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The World Cup and Protests: What Ails Brazil?

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Executive Summary. Results from preliminary pre-release 2014 AmericasBarometer survey data from Brazil indicate that the protests ongoing in the country since last year are driven largely by young, single, educated Brazilians, with widespread corruption and violence, and low quality education and healthcare at the top of their list of grievances. Thus, international sporting events like the World Cup have both exacerbated perceptions of systemic corruption among Brazilians and also provided a useful high-profile stage for protesters to voice their discontent. Though the World Cup has reached its finale, preparations for the 2016 Olympic Games promise to continue fueling the underlying societal discontent driving these protests unless political leaders address these deeper, systemic concerns.

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The media attention drawn by the World Cup tournament in Brazil has provided an opportunity to revisit the ongoing social unrest in the country.¹ ² The protests, which never fully abated after last year's peak during the Confederations Cup, have waned considerably in terms of the number of participants; nevertheless, they continue to draw attention to the issues and concerns which a multitude of Brazilian citizens raised at that time.

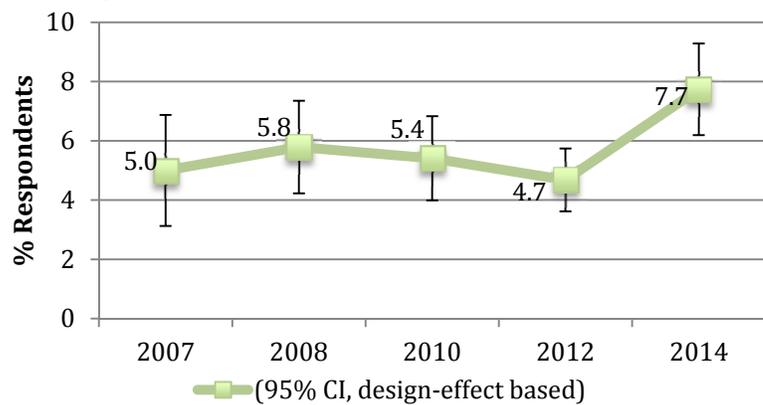
A previous *Insights* report (Moseley and Layton 2013) drew on the 2012 AmericasBarometer data to place Brazil's unrest in a regional context and showed the importance of education, interest in politics, and dissatisfaction with local public services as catalysts for participation in protests across the Americas. In this report I draw on the preliminary pre-release AmericasBarometer dataset for Brazil 2014 to more closely analyze Brazil's current wave of protest in particular.³ I show that young, single, educated Brazilians continue to be the driving force behind many of the protests and that their primary grievances concern the country's widespread corruption and the poor quality of education services.

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. This *Insights* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency.

³ The full 2014 AmericasBarometer dataset, which will cover 27 countries in the Americas, will be released to the public in December 2014.

Figure 1. Protest Participation in Brazil, 2007-2014



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Who Is Protesting in Brazil?

Brazilian media sources conservatively estimate that, at its peak, the 2013 protest movement drew more than 1.4 million Brazilians into the streets in cities across the country,⁴ making it the largest popular mobilization in Brazil since the 1992 impeachment movement successfully pushed for the ouster of the sitting president.

Despite the high-profile nature of this past year of protests, we still know relatively little about who among Brazilians is taking to the streets. Do the protesters represent a cross-section of Brazilian society, or are some citizens more active in the manifestations than others? It is to this question that I now turn.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of Brazilian respondents who reported participating in a protest during the year prior to each round of the AmericasBarometer survey.⁵ As is clear,

⁴See a useful interactive graphic produced by Globo at: <http://g1.globo.com/brasil/protestos-2013/infografico/platb/> [last access 6/24/2014]

⁵ In the 2007 and 2008 rounds, the question was asked in two parts. The first question asked if the respondent had participated in a manifestation or public protest at any time in their life, and the follow-up question asked if they had done so over the last year. In 2010 this format changed to simply ask if over the last 12 months the respondent had

protest activity in Brazil witnessed a significant increase in 2013 and early 2014 compared to a similar period in 2011-2012.

More to the point of understanding who is protesting, Table 1 provides a snapshot of the socioeconomic differences between protesters and non-protesters in Brazil over the last year. I conducted difference of means tests on these key individual characteristics to determine where the differences are statistically significant. The results show that respondents who participated in protests in the year leading up to the survey are wealthier,⁶ more educated, younger, more often single,⁷ and more frequent users of the Internet⁸ than non-protesting respondents. The difference in gender ratios is not statistically significant between protesters and non-protesters. Moreover, protesters are only marginally more likely to live in an urban area than non-protesters ($p=.06$).

Table 1. Protester/Non-protester Differences in Brazil, 2014

	Protester (n=116)	Non- protester (n=1,383)	Difference (se)
Women (%)	54.3	49.7	4.6 (4.6)
Quintile of Wealth (1-5)	3.5	2.9	0.5 (0.1) *
Education (Years Completed)	11.0	8.0	3.1 (0.4) *
Urban (%)	92.2	85.9	6.3 (3.3)
Age (Years)	31.2	40.3	-9.1 (1.1) *
Single (%)	53.4	29.6	23.9 (4.6) *
Internet Usage (0-4)	3.1	1.9	1.2 (0.2) *

* $p<0.05$

Note: Estimated means reported. All estimates are design-effect based. Some differences appear too small or too big due to rounding.

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

In the last section I use a multivariate analysis to test the independent effect of each of these individual characteristics as predictors of protest participation in the 2014 data.

Why Are Brazilians Protesting?

In the midst of Brazil's recent social unrest, observers have struggled to identify the source of the public anger. The protests initially began in response to an increase in bus fares; elected officials have responded to the protests by promising political reforms and implementing a government program (*Mais Médicos* [More Doctors]) to hire more medical staff, including a large number of Cuban physicians, to fill posts in public health clinics; and the media have often focused on the vandalism and violence against journalists that have accompanied more peaceful efforts to express dissatisfaction with any number of public services. Consequently, there is understandable confusion over which issues have most strongly mobilized protesters in Brazil.

To provide a preliminary answer to the question of what potentially motivates the protesters, I analyze responses to an open-ended question from the AmericasBarometer

participated in a manifestation or public protest. In all cases, I only report the percentage of respondents who reported participation in the year prior to the survey. In 2007 and 2008, if a respondent reported that they never participated in a protest I coded their response as '0'. The rate of missing responses was 4.53% in 2007, 6.48% in 2008, 0.81% in 2010, 0.27% in 2012, and 0.07% in 2014.

⁶ Wealth is measured in relative terms using a battery of questions about household assets. See Córdova (2009) for more details. Higher values reflect more wealth.

⁷ In analyses not shown here I found that even when broken out into individual categories, all categories had a lower likelihood of participating in protests than single respondents although given the lack of statistical power given the small size of some groups not all differences were statistically significant. In the model I present, I compare single respondents to all other civil status categories.

⁸ Respondents are given a five point response scale in terms of the frequency with which they use the internet: daily, a few times a week, a few times a month, rarely, or never. I recode these responses to a 0 to 4 scale to reflect increasing frequency of internet usage. The 2013 *Insights* report used a variable for sharing political information through a social network; however, this item was not included on the 2014 survey in Brazil.

that asks what the respondent thinks is the most serious problem facing the country.⁹ Table 2 presents the four most cited answers for protesters and non-protesters in 2014. Non-protesters were most likely to cite healthcare, violence, corruption, and insecurity as the most serious problem in Brazil. Respondents who participated in a protest in the year leading up to the survey also cited corruption, healthcare, and violence, but paired these with poor quality education services. Notably, even though the concerns of protesters and non-protesters overlap on three issues, each group differs significantly in terms of the importance they place on each issue. For instance, protesters cited corruption as the most serious problem at nearly twice the rate of non-protesters and were much less likely to cite healthcare and violence as the country's most serious problem.

The survey also asked respondents about several specific aspects of their satisfaction with public services in the city where they live and the current federal government's performance on a number of issues. Table 3 presents the differences in mean responses between protesters and non-protesters on satisfaction with their city's public transportation system, roads, public schools, and public health services.¹⁰ It also shows mean differences on perceptions of the current federal government's performance combating corruption, improving security, and managing the economy.¹¹ In all cases, protesters are less satisfied with public

Table 2. Most Serious Problem in Brazil by Protest Participation, 2014 (% Respondents)

Non-protester		Protester	
Healthcare	26.49	Corruption	22.61
Violence	20.01	Healthcare	15.65
Corruption	11.48	Violence	14.78
Insecurity	6.25	Education	11.30

Note: All estimates are design-effect based.
Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

services and perceive the government's performance as worse than do non-protesters. These differences, though, are only statistically significant in the case of satisfaction with roads and public schools and perceptions of government performance combating corruption and managing the economy.

Yet the question remains whether these differences between protesters and non-protesters in terms of perceived problems in Brazil will hold after controlling for other individual characteristics. To answer this, I now turn to a multivariate analysis of the question, "Who is protesting in Brazil and why?"

Modeling Protest Participation in Brazil, 2014

In this section, I test a multivariate model of protest participation for Brazil in 2014. I draw on the "resource mobilization model" of protest (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Jenkins 1983) developed in the previous *Insights* report for the Latin American region as a whole (Moseley and Layton 2013), but with some adaptations to study the specific case of Brazil using the 2014 data.

Thus far, I have identified a number of potential grievances (the most important problems in Brazil as determined by respondents to the AmericasBarometer survey,

⁹ Respondents are asked what they think is the most serious problem in the country. They are not given response options; rather, their open-ended response is placed into one of more than 40 pre-coded categories, including an option for 'other' responses. In Table 1 I present the four categories that receive the largest number of responses. All other responses are then considered together as 'other' responses in the analyses below.

¹⁰ Respondents report whether they are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with each given public service. I recode responses so that any level of satisfaction receives a score of '100' and any level of dissatisfaction receives a score of '0'.

¹¹ Respondents report to what extent they believe the government achieves each performance objective on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 means 'not at all' and 7 means 'a lot'.

dissatisfaction with public services, and perceptions of poor government performance) that citizens in Brazil have expressed, as well as several individual characteristics (urban/rural residence, gender, age, household assets, years of education, civil status, and self-reported frequency of internet usage) that may help clarify who has protested over the last year and why. In this section, I test these potential explanations together to determine which factors are the most important for identifying the protesters and their motives.¹²

In addition to the factors I have already mentioned, I include the following control variables in the model of protest participation: level of community participation;¹³ respondents' level of support for the Brazilian political system;¹⁴ interest in politics;¹⁵ sense of internal and external political efficacy;¹⁶ partisan

Table 3. Protester/Non-protester Differences on Satisfaction with Public Services and Perceptions of Government Performance in Brazil, 2014

	Protester (n=116)	Non- prottester (n=1,383)	Difference (se)
Sat. Public Transportation	35.1	37.3	-2.2 (5.0)
Sat. Roads	32.8	45.7	-13.0 (5.3) *
Sat. Public Schools	37.7	51.0	-13.3 (4.9) *
Sat. Public Health	20.7	24.1	-3.4 (3.9)
Gov. Combats Corruption	24.3	32.1	-7.9 (2.8) *
Gov. Improves Security	30.6	35.2	-4.6 (2.8)
Gov. Manages Economy Well	27.7	35.4	-7.8 (2.9) *

*p<0.05

Note: Estimated means reported. All estimates are design-effect based. Some differences appear too small or too big due to rounding. For satisfaction with public services, satisfied or very satisfied=100, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied=0. Performance perceptions measured on 1-7 scale, recoded to 0-100 scale.

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

sympathy;¹⁷ and the respondent's region of residence.

Figure 2 illustrates standardized logit regression coefficients with design-based 95% confidence intervals for the model of protest participation in Brazil from the preliminary pre-release 2014 data. If the estimated coefficient and the entire length of the confidence bar do not cross the red line, then that indicator has a statistically significant effect in the model. That effect is positive if the coefficient point is to the right of the red "zero" line and negative if it is to the left.¹⁸

¹² I only include measures of satisfaction with public services and perceptions of government performance on the issues where I have shown that there is a statistical difference in the mean opinion between protesters and non-protesters.

¹³ Community participation is measured as the average rate of participation across three types of community involvement: religious organizations, parent-teacher organizations, and neighborhood improvement organizations. Respondents can reply that they participate at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never.

¹⁴ System support is the average score of the respondent across five indicators scored using a seven point scale: the extent to which the respondent thinks that the courts guarantee a fair trial; the extent to which they respect the country's political institutions; the extent to which they believe that the political system protects basic rights; the extent to which they feel proud to live under their political system; and the extent to which they believe that one should support the political system. Respondents missing a response on more than two indicators are excluded from the average score.

¹⁵ Respondents answer whether they are very, somewhat, a little, or not at all interested in politics.

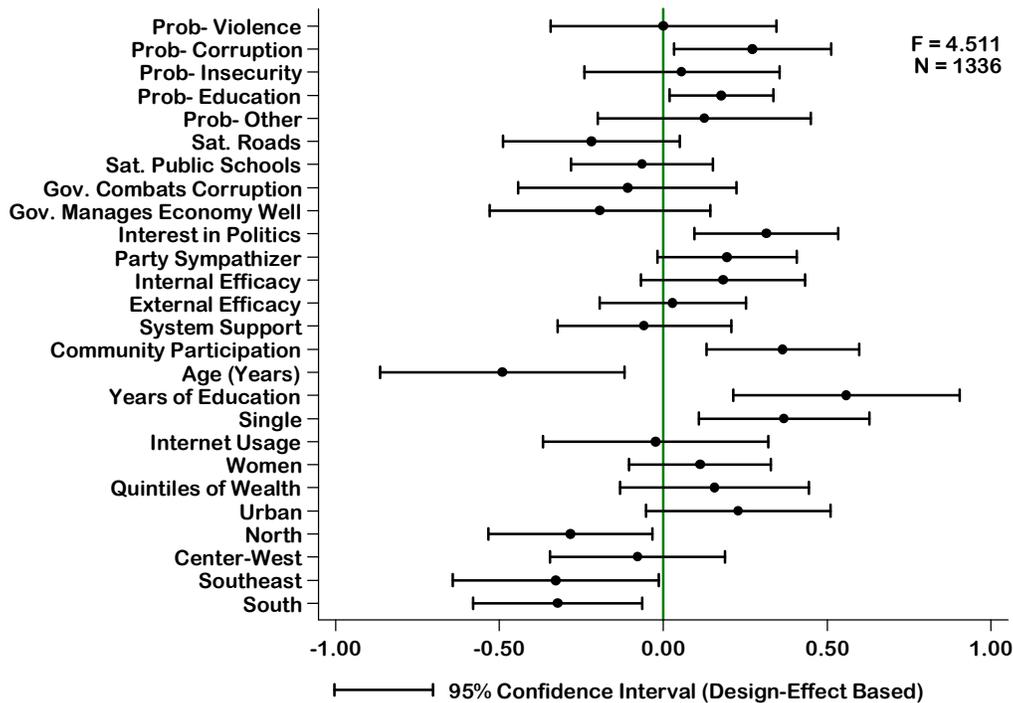
¹⁶ Internal efficacy is measured using a question that asks respondents to what extent they feel they understand the most important political issues in the country. External efficacy is based on a question that asks to what extent

those that govern the country are interested in what people like the respondent think.

¹⁷ Respondents report whether they currently sympathize with any political party. These individuals may be more strongly motivated to participate in the public sphere. I code sympathizers as '1' and non-partisans as '0'.

¹⁸ In two cases, the variables are categorical in nature and the coefficients must be interpreted in relation to the baseline category. For the list of the most important problems, the baseline is healthcare services; for region, the baseline is the Northeast.

Figure 2. Model of Protest Participation in Brazil, 2014



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Key Findings

The results help clarify several aspects of the recent protests in Brazil. In terms of *who* participates, the model suggests that the protesters do in fact tend to be young, single, more educated, interested in politics, and active in their local community.

Interestingly, the effect of Internet usage on protest participation is statistically insignificant, a finding that runs counter to recent research (e.g. Moseley and Layton 2013) that finds Internet use, and more specifically involvement in social media networks, strongly related to protest activity. Similarly, the level of respondent wealth and the respondent's

gender has no significant effect on the likelihood of reporting participation in protests independent of other personal characteristics.

Perceptions of corruption and the poor quality of education services are the two problems driving protesters into the streets.

Another set of significant findings focuses attention on the location of the protests. Many news reports have highlighted *urban* protests, but the model confirms what was shown in Table 1, that the difference between urban and rural residents is

statistically insignificant. Moreover, although the model shows that reported protest participation is fairly even across the regions, residents of the Northeast are significantly more likely to report protest participation than residents of the North, Southeast, and South. To reemphasize the point, news reports have focused on the protests that take place in the large urban capitals of the Southeast, but these

results suggest that the unrest is somewhat more prevalent among residents of the Northeast and may be at least as common among rural residents.

In terms of *why* Brazilians are protesting, the model also provides compelling findings. After controlling for individual characteristics of the respondents, it appears that broad perceptions of corruption and the poor quality of education services in Brazil are indeed the two key problems driving the protesters into the streets. Respondents who see corruption or poor quality education services as the most serious problems in the country are significantly more likely to report protest participation than respondents who listed the other top problems.¹⁹ Conversely, satisfaction with public services in their city of residence and perceptions of the current federal government's performance are no longer statistically significant predictors of protest participation after controlling for individual characteristics. This suggests that the protesters are less concerned with specific problems either at the local level or with the current government and are more concerned with systemic failings that such international events as the World Cup can call even greater attention to. Consequently, although it may be possible in any given protest to find participants who have other grievances and objectives, generalized perceptions of the systemic problems of corruption and the poor quality of public education are the driving concerns that seem to be filling the streets and public squares across Brazil.

¹⁹ The likelihood of protest participation for respondents who cited corruption or poor quality education is not statistically different from respondents who cited insecurity as the top concern because of a lack of statistical power given the number of respondents in each group. Even so, citing corruption or poor quality schools as the top problem is still more substantively meaningful in terms of predicting protest participation.

Conclusion

The results presented here help explain what has motivated the last year of social unrest in Brazil. Brazilians are concerned with the durable, perhaps even intractable, issues that their country faces like corruption, education, healthcare, violence, and insecurity. Of these chief concerns, the results above suggest that broad perceptions of corruption and a poor quality education system are the main catalysts for the crowds of mostly young, single, educated protest participants. International events like the Confederations Cup of 2013, the World Cup of this year, and the Olympic Games of 2016 (to be held in Rio de Janeiro) all tend to call greater attention to these systemic problems, as well as to provide a platform for citizens to demand action to address these issues. Importantly, at least regarding their concerns with corruption and poor quality education services, Brazilian protesters appear to be representing and giving voice to the concerns of many non-protesting Brazilians as well.

These findings also suggest that elected officials and political leaders in Brazil may continue to face significant unrest for some time to come. After all, once the World Cup is over, the systemic grievances of protesters will remain unresolved. Fully addressing the problem of corruption and the structure of the nation's public education system will require more than quick-fix presidential decrees. Given that recent events have begun to increase the presidential election year drama surrounding what had until recently been seen as the inevitable reelection of Brazil's incumbent president, Dilma Rousseff, it seems highly unlikely that the reform legislation that is necessary to address the deeper systemic roots of these problems will emerge from a politicized Brazilian Congress whose members are shifting into campaign mode for their own concurrent reelection efforts. What is more, unless this year's presidential and legislative elections are able to renew the citizenry's faith

in the Brazilian political system, the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro will likely once again serve as both a spark and high-profile stage for further protests.

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Appendix

Table A1. Predictors of Protest Participation in Brazil, 2014

	Coefficients	(t)
South	-0.322*	-2.47
Southeast	-0.327*	-2.06
Center-West	-0.078	-0.58
North	-0.283*	-2.25
Urban	0.229	1.61
Quintiles of Wealth	0.157	1.08
Woman	0.112	1.03
Internet Usage	-0.023	-0.13
Single	0.369*	2.81
Years of Education	0.559*	3.21
Age (Years)	-0.491*	-2.61
Community Participation	0.365*	3.11
System Support	-0.057	-0.43
External Efficacy	0.030	0.26
Internal Efficacy	0.183	1.45
Party Sympathizer	0.195	1.82
Interest in Politics	0.315*	2.85
Gov. Manages Economy Well	-0.193	-1.13
Gov. Combats Corruption	-0.109	-0.65
Sat. Public Schools	-0.065	-0.59
Sat. Roads	-0.219	-1.60
Prob- Other	0.126	0.77
Prob- Education	0.178*	2.23
Prob- Insecurity	0.057	0.38
Prob- Corruption	0.272*	2.25
Prob- Violence	0.001	0.01
Constant	-3.184*	-19.17
<i>F</i>	4.51	
<i>No. of cases</i>	1336	

* p<0.05