

Music Censorship and Brazilian Popular Music (MPB) throughout Brazil's Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964-1985)

Introduction: Popular music as an eminent threat

This article presents a panoramic view on the relationship between popular music and censorship during civil-military regime in Brazil (1964-1985). The research is based on the analysis of several documents produced during the period held at the *Arquivo Nacional* (National Archive), in Brasília. Among the documents in the archive are original versions of lyrics, censors' reports and letters addressing censorship, written by record label personnel and artists, advocating the approval of prohibited songs.

Although there have been extensive and important studies on censorship in this period, the specific subject of music censorship has still been little explored in the academic field in Brazil and has been gaining more attention since the opening of the music censorship archives to public consultation in the early 1990s. In 2012, the *Comissão Nacional da Verdade* (National Truth Commission) was created, aiming to investigate human right violations by the state, especially during the civil-military dictatorship in Brazil, giving particular attention to several documents produced during the regime, including censorship documents. This fact represents the possibility of a revision of Brazil's history and stimulates civil society to debate about the dictatorship period, which still leaves strong traces in the recent and fragile trajectory of democracy in the country. When I consulted the material at the *Arquivo Nacional*, in 2013, the documents were in a poor state of conservation, without detailed cataloguing of content. Since 2017, the collection has been digitalized and is available for online consultation, providing better conditions for researching.

Among the research that specifically addresses the theme of music censorship in the military period in Brazil, I highlight the recent work of the historian Cecília Riquino Heredia. Her master's thesis (Heredia 2015) stands out for its relevance in terms of sampling and analysis. Heredia selected and analyzed 1,470 censorial proceedings produced between the years of 1971 and 1984, which are held at the *Arquivo Nacional*, enabling a more comprehensive and detailed look at the relationship between censorship and song in the military period.

This article discusses some cases that were emblematic and that involved the work of artists of greater prominence and popularity in the music industry. At the same time, I aim to present a more global vision of the period, trying to understand the complex network of relationships involving music and censorship.

This article dialogues with other relevant researches which deal specifically with the matter of song censorship in Brazil during the civil-military regime. Among them, I highlight the research of the historian Alexandre Felipe Fiuza (2006), which deals with the particularities and correlations of music censorship in Brazil and Portugal, during the period when both countries were living under dictatorial regimes. Historian Maika Carocha (2007) focuses on the dynamics of the functioning of music censorship and contributes to a better understanding of the institutional perspective.

As Carocha underlines, censorship of press and cultural production was already part of the constitutional practices in Brazil since the 1930s (Carocha 2007, 35). However, over its twenty-one years, the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship showed a sustained and increasing use of censorship as a form of controlling society. The government's state policy was based on the threat of order and "National Security" to justify the silencing of opposition voices and managing the government's reputation. It was under the same pretext that the state made use of violence and torture, intending to politically demobilize society, silencing those who disagreed with the state's actions.

Despite the political control of cultural production, a segment of popular songs, called MPB, turned out to play an important role as a dissenting voice in the authoritarian context, spreading democratic ideals and echoing the aspirations of civil society. Songwriters were frequently able to circumvent censorship through the use of a metaphorical language; this was one of the strategies that allowed them to disseminate critical messages against the government's repressive and authoritarian measures.

As noted by Fiuza (2006, 22), censorship reports on the cultural production and documents produced by the government's surveillance agencies were used as a criterion to guide the State repressive actions, such as arrests and interrogations. More importantly, these documents were used to create a self-justification for the existence of such agencies. They supported the idea of the existence of a threat to justify a state of exception. Cultural production was considered one of the eminent threats to the political stability.

Major record labels also played a significant role in the music censorship process. Oftentimes, these companies were the mediators between songwriters and censors. As can be seen in the reports consulted for this research, record labels could interfere in the censorship process, intending to approve the songs for recording. The economic importance of the songs for the music business has become a parameter of choice in the relationship between censorship and the market. With the prestige acquired by MPB in the music industry, especially in the second half of the 1970s, there was a greater interference of record labels in the censorship process. These companies' goal was to avoid the prohibition of songs that would be an important source of profit.

Taking these issues into account, I will discuss in the following pages the specifics of song censorship in Brazil, during the civil-military dictatorship period. First, I will

address the context in which the military coup took place, supported by sectors of civil society. Then, I will present an analysis of songs censored in the most repressive period of the dictatorship, between 1968 and 1973. Finally, I will analyze the relationship between songs and censorship when the military government inaugurates an “opening” policy, through which it sought a rapprochement with civil society, leading in a controlled and planned way the resumption of democracy in Brazil.

From the methodological point of view, the analysis of songs presented applies the analytical line proposed by the historian Marcos Napolitano. He suggests, as a starting point, the principle that a song can be used as a document, considering that it often reveals itself as a “thermometer and mirror not only of social changes but above all of our deeper collective sociabilities and sensibilities” (Napolitano 2002, 77). The analytical parameters try to give account of the range of meanings in a song, situating it socially and historically. Napolitano proposes the use of two parameters of analysis: verb-poetic, which takes “motifs, symbolic categories, figures of speech, poetic procedures” (Napolitano 2002, 79) into account; and the musical parameters of creation and interpretation, which cover musical construction, in terms of composition and interpretive elements, such as arrangement, timbre, instrumentation. Although the parameters allow a better understanding of the songs, Napolitano emphasizes the importance of a critical and wider view from the analytical standpoint:

(...) it is necessary to take into account discontinuous aspects of history: multiple historicity; the problematization of values of appreciation and cultural hierarchies inherited by memory and tradition; the analysis of the sociological mechanisms, the political and musical culture of a period and its influence in the musical environment; the intellectual environment, educational institutions and music diffusion. (Napolitano 2002, 92)

Music and resistance in the establishment of the authoritarian regime

Since the late 1950s, Brazilian popular music gained strength as a symbolic space of intellectual debate and political resistance in the country (Naves 2010, 20), aligned with left-wing ideals. Part of the cultural production resorted to a revolutionary discourse, augmented by President João Goulart’s state policy, from 1961 to 1964. Goulart intended to put into practice the so-called *reformas de base* (base reforms), aiming to promote significant changes in Brazil’s rural and urban environment and to achieve greater social equality. The cultural scenario further blossomed with these factors, due to the considerable spread in agrarian and workers’ movements in Brazil, and by the emancipatory nature of international revolutions such as the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Algeria’s independence, in 1962, and even the Vietnam War, which was then in progress (Ridenti 2000, 33).

In 1961, the *União Nacional dos Estudantes* (known by the acronym UNE), Brazil’s students union, founded the *Centro Popular de Cultura* (People’s Cultural Center), which brought together artists involved in music, theater, literature and the arts to

produce what, in their understanding, would become a revolutionary art. These artists believed in the utopian idea that art would help to increase the working classes' awareness on their reality, thereby leading to a social revolution (Hollanda 2004, 23). Their art was embedded with development-oriented and nationalistic values, having reverberated in the cultural production of the 1960s and 1970s, gaining new meanings.

João Goulart became chief of State following the resignation of President Jânio Quadros, amidst a growing political and economic crisis. His reform-oriented purposes were radically against the interests of Brazil's conservative segments. As Goulart's measures became increasingly and effectively oriented towards base reforms, the military and part of the civil society articulated means to initiate a coup d'état, which effectively took place in 1964, thereby implementing the civil-military regime in Brazil. Though apparently established to free the country from corruption and communism, and to restore democracy (Fausto 1999, 465), it was quite the opposite: the regime lasted for twenty-one years and became ever more authoritarian, especially from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

Left-leaning organizations, such as UNE, trade unions and civilian oppositionists were promptly dissipated and persecuted by the civil-military regime. The regime's actions intending to politically demobilize society were guided by the doctrine of "National Security." Despite such factors, culture was still not the main target of more repressive measures, enabling a left-leaning cultural production to flourish (Schwarz 1978, 62-67). Popular music reflected this reality in quite a peculiar fashion, for it became somewhat of a "spokesperson" for the opposition to the authoritarian regime. At the same time, it became the leading player in the ascension of both television and the music industry in Brazil. Since the second half of the 1960s, musical programs and song festivals organized by television networks played a strong role in the process of increasing the popularity of television in Brazil. During such shows, singers and songwriters would perform their new songs for an audience mostly comprised of middle class students. Several artists including Elis Regina, Edu Lobo, Milton Nascimento, Chico Buarque, Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso became known to the public through the music festivals.

During this period, Brazilian popular music was first referred to by the acronym MPB and though its production was heterogeneous from a musical and poetical standpoint, its repertoire was marked by a set of common values, such as freedom, social justice and democracy. Though the belief that the ability of popular music could contribute to social revolution had been shaken and diluted by the military coup, popular songs translated an idea of a collective experience to resistance of authoritarianism and a full freedom of speech, while society was increasingly subject to the repressive control of the civil-military government.

The so-called *Ato Institucional no. 5* (Institutional Act No. 5) was enacted at the end of 1968, during the presidency of General Costa e Silva, marking the most repressive phase of the authoritarian regime. This act guaranteed exceptional powers to the President of the Republic, which included the suspension of political rights, subjecting

National Congress to forced recess, impeachment of representatives, the suspension of the right to *habeas corpus* and the prohibition of popular manifestations of a political nature, among other resolutions. Censorship and repression increased, including political imprisonment and the use of torture in interrogations (Skidmore 1988, 250). Cultural production, which had once been spared from more radical measures, then became subject to severe repression. Artists and intellectuals were increasingly watched and persecuted by the regime. Many of them even fled to exile, as was the case of MPB songwriters with an intensive activity in the cultural scene, such as Caetano Veloso, Geraldo Vandré, Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil.

With the dawn of the civil-military regime and especially the enactment of Institutional Act No. 5 censorship widened its scope of action considerably. Several artists were subject to stricter control both in terms of censorship and other forms of repression – their works were forbidden, performances were observed and artists were sometimes subject to police interrogation (Fiuza 2006). The following paragraphs will focus specifically on the discussion of the relationship established between MPB production and censorship.

MPB Songs and Censorship during the “Hard Years”

The first cases presented date from the most repressive period of the civil-military regime – from 1968 to 1974 – based on the analysis of the lyrics to the songs and the censorship reports available at the *Arquivo Nacional*, in Brasília, which hosts part of documents on musical censorship during the regime.

In order to record an album, either the artist or the record label had to send the lyrics of the songs to be reviewed by the censors. Three different officials oftentimes reviewed the lyrics. If forbidden, songwriters could change the words to the song, including accepting changes recommended by the censors, and once again submit the song for approval. Artists or labels could also file appeals to defend the approval of a song (Carocha 2007, 58). This aspect reveals that there was a certain level of dialogue that could even interfere in the censorship process, reversing, in some cases, the opinion of the censors. It also shows the censors’ level of interference, as they could impose changes in the lyrics for its approval, based on their own opinions.

The first song I will review is titled *Segure Tudo* (Take a Hold of it All), written and performed by Martinho da Vila. The song was recorded as a cheerful *samba* and its lyrics speak about the importance of guaranteeing or preserving sincere love, happiness and subsistence through work. It was forbidden because of a single line: “*essa tal de liberdade*” (to this thing called freedom). This line is placed at the end of the third stanza: “*Assegure o pão de cada dia* (Make sure you make your daily bread)/ *Trabalhando com vontade* (Put your heart into what you do)/ *Segura, segura, segura, não larga* (Hold on to it, do not let it go)/ *Essa tal de liberdade* (to this thing called freedom).”

The censorship document dealing with this song reveals that the censor highlighted the aforementioned line and added the following comment, without providing any reason to justify it: “I believe the use of the expression ‘this thing called freedom’ is

dangerous. I suggest the foregoing lyrics are denied approval."¹ A second document, of 1972, shows that the lyrics were approved following the modification of the line to "*essa tal felicidade* (this thing called happiness)," as can be heard in the original recording, of 1971. The songwriter changed the words to "*Tal Felicidade*" (this thing called happiness) and the song was approved.²

By using the indefinite pronoun "*tal*" in the lyrics to refer to freedom (which literally translates into "such"), Martinho da Vila perhaps intended to say that, at that point, the most repressive period of the regime, freedom was something unknown; one can say that this was also his intention in the expression "*tal felicidade* (this thing called happiness)," which replaced the original words. Also, it is interesting that the last line of the song, "*Eu também tenho direito de tocar meu tamborim* (I also have the right to play my tambourine)," did not draw the censor's attention, even though playing the tambourine, a percussion instrument used in samba, may be understood as "making noise", complaining or making oneself heard. Even though this line, thus, may be interpreted as a metaphor for one's right to freedom of expression it remained in the recorded version.

Perhaps Martinho da Vila did not mean to make any critical reference to the government, however the censors aimed at avoiding the circulation of messages that could go against the government policies in the civil-military regime. In order to prohibit the song, the censor resorted to the doctrine of "National Security" and of society's political demobilization, for he was attempting to prevent the spread of a possible message of resistance included in the song of Martinho da Vila, one of Brazil's top-selling artists, which would certainly be sung by his audience.

The second case I will examine is the song "*Paiol de Pólvora* (Powder Magazine)" written and performed by Toquinho and Vinícius de Moraes and prohibited by censorship in 1973 due to "National Security". The song had been included in the soundtrack of a *telenovela* (similar to a soap opera) *O Bem Amado* (The Beloved One), which was already being broadcast by TV network Rede Globo. The network filed an appeal via its limited-liability company "Sistema Globo de Gravações Áudio-Visuais Ltda." to the head of the censorship office of the Federal Police Department.³ In this document, the company claimed that the song had been approved by the first censorship assessment conducted by the State of Guanabara (current territory of the city of Rio de Janeiro), as can be seen in the document produced in the record. However, the song was vetoed by the censorship of the State of São Paulo, which actually seized the tape with the recording that would be played by a radio station. The justification included in the request for approval were the financial losses the company would have to bear as a result of the prohibition, considering the song had also been recorded in the soap opera's soundtrack, which was about to be distributed to the market. The network

1 Report No. 65284, 001/69, by censorship official Reginaldo, undated, 1969. Translated from Portuguese: *Tenho como perigoso o emprego desse "tal de liberdade."* *Recomendo a não aprovação da letra acima.*

2 Report No. 278/72-TCDP, by censorship official Oresto Mannarino, 04 Jul. 1972.

3 Letter from "Sistema Globo de Gravações Áudio-Visuais LTDA," to the head of the *Serviço de Censura do Departamento de Polícia Federal*, 14 Mar. 1973.

further added that “there was no violation of the law in the song.” Below is an excerpt of “*Paiol de Pólvora*” (Powder Magazine):

<i>Estamos trancados no paiol de pólvora</i>	We’re locked inside the powder magazine
<i>Paralisados no paiol de pólvora</i>	Paralyzed in the powder magazine
<i>Olhos vendados no paiol de pólvora</i>	Blindfolded in the powder magazine
<i>Dentes cerrados no paiol de pólvora</i>	Clenched teeth in the powder magazine
<i>Só tem entrada no paiol de pólvora</i>	There’s no way out of the powder magazine
<i>Ninguém diz nada no paiol de pólvora</i>	Not a word is said in the powder magazine
<i>Ninguém se encara no paiol de pólvora</i>	No one exchanges glances in the powder magazine
<i>Só se enche a cara no paiol de pólvora</i>	All you do is get drunk in the powder magazine
<i>Mulher e homem no paiol de pólvora</i>	Both men and women are in the powder magazine
<i>Ninguém tem nome no paiol de pólvora</i>	No one has a name in the powder magazine
<i>O azar é sorte no paiol de pólvora</i>	Bad luck becomes good luck in the powder magazine
<i>A vida é morte no paiol de pólvora</i>	Life is death in the powder magazine

In the song lyrics poet and songwriter Vinícius de Moraes clearly used a metaphorical language. Specifically, the allegory of a powder house seems to represent something that could turn into a catastrophe – a powder magazine that could be set on fire drastically imposes caution and fear on those who are stuck inside it, risking their own lives, without being able to flee. The musical arrangement accentuates the tension of the lyrics, with strings and brass instruments highlighting the harmonic dissonances, hereby creating a noisy and tense environment.

The song was written during the period in which the civil-military regime had intensified its vigilance on society and the persecution of anyone who challenged the regime; the government’s repression agencies sought the extermination of armed organizations, which intended to fight against the regime and take over power, and imposed fear on any citizen, who dared to challenge the system (Gáspari 2002, 225). These years witnessed the highest number of reports of torture and missing people, or even deaths. Hence, some of the lines of the song, such as “*Olhos vendados no paiol de pólvora*” (Blindfolded in the powder magazine), “*Ninguém diz nada no paiol de pólvora*” (Not a word is said in the powder magazine) and “*A vida é morte no paiol de pólvora*” (Life is death in the powder magazine)” could be interpreted to represent control and the imposition of fear through the repressive measures used by the authoritarian government.

When the song was submitted for a second assessment, following the appeal to approve the song, the censor agreed with the first opinion, having forbidden the song once again, as can be seen in the following opinion:

Based on the assessment of the lyrics to *Paiol de Pólvora* (Powder Magazine), written by Messrs. Toquinho and Vinicius, it is clear that this is a protest song for it includes the cries of one who is suffocated by a regime one does not accept, proven by removing the expression “*Paiol de Pólvora* (Power Magazine)” from all the lines. We do not suggest the approval of the song because its lyrics are clearly against National Security (...).⁴

Once again, the doctrine of “National Security” was used to endorse the veto on a message that could be interpreted as being against the civil-military regime. The four censors who signed the opinion not only classified the work as a “protest song,” but also understood that the narrator felt “suffocated by a regime” (my highlights). Because it is metaphorical, the reference that the censors made to an alleged regime arises out of their own understanding; though the words do include elements that provide for such interpretation, the four censors who had analyzed the song do not mention the double meaning of the lyrics, as if the words spoke openly about the challenged regime.

Censorship practices were also frequently directed to veto messages that could go against “good moral and right conduct” (Carocha 2007, 57). This is the case of “*Gente Fina É Outra Coisa*,” a rock ballad, written by Rita Lee, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

<i>Não vá se misturar com esses meninos cabeludos</i>	Don't you mess with these long-haired fellas
<i>Que só pensam em tocar</i>	Music is all they have in mind
<i>E você escuta o papai dizendo</i>	You'll hear daddy say over and over again
<i>Que gente fina é outra coisa</i>	These people are not your kind
<i>Mas gente fina é outra coisa</i>	But these people are not your kind
<i>Então você fica nessa indecisão</i>	So indecision hits you
<i>Papai tem razão</i>	Daddy is right
<i>E não me venha dizer</i>	Don't you dare tell me
<i>Que você vai sair de casa e batalhar pra viver</i>	You're leaving my house to make a living
<i>É mentira</i>	It's a lie
<i>É mentira</i>	It's a lie
<i>Hoje mesmo eu te vi</i>	I just saw you today
<i>Pensei que fosse o seu pai</i>	I thought it was your dad

4 Report No. 865, by censorship officials Therezinha de Toledo Neves, Marly M. C. de Albuquerque, Reginaldo Oscar de Castro, Carlos Alberto Braz de Souza, 15 Mar. 1973. Translated from Portuguese: Ao examinarmos a letra da música *Paiol de Pólvora*, de autoria dos srs. Toquinho e Vinicius, constatamos tratar-se de tema de contestação, onde são apresentados desabafos de alguém que está sufocado por um regime que não aceita, o que se comprova quando se retira a expressão “*Paiol de Pólvora*” de todos os versos.

Deixamos de sugerir a liberação uma vez que a letra atenta contra a Segurança Nacional (...).

<i>Que decepção</i>	How disappointing
<i>Eu fiquei triste de ver</i>	I was saddened to see
<i>A sua vida começando pelo lado errado</i>	Your life starting on the wrong side
<i>E você está acreditando mesmo</i>	And you actually believe
<i>Que gente fina é outra coisa</i>	These people are not your kind
<i>Mas gente fina é outra coisa</i>	But these people are not your kind

Not only this song specifically, but most of Rita Lee's musical work during the "hard years" was associated with the reverberations of counterculture in Brazil, and reflected a young culture that was clearly against this society-accepted behavior (Risério 2005, 29); such work was also marked by the pursuit of a new way to reflect on the world and by a break with the "rationalizing logic of both the left and the right" (Hollanda 2004, 78). Unlike the other reviewed songs, which criticized a repressive government, this song criticizes a behavior, as can be seen in the narrator's words against someone who is unwilling to break with a conventional model of "good social behavior": "*Não vá se misturar com esses meninos cabeludos* (Don't you mess with these long-haired fellas) / *Que só pensam em tocar* (Music is all they have in mind)." The censors prohibited the song, as shown in the excerpt of the censorship report:

Genre: Protest

Language: Symbolic

Theme: Social

Message: Negative – leads to bad habits.

Conclusion: In these lyrics, a young woman rises against fatherly authority by attempting to convince a friend to no longer believe in his father, and thus join a group of youngsters with questionable behavior. Because this song is to be recorded in an album, which is therefore likely to be promoted to several social groups, and furthermore taking into account the subtlety of the verses, which immediately lead the audience to ask the same questions included in the message, I vote for the prohibition of the song (...).⁵

As it appears, the censor is clearly trying to avoid the circulation of a message deemed "dangerous" because of the artist's significant commercial potential, which could be "promoted to several social groups." The songwriter uses irony to address the issues criticized in the lyrics, such as the superiority of the ruling class, for whom "these people are not your kind" in addition to the prejudgment seen in the line "Don't you mess with these long-haired fellas," or the unwillingness to change seen in "Don't you dare tell me / You're leaving my house to make a living." According to the censor's

5 Report No. 7048/73, by censorship official José do Carmo Andrade, 30 Aug. 1973. Translated from Portuguese: Gênero: Protesto. Linguagem: Simbólica. Tema: Social. Mensagem: Negativa – induz aos maus costumes. Conclusão: Na letra em exame uma jovem insurge-se contra o pátrio-poder, ao tentar persuadir um amigo a desacreditar de seu pai, para juntar-se a grupo juvenil de comportamento duvidoso. Considerando tratar-se de matéria para gravação em disco, que terá, portanto, grande penetração entre as diversas camadas sociais, e levando ainda em conta a sutileza dos versos, que propõem de imediato a indagação do público em torno da mensagem, manifesto-me pela sua não liberação (...).

interpretation, the issues brought forth in the lyrics are seen as a way to persuade the character to join “a group of youngsters with questionable behavior;” in other words, the censor believes the song is against the dominating moral and correct conduct. It is also worth mentioning that the song was classified according to genre, language, theme and message. This type of classification was often used by censorship to clearly indicate which songs were susceptible to prohibition (Fiuza 2006, 87). The song was submitted to new assessment, as can be seen below:

This song is likely to negatively influence youth for its words of protest. Youth who follow the pathways imposed by traditional society, thereby behaving like their parents, are challenged. Negative attitude with respect to this behavior, thereby assuming what would be positive behavior: involvement in the marginalized world of rebellious youth. Based on this notion, the song may be denied approval (...).⁶

Once again, it is clear that the song’s message is deemed “dangerous,” capable of leading listeners to bad behavior. The censor compares certain images, to wit: good behavior, of “traditional society,” versus the “marginalized world of rebellious youth”. The album *Cilibrinas do Éden* (Eden’s Complicating Gals), from 1973, in which the song was to be included, was actually recorded but not sold, and then finally relaunched in 2008.

A set of values related to a Christian conservative culture and to a military moral continued to orient censorship’s actions in Brazil, even after the ending of the dictatorship, in 1985 (Fiuza 2006, 106). Censorship was extinguished only in 1988, when a new post-dictatorship constitution was enacted.

The songs of the “hard years” were based on traditional genres, such as samba and regional rhythms, and lyric poetry, in which themes related to democratic values and a universalist humanistic conception of the world prevailed. From these values, popular song echoed the recent traumatic experience of increased control, vigilance and violence by the State, after the institution of the Act no. 5 in 1968, adding the consequent lack of visibility in the reestablishment of a democracy. The repressive picture reflected a sense of lack of perspective in the social sphere, which was often transposed into the lyrics of the songs.

MPB Songs during the “Opening Period”

Since president general Ernesto Geisel’s government, in 1974, Brazil gradually underwent a period of political “opening”. The strategy of “easing” the most repressive measures of the military regime happened more effectively in the late 1970s, in the administration of general João Baptista Figueiredo (1979-1985). The “opening” agen-

6 Report No. 7284/73, by censorship official Maria Luiza Barroso Cavalcante, 04 Sep. 1973. Translated from Portuguese: Música que teria influência perniciosa na juventude por seu caráter complacitivo. Os jovens que seguem os caminhos impostos pela sociedade tradicional com comportamento semelhante ao do pai é contestado. Atitude negativa em relação a este comportamento, suponho a sugestão do que seria positivo: engajamento no mundo marginalizado de jovens rebeldes. Partindo de tal conceito a música poderá ter negada sua liberação (...).

da was an attempt to reconnect government and civil society, through measures such as the repeal of Institutional Act No. 5, amnesty to political prisoners, return of exiles, the end of bipartisanship and direct elections for governors. Despite this initiative, the government agencies continued their repressive practices, thereby maintaining an authoritarian government policy. Throughout the entire civil-military regime, and especially following the enactment of Institutional Act No. 5, which authorized the violation of constitutional principles, the repression agencies became increasingly independent within the government hierarchy, thus implementing illegal measures, such as torture and assassination, in order to fight the opposition, which was deprived of its constitutional rights (Fausto 1999, 490).

On the other hand, secret documents produced at the time by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA, recently came to the public, corroborating the direct participation of presidents conducting an "opening" agenda – Geisel and Figueiredo – in the control of executions of political opponents.⁷ This helps to review an image that the government had softened its more violent character, and that the more severe cases came from a "military anarchy." Opposition to the dictatorship had the consequence of living under the banner of fear.

As Lilia Schwarcz and Heloísa Starling point out (2015, 473), from the process of "political opening" society regained its access to public space, and opposition forces began forming an alliance to fight the dictatorship. Although these voices have gained prominence and strength, the democratic transition took place through a project controlled and planned by the military government, which still leaves traces in Brazilian recent and fragile democracy.

Popular music nevertheless remained under the target of the regime's vigilance and was seen as a space in which "subversive" people and messages circulated, and consequently part of what the regime believed to be the "psychological warfare" promoted through culture (Napolitano 2010, 107). Musical censorship remained strict even during the so-called "opening period", as can be seen in the cases reviewed below.

The first song I will examine is Chico Buarque's "Tanto Mar" (An Ocean Apart), which implicitly refers to the Portuguese "Carnation Revolution" in April 1974, which marked the country's re-democratization process. Elements included both in the music and lyrics, as shall be seen below, remit to Portugal and to the deposition of the authoritarian regime under which the country lived. The song is entirely played in ternary rhythm, much like a *vira* – a Portuguese musical style. In the lyrics, Chico Buarque uses an idiom of widespread popular use in Portugal, the vocative "*pá*," which further contributes to clearly mark the reference to the country:

7 In 2015, the US State Department published the memorandum, from 11th April 1974, attributed to the CIA's director general at the time, William Colby, for Henry Kissinger, the government's foreign affairs adviser. The secret document reveals the contents of a meeting that took place in Brasília in 1974, confirming the direct involvement of the Presidents Médici, Geisel and Figueiredo in the order of summary executions of political opponents during the military regime. The memorandum was released in Brazil in 2018 by Professor Matias Spektor, from Fundação Getúlio Vargas (<https://www.matiasspektor.com>). The memorandum is available at the website: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d99?platform=hootsuite>.

<i>Sei que estás em festa, pá</i>	I know you're celebrating, man
<i>Fico contente</i>	I'm glad to hear
<i>E enquanto estou ausente</i>	While I'm gone
<i>Guarda um cravo para mim</i>	Save me a carnation
<i>Eu queria estar em festa, pá</i>	I'd sure like to be celebrating, man
<i>Com a tua gente</i>	With your people
<i>E colher pessoalmente</i>	And to pick
<i>Uma flor no teu jardim</i>	a flower in your garden myself
<i>Sei que há léguas a nos separar</i>	I know there are miles keeping us apart
<i>Tanto mar, tanto mar</i>	An ocean apart, an ocean apart
<i>Sei, também, que é preciso, pá</i>	I also know one must
<i>Navegar, navegar</i>	sail away, sail away, man
<i>Lá faz primavera, pá</i>	It's already spring there, man
<i>Cá estou doente</i>	While I'm still sick here
<i>Manda urgentemente</i>	Do send me, urgently
<i>Algum cheirinho de alecrim</i>	Some scent of rosemary

The narrator who is far away speaks of celebration, the carnation, sailing and the scent of rosemary, thereby including Portuguese elements with references to the symbols of the "Carnation Revolution." There is also a clearly melancholic mood of one who is not there, who would like to be celebrating, and who is sick, wherever this person is. The song was forbidden when first reviewed, in 1975; the censor interpreted it as honoring of the "Carnation Revolution" and denied the approval of the song, as can be seen in the following statement:

It is my understanding that these words are an allegory of the socialist revolution in Portugal. The first line, "Save me a carnation". The carnation was the symbol of the revolutionaries. Then ... "I'd sure like to be celebrating, man With your folk," refers to the revolution in progress, and, further, there are miles keeping us apart – an ocean apart – It is "spring" there and he is "sick" because he cannot take part in it (...). In view of the foregoing, and for the political orientation (...) I veto this song.⁸

Despite the poetic subtlety behind the metaphorical language that Chico Buarque uses – which does not include any specific mention of the revolution – the censor was sufficiently qualified to understand the relationship between the song and the Carnation Revolution. Further attention is drawn to this song's relationship with censorship during the regime because of a second review entitled "Censorship Review," defending the approval thereof, as can be seen below:

8 Report No. 511/7, by censorship official Eugênia Costa Rodrigues, 23 Apr. 1975. Translated from Portuguese: Esta letra, ao meu ver, é uma alegoria à revolução socialista em Portugal. Na primeira estrofe "guarda um cravo para mim". Cravo era o símbolo dos revolucionários. Depois... "Eu queria estar em festa rapaz Com a tua gente, está se referindo à revolução em curso, e mais adiante – na distância que nos separa – tanto mar a navegar – Lá a estação é a "primavera", e ele aqui está "doente" por não poder participar (...). Face ao exposto, pela conotação política (...) veto a em pauta.

The revolution in Portugal is *fait accompli* from the political standpoint and the Brazilian government immediately recognized the new regime, therefore excluding the possibility of considering the facts that took place in said country as offensive or threatening to our country and people. (...) the lyrics refer to a message of solidarity and congratulations sent by one who tries to feel the same joy, albeit having been unsuccessful in one's revolutionary ideals. This message of support could be sent to any country (...). The songwriter did not include any reference to Brazil and to its organized authorities, thereby rendering the meaning and the message of the verses ambiguous. Only based on assumptions it is possible to consider such a stand as dangerous and hazardous and thereby classify the song under the censorial rules, and we are aware that this assumption is vague and inaccurate, and Censorship has oftentimes been criticized for being ruthless for making such assumptions.⁹

The foregoing opinion, drafted by the censorship service agency itself, not only substantially differs from the reasons used to back the song's prohibition, as seen in the first opinion, but also criticizes censorial arbitrariness. In this opinion, the song is deemed a "message of solidarity" to a historical event legitimized by the Brazilian government. Though they understood the double meaning of its lines, the censorship agents are against the veto for its association to hypothetical interpretations. It is therefore clear that the censors were concerned with changing the institution's reputation, frequently stigmatized for its authoritarian and ungrounded acts. The defense was nevertheless unsuccessful and the song was recorded for the first time in live album *Chico Buarque e Maria Bethânia ao vivo*, in 1975, without the lyrics. As pointed out by Fiuza (2006, 19), the Brazilian authorities increased the control of the information about the Portuguese revolution, as this was seen as a risk to the Brazilian authoritarianism, bringing up the possibility of the fall of the dictatorship regime also in Brazil.

Two years later, in 1977, the censorship agency also denied approval of the song "*Um Fado*" (A Fado), written by Ivan Lins and lyricist Vitor Martins, which also referred to Portugal. If Chico Buarque's reference to Portugal was somewhat hopeful, in view of the nation's re-democratization process, Lins' reference, in turn, was clearly of disbelief:

9 Report No. 512/71, by censorship officials Ana Kátia Vieira, Lúcia de Rivorêdo Cristofolini, 02 May. 1975. Translated from Portuguese: A revolução havida em Portugal constituiu-se em fato consumado do ponto de vista político e o novo regime foi de imediato reconhecido pelo governo brasileiro, que, desta maneira, excluiu a possibilidade de se considerar os acontecimentos ocorridos naquele país, como ofensivos ou ameaçadores a nosso povo e país. (...) a letra refere-se a uma mensagem de solidariedade e congratulações, enviada por alguém que tenta compartilhar da alegria apesar de ter sido mal sucedido nos seus ideais revolucionários. Esta mensagem de apoio poderia ser enviada de qualquer país (...).O autor omite qualquer referência ao Brasil e às suas autoridades constituídas, tornando ambíguo o sentido e a mensagem de seus versos. Só partindo de suposições poderíamos situar tal posição como perigosa e nociva e enquadrá-la nas normas censórias, e sabemos que toda suposição é vaga, imprecisa, e avisada de se calcar em suposições tem sido a Censura muitas vezes criticada de maneira impiedosa.

<i>Nenhuma esperança à vista</i>	There is no hope in sight
<i>Nada virá do horizonte</i>	Nothing will come from the horizon
<i>Não haverá mais conquistas</i>	There will be no more achievements
<i>E nem quem as conte</i>	Or anyone to tell them
<i>Mulheres gastaram as contas</i>	Women wasted the beads
<i>Do terço em salve-rainhas</i>	Of the rosary in Hail-Maries
<i>Contando nos dedos os filhos</i>	Counting on their fingers the children
<i>Que faltam nas vinhas</i>	Who are missing in the vineyards
<i>Pra enxugar tantos olhos</i>	To dry so many eyes
<i>Fizeram muitos moinhos</i>	They made a lot of mills
<i>Mas o vento foi pouco</i>	But there was little wind
<i>E os olhos do povo</i>	And the eyes of the people
<i>Mancharam as vestes de vinho</i>	Stained the garments with wine
<i>Nenhuma esperança à vista</i>	No hope in sight
<i>Não haverá mais conquistas</i>	There won't be any more conquest
<i>Não, navegar não é preciso</i>	No, navigating isn't necessary
<i>Viver é preciso</i>	Living is necessary

As the title itself reveals, the song is written in a Portuguese style, as a *fado*, which means both destiny or fate, thereby contributing to the ambiguity of the lyrics that speak of a people's lack of hope. Additionally, several other images remit to Portugal, such as past battles won, the Catholic faith, the vineyards and the mills, which are used as a background to portray a dark situation that could be translated into Brazilian reality. As previously mentioned, despite the perspective of a political opening, Brazil was still living under an authoritarian regime, which censored, imprisoned, tortured and killed citizens. Before being approved by the censors, the song was entitled "*Fado de Contas*" (Fado on Beads), and it is possible to trace a parallel, in its words, between women who "*gastaram as contas* (wasted the beads) / *Do terço em salve-rainhas* (Of the rosary in Hail-Maries) / *Contando nos dedos os filhos* (Counting on their fingers the children) / *Que faltam nas vinhas* (Who are missing in the vineyards)," to the mothers, in Brazil, who prayed in vain for the return of their "missing", imprisoned or dead sons in the regime's dungeons. As was the case with Chico Buarque's song, the censorship agency interpreted the content of Lins' song as being political in the three different reviews to which it was subject. In the first review, the censor mentions "the clear political connotation, in what concerns the people's deception."¹⁰ The second review highlights "its clear political orientation, reflecting the complete lack of hope in the change of a state of popular oppression."¹¹ According to the last review, the censor believes that there is "a clear negative sense of its political connotation, portraying the deception and lack of hope of a people with the possibility of witnessing the change

10 Report No. 065, by censorship official Selma Chaves, 06 Jan. 1977. Translated from Portuguese: a evidente conotação política, no que se refere à desilusão do povo.

11 Report No. 066, by censorship official Joel Carlos Tavares de Almeida, 07 Jan. 1977. Translated from Portuguese: evidente sentido político, refletindo total desesperança na modificação de um estado de opressão popular.

of a system of oppression.”¹² It is clear that the censors’ discourses are similar, as if one were repeating the opinion of the other. The metaphorical language did not suffice to trick the censors into approving the song, which was banned based on subjective interpretations, as can be seen in the statement in which the censor believes there is a reference to a “system of oppression.”

However, even though it was denied approval, the song was recorded for the album *Somos Todos Iguais Nesta Noite* (We’re All the Same Tonight) and released in 1977. Based on this information, it is possible to shine a light on the specificities of the existing relationship between artists, their work, censorship and the cultural industry in Brazil. Since the 1964 coup, the government began encouraging a capital internationalization process, backed by private enterprise and on the significant expansion of the market of symbolic assets, based on the principle of “national integration” (Ortiz 2006, 118). Throughout the growth and consolidation process of the activities developed by multinational record labels in Brazil, MPB became one of its most prestigious products (Dias 2000, 58-59). Both the government and the record labels were therefore interested in moving the economy forward, and based on this assumption, it is possible to reflect on how important it was for MPB songs and albums to be released so as to supply the market demands, even though the content thereof was contrary to the regime.

Record labels would often interfere in the censorship process by releasing works vetoed by the censorship agency. One specific case that stands out is that of lawyer João Carlos Muller, who was engaged by multinational record labels specifically to negotiate with the censorship agency. According to Muller, his role was to release the songs, thereby rendering the activities of the music industry feasible (Cavalcanti 2010). The lawyer developed strategies that made it easier to negotiate with the agency; for instance, he mentioned how at times he would suggest songwriters to include a “very violent” song in the repertoire to be subject to approval. As expected, the song was banned; however, if there were still other songs likely to be vetoed, Miller would use the prohibition of the more exaggerated song as an argument to negotiate the approval of the other songs, whose content would be milder. In so doing, he managed to get songs approved. Muller emphasized his role was not ideology-oriented, but a market-oriented procedure. This approach reinforces the existence of an interplay of interests and the contradictory nature of the relations established between censors, artists and the music industry.

The last case I will address in this article refers to the song “*Marcha do Povo Doido*” (March of the Mad People), written by Gonzaguinha, whose analyzed document was submitted to censorial review in 1980. The song is a critique of the government’s political opening process, as can be seen in the excerpt of the words, below:

12 Report No. 064, by censorship official Sonia Maria Galo Mendes, 10 Jan. 1977. Translated from Portuguese: se desprende um sentido negativo pela sua conotação política, retratando a desilusão e falta de esperança de um povo em ver modificado um sistema de opressão.

Aqui quem está doido é o povo, que parece ser o grande culpado pela crise de energia, pela carestia, pela policia e pelo mistério de uma coisa chamada anistia, que se você não sabe, não permitiu ao anistiado ser reintegrado a seu trabalho, a não ser que passasse de novo por um novo júri, uma nova censura de modo que não atrapalhasse uma coisa chamada abertura.

Confesso

A culpa pela carestia

E pela crise de energia

Eu sou o dono da OPEP, ou Pepsi, ou pop ou Cola

Confesso (e nem precisa bater)

E confessar me alivia

Vem meu bem me condena com aquela anistia

Me manda logo pra cadeia

It's the people who have gone mad here, who seem to be truly responsible for the energy crisis, for the high prices, for the police and for the mystery of that thing called amnesty, which, in case you are unaware, didn't allow those who returned to go back to work, unless they were once again submitted to trial, to another type of censure, so as not to mess with that thing called opening.

I admit it

I'm the one to blame for the high prices

And for the energy crisis

I'm the owner of OPEC, Pepsi, pop or Cola

I admit it (and there's no need to hit me)

And I'm relieved by doing so

C'mon, my dear, sentence me to that thing you call amnesty

Send me to jail, once and for all

According to the aforesaid document, filed by record label EMI-Odeon, the lyrics had already been previously approved by the censorship agency; the songwriter would then submit the first excerpt to be included in the recording, as a speech. Gonzaguinha's song is not only ironic, but also a critique of government's opening agenda. It is worth mentioning that one year earlier, in 1979, the "Amnesty Law" was enacted with respect to political crimes, therefore reestablishing the suspended rights and authorizing the return of political exiles to the country; however, it also included a pardon for torturers and other regime agents. In the speech that opens Gonzaguinha's song, the artist refers to the restrictive and controlling conditions imposed by the "Amnesty Law," claiming that citizens, deprived of their freedoms by the regime, had to be tried in order to regain their rights – which did not guarantee that such freedom would be restored. Gonzaguinha furthermore used the interjection "I admit it" sarcastically throughout the song, as if the narrator were subject to police interrogation. As previously mentioned, in several events, the repression agencies used torture to obtain confessions. Gonzaguinha would thus ironically say: "I admit it (and there's no need to hit me) / And I'm relieved by doing so" – the narrator confesses absurd ideas, such as being responsible for the high prices or the energy crisis and asks to be sentenced "to that thing you call amnesty." The songwriter therefore directly attacks the "Amnesty Law" and the limitation on public freedoms

in Brazil. In turn, the censorship agency denied approval on the song, backed by a contradictory opinion:

Though the level of political opening that the government is intending to establish, the lyrics, especially the speech that opens the song, represent a very serious attack on the government's political system, maliciously added to a nice song that will certainly become a hit in radio shows and will condition the listeners' opinion. This is not the case when the press discloses any piece of news.¹³

Despite the perspective of Brazil's re-democratization, the censor believed the message was "dangerous" and capable of inducing public opinion against the regime in a "nice" fashion. It is noteworthy how the censor admits the pursuit for greater political opening, and nevertheless goes against the critical nature of the song. In other words, freedom of speech through music was still inappropriate; however, the same content would not be "dangerous" in the press, according to the censor's opinion, which shows the importance given to popular music for its ability to spread messages against the regime. It is also worth highlighting the censor's concern with the pleasing character of the music, which could easily become a hit, being seen as a particularly dangerous medium. The song was recorded in Gonzaguinha's album *De Volta Ao Começo* (Back to the Start), though there is no information on how it was released.

MPB songs during the "opening period" reveal a collective feeling of hope and euphoria, pulsating in Brazilian society, uniting different voices in the chorus of opposition to the military government and the resumption of democratic freedoms. However, it cannot be said that it has an optimistic character; on the contrary, MPB makes a critical and forceful interpretation of that moment, signaling a climate of hope, but with many uncertainties and fears.

Final Considerations

The purpose of this article has been to expand our understanding of the relationship between censorship and the MPB repertoire, by analyzing some relevant cases of songs written by artists who were very popular and therefore relevant to the music industry at the time. MPB contributed to establish a set of ideas that translated both society's hope for recovering its democratic freedom and its collective values concerning its opposition to the authoritarian regime. However, though represented as a symbolic place of resistance, it also became a privileged product in the cultural industry. From this standpoint, its critical values were also ingredients of success due to the growing demand for protest songs in an increasingly rationalized market. Aside from ideologi-

13 Report No. 383/80, by censorship official L. Fernando, 22 Apr. 1980. Translated from Portuguese: Muito embora o nível de abertura política que se está procurando estabelecer, a presente letra musical com a parte em prosa que a antecipa, são de uma gravidade crítica ao sistema político governamental, maliciosamente adicionada a uma música agradável que chegará ao sucesso nos programas radiofônicos e acarretará um condicionamento no público ouvinte. Não acontece o mesmo quando uma notícia é divulgada pela imprensa.

cal issues, the relations between artists, censors and the market of symbolic assets reveal the clear interplay of interests behind the commercial value of the songs for the record labels and for Brazil's economy. It was also possible to understand the constant concern of the censorship agency in avoiding contrary messages to the regime, guided by the "National Security" doctrine. In spite of Brazil's re-democratization, the censorship agency maintained these purposes. The civil-military dictatorship ended in 1985, but the censorship agency remained active up to 1988, though milder in its actions.

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Abstract

Brazilian popular music, referred to as MPB (acronym for *música popular brasileira*), gained strength as a symbolic space of intellectual debate and political resistance, especially during Brazil's civil-military regime (1964-85). The article focuses on the relationship between MPB production and the regime's censorship based on the analysis of songs written by renowned songwriters and censorship documents available at the *Arquivo Nacional* (National Archive). Although the censorship aimed to restrict messages that could be contrary to the government's state policy, the paper shows that MPB songs and censorship were intertwined in a complex network of interests involving the culture industry. In many cases, the censorship allowed the recording of songs of opposition to the government, considering the importance that they had in the music business.