ARTICLE 1

Bananas to sell and stories to tell: Local food culture and territorial identities from organic and agro-ecological markets

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ABSTRACT KEYWORDS

This article addresses the dispute involving the different meanings of the banana in the city of Rio de Janeiro, especially in the Pedra Branca Massif — an area that in the past was part of the city's Rural Zone. More recently, the banana from this location received the Gastronomic Wonders of Rio de Janeiro Award, however, this same banana is accused by environmentalists of being an exotic plant and its producers accused of invading environmental protection areas. From another perspective, the banana for its producers is a market-oriented culture. However, it is also the market (organic/agroe-cological) that, by making the local banana known, also projects the banana producers, the memory of the place and the local food culture. Based on the analysis of discursive bodies — oral and written — about the banana tree, we try to build a context (set of texts) that reveals the social tensions of this territory.

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ABSTRACT This article addresses the dispute involving the different meanings of the banana in the city of Rio de Janeiro, especially in the Pedra Branca Massif — an area that in the past was part of the city's Rural Zone. More recently, the banana from this location received the Gastronomic Wonders of Rio de Janeiro Award, however, this same banana is accused by environmentalists of being an exotic plant and its producers accused of invading environmental protection areas. From another perspective, the banana for its producers is a market-oriented culture. However, it is also the market (organic/agroecological) that, by making the local banana known, also projects the banana producers, the memory of the place and the local food culture. Based on the analysis of discursive bodies — oral and written — about the banana tree, we try to build a context (set of texts) that reveals the social tensions of this territory.

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"Look at the banana look at the banana tree I bring bananas to sell Bananas of all qualities who will want"

Jorge Benjor

INTRODUCTION

The banana tree is a plant present in the Brazilian landscape. With several varieties and consumed in different ways, bananas are considered a cheap and everyday food in national life. It is also a source of livelihood for farmers who cultivate on shaded slopes and, by specializing in this market culture, are called banana trees.

In the city of Rio de Janeiro, the production of bananas preserved rustic characteristics of cultivation and still depends on the use of pack animals to "pull the banana". In the layman's view, it is a shock to discover that this fruit, so typical and established for centuries in our territory, is classified as an exotic plant and incompatible with the preservation of the slopes, which have been transformed into areas of environmental protection in the city. With some regularity, accusations about "illegal plantations" and their responsible, the "invading farmers" of these environmental areas are reported in the media. Plants and people who inhabit the landscape of the city's former Rural Zone are thus threatened with removal by a certain conservationist interpretation, which preaches the incompatibility between production spaces and conservation spaces.

In the organic and agro-ecological markets¹, bananas from this place have gained increasing notoriety. Part of this projection is due to the action of institutional mediators and organizations that have promoted the recognition of agricultural ways of life in the city's West Zone. When working the disputes of meaning around banana, this article aims to describe the trajectory of this small agriculture in front of the city and its redefinition from a debate on the relocation of food culture brought about by the agro-ecological movement and its markets.

As a methodology, this work used texts: bibliographic production, documents, newspaper articles, videos and some testimonies, all about bananas, trying to describe how these sources express different situations and change in sensitivity in relation to the way of agricultural life in Pedra Branca massif². On onehand, we tried to put into dialogue texts produced at different times, and, on the other hand, we present some texts that, recently released in the media, presented an intense circulation of ideas and resulted in the production of new texts. In this sense, we emphasize that the registration of these discursive materials, as well as the monitoring of the process of recognition of local agricultural systems (Santilli, 2009) is the result

^{1 |} For the purposes of this article, such markets are the fairsorganic and agro-ecological city of Rio de Janeiro. Aboutthe social construction process of the Carioca Fair Circuit Organic, see Ferreira (2013).

^{2 |} Located in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro. On the east face,has its limits in the neighborhood of Taquara, Colonia, Camorim,Vargem Grande and Vargem Pequena. To the south, it borders onthe localities of Grumari and Guaratiba. On the west face, withthe Campo Grande neighborhood. On the North face, it borders theneighborhoods of SenadorCamará, Bangu, Realengo and Sulacap.

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of long-term research by the authors (Fernandez, 2009, 2015, 2016a; Baptista, 2014; Silva, 2017) or even of their presence in the field during events and activities.

We use the notion of context as conceived by Dominick LaCapra (1983) and Sarmento (1998), who inform us that the context in which a text is produced is not simply the empirical reality on which it rests, but is informed by the set of texts that, in dialogue, constitute the argumentative universe of a time. For LaCapra, therefore, reality is textualized in various ways and the researcher is necessarily involved in the processes of meaning and interpretation of reality. The authors thus recognize its implication in the construction of this argumentative field, either by the selection of texts put into conversation, or by the circulation of their own texts over the last decade.

1. THE SERTÃO CARIOCA³: THE FIRST TEXT AND THE CONTEXT OF REFLECTIONS ON THE BANANA, THE BANANA TREE AND THE LANDSCAPE.

The book O Sertão Carioca was published in 1933 by self-taught chronicler, draftsman and naturalist Armando Magalhães Corrêa and portrays the way of life of the old Rural Zone (nowadays, West Zone) of the city of Rio de Janeiro. In this work, are described, so sensitive, the impasses experienced by farmers in this location in the face of the urbanization process and the development of new production relations that threatened the possibilities of reproducing the living conditions of the "sertanejos".⁴

More than just a beautiful description of the landscape and local "human types",⁵ the book is part of a discursive matrix about the backland customs⁶ inaugurated with the work of Euclides da Cunha, which has produced and has been producing different versions of Brazilian social diversity, of the field/city, coastline/hinterland dichotomy. The description of the place, therefore, is used to understand the specificities of population groups furthest away from the civilized centers of the country, in contrast to the more urbanized areas of the city. Thus, it portrays the isolation of this region, the simplicity and the deep interaction of the inhabitants with nature, through extractivism and rustic forms of Handicraft and agriculture, at the same time that it demonstrates the relative physical and economic proximity of the city, as they are the commerce and settlement centers that allow these "sertanejos" to earn their livelihood and sell their goods.

Among the various "human types" described by the author-the dam maneuverer, the fisherman, the mat, clog-maker, ax-handler, the charcoal worker, the urban, suburban and rural street vendor, etc. -, Corrêa also describes the banana trade. In describing them, the author portrays some of their difficulties: the discrimination of rural ways of life compared to urban habits; the abandonment of the rural environment by public agencies and the importance of bananas as a market-oriented crop, allowing producers to acquire products that they do not have on their farms:

- 3 | As we will work through out the text, the term Sertão is the bearer of a rich semantic universe regarding the Brazilian civilizing process. However, for a first understanding of the terms, sertão refers to the interior or rural area and carioca is everything related to the city of Rio de Janeiro.
- 4 | Those who live in the sertão.
- 5 | Correa establishes a typology of inhabitants of the Sertão according to their relationships or functions performed in the natural environment: fisherman, helmsman, banana planter, clog maker, among others. According to Sarmento (1998), the author reproduces the organological matrix which marked the social sciences in its infancy.
- 6 | Segundo Pereira de Queiroz (1978), uma série de romances do século XIX retratam o distanciamento entre os hábitos citadinos e aqueles da roça, ainda que a proximidade entre esses dois mundos garanta a vitalidade desta agricultura. A autora destaca os romances de Manoel de Macedo, que retratam a vida citadina do Rio de Janeiro: A moreninha (1844), O moço Loiro (1845), Rosa (1849) e, em referência às distâncias sociais em São Paulo, cita as comédias de Martins Pena e o romance de Bernardo Guimarães: Rosaura, a enjeitada (1883)

Once the bunches are collected on the feet, they are arranged on the paths, and then transported by donkeys to the roadside depots and, from there, taken by auto-trucks to the export center, in the urban center, or by troops, in the jacás from the yokes of the donkeys. It is truly interesting to see the freighters or drovers that leave all the holes in the countryside, late at night, to reach the market at dawn, but currently, the authorities do not let them go beyond a certain point, as they find it shameful to troop...

What impressed me the most in Paris, on the Boulevard Raspail, was a little man with a horn, hoarse sound, announcing goat cheese, in the company of about thirty beautiful goats. How different is the mentality of civilized peoples.

(...) As true selfless people, fighting against all the elements and finally abandoned by our leaders; when, by chance, they commit any crime, the law is immediately applied to them, but the law made for 'the city's dandy', there is no understanding of their environment, their mentality and their rural life, which demonstrates the need for study of rural habitat, as does the International Geographical Union.

When they return to their ranch, they bring something to eat for the next day, in the company of their partner and children (Corrêa, 1933:142).

Corrêa's quote demonstrates the economic integration of agricultural activity with the urban center, although in many other parts of the book the author emphasizes the idea of a world apart from the urban environment, highlighting cultural isolation and abandonment institutional to which the sertanejos are relegated. Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (1978) points out that the contrast between the rural and the urban⁷ appears at the end of the 19th century, mainly in large cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, driven by coffee richness. It is, in the author's terms, a bourgeoisification or a contrast that is more cultural than economic⁸, since at this time the city still depends on heavily from rural activities for their livelihood. So, for the author, it is precisely the proximity to urban centers that guarantees the vitality of this agriculture.

From the industrialization process in the first decades of the 20th century, there is in fact a break with the rural environment and local agriculture starts to occupy a peripheral place in the context of supplying the city, which increasingly requires a larger and technified scale of production. Corrêa's work is, in this sense, a harbinger of the disappearance of rustic agriculture in the face of the urbanization process and the growing imposition of new capitalist rationalities, which change the place of this agriculture in the city's supply plan, reinforcing the readings about the decadence of this activity. We can point to a series of socio-spatial transformations, together with changes in urban legislation, which contributed to the growing invisibility of agriculture in the Sertão Carioca. Stand out: the renaming of the Rural Zone⁹ as the West Zone and the incentive to industrial and residential uses, the intense process of real estate speculation in the region.

In terms of environmental policies, the threat of urbanization on the slopes

- 7 | According to Pereira de Queiroz (1978), a series of novels of the nineteenth century portray the distance between the urban habits and those of the countryside, despite the proximity between these two worlds guarantee the vitality of this agriculture. The author highlights the novels of Manoel de Macedo, who portray the city life of Rio de Janeiro: A Moreninha (1844), O moço loiro (1845), Rosa (1849) and, in Reference to social distances in São Paulo, cites comedies by Martins Pena andthe novel by Bernardo Guimarães: Rosaura, a enjeitada (1883).
- 8 | Based on Weberian inspiration, Pereira de Queiroz (1978) proposes to think about the relations between the rural environment and urban from three ideal types of economic and political-administrative relations.
- 9 | The division of the city into South, North and West Zone corresponds to the geographical division of the city and is widely used by the population. In administrative terms, the Decree 3800/1970 which abolished the Rural Zone nomenclature and divided the State of Guanabara into the following zones: Area Central, Port Area; Industrial Zone, Tourist Zone; Residential Zones from 1 to 6; Special Zone from 1 to 7.

10 | The Pedra Branca State Park occupies approximately 12% of the territory of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro.

and springs of the Pedra Branca Massif was used as a justification for the creation of the Pedra Branca State Park¹⁰ (here in after PEPB) in 1974. From that date, the State, through the legal power to name this protected territory, has defined new uses and representations for areas with elevation above the altitude of 100 meters.

Agriculture, since then, has become doubly invisible, either by the conservation nist imagination that makes the representation (Bourdieu, 2006) of an "untouched" forested area existence, or by the very market dynamics that relegate this small-scale agriculture to a condition peripheral/local and strengthened the representation that there is no agriculture in the municipality. Paradoxically, the creation of the Park was responsible for maintaining a portion of this agricultural activity. In other words, the Park conserved part of the Sertão Carioca (Fernandez, 2016a). Due to environmental restrictions, which legally do not allow housing or any direct use of natural resources in parks, many crops were abandoned and the forest recovered. Those who stayed, however, did not expand their crops and began to defend their permanence, highlighting their Belonging to the place, their identity as a farmer and their role in nature conservation. In this way, the banana plantations fulfill the role of marking the existence of farmers in the forested landscape and an agricultural system formed by paths, wattle and daub houses, fences and pack animals.

Although one cannot speak of an open conflict and the imminent removal of PEPB residents and producers, the visible and stigmatizing dimension of the subjective deterritorialization referred by Sathler (2007)¹¹ is present in recurrent reports that accuse producers of invaders and threaten their removal from inside the conservation unit. Thus, in the G1 Newspaper report of May 27, 2011¹², it reads: "Images show illegal planting of bananas in a Rio de Janeiro's environmental park". In this matter, the respondent and responsible for the Coordination of Combating Environmental Crimes, José Maurício Padrone, says:

There is a project, the project will finish at the end of the year and the secretariat will compensate those people who are there, and will end the banana, with this banana plantation, and plant seedlings of the Atlantic Forest native to that region (Portal G1, 2011).

The afore mentioned project is, in fact, the Park's management plan, which on this occasion was not even ready. In his speech, the plan appears to be a technical-scientific instrument¹³ that will finally provide the legal justification for the removal of these "people" and its plantations. The criminalization of producers, based on principles of environmental legislation and conservation values, hides the history of occupation of the Pedra Branca Massif. By calling them invaders, it inverts the relationship of prior presence of producers and their crops in the region. Implicit in this speech, there is also the condemnation of banana cultivation, as it is classified as an exotic plant. In fact, the State Forestry Institute (IEF), ¹⁴ the entity responsible for the administration of the PEPB

- 11 | Subjective deterritorialization is defined by the feeling of loss of territorial ties, by a permanent state of threat of removal, without actually deterritorialization
- 12 | Available at: http:// gr.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/ noticia/2011/05/images show-plantacao-illegal de-bananas-em-parque Ambiental-no-rio.html.
- 13 Often, values, concepts with appeal scientific and not exactly research results based, are activated to legitimize the decision-making process in environmental policies. (Barreto Filho, 2001; RAM; Medeiros; Laurent, 2008, Fernandez; Oliveira; Dias, 2015).
- 14 | In January 2009, the State Forest Institute (IEF Instituto Estadual de Florestas) together with other state environmental Agencies became part of the State Environment Institute (INEA Instituto Estadual do Ambiente).

and other state parks, started in 2007 a project to remove jackfruit trees and bamboos from Ilha Grande State Park under the allegation that they were invasive exotic plants. The action caused great shock and perplexity among the population of Ilha Grande and was described by Prado and Catão (2010) as a manifestation of ethnocentrism and asymmetry in relations with the other, as it does not consider local knowledge and the importance of species in the cultural practices of communities.

Such controversies have aroused interest in the topic of agrobiodiversity (Santilli, 2009), which seeks to highlight the role of human management, through the domestication of plants and animals, in biodiversity and *in situ* genetic diversity. From this perspective, many forests considered untouched may actually have been managed thousands of years ago (Balée, 2009, Adams, 1994, Oliveira; Silva, 2011, Fernandez; Oliveira; Dias, 2015).

Banana cultivation in the Pedra Branca Massif causes controversy among biologists, environmentalists, geographers, agronomists and others. Considered an exotic plant, it is alleged that the banana tree does not allow anything to grow between its feet, opens up clearings in the forest, alters the original vegetation and increases the risk of landslides in slopes. Others, however, consider that the banana tree, despite being an exotic plant, has been established there for a long time, its culture has not expanded and, from an erosive point of view, its effects are negligible (Freitas, 2003). This author then concludes that such results should be taken into account when solving territorial conflicts with local populations and that these should be incorporated into conservation projects.

Interdisciplinary collaboration on agrobiodiversity and landscape has contributed to the study of the historicity of the adaptation of plants, men and animals in ecological chains. The values, practices and local knowledge that involve the use of species by human groups are relevant to problematize what deserves to be protected and conserved. The agricultural system¹⁵ (composed by the interaction between environment, techniques, objects, knowledge) is now considered for its natural conservation potential, but also for its cultural value, for the ingenuity of its techniques and cultural richness.

The longevity of this crop in Brazilian territory invites us to think about the effectiveness of posing the question in terms of exotic-native opposition, instead of thinking about the historical results of the interaction between human and non-humans in the secular or even millenary constitution of landscapes. As one reads in Corrêa's work (1933:141): it is believed that bananas arrived in Brazil with the first settlers. "In India, Malaysia and the Philippines, bananas have been cultivated for over 4000 years. (...). It was cultivated in America for the first time in 1516".

The rustic banana culture in the Pedra Branca Massif involves a specialized and very old knowledge of handling and observing the banana plantations, the relationship with the donkeys that transport the fruits along the paths and the

15 In 2010, National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN - Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional) recognized the Traditional Agricultural System of the Rio Negro (Amazonas) as cultural Brazilian heritage. The patrimonialization of agricultural systems results understanding that certain ecosystems can only be preserved if, together with them, the livelihoods of the populations that created them and that are coming to handling with. The reverse is also true: don'tcan ensure the dynamics of cultures and knowledge traditional members without the maintenance of territories where such ways of life were gestated. See in:http://portal.iphan.gov. br/pagina/ Details/75.

techniques for correct ripening of the fruits. Farmer Claudino, in a statement in the article "O Sertão Carioca", published in a large-circulation newspaper, describes his daily life, highlighting the hardship of agricultural work:

The secret is to brush twice a year, and let the land feed on its own banana tree.

(...). When I get here, I have to cut the bunch, right, I cut sheets, I line the boxes all right, I tidy up, then I put everything on the donkey, I carry it on the donkey, then I'll take it downstairs for the association.

When the weather is sunny like this, we put four boxes on top of the donkey and go down, which is a beauty, but when there are storms, it really rains; thunderstorm then the donkey it goes down, sometimes it slips, rolls down the gutter, I have to be running, catching, poor thing, so as not to hurt the animals. To go down is tough. Our lives are like that, we have to move forward, we cannot be discouraged (Claudino da Costa apud Briso; Marenco, 2015).

2. CROPS FOR THE MARKET, SELF-CONSUMPTION AND THE SERTÃO CARIOCA REINVENTION

The former Sertão Carioca region had several market crops such as coffee, orange and charcoal production. Currently, banana and persimmon are the main crops market. The latter arrived in the Pedra Branca Massif in the 1960s. Banana, according to historical sources, is the longest-lived market crop in the Massif. Garcia Jr. (1983:16), when dealing with the distinction between market and subsistence crops, states that market crops, by producing exchange value, allow farmers to acquire other goods that are not produced on their properties. This does not mean that subsistence crops are not commercialized, but that the logic that guides the planting and the ways in which it circulates have different social consequences and cover different spheres of family consumption.

If on the one hand, the relationship with urban markets is a historical condition experienced by farming families, on the other hand, the process of urbanization and development of the productive forces impose growing consumption needs that can lead them to a state of imbalance (Cândido, 1971), that is, what if produces is not enough to acquire other products that have become essential.

We must emphasize in this process the democratization of access to refrigerators and other domestic equipment, modifying eating habits and facilitating the storage of meat and, in this case, reducing pressure on some resources natural, including hunting. Conversely, there is a growing dependence on products outside the property to supply families.

The memories of farmers in the Pedra Branca Massif point to a past of plenty, in which few things needed to be bought, in contrast to the countless current difficulties in planting, whether due to the lack of labor or the impossibility of expanding crops, the unkempt paths etc. Finally, the generational issue is also highlighted,

since these factors, allied to new consumption needs, lead to a growing disinterest of the youngest in agriculture, who seek other activities in the city, threatening the continuity of this agriculture.

When I was a child, there were a lot of people in this mountain, we had greater joy on Sundays, playing ball, naked, in the yards, we went to each other's yards, today you don't see that anymore, you don't see anything anymore. There are few people. There are people we know forinside the bush, but today most people have their homes down there. Those who are already here stay, but slowly they die, they leave and turn into a *forest how do we see it now or how it has become*. That's where I really feel sad. I think that in the future, this will go down in history (Claudino da Costa apud Briso; Marenco, 2015)

Although the alternative between market-oriented and self-consumption is always found, the historical trend of this Massif agriculture has led to a growing specialization in banana production. Given the restrictions of a rustic crop transported on the back of animals and the competition from bananas coming from others states and produced on a large scale, their market conditions become more difficult. Many of these producers deliver their production to intermediaries, receiving very little for it.

Banana cultivation requires little management compared to other crops. Some agronomists even define it as extractive agriculture, although the combined use of these two terms seems contradictory. From a cultural perspective and adaptation of local ways of working, interest in other crops (with the exception of persimmon¹⁶, which also requires little care) is specific and only complementary to bananas. However, the growth of the organic market and the penetration of agroecology values brought new possibilities for reinvention of this agriculture. The participation of the local farmers in fairs in the South Zone of the city helped to promote their living space in other corners of the city (Prado; Mattos; Fernandez, 2012).

People from Ipanema, Copacabana, Leblon, Tijuca, already buy our products. We were raised here in the forest, when I talked about Copacabana I listened to it on the radio.

(...) We were organic and didn't even know it. I had never heard that word. (...) Five years ago, when organic fairs started, there were people up here who called me crazy. Crossing the city to do a fair, how is this possible? In Ipanema, we said good morning and people didn't respond. We were really stupid, even depressed. (Claudino da Costa apud Briso; Marenco, 2015).

By their own accounts, farmers say consumers want to know how they grow, where and how they live. The social interest in certain cultural traits in the Pedra Branca massif has encouraged farmers to produce a local memory, valuing their history and dignifying their activity. This allows us to speak of a patrimonialization Rev. antropol. (São Paulo, Online) | v. 63 n. 3: e178185 | USP, 2020

16 | The culture of persimmon, as well as bananas, has gone through a similar process of valorization and territorial linkage. The fruit is part of the visual identity of two agroecological fairs in the West Zone. Since 2011 we celebrate the Persimmon Harvest Day (Dia do Tira Caqui) a Kind of community harvest, always held on April 21; Tiradentes holiday. In 2014, the television programme "What tree is this?" (Um pé de quê?), dedicated to the social history of plants. recorded an episode about persimmon and visited farmers from the mountainous region of the state of Rio de Janeiro and Pedra Branca Massif. The visit to Pedra Branca can be seen from the 13:40 minute of the Video Um pé de quê?" https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_ v]66FHgBg&t=1127s.

process¹⁷ (Gonçalves, 2009) of the Sertão Carioca agricultural system, which, according to the author, is stimulated by the feeling of loss; of disappearance of certain cultural traits that need to be safeguarded.

The article from which the above quote was extracted had great social repercussion. Published on the cover of a Sunday edition of the newspaper O Globo, the headline announces: A trip to the backlands of the city: Cariocas live in a rustic way without electricity in the highest hills of Rio and invites the reader to become a traveler in a "tamed sertão" (Vidal e Souza, 2010), as Magalhães Corrêa (1933) did, from a place located a few kilometers from the busiest neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro. Despite the air of flagrant exoticization of Sertão Carioca, there are signs in the report that the script and the topics covered were built in a participatory manner with its interviewees, the farmers. In this sense, journalists had the merit of understanding the sertão through the self-representation of the "sertanejos".

17 | We are not referring to any formal recognition process, although some dimensions of this socio-spatial universe have been recognized institutionally. In the Pedra Branca massif, three quilombola communities were recognized by the Palmares Foundation. Two of them in 2014: the quilombo Cafundá Astrogilda and Camorim, and another in 2017,the Dona Bilina quilombo.

3. FROM THE INVISIBLE FARM TO THE GASTRONOMIC WONDERS PRIZE

These changes, therefore, began with the organic conversion process of farmers in the Rio da Prata locality in the early 2000s, but gained momentum with the opening of the Rio's Organic Fair Circuit (Circuito Carioca de Feiras Orgânicas) in 2010. Environmental agencies, however, have been slow to recognize the right of farmers to the territory. In 2006, the Farmanguinhos/Fiocruz Biodiversity Laboratory, located around the Pedra Branca Massif, developed a Project training in medicinal plants to local producers, called Projeto Profito. The Park manager was receptive to the project as long as it was developed around the park, as it could not be used directly and showed optimism in relation to the disappearance of agriculture and, consequently, of the farmers who inhabit the Park:

The biggest problem is the guy who is tied to the land, but a positive fact is that the old farmers are dying. I really think that the trend is to abandon agriculture. Now there are those who enjoy the activity. The great luck for us is that the young man is no longer interested in agriculture.

In 2007, it changed the administration of the Park and of the entire Secretariat for the Environment, including the new managers, it showed itself in favor of the project as an environmentally compatible activity with the conservation unit, as long as the condition of permanence of the farmers was not resolved. After approval by both institutions of a term of technical cooperation, the document was never signed by the environmental agency (IEF and later INEA), but it was never officially denied either. The silence actually reveals the positioning of this administration, apparently committed to demonstrating a character of mediation of conflicts, but, in practice,

denying rights to farmers.

To the managers' disappointment, the project yielded numerous political achievements and enabled the insertion of farmers into networks of agroecology movements. The organic conversion of some associations and growing opportunities for organic and agro-ecological markets promoted new reflections on the desired markets, the local identity of the products and linked to a specific way of life. The O Globo article of July 13, 2013, entitled "Invisible Agriculture: Rio's rural producers try to survive the IPTU charge and the lack of incentives", presents with balance the different points of view on the maintenance of agriculture in the Pedra Branca Massif. The report gives a voice to farmers, environmental managers and agricultural support partners:

My grandfather was a charcoal worker, my father grew oranges, and since I was a boy I have worked in the banana plantation, without any incentive or official certification. We help preserve the park. If we have to leave, where do we go? Living in a favela? - asks Luís Carlos, while walks through its banana plantation, which does not require the use of pesticides¹⁸.

The municipal secretary for the Environment, Carlos Alberto Muniz, on the other hand, is categorical: nothing justifies agricultural production in parks. He defends the eradication of banana trees from the slopes of Pedra Branca, admits that the Master Plan allows for the collection of property tax in areas with agricultural potential, but states that the tax exemption for producers will continue: — This production in Pedra Branca is not positive. It is more important for the city to develop that ecosystem than to maintain an invasion there.

The imbroglio brought a group of renowned chefs to the side of the producers. Teresa Corção, from the Navegador restaurant, in downtown Rio, coordinates a movement in defense of the organic production of Pedra Branca. She recalls that, at the moment when Europe discusses the expansion of "green belts" in urban conglomerates, Rio moves in the opposite direction by simply denying its rural side. — If small organic production ends up in Rio, our everyday food will come industrialized from far away. We will completely lose our quality control. We want to build a relationship with these farmers, who need recognition (Alencar, 2013).

Given the great impact of the report and with the objective of increasing the access of more farmers to the debate, one of the members of the Profito Project¹⁹ recorded a video²⁰ presenting the reception of the report by farmers. The audiovisual tool allowed recording their right to reply, made by Jorge Cardia and Cristina Santos, making it a public document that could have the same scope as the journalistic text. Furthermore, it ensured that the farmers' point of view preserved the argumentative force characteristic of oral discourse.

18 | In Brazil, the use of the term agricultural defensive or pesticide mark distinct ideological positions in the field of agrarian and agricultural debates. The first is used by those who defend agribusiness, its technological package and justify the inevitability of using certain substances to fight pests. Already the defenders of organic and agroecological agriculture define these substances such as pesticides, emphasizing their health risk and to environmental contamination. Pesticides are defined in federal law No. 7.802, of 11th of July 1989, regulated by Decree No. 4,074, of January 4, 2002.

19 The Profito Project. although it had as an activity end the training for the cultivation and management of medicinal plants products, due to institutional and legal barriers and politicians found to carry out the project, it's over for promoting a politicization of the issues that affected farmers and sought to create channels of dialogue of this group with other actors. The authors Fernandez and Baptista participated in the construction and implementation of the Project developed by Farmanguinhos/ Fiocruz in the 2006-2016 period. About the project, watch the video "Health is among us". 2013. https:// vimeo.com/70507705

20 | "A roça é invisível para quem?" Available in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xcWiq48KLU.

Is the garden invisible? It's not invisible to me, because I come from a traditional family here in Vargem Grande, in PedraBranca, over a hundred and fifty or two hundred years old, do you understand? So how invisible? (...) So much so that she is not invisible that it is her that we are bringing our bananas to sell here in Vargem Grande and everyone already knows our products. You already know that our product is organic, it's good, straight from the farm. So the garden is not invisible. Why does this banana come from? (...) From it our livelihood comes and we are supporting the people of Vargem Grande with it. And with quality merchandise.

People come from everywhere to buy, people from Barra, Recreio, Vargem Pequena, Camorim. All people who come to buy our products with us and want more products and we don't have them (Baptista, 2013).

Reading the article shows that the use of the term invisible by the newspaper list refers to the lack of support, institutional abandonment and the population's lack of knowledge about agricultural activities in the city. For the farmer couple, however, defining their farm as invisible sounded like an offense. It was necessary to defend its history, the value of its activity and its products in local markets.

The video was recorded at the Vargem Grande Residents' Association. At the entrance to the site there is a banana stand. The creation of this point of sale came from the idea of Profito's mediators, together with the farmers association Agrovargem, who organized the tent in some specific events.

Subsequently, the sale of bananas was continued by the perseverance of the farmer]orge Rodrigues, who strengthened the sale point. Working in a rotation scheme with other producers, this point represented, for some of them, the possibility to abandon sales to intermediaries and sell directly to consumers.

While in conventional markets, and about the focus of large logistics and long food production chains, food comes from nowhere (Schmitt, 2011: 4), in alternative circuits, food starts to be seen from its link with the producer and with his life story.

The alternation between market and self-consumption cultures (Garcia Jr., 1983), direct sales to consumers, proximity markets and the enhancement of local food are part of a set of precepts that the agro-ecological movement advocates for the strengthening of a farming (Petersen, 2009) and that can face the global structures of food production.

The emergence of new alternative fairs or points of sale in neighborhoods close to their sites and the search by consumers for "clean food"²¹ impose on these producers the challenge of offering a diversity of products on the board limited by decades of specialization in the production of Banana food. However, there is that to think about whether the ongoing process of territorial affirmation allows farmers to activate symbolic capital that can leverage different income opportunities (such as community-based tourism, the manufacture of processed products) and not

21 Clean food is a common term for food produced without pesticides.

exclusively the diversification of production. According to Favareto (2007), in the construction of new ruralities, primary activities give way to a growing heterogenization of economic activities, such as environmental services and the production of symbolic goods.

It is in this sense that authors such as Appadurai (2008) and Kopytoff (2008) go beyond the discussion of forms and functions of exchange, and seek to draw attention to the different value regimes that are assigned to objects in exchange situations. Along with its mercantile character, the banana from the Pedra Branca Massif became the bearer of numerous social attributes, linked more broadly to agro-ecological values²² and more specifically to the ways of living in the territory. Even to it are attributed (by consumers) values of taste and shapes differentiated: they are tastier bananas, although smaller and with a poor appearance, and when compared to those sold in supermarkets, they are called "country banana" or "scraped" banana.

ished bend rules of
ut of stalls
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22 | Among them, we highlight:

In the spaces of the fairs, a pedagogical learning process is established between producers and consumers about food and its preparation, tastes and rules of operation of the markets (use of packaging, prices, sanitary issues, layout of stalls and quality of food), thus as the sharing of ways of life, ways of conceiving the social division of the city, etc.

Appadurai (2008), inspired by Simmel, tells us that economic life is determined by the exchange of sacrifices between sellers and buyers, however, the measurement of sacrifices is not always shared between them, especially in long chains of marketing or intercultural contexts. In the case in question, we saw that, due to the very characteristics of agro-ecological markets and the action of social media, consumers expand their knowledge about the sacrifice of producers in taking their products to the fair, in addition to other adversities faced in their daily lives morning. Farmers-marketers, in turn, start to consider the sacrifices of consumers, which involve health care and requirement of restrictive diets, limited locations and hours of marketing spaces, issues of taste and search for specific foods.

PIn addition to organic markets, Fernandez (2016) discovered, by chance, the strength of local banana distribution circuits in Pedra Branca Massif.

In a conversation with a fruit salad vendor in the Praça Seca neighborhood, I learned that this banana also stands out at conventional fairs for its antioxidant attributes, ripening without chemical additives and the absence of "cica"²³:

23 Bitterness found in unripe fruits.

Today I had the pleasure of meeting Gegê. He sells fruit salad and ice cream at Praça Seca, next to Caixa Econômica bank. In our conversation, he says that he is an economist and even ventured into a postgraduate course at CPDA/UFRRJ, but the work did not allow him to take the project ahead. His cart is extremely organized, the fruits and ice cream are stored separately and he offers the portions to the customers: "Mango? Watermelon? Papaya? Banana?" I see the banana in beautiful slices and ask what the secret is for it not to get dark.

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He then replies that it is the quality of the banana. Just yesterday, he says the banana was not good, it got dark and my salad was ugly. Gegê then adds: "the good banana is the banana from the shills, which I buy from that man who sells at the Praça Seca market, next to the coconut man. This banana comes from Recreio, doesn't take carbs and even green doesn't have "cica". Bananas from Pau da Fome, Vargem Grande, Piabas²⁴ are of the best quality" (Fernandez, 2016b).

The projection of farmers in organic/agro-ecological markets and the closeness with chefs, food relocation movements²⁵ and food safety resulted in the award in December 2015 of the Vargem Grande banana, as Gastronomic Wonder of the State of Rio de Janeiro, in the category "land" (Soares, 2015). The award was sponsored by SENAC-RIO and the Government of State. It is this same Government that still criminalizes the cultivation of bananas in the PEPB and that refuses to formalize any agreement that gives legal certainty to farmers. Therefore, it was an event of great symbolism: the farmers from Vargem Grande, the same from the newspaper article "Invisible Agriculture", to be received and awarded with the award at the Guanabara Palace, seat of the State Government.

24 | Locations around the PedraBranca Massif.

25 | Shortening the path between production and consumption.

Following the path of fame for bananas and persimmons, other foods are gradually being introduced into the market and presented as local foods: taioba, pink yam, yam moela, serralha, some varieties of cassava that are not found in large commercial chains. Thus, together with the incentive to relocate the agrifood system, one of the expected effects is the rescue of traditional cuisine.

4. THE PUBLIC MEMORY APPRECIATION AND LOCAL FOOD CULTURE

So, the first gains were political and symbolic. The local memory was redefined, the identification between farmers and their food became positive (Velho, 2013: 63) and there was recognition of traditional recipes, some of them, with the banana as the main ingredient.

One can also observe the increase in direct sales points in locations closer to agricultural spaces. At the Feira da Roça in Vargem Grande, for example, local producers, several of which are self-identified as quilombolas²⁶, weekly sell bananas with other foods from their backyards, whether processed or not. The appreciation of local culture meant that, in addition to bananas, they began to continuously bring sweets traditionally made for their own consumption to the fairs. A similar phenomenon was observed by Janine Gomes da Silva (2011) in family farming in Joinville (PR), where the "typical dishes" of families descending from Italian immigrants came to be recognized as a cultural heritage and valued and consumed by tourists in annual celebrations.

In the first half of 2016, several jars of banana jam decorated with the arms

24 | Quilombolas are those who live in Quilombos, communities descended from enslaved black people who have protection policies recognized by the 1988 Brazilian Constitution.

coat of the remaining Quilombo community Cafundá Astrogilda²⁷ were sold at Feira da Roça. The sweets were made by the wife of one of the representatives of the community. Although they stopped being sold some time later, it is still possible to buy banana candies at the market. Currently, banana, pumpkin and papaya sweets are sold in simpler packaging and without a coat of arms, by Jorgina Cardia, a member of one of the family's nuclei of the aforementioned community. The sweets are made by her sister, "the way they used to be made"²⁸ with chopped banana slices. In other words, due to their consistency and texture, they are not suitable to be consumed with bread, but as a dessert.

The sweet is still served today as a dessert in both family and public commemorations held by the quilombos of the Massif²⁹. In addition to the sweet, we can also mention the banana stew commonly made at the Bar Tô na Boa, by its owner, Gisele Mesquita, also belonging to Cafundá Astrogilda. At the annual Black Consciousness Day parties, usually held in front of your establishment, feijoada is served. However, on November 20, 2016, in a minor commemoration, for the death of one of the community's elderly representatives, Jorge Mesquita³⁰, they served banana stew for its members, partners and mediators.

In this event, austerity and mourning were evidenced through the food. Thus, the opposition between the two dishes is perceived and, through them, the differentiation between the public quilombola identity exposed in the great commemorations — related to the most common symbols of Afro-Brazilian cultural representation — and the own specificity of the local culture. The banana stew, in addition to fulfilling the role of representing the traditionality of local practices and social relations at the height of the honoree, brings elements of simplicity and sobriety that match with a moment of death, while feijoada refers to celebration moments and achievements At the same time, in Quilombo CafundáAstrogilda, the trend common to other remaining quilombo communities in the State of Rio de Janeiro is identified: in large parties they celebrate political achievements, important dates and raise money with public feijoadas, such as the Quilombo do Sacopã, São José da Serra and, much closer, the Camorim Quilombo (also located in the Massif) which had already held feijoadas several years before.

Feijoada, as Roberto da Matta wrote, within the Brazilian culinary system, represents the "cooked" food situated between solid and liquid. A heritage of Iberian culture, but also altered by miscegenation. So it symbolized, over time, this hybrid national identity. (2012:6) Câmara Cascudo (2011) states that, although it is often associated with black identity, because it would be made by slaves with leftover food from the masters' table and this is rooted in the national imagination, its roots would be rooted in the Iberian stews, made with the same logic of cooking different foods together, and that on the African continent itself, beans would have much less culinary importance compared to corn and cassava.

- 27 | Cafundá Astrogilda is one of the family nuclei that make up the Quilombo in the broadest sense called Quilombo Vargem. Its members are predominantlyfarmers from families living in the PedraBranca Massif for approximately 200 years, but like yours certification is recent (August 16, 2014), manyworks previously referred to them onlyas farmers.
- **28** Definition given by the seller about the candy recipe.
- 29 | At the 15th Feijoada of Quilombo do Camorim(also located in the Massif) on November 272016, the banana jam with pieces was served in small cups as dessert for gifts.
- 30 | Jorge dos Santos Mesquita, who inherited from his matriarch (Astrogilda Ferreira da Rosa) the respect of the community, was important for the certification process of Cafundá Astrogilda at the Palmares Cultural Foundation. Furthermore, in the following years he was one of the public figures of reference, telling stories at AçãoGriô (memberguided tours from the community to the quilombo).

The relationship between feijoada and stew was explained by the narrative of Fátima Martins, one of the quilombola women who helped prepare the feijoada in the 2015 edition of this party. In his speech, he establishes a closer cultural relationship with banana stew, because banana has always existed as a food base for farmers. While feijoada was rare, a delicacy for specific occasions because the cost of meat was high, despite its symbolic importance.

Feijoada is a tradition, our tradition is feijoada isn't it? So the banana stew is also our tradition, it reminds me a lot of my childhood. Ah, my mother used bananas a lot, I don't know how to do it, I didn't record it, I don't like it, it's a lot of work. But I love eating, whenever I go out I'm the first to try it, but my mother used bananas, banana stews a lot, feijoada my mother used to do a lot after it got better because before it was more difficult [...] Because it was more difficult have meat at home, but when she could, she would always buy something and make the feijoada and make it for us, a little, but she did it, not with all the parts...

The recognition of bananas by organic and/or agro-ecological markets occurred years before Cafundá Astrogilda was certified, however, in some way, the fruit became a reference in its recognition process, because of the historic banana cultivation and traditional cuisine contributed to anchor the quilombola identity.

Bananas and forms of preparation are not only for the quilombolas, but common to farmers who have lived in the Massif for generations and have cultivated and consumed them over time. In this sense, the specificity consists in valuing this food and making the local cuisine the basis for the quilombola identity. Or the premise that, in addition to specific recipes, there is this broader logic that connects people and food in various instances:

The cuisine of a group is much more than a sum of dishes considered characteristic or emblematic. It is a set of elements referenced in tradition and articulated in the sense of constituting it as something particular, singular, recognizable in relation to other cuisines (Maciel, 2005: 50).

In this sense, as proposed by José Reginaldo Gonçalves (2009:27-28), it can also be a cultural heritage, because it encompasses other instances: economic, moral, religious, magical, political, legal, aesthetic, psychological and physiological. The cultural heritage is inserted in social relations, in a certain referential system that produces meanings, serving at the same time to format projects and discourses. Therefore, it is not possible by definition to obtain a single linear discourse of valuation. But agents in a space of dispute and negotiation manage to determine the recognition of certain values to the detriment of others, even though they may leave out important elements, which do not fit well into the historical-social context.

The notion of cultural, immaterial and/or intangible heritage, in this case, gives formal value to food, as well as to other Afro-Brazilian cultural practices. In this way, we can consider that every culture has materiality and at the same time all materiality is appropriated, signified and used within the culture. Therefore, when we refer to cultural heritage, immaterial or intangible, we are indirectly dealing with transitory material aspects that are difficult to touch upon; the ways of doing, which can be registered but not frozen and which are important testimonies of our memory and identity, preserved by groups, regions or even the country. For example: ways of dancing, cooking, building or creating things that have a certain temporal continuity (Fonseca, 2004). This value consequently allows for the "collective titling of land to traditional black communities recognized as 'quilombo remnants' and the official recognition of immaterial assets related to the inheritance of enslaved populations" (Mattos; Abreu, 2013:107).

This is evident in the research proposal by Nina Bitar (2011) when it assumes that even before the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (Iphan) recognized the acarajé as cultural heritage, the Bahia women themselves from acarajé already considered this food as an important reference for their religious identity and for the heritage of Afro-Brazilian culture, which was later endorsed by the State with the inventory process of the "Craft of baianas of Acarajé". Therefore, food should be maintained with its appropriation of public space, the relationship of gift with its deities and the execution of religious obligations related to the process of preparation, offer, exhibition/sale and consumption of Acarajé.

Likewise, although Cafundá Astrogilda singled out the local cuisine recipes made with bananas for its own identity constitution and consequently highlighted its specificity and importance, it did so from its own conception of heritage in the most essential sense of the term, that is, what is so important that it has been handed down for generations. According to Moraes (2005), it is a dispute of meanings, which is socially configured through new discursive interpretations in the field. Among your forms of communication there are Facebook, conversations at the fair, public speaking at academic events and at the parties they hold. They become protagonists of their trajectory and the defense of an agrifood system integrated to the city.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the text, we seek to show the disputes over the meaning surrounding banana cultivation in the Pedra Branca Massif, based on the confrontation of discursive bodies — reports, testimonies, documents, books and videos — that are carriers of argumentative possibilities of certain historical contexts. It is observed that the new socio-environmental guidelines and the insertion of farmers in agroecology movements and in organic circuits have enabled farmers some protagonism in the

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production of texts about its own history, thus producing new forms of communication and polyphony. The growing linkage of bananas to the territory and to a specific way of life through alternative markets has brought visibility to the local agrifood system, as well as the recovery of traces of food culture, which can contribute to the strengthening of this threatened agriculture.

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