue for many Brazilians who relied on public transportation, the cost of which had increased nearly 200 percent since 2000 and had even outpaced inflation rates in that same period.<sup>2</sup> That students were at the forefront of such movements was unsurprising, given that many students, even from middle-class and wealthier families, remained dependent on public transportation to reach often-distant schools (Cicalo 2012).

In other ways, the 2013 protests were not unique either to the new century or to the MPL. Bus fare increases served as a point of contention throughout the twentieth century, bringing Brazilians into the streets to resist government policies that directly affected their quotidian socioeconomic lives. Such protests

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Facebook page entry on the União Nacional dos Estudantes's page on June 27, 2013. Available at <http://www.facebook.com/uneoficial?fref=ts> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> "The Rising Cost of Living in Brazil," *New York Times*, June 18, 2013.

could and did turn violent, as was the case in São Paulo in 1958, when the police crackdown on protests left four people dead.<sup>3</sup> And while the MPL participated in protests between 2005 and 2013, other student groups, particularly the União Nacional dos Estudantes (National Students Union, UNE) and the União Brasileiro de Estudantes Secundaristas (Brazilian Union of Secondary Students, UBES) also led protests over fare hikes that disproportionately affected the poor and sectors of the middle classes in urban areas in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Amazonas, among others, in 2007, 2010, and 2011.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the protests against the increase in fares in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and elsewhere in June 2013 had recent precedents. What made 2013 exceptional was not the issue itself but the way in which it served as a catalyst. Whereas previous protests had occurred peacefully, in June 2013 police responded with violence, relying on tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets to disperse unarmed and peaceful demonstrators. The result was an outpouring of public support for the protesters. Forty-five years after hundreds of thousands of Brazilians had taken to the streets to demonstrate against repression and police violence in the midst of a military dictatorship, so too did hundreds of thousands take to the streets in response to the violence in 2013. The regime in 2013 may have been democratic, but the police violence remained authoritarian. The protests and repression transpired even as members of the international media converged on Brazil to cover the Confederations Cup, the warm-up tournament to prepare Brazil to host the World Cup in 2014. The result was the proverbial perfect storm of public unrest, with national and international media outlets looking on as increasing bus fares and police violence merged with exorbitant expenses for international sporting events intended for global entertainment, while spending on real social services for Brazilians languished.

Consequently, between the second and third weeks of June, over one million protesters took to the streets throughout the country, raising “a diffuse cloud of demands”<sup>5</sup> that took two general forms. On the one hand were anticorruption discourses, issues that rejected politics-as-usual in Brazil; these could be further divided into leftist critiques of liberal politics that ignored the needs of the masses and conservative critiques that focused on the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party, PT) and President Dilma Rousseff. The latter strain was in the minority, but it would have a transformative impact in the longer term, setting a discursive precedent that conservative social groups, media, and politicians would later deploy to shape the eventual impeachment of Rousseff and her removal from office in 2016.

On the other hand, in making demands for federal funding to education, medicine, infrastructure, and other social needs, many protesters expressed an inherent belief in the strong and positive role the state should play in providing services for citizens, while rejecting the spending on the World Cup. These groups tapped into a sense of both a “transgressive” and an “insurgent” citizenship in which citizens demanded the fulfillment of their constitutionally defined social rights while also using urban landscapes to demand that the state address ongoing social inequalities (Earle 2012; Holston 2009). These critiques spanned the political spectrum. While individuals of the left, center, and right all had their own visions of the appropriate role of the state, in the 2013 protests all could agree that the Brazilian state had failed to meet those expectations.

These two general criticisms were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Protests demanding a reduction in bus fare hikes and even free public transportation could and did target individual politicians at the municipal and state levels who issued such policies. What emerged were parallel political discourses that simultaneously condemned and upheld the state. They mobilized against the state’s abuse of power, be it through corruption, repression, or impunity, even while making demands predicated on the notion that the state should improve the quality of life in Brazil through social programs that directly addressed the public’s perceived needs.

The protests had a very real and immediate effect on national politics. By the end of June, public officials walked away from bus fare hikes in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and elsewhere. President Rousseff gave an address on June 21 acknowledging the protesters’ numerous issues and pledging to work toward five “pacts” that would address issues like transportation, education, health, and corruption in Brazil.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Senate

<sup>3</sup> “A cidade conflagrada pelo aumento de tarifas: Choques entre a polícia, agitadores e populares,” *O Estado de S. Paulo* (São Paulo), October 31, 1958.

<sup>4</sup> “Estudantes fazem novo protesto contra o fim do passe livre,” *O Globo* (Rio de Janeiro), March 29, 2007; “Jornada de Lutas 2010 deve reunir 10 mil estudantes no Centro do Rio,” *O Globo*, March 23, 2010; “Estudantes fazem manifestação pelo passe livre em diversos pontos da cidade,” *Extra* (Rio de Janeiro), December 15, 2010; “Estudantes cariocas fazem passeata pela meia-passage universitária e uso do fundo do pré-sal na educação,” *O Globo*, March 24, 2011; Héveny Bandeira, “Estudantes organizam protesto contra aumento da tarifa em Manaus,” *O Globo*, October 10, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth de Aquino, “Desespero de causa,” *Época*, June 21, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> “Pronunciamento da República, Dilma Rousseff, em cadeia nacional de rádio e TV,” June 21, 2013, <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/acompanhe-o-planalto/discursos/discursos-da-presidencia/pronunciamento-da-presidenta-da-republica-dilma-rousseff-em-cadeia>

president Renan Calheiros, who had been the target of public ire and the focus of calls for resignation,<sup>7</sup> also acknowledged the protests publicly, belatedly promoting congressional action to attend to the protesters' demands. In the wake of the protests, Congress rejected Constitutional Amendment Proposal 37 (PEC 37), which would have prohibited the Public Ministry from investigating congressional members, ultimately preserving the structure that allowed the Lava Jato investigation to implicate many congressional officials across party lines in 2015–2016. Despite political support for the bill from groups like the Ordem dos Advogados Brasileiros (Organization of Brazilian Lawyers, OAB) in May 2013,<sup>8</sup> Brazilians taking to the streets in June believed PEC 37 opened the way for a climate of impunity for political corruption. Congress subsequently voted against PEC 37, 430 to 9 (with two abstentions). Just as the millions of Brazilians in the streets in 1983–1984 had shaped how Congress voted in the indirect presidential election that ushered out military rule, so too did the demonstrations of 2013 shape a congressional vote.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, a bill that would have provided federal funding to find a “cure” for homosexuality ironically passed the Committee of Human Rights on June 18, but in the face of public opposition to the bill in the June protests, by the beginning of July, the bill's author, Marco Feliciano, withdrew the proposal, though not without promising to “double” his efforts.<sup>10</sup> The 2013 protests elicited real responses to real anger over institutional disconnect between the state and the public. That Congress and President Rousseff directly addressed several of the issues protesters raised revealed how protests could lead to real, if temporary, pressure from the bottom up as part of the broader nature of state-society relations.

### Students, Subjectivity, and Historical Awareness

While Brazilians of various ages and political stripes took to the streets in 2013, students were undeniably major actors in spurring protests. Polls at the time found that just over half of those in the streets in June 2013 were secondary or university students. Yet this was not youthful rebellion for its own sake. Students in 2013 made clear their understanding of their own position as fulfilling the historical role of students in mobilizing change; indeed, in the claim to “make history yet again,”<sup>11</sup> students were explicitly linking their moment to the broader history of student mobilization, forging political ties to the past in ways that reinforced students' subjectivity in the present. The universities themselves, and associations like UNE, along with the history of student activism in Brazil, offered students not just an organizational or institutional identity but the “cultural traditions [and] institutional memories” (Polletta 1999, 17) to connect their present struggles with the past. Thus students in 2013 mobilized around their own material and social understandings of democracy and inequality, drawing from historical, political, and cultural traditions that allowed them to connect their own struggles for a democratic society to a broader “transgenerational collective student memory” (Langland 2013, 216), even as they tacitly reinforced narratives that privileged better-educated students as the agents of change in society.

Certainly, the political context of 2013 was distinct from previous moments of student mobilization. Though there was a long institutional and cultural tradition of students mobilizing for democracy in Brazil, what exactly constituted democracy varied across time. The first major UNE mobilization in the early 1940s

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nacional-de-radio-e-tv. The subsequent impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, and of House Leader (and eventual antagonist to Dilma) Eduardo Cunha, are too recent to fully understand the behind-the-scenes maneuvers. However, it seems possible that Dilma's pledge to address corruption may have played at least a small part in her willingness to let investigations into Petrobrás and the Lava Jato investigation into corruption continue. The latter case revealed widespread corruption among many politicians in Congress, including in the PT, the PSDB (Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro, Brazilian Social Democratic Party), and the PMDB (Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, Brazilian Democratic Movement Party). Dilma's refusal to halt the investigation may have spurred the congressional opposition that ultimately led Cunha and his PMDB to abandon the PT coalition and join with the PSDB and other parties to bring forth articles of impeachment against Rousseff over budgetary maneuvers separate from the issue of corruption traced in the Lava Jato investigation.

<sup>7</sup> “Manifestantes nas ruas em diversas cidades do país,” *Época*, June 20, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, “Plenário da OAB é favorável à aprovação da PEC 37,” May 20, 2014, <http://www.oab.org.br/noticia/25648/plenario-da-oab-e-favoravel-a-aprovacao-da-pec-37>. The bill threatened to take away the power of the Ministério Público (Public Prosecutor's Office; MP) to investigate alleged criminal activity among public officials. The OAB supported the bill under legalist grounds, saying that while it supported the “good intentions,” by law, the police exclusively had the power to investigate crimes. The MP, whose office is appointed by the presidency, opposed the bill, joining protestors in arguing that the bill would remove the executive branch's ability to “check” corruption in Congress, allowing for further Congressional impunity in a system where the removal of politicians alleged to engage in corrupt practices is already incredibly difficult and time-consuming.

<sup>9</sup> “Câmara derruba a PEC 37 e o texto será arquivado,” *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), June 25, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> “Projeto de ‘cura Gay’ é retirado da pauta,” *Carta Capital*, July 2, 2013. Feliciano continued to publicly controversially campaign for a “cure” for homosexuality into 2016, even as he faced allegations of sexual assault.

<sup>11</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, “#VemPraRua: UNE aprova manifesto após reunião da diretoria executiva.” <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/vempraru-lutar-pela-educacao-brasileira-une-convoa-jovens-de-todo-o-pais-para-mostrar-sua-cara-em-brasilia/>.

pressured Getúlio Vargas's dictatorial Estado Novo to join World War II on the side of the Allies, perceived as the champions of democracy. When students took to the streets in 1968, they were fighting for political and social democracy against a repressive military regime. Public demonstrations in the early 1980s that culminated in the Diretas Já campaign saw Brazilians trying to shape a nascent democracy even while a liberalizing military regime remained in power. The 1992 protests, when students had last taken to the streets en masse, had hinged on the issue of political corruption in a budding democracy. By contrast, the 2013 protests occurred in the midst of an electorally, if not socially, "fully fledged democracy" (Bethell 2000, 1) that had existed uninterrupted for twenty-five years and had seen six successful direct elections for president.<sup>12</sup>

The sociopolitical contexts students faced also differed considerably. Institutionally, UNE and UBES were the primary organizational bodies that had helped mobilize and represented student interests since the 1930s. By 2013, however, student movements had become more diffuse. In addition to the internal political divisions within organizations like UNE—political divisions that had existed in various forms since the organization's origins in 1937–1938 (Araujo 2007)—there were any number of other organizations that represented and relied on the participation of university students. The MPL counted primarily on students in its activism, pointing to the ways students formed and were a major part of a social movement whose objectives went beyond student issues. Likewise, the formation of splinter groups like the Assembleia Nacional dos Estudantes Livre (National Association of Free Students, ANEL) challenged a UNE that some students believed had become too closely tied to the government (Franco 2008).<sup>13</sup>

These groups differed not just in terms of their sheer numbers but in their vision of organization. While UNE maintained its historical structure of a president and a directorate of vice presidents, directors, secretaries, and other administrative positions, the MPL was, like the Occupy movement in the United States, an "autonomous," "nonpartisan," and "horizontal movement, without clear leaders" or "any central organization" (Vainer et al. 2014, 15). Social media in the twenty-first century further allowed students and horizontally organized movements to extra-institutionally mobilize thousands quickly via Facebook groups or other forums, converting the individual act of creating an online persona and expressing oneself into the collective mobilization of thousands with shared interests and concerns. Where pamphlets, posters, and word of mouth had been the mechanism for mobilization in the twentieth century, virtual word of mouth, spread through Facebook invitations, Twitter, and other forums, was a major engine of mobilization in 2013.

Despite the politically democratic context, however, some elements of 2013 looked all too familiar to previous historical moments. Just as police with truncheons on horseback had increasingly relied on repression to break up student protests in 1968, images of police in riot gear became a motif of the 2013 protests. In both cases, the disproportionate use of violence against unarmed protesters spurred more people to take to the streets to protest not only in favor of social and political issues but against police violence. The technologies may have changed, as police with rubber bullets and tear gas replaced police on horseback, yet the face of repression remained obvious to all, indelibly captured in 2013 in the image of a military policeman using pepper spray at point blank range on an unarmed and solitary young woman (Amira 2013). While the 2013 protesters were unlikely to become political prisoners facing torture, as leftist, often middle-class groups did both before and after 1968, the police's use of violence, torture, and even murder and the "disappearing" of bodies nonetheless remained a reality for many Brazilians well after the military regime fell, particularly in favelas (McCann 2014). The 2013 protests were yet another reminder of that reality that historically connected students in 2013 to their counterparts in the 1960s.

Additionally, despite the very different political contexts, higher education was a central component of discourses of resistance and protest across these three historical moments. Educational issues had been a centerpiece of student mobilization in the late 1950s and 1960s and remained alongside antidictatorship demonstrations after 1964. Although the Diretas Já campaign of 1983–1984 revolved primarily around the question of direct elections, opposition politicians addressed the issue of educational reform in an attempt to reach out to student movements that had carried the banner of reform (Snider 2011). Even while the 1992 protests hinged on the corruption case against President Fernando Collor, UNE used his administration

<sup>12</sup> This dates democracy from 1988, when Brazil established a new constitution. Though the 2014 elections marked seven straight successful direct elections for president in Brazil, the impeachment of Dilma in 2016 also meant that, out of the four presidents elected since 1989, only two—Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2003) and Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2011)—finished their mandate.

<sup>13</sup> For more on ANEL's objectives, agenda, and critique of UNE, see <http://www.anelonline.com>.

to criticize the government's higher education policies.<sup>14</sup> The 2013 protests simultaneously revealed how much higher education had transformed in the previous sixty years and how much the issues that brought students to the streets in previous eras remained germane.

This continuity was due in no small part to the fact that it was frequently students who were at the forefront of popular mobilization, based on a strong sense of historical subjectivity as political actors. The institutional memory of UNE had long highlighted students' role in national politics, from mobilizations in favor of joining World War II in the 1940s to the fight to nationalize oil in the 1950s; from the push for social reforms in the early 1960s to the antidictatorship struggle of the 1960s and 1970s; from their role in the transition to democracy in the 1980s to the mobilization against Collor in the 1990s. By linking together very different moments and contexts, students in 2013 forged and mobilized around a collective identity that connected them with their forebears historically, politically, and, through educational institutions themselves, culturally. The result was a transgenerational narrative of students who were the catalysts for political and social change in Brazil across decades.

Students in 2013 were well aware of these various historical moments and did not hesitate to connect them with 2013. The president of UNE, Virginia Barros, commented that the social agitation and organization taking place in 2013 was the greatest since the Diretas Já movement of 1983–1984. Barros situated the students' struggle as one that had been occurring since neoliberal reforms in the 1990s.<sup>15</sup> In addressing the question of federal funding for higher education in 2013, UNE said the fight for funding for education was "as important as the fight against the dictatorship and the O Petróleo é Nosso campaign were."<sup>16</sup> Some who had lived through the dictatorship were critical of students who "little knew what the word 'dictatorship' truly signified,"<sup>17</sup> but that was not the point for students. Rather, in positioning their demands in 2013 in terms of student mobilizations from the 1950s to the 1990s, they established their own mobilization and historical subjectivity as the latest in a long line of student activism, one that bound them all together across generations as students.

Further cementing this transgenerational collective identity was the fact that, as had been the case in the 1950s, 1968, or 1992, students were at the core of the 2013 protests. It had been students who formed and mobilized the movement (MPL) that began pushing for a reduction in fares in June. In São Paulo, students from the Universidade de São Paulo's law, history, and geography programs made up the core of the MPL,<sup>18</sup> and university students were the motors behind mobilizations of the MPL in Fortaleza.<sup>19</sup> Numerous "person on the street" interviews with random protesters who affiliated with the MPL made clear that a significant portion of the MPL's base was students,<sup>20</sup> perhaps unsurprisingly, given the role of students in the MPL's formation in 2005 and students' sporadic, yet long-term, fight for reduced student fares for public transportation dating back to the 1950s.<sup>21</sup> In mid-June, a poll by the Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics, IBOPE) found that 52 percent of the protesters were students, and 43 percent of the protesters had completed higher education. Although millions had taken to the streets in June 2013, they represented only 6 percent of the population across seventy-nine cities, even while enjoying 75 percent public approval for the protests. Put another way, as had been the case in very different circumstances in previous decades, once again in 2013, it was students "who first went to the streets,"<sup>22</sup> with society following in their footsteps.

So it was that when students took to the streets to protest in 2013, they firmly tied their own movement to the historical role of students in the twentieth century. With the institutional memory of student

<sup>14</sup> Fundação Roberto Marinho, Projeto Memória Movimento Estudantil (hereafter cited as PMME), interview with Patrícia de Angelis; PMME, interview with Cláudio Langone.

<sup>15</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Em entrevista, presidenta da UNE aponta juventude com mais vontade de participar," <http://www.une.org.br/2013/12/em-entrevista-presidenta-da-une-aponta-juventude-mais-feminista-e-democratica/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "10% do PIB para a educação, e eu com isso?," <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/10-do-pib-para-a-educacao-e-eu-com-isso/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Ruth de Aquino, "Desespero de causa," *Época*, June 21, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Thiago Henry and Sílvia Amorim, "Ligado a movimento estudantil, Movimento Passagem Livre tem apoio de partidos," *O Globo*, June 13, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> "Protestos devem ocorrer em pelo menos 15 capitais nesta quinta-feira," *Época*, June 20, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Manifestantes farão protesto durante a Copa das Confederações no Rio," *O Globo*, June 13, 2013; Alberto Bombig and Vinícius Gorczeski, "Quem são os manifestantes que pararam as grandes cidades do país," *Época*, June 14, 2013; "Manifestantes nas ruas em diversas cidades do país," June 20, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> PMME, interview with Pedro Simon.

<sup>22</sup> Jairo Bouer, "As razões da revolta," *Época*, July 17, 2013.

organizations and politicocultural forms of mobilization that had endured for decades, and the historical examples of cultural and political traditions of mobilizing, students in 2013 situated themselves as the latest in a long line of agents for social and political change. Pointing to the past, they drew on a transgenerational collective identity of students as historical subjects leading the causes of democracy and social and political reform.

### **Educational Issues and the 2013 Protests in Historical Perspective**

As students placed their 2013 mobilization in a longer history of students mobilizing to transform society, the issues they raised simultaneously reflected their very real material concerns in the twenty-first century even as the long-term legacy of state policies in education continued to shape student demands. While much of the national and global media focused on the stories of bus fares, police violence, or political anger,<sup>23</sup> such accounts ignored the extent to which higher education served as a fulcrum in student mobilization in the June protests and its historical role as a “principal struggle of the student movement.”<sup>24</sup> Certainly the presence of students in the streets gave higher education a physical presence, but it also played a key discursive role in defining what constituted a democratic society and what the state’s role was in constructing that society. Examining higher education in 2013 debates over what constituted a democratic society illustrates how the protests were part of a much longer and contentious struggle for social equality and democracy in education in Brazil. Highlighting the lack of funds for a more inclusive higher education system and the reliance on costly private education over state-funded public education, university students were not only mobilizing over their own bread-and-butter issues but defining a version of democracy in which the state fulfilled its duties by offering free public education to all members of society rather than to those who could afford it.

Since the late 1950s, the state of higher education in Brazil and student demands for reforms were central in the discourses that challenged both democratic and authoritarian political regimes. Advocating university reform allowed students to reinsert education into national politics, placing higher education as the keystone in constituting a democratic society. Like the concern over bus fares, student demands for comprehensive reforms in higher education were not new; just as there had been protests over bus fares in 1958, student demands for educational reform dated all the way back to 1957, when UNE held the First National Seminar of Educational Reform in Rio de Janeiro in an effort to draw broader attention to the need to expand a higher educational system that served less than 1 percent of Brazilians.<sup>25</sup> The struggle for educational reforms continued throughout the early 1960s, gaining an increasingly social and politicized tone in the context of the Cold War as Brazilian students demanded an educational system that addressed the needs of Brazil’s population more generally, criticizing the structural inequalities of a society where, as late as 1963, only 124,214 of Brazil’s 77 million citizens had access to higher education.<sup>26</sup> Students in the early 1960s called on the government to expand publicly funded universities over private universities (which were then still a minority) as they envisioned a system of higher education that would create a more socially democratic and equal society.<sup>27</sup>

With the military coup of 1964, the definition of a democratic society transformed as students quickly became the vanguard of antidictatorship protests after the crackdown on unions and leftist political parties (Gaspari 2002). However, students did not abandon their demands for greater social equality, instead adding demands for an end to authoritarian rule among their various educational causes. This continuity was due not just to the precedent of student demands from the mid-1950s but to the military’s own educational policies as well. In the hopes of transforming Brazilian development, the military regime emphasized its own vision of university reform that placed an “economic” emphasis on the universities as the sources of “human capital” that would create the doctors, economists, businessmen, and engineers who would lead Brazilian development (Cunha 2007). Even while the dictatorship claimed to uplift universities’ place in national economic development, it also reduced spending on education. Federal universities increasingly

<sup>23</sup> For a summary of some international news outlets’ treatment of the 2013 protests, see “Protestos em São Paulo e no Rio repercutem na imprensa internacional,” *Época*, June 14, 2013, and “Protestos no Brasil repercutem na imprensa internacional,” *Época*, June 18, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, “Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE,” <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/veja-as-resolucoes-do-53-congresso-da-une/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Arquivo Público do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (hereafter cited as APERJ), Livros Apreendidos pelas Polícias Política, L514, *Luta atual pela reforma universitária*, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> “Matrícula geral, segundo os ramos do ensino,” and “População estimada, segundo as regiões fisiográficas e as Unidades da Federação, 1960/1970,” Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (hereafter cited as IBGE).

<sup>27</sup> PMME, interview with José Serra, and PMME, interview Sepúlveda Pertence.

felt the pinch, witnessing cuts of billions of *cruzeiros* from individual schools.<sup>28</sup> The educational spending that remained increasingly went to administrative positions rather than educational programs (Brown 2002). As a result, not only students but parents, pedagogical experts, business elites, and even the lower middle and working classes who saw higher education as the avenue to social mobility and material wealth began to publicly debate and contest the military regime's educational policies (Snider 2013). Consequently, as various sectors both within and outside higher education pushed for educational reforms, the question of university reform became not just a social or economic issue but a political one in the context of military rule.

Students especially politicized the question of university education after 1964, as they merged questions of social democracy and demands for educational reform from the late 1950s and early 1960s with criticisms of the authoritarian regime in 1964 and beyond. Students cited the military regime's reduced spending on education as the "root of ills" in the schools, and repeatedly demanded more support from the state.<sup>29</sup> Where the government hoped universities would strengthen the Brazilian professional classes, students hoped the universities would offer a "critical" education that would contribute to social equality in Brazil, while others looked to an expanded university system as a means to social mobility. Although military government officials and students could agree on the need for better professional development, the justifications differed ideologically. In this way, the students' visions became the antithesis of the military's educational policies. Students vowed "to fight for true university reform, as well as to denounce, concomitantly, the university reform of the dictatorship."<sup>30</sup> As students took to the streets throughout 1968, they demanded "abaixo a ditadura" (down with the dictatorship) at the same time as they carried banners demanding university reform and free public education, simultaneously politicizing educational reform and socializing antidictatorship rhetoric.<sup>31</sup> Government officials publicly downplayed the protests as the act of "subversives," but privately these officials admitted that the student protesters were justified in demanding university reform and an expansion of higher education in Brazil, be they "activists or not."<sup>32</sup>

These student issues persisted even in the wake of, and in part due to, the military regime's 1968 university reform. Although the number of universities expanded in the 1970s as a result of the 1968 reform, that expansion overwhelmingly occurred in private education, leading to an explosion of schools that were more costly and of lower educational quality than the federal university system. Whereas nearly 80 percent of students once attended public universities, by 1973 that number was down to 42 percent.<sup>33</sup> This system did little to ameliorate socioeconomic inequalities, as the emphasis on private education worked further against the socioeconomically disadvantaged. Generally, those who could attend the free public universities were only able to gain admittance due to rigorous private education at the secondary level. Consequently, families that could not afford private high schools and depended on public schools for their children still had to pay for a college degree, something many could not afford, thus reducing the likelihood for social mobility through education. Additionally, throughout the 1970s, fees ballooned at both public and private universities, further placing the onus of the cost of education on students. Nor were the nascent inequalities merely economic; the already small number of Afro-descendants in universities actually dropped between the 1950s and 1976, making the already unequal higher education system even more racially unequal (Alberto 2011). By the 1980s, as national student movements reconstituted themselves, a key issue was the way in which higher education had rapidly shifted from (free) public universities to private universities in the wake of the 1968 reform.

As the 1980s dawned, over a decade of governmental failures to adequately fund higher education had become increasingly apparent. Additionally, upon taking office in 1979, President João Figueiredo shifted his focus away from higher education to primary education, with a resultant reduction in federal funding

<sup>28</sup> Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação da História Contemporânea do Brasil (hereafter cited as CPDOC), EAP erj 1945/1965.00.00, Pasta III, "Plano de reestruturação da Universidade Federal de Fluminense," 1967, and APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 30/31, "Manifesto dos Estudantes da E.N. Química," May 29, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 30/31, "Manifesto dos estudantes da E.N. Química," May 29, 1968. See also APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 30/31, Informação No. 271/DPDS/RJ – Serviço de Cadastro e Documentação, September 23, 1968; Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 6, "Nota oficial da UME"; APERJ, Coleção Daniel Aarão Reis, Dossie 9, Caixa 5, *Guerra Popular* (Órgão Nacional do Setor Estudantil do P.C. do Brasil – Ala Vermelha), No. 1, Ano 1, Oct. 1968, pp. 5–6; and Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Dossie 6, "Análise do Movimento Estudantil a partir de 1964."

<sup>30</sup> APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 5, Informe S.O., 14, October 1966.

<sup>31</sup> Photographs available in Araujo (2007).

<sup>32</sup> CPDOC, NL g 1968.06.23, letters from Francisco Negrão de Lima to Artur Costa e Silva (I and II, June 23, 1968, and July 1968, respectively).

<sup>33</sup> Coordenador Regional do Arquivo Nacional, Brasília (COREG), Coleção MEC, SEEC-MEC, M.8, "Informações Estatísticas," n.p.



for universities. In the wake of the 1968 university reform, students lamented the decline in education's total percentage of federal spending, and Figueiredo did not hide the fact that he was reducing spending on education even further in the face of Brazil's economic crisis. Students responded by increasing the intensity of their own demands. In 1980, nearly 120,000 students in the city of Rio de Janeiro and another 10,000 from the interior of the state, composing 90 percent of the student body in the entire state of Rio de Janeiro, went on a twenty-four-hour strike to demand that 12 percent of the federal budget be spent on education.<sup>34</sup> Continuing a discourse that equated educational issues to the broader repressive context of military rule, students marched by Figueiredo's dais during an Independence Day parade and unfurled a banner that read, "Down with the dictatorship, funding for education!"<sup>35</sup> UNE quickly adopted the 12 percent demand into its own platform.<sup>36</sup> In 1981, UNE attempted to go straight to the minister of education and culture, General Rubem Carlos Ludwig, to deliver a list of immediate demands from the students, including the 12 percent figure, while also calling for subsidies for private universities that the government did not control and a cap on fees.<sup>37</sup> Students linked the state's withdrawal from its responsibilities to higher education with the poor quality of education they were receiving in a rapidly expanded and overextended university system, something the government itself acknowledged was a problem.<sup>38</sup> Once again, issues like funding, infrastructure, and the quality of education both mobilized students and became an important piece of political mobilization of the early 1980s.

These issues extended beyond the military regime as Brazil returned to democracy in the 1980s and saw the emergence of neoliberal policies in the 1990s. José Sarney (1985–1989) continued to let private institutions be the main vehicle of higher education in Brazil, even as the state's investment in higher education remained low (Picanço 2016). By 1990, the number of private higher education institutions reached 696, compared to only 55 federal universities and colleges, with another 164 state and municipal schools (Ribeiro 2002). Private universities remained subject to federal educational regulations but received less federal funding, continuing to shift the fiscal burden to students.<sup>39</sup> As a result, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, demands for a new university reform that undid the military regime's 1968 reform continued.<sup>40</sup> As late as 1998, pamphlets linked the struggle for higher education to the student movement's past, with one proclaiming, "The end of the dictatorship is the right to education; the dictatorship has not ended" (Langland 2013, 247). In continuing to fight for a new university reform, students were not just mobilizing around the "failings of the post-1985 state" (Hochstetler 2000, 168); they were mobilizing around the carryover of the military regime's policies into the post-1985 state.

Though the great disparity between private and public universities continued into the first years of the 2000s, some efforts to address ongoing educational inequalities began to occur. Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration (1995–2003) established programs to expand education at the primary and secondary levels, leading the number of students attending secondary schools to more than double and surpass 50 percent of the high-school-aged population (15–24) by 2005 (Huber and Stephens 2012, 249). Near the end of his administration, Cardoso built on new policies at two Rio de Janeiro universities and established an affirmative action program that established university quotas for Brazil's historically excluded Afro-descendant population (Htun 2004; Telles 2004; Bailey 2009). With the ascension of the PT to the presidency with Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's election in 2003, the Brazilian state continued efforts to partially address structural inequalities in higher education. In addition to maintaining the quota system, Lula established programs like Programa Universidade para Todos (University for All Program, ProUni) to provide money to students attending private universities while also further expanding federal universities. Additionally, during the presidency of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of quotas. The result was that, by the 2010s, there had been important efforts to address inequality in Brazil's higher

<sup>34</sup> In addition to the demands for funding, they also demanded that fees not increase more than 35 percent per year. "Greve nacional tem adesão de 90% dos estudantes do Rio," *Jornal do Brasil*, September 11, 1980.

<sup>35</sup> PMME, interview with Apolinário Rebelo.

<sup>36</sup> Arquivo Nacional (hereafter cited as AN), Coleção DSI, Caixa 3577-00077, Unidade 41, "Análise de Propaganda Adversa – *Hora do Povo* – 11/07 a 18/07/1980, No. 44"; APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 69-A, "Pedido de Busca No. 0115 DI/DGIE – Reunião do Conselho Geral de Entidades Gerais da UNE," January 27, 1981; and APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 69-A, "Informe No. 500/80-SI/SR/DPF/RJ – "Seminário Nacional da UNE," July 31, 1980. See also PMME, interview with Aldo Rebelo; PMME, interview with Apolinário Rebelo; and PMME, interview with Gisela Mendonça.

<sup>37</sup> APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 69-A, DGIE, Pedido de Busca No. 0115 DI/DGIE, January 27, 1981, pp. 1–2.

<sup>38</sup> For example, see "Verdade amarga," *Jornal do Brasil*, January 3, 1981, and "Pais já não querem filho médico," *Jornal do Brasil*, December 9, 1981; for the government's acknowledgement, see "Ludwig vai mudar sistema," *Jornal do Brasil*, January 17, 1981.

<sup>39</sup> AN, Coleção Paulo de Assis Ribeiro, Caixa 309, Reportagem do Grupo de Trabalho sobre a Reforma Universitária.

<sup>40</sup> PMME, interview with Patrícia de Angelis; PMME, interview with Cláudio Langone; and PMME, interview with Fernando Gusmão.

education system. Whereas there were only 124,000 students in 21 universities in 1964, and 1.7 million in the mid-1990s, by 2013, over 7 million students were enrolled in 2,391 institutions of higher education.<sup>41</sup> And under state-sponsored affirmative action programs, the numbers of age-appropriate Afro-descendants attending college also jumped from 4 percent in 1997 to 19.8 percent in 2011 (Heringer 2015).<sup>42</sup>

Yet these transformations did not necessarily address students' issues. Although seven million students now had access to higher education, they represented only 26 percent of the population eighteen years or older (Picanço 2016). Where those students went to school had also continued a trend that started after the military's 1968 reform and accelerated during the post-1985 republic. By 2013, 74 percent of Brazil's university population attended private institutions.<sup>43</sup> Although programs like ProUni offered aid to over one million students, the fact remained that the federal government was using public funding to ensure that students enrolled in private universities rather than investing that money in expanding the free public educational system. Nor did increased enrollment reflect the socially democratic society students had periodically demanded since the 1950s. Of those enrolled, 47 percent came from the upper one-fifth of income brackets, while only 4 percent came from the bottom fifth of income brackets. Additionally, despite the affirmative action laws that had gone into effect in the first decade of the 2000s, only 11 percent of self-identified "blacks" were enrolled in higher education among a population where 50.6 percent of the country identified as *preto* (black) or *pardo* (brown) in 2009.<sup>44</sup> Those Afro-descendants from the upper quintile of incomes were disproportionately represented (Picanço 2016), meaning that the racial demography of university enrollment may have been changing but that universities remained an arena for those who were well-off. Geographically, the historic inequalities that marked Brazil's different regions remained endemic, with the southeastern region (composed of the states of Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo) accounting for over half of Brazil's total number of university graduates, while the north, northeast, and central west, made up of nineteen states and the federal district, collectively accounted for only 29.6 percent of the country's graduates.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, for students mobilizing in 2013, while the university system had seen some important efforts to address inequalities, many of the issues students raised strikingly paralleled those of the late 1950s and 1960s. For students on the streets in 2013, the government had failed in its obligation to offer free and quality higher education to address the country's socioeconomic inequalities—an issue that had consistently been on UNE's agenda since the late 1950s.<sup>46</sup> In a common refrain that dated back over fifty years, students lamented the "crisis" facing universities, calling on federal intervention and aid to improve higher education. They highlighted the inability of many college graduates to find jobs upon completing their education. As their forebears had repeatedly done since the 1950s, UNE in 2013 suggested that only with "democratization of access and permanence in the university" would Brazil become socially democratic.<sup>47</sup>

In this context, as students mobilized, be it in the MPL and ANEL or through the UNE and UBES, they located their struggles within a broader historical narrative and pattern of struggles that equated increased funding for education with the creation of a more democratic Brazil. Students, especially UNE, used the 2013 protests to outline their own vision of educational reform and of the function of education in Brazil. Like their counterparts in both the 1960s and the 1980s, they demanded greater investment in public education, both before and during the June 2013 protests.<sup>48</sup> This funding would have three sources. First and foremost

<sup>41</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (hereafter cited as INEP), *Censo 2013*.

<sup>42</sup> These numbers derive from the sum of *pardos* (brown people) and *pretos* (blacks) in Brazil. For 1997, the individual rates were 2.2 percent enrollment for pardos and 1.8 percent for pretos; for 2011, it was 11.0 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> INEP, *Censo 2013*.

<sup>44</sup> "Pesquisa nacional por amostra de domicílios: Síntese de indicadores 2009," IBGE.

<sup>45</sup> IBGE, 2010 Census. The north, made up of the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins, accounted for only 639,512 (4.75 percent) of Brazil's nearly 13.5 million university graduates. The northeastern states of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, and Sergipe made up another 2.2 million (16.24 percent) of the graduates, while the central west region of the Federal District, Goiás, Mato Grosso, and Mato Grosso do Sul accounted for another 1.2 million (8.58 percent). In the southeast, 7.3 million of the 13.5 million college graduates resided, with 42 percent of them accounted for in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the economic and industrial centers of the country, alone. The southern states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul accounted for the remaining 2.2 million (16.35 percent) of Brazilians who had completed higher education.

<sup>46</sup> APERJ, *Livros Apreendidos pelas Polícias Política, L514, Luta atual pela reforma universitária*.

<sup>47</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE."

<sup>48</sup> "UNE pede a Dilma royalties do petróleo para educação," *Extra*, November 30, 2012; "Estudantes fazem protesto contra crise na Gama Filho e UniversCidade," *O Globo*, April 9, 2013; "MEC suspende convênio de Prouni de 14 instituições de ensino da Bahia," May 21, 2013; União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE"; "Estudantes pedem votação do PNE e 10% do PIB para educação," *O Globo*, March 26, 2014.

was the demand that 10 percent of Brazil's gross domestic product go to funding education. Given that the federal government was primarily responsible for governing higher education, with states and municipalities responsible for primary and secondary education, the issue implicitly demanded federal funding that would benefit higher education. Additionally, the Plano Nacional de Educação (National Education Plan, PNE) had been sitting in Congress since 2010; the educational demands of 2013 were in no small part intended to pressure Congress into passing the PNE in order to address students' demands on funding.<sup>49</sup>

This demand for 10 percent of the GDP was not new; it dated back to the 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s when students at the Federal Universities of Pernambuco and of Espírito Santo both pointed to data that showed that federal funding for education had dropped from 11 percent of the total federal budget in 1965 to 4.7 percent for 1976. These data made clear to students that the government was shifting the costs of education from the state to the students themselves, leading to a decline in the quality of education in Brazil and in turn demonstrating broader failings on the part of the government in helping Brazil to develop,<sup>50</sup> a refrain that politicians also began to echo as the decade progressed.<sup>51</sup> By the 1980s, the demand that 12 percent of the GDP go to education had become a key component of student politics.

Thus, when students in 2013 called for more federal funding for higher education, they were echoing demands from student movements at previous moments of social mobilization, even while they highlighted the ways the government had failed to provide adequate resources to combat educational inequality. Like students in both the 1960s and the 1980s, they demanded greater funding for higher education, albeit by the 2010s the source of that funding was more specifically focused on oil revenues. With greater federal funding, whether from 10 percent of the PIB, 100 percent of oil royalties for education, or 50 percent of the social fund from pre-salt revenues, students in 2013 maintained that the government could address these issues. They even hearkened to the student movement's past, saying that these struggles were "as important as the fight against the dictatorship and the fight of 'the Oil Is Ours,'" <sup>52</sup> the student-led campaign to nationalize oil in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Indeed, in the latter case, students even co-opted earlier generations' slogans. Where students calling for the nationalization of oil in the late 1940s and early 1950s insisted that "o petróleo é nosso" (the oil is ours), in 2013, students were proclaiming that "o pré-sal é nosso" (the pre-salt [profits] are ours).<sup>53</sup> Where the former slogan appealed to nationalist sentiment in the context of postwar economic nationalism, the 2013 slogan focused solely on the structural problems in higher education, building on a foundation of student mobilization for university reform since the late 1950s. Thus students in 2013 tied their struggle to those of previous generations, even while laying claim to their own vision of and reshaping discourses on educational reforms in Brazil's university system.

In protests throughout June 2013, demands for more investment in education accompanied protests against the bus fare hikes. As cities rolled back the fares, people continued to take to the streets to continue fighting for greater federal and public spending on education. Even criticisms of the amount Brazil spent to host the Confederations Cup in 2013 and World Cup in 2014 were funneled through the lens of education, as protesters at one rally chanted, "Da Copa eu abro mão, eu quero dinheiro pra saúde e educação" (From the Cup I open my hand, I want money for health and education).<sup>54</sup> As secondary student Grazielle Paz put it, students believed the government was "worrying too much about the World Cup and forgetting students. We have to fight for the [National Education] Plan, because it is something that can transform education for the next ten years."<sup>55</sup>

These demands for federal spending to prioritize higher education over other levels of education, be it in 2013 or in earlier decades, were not necessarily surprising. Studies of elite perceptions of inequality have found that elites perceive education as one of the biggest issues in Brazilian inequality, with Brazilians with more education giving it a greater priority than those with less education (Reis 2007, 2011). Given that Brazil's university students still represented a relative minority among their age group, their emphasis on the importance of higher education as a key to resolving inequalities fits this trend. However, these were

<sup>49</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "10% do PIB para a Educação, e Eu com Isso?" <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/10-do-pib-para-a-educacao-e-eu-com-isso/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, Pasta 43, "Manifesto sobre o crédito educativo," March 27, 1976. Annexed to Encaminhamento No. 63/76/DPPS/RJ/Interior, Serviço Público Estadual, Secretaria de Estado de Segurança Pública, DPPS/RJ/Interior, April 5, 1976.

<sup>51</sup> AN, Coleção DSI, Caixa 3408-08075, Informação No. 262/78/DSI/MJ, March 31, 1978.

<sup>52</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "10% do PIB para a educação, e eu com isso?" <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/10-do-pib-para-a-educacao-e-eu-com-isso/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> See photograph in "Estudantes fazem protesto em frente ao Congresso Nacional," *O Globo*, March 24, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Humberto Trajano e Sara Antunes, "Manifestação no Centro de BH reúne oito mil pessoas, diz PM," *O Globo*, June 15, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> "Estudantes pedem votação do PNE e 10% do PIB para educação," *O Globo*, June 26, 2013.

not merely myopic or self-interested demands. Despite the rapid expansion of higher education in Brazil, it remained unequal in terms of both cost and region. While the total number of enrollees had nearly doubled, the percentage of students enrolled in private universities had also dramatically expanded under Lula. Thus, whereas 69 percent of Brazil's 3.5 million college-enrolled students attended private universities in 2002, by 2011, the first year of Dilma's presidency, that number had gone up to 74 percent of the 6.7 million students enrolled in higher education.<sup>56</sup> Certainly ProUni helped many; according to UNE, over 1 million students acquired the financial means to attend a private university via ProUni.<sup>57</sup>

Nonetheless, students made clear that the objective was not greater access to private universities; it was the federal regularization, or even appropriation, of private universities.<sup>58</sup> In 2010, Ismael Cardoso and Lúcia Stumpf, then presidents of UBES and UNE, respectively, issued a manifesto for their organizations that insisted that "more investment in education" would help "democratize access to the university."<sup>59</sup> Three years later, as UNE's fifty-third congress ended just days before the June 2013 protests erupted, its platform declared that greater investment in education could create space for the substantial majority of Brazilians who still lacked access to higher education. The result would be "a more democratic Brazil, with social policies of inclusion and sovereign development,"<sup>60</sup> a sovereignty that could only exist through public schools, as private institutions, UNE president Barros argued, embodied "not only the abusive profit of the market, but the threat to the very national identity and sovereignty."<sup>61</sup> In this discourse, "public education is fundamental for a country that needs to incorporate these millions of Brazilians . . . into a project of citizenship"<sup>62</sup> in order to achieve a democratic society. Greater public funding for public education was fundamental to the task of ending Brazil's status as a "democracy without citizenship" (Bethell 2000).

If students' demands for creating a more socially democratic society through higher education echoed their forebears, the context of 2013 was what set these protests apart. During military rule, student discourse had to address and operate within the confines of the repressive nature of military rule. While ideologically leftist views within the student movement also pushed for greater social equality that eschewed capitalism, such views tended to percolate mostly among UNE's leadership, rather than among the majority of the students it represented.<sup>63</sup> Ten percent of the GDP, 100 percent of royalties, and 50 percent of the Fundo Social were still the top issues for UNE as the 2013 protests erupted. Yet they were closely followed by "democratization of the university" via "racial and social quotas" that expanded access to campuses as part of the broader efforts to overcome the ongoing "cases of racism, homophobia, machismo, etc." that were "still very present in Brazilian society."<sup>64</sup> By the end of the first decade of the 2000s, issues of gender and racial equality had also emerged on the agenda of student movements, demonstrating how, even as the issue to improve and democratize the university system continued across decades, what it meant to democratize Brazil's universities had transformed.

## Conclusion

The events of June 2013 in Brazil were in many ways monumental, drawing worldwide attention as millions throughout the country took to the streets for the first time in over two decades. The issues that brought Brazilians to support protests—bus fare hikes, World Cup spending, PEC 37, violent police suppression of protests—were national problems. Yet so too was Brazil's educational system, which had seen improvement but still faced structural inequalities dating back decades. In the context of the first decade of the 2000s, as the Americas dealt with the ongoing legacies of neoliberal policies in the 1990s, the issue of educational reform took on a new tenor. In Brazil, the demand for greater public spending on higher education was a

<sup>56</sup> INEP, *Censo 2013*.

<sup>57</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE."

<sup>58</sup> "UNE pede a Dilma royalties do petróleo para educação," *Extra*, November 30, 2012; "Estudantes fazem protesto contra crise na Gama Filho e UniverCidade," *O Globo*, April 9, 2013; "MEC suspende convênio do Prouni de 14 instituições de ensino da Bahia," May 21, 2013; União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE"; "Estudantes pedem votação do PNE e 10% do PIB para educação," *O Globo*, March 26, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> "Em São Paulo, estudantes vão às ruas contra o novo Enem e pelo fim do vestibular," *Extra*, December 10, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE."

<sup>61</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Em entrevista, presidenta da UNE aponta juventude com mais vontade de participar." <http://www.une.org.br/2013/12/em-entrevista-presidenta-da-une-aponta-juventude-mais-feminista-e-democratica> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "10% do PIB para a educação, e eu com isso?" <http://www.une.org.br/2013/06/10-do-pib-para-a-educacao-e-eu-com-isso/> (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>63</sup> PMME, interview with Aldo Rebelo; PMME, interview with Amâncio Paulino de Carvalho.

<sup>64</sup> União Nacional dos Estudantes, "Veja as Resoluções do 53º Congresso da UNE."

direct response to conditions dating back to the implementation of the military regime's 1968 University Reform, the post-1985 state's acceleration of private education, and even programs like ProUni that saw federal spending going to private universities. These issues generally, and the educational issue in particular, simultaneously shed greater light on the ongoing inequalities in Brazil even while demonstrating the public's rejection of the state's withdrawal of funding for public institutions.

Yet in many regards, even as these were national questions, Brazil's unrest resonated in the Americas and in much of the world, as states throughout the world increasingly divested themselves of funding education, much as Brazil had done since the 1970s. The result was student mobilization over the political issue of educational reform not just in Brazil but throughout much of the hemisphere. In 2011–2013, Chilean students at both the secondary and university levels repeatedly and regularly mobilized to demand an end to profit-generating private higher education. When conservative president Sebastián Piñera came out against public higher education, students continued to mobilize in greater numbers and with rising support from the Chilean public even as police regularly relied on tear gas and rubber bullets to break up protests.<sup>65</sup> In Iguala, Mexico, what started as protests over the lack of public funds for the public Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College ended in tragedy, as forty-three male students from the college were disappeared. While the focus in the aftermath has justifiably fallen on the human rights violations, it bears remembering that the protests hinged on the failure of state officials to provide funding to the college.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, in 2005, even as students were organizing through the MPL, over 100,000 college students in Quebec struck in response to liberal premier Jean Charest's program to transform provincial aid for higher education into loans that students would have to repay, a policy that would hit hardest poorer students who depended on public scholarships. When Charest attempted to raise tuition in 2012, hundreds of thousands of Quebecois students again struck in protest over the government increasingly making private citizens pay for higher education. Meanwhile, in the United States, states' continued shifting of the costs of education from the public sector to students led to record degrees of higher education debt (Drake 2013; Dynarski 2015). When students have protested against such policies in states such as California, they have been met with police violence, most infamously in the image of a University of California police officer pepper-spraying peaceful demonstrators. This was one of many images—from Occupy New York to Ferguson, Missouri—of police violence in response to peaceful protests like that on the streets of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Student mobilization in 2013 itself was not just historically rooted in Brazilian students' struggles; it was a part of a broader hemispheric wave of protests over higher education, protests that show how students continued to shape national politics through educational issues.

While each of these protests was rooted in the local and national contingencies of higher education, they shared commonalities in students protesting against the lack of public funds for higher education and the linking of education to democratic societies in which the state assumes a leading role in offering social services to the citizenry. Just as Brazilian students in the 1950s and 1960s called attention to the unequal access to higher education, so too was educational inequality an issue in 2013. Where the earlier issue was framed in terms of social equality in the context of the Cold War, the latter case built on the language of a democratic society to highlight the ongoing inequalities in access to free education, even while pointing to the ways structural inequalities limited access to higher education for the socioeconomically disadvantaged or Brazil's Afro-descendant population.

The 2013 protests in Brazil did have a dramatic impact on politics in the short and long terms. The public pressure through protests led Congress to abandon PEC 37, while the federal government moved to provide more funding for education and address the lack of medical care in the country. With the (in some cases temporary) revocation of bus fare hikes, the defeat of PEC 37, and the end of the Confederations Cup, the protests subsided after June 2013, as did global attention to them. However, protest activity did not disappear, nor did the educational issues that had been a key component of the demonstrations. In July, students at the Federal University of Tocantins demanded better infrastructure on campus; in September, students in Mato Grosso demonstrated, calling on the government to provide "more attention to education."<sup>67</sup> In August, UNE and UBES led protests in Acre, fighting for 100 percent of the oil royalties to go toward education.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Allie Morris, "Student Education Reform Protests Rock Chile," PBS NewsHour, August 31, 2011, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/world-july-dec11-chile\\_08-31/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/world-july-dec11-chile_08-31/).

<sup>66</sup> Tim Johnson, "At College of Missing Mexican Students, History of Revolutionary Zeal," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 2014, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2014/1013/At-college-of-missing-Mexican-students-history-of-revolutionary-zeal>.

<sup>67</sup> Monique Almeida, "Estudantes da UFT fazem protesto por melhorias na universidade," *O Globo*, July 4, 2013; "Alunos do IFMT suspendem aulas e realizam protesto por melhorias," *O Globo*, September 17, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Veriana Ribeiro, "Em ato, governador do Acre assina carta de compromisso para educação," *O Globo*, August 12, 2013.

Although Congress began moving to increase federal spending in education while working on a bill to provide public transportation for students in June, by the end of 2013, the PNE remained stuck on the Congress floor, prompting students in March 2014 to again demonstrate in Brasília.<sup>69</sup> Only in June 2014 did President Rousseff finally sign the PNE into effect; among other things, the bill pledged to provide 10 percent of the GDP to education by the end of its ten-year period.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, UNE issued a call for university reform that would regulate private education and increase federal spending in higher education; it would also allow students to have one-third representation in the decision-making councils that govern universities.<sup>71</sup> This demand led tens of thousands of students to go on strike in 1961 (Rosas 1992).

The other legacy of 2013 perhaps came into clearer focus in 2016, when conservative grassroots movements, media, and politicians maneuvered to impeach Rousseff over budgetary maneuvers during 2014. Opponents directly, if dubiously, tied her impeachment to broader allegations of “corruption,” charges that had resonated in 2013 and taken on a new depth with the findings of the Lava Jato investigation, which directly implicated many in Congress. Amid a worsening economy, public dissatisfaction, and partisan opposition, Congress removed Rousseff and installed her vice president, the PMDB’s Michel Temer, as president, allowing him to usher in a return to austerity measures and neoliberal policies. In an unscripted moment, Temer himself suggested that Dilma’s impeachment had not been about fiscal maneuvers, but about her failure to embrace austerity.<sup>72</sup> As 2016 closed, his government had already proposed considerable cuts to education, even as some federal and local politicians’ calls for “Educação sem Partido” (Education without Party) threaten institutional autonomy by regulating course materials in a way that some suggest favors conservative viewpoints. Thus the issues that brought students to the streets in the 1950s and 1960s continue to echo up through the 2013 protests and, quite possibly, beyond.

### Author Information

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<sup>69</sup> “Estudantes fecham acesso à Esplanada por aprovação de projeto,” *O Globo*, March 26, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Lei N° 13.005, June 25, 2014. Available at [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_Ato2011-2014/2014/Lei/L13005.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2011-2014/2014/Lei/L13005.htm) (accessed May 7, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> *Projeto UNE pelo Brasil*, 2014. Available at <http://issuu.com/imprensaune/docs/projeto-une-pelo-brasil-2014> (accessed May 9, 2015).

<sup>72</sup> Inacio Vieira, “Brazil’s President Michel Temer Says Rousseff Was Impeached for Refusing His Economic Agenda,” *The Intercept*, September 23, 2016. <https://theintercept.com/2016/09/23/brazils-president-michel-temer-says-rousseff-was-impeached-for-refusing-his-economic-agenda>.

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