

# COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE POST-JUNE 2013: LYNCHING, LOOTING AND “QUEBRA- QUEBRAS”

DOI: 10.12957/SYNTHESIS.2023.83512

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## Abstract

The article addresses dimensions related to the occurrences of collective violence in Brazil in post-June 2013 - notably the lynching, looting, and “quebra-quebras”. Bearing in mind the ruptures and continuities of this group of collective actions with previous moments, we argue that this is a central process in understanding the openings of June 2013. This violent repertoire will be analyzed based on a database of news published between 2010 and 2018 in the Folha de São Paulo newspaper about these collective actions and a dialogue with the bibliographic production on the theme. The analysis, therefore, aims to scrutinize a period of political rearticulation that is concomitant to the increase in conflict in the streets. As a result, we propose a contribution to the literature of innovations in social movements, because given their oscillating characteristics between resistance and reinforcement of capitalism, these practices reveal ambiguities and disputes in course in contemporary Brazil.

**Keywords:** collective violence; June 2013; lynching; looting; quebra-quebras.

## Violências coletivas pós-junho de 2013: linchamentos, saques e quebra-quebras

### Resumo

O artigo aborda dimensões relativas às ocorrências de violências coletivas no Brasil no pós-junho de 2013 – notadamente os linchamentos, saques e quebra-quebras. Tendo em vista as rupturas e continuidades desse conjunto de ações coletivas com momentos anteriores, defendemos ser esse um processo central na compreensão das aberturas de junho de 2013. Esse repertório violento será analisado a partir de um banco de dados de notícias veiculadas entre 2010 e 2018 no jornal Folha de São Paulo acerca dessas ações coletivas e de um diálogo com a produção bibliográfica sobre a temática. A análise, portanto, visa esmiuçar um período de rearticulação política que é concomitante ao aumento da conflitividade nas ruas. Como resultado, propomos uma contribuição para a literatura de novidades nos movimentos sociais, pois, dadas suas

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características oscilantes entre resistência e reforço ao capitalismo, essas práticas revelam ambiguidades e disputas em curso no Brasil contemporâneo.

**Palavras-chave:** violência coletiva; Junho de 2013; linchamentos; saques; quebra-quebras.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses occurrences of collective violence in Brazil in the post-June 2013 period focusing specifically on cases of lynching, looting and “quebra-quebras”. We highlight both the continuous and novel actions in comparison to previous incidents, arguing that this process is crucial for understanding contemporary political disputes. Our primary objective is to provide an overview of these actions, contributing to the literature that identifies changes in actors, agendas, and performances – utilizing interactive, communicative, and symbolic elements – within this timeframe (Gohn, 2017). This study aims to add insights to the mosaic assembled in the recent history of collective actions in Brazil. Bearing in mind the long history of this repertoire in the national territory and drawing from the notions of “societal opening

1” and “societal overflow<sup>2</sup>” (Bringel; Pleyers, 2015), the analysis of these collective actions aims at scrutinizing recent occurrences and articulating them with the developments from June 2013.

Even though there is an appearance of novelty, it is important to highlight that this repertoire is not something new in Brazilian history, as it has been documented in various instances (Benevides; Fischer, 1983; Martins, 1996; Diniz, 1986; Neves, 2000; Moisés; Martinez-Alier, 1977). When examining inflection points in demonstrations and collective actions, it is important to avoid “temporal myopia” (Bringel, 2013) which disregards everything that preceded the process. However, even with this caution, we argue that there is a specificity in the recent utilization of this repertoire, particularly in its appropriation during moments of protest. This point of inflection is unique since the redemocratization of Brazil, and is marked by a qualitative difference in its usage compared to previous periods.

Some authors have highlighted an increase in collective violence in the post-June period. Notably, those particularly interested in the change of repertoire in collective actions during protests precede us in this argument. For instance, Tatagiba (2014, p. 54) contends that “maybe the main innovation in the June protests, in relation to previous cycles, was the presence of violent confrontation strategies”. Comparing with protest cycles such as “Diretas Já”<sup>3</sup> (1985) and “Fora Collor”<sup>4</sup> (1992), both ourselves the author have been primarily interested in understanding the dynamics of the mobilizations. Disregarding the weight given to novelty, we agree with Tatagiba when she points out that the “violent confrontation strategies” were a highlight both in street demonstrations and in press coverage. Another research that identifies violence as a distinctive feature of the recent period is by Silva and Silva (2016), focusing on public complaints about public transportation in Porto Alegre from 1970 to 2013. The authors identified that, since 2005, such demonstrations made use of “extra-institutional confrontational methods”, but “only in 2013 was there a high incidence of demonstrations with the use of violence by protesters” (Silva; Silva, 2016, p. 166). Despite the focus on a specific demand and city, this research provides data supporting the identified inflection. Lastly, Alonso and Mische (2017) observed a shift towards the protagonism of an autonomist repertoire that is more receptive to the use of violence as a “political weapon”. According to the authors, this shift is connected to an adherence to a form of claim based on direct action and horizontal decision-making processes.

Besides the authors concerned with protest cycles, there is a lack of long-duration perspectives among many of those who have mentioned collective violence. An exception to this is the work of Martins (2015), who identified a growth in lynching practices over the last 60 years, highlighting an average of one lynching per day in Brazil. Regarding looting and “quebra-quebras”, papers that compare the current period with previous ones are rare (see Benzaquen, 2020). In the 1970s and 1980s, both categories were prominent in the bibliography on social movements and collective actions, but currently they have lost their prominence. Still, even though they are not always mentioned, these forms of collective violence reappear in debates on Black Bloc tactics (Solano, Manso and Novaes, 2014; Scherer-Warren, 2014; Vainer et al, 2014). This continuity, however, has not been properly problematized yet.

In terms of methodology, the repertoire of violent collective actions was analyzed based on a debate with specialized bibliography, a survey in the editorial *Cotidiano* of the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper between 2010 and 2018, and videos posted on YouTube. The database, constructed from news published in *Folha de São Paulo*, cataloged concrete cases, attempted instances, and expressions of fear related to collective violence. Within the period from 2010 to 2018, the analysis reviewed 42 cases of lynching, 68 cases of looting, and 45 cases of “quebra-quebras”. The selected timeframe encompasses a period before June 2013 to facilitate the identification of certain changes while excluding the institutional rise of Bolsonarism. We acknowledge that the relationship between collective violence and Bolsonarism represents another distinct phase that further develops the issues analyzed here. To better outline the process under examination, we chose not to include the period marked by an increasing recourse to violence by the Brazilian far-right.

Nonetheless, a brief caveat is in order regarding the use of media as a source of data for this research. It is well-established that there is a specific relationship between the media and anything legally classified as a crime. In our analyses, we have paid attention to the fact that violent collective actions have a high degree of “news-value”. That is, they are unique and attractive enough to enhance the value and impact of newspaper sales (Melo, 2010). Thus, we recognize a problematic ambiguity in this data: while these cases may stimulate sales due to their exploration, they might be underreported because they would lose their “news-value” if every daily case identified by Martins were published (2015). This caveat regarding the media extends to the videos we analyzed, as many of them were produced by media outlets. Therefore, journalistic videos and texts are treated as we perceive all representations: as partial and limited. Nonetheless, they constitute the available data for a panoramic survey because there are no other permanent and consistent sources, as mentioned by Natal (2012), on lynching, as we have analyzed for looting and “quebra-quebras”. Thus, we constructed a database with the news we found, enabling us to conduct the analysis presented below.

The material was proven to be relevant for the discussion as it provides an overview of this repertoire. The analysis of paradigmatic cases enabled us to delve into significant issues, such as the conditions under which this repertoire was observed, its relationships with June 2013 as a process, and what it reveals about the connection between violence and the State, as well as violence and property in Brazilian society.

Therefore, we will commence by analyzing June 2013 and its relationship with the repertoire of violent collective actions. At this juncture, we advocate for a more nuanced understanding of the events, beginning with the use of collective violence in moments of protest and in the daily life of the country. Subsequently, we will examine violent collective actions in conjunction with important ongoing social processes. This analysis will be guided by two main axes: one considering the State and violence, and the other examining violence and property.

## **1 JUNE AS A PROCESS AND THE REPERTOIRE OF VIOLENT COLLECTIVE ACTIONS**

Let's begin by examining the process: June 2013. During the first term of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2014), Brazil witnessed the longest cycle of protests in its recent history. June began with left movements focusing on a specific agenda: preventing the announced increase in bus fares in several cities across Brazil (Tavares; Roriz; Oliveira, 2016). However, what unfolded next surprised many because, as in other countries in this same timeframe (Bringel et al., 2013), this cycle transcended the usual boundaries, and the streets were taken by a plethora of subjects, practices and demands. This surprise is related to the manner and timing of June's occurrence, as it happened during a relatively prosperous economic period, during the third presidential government of the Worker's Party (PT).

The developments of June 2013 prompt us to consider the analysis by Bringel and Pleyers (2015), particularly their procedural focus and concepts of societal opening and overflow. Therefore, we assert that June must be understood as a process, extending over a longer period than just the initial cycle of protests. In our assessment, it is crucial to recognize that its political significance must not be confined solely to the institutional realm. The polarized disputes between the left and the right, at certain junctures, converged into a shared repertoire of collective actions and protests.

One central aspect of this process, paramount for the analysis, was its nature of societal opening. Coined by McAdam (1995) – the authors’ inspiration for this term – this phenomenon refers to a situation where movements initiating protest cycles, responsible for fostering social mobilizations, give rise to derivative movements. In the Brazilian context, this is evident in the transition from movements against bus fare increases to plethora of demonstrations by diverse groups. Within this opening, Bringel and Pleyers (2015, p. 4) identified that “new spaces and actors emerged, leading to an increase in conflicts in the public space and a questioning of traditional codes, subjects, and actions that had prevailed in the country over the last two decades”.

However, beyond a conventional opening, as typically ascribed by social movement theories to derivative movements continuing the initiator movements, in Brazil, the initiator movements were surpassed. A “societal overflow” occurred, signifying that the derivative movements did not necessarily maintain a connection with the agendas and practices of their initiators. Moreover, there was a proliferation of tensions and ambivalences. In this sense, Gohn (2017) highlights the innovations within protest cycles, notably the ones in 2013 and 2016<sup>5</sup>, as pivotal moments, and explores the initial inspirations of most protesters which leaned more towards autonomist, anarchist, and utopian socialist ideals than the traditional left. We are primarily interested in analyzing the overflow that occurs in subsequent moments and the relationship with this initial moment.

With this perspective in mind, our specific contribution is to explore this process through a repertoire of collective actions, encompassing three forms of collective violence. According to Tilly (1977), the repertoire is the possible set of collective actions. The focus is on the practice of actors when they act collectively, and Tilly argues that, at any given time, there is a finite set of practices available for selection. However, the cultural and agency variations among these actors allow for a vast –though still limited – range of possible choices for forms of action.

Within this potential group, we address what Tilly (2003) terms “collective violence”, episodic social interactions involving at least two people, hence requiring some degree of coordination, and resulting in physical damage<sup>6</sup> to individuals and/or objects. This concept underscores the necessity of considering structural characteristics, processes, and social bonds in the analysis of its empirical manifestations.

We operationally defined such collective violence through global analyses and occurrences. We interpret “quebra-quebra” as a collective action involving the destruction of public and private property. Opting to use the Portuguese term instead of depredation, for instance, allow us to establish a connection between recent events and historical occurrences documented with the same term in the history of Brazil (Moisés, 1982; Teles, 2022). As for lynching, we conceptualize it as a collective action intending to conduct a “trial without the participation of a third party” (Martins, 1996 p. 12). In this scenario, participants resort to violence as a form of punishment for someone they consider an offender. Lastly, looting is understood as “a collective violent action involving a conflicting relationship related to the collective expropriation of disputed assets” (Benzaquen, 2020, p. 107). Thus, we have three types of collective actions with some degree of coordination among participants - albeit, in some cases, characterized by weak and not explicitly stated coordination. Another internal similarity of this repertoire is that the (sense of) anonymity plays a significant role in incentivizing participation in these actions. These definitions facilitate our survey and analysis of episodes where this repertoire occurred, situated in time and space in Brazil between 2010 and 2018. It is important to consider these contextual factors when making generalizations about these phenomena.

We can contextualize looting, lynching and “quebra-quebras” within the framework of June as a process, particularly concerning their endorsement by social movements. Our survey indicates that “quebra-quebra” was advocated by a limited segment of social movements, particularly those aligned with anarchism and Maoism, often in collaboration with Black Bloc tactics. This was evident during the teachers’ protest in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, epitomized by the emergence of the *Black Prof* (Ribas, 2016). In these protests, teachers, wearing black outfits with improvised shields and masks, sought to legitimize this tactic. Although lynching is not endorsed by any specific social movement, certain groups of “vigilantes,” more akin to paramilitary organizations than conventional social movements in sociological terms, have at times claimed it.

An illustrative example is the attempted lynching of a 12-year-old boy during a 2015 demonstration supporting Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in Rio de Janeiro. In a video capturing this incident (Menor, 2015), it is apparent that collective legitimacy is accorded to this form of collective violence, as the boy is physically assaulted by protesters without effective police intervention to prevent the assault. Concerning looting, historically regarded as a legitimate action in contexts of hunger, there is no evidence of social movements endorsing it. This is suggested by the absence of speeches legitimizing looting actions that transpired during police strikes in Pernambuco in 2014 (Benzaquen, 2020) and Espírito Santo in 2017.

Regarding the question of whether these forms of collective violence were effectively employed during protests, “quebra-quebras” occurred in many of the massive protests in June 2013. However, apart from the “quebra-quebras” typically associated with Black Blocs' actions, instances of looting were also reported during protests, such as the cases in Vitória in June 2013 (G1, 2013) and Rio de Janeiro in July of the same year (Atos, 2013). Lynching was also featured in protests, albeit sporadically, in attacks suffered by left-wing activists when extreme-right groups took the streets, still in June 2013, mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Azenha, 2013). Ironically, those responsible for the lynching were often advocates of a constant motto at the time: *no violence*<sup>7</sup>.

To conclude this characterization of events, it is crucial to highlight that the database not only records instances of collective violence during protests but also unveils significant aspects of these processes. What we notice in newspaper articles is that, with “quebra-quebras”, there are cases in trains and subways – as in the 1970s – and several cases related to prison riots. When it comes to lynching, most of the cases happen after accusations of theft and harassment. Out of the 42 identified cases, 17 involve reports of fear and attempted lynching. Looting, on the other hand, exhibits higher numbers during periods of storms, floods, and police strikes. Besides, there are many mentions of fear and attempted looting (18 out of 68). Lastly, both “quebra-quebras” and looting peaked in 2013, while lynching reached its higher frequency in 2015. On “quebra-quebras”, there were 15 cases in 2013 with an annual average of five cases. As for looting, there were 23 cases with an annual average of seven and a half. Regarding lynching, 10 cases were recorded in 2015, with an annual average of 4.6 cases.

After establishing the initial intersection between this repertoire and June 2013, we will proceed to the next topic. In this section, we will delve into the analysis with two guiding axes: the relationship between violence and property and the relationship between violence and the State.

## 2 VIOLENCE, PROPERTY, AND THE STATE

We now delve into the concept of improper politics proposed by Devenney (2011; 2020). Interpreting looting, lynching and “quebra-quebras” through this lens not only reveals previously unanalyzed aspects of this repertoire but also facilitates the understanding of the broader social processes involved in these phenomena. The prefix *-im* in the word “improper” reveals that this type of politics is the denial of something: the proper in property. Understanding it as a political and historical phenomenon, property always requires justifications, which are subject to dispute. In other words, all property is contingent and political, because it is always a process of dispute. Thus, it is not understood as an object, but as a relationship that outlines and sorts out space, time, and subjectivity. We are therefore dealing with processes of formation of hegemonies, in which property establishes a series of relationships and contributes to defining what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. This emphasizes a dialog between the more strictly economic aspects and the definition of appropriate forms of behavior and subjectivity. That way, properties necessarily depend on an enclosure, on establishing boundaries between what is excluded and included, on promoting inequalities. This process is based on exclusions that imply an explicit or implicit recourse to violence. According to Devenney (2020, p. 6), “violence haunts all forms of private property”. In this sense, the legitimization of a proprietary order legitimizes certain violent actions.

Improper politics, in this context, is characterized by the act of breaking boundaries and destabilizing the property regime. “Improper” is defined as the rejection of the “proper” and not the assertion of an alternative propriety. This implies that if improper politics involves a dispute

around what is deemed politically appropriate by proprietary orders, it is not because it is based on something that defines *a priori* what the property must be – whether communal, collective, or otherwise. There is no need for a vector: the improper does not necessarily advocate for “fairer” or “better” relationships with property; rather, it involves a rupture with the established norms of the proprietary order, particularly within the framework of contemporary capitalism in Brazil. The objective here is not to justify or legitimize the improper, but to analyze and critique existing relationships with property. Therefore, it is not a matter of a mere moral inversion between a proper evil and an improper good. Instead, it involves recognizing and examining the manifestations of the inappropriate and the appropriate within these collective violent actions.

If the improper challenges the proper of property, we observe that the analyzed repertoire does indeed encompass instances of impropriety, because in all of them what is allowed in contemporary capitalism is violently extrapolated, whether through the destruction of places where value is exchanged (cases of *quebra-quebras* in banks), popular justice procedures without legal mediation (as in the lynching of bodies considered to be offenders) or the appropriation of goods without the mediation of money (in the case of looting products from stores). However, this is not the entirety of the phenomenon. Simultaneously, there are moments when the proper is reaffirmed, particularly in instances of looting and lynching. In the former, there is the validation of merchandise consumption, albeit through delegitimized means, while in the latter, Brazil’s deeply ingrained structural racism is prominently manifested. It is therefore important to understand the contradictions present in these phenomena.

As we delve further into the analysis, it becomes evident that recent conflicts in Brazil have been heightened in public spaces, underscoring the intrusion of the improper into forbidden territories. By definition, the existence of the improper is denied by the appropriate, but this denial can vary depending on the context in which it manifests. The improper ventured into places where it is typically forbidden, engaging in practices that are not confined to the “spaces of exception” — as Arantes (2014) designates the precarious locations to which a significant portion of Brazil’s poor black population is relegated. In protests, activities like “quebra-quebras” are not permissible; entering stores with a group to take items without payment is not allowed; and engaging in collective violence in public view is unacceptable. However, in contemporary Brazil, such practices occur regularly in other contexts. Therefore, the territorial dimension is crucial for defining and controlling these improprieties.

Additionally, this territorial definition is interconnected with the definition of appropriate bodies, as the proper has a national racist and sexist contour. To exemplify, one can reflect on the incidents of looting in Abreu e Lima during the military police strike in Pernambuco in 2014. The city, situated in the Metropolitan Region of Recife, witnessed sixteen hours of looting in its central commercial area. The targeted stores, mostly selling kitchen appliances and shoes, were not the usual choices for outcast bodies in a city where, as per the 2010 Census, had 43.3% of its population living with a nominal monthly income of up to half a minimum wage<sup>8</sup> (IBGE, 2010). In this episode, what stood out was the presence of individuals who did not fit the expected profile of criminals, as commonly perceived—namely, elders, children, and women. This was emphasized by the media, reflecting a societal recalibration of what is considered appropriate (Benzaquen, 2020). Thus, it becomes clear that properties are intertwined with the characteristics assigned to different bodies: certain bodies are deemed suitable for specific actions, while deemed unsuitable for others. Children and elders, theoretically, are not expected to engage in looting, yet they did.

A core issue to be analyzed in these improprieties is the specificity of their violence. Unlike actions defined as appropriate, — such as many violent actions by police officers — many forms of violence are publicly condemned. What is interesting here is that this condemnation reveals nuanced perceptions of what is considered appropriate in Brazilian contemporary capitalism. In the case of lynching, we can agree that its violent character is obvious, as there is a body being assaulted. However, as this body is perceived as deviant (a person who allegedly steals) violence is, for a proportion of society, justified, under the belief that it protects private property. This illustrates a clear alignment between lynching and everyday life, which seeks to omit the violent actions on which it is based. From this perspective, the true violence to be condemned would be the one caused by the assaulted body while stealing goods. As for “quebra-quebras” and looting,

publicly perceived as violent, they imply a definition of violence that encompasses the destruction or expropriation of objects. The systematic delegitimization efforts of these behaviors in media coverage of such events once more underscore how private property is viewed as a social relationship that cannot be violated. To illustrate this phenomenon, one need only recall the famous coverage by *Jornal Nacional* on the "quebra-quebras" of the Black Bloc tactics throughout June 2013, which employed journalistic techniques to delegitimize this collective action, such as designating these subjects as "vandals" (Fontanetto; Cavalcanti, 2016).

It is known that currently, properties depend on the State for the guarantee of their enclosure using legal devices, with the State being both an expression and a condition of an economic need (Devenney, 2020). When the State returns as an analytical mediation for debate, the conflicting relationship between State and violence must consider the location of violent acts in the political life, since democracies should not be defined by their capacity to exclude violence but precisely by how they address it (Merklen, 2012).

Therefore, the analysis of violent collective actions is approached through a qualification of violence, as exemplified by Merklen (2016) in his example of the acts of arson in libraries in the French *banlieus* in 2005. Notably, the disruption of the time continuum caused by these actions resulted in a rhetorical divide, rendering subjects unintelligible within their context. The perpetrators of the fires, for example, were assumed to have social, cultural, or psychological problems. Simultaneously, "the qualification of the protest as violent and the subsequent response (we have to rebuild the library as it was before) tends to obstruct the debates and exclude the action of political order" (Merklen, 2016, p.29) – a situation not very different from what happened in the Brazilian case of "quebra-quebras" and the Black Bloc tactics (Fontanetto; Cavalcanti, 2016).

Merklen, advocating for the essential analysis of "minor" and less spectacular conflicts that preceded the destruction and arson in a library, sheds light on the current dynamics in democratic life and the inflection of order. According to the author, the *res pública* should account for how these fires, considered (morally) violent – in addition to their disruptive character – are deeply embedded in the economy of multiple conflicting relationships characterizing the bonds that connect public institutions and the State with poor neighborhoods. Merklen argues that the libraries in these neighborhoods represent the State in vulnerable public buildings located in areas populated by immigrants, unemployed individuals and poor, in general. Thus, it is possible to extend the analysis to June 2013 because the repertoire analyzed here, as an instigator of conflicts in the dynamics of collective actions, is an intrinsic part of the neoliberal democracy dynamics. Even though it attacks and violates the limits of property, it exhibits characteristics of an improper politics.

The response of the State involves the delegitimization of what is deemed "improper" and complicity with routine violent actions. In the contexts where "quebra-quebras" were featured, particularly during the protests in June, police forces filled a mediation void between spontaneously summoned protesters and the constituted powers, escalating confrontations with groups employing similar tactics (Gohn, 2017). What became evident is that in looting and lynching, there is a discretionary aspect claimed by the State that facilitates the occurrence of these events. This was observed in police strikes that created windows of opportunity for looting and the leniency or delayed response of the punitive system when dealing with lynchings. Despite attempts to politically control collective violence, some argue its power as a force capable of intervening in society, eluding State control. The inadequate status of proper institutional channels for complaints, as pointed out by Moisés and Martínez-Alier (1977) in an analysis of "quebra-quebras" in the 1970s, renders direct action the only available recourse against deepening conditions of reproduction within immediate reach. Moreover, these "uprisings" akin to some contemporary episodes of collective violence, explicitly aim to communicate with the State, seeking concrete solutions. By mobilizing the Army and the Military Police, they demonstrate to a certain extent their political efficacy while vocally opposing the most visible representatives of state agencies.

The inclusion of an improper practice in a demonstration, as historically demonstrated by various authors, underscores the exacerbation of contradictions inherent in the urban context of Brazil. These contradictions manifest in the continuous deterioration of the conditions for the

survival of the population. Faced with the absence of proper channels for complaints, people erupt in locations with more difficult control and lower risks. According to Moisés and Martinez-Alier (1977), violence in uprisings in the 1970s, while limited, was directed towards the State or, more precisely, towards the administration of public services—an integral part of the process of their reproduction (1977, p. 55). Collective uprisings were directly linked to the determinations of state interventions in outcast territories, emphasizing the inherently political nature of these forms of collective mobilization. In line with Merklen (2012), we assert the need not to establish a radical separation between violence and politics to understand the emerging violence within democratic regimes. However, this doesn't imply that all instances of violence indicate a rupture with the status quo. Politics and violence can also articulate themselves in the reproduction of an appropriate order configured in unequal and exclusionary as evident in cases of racist lynching, as mentioned above.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this text, our objective was to address the phenomenon of violent collective actions during demonstrations, taking into account the societal opening in Brazil that began in June 2013. We emphasized that conflicts involving violence in the streets gained political prominence following this *societal opening*. As demonstrated in the text, we deem this repertoire important. Firstly, it includes the authors, usually bodies considered outcast for institutional politics, engaging in improper politics and confronting the State and proprietary orders. They demand improvements in their access to goods and the state administration while seeking catharsis and visibility.

As we can observe, the connections between June and violent collective actions do imply equivalence between protests and violent collective actions, nor the establishment of causal links between them. Our aim is to argue that there are intersections between these phenomena, primarily because they share a certain historical context. The most relevant intersection, in our view, is the one shared by this repertoire with a significant proportion of protests: a rejection of the institutional. This involves direct action as a means of asserting a demand and decentralizing organizations from their traditional role as mobilizers of collective actions. In this sense, it reflects the societal opening that occurred in June, a return of conflict to the streets, expressed with or without violence, and with or without explicit demands. Furthermore, in terms of its position on the Brazilian political spectrum, this repertoire accentuates the perception of the ambivalences in June. This is evident in the ambiguous political nature of looting, as it lacks articulated discursive demands, simultaneously contesting some aspects of the daily order while reaffirming it.

As noted by Merklen (2016), by the end of the 1980s, appeared that political violence was coming to an end, at least in terms of groups openly declaring political objectives. During this period, no other political actor was openly against democracy, and there was an increase in the judiciary's power as an exclusive response to violence. However, as discussed here, this new cycle of violent collective actions serves as a reminder that violence is a crucial phenomenon at the intersection of property and the State. Thus, it seems there have been a reconfiguration of traditional forms of collective violence, bringing more visibility to alternative uses of violence in demonstrations and protests that challenge the State and the concept of coexistence. Various transformations have facilitated the prominence of violence in recent years, including the revitalization of popular collective action, the weakening of trade unionism, and the deepening of social fractures, leading to the emergence of violent forms of political engagement. In this regard, we align with Souza and Richer (2018) in asserting that the increase in conflicting collective actions occurs during a transitional period at the end of a relatively conciliatory era experienced during Lulism. This period witnesses a redefinition of mobilization agendas, marked by an escalation of conflicts in the streets and a reduction in proposals for interaction with institutional politics.

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> T.N. The original term was coined in Portuguese by Breno Bringel and Geoffrey Pleyers as “abertura societária” and it was translated freely for this paper into “societal opening” according to the explanation of its meaning by the authors: “societal opening [...] a phenomenon in which movements initiators of protest cycles, the ones in charge of encouraging social mobilizations, are succeeded by derivative movements.” (also, in free translation) Available at: <<https://repositorio.ufpe.br/bitstream/123456789/38086/1/TESE%20Guilherme%20Figueredo%20Benzaken.pdf>>
- <sup>2</sup> T.N. The original term was coined by the authors Breno Bringel and Geoffrey Pleyers as “desbordamento societário”, and it was freely translated for this paper into “societal overflow” according to the authors’ explanation for the term: “There was a “societal overflow”, that is, derivative movements did not necessarily maintain a connection with the agendas and practices of their initiators and there was a proliferation of tensions and ambivalences.” (also, in free translation). Available at: <<https://repositorio.ufpe.br/bitstream/123456789/38086/1/TESE%20Guilherme%20Figueredo%20Benzaken.pdf>>.
- <sup>3</sup> T.N.: Diretas Já [Direct (Elections) Now] was a 1984 civil movement which demanded direct presidential elections in Brazil.
- <sup>4</sup> T.N.: Fora Collor [Collor, out!] protests in Brazil were a series of widespread demonstrations in the early 1990s calling for the impeachment of then-President Fernando Collor de Mello due to corruption allegations.
- <sup>5</sup> Let us remember that, in the beginning of 2015, the 2016 protests had as their main agenda defending the Operation Car Wash and the impeachment of then-president Dilma Rousseff..
- <sup>6</sup> By definition, damage may be caused to objects, because “damage includes the forced seizure of people and objects under restriction or resistance” (Tilly, 2003, p. 3).
- <sup>7</sup> The motto *no violence* was frequently used during the demonstrations of June 2013 all over the country. It was echoed during the demonstrations, notably when combats were announced between protesters and police forces.
- <sup>8</sup> T.N. In 2010 (when the last Census was carried out), the minimum wage in Brazil was R\$ 600.

Received in May 2023  
Approved on October 2023