

Socio-cultural relations around the feeding habits of people living in Sao Paulo in the formation of cultural identity and construction of the Brazilian nation

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Abstract

In order to understand the socio-cultural relations among individuals that make up the Municipal Market of Sao Paulo - sellers, consumers and tourists - we intended to build an imaginary parallel of the city of Sao Paulo as a known cosmopolitan place. From the observation of the daily lives of these characters, it is clear that the Municipal Market operates not as a food market distributor, but as a tourist center that offers domestic and international food, as well as goodies that were selected as icons of the city of São Paulo. São Paulo's municipal market, a tourist attraction marked by tradition that represents the diversity of the city, has traders from different ethnicities selling genuine products from their lands which, to some extent, contributed to make up the taste and the dishes of Sao Paulo, which is understood to be an invented tradition according to Eric Hobsbawm. The anthropological research includes reflections on the construction of Brazil as a nation, based on the Sao Paulo cooking classification represented by the Municipal Market trade that brings together local, regional, national and global food, dimensions that allow thinking of Brazil as a nation, and the city as a possible capital of the world. We believe that the Municipal Market is a suitable space to build reflections on the transformation of social relations in the contemporary context of Sao Paulo and, in short, elements that make up a cultural identity and the civilizing process in Brazil as a nation and Sao Paulo as its representative.

Key words: Anthropology. Brazil. Cultural Characteristics. Social Interaction. Food Habits. Qualitative Research.

Introduction

The main objective of this text was to build a methodological-theoretical storage in order to reflect on the production of traditions to create identities and feelings of belonging in certain groups, including the idea of national identity. We work on concepts and theoretical notions, specifically the Elisiana proposal of the civilized process. For such, we discuss some key words to understand the formation of tradition, identity and nation from eating habits, having as a background the socio-cultural relations observed in the Municipal Market of São Paulo.

From the standpoint of the identity construction of the individuals as a process, we aim at discussing the socio-cultural relations of the characters that are part of the Municipal Market Space in São Paulo. Starting from the concept of total social fact by Marcel Mauss¹, it is possible to realize the complexity of the established relationships in this space that combines trade, food, tourism, consumption, modernity and tradition in the relationships among the traders, sellers, employees, clients and tourists. We took the São Paulo Municipal Market as a space that would lead us to think about the new and old relationships that are experienced there, based on the eating habits as an object that enables the relationships that go from family bonds to legitimacy disputes and occupation of a space inside the establishment.

Norbert Elias² points out that gestures, clothing, behavior, body language, choice of food and manners at the table are typical characteristics of certain societies. They indicate how the configuration of such demonstrations can spread in the societies, creating different behaviors that can be led to a civilizing process, building habits belonging or not to certain social groups, building collective identities.

The historical, political and social transformations lead to new behaviors, showing the process of identity formation — in this case, we search for peculiar information of the daily life of the individuals who have socio-cultural and economic relations in the Municipal Market, seeking, at the same time, to contextualize them in a dynamic and plural movement of the society, showing manifestations that build a possible identity of the São Paulo inhabitants.

This research aims at observing the habits and behaviors of the characters that are part of this scenario, which can indicate transformations in a process of building collective identities, such as the affirmation of a different self-image. Therefore, it enables the sociology of the relations that are built in the different spaces, providing an analysis of the micro and macro that perform in a specific space — in this case, the Municipal Market of São Paulo. We understand that, when we observe the socio-cultural relations of the Market, we will understand some of the behaviors of a group of individuals to then reflect on a contemporary and cosmopolitan society, such as the city of São Paulo.

The social relations in this environment are determined by the position or social status that each individual occupies — seller and permit holder, client and tourist — generating a territory of disputes whether for space, competition, fidelity or tradition.

Elias³ shows that the concepts of society and individual may be parts of a same reality, as they are fruit of the contemporary society, here understood as super modern,⁴ with the over appreciation of the me-identity (of the individual as responsible for his own fate), but that in some other moments this appreciation was for the opposition, the us-identity (of the collective, the notion that unity is strength). Such constructions pervade interests and positions that the individuals occupy in certain groups. Here, one should understand what these interests and positions are, which sometimes opt for the appreciation of individuality and sometimes for the appreciation of the collective.

Therefore, we start from the categories "process" and "social configuration" proposed by Norbert Elias², who proposes a theoretical line that contemplates all the aspects that involve the totality of what composes a human being, so that it is not fragmented.

The environment of the Municipal Market becomes suitable for complex coexistences, as we can realize different interests established in those relations. Taking into account the author's idea that the singularity of human beings is established as they recognize themselves as social beings, our methodological path — field observations and interviews with permit holders and sellers — is to reach individual perceptions, flexibility and dynamism of the most particular relations that build a network of interdependencies.

The spaces in the Market are formed by these interdependent relations network, in which the different individuals are observed — such as sellers of the fruit tent, sellers of the emporiums and snack bars sellers. All these agents form a different field, since each one offers different values, working relationships, etc., which are understood differently.

The treatment of clients and tourists is also different; there is an identity classification in this relationship, that creates a notion of those who are insiders and those who are outsiders, that is, who the client is (mostly classified as the Sao Paulo inhabitant) and who the tourist is. Thus, certain customs and habits are faced differently. There are different behaviors of clients and tourists who have as an essence different interests for the Market field. While the first seek to buy supplies and products that are part of their daily meals, the latter is interested in appreciating the environment, knowing the space and the products that are traded there.

These several relations imply sociological notions, such as the perception of old and new, tradition and modernity. They help us reflect on the research problem, of the creation of identity cultures in the contemporary world, new and old relations established in the great urban centers, which is the case of the city of Sao Paulo, having food as a co-actor in the creation of collective identities.

We realized, at a first moment, the concept of identity such as a relational construction, a place in the world for certain groups, with tension and contact relations. A historical and social moment that we admit being due to globalization – a way in which the global relations replace the problem of differences, with a feeling of the modern world of physical suppression of the distance and time, of how we deal with relations between humans and things, the non-human.⁵ We also resort to the anthropological studies that have always worked with cultural distance and interpersonal relations.

Face the problem raised, according to Elias,³ we can reflect on the way we think of our knowledge about the relations among isolated people and how we think "the relations among non-human objects and their modifications, the relation between cause and effect, for example." Both ways of thinking, according to the author, are connected to a peculiar "self-consciousness way [...]. However, these ways of thinking are seen mostly as something natural and "universally human, as a human self-consciousness way, the image people have of themselves at all times".³

We can reflect on how this type of thought remains in society, as it inspires safety and, differently, something out of the men, that is, something that is not natural, but built, brings discomfort by the feeling of uncertainty, insecurity. This perspective interferes in the creation of the identity of individuals that build, according to their beliefs, their relations and perspectives to which they are inserted together in a society. From social learning, the individual becomes increasingly conscious of his "me", developing an "ego" that is not natural to the individual, but is learned in society.

Another point to be dealt with in this article is the construction of the Brazilian nation from foods classified as national, regional and local, representative of the Brazilian culture. We work that idea from the theory of the Invented Traditions, by Eric Hobsbawm,⁶ who affirms:

Invented tradition is understood as a group of practices, normally regulated by unspoken rules or openly accepted rules. Such practices, with ritual or symbolic nature, aim to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior through repetition, which implies, automatically, a continuity in relation to the past. By the way, whenever possible, one tries to establish continuity with an appropriate historical past. (p. 9).

Therefore, it is possible to think of the São Paulo Municipal Market as an icon of São Paulo, a touristic point outlined by the tradition that represents the diversity of the city, once there are traders from different ethnicities that sell products original from their lands that, to a certain extent, helped compose the taste and the São Paulo dish. It is an invented tradition in a wide sense.

Face this tangle of situations and contexts, we reflect on the identity constructions of the São Paulo inhabitant, as well as the construction of a Brazilian nation, having as a background the context of food that sustains the relations experienced in the environment of the São Paulo Municipal Market.

São Paulo municipal market: from feeding to the São Paulo inhabitants food - an identity construction of the city

The São Paulo municipal market, or Mercado, as it is popularly known, started being constructed in 1928 and was finished in 1932, when there was the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 in São Paulo.* It was then used as a warehouse for the Army weapons.⁷ It was launched in 1933, with a neoclassic construction of 22,230m² delimited among streets Cantareira, Mercúrio, Assad Abada and Avenida do Estado, in the center of São Paulo. It has a beautiful architecture and beautiful stained glass by the Russian artist Conrado Sorgenicht Filho, at the Central Market, located at Rua 25 de Março, with commerce of food products in the open air.

Its space is organized among different types of commerce: cereals, vegetables, fruits and flowers, occupying 40% of the space, 20% being occupied by dairy and salty food, 10% dedicated to green meat, 10% for fish and 20% for poultry and other types of meat.⁸ Since its launch, the market operates with hereditary points in the permission system that, according to Desgualdo Netto,⁹ "would be the location of the space on a temporary basis, in which the tenant is subject to the specific legal postures, being able to cease unilaterally, without involving pending issues or onus for either party." Therefore, most of the stands or boxes are composed by family members that have occupied the spaces for generations, since its launch, going from parents to children and, currently in its third generation, to grandchildren.

* The Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 of São Paulo was a movement against the provisional government of Getúlio Vargas and the promulgation of a new Constitution for Brazil. It happened between July and October 1932. According to Abreu,¹⁰ the "the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 is a disputed object. Since it ended, the winners sought to represent it as an attempt of separatism or as a counterrevolutionary movement that sought to assure that the São Paulo oligarchies, deposed in 1930, would come back to power" (p. 318). Currently, July 9 is the date considered to mark the beginning of the movement, and a state civic holiday was declared.

Its characteristics were, initially, of a food distributing market, trading several types of national and imported foodstuff. However, in the end of the 1970s, the commerce started to grow weak, losing sales for the supermarket networks that were being established in the city, bringing easiness to the consumer so that they could find a variety of products in only one place, besides the attractive prices.

This consumption transformation of the city resulted in a considerable decrease in the sales in the Market's stands. According to Kirsten (1980), apud Netto:⁹

[...] The [São Paulo residents] purchase habits had deeply changed, especially in the supermarket purchases (16.2% in 1971 to 40.24% in 1980), while the street markets practically kept their relative participation in the preference of the housewives. In turn, the participation of the municipal markets of the capital had reduced from 2.5% to 0.12% of the family costs (p. 4).

This reality faced by the market remained until the decade of 1990, with permit holders closing their stands or handing them to others because they could not sustain their business anymore. In 2004, the Municipal Market raised money from the city hall for a wide reform, which was part of the revitalization projects of the old city center. The facade was restored, as well as the stained glass, and a 2.000 m² mezzanine was constructed to accommodate new snack bars in the space, in order to stimulate tourism in the place.¹¹

The market currently has 291 *boxes* distributed in 12,600 m², with an estimated public of 14 thousand people every day and around 1,600 employees. There are also 1,600 m² of subsoil, with toilets, comfort station, nursing room and the ozone machine, installed to minimize the smell of sewer and maintenance for the eradication of pests in the place. Approximately 350 tons of foods are commercialized throughout the day, seeing that the market closes from 6 to 8 p.m.⁷

It is a great space, with activities not only related to work, but other ways of social interaction that are approached in a timely manner in this paper. First, we should carry out a general analysis of the context so that we can learn the relations established in this space.

The market holds different types of goods, most of them driven to food, and after the 2004 reform, a space for new market tendencies was opened and new products and artifacts started being traded, joining both "the old and the new". In this sense, we can observe that tradition and modernity sometimes are mixed and sometimes are opposed, coexisting in this environment.

To better understand it, we classified it in three different commercial practices, giving it a specific category according to what we realized in the permit holders themselves. Thus, we can affirm that the space of the market is divided among the *boxes* called “emporiums”, that trade cheese, deli meat, cod fish, olive oil and imported spices; the ones that trade fruit, fish and meat, that trade national or imported high quality fruits, freshwater fish and saltwater fish, and several types of meat; and finally, the ones that have gastronomy and souvenirs, composed of bars, snack bars, restaurants that serve delicacies of the place and stands with national artifacts that serve as gifts or mementos. These three groups of commerce are classified, respectively, as traditional, popular and modern.

The traditional space is the most conservative in the market, many times composed of older stands that seek to maintain tradition and give continuity to the family work, passed from generation to generation as a way of keeping the national identity of migrant roots, the customs of their native land, as a way of preserving the pride of keeping the job restricted to the family.

The migration among the permit holders is, mostly, composed of Italians, Portuguese and Spanish, who have stands in the Market since it was launched and keep the family business. We also see a parcel of the northern and northeastern migrants who moved to São Paulo in the decades of 1960 and 1970 in search of work opportunities; many have established in the Market's commerce, first as employees and later on as permit holders.

The popular space is where the Brazilian customs of street markets are practiced similarly within the Market, more common in the stands of fruit, fish and meat, so their employees approach the client, calling their attention with jokes, nicknaming them and joking among themselves. The jokes made among the employees are examples of that; they are created to make the work journey more fun and less hard. For example, a common joke among them is to search for clients with physical similarities to the co-workers and, consequently, call them by the name of the colleague to whom they attribute the similarities; that way, they nickname the clients, approaching them by offering a taste of fruits, affirming they have the best price and quality of products. Usual sentences heard in street markets are also common in the streets in which the fruit stands are grouped, such as “pretty women don't have to pay, but they also don't take the product home”.

The space we call “modern” is composed by two types of commerce in the Market – the gastronomic and the souvenirs and national products – which are more used by the tourists that seek delicacies classified as traditional of the market, such as the bologna sandwich and the cod fish pastry; or even the store that commercializes products for presents, such as mugs from the Market, with the symbol of São Paulo and Brazil, pens, T-shirts, glasses, key chains, slippers, caps; and also the box that works with handicraft products such as costume jewelry and jewelry with national stones, bags, clothes, slippers, etc.

This space is the newest field formed in the Market, a fruit of the reform and the new interests of the place's administration in transforming it into an attractive place for the public who visit São Paulo for purchase in the popular types of commerce around Rua 25 de março, which receive tourists from all Brazilian states. Within this new perspective for the market, spaces were open for other types of products that previously were not sought for and/or commercialized, such as condiments and Brazilian exotic products, Arabic and Asian products, etc.

A behavior noticed in these three spaces would be the relationship between employees and clients. In the traditional space (of the emporiums), the treatment between employees and clients is more formal and cordial, in the sense that there is more intimacy when they are talking to old clients that shop there for years, allowing the employee to know their preferences, tastes and types of products they are looking for. In the popular space (mainly fruits and fishes), the relationship between employees and clients is more relaxed, informal, with jokes and types of approach common to the street markets. Finally, in the modern space (of souvenirs and gastronomy), the relationship established is to please the tourist, inform them about the local customs, treat them as special clients that look for information and stories of the place.

Therefore, the tourists and clients are classified differently among the employees, and there are even moments of hostility, once the tourists are many times considered clients only by the modern space and not by the others. Some employees of the fruit stands, for example, call the tourists flies that visit the market, look at the goods, but never buy, according to statements given by some of them.

In this sense, there is rivalry among the older permit holders that occupy the boxes of emporiums, fruits, meat and other products with the stands that offer fast food, especially the restaurants located at the mezzanine, symbol of the modernity and the new function assigned to the market when it proposed the reform as part of the revitalization project of the city's old center, making it a touristic attraction in São Paulo.

This rivalry is evident in the first conversations among the older permit holders who receive, in their defense, hostility from the younger permit holders. According to an old client, Gino Venneri,** until 2004 it was a market that distributed foods, there were no boxes of snack bars.

** Gino Venneri is an Italian client who worked at Ceasa and distributed at the Mercado. Currently he is retired. He goes to the market every morning. He is Italian, having come to Brazil in 1950, at 22 years old. From 1950 to 2002, according to him, he would sell to all the fishmongers in the market. Interview done on January 8, 2013.

Leonardo Chiappetta^{***} administers one of the oldest stands, initiated by his grandfather when the market was launched, then it went to his father and today it is administered by him and his brother. He tries to keep the tradition of his emporium, his history in the commerce and, consequently, his family history, initiated with the Italian migration to Brazil in the beginning of the twentieth century and consolidated in the commerce. His family works with import of deli meat, cod fish, olive oil, and other foods since 1908, having established at the Municipal Market in 1933. Leonardo advocates for the tradition and the origins of the Market, affirming that it is not only about the Bologna sandwich, that "there is a lot of other things behind it and that this new fame may decharacterize the place". The same opinion is shared by older people installed in the market, the first immigrants that could get their permission to occupy a box and commercialize their products.

On the other hand, we have the opinion of the younger individuals in the market, especially those who initiated their activity between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. For these people, the Market needed to change its administration, restructure, and survive the new tendencies of the Brazilian market, especially with the culture of super and hypermarkets in the city, with great networks of commerce, in which there is a variety of products, brands and prices, so it is necessary to really search for new ways of conduct in order to increase the demand for products commercialized at the market, as well as to leverage its profit and keep it open face the economy of the time.

For Hugo, permit holder of the Mercapoint *box*, after the 2004 reform, the Market went through considerable transformations, starting to be part of the touristic path of the city. Therefore, what was a food supply market started changed into a "cultural, historical and gastronomic" market.^{****} There is acceptance difficulty by the oldest ones:

They are all workers, honest ones, that work too much, but they are very simple and, for that, maybe the ignorance of accepting the new, because they do not know what they can and what they cannot do here. They buy and sell, everything in a very simple way, passed from parents to children, with the same customs of the 1950s, therefore, they do not accept the people who come with this mind of changing the Market, of benefiting from this flow of tourists and increase their sales, for them, they have to continue as it was before: someone comes to buy a kilo of rice, another one comes to get beans, the owner of the bar comes for deli meat. They do not know how to deal with retail nowadays. (Hugo, 2012).

^{***} The interview with Leonardo Chiappetta was done on January 9 2013, with the presentation of his two *boxes*, the emporium and the ice cream parlor, which is taken care of by his mother. Leonardo is an engineer, but he left the profession in 2008 to take over the administration of the emporium, which currently has also a store outside the market, in a shopping mall in the city.

^{****} Interview carried out on January 10 2012 at the *box* 42/44 – Mercapoint, located at rua M. do Mercado Municipal de São Paulo. Hugo is the owner of the box, which has been working since 2010.

Thus, we find the two main perspectives of understanding the Municipal Market between the idea of the new and the idea of the old: one that has a current ideal, based on the administration of the market and its new tendencies; and the other with a nostalgic idea that wishes to preserve the old customs and continue to act in the same way inside the market, without the need to refresh their sales strategies and marketing tactics.

Besides these situations that directly involve work relationships, there are other forms of social relations that occur among the streets of the Municipal Market, such as the degree of kinship among the employees, where there are husbands and wives, parents, children, grandchildren, uncles and nephews, in addition to family bonds acquired through symbolic rituals, such as baptism of the children of these employees and permit holders.

Other relations are also acquired through entertainment and leisure in the market, such as lottery, legalized in Brazil, "sweepstakes" games, where employees gather to bet certain values in the accumulated games. In addition to this type of game, zoological lottery is very frequent in the place, a game that is illegal in Brazil, but that occurs daily and moves the stands, once they bet among themselves and seek information on what the neighbor permit holder bet.

From this situation, where we found several elements to be studied and analyzed in their logical and symbolic forms of dealing with the daily life in the Municipal Market, that closes only for two hours every day, we can discuss how São Paulo goes through these relations in which we can reflect about its identity and its ways of feeding. Then, we analyzed the relations of the local, regional, national and global identity that are understood according to the food that is commercialized in the place.

We have the references of the already mentioned inside food, which would be the products classified as local — the bologna sandwich, the cod fish balls and pastry, and the fruits salads —, traded by most of the bars and snack bars because they are very sought after. There is also the pub food, with reference to a Minas Gerais food tradition, delicacies appreciated in bars to leverage the gastronomic tourism in the region. And there are also the stands that commercialize regional products such as the manioc flour produced in several states, fresh cheese, spices, tapioca, olive oil, and other regional products.

The national food is represented, above all, by a traditional recognized dish, the feijoada, with stands that commercialize products for its preparation. For example, there is the Mr. Quintas stand, in the market since it was launched, with the sale of pork, different types of beans, sausages, and other products necessary for the preparation of the dish.

The Mercado tries, in its *marketing*, to reinforce the idea of a global identity of the city of São Paulo, resorting to the title of São Paulo as the world's capital and cosmopolitan city that holds citizens from all over the world. Part of its consumers are inhabitants of the city of São Paulo that come from other places and seek to preserve their traditions, customs and food. Thus, the justification is that important food is commercialized there, coming from different countries: cod from Norway, olive oil, olive, Spanish deli food, Italian pasta and sauce, Arabic goods, Asian products, fruits and spices from around the world, seeking to convey this global trend present in the country, especially in the capital of São Paulo. The *boxes* that work with imported products serve their immigrant customers as well as the Brazilian ones, who want to appreciate food from other cultures.

The municipal market of São Paulo brings along these identity relations of the São Paulo inhabitants food, since its formation with regional products, from the flour to the rice, beans and dried meat, to the aspects of the migration influence, with pasta, sauces and herbs, different types of fish and seafood, to the internationalization of the cuisines, with more exotic varied products.

Tradition and nation: food as an element in the construction of Brazil - the market as a representative of the Brazilian food history and their cultural habits

Seeing the inter social relations that involve the commerce of national and imported products in the municipal market, we can talk about its delicacies from the standpoint of Hobsbawm,⁶ of invented tradition in the wide sense.

We see the market as a space that presents the cultural diversity and the food tradition of São Paulo as an invented tradition, once the market and its commerce date back to 1933, not historically long, if we consider the age of the city formation. We can also consider the fact that some of the permit holders started trading foods and ethnic condiments in the market after it was launched, some in the 1960s and others in the 1990s.

In the sense of invented tradition, we should consider the period after the reform of 2004, which showed to be a watershed for the history of the market as a reformulation, gaining character of a touristic point, first for its beauty and architecture originality still preserved; secondly because of its stay and the importance of the popular commerce; thirdly, for the products and stories created along the years.

From this restructuring process that held several restaurants, bars and snack bars, they sought to rescue reports of stories lived in the market and elements that would identify the place, inventing the giant bologna sandwich as a symbol of the place, a delicacy that is traditional in the market, classifying the local food, from the inside, that is part of the market's identity.

*However, as there is reference to a historical past, the invented traditions are characterized for establishing a very artificial continuity. In a few words, they are reactions to new situations that assume the form of reference to previous situations, or establish their own past through an almost mandatory repetition.*⁶ (p. 10).

The bologna was created like that, as a traditional product of the market. Mr. Manuel, first permit holder of the Bar do Mané, father of Marcos (currently permit holder of the box) has a story that connected to the popularity of the bologna sandwich in the first years of the market, because it was affordable and appreciated in the Southeast region, created a sandwich tradition, recreating its meaning for the tourists that visit, many times only the bar, exclusively for its stories and to eat the "original" sandwich with three hundred grams of bologna.

In one of the visits to the market, such tradition could be observed and materialized with a tourist coming from Fortaleza, who asked for a bologna sandwich, a soda and a photo with Marcos on his apron and wearing the bar's cap, to show, according to him "friends that he actually ate the original sandwich and not the ones from the generic bars from the mezzanine."

This reinforces as, from the artificial proposal of a sandwich created to be a tourist attraction as a popularizer product of the municipal market, there is its reproduction in several snack bars which sell lots of them every day, making the invented tradition a reality. This creates disputes for the veracity of facts and originality, such as the Bar do Mané case, who affirms being the creator of the bologna sandwich produced with three hundred grams, invented from an old story of the first owner of the bar, Mr. Mané, who used to build the sandwich carefully for the box carriers that distributed goods in the place. And the Hoca Bar, whose advertisement says that it is the traditional bologna sandwich bar, with the best brand of the deli meat, assuring the quality of the sandwich.

From these speeches of stories and the use of certain brands of products used in the making of the sandwiches, an authenticity is sought in the stories told, in the attempt to sell more and have more profit.

Besides this two bars, which are there longer, other snack bars make the sandwich, not claiming to themselves the job of making the original and true sandwich, not in the sense of being the first to make it, but appealing to the tradition and quality of the brand of the bologna used.

According to Hobsbawm,⁶ “there was an adaptation when it was necessary to preserve the old customs in new conditions or to use old models for new ends.” This in fact occurred at the Market after the reform, when they sought to know different narratives to find something original in the place, getting to the bologna sandwich, popular and characteristic of a popular commerce.

*Tradition, because tradition is something old, right? But it is not changeless, just so you know the bologna sandwich with 300 grams cannot be traditional because it didn't exist, it's an invention, an adapted tradition, eating bread with bologna is something an Italian loader of old trucks would do, but he would eat two slices, not half a kilo, you have an adaptation, so you changed the tradition, it is the same thing as if I said that tradition is to play the samba, and then Marcelo D2 comes and does a hip hop samba, but it is not tradition because it was changed, so you have to see what the word tradition means, but it is a Brazilian tradition to make samba, even if its mixed with hip hop****.*

The opinion of the interviewee illustrated what we affirmed to be invented tradition, but without putting it in a subdued, detailed sense; on the contrary, it is exactly the idea that tradition is not something changeless, that it can be transformed according to the reality, the meaning and the use given to this tradition, respecting its origin, but giving it a new meaning of being and operating as a way of sociocultural relations. Therefore, we can realize that, although there is a dispute for legitimacy in the commercialization of certain products, especially foods to be consumed at the place, such as the bologna sandwich and the cod fish pastry, and even the natural juice and the fruit salad, there is a renewal of interests that goes through this new organization that the place suffered with public policies of the government in the period of 2004 in the city of São Paulo.

The delimitation of spaces, as old and new — fruit, fish, meat and emporium boxes on one side, snack bars, bars, souvenir and accessories stores on the other – indicate a movement of conflict that exists in any place where there is transformation and the follows the current market's tendencies.

*Always, the old and the new are also classic, this is eternal, but it was, so to speak, delimited, but the old and the new will always fight, but there is one turning point here, such as technology, computing, right? The computer is a degree between the old and the new, right? So this reform would be that, a degree between the old and the new too, sort of that*****.*

***** Interview with Hugo (done on 10 January 2013), permit holder since 2010 (box Mercapoint) but with a journey in the market since he was a child, since his family owns the fish box.

***** Interview with Hugo, from the Mercapoint box, carried out on January 10, 2013.

This affirms our central ideals of the invention and tradition in a same coexistence space, following a marketing and urban tendency of the old center of the city of São Paulo, concerned about recovering the local identity and to understand the forms of local, regional, national and international relations of the city.

The Municipal Market, nowadays, follows the tendency of the international markets that, according to the data collection, went through such confrontations, but always aim at the new, the mixture of elements and food products.

In Middle Age, according to Montanari,¹² “the Bologna or Milan market was very spoken of, not because there were local foods there, but because of its capacity of defining itself as an inter-territorial, interregional and international place of exchange” (p. 137). The market of Paris, for centuries, was organized in the same way and lived under the same image.

The same happens in the Municipal Market of São Paulo, when we find a great variety of regional, national and international products to be commercialized, such as the bio jewels produced from golden grass, or even the exotic fruits from Amazon, such as cupuaçu and açaí, or even imported products such as olive oil, deli meat, pasta, spices and condiments, imported directly by the permit holders of the emporiums, and other fruits from different parts of the world.

Rubem Oliven,¹³ in his studies about nation, shows how it is possible to understand the creation of the Brazilian national identity from two movements that happened in the 1920's in the country. One of them was in São Paulo, with a national representability, defending the Brazilian culture and the highlighting of national artists, with the week of modern art of 1922; the São Paulo inhabitant is classified and creates a national identity and then becomes global. From this conception, we can relate the symbology that certain foods have at the Market when customs are preserved and the tradition of certain national foods are highlighted, such as the handcrafted manioc flour that is valued in this commerce, or even the handcrafted cachacas of different mills in Brazil, or the commerce of dried meat and other products that are dried for the preparation of typical dishes.

Also, another regional movement happened in 1926, with the Gilberto Freire Regionalist Manifest, defending a regional identity in order to have a Brazilian national identity, highlighting the customs, parties and regional music. And the northeastern regional cuisine that, according to Freire (apud Oliven¹³) should be preserved, once it was in a crisis, crushed by the canned candies and other preserved products, and that “a cuisine in crises means a civilization in danger: the danger of being uncharacterized” (Freire 1976: 72 apud Oliven¹³2002: 28).

Thus, we can think that the Market is concerned about preserving local, regional and national traditions with the commerce of small growers' goods, local spices, handicraft products that value the Brazilian culture without, however, stopping following the commerce trends of products of other nationalities or even fast food snack bars.

Final considerations

From the theme covered throughout the text, we did some considerations around the socio-cultural relations that occurred in the space of the Municipal Market of São Paulo which indicate certain food tendencies in the popular commerce of the city.

The observations at the market brought to light some elements to discuss about the concept of figuration and the me identity and the us identity of Norbert Elias,³ besides the concept of the invented tradition proposed by Eric Hosbsbawm,⁶ so that they complement each other. It is observed that the Elias² concept of configuration is about the society and its culture the way it is structured, but that is not tight; it modifies, an existing reality that, on the one hand, it imposes limits to the individual and, on the other, it offers different alternatives so that the individual can live in it.

In that sense, we can think of the building of the me identity and the us identity as a learning process of the individual by the society in which the customs are formed, habits that consolidate themselves throughout its repetition, transforming into a tradition that, throughout the civilizing process, according to their needs, realities and tendencies, takes different functionalities and meanings, and it can become an adapted tradition to nowadays – or better yet, an invented tradition, with new meaning and new functions in the society in which it is inserted.

The commerce of products and food in the market easily identifies these identity relations and formation of local, regional, national and global traditions with the trade of the bologna sandwich, a tradition invented in the place, with regional products such as the palm oil, flours, tapiocas, cachaças, spices for feijoada etc.; and the global products such as oriental, Asian spices, typical products of different countries and different cultures.

The Municipal Market represents some practices of the Sao Paulo inhabitants' society that set different social extracts, different nationalities, migrations, and other socio-cultural relations. Inside the market, for example, there is a flow of millions of people every day, among which

beggars, traders, migrants, foreigners, tourists, "bookies", workers, security people, that use the space of the market, besides the boxes of commerce and other common areas, as a lottery place, food court and ATMs.

Therefore, we can affirm that there are different spaces inside what we call the "São Paulo inhabitants Municipal Market": the nostalgic side, the new side, the old side, with conflicts, coexistences and exchanges of experiences and values.

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