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# Bringing the State Back Out: How Vested Interests, Moralism and Conservative Economic Discourse Helped Undermine Brazil's Democratic Government

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## Résumé

From 2013 to 2018, the Brazilian political and economic landscape has been engulfed in incessant turmoil. Following what started a series of popular demonstrations on bus fare increase in major capitals, the country's middle class took to the streets to voice their discontent with the stream of PT administrations started in 2002. After impeaching democratically elected president Rousseff and judging former president Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva, partisans of this local strain of neoconservative ideology still adhere to the general tenet that Brazil's XXIst century policy shifts were the result of the prevalence of vested interests within the federal administration.

Our aim with this paper is twofold: on a first level, we aim at reconstructing a historical narrative of the current debacle of Brazilian democracy and the decisive influence of right-wing populism and its radicalization of vague and irresponsible political discourse centered on supposed vested interests. On a second note, we reflect upon how the ideas present in Vested Interests and the Common Man provide an interesting standing point not only for reassessing the claims of Brazil's middle class and its most vocal apologists, but also the links between morally grounded political movements and their subservience, on several instances, to the motivations of economically established vested interests.

**Mots-Clés:** Brazil, Political Economy, Radical Institutionalism

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