

# What Made People Take to the Streets? A Study on the Determinants of Protests in Brazil Based on Google Trends Data

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## Abstract

In the literature on political participation through contestation, the apparent difficulties that can hinder the realization of protests are extensively debated. The high costs associated with the act of protesting can make it an option of political participation mainly associated with the high class. The importance of certain institutional frameworks that more easily give vent to a society that protests is also discussed. Psychological variables are as well explored in this area of Political Science: lacking the horizon of possibilities, certain societies can become distrustful of the efficiency of protest, submitting to the status quo, thus creating a dulled scenario of normality in the face of socioeconomic injustices. This work intended to study the determinants that could overcome these adversities in the Brazilian context. It was concluded in favor of the thesis of the mobilizing event as a relevant channel to incite protests – such as the increase in bus fares in 2013, and the World Cup in 2014. In 2015, however, there is a change in the mobilizing agenda, leading us to the second factor that most easily mobilizes Brazilians: the blaming of personalities or institutions.

**Keywords:** protests, political participation, world cup, Brazil

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Popular Protests in 2013-2016

Demonstrations in the form of protests are a recurring reality in Brazil and the rest of the world. In recent years, there seems to be a greater preference for forms of direct participation, both in counter-movements and in favorable all over the world and this no different in Brazil. The very year 2020 was, in fact, characterized by anti-democratic demonstrations and motorcades, which even included the participation of the president. In 2021, in turn, movements against the Bolsonaro government reflected important criticism from Brazilian society in relation to the conduct of the biggest health crisis in recent times. Thus, in May of that same year, social upheavals took to the streets in Brazil.

Internationally, these last few years have sparked discussions and protest movements involving direct participation. Protests following the murder of George Floyd took to the streets of the United States of America, emblematically repositioning the anti-racist agenda and the Black Lives Matter movement in the global public debate. In the East, protests in Lebanon following the explosion in Beirut sparked social unrest in the country. All these events confirm the importance that unconventional forms of political action have for representation and civil participation and are of great interest to the academic community.

In this sense, this work seeks to answer the following research question: “What made Brazilians take to the streets?” between 2013 and 2016, a period historically characterized by the largest street demonstrations in Brazil. To this end, we sought to investigate the determinants of protests using the Google Trends platform, which uses the level of interest in terms searched in Google searches. In recent times, the importance of networks for social movements in the form of protests has been noted, especially regarding the viability of this method of participation, as will be discussed below.

Thus, this article is composed of 5 sections, including this brief introduction as the first section. Section 2 discusses the theoretical frameworks of Political Science on social movements and protests, to contextualize the debate on street demonstrations and understand how Brazil is situated within the academic discussion in question. Section 3 addresses the methodology, and the fourth, our results; and, finally, section 5 brings our conclusion.

Thus, we seek to complement the understanding of national political behavior and participation, to better understand Brazilian society and its demands before the public authorities.

## 2. Literature Review

The question of what would lead people to choose street demonstrations as a form of participation is a broad debate in Political Science. In this sense, it was possible to diagnose three main theories and three recurring arguments that contemplate the debate in question, to structure the work proposed here for the reality of Brazil, thus seeking to answer the research question: “what made Brazilians take to the streets?” in the time window from 2013 to 2016.

The first theory of interest is the Relative Deprivation Theory, which is the most explored in this article. It deals mainly with psychological variables as a primary trigger for mobilization. From this perspective, the feeling of discontent and social injustice is the result of the comparison that the individual makes with others, enabling him to recognize that the latter enjoys privileges and rights that he does not enjoy (Inglehart, 1988; Gurr, 1968; Chaney, Akerlof, & Blaydes, 2012).

This theory also addresses the so-called “horizon of the possible”, that is, dissatisfaction is a necessary but not sufficient condition for engagement, and it is essential that the individual also envisions a perspective of change based on his/her actions (Mendonça & Fuks, 2015; Santos, 2006). A relevant discussion derived from this theory is the idea of mobilizing complaints, that is, those that most easily instigate mobilizations. A relevant mobilizing complaint diagnosed by Political Science is precisely corruption (De Jonge, 2009; Machado, Scartascini, & Tommasi, 2015; Gingerich, 2009).

The second theory of interest is the so-called Resource Mobilization Theory, which discusses how protests are the product of a set of resources, both subjective and objective, and the interrelationship between them (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Turner & Killian, 1972). The main objective resources extensively mentioned are “education” and “income”, which are variables highly correlated with each other, that is, access to higher levels of income is expected to cause high levels of schooling and vice versa (Schoene & Allaway, 2019; Alst & Walgrave, 2001; Ribeiro & Borba, 2015; Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Arbache, 2015; Casta Ñeda, 2012; Calvo, 2013; Anduiza et al., 2014).

Another objective resource that is often cited is associationism, that is, the ability of individuals to associate in social movements and civil society organizations, such as unions and NGOs (Alst & Walgrave, 2001; Klandermans, 2002). In this way, the association channel would more easily instigate forms of direct political action that contests. Finally, as the main subjective resource, emphasis is placed on “interest in politics”, which in fact depends on external factors – such as income, education and family life – but is also closely related to one’s own strictly particular subjectivity (Arbache, 2015; Schoussman & Soule, 2005).

The third theory then suggests the importance of the structure of political opportunities as the main determining factor in protests. Therefore, the institutional configuration, historical antecedents and cultural aspects shared by a social organization are extremely important forces in instigating the preference for direct political participation in the form of protests. In this sense, the type of political regime and its degree of openness in terms of media and individual freedoms would define the ability to protest (Kitschelt, 1986; Meyer, 2004; Joffé 2011).

Other important arguments in the study on the determinants of protests are the thesis of the mobilizing event, that is, the idea of some triggering event that guides the mobilization, thus highlighting the importance of the specific context in which the protests emerge (Alst & Walsgrave, 2001); and, finally, polarization – or personification – as an element that stimulates the street movement. This thesis is based on the feeling of anger, specifically materialized in the jargon “us against them”, as a central factor in engagement (De Jonge, 2009; Calderon et al., 2015; Klandermans, 2002).

The relationship between socioeconomic variables and mobilizations in the form of protests is also widely explored in the literature. It is particularly noticeable that structural problems of an economic nature – such as unemployment and income inequality – face difficulties in the process of engaging in mobilizations. This situation is a product of the complexity of materializing or personifying such problems, precisely because of their structural nature (Schoene & Allaway, 2019). This argument is also consistent with Santos’s thesis (2006), to support a plausible justification for the context of social inertia extensively debated by him.

Thus, only in extreme and exceptional situations, that is, when income inequality is excessive, is it truly capable of driving protest activity. Therefore, specific situations in the state of the economy, such as when considering a recession, may be more relevant to explain protest collective actions. Thus, factors such as mass unemployment and continuous bankruptcies, which lead to successive demand and supply shocks, combined with the loss of

purchasing power, due to the freezing of wages and pensions and tax increases, are contextual elements that more easily instigate mobilizations (Schoene & Allaway, 2019; Quaranta, 2016).

Based on the theoretical analysis presented so far and the proposed methodology described below, which has networks as one of its fundamental points, it is possible to conclude, hypothetically and for the contemporary context, that engagement in protests is the result of the interaction of three central points: (1) dissatisfaction and complaints regarding a specific situation or in defense of a cause; (2) access to resources, whether subjective – such as interest in politics – or objective – such as income and education – further emphasizing the existence of an intrinsic relationship and an extensive debate on the causality of these variables; (3) access to the virtual environment and social media.

From this perspective, through these hypothetical formulations, this paper seeks to investigate the existence of central complaints and feelings in the exercise of mobilizations between 2013 and 2016 through social media. It thus attempts to contribute to the literature with new understandings about the public mobilized at the time and what instigates Brazilians to take to the streets. Figure 1 presents, in a schematic form, a summary of the theories presented in this section.

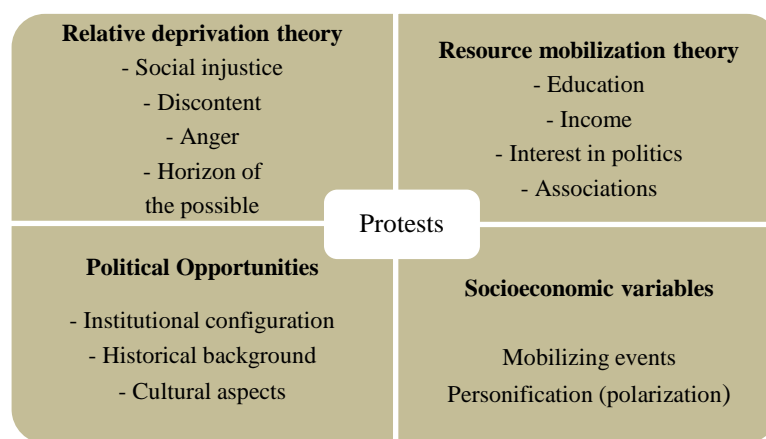


Figure 1. Theoretical mapping

## 2. Method

The study aimed to obtain possible determinants for the outbreak of protests in the Brazilian context was conducted through the creation of latent variables – called dimensions – from an exploratory factor analysis. The data were obtained from the *Google Trends platform*, which provides the level of interest in each search term from Google searches. The keywords extracted were banging of pots, demonstration, protests, twenty cents, corruption, Dilma Rousseff, Eduardo Cunha, impeachment, Lula, free pass, plebiscite, Sérgio Moro, police violence, Movimento Passe Livre (MPL), FIFA standard and anti-PTism.

We use Google Trends as the availability of data in a developing country such as Brazil is not consistent, especially when it comes to public opinions surveys, usually only carried on for specific purposes. So this is the only kind of consistent database that allows any study of this kind to be carried on.

The exploratory factor analysis method was chosen due to the excessive number of words chosen to express possible determinants of protests. The objective was to reduce the high number of variables correlated with each other, grouping them into the same dimension, to generate a factor with minimal loss of information.

It is important to emphasize that the factors seek to summarize what the variables express, and not to conceive a new concept from the interaction of the chosen terms. Exploratory was preferred over confirmatory because the captured variables generated the factors. Therefore, the objective of this work is not to confirm the adequate allocation of a given variable in a factor, but rather to study the complex interrelationship between the terms without there being an initial assumption about their factors.

The data were adjusted by calculating the square root of the levels of interest for each term so that they approximated a standard normal, with the aim of enabling the factor analysis itself. Multivariate normality was not achieved, but nonparametric tests were performed to test the homogeneity of the data and continue with the chosen methodology option.

Data extraction by *Google Trends* seeks to support the contemporary thesis that the process of structuring protest

movements permeates networks. Three dimensions were created based on the search terms presented for each year analyzed – 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. The time frame chosen is precisely the period historically marked by social upheavals in the country and the choice to study the four-year period instead of an isolated year justifies the aim of capturing some continuity of agendas at each moment of protests.

Based on the Theory of Relative Deprivation and using especially the argument about mobilizing complaints, it was possible to structure two dimensions of dissatisfaction. The first of these expresses discontent regarding the poor distribution of public services, in which the words “twenty cents”, “free pass”, “FIFA Standard” and “MPL” were grouped together. According to the literature, dissatisfaction with public services – especially those related to mobility and urban life (Note 1)– is a fundamental factor in explaining the outbreak of demonstrations in the Brazilian context.

The search term “FIFA Standard” was chosen as a *proxy* to capture popular dissatisfaction with government services. As 2014 was a year characterized by the FIFA-sponsored World Cup football event, the jargon “we want FIFA Standard public services” became popular, becoming a symbol of complaints and dissatisfaction with public management.

The second dimension, whose theme is dissatisfaction, brings together terms related to political discontent. It includes words such as “corruption,” “plebiscite,” “political reform,” “police violence,” and “impeachment.” (Note 2). Thus, the aim of both dimensions of dissatisfaction is to capture the discontent of the Brazilian population with institutions, especially regarding the national political class – represented, above all, by the executive branch and Congress.

The words chosen seek to express precisely a desire to change the status quo of the national political environment, which is perceived as benefiting from rights and privileges that the people do not enjoy and that are somehow immune to the social problems faced by the population (Note 3). In this sense, the main premise of the Theory of Relative Deprivation is fulfilled, which has in comparison with others the origin of the discontent that drives protest actions.

Finally, the latent variable on blaming political leaders was constructed. It includes the names mentioned above: Lula, Dilma Rousseff, Eduardo Cunha and Sérgio Moro, and the term “anti-PTism”. This dimension aims to capture the personification of social problems as a determinant for protesting. It is based on the hypothesis that polarization – “us against them” – is a strong element in inciting protest activities.

It is of utmost importance to emphasize that some words were removed from the respective dimension, depending on the year. It was observed that certain key terms weaken the latent variable created – that is, the correlation between the terms that form that dimension loses statistical significance. Certain statistical tests were performed to support this decision – such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the factor test.

The dependent variable is also a dimension constituted by the terms “protests”, “demonstration” and “panelaço”. This latent variable also underwent changes depending on the year, with some terms being removed depending on the result of the statistical tests mentioned. In short, the fundamental object of the proposed analysis is to understand whether the dimensions created and used as independent variables – public services, political dissatisfaction and blaming of leaders – have an influence on the variability of the dimension used as the dependent variable and whose theme is social mobilization.

To this end, the multiple linear regression model was used based on the Ordinary Least Squares method. For this method to be used for modeling, the literature presents five main assumptions that need to be met (Note 4): linearity in the parameters (RLM. 1); random sampling (RLM. 2); non-perfect collinearity (RLM. 3); conditional mean equal to zero of the error term in relation to the predictor variables (RLM. 4); and, finally, the assumption of homoscedasticity: the error term has the same variance given any values of the explanatory variables (RLM. 5). In this sense, a series of statistical tests were performed so that the regressions for each year could be validated.

To meet the RLM.1 hypothesis, the Ramsey test was performed to verify whether the model could in fact be written as a multiple linear regression. The Shapiro-Wilk and Jarque-Bera tests were performed to test the normality of the residuals, respecting the RLM.2 hypothesis on random sampling. Two normality tests were performed due to the difference in methodology between them: the Jarque-Bera method considers asymmetry and kurtosis to test normality.

According to the RLM hypothesis. 3, the multiple linear regression model accepts some degree of collinearity between the independent variables, as long as it is not an exact linear relationship. In this sense, the multicollinearity test was performed using the variance inflation factor to detect the degree of collinearity

between the predictors. Regarding the RLM hypotheses. 4 and RLM hypotheses. 5, the Breusch-Pagan test was performed to verify heteroscedasticity, given that the Ordinary Least Squares method can only be validated under homoscedasticity.

From this perspective, the basic structure of all regressions presented in the next sessions – isolated and aggregated results – is as described below:

$$mobilization_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * politicaldissatisfaction_i + \beta_2 * publiservi + \beta_3 * blaming_leaders_i + u_i \quad (1)$$

The index i represents the ith level of interest for the search terms contained in the respective dimension for year t. The term  $u_i$  refers to the elements that impact the mobilization dimension for year t and that are not contemplated by the equation.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 Study of Independent and Dependent Variables

Table 1 shows, each year, the words maintained for each dimension created. The nomenclature of the independent variables is as follows: political dissatisfaction, blaming of leaders and dissatisfaction with public services. The choice of the permanence of the words was based on the tests mentioned above – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the factor test. By running these tests, it was possible to diagnose which words weaken the respective dimension, reducing its factorial load of interest.

Table 1. Construction of dimensions as independent variables

Year	Dimension	Words kept
2013	Dissatisfaction with institutions and distrust	Corruption, plebiscite, political reform, police violence, impeachment.
2013	Blame and political leadership	Dilma, Lula.
2013	Dissatisfaction with public services	Twenty cents, free pass, FIFA standard, MPL.
2014	Dissatisfaction with institutions and distrust	Corruption, plebiscite, political reform, impeachment.
2014	Blame and political leadership	Dilma, Lula.
2014	Dissatisfaction with public services	Free pass, FIFA standard.
2015	Dissatisfaction with institutions and distrust	Corruption, plebiscite, political reform.
2015	Blame and political leadership	Dilma, Lula, Eduardo Cunha, Sergio Moro.
2015	Dissatisfaction with public services	Free pass, FIFA standard, MPL.
2016	Dissatisfaction with institutions and distrust	Corruption, plebiscite, political reform, impeachment.
2016	Blame and political leadership	Dilma, Lula, Eduardo Cunha, Sergio Moro, anti-petism.
2016	Dissatisfaction with public services	Free pass, FIFA standard.

The dependent variables are also dimensions and consist of the words “demonstration”, “protests” and “panelaço”. The same tests were performed to verify the factorial load of the dimensions and, therefore, not all the words collected to characterize them were used, depending on the year. Table 1 below shows how each explained variable behaves depending on the time frame and whose name is “mobilization”.

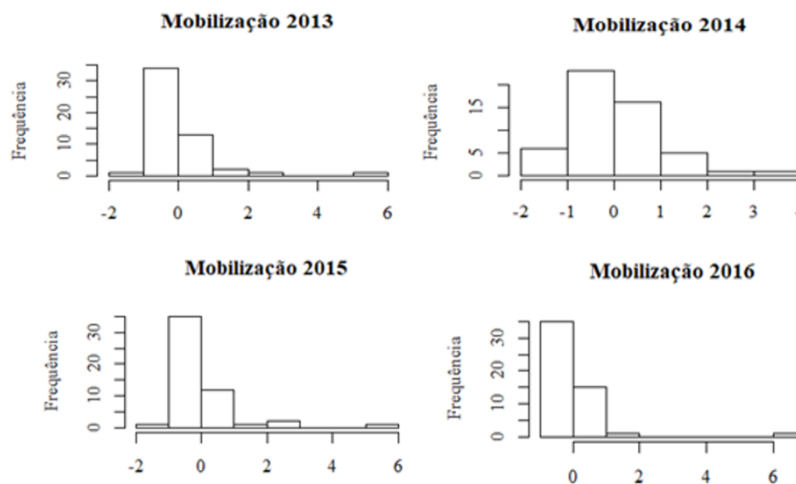


Figure 2. Behavior of dependent variables

All dependent variables approximated a standard normal, with a mean of zero and a standard deviation close to one. All presented left skewness and positive kurtosis, indicating heavy tails and values far from the mean.

#### 4.2 Regression Results

For the year 2013, all dimensions were significant in explaining the variability of the dimension on mobilization. They also presented the sign expected by the literature, indicating a positive impact on mobilizations. In short, all assumptions of the Ordinary Least Squares model were met in 2013, namely: linearity in parameters, random sampling, normality of residues, homoscedasticity and conditional independence of the error term.

In 2014, the only dimension that had significance at 10% was dissatisfaction with public services. The F test did not show significance overall and, in this sense, the anova table was run, with significance only for the variance of the dimension on public services. Thus, it was decided to run a restricted model, chosen to incorporate the final results table, and the other dimensions were removed from the model. In the final regression, dissatisfaction with public services showed a positive and significant impact at 5% to explain the variability of the dimension on mobilizations.

For 2015, all dimensions showed significance and positive impact in explaining the variability of the dimension on mobilizations. However, the regression did not pass the Ramsey test, indicating that it did not fit the functional form. The model also did not pass the non-heteroscedasticity test. Therefore, a second model was run to correct for heteroscedasticity. The coefficients in the corrected model had a positive impact on the variability of the dimension on mobilizations, as expected from the literature.

Finally, for 2016, three models were run. The first contains all dimensions and without correction for heteroscedasticity. Only the “political leadership” dimension had statistical significance, so it was decided to work with the restricted model. The third regression contains the correction in terms of heteroscedasticity for the restricted model. The final regression (restricted and corrected) was also subjected to statistical tests, passing the normality tests, but with signs of non-adaptation to the functional form.

Trends data corroborates the thesis that 2013 was characterized by a plurality of agendas: people took to the streets without a specific reason, describing a context of widespread discontent with the political scenario. Furthermore, it was the only year in which the dimensions worked better together. For the others, as described previously and shown in the table below, it was necessary to work with restricted models or adjust.

Table 2. Isolates regressions

	Mobilization			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Political and institutional dissatisfaction	0.241 *** (0.072)		0.253 *** (0.062)	
Political leadership	0.196 ** (0.096)		0.090 * (0.051)	0.755 *** (0.152)
Dissatisfaction with public services	0.595 *** (0.087)	0.534 ** (0.263)	0.178 *** (0.056)	
Constant	-0.000 (0.037)	0.000 (0.135)	-0.169 *** (0.038)	0.044 (0.114)
Observations	52	52	52	52
R <sup>2</sup>	0.932	0.076	0.378	0.332
Adjusted R2	0.927	0.058	0.340	0.318
F statistic	218,165 ***	4,129 **	9,742 ***	24,828 ***

Note. \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01.

Therefore, both the 2013 and 2014 results show (Note 5) that the context in which protests emerge is of fundamental importance, as already exposed by the study by ALST and WALGRAVE (2001). In the Brazilian context, it seems that while people are unable to materialize their complaints about a given mobilizing event – as for example in 2013 with the increase in bus fares and in 2014 with the World Cup event – the act of mobilizing is prevented or perhaps presents sufficiently high costs that hinder the effort.

The year 2015, in turn, can be understood as a precedent that laid the foundations for unbearable discontent with the PT's political leadership, culminating in the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. One can even mention the complaints of the middle class spread across the internet in the form of memes, such as the

phrases “the PT destroyed my life” or “just get rid of the PT” and “Brazil would move forward”. For 2015 and 2016, however, this was not so much a mobilizing event, but rather a process of blaming – which peaked in 2016.

Still, for every year, what seems most certain is the importance of materializing complaints in something or someone. From this perspective, there may be several target factors capable of generating mobilizations – such as income inequality, poverty, poor quality public services, corruption, etc. – but if these are not materialized in some trigger event or in some personality or entity, they do not become sufficient elements to incite protests, which could explain the context of social inertia previously exposed by the study by Mendonça and Fuks (2015) and Santos (2006).

Thus, the results of the isolated regressions also confirm the thesis of Schoene and Allaway (2019), previously presented. Structural social problems, such as income inequality or corrupt societies, are rarely the focus of mobilization due to the difficulty of materializing or perceiving them. Furthermore, people apparently get used to these problematic socio-political scenarios.

However, as the study undertaken here shows, this complex and apparently paradoxical order is fragile. An event or an escalation of events can trigger feelings of revolt capable of reducing the costs of mass mobilization. Thus, social upheavals with some substantial impact on the political and economic organization of a nation become possible.

#### *4.3 Aggregate Result*

The aggregate result shows a persistent significance of the dimension on dissatisfaction with public services to explain the variability of the dimension on mobilizations. From this perspective within the context of Brazilian society, the level of interest in this period for the words that form this latent variable – namely “twenty cents”, “free pass”, “MPL” and “FIFA Standard” – is somehow linked to the level of interest in the words that refer to social mobilization, and this can be measured by Google searches.

The term “MPL”, which was important in both 2013 and 2015, can also be considered an indication of the thesis that associations are a mobilizing factor on the national scene. In fact, this dimension required greater complexity of construction due to the innate difficulties of classifying dissatisfaction with public services – due to the very scope that this subject raises. Thus, it was necessary to look for words that had a close relationship with the social movements of the period and with the theme that we sought to characterize, even though some of these terms may have ambiguous links with the dependent variable or questionable capacity to explain what the dimension suggests (Note 6).

The time dummies did not show statistical significance. In the second model for 2014, the dimension “political dissatisfaction” weakened as an explanatory factor for social mobilizations compared to 2013. For the other years, the coefficients were not statistically significant. The analysis of the following models seems to suggest that this political dissatisfaction returned in 2015 with a new peak of discontent, given the positive and statistically significant interaction coefficient at 10% between that year and this dimension in the final model. For 2016, in turn, the level of discontent returned to that observed in 2013.

The interaction between leadership and the year 2014 is negative and statistically significant in the third model, reflecting the same phenomenon observed for the interaction between that year and the dimension of political dissatisfaction. This means that, compared to 2013, political leadership loses explanatory power in 2014. For 2015 and 2016, however, the coefficients are not statistically significant. In the other models, it is observed that political leadership gains substantial importance in 2016.

The fourth model, in turn, shows that “dissatisfaction with public services” has a similar explanatory power to 2013 for the years 2014 and 2015. From this perspective, there are signs of a continuity of mobilizing agendas between 2013 and 2016, while in this year, this dimension loses its explanatory power. In other words, the analysis undertaken here suggests that from 2013 to 2015, terms such as “MPL”, “FIFA Standard” and “Free Pass” seemed to characterize the mobilizations in the country and, in 2015, there was a new peak in terms of political dissatisfaction that changed the mobilizing agenda, given the statistical importance of the dimension on leadership in 2016.

Table 3. Comparative results

	Mobilization				
	Base Model	Mod_isat	Mod_lider_pol	Mod_serv_publi	Final Model
Political and institutional dissatisfaction	0.360 *** (0.075)	0.384 *** (0.132)	0.390 *** (0.073)	0.303 *** (0.078)	0.241 (0.184)
Political leadership	0.287 *** (0.073)	0.329 *** (0.072)	0.379 ** (0.146)	0.310 *** (0.078)	0.196 (0.248)
Dissatisfaction with public services	0.300 *** (0.069)	0.301 *** (0.074)	0.273 *** (0.078)	0.453 *** (0.121)	0.595 *** (0.224)
Dummy (2014)	-0.000 (0.148)	-0.000 (0.142)	-0.000 (0.140)	-0.000 (0.147)	-0.000 (0.134)
Dummy (2015)	-0.000 (0.148)	0.000 (0.142)	-0.000 (0.140)	-0.000 (0.147)	-0.000 (0.134)
Dummy (2016)	-0.000 (0.148)	-0.000 (0.142)	-0.000 (0.140)	-0.000 (0.147)	-0.000 (0.134)
Insat*2014		-0.434 *** (0.159)			-0.013 (0.233)
Insat*2015		0.248 (0.174)			0.380 * (0.219)
Insat*2016		0.059 (0.173)			-0.203 (0.238)
lider_pol*2014			-0.552 *** (0.164)		-0.284 (0.284)
lider_pol*2015			-0.008 (0.196)		0.165 (0.280)
lider_pol*2016			0.171 (0.162)		0.624 ** (0.282)
serv_publi*2014				-0.195 (0.230)	-0.128 (0.295)
serv_publi*2015				-0.054 (0.184)	-0.179 (0.258)
serv_publi*2016				-0.425 ** (0.178)	-0.751 *** (0.259)
Constant	0.000 (0.105)	0.000 (0.101)	0.000 (0.099)	0.000 (0.104)	0.000 (0.095)
Observations	208	208	208	208	208
R <sup>2</sup>	0.430	0.482	0.501	0.449	0.553
Adjusted R2	0.413	0.458	0.478	0.423	0.518
F statistic	25,318 ***	20,452 ***	22,073 ***	17,895 ***	15,807 ***

Note. \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01.

#### 4. Conclusion

All the effort put in here was intended to reach an answer to the question: why did Brazilians go to the streets? Data collected from Google searches show that between 2013 and 2015, the main mobilizing issue was, according to our terminology, dissatisfaction with public services. Although the words that make up this dimension suggest other interpretations for the determinants of social unrest, it is more certain that, in the Brazilian context, a mobilizing event is, in fact, a relevant channel for inciting protests – such as the increase in bus fares in 2013 and the World Cup in 2014.

From 2015 onwards, there was a change in the mobilizing agenda, leading us to the second factor that most easily mobilizes Brazilians: blaming individuals or institutions. Thus, based on the sample collected, it is possible to conclude that the thesis of the mobilizing event and blaming are those that best characterize the determinants of protests on a national scene.

Therefore, while the macroeconomic context and structural problems do not materialize in an event, person, institution or entity, the results obtained here seem to conclude that protests become a form of direct participation that is not preferred by Brazilians. Either because the costs of political action become higher, or because there is



difficulty in envisioning the social problems faced.

Future proposals for scientific studies may focus on the issues that led to this change in the mobilizing agenda, and it seems reasonable to assume that the public mobilized between 2015-2016 is not the public mobilized between 2013-2014.

This is the main limitation to our study at the same time that it was a methodological choice. We believe that the events that occurred in this period were so unique (major sport events, one related and one unrelated corrupted scandal and a Presidential Impeachment) that analyzing them in a longer time series might have made their importance – although limited to that time frame – fade. This also means that comparison to other countries becomes hard, as such an increase in government spending for temporary events is rare, especially in this level. This does not mean however, that a longer analysis should not be carried out and we leave this for future research, given that this is not the proposal of the work carried out here.

### Authors Contributions

Maria Luiza Campos was responsible for study design, data collection and data collection. Maria Luiza Campos and Márcio Alves were responsible for econometrics analysis. Dr. Andre Cabello was responsible for writing and revising the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## Notes

Note 1. Holston, James. "Come to the Street!": Urban Protest, Brazil 2013. *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 87, no. 3, p. 893, 894 and 895. 2014.

Note 2. We complement this work with the words used in the article by Bernandes De Moraes, T; SANTOS, R. Protests in Brazil. A study on web research and the case of the Brazilian Spring. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, vol. 9, no. 02, p. 193-206. December 2013.

Note 3. This justification was taken from the study by Calderol et al. (2015) and used the words chosen by

Moraes and Santos (2013).

Note 4. Wooldridge, J. Introduction to Econometrics: a modern approach. 6th edition. São Paulo: Cengage Learning, 2016.

Note 5. The dimension on public services in 2014 included the proposed *proxy* to capture the feeling of anger regarding poorly allocated public spending. It is possible that this “FIFA Standard” *proxy* corroborated this positive and statistically significant result.

Note 6. The influence of the term “MPL” on the variability of the dimension on social mobilizations may be more linked to the capacity for association than to dissatisfaction with public services per se. In this sense, associationism is more important to explain protests to the extent that being associated with a movement is what may in fact be prompting mobilizations – there may be dissatisfaction, but without association, there may not be an effort to protest. Thus, perhaps the best dimension to allocate the term MPL would be one that seeks to capture the effect of associationism on mobilizations and not dissatisfaction with public services.

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