



Hunger, food and drink in Brazilian popular music: a brief overview

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Abstract

The article reflects on how the themes of hunger, consumption of soft drinks and consumption of beans and rice are addressed in Brazilian popular music. We investigate the years of military dictatorship (1964-1985). The focus of the analysis is on the so-called protest song, a musical genre characterized by aesthetic, cultural, political, ideological and social criticism to military rule. The study of the ideology and philosophy of language of Mikhail Bakhtin is the theoretical reference; especially his concepts of “ideological sign” and “word.” Analysis reveals that the protest song portrayed elements of the economic, political and social contexts and led to the diffusion of healthy or unhealthy eating habits or ideologies, contributing to the construction of the Brazilian dietary identity.

Keywords: hunger; soft drinks; beans with rice; Brazilian popular music; military dictatorship.

The article seeks to reflect on how the theme of food and nutrition is addressed in Brazilian popular music (MPB).¹ We take the 21 years of military dictatorship (March 31, 1964 to March 15, 1985) as the time frame for analysis, which was the historical context in which the “icons” of MPB emerged including the composers Caetano Veloso, Chico Buarque, Edu Lobo, Geraldo Vandré, Gilberto Gil, Gonzaguinha, Ivan Lins, Milton Nascimento, among others.

The musical scenario of this period was the stage for the confluence of different musical genres that emerged, were structured and became consolidated, among which we highlight *Bossa Nova*, *Jovem Guarda*, *Tropicália* and MPB.² In the field of MPB, our focus of analysis will be the so-called “protest song.”³ This is the musical genre that emerged and became consolidated in the historical period under scrutiny, with the main feature being aesthetic, cultural, political, ideological and social criticism as a form of civil resistance and opposition to the military dictatorship (Contier, 1998; Napolitano, Villaça 1998; Naves, 2000; Napolitano, 2004, 2010; Kirschbaum, Carvalho de Vasconcelos, 2007; Neder, 2012; Tinhorão, 2013).

The nutritional scenario of the period was the stage for three major field surveys of food and nutrition: (1) The research into family spending on food conducted in 1962 by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (Fundação Getúlio Vargas – FGV); (2) The Nutrition Survey in Northeast Brazil, in 1963 based on an agreement between the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Development (ICNND) of the United States and the Institute of Nutrition of the Federal University of Pernambuco; and (3) The National Survey of Household Spending (Endef), conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – IBGE) in the years 1974-1975. Different analyses of the findings of such investigations showed that at the time, a significant portion of the population in all regions of the country faced insufficiencies in food consumption, particularly characterized by deficits in the consumption of calories and proteins. The main nutritional consequences of this were reflected in the prevalence of diseases related to hunger and poverty (protein energy malnutrition, vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency anemia, endemic goiter etc.) (Viacava et al, 1983; Mondini, Monteiro, 2000; Vasconcelos, 2007).

As a methodological strategy based on the selection of some musical compositions of the period, we sought to analyze the themes of hunger, consumption of soft drinks and other beverages and consumption of beans with rice addressed by MPB artists throughout the years of military dictatorship. We stress the criteria of intentionality and convenience of both the selection process of the compositions analyzed and the issues that were the focus of our analysis.

We took the ideological and philosophical studies of the language of Bakhtin (1999) as the theoretical reference, particularly his concepts of “ideological sign” and “word.” From the Bakhtinian perspective, “an ideological product is part of a (natural or social) reality as all physical beings, production tools or consumer products; but unlike these, it also reflects and refracts another reality, that is external to it. Everything has an ideological meaning and refers to something outside of oneself. In other words, everything that is ideological is a sign” (p.31). For the author, “the word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence. The whole reality of the word is absorbed by its function as a sign. The word does not contain anything that is not connected to this role, anything that has not been generated by it. The word is the

purest and most sensitive form of the social relationship” (p.36). In other words, the word is the bridge of verbal interaction between the speaker and the listener in social communication or communication in everyday life.

This paper is divided into three sections. In the first, we sought to approach the different meanings (polysemy) that the word hunger revealed in the lyrics of the songs analyzed. In the second, we analyzed how the consumption of soft drinks (particularly Coca-Cola) and other drinks is portrayed. And in the third, we examined how the songs analyzed address the consumption of beans and the combination of beans with rice.

It is worth clarifying the reason for the option to focus the analysis on the consumption of soft drinks and other beverages, beans and the combination of beans with rice. Accumulated scientific evidence in recent years has highlighted these two markers as risk factors (consumption of soft drinks and other sweetened drinks) and protective factors (consumption of beans and the combination of beans with rice) associated with obesity and other chronic non-transmissible diseases (Brasil, 2006; Hu, Malik, 2010; Ko et al, 2010; Silva Santos, Moura, 2010; Malik, Hu, 2012; Rodrigues et al, 2013). On the other hand, based on socio-anthropological and nutritional parameters we assume the premise that the consumption of soft drinks (particularly Coca-Cola) is an eating habit imported from the United States of America, whereas the consumption of the combination of beans and rice is a typical Brazilian eating habit (Cascardo, 2004; Carneiro, 2005; Brasil, 2006; Coca-Cola..., 2013). From this perspective, in this paper the practice of consuming soft drinks (especially Coca-Cola) as an indicator of adopting an unhealthy eating habit, whereas the practice of consuming beans and rice is an indicator of a healthy eating habit, will be analyzed.

Therefore, in relation to the three central themes analyzed (hunger, consumption of soft drinks and consumption of beans with rice), the idea was to identify how the protest song (composition) perceived and portrayed elements of the economic, political and social context; how it favored the diffusion of healthy and unhealthy eating habits or ideologies; and, finally, how it contributed to the construction of the Brazilian dietary identity.

“What do you hunger for?” The complex dimensions of hunger in Brazil

In Brazil, the complex process of genesis and reproduction of hunger has been the scope of study since the early 1930s, when physician Josué de Castro (1908-1973) dared to denounce it as a phenomenon of a multidimensional nature, arising from the conjunction of biological and social dimensions (Vasconcelos, 2001).

Thus, in the book entitled *Geografia da fome* (Geography of hunger), first published in 1946, Josué de Castro (1980, p.305) denounced: “Hunger is nothing more than an expression – the darkest and most tragic expression of economic underdevelopment. It is an expression that will only disappear when economic underdevelopment, with the generalized poverty that this condition entails, is banished forever from the country.”

Still in *Geografia da fome*, finalizing his conclusions as a way of tackling/overcoming hunger, Josué de Castro (1980, p.305) proposed: “We need a policy that accelerates the development process and breaks the most reactionary forces of contention that impede access of large groups

and sectors of the nation to the country's economy and create indispensable opportunities for enhancing our dietary standards."

We would mention that on April 9, 1964 the military dictatorship revoked Josué de Castro's political rights, whereupon he went into exile in Paris, where he died in 1973. In the meantime, hunger was considered a taboo theme by subsequent military governments (Vasconcelos, 2001, 2010b).

In the domain of so-called protest songs, among those that managed to touch upon hunger, one of the most emblematic is "Pra não dizer que não falei das flores" [Not to say that I did not speak of flowers (walking)], composed by Geraldo Vandré in 1968: "In the fields there is hunger in the large plantations / Tentative slogans voiced by those marching in the streets / Though they still make the flower the strongest chorus / And they believe that the flower will defeat the cannon."

In these verses, Geraldo Vandré portrays one of the paradoxes of the socio-economic and political context of the country: poverty and hunger of the Brazilian rural population, to the detriment of abundance and wealth of agriculture for export. It reveals the concentration of land and income in the hands of a minority of major landowners, while the vast majority of the rural population suffer in precarious living conditions. In that context of the 1960s, the process of accentuation of regional disparities and the rural-urban divide became quite evident and it resulted as much from the concentration of capital accumulation in the center-south axis of the country as from its penetration in Brazilian agriculture. In the case of the Northeast, there was an intensification of economic stagnation which, combined with periodic droughts in the region, led to an intensification of labor mobility towards the areas where the concentration of economic growth is to be found. On the other hand, it triggered intense organization, mobilization and struggle of the rural and urban workers in Brazil. For example, we highlight the Peasant Leagues, a movement started in 1955 in Engenho Galileia (municipality of Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco). In the early years of the 1960s, the Peasant Leagues were scattered over all municipalities of Pernambuco and the other states of the Northeast and the country, mobilizing rural workers to call for the implementation of agrarian reform and more in-depth social changes. This movement was progressively dismantled and heavily repressed with the instatement of the military dictatorship in March 1964 (Azevêdo, 1982; Ianni, 1986; Vieira, 1987; Furtado, 1997; Vasconcelos, 2010b).

It is important to dwell on the results of the survey of food consumption conducted in 1962 by FGV in eight Brazilian states (Bahia, Ceará, Minas Gerais, Pará, Paraná, Pernambuco, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro). Although the intake of 2,450 calories was considered critical, this survey found that 38.5% of the population were below this level, with 53.7% corresponding to the urban population and 39.1% to the rural population. In the Northeast, the percentage of the population with insufficient caloric intake was 74.4%, with virtually no differences between the urban and rural population (FGV, 1970; Vasconcelos, 2010b).

As it denounced hunger and encouraged the Brazilian people to go onto the streets and engage in the struggle against the military dictatorship, the song "Pra não dizer que não falei das flores" was banned,⁴ the composer's master tapes were destroyed by the military and Geraldo Vandré was forced into exile from Brazil in 1968 after the passing of Institutional Act No.5 (AI-5) (Napolitano, 2004).

Caetano Veloso (1968) in “Alegria, alegria” (Joy, joy), composed in 1967, also talks about hunger by addressing it in another dimension: “From among photos and names / without books and without rifle / no hunger, no telephone / in the heart of Brazil.”

Of course, the lyrics of “Alegria, alegria” contain many levels of meaning, which are open to multiple interpretations. First of all, it is necessary to situate the socio-historical and political context in which this song was conceived. At the height of the military dictatorship, the apparent disjointed and metaphorical verses created by Caetano Veloso to express his criticism and discontent with that form of government, censorship, imprisonment, torture, military-police violence, exile, cultural alienation, are imbued with significant political sense of protest and contestation. “Alegria, alegria” was also censored and its execution prohibited after the AI-5 decree. Caetano Veloso was also arrested and went into exile in London until 1972, when he returned to Brazil (Napolitano, 2004; Tinhorão, 2013).

In 1976, the duo João Bosco and Aldir Blanc, in the song “O ronco da cuíca” (The roar of the Brazilian friction-drum [*cuíca*]), present us with a provocative approach to the origin of hunger:

Anger can be stopped and interrupted
Hunger cannot be interrupted.
Anger and hunger are wrought by mankind.
Hunger must be backed by anger to be interrupted.
Anger is hunger to be interrupted.
Anger and hunger are wrought by mankind (Bosco, Blanc, 1976b).

In the song “O ronco da cuíca” the words anger and hunger intersect, are differentiated, distinguished and at the same time they complement each other in a relationship of interdependence of the existence of one on the other. The human sentiment of anger, with its corresponding vernacular meaning of great irritation, aversion, fury, despair or hatred for a given situation, person, thing, attitude etc., depending on the song, can be controlled or combatted within certain limits of rationality. Hunger, the corporal expression of the quantitative and/or qualitative physiological need for food and nutrients, whatever the song, cannot be extinguished or interrupted by rational impulses or behavior, as the body must mandatorily be supplied with the required food and nutrients. Thus, as a product of human social relations, economic exploitation of man by man in certain social historical contexts, hunger needed to break the vicious cycle of exploitative relationships in order to be interrupted or extinguished (Castro, 1980; Ferreira, 2010).

In 1977, the song “Gente” (People), Caetano Veloso, poetically portrays the context of poverty and hunger experienced by a significant portion of the population of Brazilian workers in the post-economic miracle period:

People washing clothes, kneading bread,
Poor people eking out a living by hand,
In the heart of the forest, people want to continue,
They want to last; they want to grow,
They want to shine...
People need to shine, not to die of starvation (Veloso, 1977).

We recall that at the time, the contradictions of the Brazilian economic miracle period (1968-1974), such as high unemployment rates, the wage squeeze, rising inflation, the concentration of income and land, the high rates of infant mortality, infectious and parasitic diseases, hunger, malnutrition, growth deficit and other nutritional deficiencies were widely publicized in the national and international press, even with the diligent censorship of the media. One example was the “silence” of the military government regarding the Endef data, namely the survey conducted by IBGE between 1974 and 1975. The results began to be published from 1978 and revealed that 67% of the population had energy consumption below the minimum nutritional requirements recommended by the World Health Organization. As a result, 46.1% of children under five, 24.3% of adults and elderly Brazilian males, and 26.4% of females, suffered from protein-energy malnutrition (Viacava et al, 1983; Mondini, Miller, 2000; Vasconcelos, 2005, 2007).

In 1987, the Titãs (Arnaldo Antunes, Marcelo Fromer and Sergio Brito), composed the “Comida” (Food) song, where hunger acquires a very appropriate dimension in the context of the struggle for democracy that the country was experiencing – hunger for democracy, culture, entertainment, art and happiness:

We want not only food.
We want food, fun and art.
We want not only food.
We want to go anywhere.
We want not only food.
We want drink, fun, ballet.
We want not only food.
We want life as life wants to be.
Drink is water! Food is fodder!
What are you thirsty for? What are you hungry for?
We don't just want to eat.
We want to eat and to make love.
We don't just want to eat.
We want pleasure to alleviate our pain (Antunes, Fromer, Brito, 1987).

It is important to stress the intentional inclusion of the song “Comida” in our analysis, although it extrapolates the limits of the established time frame (1964-1985) and to a certain extent the limits of its inclusion as a protest song. Indeed, in 1987 the country was experiencing the third year of the post-military dictatorship democratization process or democratic transition, in the context known as the New Republic. On the other hand, although it was formed in 1982 with a musical proposal with marked cultural characteristics of resistance to the military dictatorship, the Titãs are linked to a different musical genre to the “protest song,” namely “Brazilian rock” (Marmo, Alzer, 2002; Napolitano, 2010; Tinhorão, 2013). Thus, the intentional inclusion of the song “Comida” in our analysis was an attempt to point out the different approaches to the word hunger in the two contexts.

It can be observed that the *Titãs* refer us not only to satisfying two of the vital human needs – eating and drinking – and the effects of failure to satisfy these needs – hunger and thirst, but also to claim the right to satisfy other equally basic human needs. In the nutritional context, research conducted since the mid-1980s began to signal a reduction in the prevalence of malnutrition (hunger) and the beginning of the escalation of the increased prevalence of obesity (Mondini, Monteiro, 2000; IBGE, 2004; Vasconcelos, 2005, 2007). In this respect, the different portrayals of hunger traced by MPB artists during the military dictatorship and the democratic transition period become comprehensible. Making an analogy of the analysis made by Napolitano (2010) on the distinctions between the radical protest songs of the 1969-1974 period (which he called “songs of the leaden years”) and those of the 1975-1982 period (which he called “songs of openness”),⁵ we would say that the context of hunger portrayed by MPB artists between the years 1960-1970 had passed, but the context of obesity and freedom was already beginning from the mid-1980s onwards, though it was not yet depicted in popular songs.

Finally, in the context of the campaign against military dictatorship and for the democratization of the country, it is worth highlighting the role of the Brazilian health movement, the main objectives of which were to implement health reform and establish the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS) (Fleury, 2009). In addition to this, within this broader movement there is the fight for the Human Right to Adequate Food (Valente, 2002). Thus, we highlight the realization of the eighth National Health Conference (Brasília, March 17-21, 1986), which defined “health as a right of all and a duty of the State” and subsequently the staging of the first National Conference on Food and Nutrition (1st CNAN). The 1st CNAN also held in Brasilia from November 26-28, 1986, was the event where it was first publicly acknowledged that access to adequate food at the different biological stages is a fundamental right of all persons and a paramount obligation of the State (Valente, 2002). We therefore perceive this event as the embryonic process of mobilization and struggle that led to the recent enactment by the Brazilian Congress on February 4, 2010 of the Amendment to the Constitution of 1988, which included nutrition as one of the social rights of all Brazilians in Article 6, as established in Constitutional Amendment Project (Proposta de Emenda à Constituição – PEC) No.47, 2003 (Brasil, 5 fev., 2010).

“I drink a Coca-Cola:” the Americanization of eating habits

The protest song “Alegria, alegria,” launched in 1967 by Caetano Veloso, masterfully portrays the importance that consumption of Coca-Cola already represented in the late 1960s in the eating habits of youngsters: “I drink a Coca-Cola / she thinks of marriage / and a song consoles me / I leave” (Veloso, 1968).

Indeed, the introduction of the consumption of “Coca-Cola” in Brazilian eating habits has been credited to American soldiers, who during the Second World War (1941-1945) made mandatory stops in Pernambuco (Recife) and Rio Grande do North (Natal) before continuing to Europe by ship or by aircraft. During that period, the first bottling plants of the soft drink were established in Brazil and thereafter lavish advertising campaigns were launched for the expansion of its consumption. Some slogans of the campaigns such as “Coca-Cola refreshes

you best” (1959), “Things go better with Coca-Cola” (1966) and “Coca-Cola adds life” (1972) clearly expresses the marketing appeal that the manufacturers of the soft drink strategically employed to increase adherence to the consumption of this important symbol of the American way of life among young Brazilians (Coca-Cola..., 2013).

Taking into consideration the historical context in which Caetano Veloso composed the song “Alegria, alegria,” it can be said that there is a possible ambiguity in the use of the word Coca-Cola, and not only the word itself, but also the entire lyrics, as well as in other songs of the same period. However, we will focus especially on the possible meanings attributed to the word Coca-Cola, which is the key point of our work at this juncture. The ambiguity proposed here is the use of double entendre, a subtle strategy used by artists and intellectuals during the military dictatorship when censorship dominated the advertising and artistic media, banning any form of explicit expression of ideas considered subversive by the military (Couto, 1998; Napolitano, 2004).

Coca-Cola is the symbol of liberty,⁶ according to its slogans and the fact that it is a brand from the United States, a country that had, and still has, the status of the world’s greatest power, misleadingly considered to be the place where dreams can come true. At first sight, one might get the impression that the use of the word Coca-Cola represents the link between Brazil – a country in a full-blown military dictatorship and suffocated by a brutal crisis – and the “model” of an ideal country transmitted by the information channels (Coca-Cola..., 2013).

However, according to the standpoint of the composer who wrote the song, taking into account his critical point of view, we can attribute another view, as from the ideology of protest,⁷ Coca-Cola represents a symbol of alienation. Contradictorily, by deceiving the public with its brand of modernity and liberty, the champion country of modernity and exporter of culture produced a generation plagued by obesity (Ezzati et al, 2006; Lobstein, Jackson-Leach, 2007; Wang et al, 2011).

In this sense, we find the antithesis established in the double entendre which can be elicited by the word Coca-Cola. These two views are possible due to two important factors, the social and historical context, and especially in the following verses:

She thinks of marriage
And I never returned to school
Without handkerchief or document,
I leave ...
I drink a Coca-Cola
She thinks of marriage
And a song consoles me
I leave, (Veloso, 1968).

The word marriage represents imprisonment and establishes a parallelism of ideas with Coca-Cola. When the author says, “And I never returned to school,” we can see a strong criticism of the censorship of the time experienced by Caetano, in which even in schools only what suited the government was taught, that also served as a form of generalized alienation such that future citizens would not comprehend the reality of the atrocities that

were occurring. “Without document,” since those who could see what was happening went into hiding to avoid being found and consequently tortured not to continue slandering government atrocities and denounce their comrades in arms. “And a song consoles me,” because the repressed feelings and the complaints could be expressed so as to circumvent censorship. Thus, we also detect a point of ambiguity found in the lyrics. If the person in the lyrics says that he never returned to school, declares that he has no handkerchief or document and a song consoles him, so it seems to us that he is imprisoned for being against the system. In this way, it makes us think that he is contextualizing out of the dictatorial system, but when he drinks a Coca-Cola he is inserted into that environment because it represents a link to the alienation. A highly important point that cannot be overlooked and that enhances our analysis is the evidence of the United States political, ideological and financial support for the military dictatorship in Brazil and in other Latin American countries (Couto, 1998), so there is nothing more natural than to bring it into this context using Coca-Cola.

As stated above, this song is made up of seemingly disconnected verses that only make sense depending on the type of listener, i.e. a listener who knows and/or has experienced the historical context of the song.⁸ Thus, already in 1968, in the verses of “Alegria, alegria,” Caetano Veloso expressed having the habit of drinking Coca-Cola. This habit that reappears in the song “Você não entende nada” (You do not understand anything), originally recorded by singer Gal Costa in 1970. We recall that at the time of recording of “Você não entende nada,” Caetano Veloso was in exile in London; so, some verses of the song allude to this context (Napolitano, 2004; Tinhorão, 2013). On the other hand, other verses seem to depict the incorporation and dissemination of eating habits that are inadequate and dangerous to health, such as the consumption of Coca-Cola during the main meals and, simultaneously, consumption of dessert, coffee with sweetener and cigarettes (Brazil, 2006; Hu, Malik, 2010; Ko et al, 2010; Malik, Hu, 2012). Therefore, these verses seem to indicate a criticism of automation and the desire to break and transgress it:

You bring a Coca-Cola and I drink it,
 You lay the table and I eat and eat ...
 I sit, I smoke, I eat, I cannot stand it,
 Bring my coffee, which I drink with sweetener
 Bring the dessert and I eat and eat ...
 You have to know that I want to tour the world
 Experience danger
 I want to go away
 I want to get out of here
 And I want you to come with me (Veloso, 1968).

Meanwhile, Milton Nascimento, in the song “Saudades dos aviões da Panair (conversando no bar)” [I miss the Panair planes (chatting at the bar)] in 1975, seven years after Caetano Veloso sang that he drank Coca-Cola, tells us that his adherence to the habit of consuming this product was only just beginning: “The beer I drink today is only as a tribute to the days

of Panair / my first Coca-Cola was, I now remember, on the wings of Panair / the height of perfection was, / flying above the world on the wings of Panair” (Nascimento, Brant, 1975).

On the other hand, the duo João Bosco and Aldir Blanc composed “Dois pra lá, dois pra cá” (Two on the way there, two on the way back), originally recorded in 1973 by Elis Regina (1945-1982), which tells of the consumption of the alcoholic mixture of whisky with *guaraná*: “Today, while getting drunk on whisky with *guaraná*, / I heard your voice whispering there are two on the way there and two on the way back” (Bosco, Blanc, 1975).

The musicality of the mixture of “whisky with *guaraná*” with the dance steps seem perfect, but most of all brings us again to the identification of the dietary syncretism⁹ of the Brazilian people. We stress that other alcoholic drinks or cocktails (mixture of spirits with a soft drink) very common in Brazil at that time were “Cuba *libre*” (mixture of rum with Coca-Cola and a slice of lemon). There was also the Brazil alternative, the *Sambão* (mixture of *cachaça* with Coca-Cola), not to mention the authentic Brazilian alcoholic drink – *caipirinha* (*cachaça*, lime, sugar and ice).

It is important to stress that the beginning of the industrialization process of *guaraná*-based drinks in Brazil occurred from 1905 onwards, but it was only in 1921 that the current soft drink brand called Guaraná Antarctica was launched on the market. It is now the second soft drink brand most consumed in Brazil and one of the 15 most consumed in the world (Guaraná..., s.d.). According to data from surveys conducted by IBGE between 1974-1975 and 2002-2003, the per capita annual amount of *guaraná* soft drink purchased for home consumption increased from 1.297 to 7.656 liters/kg (IBGE, 2004).

For his part, in his 1971 song “Chocolate,” Tim Maia (1942-1998) sought to express his apparent dietary preference for a non-alcoholic drink, namely chocolate. In this way, he expressed his “rejection” of a soft drink more usually consumed in the context of Brazilian dietary habits (tea, coffee, Coca-Cola and *guaraná*) (IBGE, 2004, 2010; Brasil, 2006):

I don't want tea.

I don't want coffee.

I don't want Coca-Cola.

I'm hooked on chocolate.

I just want chocolate.

There's no point bringing me *guaraná*.

It's chocolate that I want to drink (Maia, 1971).

The fact is that in order to circumvent censorship and to avoid an explicit reference to drug use (alcohol, amphetamines, marijuana, hashish, etc.), there are biographical accounts that Tim Maia used the word “chocolate” to camouflage the use of hashish (Motta, 2007). Indeed, given current scientific evidence, chocolate consumption compared to other soft drinks rejected in Tim Maia's song is now associated with effects that are beneficial to health, particularly in relation to its antioxidant, cardio-protective and anti-inflammatory properties, among others (Ephraim, Alves, Jardim, 2011).

In 1973, Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil released the song “Cálice” (Chalice), which was immediately censored and banned until 1978.¹⁰ Aside from the lyrical and ideological use

of words with which the song ends, the authors seemingly recommend giving up a dietary habit of ancient origin, namely wine consumption:¹¹ “Lord! Take this chalice away from me / of blood red wine / how can one drink this bitter draft / sip the pain and swallow the drudgery?” (Buarque, Gil, 1978).

We emphasize that the lyricism of the song is marked by the strength of the metaphorical use of the term chalice and its contextual ambiguity. Thus, the appeal for giving up this dietary habit of ancient origin cannot be divorced from the ideological issue, namely the symbolism of wine employed by the Christian tradition,¹² that the poets appropriate to denounce the sacrifice of victims of the military dictatorship and the imposition of silence by censorship and the omission of the Church.

Finally, four decades later, the scientific evidence of prejudice to health/nutrition that consumption of soft drinks and sweetened drinks causes is abundant, particularly in relation to its association with the development of obesity and associated chronic diseases (Hu, Malik, 2010; Ko et al, 2010; Malik, Hu, 2012). It seems to us that it would be politically incorrect within the paradigm of “healthy eating” of the present day (WHO, 2004; Vasconcelos, 2010a) to sing about the consumption of soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

Following the line of interpretation of Napolitano (2010, p 400) on the political and social role of MPB, he concludes that “it is plausible that popular music had some responsibility for the expansion of civil resistance ideas and values, by infiltrating the whispers of poetic conspiracies in the circle of fear built by repression.” We would say that the songs analyzed in this paper had some responsibility for the spread of soft drink consumption habits (particularly Coca-Cola) and other beverages, contributing jointly with a complex network and multiple causes of biological and environmental factors to the current prevalence of obesity and associated diseases of the Brazilian population (Brasil, 2006).

“The black bean that hits the spot:” the Brazilian dietary identity

Numerous Brazilian songs extol the importance of the consumption of beans as one of the main staples that make up the Brazilian dietary model. Thus, in the song “Cotidiano” (The Daily Routine), composed by Chico Buarque in 1971, when reporting the day-to-day routine of the Brazilian worker, there appears a reference to the daily consumption of beans at lunch. This can both express the existence of a monotonous dietary pattern, as well as denote the historical and cultural roots of the eating habits of the population. As per the lyrics: “Every day, I think only of being able to stop; / at noon I only think of saying no, / then I think of the life ahead / and I keep quiet with a mouthful of beans” (Buarque, 1971b).

Similarly, in his description of living conditions of the civil construction worker in the song “Construção” (Construction), also recorded in 1971, Chico Buarque reports daily consumption of “beans mixed with rice” as a main dish or single lunch “He ate beans and rice like a prince ... / he ate beans and rice as if it were the best” (Buarque, 1971a).

In 1978, the year the Brazilian Amnesty Committee was created, bringing together various civil society organizations (Carlos, 2008), Chico Buarque released the song “Feijoada completa” (*Feijoada* with trimmings) teaching the recipe of the most traditional dish of contemporary Brazilian cuisine to welcome returning political exiles:

Woman, you will like it
I'm bringing some friends over to chat
They are so hungry that they can hardly talk
They are thirsty as if they hadn't drank since the day before yesterday
Get super cooled beer ready for a battalion
And let's add water to make the beans go further

Woman, you do not need to fluster
You do not have to set the table, there isn't room
Put the dishes on the floor, and the meal will be ready
And prepare the sausages for appetizers
Cachaça, sugar, ice bucket, lemon
And let's add water to make the beans go further

Woman, you will fry
A heap of crackling to accompany the
White rice, farofa flour and chilies
Two types of oranges
Put the dried sausage, jerky and bacon in the pot
And let's add water to make the beans go further

Woman, after adding salt
Cook well to thicken the broth
Take advantage of the fat in the pan
To season and fry the kale Minas-style
Tell our brother you're broke and send the bill to him
And let's add water to make the beans go further (Buarque, 1978).

The song "Tô voltando" (I'm coming back), composed by Maurício Tapajós and Paulo Cesar Pinheiro, became popular with the recording made by singer Simone, in 1979, at the dawn of the political amnesty process. It alludes to the desire of a political exile hopeful to be able to taste those "black beans" prepared by his beloved: "You can get the place ready / and prepare those black beans, / I'm coming back" (Tapajós, Pinheiro, 1979).

The song "O preto que satisfaz" (The black bean that hits the spot) composed in 1979 by Gonzaguinha (1945 to 1991), is another example of the significant cultural and nutritional role played by beans in Brazil:

Ten out of ten Brazilians prefer beans.
This very Brazilian flavor and binding factor of family togetherness.
This adventurous flavor of the famous Wonder Bean.
Makes mom, dad, son and daughter happier.

Ten out of ten Brazilian prefer beans!
 Pure, with bread, rice, flour or pasta, pasta!
 That's when they forget their prejudices.
 They shout that the black one is an old bosom friend.
 Beans are like a party; they are the best and don't do any harm.
 Yesterday, today, forever, beans, beans, black beans, hit the spot! (Nascimento Junior, 1979).

As pointed out in *Geografia da fome* (Vasconcelos, 2008), Josué de Castro introduced the concepts of dietary areas, areas of hunger and the Brazilian dietary mosaic, tracing the first map of hunger in the country. By “dietary areas,” he conceived a given geographic region that had typical resources, a standard diet based on certain regional products and with its people reflecting the marked influence of the diet in their biological and sociocultural characteristics. And by “Brazilian dietary mosaic,” he conceived the regional differentiation of existing types of diet in the country, arising from the different categories of natural resources and the different ethnic groups that constitute the Brazilian nation. Thus, in *Geografia da fome* the country was divided into five different dietary areas distributed as follows: (1) Amazon region; (2) Sugar-producing northeast or the northeastern scrubland; (3) northeastern hinterland; (4) Midwest; and (5) the Deep South. At that time, in all Brazilian regions, with the exception of the Deep South, beans appear as one of the four food components comprising the diet of the population (Castro, 1980).

Also in a previous study (Vasconcelos, 2001), when analyzing the contribution of Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) to the characterization of the field of nutrition in Brazil, based on reading *Casa-grande e Senzala* (Freyre, 1998), we observed that, for that author, the interaction of ethno-cultural, socio-economic and geographical factors enabled the determination of the pattern of consumption and eating habits of Brazilian colonial society. For Gilberto Freyre, the aforesaid pattern was the product of dietary syncretism of the Brazilian Indian, black African and white Portuguese cuisine. To this end, he produces proof in order to demonstrate that it was the mixture of the cuisines of the three races that formed the hybrid cuisine, which is for him the authentic Brazilian cuisine. Although in some passages Gilberto Freyre reports the consumption of beans in the period of colonial slave society, there is no record of the consumption of the mixture of beans with rice, or indeed of *feijoada*. According to Gilberto Freyre, cassava flour is the backbone of our dietary system. In various sections, he draws attention to two native food products – cassava and corn – especially cassava flour, which he considers has become the fundamental food of Brazil.

In recent decades, some studies have sought to establish the historical, socio-cultural and symbolic origins of the consumption of beans, beans mixed with rice and the Brazilian *feijoada* (Maciel, 2001; Papavero, 2002; Elias, 2004; Carneiro, 2005; Silva, Gomes, 2008). Many of these studies take as a reference the work of Luís da Câmara Cascudo (1898-1986) entitled *História da alimentação no Brasil* (The history of food in Brazil) (Cascudo, 2004), where there are the first records of the *feijoada* as a symbol of Brazilian cuisine as the typical national dish and synthesis of our dietary identity.

The songs analyzed in this section reveal that the MPB artists performed a painstaking dietary survey of eating habits of the population (Vasconcelos, 2007), highlighting beans and the combination of beans with rice as staple daily food dishes and *feijoada* as an atypical dish, for feast days, weekends or gatherings with friends. The sensation perceived is that singing about beans, beans with rice and *feijoada* became “fashionable” in MPB in the 1970s.

In the songs “*Cotidiano*” and “*Construção*,” which were representatives of the musical genre called by Napolitano (2010, p.391) “songs of the leaden years” because they were launched at the time of extreme violence of the military dictatorship (1969-1974), beans and the combination of beans with rice appear as staple daily dishes of the oppressed Brazilian worker. However, in other songs (“*Feijoada completa*,” “*Tô voltando*” and “*O preto que satisfaz*”) – representatives of the musical genre called by Napolitano (2010, p.391) “songs of openness” because they were launched in the period of “easing” of the military dictatorship (1975-1982) – beans, the combination of beans with rice and other foods and *feijoada* appear as an atypical dish, for feast days, weekends or gatherings with friends or family.

However, the analysis of the temporal trend of the availability of beans and rice in the diet of Brazilian families, as witnessed by the Household Budget Surveys (Pesquisas de Orçamento Familiar – POFs) of the IBGE, has pointed to the constant reduction of the percentage share of these food items during the period from 1974 to 2009. Thus, between 1974-1975 and 2002-2003, a reduction of 30% and 23% was observed in the domestic availability of beans and rice, respectively. In the period from 2002-2003 and 2008-2009, the decrease observed was 26.4% for beans and 40.5% for rice (IBGE, 2004, 2010; Rodrigues et al, 2013.).

So we need to listen again to the song of Chico Buarque and “eat beans and rice like a prince, eat beans and rice as if it were the best,” eating beans and rice because it is healthy.

Final considerations

The analysis performed reinforces the idea that protest songs that were the scope of our investigation were important tools of communication between the singers/songwriters and their listeners (speakers and interlocutors from the Bakhtinian perspective), based on the polysemic dissemination of the words and phrases that comprised their lyrics.

It was possible to identify that some songs fulfilled the role of portraying scenes of the historical context, denouncing the conditions of hunger, poverty, violence and exploitation of significant portions of the Brazilian population. Others were a vehicle of criticism and simultaneously of dissemination of new eating habits and ideologies. Others extolled the socio-cultural role of given foods and typical dishes in the process of construction of our dietary identity. Consequently, as a whole, the protest songs contributed to the process of construction of the Brazilian national identity within the context analyzed.

In addition to the dimensions outlined, we should add that MPB created in the years of military dictatorship also sought to define other interpretive trails of the act of human eating habits. In this sense, it is worth mentioning an excerpt from the song “*Rancho da goiabada*,” composed by João Bosco and Aldir Blanc in 1976:

The laborers when they have a few drinks
 To dispel their sadness
 Dream of a steak, fried egg and French fries
 And the dessert
 Is guava paste with plenty of cheese
 After that, coffee, a cigarette and the kiss of a mulatto girl
 Called Leonor or Dagmar (Bosco, Blanc, 1976a).

In these verses, João Bosco and Aldir Blanc try to induce in the alcohol-fueled dream of the laborers what Claude Fischler (1995) called the symbolic dimension of the food identity. For Fischler (1995), besides the nutritional dimension or value (being a source of energy, vitamins and minerals necessary for building and maintenance of the human body), food includes a symbolic dimension or value (being a source of imagery, social or collective meanings and representations). So, instead of portraying the reality of hunger and political and social exclusion experienced by the huge number of temporary agricultural workers that the capitalist modernization process of Brazilian agriculture created from 1960 onwards (Gonçalves Neto, 1997), João Bosco and Aldir Blanc appeal to the food dream (a lunchbox containing a steak, fried egg and French fries, guava paste with plenty of cheese and coffee). Nevertheless, they have also sung of the unhealthy habits of alcohol consumption and smoking of the protagonists of “Rancho da goiabada.”

NOTES

¹ It is important to stress here that in the literature investigated there is no consensus on the concept of Brazilian popular music (*Música Popular Brasileira* – MPB). One finds the use of the expression Brazilian popular music both in the broadest sense (without chronological limitation or musical genre, spanning from the music of the eighteenth century to funk in the twenty-first century) and in the strict sense (with chronological limitation and musical genre) (Contier, 1998; Napolitano, 2004; Neder, 2012; Tinhorão, 2013). In this paper, we will adopt the concept of MPB in its restricted sense as presented by Napolitano (2004, p.105): “MPB (Brazilian Popular Music), an acronym that since the mid-1960s has encompassed music of a national-popular style (broadened from 1968 onwards to include other cultural styles, such as pop), openly critical of the military regime.”

² Regarding the different musical genres that emerged, became structured and consolidated in the period under review (*Bossa Nova*, *Jovem Guarda*, *Tropicália*, MPB, among others), we refer to the following texts: Contier (1998); Napolitano, Villaça (1998); Naves (2000); Napolitano, Wasserman (2000); Kirschbaum, Carvalho de Vasconcelos (2007); Neder (2012); and Tinhorão (2013).

³ In the literature investigated we also did not detect a consensus on the concept of “protest song.” We note the use of variants like “engaged” song, “participant song,” “avant-garde song,” “resistance song,” “political song,” “opposition song” and “leftist song,” some often used as synonyms and others not. For Contier (1998, p.14), for example, “the so-called protest songs, written by dozens of composers during the 1960s, at first blush represented a possible political intervention of the artist in the social reality of the country, thus contributing to transformation into a more equitable society.” In turn, in Napolitano (2004, 2010) there appears a mention of the term “protest song,” but the expression “engaged song” is more often used: “The engaged song in all its variants, not only spoke of the authoritarian context and the struggles of civil society, but poetically and musically speaking it helped to create a meaning for the social experience of resistance to the military regime, transforming ‘civil courage’ in dark times into a poetical and musical synthesis” (Napolitano, 2010, p.390).

⁴ The song “Pra não dizer que não falei das flores” was re-recorded in 1979 by singer Simone, achieving critical and public acclaim, becoming one of the songs of the movement for political openness in the country.

⁵ Comparing the 1975-1982 context to the 1969-1974 context, Napolitano (2010, p.391) considers that “The era of extreme violence had passed, but the era of freedom had not yet begun.”

⁶ According to Bakhtin (1999, p.32), “any consumer product can likewise be turned into an ideological sign. ... But the consumer product as such is not, in any way, a sign.”

⁷ The ideology of protest contained in the so-called engaged song, in accordance with different analyses, involved the adoption of ideas and principles against the internationalization of the economy, culture and other spheres of society under the aegis of imperialism. In the specific field of Brazilian popular music, it involved the political and ideological struggle against the influence of imperialism represented by certain musical genres such as jazz and rock, and the defense and enhancement of musical genres of the national and popular base (*samba, marcha, frevo, baião*, among others). The *Tropicália* movement, introduced in particular by Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, appears to have distanced itself from some of these political and ideological bases. In this respect, at the time, both were considered by fellow artists and MPB critics as “alienated” and “Americanized.” From this perspective, both the use of electrical and electronic musical instruments and the reference to the habit of consuming “Coca-Cola” in the lyrics of “Alegria, alegria” seem to indicate the “modernizing,” “Americanized” and “alienated” trend of the creators of *Tropicália* (Contier, 1998; Napolitano, 2004, 2010; Neder, 2012; Tinhorão, 2013).

⁸ According to Bakhtin (1999, p.106), “the meaning of the word is completely determined by its context. Indeed, there are as many possible meanings as there are possible contexts. However, this does not mean that the word ceases to be unique.” From the perspective of Bakhtin (1999), the word is the bridge of verbal interaction between the speaker and the listener (speaker and listener or in our case, singer/composer and listener). It seems to us, then, that this view is consistent with the reflection made by Napolitano (2010, p.397) on the problem of social realization of the song: “The political form and function of a song must be included in the analysis of the actual hearing situations, which makes it possible to inject tension into the interplay between the author’s intention, the form of the work and the conditions of appropriation by the public.”

⁹ We are considering the “whisky with *guaraná* mixture” as a case of “Brazilian dietary syncretism” within the perspective of Gilberto Freyre (1998): the fusion of a national drink (*guaraná* soft drink) with a foreign alcoholic beverage.

¹⁰ Regarding the song “Cálice,” see, among others, the briefing notes on its process of creation, censorship and dissemination on the official website of the singer Chico Buarque, especially the website: http://www.chicobuarque.com.br/construcao/mestre.asp?pg=calice_73.htm. Accessed on: 12 Feb. 2014.

¹¹ Regarding the effects of wine consumption for nutrition and health, particularly on potential beneficial/protective effects against the development of chronic diseases (cardiovascular diseases, certain types of cancer etc.), see, among others, Rique, Soares, Meirelles (2002) and Penna, Hecktheuer (2004).

¹² In line with the theoretical reasoning contained in Bakhtin (1999).

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