

A large crowd of people at a protest, with a sign that reads "LIBERDADE NA FRIEDM". The image is high-contrast, with a dark background and bright highlights on the crowd and the sign.

**PATRIA, GOD,  
AND GUNS**  
AN ANALYSIS OF  
BRAZILIAN RIGHT-WING  
STREET PROTESTS FROM  
2013 TO 2021

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## KEYWORDS

extreme right, spectatorship, street protests, performance, theatricality

## PALAVRAS-CHAVES

extrema-direita, espectadores, manifestações de rua, performance, teatralidade

# SUMMARY

This article analyses the different cycles of street demonstrations that arose in Brazil between 2013 and 2021, especially those politically situated on 'the new Brazilian right' and 'the extreme right'. We attempt to identify different performances and theatrical strategies used in these protests through an approach that combines politics and performing arts. These events have played a central role in constructing the country's recent history. They endorsed critical political processes, acted in the discursive battle about these processes, and operated as a mechanism to encourage social adherence to conservative discourse. To understand the social and ideological functions of these protests, we examine how they explored theatricality to organise the spectator's gaze. These theatrical strategies projected strong and effective symbolic images around conservative agendas.

# RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa os diferentes ciclos de manifestações de rua que eclodiram no Brasil a partir de 2013, dando ênfase àqueles que se situam no espectro político da direita, denominada 'nova direita brasileira' e 'extrema-direita'. Através de uma abordagem construída pela aproximação entre política e artes cênicas, identificamos diferentes performances e estratégias teatrais usadas nesses protestos. Esses eventos exerceram um papel central na construção da história recente do país e corroboraram para a consolidação de importantes processos políticos, seja ao atuar na batalha narrativa acerca desses processos, seja ao operar como mecanismo de estímulo à adesão social. Para compreender as funções sociais e ideológicas presentes nesses protestos, investigamos de que modo esses grupos exploraram a teatralidade no intuito de organizar o olhar do espectador. Trata-se de estratégias que projetaram um imaginário simbólico forte e eficaz em torno de pautas conservadoras.

This article proposes a more detailed reflection on street demonstrations from the ‘right-wing’ in Brazil from 2013 to 2021. The aim of this essay is to analyse an ensemble of symbols used in these protests, seeking a deeper understanding of their meanings and of their strongest tendencies, interpreted here as three thematic cycles: ‘Patria’ (from 2014 to 2016), ‘God’ (from 2016 to 2017), and ‘Guns’ (since 2018). The division between these cycles is porous, as we considered the most often recurring symbols operated by the protesters in each period. All these symbols were constantly present at the performances in juxtaposition, but one theme gained more prominence and visibility in each of the cycles. If we see the demonstrators as performers, it is necessary to consider the semiotic constellation proposed by them. In this way, some of the questions raised by Kershaw (1997) about what social protests might signify in periods of crisis and how they may ‘embody their historical context through their location in identifiable traditions’ (257) are pertinent to the essay.

At the end of the 1970s, Brazil experienced a great and important cycle of protests, unprecedented within the military regime,<sup>1</sup> ranging from general strikes to the campaign for direct elections (during 1983 and 1984) and the promulgation of a new Constitution (1988). The main

1. From 1964 to 1985, the military forces established a tutelary regime in Brazil, imposing elected generals as presidents and installing indirect regional elections. Brazilian dictatorship served as a political model for other military regimes in the Southern Cone (Napolitano 2018).

protagonists of these movements were the lower-income and trade union sectors. In the following decades, the Brazilian left dominated political confrontations on the street, to a large extent thanks to organisations that had a solid mobilisation capacity, such as the Unified Workers' Central (CUT), Landless Workers Movement (MST), National Union of Students (UNE), and even the Workers' Party (Tatagiba 2018: 114). The Workers' Party (PT) years of federal administrations (from 2002 to 2016) allowed for the large-scale institutionalisation of various actors from these movements, disrupting their organisations of origin and disconnecting these actors from their bases.

In June 2013, a cycle of street protests broke out in Brazil, led by movements on the left of the political spectrum, wishing new forms of political representativity. These *Jornadas de Junho*<sup>2</sup> (*June Journeys*) also marked the beginning of a period of widespread political and social turbulence and the emergence of what is usually called the 'new Brazilian right' (Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco 2018; Solano, Ortellado, and Moretto 2017). The protests that arose after the *Jornadas de Junho* revealed a heterogeneous set of political forces opposed to Dilma Rousseff's Presidency and created a political crisis that contributed to her impeachment and the election of Jair Bolsonaro.

As Pierucci (1987) observed, being right-wing was perceived as shameful in the years that followed the end of the military regime. The right did not identify itself in this way because it was offended 'by its own name, a victim of their infamous positions' (38).<sup>3</sup> Voters and politicians alike found it difficult to define themselves as ideologically right-wing, avoiding radical stances and even placing themselves slightly to the left.

Understanding the right as internally diverse, Pierucci pointed out that the 'radical right' was the political group that most hid their positions, never presenting themselves as extremists: 'In Brazil, during the democratic transition, for politicians [...] it is certainly not very advisable to confess being right-wing. Worse yet of the extreme right' (Pierucci 1987: 38). However, since 2014, politicians and voters have fiercely defined themselves as being on the 'right', or as 'liberals', and made an effort to deepen the ideological fissure and the ontological opposition between themselves and 'leftists' or 'communists'.

During the years in question, street demonstrations and their reverberations on the social networks became the principal collective *loci* for making demands and, therefore, one of the major territories of political dispute in Brazil. The development of performances and theatrical strategies presented in different spaces, whether on the streets, social networks, or in the National Congress, accompanied these events. The different political sectors have explored various theatrical resources, such as the discourses, the choice of objects, effigies, slogans, choreographies, and iconic images to symbolise demands in public protests. In this way, these strategies have exercised a central role in the construction of the country's recent history, whether in helping to endorse political processes, acting in the discursive battle about these processes, or playing as mechanisms to stimulate social adhesion. The desire to propose this theoretical investigation is related to the need to contribute to a collective reflection on this socio-political movement through the prism of the arts, understanding them as a field of production of knowledge.

2. The *Jornadas de Junho* had pointed to the contestation of sporting events held in the country, such as the Confederations Cup (2013), the World Cup (2014), and to a lesser extent, the Olympic Games (2016).

3. We translated all the citations originally in Portuguese into English.

# Performativity/Theatricality/ Performance/Theatre

To understand the main strategies forged in the protests examined here, this research worked with the assumption that the fields of performativity and theatricality may contribute to the construction of specific angles to approach these phenomena. Furthermore, an expanded perspective on these concepts allows for an analysis of the uses and effects of the migration of these strategies from the sphere of the real to that of the virtual. Following Josette Féral (2015) as well as Féral and Bermingham (2002), theatricality is simultaneously understood as an action that organises the spectator's gaze and a domain that creates fictional distance, without which the spectator could intervene in what happens on stage. Theatricality is a process of self-perception of the spectator as a spectator of something; the recognition of a cleavage between the performance and the one who observes it. For Elizabeth Burns (1973: 33), theatricality exists in 'any kind of behaviour perceived and interpreted by other and described (mentally or explicitly) in theatrical terms', and this is particularly applicable to those behaviours composed according to conventions that are recognised as theatrical. Always political, theatricality for Diana Taylor (2003) 'flaunts its artifice, its constructedness' and 'strives for efficaciousness, not authenticity', highlighting the mechanics of the spectacle (13).

In each demonstration, the performers reactivate their demands at the same time as they align themselves with a pre-existing symbology. This constellation of codes must be understood by protesters and their audience (Kershaw 1997: 270). So, theatricality here also involves a 'stylization with aesthetic and self-referential dimensions of performance'

(Rai, Gluhovic, Jestrovic, and Seward 2021), establishing a set of references that are constantly tested on the streets. The analyses developed here will prioritise the understanding of the effects of the theatricality in these manifestations, through the analysis of symbologies and framings produced in each one of them. In accordance with the 'double reading' proposed by Féral (2015: 251),<sup>4</sup> our analysis will consider the 'performances', their constructed meanings (theatricality), and the political subjects involved in them (performativity).

In dialogue with the Performance Studies' field, Taylor presents an expansion of the analysis of the performance phenomenon, transforming it into a system/epistemology of expressive behaviour. For her, performances 'function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called "twice-behaved behaviour"' (2003: 2); as 'the object/process of analysis in performance studies' (2); as an epistemological framework; and as incorporated practice. In this way, we are framing the events described here *as performances*, observing what the performers do and how they show this doing. Street demonstrations need to be understood as performances where a form of expressivity emerges that is simultaneously individual and collective, aesthetically materialised by a complex ensemble of verbal and non-verbal signs articulated by protesters/performers. Here, theatrical strategies refer to the arrangement of this constellation of elements, intended to perform a set of claims, directing the viewer's gaze.

In demonstrations, the protestors share the public space as they embody their demands collectively. In these events, we have the bodily performativity that requests, not only with written and spoken words

4. Josette Féral's book *Além dos Limites* (2015) presents several excerpts that do not have yet a published version in English.

(linguistic performativity) but also through bodily actions and gestures: ‘it is not that bodily action and gesture have to be translated into language, but that both action and gesture signify and speak, as action and claim, and that the one is not finally extricable from the other’ (Butler 2011: 5). In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Judith Butler (2015) addresses the question and the urgent necessity of making alliances between various minorities or populations considered disposable. Understanding how precarity operates in regimes of appearance, Butler also examines how the idea of ‘the people’ is constituted through public space. The bodily performativity of the demonstrations observed in this article was guided by a logic of confrontation, with an explicit desire to act directly in society (by removing a president or by the annulment of artists and authors). In the right-wing assemblies analysed here, the bodies assumed ‘full access and rights of appearance’ (Butler 2015: 8) in the streets. The examples here reiterate Butler’s proposition showing which bodies are understood and defined as ‘the people’ by various power structures, such as the police and the press.

In this sense, we understand the streets as a territory of continuous experimentation, where performances and theatrical strategies by various political groups are constantly created, tested, and restaged, always taking into account their ‘virtual’ impact on social media. As collective performances, street demonstrations propose a multiplication (or fragmentation) of the spectators’ attention, since every demonstrator is also a performer of their demands. Occasionally, they can have a centrality of focus, provided by an ephemeral ‘stage’, such as the podium, sound car, or high-profile objects. Effective strategies for capturing focus at times need considerable financial investment. As we will see, far from being part of a spontaneous creation, some of these strategies were conceived by political marketing and advertising professionals.

Once protesters appropriate the public space in a non-quotidian way, deliberately expressing their demands or simply uttering their revolt, to whom do they direct the performance? Who would be their final spectators? It seems that the onlookers, those for whom the performance is intended, would be outside the event. However, it is difficult to define precisely who these onlookers might be. Indeed, in our examples, the performances searched for ways to spread their claims through their amplification by the mainstream press coverage and social networks replication. The protesters virtualised their presence on their Facebook timelines, while the press coverage validated and valorised their participation.

## The Demonstrations during Dilma Rousseff’s Government

From the beginning of 2014 until the hosting of the World Cup in the same year, various protests were organised throughout the country with the slogan: ‘If we do not have rights, there will be no World Cup’ (Barros 2014). Ideologically close to the *Jornadas de Junho*, these demonstrations confronted the PT administration with the inconsistencies between the holding of the World Cup (which would be followed by the Olympic Games two years later in Rio de Janeiro) and the social improvements promised and not carried out during the organisation of these events.

In June 2014, left-wing social movements called for demonstrations on social networks. The protests were violently repressed by the gendarmerie (or *Polícia Militar*) in the states, as in the previous year. The cycles of protests between 2013 and 2014 confronted the Rousseff Government with dissatisfaction primarily related to the precariousness of public services in large Brazilian cities and the hefty public

investment in these events. At this moment, the national flag and other national symbols could regularly be seen in the demonstrations and were identified with individuals who were often neophytes in these events, generally without any previous participation in social movements. As on the macro-global scale, collective action was ‘based on fluid and personalised engagements, mediated through digital communication and suspicious of traditional institutions’ (Domingues 2019: iv).<sup>5</sup>

A tacit expression of a profound crisis of political representativity, as well as the limits of the conciliatory class policy of the PT administrations,<sup>6</sup> these cycles of protests have produced a multivocal and non-consensual academic interpretation. Without focusing exceedingly on this discussion, we tend to agree with the analysis of Tatagiba and Galvão, who state that both the sectors which requested the progression of social reforms and those which intended to restore the *status quo* emerged from the 2013 protests (Tatagiba and Galvão 2019: 65–6).

Also in 2014 were the first protests of *Vem Pra Rua* (Come to the Streets), in which people frustrated about the election results carried banners saying ‘PT Out’, among others. In the months which followed and until Rousseff was impeached in 2016, the demonstrations grew in volume and became the most expressive protests in the history of the country. In this interim, the investigations of Operation Lava Jato,<sup>7</sup> whose actions synchronised institutional and extra-institutional arenas, above all sectors from the national press, collaborated to create an intense anti-*Petista*

5. This should not be understood in a definitive manner. The interviewees who saw themselves as ‘non-left’ in the work of Domingues, for example, were connected to the PSDB, the *Partido Social-Democrata Brasileiro*, or Brazilian Social Democratic Party.

6. The class conciliation policy promoted by the PT during its mandates (2002–5 and 2006–9 with Lula, and 2010–15 with Rousseff) consisted of the maintenance of a neoliberal economic policy and the expansion of social policies.



FIGURE 1

feeling in the population. The demonstrators expressed this sentiment through criticism of corruption scandals and the urgent demand for the moralisation of politics. In these demonstrations,<sup>8</sup> some actions from previous protests appeared, such as face-painting (Fig. 1), notably in green and yellow, reworking the performance of the *cara-pintadas* from the movement for the impeachment of President Fernando Collor in 1992.<sup>9</sup>

From 2015, inflatable puppets emerged, and the inanimate characters *Pato da FIESP* (Fig. 2), ‘Pixuleco’ and ‘Bandilma’ (Fig. 3) gained notoriety, with the latter two being parodies of the former PT President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva and the then-President Dilma Rousseff. The inflatable puppets proved to be an effective strategy for capturing the fragmented focus of the protests. The *Pato da FIESP*, a twenty-two-metre Yellow Duck, became an icon, at first neutral, apolitical, installing a peaceful action, seeking a playful and childish interaction with the passing public. In effect, the FIESP’s Yellow Duck was an itinerant



FIGURE 2

performance that marked a fundamental counterpoint to the demonstrations up to that time, in which police violence was a constant. It was part of a more extensive and expensive campaign that encompassed other actions, sponsored by the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP) and conceived by a well-known political marketing agency the Prole. In turn, the creation of ‘Pixuleco’ responded to a very concrete problem: between the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, the number of street protesters decreased considerably. Consequently, the publicist Paulo Gusmão created this character to fill the streets (Kaz 2015), replacing the presence of the protesters with the puppet, which was reproduced in different scales.

← 7. Operation Lava Jato (Car Wash) was an extensive criminal investigation led by the Brazilian Federal Police branch in Curitiba. Between 2014 and 2019, the investigation implicated executive members and business people from major Brazilian companies and politicians: former Presidents, federal deputies, senators, and state governors, including PT members.

8. The documentation of the iconography of the *Jornadas de Junho* and the protests against the World Cup is abundant. Our main sources of analysis were the collection of *Mídia Ninja*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Estado de S. Paulo*, and *O Tempo* newspapers, and the G1 website.

9. *Cara-pintadas* may be translated as ‘the painted faces’. The action of painting the face in the colours of the Brazilian flag and in black, adding the slogans ‘Out’ or ‘Out Collor’ became the most iconic expressive strategy of the protests for the impeachment of the former President Fernando Collor. In 1989, Fernando Collor de Mello was the first President democratically elected after the military dictatorship. Accusations of political corruption culminated in the process of impeachment approved by the Chamber of Deputies, in September 1992. Collor resigned from the Presidency of the Republic, hours before being convicted by the Senate. For further information, see, <http://memoria.oglobo.globo.com/fotos/caras-pintadas-contra-collor-9430223>. [accessed 24 September 2021].



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

Also evident were performers using red clown noses (Fig. 4) and politicians masks (Fig. 5, 6, and 7), and even the partial (topless) and total nudity of women, above all in protests on Avenida Paulista, in São Paulo.<sup>10</sup> Equally, since the beginning of the protests, there were initiatives materialised in posters calling for ‘Military Intervention Now!’, ‘SOS Army Forces’, ‘Vote Bolsonaro 2018’<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 8 and 9; also written in English), trucks with loudspeakers (Fig. 10), and protesters wearing military uniforms. These protests, which identified themselves as ‘peaceful’, would modify the relationship with the police forces chosen to accompany these events. Behaviour involving mutual appreciation between protesters and the police would become common: reciprocal praise, applauding the police, and especially taking photos with the forces of order. In radical opposition to the relationship between the



FIGURE 5

police and participants in the previous demonstrations, the protesters were even allowed to take pictures inside vehicles with police officers. Parades of truckers and motorbikes, which would become constant from 2018, were also present occasionally, as well as complimentary references to the Brazilian Empire.

← 10. The FolhaPress album of the demonstrations from 15 March 2015 is available here: <https://fotografia.folha.uol.com.br/galerias/nova/33420-protestos-de-15-de-marco#foto-441449> [accessed 24 September 2021]. The one from one year later, 13 March 2016, here: <https://fotografia.folha.uol.com.br/galerias/42594-manifestacao-vista-do-alto-pelo-brasil#foto-536027> [accessed 24 September 2021].

← 11. Like many politicians elected in 2018, Bolsonaro used the protests against Dilma Rousseff to increase media visibility. He participated in several demonstrations and was invited to give speeches on the podium. As a controversial character, he was sometimes booed, sometimes applauded.

FIGURE 6



FIGURE 8



FIGURE 7



FIGURE 9



FIGURE 10



# The Patria in Football Boots: The Activist Supporter

However, there is a moment when everyone remembers Brazil, when 90 million Brazilians discover Brazil. Here is the miracle of the team. Apart from the left, who think football is the opium of the people, apart from the left, I say, all the other Brazilians gather around the national team. It is thus a pretext, a source of self-esteem. Moreover, each victory compensates the people for the old frustrations, the scars that have never healed. (Rodrigues 1993: 181)

None of the elements described seemed as iconic as the Brazilian football shirt, whether from the CBF (Brazilian Football Confederation) or other versions (Fig. 11). Nelson Rodrigues, a journalist, playwright, and one of the best columnists on Brazilian football, saw the national team, *a seleção*, as a ‘political community’ materialised and corporified in signs which represented ‘the ties of belonging and solidarity which unite their members, despite the conflicts which exist between them’ (Silva 1998: 108). The Brazilian flag, the national anthem, and the team uniform are the symbols used and superimposed during international football competitions. Nationalism is the most apparent recursive theme of the political ideologies that ‘emerge in the game’ and which ‘are part of the game’, according to Flores (1982). In these events, an almost ‘national union’ is achieved ‘around the team representing all Brazilians, defining Brazil as something monolithic and univocally representable’ (Flores 1982: 49). Thus, profoundly present in football are: nationalism — providing the illusion of the nation and erasing divergences and disputes; paternalism — the illusion of just and kind relations between club directors and supporters; and populism — ‘the illusion of the exercise of power’, as the supporter ‘seems to influence



FIGURE 11

the results of the matches through their actions in the stands’ (Flores 1982: 49). However, in football, neither the rules of the game nor the referee, who stands for the highest authority on the pitch, are replaced or eliminated by their actions.

In 2013, Marcelo Falcão, from the reggae-rock group O Rappa, sang the verses, ‘Come to the streets/Because the streets are the largest bleachers in Brazil’ in a commercial for the carmaker Fiat. The country lived a moment of national and international relevance, thanks to the Confederations Cup and the World Cup (Almeida, Barreto, and Cunha 2017). One year later, after a traumatising Brazilian defeat in the Mineirão Stadium and Rousseff’s victory in the elections of the

same year, the protests changed their protagonists and began to massively incorporate the national colours. Months afterwards, Falcão's refrain became the name of Vem Pra Rua (Come to the streets), one of the movements which most organised protests for the impeachment, alongside Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL; Free Movement Brazil) and, to a lesser extent, Revoltados Online (Online Rebels).

It seems possible to describe this type of a protester as a 'supporter'. On the streets, these individuals came to perform the repertoire of actions used in football stadiums: singing the national anthem, dressing in the colours of the Brazilian flag, creating slogans, establishing an adversary team, wielding horns, and chanting war songs. They, thus, restored behaviour outside of their *locus* of origin, incorporating it into the street demonstrations. Roberto Da Matta, one of the anthropologists who most dedicated themselves to thinking about the social function of football in Brazil, has stated that as a great and multivocal event, between sport and art, between business and religion, football is 'a spectacle of great visual and auditive seduction, as well as, as "fans", we are active actors of a spectacle in an open space' (Da Matta 1994: 15). Between an individual and their team, profound symbolic and social ties are established, which create the figure of the 'supporter', 'the one who supports, twists and moves their body for this team to be a winner' (15). For Da Matta, in a reading of the country in the 1980s, but which still seems relevant for our discussion, state and society are only brought together through football (1982).

By appropriating the team uniform, a shirt that amalgamates allegiance to the nationhood, the demonstrators reaffirmed and adjusted the notions of nation and patria, which in turn are not extensively appropriated by the left — constantly attentive to their contradictions and asymmetries. This begs the important question of the capacity of the national symbols for mobilisation, which move collective affections that

are denser than the flags of trade unions, for example, so dear to the political expressiveness of the left.

The left in a general manner, and the Workers' Party in a specific form, is given the place of the opposing team. The street becomes the stadium and the arena for its 'supporters'/citizens, and their repertoires are used in the political confrontation which takes place in the demonstrations: establishing their own field, 'my team is my country', and an antagonistic field, 'the PT', 'the *Petistas*', 'communists', 'the *mortadellas*',<sup>12</sup> 'the reds', since 'my flag will never be red'.<sup>13</sup> In the demonstrations, many performances displayed symbolic violence to the opposing team; the protesters bit or burned *Partido dos Trabalhadores*' flags and carried on the streets decapitated or hanged images of former PT Presidents. These actions were expressive forms of *antipetismo*, a socio-political movement characterised by rejection and hatred of the Party. The country's large media corporations and posts on social networks contributed to the aggressiveness expressed in the streets: 'This cognitive and emotional mechanism had significant implications for recruitment and for the characteristics of the social mobilisation in the impeachment campaign, which assumed the form of a moral crusade, represented in the struggle of good ("us") against evil ("them")' (Tatagiba 2018: 124).

Like in a World Cup final, Brazil stopped during the vote on the continuation of the impeachment process of Dilma Rousseff in the Chamber of Deputies, on Sunday 17 April 2016. Large screens were put up in various parts of the country for each of the adversarial groups. Television channels adapted their regular schedules, especially Globo, which asked football federations to alter the dates of football games to

12. *Mortadella* is an Italian cold cut. This term is pejoratively used to describe left-wing militants. During PT events, a bread and *mortadella* sandwich was usually served to the militants as a low-cost snack.

13. All these expressions were commonly present in posters at the demonstrations.



FIGURE 12

Saturday 16 April (Pacheco 2016). In Brasilia, the Esplanade of Ministries was divided by a metallic wall that separated the two antagonistic fields, those in favour and those opposed to the President's removal (Fig. 12). On this Sunday without football, the Brazilians who were watching the voting on television saw transplanted to the Chamber of Deputies many of the performances and theatrical strategies found in the streets and stadiums: state flags tied around the necks of deputies covering their bodies like capes, the use of confetti, posters saying *'Tchau querida'* (Bye dear) and 'There will be no Coup' (Fig. 13), small 'Pixuleco' puppets, shirts of the Brazilian football team (Fig. 14). Attempts were made to accommodate the symbolic colourimetry of the stadiums/streets on the suits of the deputies in the form of ornaments (scarves and flags), highlighting in their costumes governmental and non-governmental realms. In a ceremony where words *acted* and were



FIGURE 13

performative, in the sense given by Austin (1962), each 'yes' and 'no' decided the destiny of the country, each time they were spoken by the deputies. In the Chamber of Deputies and outside it, each vote was celebrated as a 'goal' in a football game. Just before the uttering of the last vote necessary for concluding the majority favourable to the impeachment, the deputies sang the verses of a well-known Brazilian supporters' chant: 'I am Brazilian with great pride, with great love'.

Many of the votes, both on the left and the right, gained resonance. However, the vote of the then deputy Jair Messias Bolsonaro stood out, since he was accused of praising and making an apology for torture: 'They lost in '64, and they will lose now in 2016. For the family and for the innocence of children in classrooms, which they never had under the PT. Against communism, for our freedom. Against the Forum of



FIGURE 14

São Paulo. In the memory of Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the terror of Dilma Rousseff. For the Army of Caxias, for our Armed Forces'<sup>14</sup> (Poder 360 2016). Until this moment, he had addressed himself to the audience in the Congress, in other words, his fellow deputies. In uttering his last words, he turned to the camera transmitting the event and spoke to the viewers: 'For a Brazil above everything and a God above everyone, my vote is yes'. This would become his slogan in the 2018 presidential campaign. The same night, commenting on the event, he summarised the session: 'We have the ball. What is of interest is the Brazil of today, the green and yellow Brazil, ours, of the good people, the real workers, we won the first half: 1–0 to us, ok?'.<sup>15</sup>

As a system, football helps us to understand the intertwining of the players that acted during the impeachment process of former President Rousseff in several instances: the political, judicial, and economic, having the protesters as the representation of the crowd, elevated to the synonym of 'the people'. Kershaw (1997) draws our attention to the synecdoche character of demonstrations, which was particularly used by the press to define the performers/protesters. Demonstrations from the left were also numerous throughout this period (and even after). However, the mainstream media did not designate their protesters as 'the people' but 'allies of Dilma and Lula'. By defining frames and the appearance of the protesters, as well their overexposure, the mainstream media contributed to the definition of 'the people': 'If people are constituted through a complex interplay of performance, image, acoustics, and all the various technologies engaged in those productions, then

14. An infamous torturer, the Colonel in question was the only member of the Brazilian army to be condemned for crimes of torture during the military dictatorship. He was one of the torturers of the former President Dilma Rousseff.

15. The left-wing deputy Jean Wyllys's vote also gained notoriety during the session, in contrast with Bolsonaro's. After voting, Wyllys reacted to Bolsonaro's homophobic offences by spitting on him (Marinho 2016).

"media" is not just reporting who the people claim to be, but media has entered into the very definition of the people' (Butler 2015: 20). The triangulation of focus between the protesters and institutions (judiciary and legislative powers), against the enemies, established an economy of visibility. For the protesters/performers, this regime created the sense of activism, cohesion, and community provided by the demonstrations.

## Performative Platforms: From the Streets to the Networks

Since the *Jornadas de Junho*, but especially since the demonstrations in 2015 to 2016, there can be clearly observed a migration from the performative territory on the streets to the social networks. As contents generate action, engagement, or hate, mobilising another audience in the virtual world, we understand them as performatives (Ertzscheid 2018), as are the platforms that host them. The toxic algorithm structure of Facebook, which was the leading platform used in this period along with YouTube, favours the interaction of users with hate and controversial content. Between the streets and the mobile phones, the content was framed, edited, commented upon, and decontextualised, acquiring new and diverse meanings. What happened on the streets became the 'primary source' for creating GIFs, memes, and short videos, appearing in publications on Facebook and WhatsApp groups discussions.

In this way, social networks operated as a performative sphere where the content could acquire a more expansive dimension than that observed on the streets, as it may be distorted, edited, and replicated (Ladeira 2020), multiplying its audience. The performative strategies of the 'new right' evolved radically on the digital performative platforms.<sup>16</sup>

# God and Family in the Moral Crusade of Brazil's Extreme Right

Reframed on social media, the street performances were restaged in the digital world. They returned in the subsequent demonstrations confirmed, reformulated, or eliminated. In this sense, measuring the success or failure of a demonstration is a crucial point in the networks. How can it be established if a demonstration was really successful or expressive, thereby reiterating the power of confirmation and legitimation? Proof is given *a posteriori*, through documentation, at times, photographic manipulation,<sup>17</sup> and the reaction that the demonstration was able to create on the social networks. Re-framing and modifying documents is central to social networks' functioning: applying photo filters for posting is one banal example of this operation. An event such as a protest proposes a plethora of documents, like photos and videos, that may be potentially used and reframed in the digital sphere.

Thus, the emergence of new political actors during this period, notably coming from the already mentioned movements, such as the MBL and Vem Para a Rua, likewise, the increasing mediatisation of conservative politicians, such as Jair Bolsonaro, was due to the emergence of well-articulated content creation structures, and the strategic and financed use of social media.

The main request that until then promoted some 'unity' in the conservative sectors was achieved with the impeachment of Rousseff in 2016. It was necessary to build new mechanisms to maintain great adherence to the conservative agenda. In this context, one of the themes which most gained support and public visibility in the pre-election years was the defence of religious morality and values associated with the traditional conception of the family. The year 2017 was especially emblematic for the consolidation of these themes in the Brazilian public sphere, as the similar profile of protests gained evidence in various state capitals throughout the country. In common, there was a continuous attempt to censor shows, performances, art exhibitions, or even academic debates by associating these events with practices such as 'paedophilia' and 'zoophilia' or ideas such as 'gender ideology' and 'cultural Marxism'.

Among the examples, we can mention attempts (in some cases successful ones) at censoring exhibitions such as *QueerMuseu* (Porto Alegre/Rio Grande do Sul) and *Faça você mesmo a sua Capela Sistina* (*Make Your Own Sistine Chapel*), by the artist Pedro Moraleida (Belo Horizonte/Minas Gerais); performances and theatre shows such as *O Evangelho Segundo Jesus, Rainha do Céu* (*The Gospel According to Jesus, Queen of Heaven*), written by Jo Clifford and starring by Renata Carvalho;

← 16. The article cited here 'Le corps féminin en performance: Une étude de cas des mouvements #elenão et #elesim' proposes a case study on the political use of women's bodies at the 2018 election campaign and the migration of the performative territory from the streets to the social networks during this period. The relationship between social media and performativity is a vast subject, imbricating diverse discursive arenas and private corporations' financial interests. It is also difficult to establish a global analysis of the Brazilian case, since from 2013 to 2018, for example, the creation of content and its association with different digital platforms took place differently depending on the group. The MBL, for example, created a professional video production structure. However, we may stand that, between 2013 and 2014, different digital strategies were being experienced, and a large audience was also migrating from traditional media to the social networks.

← 17. The publication of photos on social networks is one way of proving its success. In social networks, we may observe diverse photographic strategies searching for the most effective angle of a demonstration. The usual selection favours pictures where a significant number of people are present and where the landscape perspective emphasises this extension.

*La Bête (The Beast)*, by Wagner Schwartz; and *DNA de DAN (DNA of DAN)*, by Maikon K; or even Judith Butler's lecture in Brazil.<sup>18</sup> These protests became emblematic marks for the consolidation of a common conservative social field, which culminated in the election of Jair Bolsonaro the following year.

Although they occurred in different regions of the country, the protests had similar characteristics regarding their performative-discursive construction. Promoting visibility through a spectacular effect associated with a moral scandal was shown to be one of the most successful strategies of gaining support for these subjects. In addition, this strategy helped to strengthen neoliberal and conservative movements such as the MBL and to advance the candidacy of various politicians for the 2018 elections. As the philosopher Marcia Tiburi (2019) commented, words such as 'child' and 'paedophilia' became devices to produce effects of shock and achieve the 'mental and affective, moral and political manipulation useful for the moment' (para. 43).

The main agendas and slogans associated with the 2017 street protests were not exactly 'new' — they were drawn from a vast history of protests led by conservative movements worldwide. Nevertheless, the unprecedented visibility and adhesion achieved in the period demonstrate that the strategy of associating the progressive field with the idea of 'promiscuity' and 'the apology for homosexuality' was highly effective.<sup>19</sup> In the analysis of the sociologist Richard Miskolci (2018), the

moral crusade pushed by conservative sectors in Brazil was the fruit of a successful alliance between groups who defended neoliberal economics (such as MBL) and 'historical moral entrepreneurs (such as the Catholic Church and followers of evangelical religions)' (12). Miskolci highlights the importance of observing that the so-called conservative 'moral crusade' had been gestated for more than two decades. As an example, he goes back to the genealogy of the term 'gender ideology', created by the Catholic Church, and the phrase 'kit gay', initially spread by politicians who came to power in 2018, such as President Jair Bolsonaro (Miskolci 2018: 5). The development of these agendas in 2017 can be related to practices that have been widely tested among various sectors of Brazilian society. This points to the more systematic nature of this action, in opposition to the supposed spontaneity the protests seemed to project.

## The Theatrical Dimension of Conservative Protests in 2017

In order to understand how the theatrical elements were used to gain visibility and adhesion for conservative agendas in Brazil in 2017, we will analyse two street protests of that year through the concept of 'theatricality'. For Taylor, theatricality 'capture[s] the constructed, all-encompassing sense of performance' (2003: 13). In other words, it 'sustains a scenario, a paradigmatic setup that relies on supposedly live participants, structured around a schematic plot, with an intended (though adaptable) end' (13). She understands theatricality as an element of any performance, related to the term 'theatrical scenario' (13–14).

18. In November 2017, the feminist philosopher attended the International Colloquium 'The Ends of Democracy', an event with the participation of other renowned intellectuals in São Paulo.

19. For further references to the relationship between art and censorship under religious allegations in the recent history of Brazil, see: <https://gauchazh.clicrbs.com.br/cultura-e-lazer/artes/noticia/2017/09/cancelamento-da-queermuseu-conheca-outros-casos-de-confrontos-entre-arte-e-censura-em-porto-alegre-9894213.html> [accessed 21 November 2021].

Using the example of the ‘colonial encounter’, Taylor highlights that ‘we could also look to scenarios as meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviours, and potential outcomes’ (28). One of the purposes of these scenarios is to make ‘visible, yet again, what is already there: the ghosts, the images, the stereotypes’ (28). Our decision to use the terms ‘theatricality’ and ‘theatrical scenario’ in this context is related to the purpose of understanding them as planned strategies with a political finality. In many cases, these protests were created to make visible some ‘ghosts’ and ‘stereotypes’ linked to polemical and sensible subjects in Brazil, and to gather attention to emerging politicians.

The first street demonstration that we examined was held in Palácio das Artes Cultural Centre (Belo Horizonte) on distinct dates in October 2017 and involved around four hundred people protesting against the exhibition *Faça você mesmo a sua Capela Sistina (Make Your Own Sistine Chapel)*,<sup>20</sup> by Pedro Moraleida (1977–1999). On 4 October, the then councillor Jair Di Gregório (Progressives Party; PP) posted a video on social networks in which he falsely accused teachers from public schools of bringing students to the exhibition, which had an over-18 classification and presented paintings that referred to Christian symbols and sex (Pró-vida e Família 2017). The video rapidly went viral on social networks and became the primary stimulus for different protests held in front of Palácio das Artes in the following days.

Based on the first action which preceded the protest, it is possible to observe that the transit between the real and virtual space is central to understanding the theatrical nature of these acts. Here the notion

20. Make Your Own Sistine Chapel is a drawing series made in 1997 to 1998, before the suicide of Brazilian artist Pedro Moraleida Bernardes in 1999. Some themes of his artworks are the complexity of questions about religion and the forms of expression of sexuality, linked to the intricacy of the relationship between power, politics, and ideology.

of ‘framing’, discussed by Féral (2015), in dialogue with Erving Goffman, contributes to the understanding of the protests’ adherence strategies. In the context of conservative protests in Brazil, the transposition of the physical to the digital environment (through social network posts) accompanies a framing created by a narrative construction — often organised with false information, which is legitimated by the existence of videos and photos — and, consequently, the idea of transforming the *event into a sign*. This is not an artistic sign, but the construction of a plethora of images charged with fictionality, in which signifiers such as ‘children’, ‘art’, and ‘school’ emerge together to construct a common phantasmagoria related to paedophilia. In the case of the councillor’s video, a soundtrack was also included to create an effect of commotion associated with the supposed denunciation.

After the dissemination of the video, the first wave of protests against the exhibition was called by Leonardo Alvim de Melo, pastor of the Evangelical Community Projeto Viver (Ceprovi). While at the first demonstration (held on 5 October) there were around fifty demonstrators, the following protests had much more significant numbers, with three to four hundred people in each of them. Increasingly theatrical, the protests on 10 and 13 October had more heterogeneous groups, formed by ‘evangelicals, Catholics, groups organised for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, young people from Direita Minas<sup>21</sup> and supporters of Bolsonaro’ (Simões 2017: para. 1). In the posters and slogans, the exhibition was associated with practices such as ‘zoophilia’, ‘paedophilia’, and ‘Christophobia’.

Among the actions observed, the main one was the saying the ‘Our Father’ prayer in front of Palácio das Artes (Rádio Itatiaia 2017).

21. Created in 2016 in Minas Gerais, the movement defends the ‘return to traditional family values’ and ‘economic liberalism’.



FIGURE 15

On their knees, holding candles, crosses, bibles, and an image of the Virgin Mary (as well as mobile phones), the protesters carried out a performance with considerable visual impact on one of the main avenues in the city (Fig. 15). Besides the performance itself, the reaction of progressive sectors contributed to propel and expand the visibility of these protests. Also constructed through symbolic elements (such as the use of duct tape over protesters' mouths to symbolise censorship and silencing), the demonstrations in defence of art, and the critics against censorship attempts, ended drawing even more attention to the initial protests, due to the conflictive dimension that the presence of demonstrators from the progressive field brought to the incident.

An analogous antagonistic scenario appears on 7 November 2017, outside the Sesc Pompeia Cultural Centre in São Paulo, against the



FIGURE 16

participation of the American philosopher Judith Butler in the colloquium 'The Ends of Democracy', organised by the University of São Paulo in conjunction with the University of California. Compared to the demonstration we analysed above, this protest was smaller in numbers — there were around seventy people in total. However, because of the radicality of the confrontation between those who defended and attacked Butler and the high degree of theatricality constructed by the conservative protestors (as well as the importance associated with the name of the US philosopher), the demonstration had great repercussions in the press and social networks, not just in Brazil but also abroad.

In analysing the elements (like posters and objects) present in the protests against Butler's coming to Brazil, one aspect that caught our attention was the heterogeneity of the 'flags' gathered there. In addition



FIGURE 17

to posters most directly related to the reason of the protest, with the phrases ‘Go to Hell’ or those opposed to ‘gender ideology’, criticism was also directed at other targets, whose relationship with Butler was, at the very least, tenuous (Fig. 16 and 17). These ranged from institutions such as the UN and UNESCO to two former presidents from rival parties in Brazilian politics: Lula (PT) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (PSDB) (Fig. 18). The symbolic miscellany also included flags of Brazil and Israel, clothing and discourses demanding the return of the monarchy in Brazil, protests against Venezuela and Cuba, T-shirts calling for military intervention, as well as the habitual crosses and bibles (Fig. 19).

As the anthropologist Letícia Cesarino (2019) indicates, one of the elements which helps to understand the profound reorganisation in the



FIGURE 18

political and identity fields in Brazil in this period is the notion of the ‘fractal person’. Cesarino notes that one of the most successful aspects of the Bolsonaro campaign in 2018 consisted in exploiting on social networks, and taking advantage of the logic of the latter’s algorithms, an identitarian conception based on an ‘infinite fragmentation of identitarian “pieces” which can be linked and gain scale in [...] chains of equivalence — notably through populist-type representation’ (2019: 548). Although this refers to the digital strategies of *bolsonarismo*, it can be noted that the symbology constellation present in the protests against Butler materialised the ‘potentially interminable chain of equivalencies’ (Laclau 2005: 205) that characterises the so-called ‘populist reason’. According to Laclau (2005), the emergence and expansion of ‘popular identities’ only becomes possible when the heterogeneity of their demands leads to some form of unity through ‘equivalent political articulations’ (229–30).



FIGURE 19

What is observed in the theatricality of symbolic heterogeneity present in the demonstrations against Butler is the effectiveness of the agenda linked to moral and sexual questions in propelling a series of chains of equivalencies indirectly associated with them. The *antipetismo*, linked to the repudiation of international human rights institutions, such as the UN and UNESCO, or even the traditional political class (symbolised by the former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso), were gathered as common enemies against broad and relatively generic categories, such as ‘God’ and ‘Family’. These are signifiers which are still exploited by President Jair Bolsonaro in his governmental slogans and speeches.

In the name of God and the Family, the protests against Judith Butler coming to Brazil had an outcome worthy of the well-known ‘cathartic effect’ associated with the dramatic genre in its most traditional form. In addition to posters with the image of Butler alongside phrases such as ‘Go to Hell’ and ‘No Paedophilia’, the protesters carried a large cloth figure dressed in a bra, a witch’s hat, and the face of the philosopher, which was burned at the end of the protest (TV Estadão 2017). As well as returning to the practices of the Catholic Church during the Inquisition — which calls attention again to the construction of a ‘scenario’ (Taylor 2003) during the protest — the performance explored the strategy of fictionalising adversaries, based on the phantasmatic recreation of its opponents. Not by chance, Butler’s text which reflected on reactions about the visit to Brazil gained the title of the ‘Phantasm of Gender’ (Butler 2017). The phantasmatic dimension was associated with the connections of gender theory with notions such as ‘paedophilia’ or even ‘ideology’.

It is thus possible to infer that the strategic use of theatricality in the 2017 protests helped not only to consolidate the Brazilian conservative field but also to expand its scope. Through the above-cited strategies, the path was opened for the construction of that electoral majority which, in the following year, consecrated Jair Bolsonaro as President of the Republic.

While finishing this essay, we found ourselves facing the expressive convocations for national public protests on 7 September 2021, called by President Jair Bolsonaro. A national holiday, this day celebrates the Brazilian Independence Day from Portugal, and thus a series of civic ceremonies are annually held both by the states and the Federal state. However, this year the traditional military parade was not held in Brasília, the country’s capital, and official ceremonies were reduced because of the pandemic. In their place, various protests were held all over Brazil, convoked and led by the President himself, focusing on anti-democratic agendas, including threats of intervention in the Federal Supreme Court.

Since taking office, Bolsonaro has encouraged and motivated various agglomerations and protests, such as motorbike parades and public appearances holding boxes of chloroquine.<sup>22</sup> In this way, thinking about the recent expressive set of street protests in Brazil, we can observe a fundamental change: until 2018, the prominent supporters of protests from the right were clearly entities and groups such as Vem Para a Rua, MLB, Revoltados On-line, and so many others. Today, the call for and organisation of protests is deliberately carried out by the President of the Republic himself, directing it to his most loyal and fanatical supporters, those willing ‘to die for Brazil’ and defending ‘constitutional military intervention’.

It is not our intention to analyse comprehensively the demonstrations which occurred after the election of Bolsonaro. Nevertheless, it is important to briefly recover them in order to trace an iconographic,

<sup>22</sup> Since the beginning of the pandemic, Bolsonaro defended the use of chloroquine for the treatment of Covid-19. This is a controversial stance, as there is no scientific evidence on the effectiveness of chloroquine for this disease.

performative, and conceptual trajectory of the main symbols which the ‘new right’ (now re-baptised as ‘extreme right’) has imposed in Brazil since 2015. Although a central characteristic of conservative protests is the profusion of diffuse agendas, brought together in ‘equivalent political articulations’ (Laclau 2005) typical of populist-type political strategies, it is possible to trace some dominant tendencies in different periods of the historical trajectory in recent protests in the country.

The first tendency, named under the signifier ‘Patria’, can be identified as the dominant sign of the right-wing demonstrations carried out between 2013 and 2016. Drawing on the typical behaviour of conservative nationalism (in Brazil, exploited, for example, during the Military Dictatorship with slogans such as ‘Brazil: love it or leave it’), the protests became progressively more green and yellow, the colours of the Brazilian flag. In the wake of various types of discontentment within the country, the rhetoric of ‘Patria’ was sufficiently broad to meet a heterogeneity of protests without necessarily having to conform to a specific ideological configuration. In this context, the figure of the protestor/supporter became emblematic for understanding the protests’ theatricality and how the polarisation between the conservative and the progressive sectors was constructed in this period. Even today, the rhetoric of the ‘Patria’ is a central element of the Government’s communication, and all its publicity must contain the phrase ‘Beloved country, Brazil’ (*Pátria Amada, Brasil*).

The second tendency visible in the protests of the period, whose keywords are equally stamped in Bolsonaro’s governmental slogans, emphasised the signifiers ‘God’ and ‘Family’. For these protesters, the country needed to be rescued from the forces that had degenerated it, such as the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, and pursuing common enemies continued to shape unity around their heterogeneous demands. The ‘moral crusade’ — also widely exploited during the Brazilian military dictatorship — appeared highlighted by new concepts, such as ‘gender ideology’.

In this period, the field of the right started to define itself as ‘conservative’ more extensively (Silva 2021) and the artistic and university sectors became targets. The conservative agenda, which historically possessed great capillarity in Brazilian society, was shown to be an essential strategy above all to attract lower-class groups to the right.

Between 2016 and 2018, Jair Bolsonaro was the politician with the greatest popularity among the various presidential candidates associated with the right. With Bolsonaro’s consolidation, the third and ultimate signifier which gained visibility in the symbology of performances and protests was the one associated with ‘Guns’. An emblem of the authoritarian and, at times, fascist dimension of the current presidency, ‘Guns’ represent the violent, patriarchal, openly racist, and homophobic aspects reiterated in the public performances of Jair Bolsonaro. The sign of a gun, performed by his hands, became his election campaign symbol and was acted in many public appearances. In the symbolic constellation of ‘Guns’ is also framed the iconography associated with the military category that accompanies this last axis of symbols associated with the protests of 2013 to 2021.<sup>23</sup> It is important to remember that the military has the largest number of positions in the current Government.

By investigating the constellation of symbols drawn in protests by the Brazilian right, we traced a perspective of the dominant agendas in each period as well as analysed the performances and the theatrical strategies which made these protests so visible in Brazil, culminating in the election of Jair Bolsonaro. The examination of street protests in the period in question through the lenses of theatre and performance studies has shown potential to contribute to the understanding of these demonstrations from a transdisciplinary approach. •

<sup>23</sup>. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Bolsonaro defended the use of chloroquine for the treatment of Covid-19. This is a controversial stance, as there is no scientific evidence on the effectiveness of chloroquine for this disease.

# IMAGES

## FIGURE 1

Protest for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Rio de Janeiro, 13 March 2016. A face-painted protester wearing a typical football supporter outfit. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 2

Right-wing demonstration in São Paulo, Avenida Paulista, 13 March 2016. Face-painted protesters are taking pictures with the Brazilian flag in front of FIESP's *Yellow Duck*. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 3

Protest 'Fora Dilma' ('Out Dilma') in Brasília, 7 September 2015. The inflatable puppets 'Pixuleco' and '1' at the Esplanade of Ministries' lawn. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 4

Protest for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Rio de Janeiro, 15 March 2015. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 5

Protest for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Rio de Janeiro, 13 March 2016. A protester is wearing a prisoner outfit and a mask of former president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva. He is also holding a mask of Dilma Rousseff. Inflatable gloves with the colours and symbols of the Brazilian flag amplify his hands. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 6

Right-wing demonstration in São Paulo, Avenida Paulista, 13 March 2016. Protesters' props hanging for sale: inflatable puppets, Brazilian flags, 'Out Dilma' banners, flowers, and a federal policeman's mask. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 7

Right-wing demonstration in São Paulo, Avenida Paulista, 13 March 2016. The FIESP's *Yellow Duck* is in front of the FIESP headquarters at Avenida Paulista. A Brazilian flag salesman is wearing Dilma Rousseff's 'zombie' mask. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 8

Protest for Dilma's Impeachment in Rio de Janeiro, 15 March 2015. Statements written on the posters read: 'Military Intervention Now!', 'A good communist is a dead one', 'Dilma, Maduro, Hugo, Fidel, Cristina, Lula: World's Garbage'. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 9

Protest for the impeachment in Rio de Janeiro, 13 March 2016. A face-painted young man is holding a poster: 'Vote on Bolsonaro 2018'. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 10

Right-wing demonstration in São Paulo, Avenida Paulista, 13 March 2016. A truck with loudspeakers and banners: 'Out Communism', 'No communism', and 'Brazil above all!'. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 11

Protest for Dilma's Impeachment in Rio de Janeiro, 15 March 2015. Face-painted men in yellow and green and the crowd wearing the Brazilian football shirt. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 12

A metal wall splitting the Esplanade of Ministries' lawn with the National Congress at the bottom. On the right side of the picture, there are the protesters for the impeachment of the former president Dilma Rousseff. On the left side, those who were against it. Photograph by Juca Varella, courtesy of Agência Brasil.

## FIGURE 13

Impeachment Vote Deputies, 18 April 2016. The Chamber of Deputies from the perspective of the deputies allied to the government of Dilma Rousseff. The statement on the red poster reads 'Stay Dilma', and we may identify another poster reproducing a torn front cover page of the Brazilian Federal Constitution. The men deputies are wearing neutral or red ties, with red pins from the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 14

The voting session on the continuation of the impeachment process of Dilma Rousseff in the Chamber of Deputies in Brazil. Photograph by Valter Campanato, courtesy of Agência Brasil.

## FIGURE 15

Catholics say the rosary in front of *Palácio das Artes* in a protest against the Moraleida exhibition, 13 October 2017. Screenshot from YouTube channel *Rádio Itatiaia*.

## FIGURE 16

Conservatives protest against the participation of Judith Butler in an event in *Sesc Pompéia Cultural Centre*, São Paulo, 7 November 2017. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 17

Conservatives protest against the participation of Judith Butler in an event in *Sesc Pompéia Cultural Centre*, São Paulo, 7 November 2017. Screenshot from video, courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 18

Conservatives protest against the participation of Judith Butler in an event in *Sesc Pompéia*, 7 November 2017. The posters read 'Less ONU, more Brazil' and 'UNESCO, school of terror'. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

## FIGURE 19

Conservatives protest against the participation of Judith Butler in an event in *Sesc Pompéia Cultural Centre*, São Paulo, 7 November 2017. Courtesy of Mídia Ninja.

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