

Popular movements and their importance in the regime changes occurred towards the end of the Cold War. Case study: Democracia Corinthiana

Macovei Mircea-Andrei¹

Keywords: Cold War; Brazil; Democracia Corinthiana; Sócrates; dictatorship; football; popular movement; democracy; human rights;

Abstract: *The end of the XXth century represented a complex period, in which several countries were about to know internal, as well as external conflicts, the power of which would mark a significant turning point in global history. These frictions gave birth to ample popular movements that would shatter the world order imposed at that moment. Among these manifestations of social will we can find what will become known as Democracia Corinthiana. The ideological movement born at the start of the 1980s in Brazil, around the professional football club Sport Club Corinthians Paulista to be more precise, stood behind legendary figures of the sport such as Sócrates, represents one of the most essential actions in the fight against the Brazilian military dictatorship of the time. The present study aims to analyse both the movement in its entirety, its results, and its importance in the events that led to the fall of the militarist regime in Brazil in 1985, and the place that these events hold in the global context of the precursory years of the end of the Cold War. The subject of this study has been addressed in earlier studies, in a manner more or less similar, however, the principal aspect of those papers has been focused on internal events and much less on their involvement in the international context. Furthermore, a large number of those studies are only accessible in the Portuguese language, which makes their analysis somewhat difficult. The methodology used in the completion of this study is limited to researching available primary sources, as well as secondary literature that has dealt with the subject in question. Thus, this research paper presents to the general public a less accessible subject, as well as a substantial episode of the fight against authoritarianism, of popular organization, but also of*

¹ My areas of academic interest are comprised of various subjects, such as the propagation of ideas through cultural means; the evolution of national identity and separatist movements; the impact of popular movements in society; foreign policy, international relations, and diplomacy; andrei.mircea24042013@gmail.com; doi:10.31178/eas.2025.9.3

democracy and its means. At the same time, it contributes to the understanding of the social phenomena that led to the regime changes that occurred at the end of the XXth century and their consequences.

Ideological fight begets doctrinal thawing of relations

The beginning of the 1980s brought with itself a new episode in the long-disputed Cold War that has dominated the global picture since the immediate years succeeding the end of the Second World War. Once the actor-turned-politician, Ronald Reagan, resoundingly defeated former president Jimmy Carter in the 1980 elections and thusly became the 40th president of the United States of America in 1981, he ushered in what would become known as the Reagan Doctrine. Though never officially promulgated as a series of coherent policy initiatives, in the way presidential predecessors such as Truman or Nixon did with theirs, the doctrine emerged from the writings of Reagan's Republican supporters or statements supported by think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation. The term itself was coined by political columnist Charles Krauthammer. Its essence was the active destabilization of countries thought to be following Marxist/Leninist and pro-Soviet ideologies. In this way, Reagan was determined to put an end to what he perceived to be an expansion of Soviet power by escalating the intensity of the Cold War confrontation, objective reflected in the administration's rhetoric, the rearmament programme and the selected intervention in countries belonging to the Third World.² The preferred targets of the destabilization policy were Afghanistan and Nicaragua, both with lasting consequences. In Afghanistan, the short-term goal of sucking the Soviet army into a mirror image of the Vietnamese war worked in the American interest, however, in the longer term, the state presented itself for a long time as a polarized society, prone to violence and warlordism, which prompted a 20-year war led by the United States against Al-Qaeda and the Talibans. In Nicaragua, the destabilization of the Sandinista regime through the funding of rebel groups led to the controversial "arms for hostages" diplomacy and to the Iran-Contra affair.³

² Graham Evans, Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, London, Penguin Books, 1998, p. 464.

³ *Ibidem*.

On February 6, 1985, on his 74th birthday, Ronald Reagan delivered his fourth State of the Union Address, in which he defended his administration's foreign policy of supporting anti-Communist insurgents. During this speech, he stated, among others, that: "We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth."⁴ What he didn't know at the time was that just a month after his speech the Politburo of the Soviet Union would elect Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary, and as such would change the course of the Cold War. Gorbachev brought his own doctrine, focusing on a reorientation of domestic policy, characterized by two concepts: glasnost (openness/transparency) and perestroika (restructuring). This internal change also had external echoes, especially coupled with the fact that the Soviet elite came to believe that superpower status and ideological hegemony carried a heavy economic burden that offered too little in return. As such, despite the apparent success of the Brezhnev era, which oversaw the American conflict in Vietnam, the socialist revolutions in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, or the revolutionary momentum gained in Latin America, the Soviet Union had, in fact, little actual gains from these moments. Angola and Mozambique became debtors pretty quickly and Ethiopia was ravaged by famine, whilst the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan troubled the resources of the Soviets even further. An energy crisis in Eastern Europe in 1984-1985, the growing dependence on Western sources of technology and food commodities, and a renewal of the arms race with the United States exacerbated the economic problems and resulted in a fundamental reappraisal of Soviet goals. Thus, the Gorbachev Doctrine changed the direction of foreign and defence policies and focused on the alleviation of international relations, especially with the United States.⁵

When confronted with the Gorbachev Doctrine, the Reagan Doctrine slowly lost power and favour and the two superpowers moved towards easing their relations. This international context brought forth the ending of the 1980s and soon the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the whole communist bloc. Its conclusion was facilitated by a series of popular movements, through various

⁴ Department of State – Office of the Historian, *Reagan Doctrine, 1985*, U.S., accessed April 12, 2025, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/rd/17741.htm>.

⁵ Graham Evans, Jeffrey Newnham, *op.cit*, pp. 207-208.

ways. However, not only in Europe, and not only in the communist states, could echoes of this period be found. As Professor Samuel P. Huntington designated it, "the third wave of democratization"⁶, hit many other parts of the globe, amongst which the subject of this study can be found, even though the domain that produced the popular movement in question may be somewhat surprising to some.

The Fifth Brazilian Republic: Oppression in the name of progress

On March 31, 1964, United States President Lyndon B. Johnson was spending his morning at his ranch in Texas when his phone started ringing. It was a briefing stating that the coup d'état against Brazilian left-wing president João Goulart had begun. The president's conclusion left no room for interpretation: "I think that we ought to take every step that we can", "Be prepared to do everything that we need to do, as we were in Panama, if that is at all feasible...I'd put everybody there, anyone that has any imagination or ingenuity...we just can't take this one and I'd get right on top of it and stick my neck out a little."⁷ As such, Operation Brother Sam came into action. The result was quick, as Goulart fell without civilian resistance or military confrontation: on the 1st of April the military dictatorship was established, on the 2nd, Operation Brother Sam was deactivated and the US government recognized the new government of Brazil, and two days later Goulart fled into exile, never again to return to Brazil.⁸ The coup was planned and executed by the most senior commanders of the Brazilian Army and gained favour and support amongst most high-ranking military members and conservative sectors of society, such as the Catholic Church.⁹, or amongst anti-communist civilian movements.

The period of the military dictatorship was marred by extensive censorship and a large number of human rights abuses, including but not limited to torture, killings, and forced

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Democracy's Third Wave* in "Journal of Democracy", vol. 2, no. 2, 1991, p. 12.

⁷ Matias Spektor, *The United States and the 1964 Brazilian Military Coup* in "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History", April 26, 2018, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-551>.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Angelo Barreiro Gonçalves, *A Igreja Católica e o golpe de 1964* [The Catholic Church and the 1964 coup] in "Akrópolis – Revista de Ciências Humanas da UNIPAR" [UNIPAR's Journal of Human Sciences], vol. 13, no. 1, 2008, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://revistas.unipar.br/index.php/akropolis/article/view/454>.

disappearances.¹⁰ The oppressive measures were maintained and codified by the enactment of legal and extra-legal decrees. As such, several Institutional Acts and Complementary Acts were issued in the years following the coup, the former because the measures desired by the new government needed to supersede the 1946 Constitution (and the 1967 one, after it was issued), as they were against it, and the latter because the need to elaborate on the general intent of the Institutional Acts arose. Because of this, a new Constitution would be promulgated by the National Congress on January 24, 1967¹¹ and come into force on March 15, during the latter part of Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco's presidential term. Some of the more important acts of this new constitution were as follows: the restriction of political rights by limiting direct elections to state and county level (federal territories, the largest and most important cities – deemed of interest to national security – were also exempt from direct voting) and by choosing presidents and governors in indirect elections with predetermined results; restriction of civil rights by instituting the need for authorization and supervision of any meeting, assembly or gathering of people; tasking the military police with maintaining order and internal security (reducing the power of civilian police); removal of judges' privileges (allowing the president power over them); introducing restrictive rules for the formation of new political parties (allowing the existence of only two political factions – the government party, *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* [National Renewal Alliance Party] or ARENA, and the controlled opposition, *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* [Brazilian Democratic Movement] – especially considering that all previous political parties were disbanded after the coup); granting the president the right to issue decrees that come into effect immediately and would be codified if the Congress does not deliberate on them in a timely manner.¹²

¹⁰ Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *A Present Past: The Brazilian Military Dictatorship and the 1964 Coup*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2022; Human Rights Watch, *Brazil: Prosecute Dictatorship-Era Abuses*, April 14, 2009, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/04/14/brazil-prosecute-dictatorship-era-abuses>.

¹¹ *Constituição promulgada em 1967 : Constituição que buscou legitimar o governo militar autoritário (07' 55")* [The Constitution promulgated in 1967: The Constitution that sought to legitimize the authoritarian military government (07' 55")], Câmara dos Deputados [Chamber of Deputies], November 12, 2006, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://www.camara.leg.br/radio/programas/277511-constituicao-promulgada-em-1967-constituicao-que-buscou-legitimar-o-governo-militar-autoritario-07-55/>.

¹² Political Database of the Americas, *República Federativa de Brasil - Constitución Política de 1967* [Federative Republic of Brazil – Political Constitution of 1967], accessed April 13, 2025, <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/brazil67.html>.

On December 14, 1968, the heavily censored *Jornal do Brasil* featured an interesting weather forecast on its front page: "Tempo negro. Temperatura sufocante. O ar está irrespirável. O país está sendo varrido por fortes ventos. Máx.: 38°, em Brasília. Mín.:5°, nas Laranjeiras."¹³ [Dark times. Suffocating temperature. The air is unbreathable. The country is being swept by strong winds. Max.: 38° in Brasilia. Min.: 5° in Laranjeiras.]¹⁴ The reason for this ominous text was the recent issuing, just a day before, of the Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5) by President Arthur da Costa e Silva. The wording of the forecast was meant to convey the severity of this new act, which enforced even harsher legislation than the Constitution adopted a year before. As such, according to the text of AI-5: the president was allowed to recess the National Congress and the State Legislative Assemblies (which he did almost immediately) and to assume full legislative power during the period of recession, to intervene in the states under the pretext of national security, to confiscate the property of those deemed to have gained riches illegally, to remove politicians, to suspend the political rights of any citizen for 10 years and even to "establish restrictions or prohibitions related to the exercise of any other public or private rights".¹⁵ However, the most important part of this act was that the "guarantee of habeas corpus is suspended in cases of political crimes against national security, social and economic order, and consumer economy"¹⁶, which enabled the perpetration of severe human rights abuses. The Act also furthered the censorship and the lack of civil rights, and was exempt from judicial review, as were all the other Institutional Acts before it.

President Arthur da Costa e Silva fell ill in August 1969 and in order for the presidency to not fall to the vice-president Pedro Aleixo, who was a civilian, a military junta composed of Army Minister General Aurélio de Lira Tavares, Navy Minister Admiral Augusto Hamann Rademaker Grunewald and Air Force Minister Brigadier Márcio de Souza e Mello assumed power until the transition to a new president. During this time, on October 17, the first Constitutional Amendment was introduced. Although just an amendment, it is regarded by some as a Constitution of its own, mainly because it rewrote a large portion of the 1967 Constitution. Nevertheless, the more

¹³ *Jornal do Brasil*, no. 213, December 14, 1968, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=0qX8s2k1IRwC&dat=19681214&printsec=frontpage>.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

¹⁵ Central Intelligence Agency – Special National Intelligence Estimate, *The Situation in Brazil*, no. 93-69, February 13, 1969, p. 17, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000753959.pdf.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

important aspect is that it introduced a lot of the legislation of AI-5 into the core law of Brazil.¹⁷ This solidified what would become known as "Anos de Chumbo" [Years of Lead], the most aggressive years of repressive measures, most of them under President Emílio Garrastazu Médici.

Despite the oppression, the beginning of the 1970s brought a period of exceptional economic growth, known as the "Milagre Brasileiro" [Brazilian Miracle]. This growth was driven by an increase in foreign investment and by a state-led investment program that oversaw the undertaking of immense construction projects, such as the Trans-Amazonian Highway, the Itaipu Dam, and the Rio–Niterói bridge. It is interesting to point out that strangely, both the economic miracle and the aggressively repressive years managed to exist at the same time, which proved to be somewhat of a divisive force in society. According to Brazilian journalist and writer Elio Gaspari: "O Milagre Brasileiro e os Anos de Chumbo foram simultâneos. Ambos reais, coexistiram negando-se. Passados mais de trinta anos, continuam negando-se. Quem acha que houve um, não acredita (ou não gosta de admitir) que houve o outro."¹⁸ [The Brazilian Miracle and the Years of Lead were simultaneous. Both were real, coexisting while denying each other. More than thirty years later, they continue to deny each other. Those who think one existed don't believe (or don't like to admit) that the other one did.]

Regardless, the Miracle would start crumbling down with the 1973 oil crisis, because in order to sustain its economic growth, Brazil needed to import more and more oil, which proved increasingly difficult once OPEC announced its oil embargo. Brazil had to borrow from international lenders, and its debt increased exponentially and became unmanageable, a situation not helped by the fact that its impressive investment program had also been funded through international credit institutions.¹⁹ By the end of the decade, Brazil had the largest debt in the world,

¹⁷ Organization of American States – General Secretariat, *Constitution of Brazil, 1967 (as amended by Constitutional Amendment no. 1 of October 17, 1969)*, <https://andyreiter.com/wp-content/uploads/military-justice/br/Constitutions/Brazil%20-%201967%20-%20Constitution%20with%20Amendments%20through%201969.pdf>.

¹⁸ Elio Gaspari, *A Ditadura Escancarada*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002, Explicação [Explanation], <https://redept.org/uploads/biblioteca/89955ef8e43de1f54aba061374228802.pdf>.

¹⁹ Maria Helena M. Alves, *Estado e oposição no Brasil (1964-1984)* [State and opposition in Brazil (1964-1984)], Bauru, EDUSP, 2005, p. 177.

at about 92 billion dollars. All of this was only exacerbated by the following oil crisis of 1979.²⁰ The economy came tumbling down, which led to a period of recession and hyperinflation.

During this period, the tragic methods of abuse employed by the dictatorship were still in full force, as noted above. One of the most famous cases of this time was the death of Vladimir Herzog, a prominent journalist and professor who was arrested and tortured by the military police in 1975 for his supposed communist ties. He was found hanged from his belt in his cell, one day after his arrest, and as such his death was ruled a suicide. However, a thorough study found several pieces of evidence, including multiple contusions, that suggest strangulation, and in turn, the staging of his suicide. A week-long strike comprising of 30000 university students and professors followed the news of his death, all of them rejecting the suicide story.²¹ Years later, the doctor who signed the death certificate and set the cause of death, Harry Shibata, admitted that he had neither performed the autopsy nor seen the body.²² Another case seemed to highlight the tragic nature of both victims and perpetrators. Augusto Boal, a Brazilian playwright, actor, and political activist, recalled his encounter with a military police officer: "Me quebrou o joelho em rotineira sessão de tortura, em 1971, e me pedia perdão toda vez que ligava a eletricidade: 'Você me desculpe, eu não tenho nada contra você, respeito muito, um verdadeiro artista, mas esta é a minha função, tenho mulher e filhos, preciso do meu salário, tenho que trabalhar e...você caiu no meu horário...'"²³ [He broke my knee in a routine torture session, in 1971, and asked me for forgiveness every time he turned on the electricity: "I'm sorry, I have nothing against you, I respect you a lot, you're a true artist, but this is my job, I have a wife and children, I need my salary, I have to work and...you happened to be on my schedule..."]. Nevertheless, whilst the guilt of this police officer and others like him who either participated or were accomplices in the crimes do not absolve them of the pain they have caused, it is both a harrowing insight into human nature, but also into the true extent of the dictatorship's cruelty.

²⁰ Peter T. Kilborn, *Brazil's Economic "Miracle" and Its Collapse* in "The New York Times", November 26, 1983, <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/26/business/brazil-s-economic-miracle-and-its-collapse.html>.

²¹ Brown University Library, *Vladimir Herzog*, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://library.brown.edu/create/wecannotremainsilent/biographies/vladimir-herzog/>.

²² Sérgio Buarque de Gusmão, *Shibata fala. E reabre velhas histórias* [Shibata speaks. And reopens old stories] in "IstoÉ", November 19, 1980, p. 33; *Arquivo Ana Lagôa*, <http://www.arqanalagoa.ufscar.br/pdf/recortes/R07756.pdf>.

²³ Augusto Boal, *Teatro Do Oprimido: E Outras poéticas políticas* [Theatre of the Oppressed: And Other Political Poetics], São Paulo, Editora 34, 2019, p. 19.

In this economic and social context, President João Figueiredo came to power on March 15, 1979. His presidency was more or less doomed to failure, as he had to combat the remaining hardline military members inside the government, the crumbling economy, and growing inflation, whilst dealing with the growing resentment and unrest of the population and with the decline of neighboring military dictatorships, that in turn accentuated the spirits of the dissidents. However, the bright spot of his legacy would be the albeit slow and sometimes accidental, but still relevant, continuation of the political liberalization and re-democratization policy begun by his predecessor and mentor, Ernesto Geisel. This apparent relaxation, coupled with the aforementioned factors, paved the way to ample popular movements that would in turn pave the way to freedom.

Escape to Victory: Football as an act of rebellion against dictatorship

One of those movements was brewing inside what the Brazilians colloquially referred to as "o jogo bonito" [the beautiful game]. In 1981, one of the most famous Brazilian football clubs, Sport Club Corinthians Paulista (founded in 1910 by lower-class workers; the second Brazilian club to accept black players in its ranks; a symbol of social cohesion²⁴; a club that represented the poor migrants from northern and north-eastern Brazil, a good number being socially marginalized inhabitants of the "favelas", the Brazilian slums or ghettos), held elections for the presidential position. Vicente Matheus, who until then had employed various tricks to remain club president for the last 10 years and whose methods of running the club were similar to the repressive ones found in every other aspect of Brazilian life (he declared previously that Corinthians was a "soft dictatorship"²⁵), was unable to find a legal way to continue his reign. As such, he proposed his old friend and political ally, Waldemar Pires, to the presidential position, expecting him to act as a figurehead, thus remaining in charge. Matheus ran as Pires' vice-president, and the two of them won the election. For a few months, Matheus' plan worked as he intended, however, Pires, tired of the humiliation of being a puppet, moved away from the former president and brought a

²⁴ José Paulo Florenzano, *A democracia corinthiana: práticas de liberdade no futebol brasileiro* [Corinthians Democracy: Freedom Practices in Brazilian Football], São Paulo, FAPESP, 2010, p. 149.

²⁵ Sócrates Ricardo Gozzi, *Democracia Corinthiana: a utopia em jogo* [Corinthians Democracy: A Utopia At Stake], São Paulo, Boitempo, 2002, p. 29.

33-year-old sociologist, Adilson Monteiro Alves (the son of a deputy-president of the club), in charge of the football department.

Alves believed in the free expression of ideas and wanted to eliminate the traditional hierarchy. The new hire held his first talk with the players at the beginning of November, during the usual "concentração" [confinement/concentration] (a type of regimen employed by athletes before a game, in which they are confined in a private location – usually the club headquarters or a hotel – for one or two days in order to focus together on all aspects of the game). There, he told the players that he did not know a lot about football, hence he needed their input. The team leaders had long since waited for such an opportunity, they wanted to have a voice, and they wanted to make a difference both on the playing field and in society as a whole. Guided by strong social consciousness and the desire to exercise it, this was the perfect occasion for them to showcase their strength.²⁶ Such is the way that the "Democracia Corinthiana" [Corinthians Democracy] came to life.

The essence of the movement revolved around the concept that the team members decided everything about the life of the club, from the practice schedule to the hotel they would be staying in before a match, from the economic situation of the club and the income distribution to the hiring or firing of a player. All of this was done by a simple raise of hand that was equal to a vote. Each of the members of the club, from the players to the coaching staff, from the doctors to the directors (Monteiro Alves also had the right to one single vote as the club executive), and even to the cleaning or cooking staff – were entitled to vote and each of their votes was equal.²⁷ Because voting was central to the movement, Brazilian journalist José "Juca" Kfourri gave it the name of "democracy" at the beginning of 1982.²⁸ People who opposed the movement claimed that the group of leading players, governed by legendary midfielder Sócrates, was the only one with actual power and that it won all the polls. This hypothesis is easily dismantled by the fact that Sócrates, as himself often humorously recounted, lost many of the polls.²⁹

²⁶ Peter Kaufman, Eli Wolff, *Playing and Protesting: Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change* in "Journal of Sport & Social Issues", vol. 34, no. 2, 2010, p. 158.

²⁷ Jorge Knijnik, *Playing for freedom: Sócrates, futebol-arte and democratic struggle in Brazil* in "Soccer & Society", vol. 15, no. 5, 2014, pp. 646, 635-654.

²⁸ José Kfourri, *Preface* in Sócrates Gozzi, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

²⁹ Jorge Knijnik, *op.cit.*, p. 646.

The most significant part of the movement was that all the people involved in it were forced by the weight of their votes and by the strength of the democratic process to grow as both professionals and human beings. The whole concept demanded education, information, and political formation and in this way, the Corinthians Democracy raised the political and social involvement and consciousness of each of the members. This autonomy also increased the responsibility and collegiality of the players as they knew that each performance would be heavily scrutinized and any negative result would bring the blame of the conservative factions in the club, media, and society, especially as the major newspapers of the time were already writing against this self-governance.³⁰

The main faces of the movement can usually be presented as two groups of three. Firstly, the club leadership, consisting of the aforementioned Waldemar Pires and Adilson Monteiro Alves, also included Mario Travaglini (a new coach who came to the team in 1981 - known as a man of dialogue). Together, they facilitated the democratic process and proved to be valuable allies to the players. Secondly, the team leadership, consisting of Wladimir (Wladimir Rodrigues dos Santos – a player with a long and distinguished career, a left-back considered to be the best defender produced by Corinthians), Casagrande (Wálter Casagrande Júnior – esteemed forward, albeit very young at the time of the Democracy, he also enjoyed a long and accomplished career) and Sócrates (Sócrates Brasileiro Sampaio de Souza Vieira de Oliveira – nicknamed "Doctor" for his medical and philosophical studies, political awareness, style and quality of play – a legendary midfielder admired for his career and political involvement), the latter seen by many as the leader of movement. It must be specified that amidst the playing staff, there were other important players, however, these three are usually placed at the forefront of the move. The movement also gained the support of influent members of society, such as Brazilian singer and songwriter Rita Lee Jones, media creative director Washington Olivetto (who is credited with coming up with the term "Democracia Corinthiana") or the aforementioned journalist Juca Kfourri.

Whether winning or losing, the Corinthians were always in the spotlight, which is why they soon became a focal point of the civil rights movement, but also of other aspects of society. Sócrates appeared in rock and roll shows, singing alongside known stars, such as Rita Lee, and Wladimir

³⁰ *Ibidem.*

and Casagrande started acting in movies that challenged the gender and sexual order imposed by the regime.³¹ But the team also performed on the football pitch, winning two state championships and performing admirably in the national championships, elevating their craft to real "futebol-arte" [art football] and showing that their approach had merit. However, the most important involvement of the movement came surrounding the elections. After dispelling Vicente Matheus' political group's attempt to recover power in the club (with the help of the Brazilian progressive intelligentsia)³², the Corinthians players appeared on the pitch with shirts inscribed with a clear message towards the population: "Dia 15 Vote"³³ [Vote on 15]. It was an important message, as the parliamentary elections on the 15th of November 1982 were the first multiparty elections since the military coup of 1964. They would also join the larger popular movement, "Diretas Já" [Direct (Elections) Now], which militated for free elections and was comprised of a diverse number of elements from the Brazilian civil society, such as political parties and politicians, trade unions, and leaders of civil, student or journalistic organizations and movements. Multiple times the players walked onto the pitch sporting different messages on their shirts, such as the name of the movement, "Diretas Já", or incentives like "Eu quero votar para presidente" [I want to vote for the president]. The Democracy's affiliation with this larger movement was successful in raising the profiles of both entities, which helped advance their shared cause.

As the national unrest was reaching its boiling point and the voice of the demands grew stronger, in December 1983, Corinthians was playing in the grand final of the state championship against rivals São Paulo FC in what is known as the "Clássico Majestoso" [Majestic Derby]. An impressive number of fans came to the Morumbi Stadium in Sao Paulo to watch the spectacle, but the game took a supporting role as the Corinthians team walked out of the locker rooms parading an enormous banner that read: " Ganhar ou perder, mas sempre com democracia"³⁴ [Winning or losing, but always with democracy]. This would become the motto of the movement and would

³¹ Jorge Knijnik, Victor Andrade de Melo, *Football, Cinema and New Sensibilities in the Masculine Territory: An Analysis of Asa Branca, a Brazilian Dream (1981) and New Wave (1983)* in Jorge Knijnik, Daryl Adair (eds.), "Conceptualizing Embodied Masculinities in Global Sport", West Virginia, FIT Publishing, 2014.

³² Jorge Knijnik, *Playing for freedom*, p. 647.

³³ Marco Aurélio Borba, *O Timão cheio de bossas* [The Cool Rudders] in "Revista Placar" [Placar Magazine], no. 650, November 5, 1982, pp. 50-53,

<https://books.google.ro/books?id=iASoh4sNwJcC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

³⁴ Jorge Knijnik, *Playing for freedom*, p. 647.

light a fire in the minds of the Brazilian people and reinforce their commitment to the cause. The heightened pressure of the movements, manifested through large street demonstrations, and the increasing discontent of the lower members of the military would gain political and judiciary shape in the form of a Constitutional Amendment introduced by the Federal Deputy from Mato Grosso, Dante de Oliveira. The amendment (dubbed the "Diretas Já amendment" or the "Dante de Oliveira law") would have mandated direct presidential elections. Despite pushback from President João Figueiredo and the military, the amendment was put to a vote in the Chamber of Deputies on April 25, 1984: 298 in favour, 65 against, 3 abstentions, and 113 absentees (pro-government deputies) – the quorum could not be met (it needed a two-thirds majority since it was a constitutional amendment) and the bill was dead.³⁵

The death of the bill also meant the death of the Corinthians Democracy as an active movement. Sócrates, who had already received an offer from Italian side Fiorentina, was willing to stay if the amendment passed.³⁶ Once that did not happen, he knew he had to leave, as he sorrowfully recollected: "As soon as I heard the bad news, I started to cry. I never cried like I did on that day. I told the Corinthians` directors that I would leave"³⁷. And he did. Alongside him, other key players followed, such as Casagrande or Juninho (Alcides Fonseca Júnior), whilst Mario Travaglini had already been gone since 1983. The story ended in 1985, when Adilson Monteiro Alves ran to be the club`s president, but lost the elections in favour of the conservative forces.³⁸

However, the end of the Democracy did not coincide with the end of the freedom movement in Brazil. Although it was not successful, the Dante de Oliveira law, coupled with the ever-growing social unrest and popular demonstrations led the Figueiredo administration to allow the still indirect presidential elections of 1985 to be contested between civilian candidates. In addition to that, the Electoral College that decided the result of the election was placed under no coercion, for

³⁵ *Diretas Já: rejeição da Emenda Dante de Oliveira marca a história do País* [Direct (Elections) Now: The rejection of the Dante de Oliveira Amendment marks the country`s history], Câmara dos Deputados [Chamber of Deputies], April 22, 2014, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.camara.leg.br/radio/programas/431737-direitas-ja-rejeicao-da-emenda-dante-de-oliveira-marca-a-historia-do-pais/>.

³⁶ Sócrates, *O Dia do Fico do rei corintiano* [The Day of the Corinthians King`s Staying], interview in "Revista Placar" [Placar Magazine], no. 727, April 27, 1984, pp. 37-40, <https://books.google.ro/books?id=u6qtru2TWxYC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

³⁷ Jorge Knijnik, *Playing for freedom*, p. 648.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

the first time since the coup. As such, on January 15, the opposition candidate, Tancredo Neves, won the elections resoundingly. Unfortunately for him, he would never actually assume this position, as on the eve of his inauguration, on March 14, he fell gravely ill and would later die on April 21 (interestingly, despite never officially taking his post as president, Tancredo Neves has been included in the gallery of Brazilian presidents, according to the law³⁹). Instead, his running mate and vice-president, José Sarney, who had been acting president up until that point, officially assumed the position. Although his term is not remembered very fondly⁴⁰, his greatest achievement came in the finalisation of democratic liberation. In 1987 he would convene the National Constituent Assembly which would be tasked with drafting the new Constitution. It would complete this task a year later and on October 5, 1988, the "Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil" [Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil] would be ratified, capping 21 years of "legal" military dictatorship.⁴¹ On this basis, on the same date of November 15 that started the Corinthians Democracy's political involvement, but 7 years later, the first direct presidential elections in Brazil since 1960 and the first ever Brazilian elections to be held using a two-round system would be polled. As a result, on March 15, 1990, Fernando Collor de Mello became the first democratically elected president of Brazil since the instauration of the military dictatorship.

Before analysing the true importance of the Corinthians Democracy in the democratic transition of Brazil, it would be remiss to not say a few words about the particular characteristics of this country in relation to the medium the movement presented itself in. As such, the link between Brazilian society and football cannot be understated. Whilst football is a global phenomenon that provided and continues to provide events of cultural, political, or social significance in all corners of the world, no other country embodies the sport more than "o País do Futebol" [the country of football]. Football is a prominent part of the country's national identity and over time became the most significant socio-cultural activity in Brazil. Even the military regime tried to employ it,

³⁹ Senado Federal [Federal Senate], *Lei Nº 7.465, de 21 de abril de 1986* [Law No. 7465, of April 21, 1986], archived August 5, 2012, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://archive.ph/20120805203729/http://www6.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaPublicacoes.action?id=130145&tipoDocumento=LEI&tipoTexto=PUB>.

⁴⁰ James Brooke, *In Brazil, Scathing Criticism For the Departing President* in "The New York Times", March 13, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/13/world/in-brazil-scathing-criticism-for-the-departing-president.html>.

⁴¹ John Orme, *Dismounting the Tiger: Lessons from Four Liberalizations* in "Political Science Quarterly", vol. 103, no. 2, 1988, pp. 245-265.

especially during the Years of Lead, by adopting different propaganda slogans or songs, such as "Brasil, ame-o ou deixe-o" [Brazil, love it or leave it] or respectively, "Eu Te Amo, Meu Brasil" [I Love You, My Brazil]. All of them were intended to capitalise on the success and performance of the Brazilian national team in the 1970 FIFA World Cup, where they reached the pinnacle of international football by becoming the first nation to have won three World Cups (1958, 1962, and now 1970), retiring the Jules Rimet Cup.⁴² When the "Seleção" [Selection] returned home, the cup was flown directly to Brasília, and the team was personally received by President Garrastazu Médici at the Planalto Palace. This gesture was followed by two days of Carnival-like celebration around the country, with the purpose of cementing the championship as a victory of the regime and its policies. Moreover, the campaign of using football as a tool of political legitimacy for the government was already in full force since 1968, as Garrastazu Médici began to appear almost weekly at Flamengo's matches and started taking a personal hand in the selection and training of the national team, also firing outspoken coach João Saldanha (who harbored left-wing sympathies). It did not end there, as the regime moved to take over the *Confederação Brasileira de Desportos* [Brazilian Sports Confederation] in its entirety, placing it under the command of Admiral Heleno Nunes.⁴³

But even with these developments, Brazilian football remained an appanage of the people. As such, it should come as no surprise that this was the medium that gave birth to such a large popular movement. After all, numerous Brazilian players became involved in the socio-political aspect of their country, either by attaining political functions, donating to charities, and overall being active parts of civic life after the end of their playing careers, or simply by the echoes their play left in the hearts of the people. In a way or another, most high-profile Brazilian players gave something back to the sport and to the country. However, it should not go unstated that some of those players proved to be no role models, which is why their legacies can oftentimes be bittersweet. Sócrates himself touched upon the supposed power that footballers can have in society and the failure of some of them to reach it: "They have political power in their hands. There is a stage and there is an audience. If politicians had that power they'd make hay with it. But to the contrary,

⁴² Robert M. Levine, *Sport and Society: The Case of Brazilian Futebol* in "Luso-Brazilian Review", vol. 17, no. 2, 1980, p. 241.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 246.

footballers live in ghettos. And that I think is because of their lack of education growing up and because they have no idea of their social importance."⁴⁴ In his vision, it could be assumed that they also did not take responsibility for their careers, passing it on to a higher power and hiding behind religion: "God willing, we'll get three points tomorrow. God willing, I'll be called up for the national side. Everything worked out today, thank God."⁴⁵ On another occasion, he once again showed his frustration with the perceived lack of responsibility from the players: "Footballers can be real prime ministers without the chair, but they just need to understand that they have social responsibility and the power to change the society in which they live."⁴⁶ In his eyes, the socio-political involvement of a football player was a duty in the same way that training, playing, and taking care of themselves was. Sócrates fully embodied the concept of football as an integral part of Brazilian life.

Nevertheless, the trajectory of Brazilian football in that period and the conversations surrounding it can be traced to a broader theorization about football as a vehicle for social analysis, that can be extrapolated to culture as a whole. Without going into a large tangent, there are two categories of theories about the sport: the opiate hypotheses (placing football as a tool of social control) and the integration hypotheses (placing football as a unifying agent)⁴⁷. These hypotheses could be observed in both the fans of the sport and in the players and other agents involved in the playing of the game, which could offer new ways of thinking, as far as Sócrates' proposed importance of the sport is concerned. Furthermore, whilst the subject of the studies surrounding these theories is different than the one tackled in this study, the results could open new ways of understanding the impact of football (and as such, of culture as a whole) on the individual, which could in turn offer new psychological insight into its importance and effect on large groups and the creation and sustenance of popular movements.

⁴⁴ Andrew Downie, *Sócrates: the last great political footballer* in "The Irish Times", April 3, 2017, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/socrates-the-last-great-political-footballer-1.3034678>.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ The International Platform on Sport and Development, *Sócrates and Democracia Corinthiana*, March 15, 2023, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/s%C3%B3crates-and-democracia-corinthiana>.

⁴⁷ Robert M. Levine, *op.cit*, p. 246 (the paper referenced in this note goes into more detail about the subject, and constitutes a good starting point for any study focusing on this matter).

Returning to the analysis of the Corinthians Democracy's true importance in the events that led to the fall of the military regime, the movement represented more than anything else a symbol. Through the successful implementation of democratic means and its involvement in the major socio-political movements such as "Diretas Já", it proved to be largely responsible for raising the political awareness of the people. It also put role models, such as Sócrates, in the limelight and elevated their status. However, whilst the movement proved to be a fantastic catalyst, it never reached the heights of the "Diretas Já", which managed to mobilise over one and a half million people near the voting date of the Dante de Oliveira law, mostly because the two movements shared a common goal, which they worked together to achieve. Even still, neither of the two actually took part per se in the democratic transition, as the negotiations were conducted by the usual political actors of parties and trade unions. As such, both movements represented means of putting pressure on the regime.

However, the favourable context of João Figueiredo's administration, reflected in the political relaxation and measures taken during his rule, also played an important role in the downfall of the military regime. Started in 1974, once President Ernesto Geisel attained power, the "abertura" [opening] process was continued under the one who would become the last military president. On August 28, 1979, Figueiredo signed an amnesty law, which pardoned all those convicted of political or adjacent crimes between September 2, 1961, and August 15, 1979⁴⁸. This allowed the return of a lot of anti-government voices that added to the social unrest. Since the regime could no longer maintain its two-party system, the administration dissolved its political party, ARENA, on December 20, but will officially establish a new one on January 31, 1980, the *Partido Democrático Social* [Democratic Social Party]. This time, however, the political landscape would receive the added twist of other new parties being allowed to exist. The last step in the democratization process came in 1981 when Congress enacted a law restoring direct elections of state governors. All of these measures, coupled with the structural problems of the regime

⁴⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross – International Humanitarian Law Databases, *Lei Nº. 6.683, de 28 de agosto de 1979 – concede anistia, e dá outras providências* [Law No. 6683, of August 28, 1979 – grants amnesty, and provides other measures], August 28, 1979, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/national-practice/law-no-6683-amnesty-1979>.

mentioned before, and with the effects of the popular movements, created the favourable environment needed for the transition to democracy.

After the dictatorship fell, many Brazilians returned home. Among them was Sócrates, only he did not return to Corinthians, but to a rival, Flamengo, as his beloved club was overtaken by the conservative sectors. In fact, he would never play for them again, especially seeing as his career was coming to its closing chapters. Nevertheless, he remained a lifetime supporter of both the team and its ideals. As such, it could only be poetic that his death was also tied to his team, having previously stated that his desire regarding this moment was: "to die on a Sunday when Corinthians win a trophy"⁴⁹. As he breathed his last breath on December 4, 2011, a Sunday, the fans chanted his nickname, imitated his raised fist goal celebration, and held up banners reading: "Doctor Sócrates, rest in peace", before witnessing as Corinthians won the national title for the first time in six years.⁵⁰ Sócrates' memory lived on, alongside his deeds on and off the football pitch, and whilst his Greek philosopher namesake was being described by Plato in his *Republic* as pessimistic and critic of democracy, Sócrates lived and died by staking his whole existence on it.

The global export of popular movements: The fall of authoritarianism

The events that happened in Brazil were part of a larger current of democratization around the Globe, spurred on by popular movements, as stated earlier. In order to better contextualise this process, it becomes necessary to analyse other spaces. It is important to note that the end of the Cold War did not only bring about the fall of communist regimes, but also of different ideological authoritarian systems.

With that in mind, it must be stated that the principal elements of change did occur in the communist bloc. Most of the changes occurred without blood spilling. In Poland, economic reforms led to strikes during 1988, which led on February 6, 1989, to the "Roundtable Talks" between the communist government and the members of the underground trade union *Solidarność* [Solidarity] (founded in August 1980 after a series of strikes that paralysed the Polish economy⁵¹, forced

⁴⁹ The International Platform on Sport and Development, *Sócrates and Democracia Corinthiana*

⁵⁰ BBC Sport, *Corinthians honour Socrates with Brazilian title win*, December 5, 2011, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/16030180>.

⁵¹ Jason Burke, *Divided Poland falls out over Solidarity* in "The Guardian", May 31, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/31/poland-communism-twentieth-anniversary>.

underground after the declaration of martial law in 1981 and formally dissolved by law in 1982⁵²) officially began. The result of these discussions was the organisation of semi-free elections and the official recognition of Solidarity as a political party. On June 4, Solidarity obtained a massive victory in the parliamentary elections, and in August Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first non-communist Prime Minister in Eastern Europe.⁵³ In December 1990, Lech Wałęsa (the leader of Solidarity and the laureate of a Nobel Peace Prize in 1983) became the first democratically elected president of Poland since 1926.⁵⁴ During the 1980s, Solidarity was an anti-authoritarian popular movement that used various methods of civil resistance to protest against the communist government and to advance the cause of social change and workers' rights⁵⁵ and is widely recognised as having played a focal role in the fall of the communist regime in Poland.

On November 17, 1989, on International Students' Day, the Czechoslovakian riot police suppressed a student demonstration in Prague. A day before, Slovak high school and university students organised an unauthorised demonstration in the centre of Bratislava. Whilst their march was peaceful, many participants and their families were threatened. These events led to continuous anti-communist demonstrations and strikes all around Czechoslovakia that forced the Communist Party to announce on the 28th that it would relinquish power and end the one-party state. On December 10, President Gustáv Husák appointed a largely non-communist government and resigned,⁵⁶ which allowed famous writer and dissident Václav Havel to be elected President of Czechoslovakia on December 29 and in June 1990, the first democratic elections since 1946 were held. The popular movements of 17 to 28 November became known as the "Velvet Revolution". On December 31, 1992, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two countries, the Czech Republic and the

⁵² Geir Lundestad, *The European Role at the Beginning and Particularly the End of the Cold War*, p. 58 in Olav Njølstad (ed.), "The Last Decade of the Cold War", London, Frank Cass Publishers, 2004.

⁵³ Department of State – Office of the Historian, *Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, 1989*, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/fall-of-communism>.

⁵⁴ Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, *The Collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe*, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/1f5d29d1-bc79-44af-ae41-6fdb3f41608e/de5ef049-acec-4e19-983c-27104320cd2b>.

⁵⁵ Aleksander Smolar, *Self-limiting Revolution: Poland 1970-89* in Adam Roberts, Timothy Garton Ash (eds.), "Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present", Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 127-143.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, *The Velvet Revolution demonstrated the power of civil society*, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.mzv.sk/en/web/en/slovakia/history/the-velvet-revolution>.

Slovak Republic, mainly due to governance issues between the two dominant ethnicities. This action would sometimes be referred to as the "Velvet Divorce", a reference to the revolution.

However, not all regime changes were bloodless. One such case is represented by Romania. Following the austerity programme designed to eliminate the national debt, started by dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1981, many basic goods were rationed, which drastically reduced the standard of living in the country.⁵⁷ This, coupled with the lack of most basic human rights, created big social unrest that eventually boiled over in December 1989. On the 16th, the Hungarian minority in Timișoara held a protest in favour of László Tókéş, a pastor whom the communist government wanted evicted because of his criticism of the regime.⁵⁸ The protest spread and turned anti-communist by nightfall when the protesters were forced to disperse. They came back the next day, riots started as well and then wild shooting began. The situation escalated and the popular movements spread as Ceaușescu addressed an assembly of approximately 100000 people in Bucharest on the 21st. The crowds interrupted his speech, began shouting against him, and started rioting. Pretty soon, Ceaușescu decided to respond with force and violent fighting began. The dictator tried to flee, but he was caught, the army defected⁵⁹, and the new interim government, led by reformist communist Ion Iliescu, held a mock trial for him and his wife, Elena. They were both executed on December 25.⁶⁰

It is important to note that the fall of the communist regimes seemed akin to dominoes, as with each one that fell another nation would get emboldened to get rid of theirs. However, as mentioned earlier, the democratization wave could be observed throughout the whole world. Various popular movements stood behind these changes. In Argentina, social groups such as "Madres de Plaza de Mayo" [Mothers of May Square] (a human rights association formed in response to the abuses of the military dictatorship – initially working to find the people who disappeared without arrests, trials or due process by investigating their cases, and later protesting in May Square and publicizing the crimes committed by the regime) proved to be instrumental in

⁵⁷ Stephen D. Roper, *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution*, Oxfordshire, Routledge, 2000, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁵⁹ Domnița Ștefănescu, *Cinci ani din istoria României: O cronologie a evenimentelor (decembrie 1989-decembrie 1994)* [Five years from Romania's history: A chronology of the events (December 1989-December 1994)], Bucharest, Mașina de Scris, 1995, pp. 1-27.

⁶⁰ Department of State – Office of the Historian, *Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, 1989*.

fighting against the "Guerra sucia" [Dirty War]. They undermined the legitimacy of the regime, which weakened and fell after the 1982 defeat in the "Guerra de las Malvinas" [Falklands War]. On October 30, 1983, general elections were held and constitutional rule returned.⁶¹ In Bénin, by mid-1989, an economic crisis was in full force. Thousands of disaffected public servants and employees of the private sector were starting to go into the streets to demand their rights. Seeing this, the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the National University of Bénin and a member of the legislature, Robert Dossou, met with President Mathieu Kérékou to seek a solution to the crisis. As such, a National Conference, a method often employed by Kérékou to silence his critics⁶², would be held from 19 to 28 February 1990. What the President did not realise was that, unlike all the Conferences before it, this one was supposed to represent all social, religious, professional, and political groups, and that their goal was the introduction of a constitutional liberal democracy. This experiment proved to be successful, at least temporarily, as the Conference gained acceptance of its sovereignty, which more or less eliminated the authority of the sitting president. Democratic elections were held a year later and Kérékou was ousted after 20 years in power.⁶³ It has to be said, however, that whilst this democratic experiment worked, Kérékou would return in 1996 and would rule for another ten years after that. In the Philippines, a series of popular demonstrations against the oppressive rule of Ferdinand Marcos (held mostly in Metropolitan Manila and sparked by the 1983 assassination of one of the president's biggest political opponent, Benigno Aquino, as well as the decades of autocratic rule, accusations of fraud during the 7 February 1986 election, and economic instability) were unfolding. During a period of three days, from 22 to 25 February 1986, the sustained civil resistance managed to depose Ferdinand Marcos, end his 20-year dictatorship, and restore democracy, all with almost no violence. Marcos fled the country to Hawaii, as advised

⁶¹ Joe Foweraker, *The Argentine elections of 30 October 1983* in *Electoral Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1984, pp. 107-112.

⁶² Wuyi Omitoogun, Kenneth Onigu-Otite, *The National Conference As a Model for Democratic transition: Benin and Nigeria*, Ibadan, IFRA-Nigeria, African Book Builders, pp. 4-5.

⁶³ Kathryn Nwajiaku, *The National Conferences in Benin and Togo Revisited* in "The Journal of Modern African Studies", vol. 32, no. 3, 1994, p. 429.

by US delegates⁶⁴, and Aquino's widow, Corazon, who was argued to have won the 1986 elections, was inaugurated as the President of the Philippines.⁶⁵

In an interesting turn of events, the freedom wave, especially the one in Eastern Europe, also had echoes in countries whose authoritarian systems remained in power, as the news that came from Europe seemed to especially affect their leaders. The president of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, was reported to have acted with shocked horror at the televised images of the execution of his friend, Nicolae Ceaușescu. In reference to this, a few months after seeing them, he commented: "You know what's happening across the world"⁶⁶ and announced that in the 1993 election two other parties besides his own would be allowed to participate. The former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, said: "If changes take place in Eastern Europe then other countries with one-party systems and which profess socialism will also be affected"⁶⁷ and that his country may have some lessons to learn from this. In Nepal, the government announced in April 1990 that King Birendra lifted the ban on political parties. His reasoning was based on "the international situation" and "the rising expectations of the people".⁶⁸ The Arab world was not spared of this either, as in 1990, it was reported that the "upheaval in Eastern Europe" had "fueled demands for change in the Arab world"⁶⁹. As such, leaders of Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan were beginning to open the political environment to the expression of discontent.

Conclusions

Professor Samuel P. Huntington observed that between 1974 and 1990, at least 30 countries transitioned to democracy.⁷⁰ As such, many other cases, beyond the selection presented in this study, existed. Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria, Chile, Nicaragua, South Africa, Zambia, South

⁶⁴ David Hoffman et al., *In Crucial Call, Laxalt Told Marcos: "Cut Cleanly"* in "The Washington Post", February 26, 1986,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/02/26/in-crucial-call-laxalt-told-marcos-cut-cleanly/9329b85d-f7b0-4021-884d-5e5e659a4cb0/>.

⁶⁵ Joseph A. Reaves, *Marcos Flees, Aquino Rules – Peaceful Revolt Ends In Triumph* in "Chicago Tribune", February 26, 1986, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/1986/02/26/marcos-flees-aquino-rules-2/>.

⁶⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

Korea, and Indonesia were just a few additional countries that changed their authoritarian leaders either in the period described by Huntington or close to it. All of them presented particular cases of popular movement involvements, that when studied, gave even more accounts of the social power that stood behind the fall of dictatorships towards the end of the Cold War. For the objective of this study, however, no further conclusions could be drawn from their analysis.

Based on the elements presented throughout this study, the events that led to the fall of the military regime in Brazil and the socio-political developments that went alongside them are thus part of the democratization trend that occurred towards the end of the Cold War, with similar characteristics being observed, such as the popular revolt against an authoritarian regime, the transition (at least temporarily in some cases) to a democratic regime, the organization of free and direct elections, the removal of restrictive measures implemented by previous governments, but also the association with unalienable principles and values such as human rights and rule of law.

It can also be concluded that popular movements had an important role to play in the regime changes, whether we draw the line at hybrid movements such as street demonstrations (peaceful or violent), civilian resistance, dissidence, or enterprises such as Democracia Corinthiana, or we broaden the terminology to also include more traditional movements, such as political parties or trade unions. However, the hierarchization of the contributions to the cause made by different popular movements is another discussion entirely, and it does not serve a significant purpose to the topic at hand, which is why only a few words would be spared on it. To use the example of the case study, the Corinthians Democracy acted more as a catalyst of social change, that pushed the civil society towards understanding its political role and power, which in turn empowered the more traditional movements to negotiate the transition towards democracy on their behalf. As such, we can conclude that the different types of movements worked together towards a shared goal and contributed in different, albeit still important ways to it.

It also needs to be said that the role of other factors in this regime changes cannot be understated. The oppressiveness and violence of the dictatorships, the socio-economical decline most of the countries were facing at the time of the fall, the momentum provided by the subsequent and sustained neighboring regime changes and decline of authoritarian power, the strength of the popular conviction and necessary state institutions and also the favourable context or result of

pivotal moments, provided the perfect sum of arguments needed for this changes. As it could be seen, in countries where these conditions were not met or which were not yet ready for this transition, even if the process provided an initial success, it was short-lived.