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Resistance and resilience: the importance of the Family Farming Market in Armação dos Búzios, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Family farming is central to valuing food culture, with its multiplicity of knowledge practices and foods. Open-air markets are a short supply–chain strategy that gives visibility to diversified family production. This article examines the Family Farming Market in Búzios as a territory of resistance for the production of smallholders, quilombola communities, and fishers. The methodology combined documentary and regulatory review, fieldwork, and semi-structured interviews with vendors and the market organizer. The material was systematized and analyzed in light of the importance of food culture and the valorization of territories of "re-existence," with particular emphasis on the Family Farming Market of Armação dos Búzios, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The findings show that the market mobilizes multiple spheres of society through the power of food—from production to sale and consumption—constituting a space of political resistance and the affirmation of food culture.

KEYWORDS: food culture; short supply chains; territory.

INTRODUCTION

The municipality of Armação dos Búzios is widely promoted by corporate media as a showcase of "haute cuisine," marked by international restaurants and elite tourism. This narrative erases the gastronomic presence of quilombola communities, smallholders, and caiçara artisanal fishers. Such contradictions prompt reflection on the invisibility of local food culture throughout the making of Búzios' territory, as already contextualized in Guterman and Santos (2023).

Local food culture in Armação dos Búzios has been obscured by hegemonic actors over time, erasing the people's memory. The Family Farming Market in Búzios (Feira da Agricultura Familiar de Búzios) emerged from an articulation among municipal farmers, quilombola communities at Praia Rasa and Bahia Formosa, the caiçara community of Búzios, and Brazilian gastronomy courses—particularly the Instituto Federal Fluminense in Cabo Frio, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil.

The article's central aim is to apprehend the Family Farming Market in Búzios as a territory of resistance for the production of smallholders, quilombolas, and fishers. Beyond a site of exchange aligned with the Solidarity Economy, the Fair also functions as a strategic confrontation with existing power networks. Understanding the processes that enable this erasure is therefore crucial to identify causal pathways, links between past and present policy decisions, and the consequences and possibilities for the future of food production and gastronomy in the municipality.

The research combined documentary and regulatory review, fieldwork, and analysis of local food-production data from SIDRA/IBGE—Agricultural Censuses 2006 and 2017 and Municipal Agricultural Production 2006 and 2023. Historical accounts were gathered through archival journalistic and bibliographic sources. In 2021, interviews were conducted using structured guides and an audio recorder with the fair's organizer (HC), a cook (AG), and vendors, recruited via snowball sampling. All materials were systematized and analyzed in light of the importance of food culture, drawing primarily on Montanari (2008) and Contreras; Gracia (2011), to elucidate the value of territories of "re-existence," with particular attention to the Family Farming Market of Armação dos Búzios.

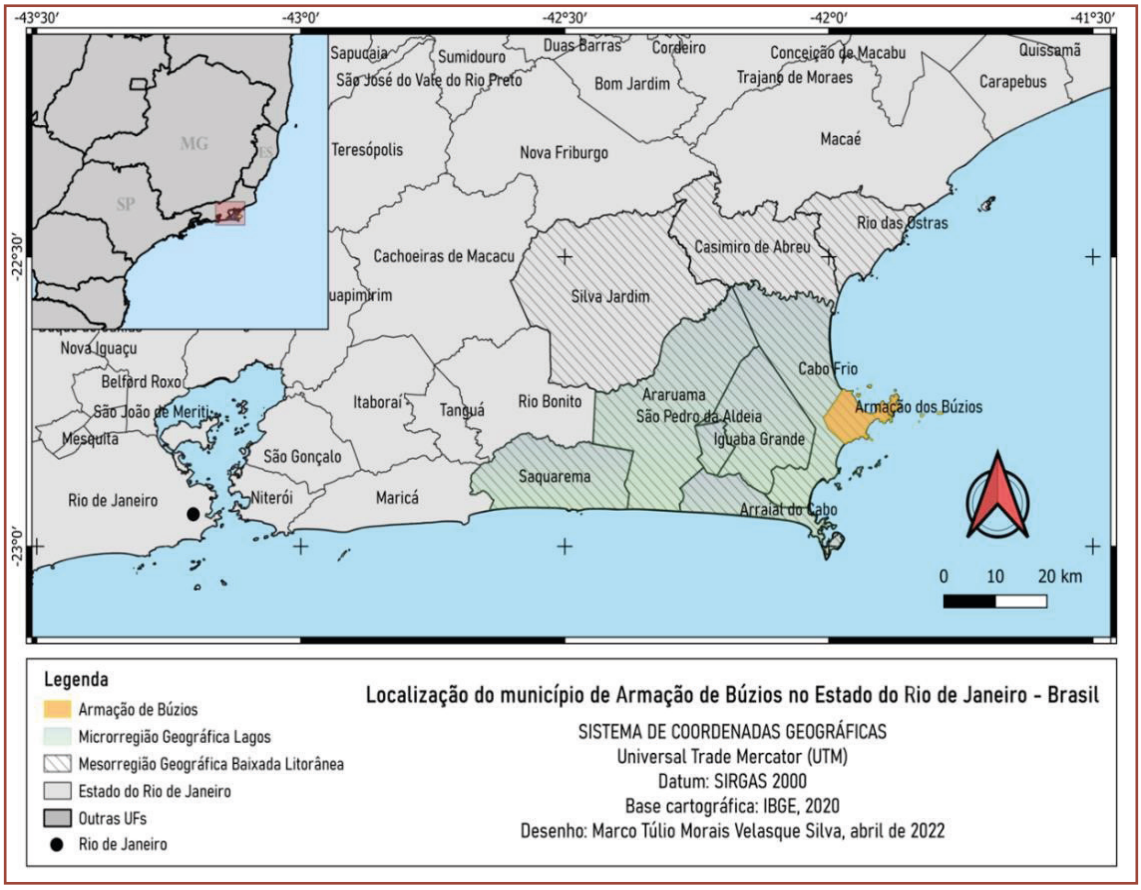
The article is structured into four parts, in addition to the introduction, conclusion, and references. The first part provides a characterization of the municipality with emphasis on land use and agricultural activities. The sec-

ond offers a brief history of regional agrarian movements and the historical context for the fair's emergence. The third presents the Family Farming Market of Búzios—its genesis as a territory of resistance in production, sale, and food consumption—and the fourth examines vendors' strategies to consolidate collective organization in the digital sphere.

PROFILING ARMAÇÃO DOS BÚZIOS: A TERRITORIAL OVERVIEW

The study area is the municipality of Armação dos Búzios, located in the Região dos Lagos in the southeastern portion of the state of Rio de Janeiro (Figure 1). Incorporated as a municipality in 1996, it forms part of the Baixada Litorânea region, which includes Araruama, Armação dos Búzios, Arraial do Cabo, Cabo Frio, Cachoeiras de Macacu, Casimiro de Abreu, Iguaba Grande, Maricá, Rio Bonito, Rio das Ostras, São Pedro da Aldeia, Saquarema, and Silva Jardim.

Figure 1 – Location of the municipality of Armação dos Búzios, Rio de Janeiro



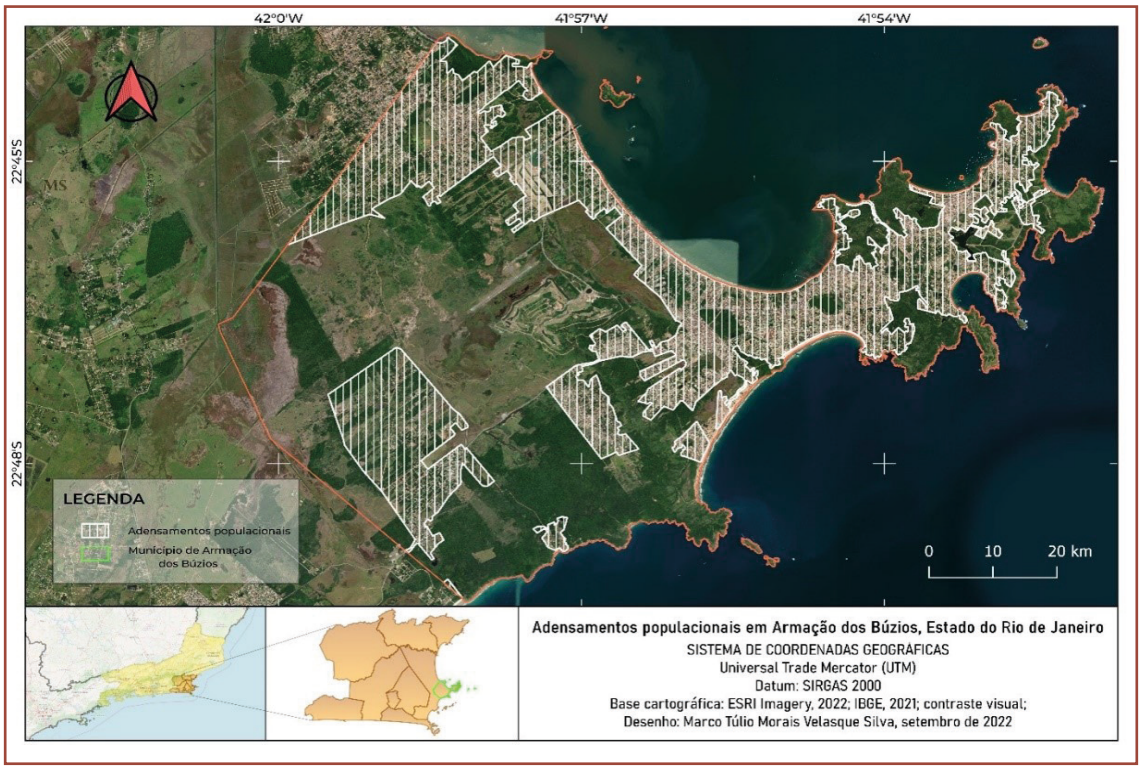
Source: IBGE (2020). Prepared by: Silva (2022).

The municipality covers a total of 70.98 km² (peninsular and continental areas combined) and shares administrative boundaries with Cabo Frio and the Atlantic Ocean. The 2022 demographic census estimated a population of

40,006. The entire municipal area is classified as urban, with no population residing in rural domiciles. In the 2022 census, the quilombola population numbered 1,777, alongside 105 Indigenous residents.

To give readers a clearer view of land occupation in Búzios, Figure 2 presents population density for the entire municipality in 2022, based on satellite-image analysis.

Figure 2 – Population density in Armação dos Búzios, 2022



Source: IBGE (2021). Prepared by: Silva (2022)

Figure 2 shows that, despite the absence of zoning that distinguishes urban from rural areas, the peninsular portion of Búzios is already densely settled, as are parts of the mainland—especially Rasa (the municipality's most populous neighborhood and a quilombola territory) and Marina.

Agricultural censuses for 2006 and 2017 indicate a contraction in the area of agricultural establishments (IBGE, 2006; 2017). Table 1 shows a marked reduction in land dedicated to agriculture during this period, even though such areas are not recorded in municipal zoning.

Census data reveal few rural establishments—rising from 10 in 2006 to 20 in 2017— while the total area they occupy shrank from 1,036 ha to 792 ha. This decline is closely tied to real-estate speculation and the expansion of the hotel sector and second homes. Table 2 disaggregates area by family and non-family agriculture.

Table 1 – Number of agricultural establishments in Armação dos Búzios, 2006 and 2017

Municipality	2006		2017	
	Number	Area (ha)	Number	Area (ha)
Armação dos Búzios	10	1,036	20	792

Source: Agricultural Census 2006 and 2017, IBGE.

Table 2 – Area of agricultural establishments (hectares) in Armação dos Búzios, 2006 and 2017

Municipality	2006		2017	
	Agriculture farming	Non-family farming	Agriculture farming	Non-family farming
Armação dos Búzios	66	970	101	691

Source: Agricultural Census 2006 and 2017, IBGE.

Non-family agriculture in Búzios occupies roughly 7 km² (6.91 km², converting hectares to km²). In a 70 km² municipality, this means about 10% of the non-urbanized area is not oriented toward agricultural practice. Production-structure data from IBGE's Municipal Agricultural Production (PAM) series, 2006–2023, show a steep contraction in harvested cassava area—from 40 ha (2006) to 2 ha (2022). A similar pattern appears for permanent crops: harvested area for banana, green coconut, orange, and lemon fell sharply and did not exceed 2 ha.

The shrinking footprint of agricultural establishments also exposes how land-tenure dynamics—intensified by real-estate speculation—erode the visibility of food culture. There is a notable absence of public policy for family farming in the municipality and no recognition of these families in urban-planning instruments. This reflects the region's limited agricultural production capacity, which undermines the continuity of agricultural practice essential to the preservation of local food cultures.

The occupation of Búzios by hegemonic actors over the past four centuries follows the *modus operandi* identified by Corrêa (2000). Urban space can be read through juxtaposed land uses—fragmented yet articulated—reflecting the society that inhabits it.

These conflicts were driven by the plunder of Indigenous lands (and later quilombola lands) from the former Búzios point through to modernization (chiefly on the peninsula). In this dynamic, the traditional caiçara population

has been pushed to peripheral neighborhoods and left without public provision, while its history and culture have been erased across local media. One illustration is the signage that "guides" tourists before they even reach the municipality (Figure 3). On these signs, public authorities brand Búzios as a service city: "Resort City" and "Búzios High Gastronomy."

Figure 3 – Signage on the Amaral Peixoto Highway (RJ-106), near the entrance to Búzios

Source: Google Street View (2021).

This symbolic erasure—which undergirds the *Búzios origin myth*—whether effected by nineteenth-century oligarchies (enslaver and otherwise), by successive governments, or more recently by the financialization of capital (via real-estate developers promising modernity and progress), not only widens the social divide but also renders the traditional population invisible—the very people whose techniques, histories, and customs could anchor a locally rooted food culture. To understand the agrarian question, the role of Sebastião Lan in the resistance movements of the Região dos Lagos must be addressed, as his efforts in the region enabled the creation of the Búzios Family Farming Market.

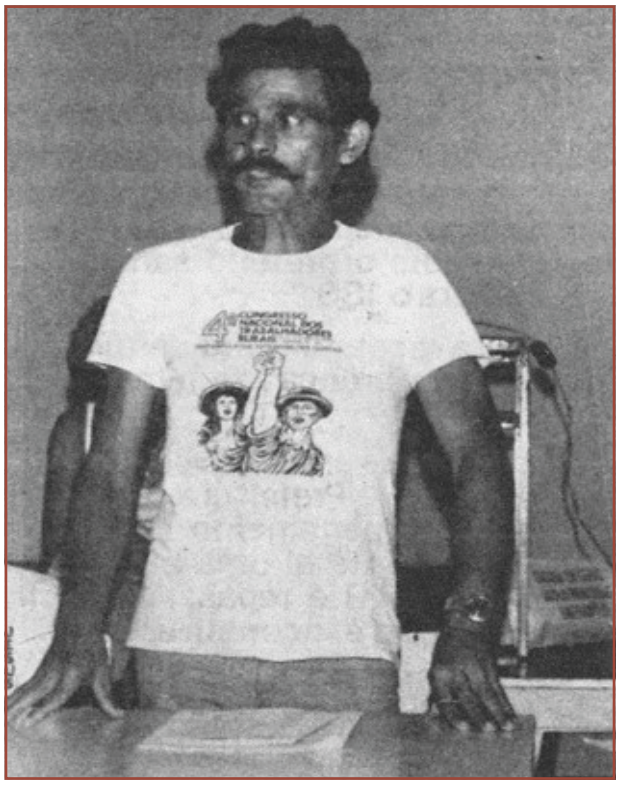
SEBASTIÃO LAN'S ROLE IN THE REGION AND THE BÚZIOS FAMILY FARMING MARKET

Until 1995, Armação dos Búzios formed part of the municipality of Cabo Frio as its third district (along with Tamoios). One of the most important figures in the region's agrarian movement was the union leader Sebastião Lan (Figure 4). According to the historian Márcio Werneck in the documentary Lan (by filmmaker Milton Alencar Junior), around 1860, with the prohibition of the transatlantic slave trade, coffee plantations spread across the estates of the Baixada Litorânea, including the Campos Novos estate. A few decades later, coffee investments were relocated to the Paraíba do Sul Valley, and the entire Cabo Frio region (including the Campos Novos estate)

fell into deep decline ("Lan - Documentário de Milton Alencar Júnior – Cabo Frio/RJ - 1988", 2015).

At the start of the 1960s, the João Goulart administration faced intensifying social conflicts and advanced a package of "basic reforms." These reforms sought to address structural problems in Brazilian society, especially stark socioeconomic inequalities rooted in extreme income concentration. The centerpiece was agrarian reform, aimed at resolving the country's long-standing concentration of landholdings, a legacy of the colonial period.

Figure 4 – Rural Workers' Union leader Sebastião Lan



Source: www.fiquebeminformado.com.br/2019/03/secretaria-de-agricultura-comeca-os.html.

It was in the 1960s, Werneck (2021) notes, that the remaining farm laborers at the Campos Novos estate decided to found the Cabo Frio Rural Workers' Union. Shortly thereafter, the 1964 military coup brought repression ("Lan - Documentário de Milton Alencar Jr. - Cabo Frio/RJ - 1988", 2015).

According to Branco (2021), Sebastião worked in charcoal kilns and on banana plantations. In 1968 he moved to the Campos Novos estate. When Lan arrived, rural workers were already mobilized, coinciding with the height of the dictatorship's persecution and the shuttering of unions nationwide. Even amid escalating conflicts involving land grabbers (grileiros), hired gunmen (jagunços), and farm workers, Lan organized the reopening

of the Cabo Frio Rural Workers' Union—closed by the military—and became president of the movement.

To contextualize the link between Lan's activism and the Búzios market, we interviewed in 2021 H.C., a lawyer who worked with urban and rural unions in Rio de Janeiro and first visited Búzios in the 1980s while covering a colleague's shift at the Cabo Frio rural union. His visit was to work alongside Sebastião Lan (then president of the Cabo Frio Rural Workers' Union) to intervene in a conflict between the owners of the Cunha Bueno estate and rural workers in what was then the third district (Armação dos Búzios).

On that same trip, he visited a settlement of family farmers in the José Gonçalves neighborhood and learned of a producers' market in Búzios that brought together farmers from Búzios and Cabo Frio.

> [...] I came to meet this community of farmers—basically family farming—located in José Gonçalves. We held a meeting to discuss issues related to union activities. That day there was a market in the peninsular part of Búzios, at Praça Santos Dumont, and I insisted on visiting it—after all, there were farmers from Cabo Frio and from what was then the third district (Búzios). I've always felt very at home in markets. Since childhood I went to market with my mother. What you found there were fruits, vegetables, greens, chickens, eggs, pigs... that traditional small-town market (H.C., 68 years old).

At the time, Lan stood out for confronting large landowners and grileiros, denouncing invasions. H.C. reports having accompanied Lan at hearings as counsel for the Cabo Frio Rural Workers' Union.

> Sebastião was a simple, calm person, but undoubtedly a great fighter who struggled tirelessly over land issues. He was always present in the region and, in a way, still is—especially in Cabo Frio and São Pedro (H.C., 68 years old).

Six months after H.C. 's 1988 trip to Búzios, Sebastião Lan was assassinated at age 46 at a bus stop on the Amaral Peixoto Highway. The attack occurred on the eve of his departure for Brasília, where he was to deliver a report to the Minister of Agrarian Reform on the region's land situation. The owner of the Campos Novos estate, "Jamil Miziara, was accused as the mastermind, but the case was archived. Only the gunmen were convicted and imprisoned" (Branco, 2021). H.C. recalls that agrarian conflicts in the region were intense.

Sebastião Lan is remembered for his entire history of struggle in defense of rural workers. Sebastião Lan is remembered for a lifelong struggle on behalf of rural workers. His contributions to labor and social rights in Cabo Frio, and specifically to rural workers' rights, are honored to this day: the family farmers' market venue in the Jardim Caiçara neighborhood of Cabo Frio now bears his name.

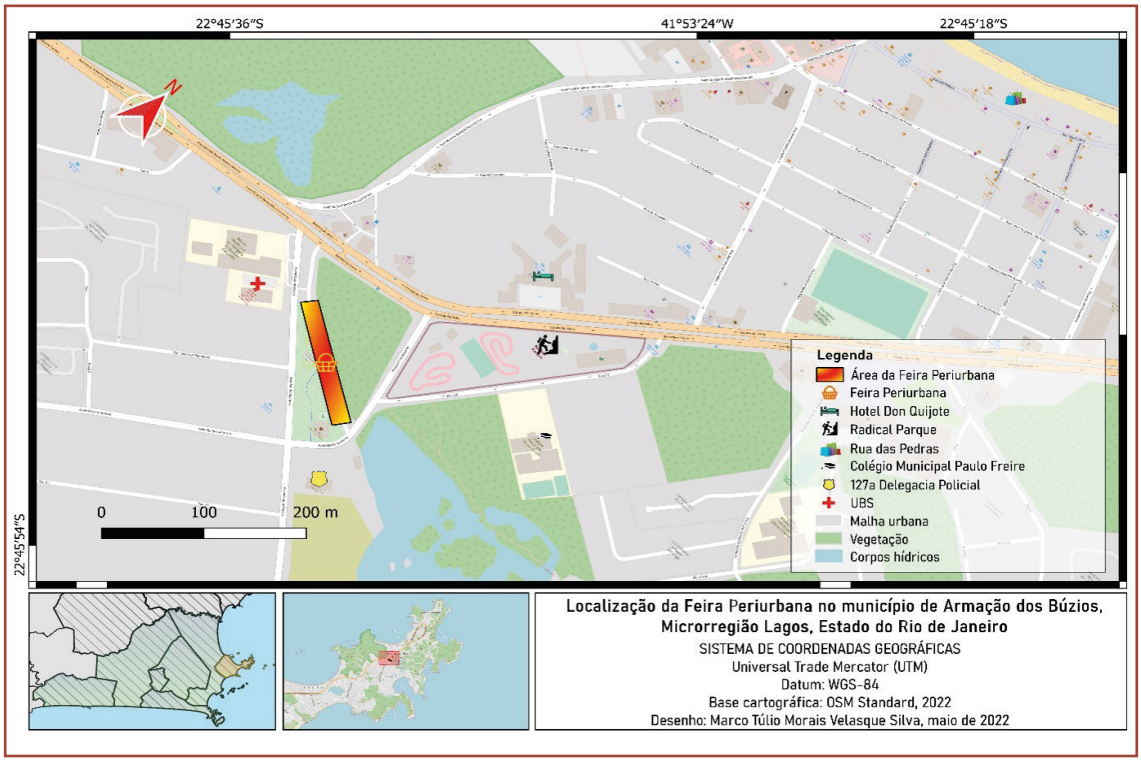
Armação dos Búzios, however, lost its farmers' market upon emancipation; any remaining organization or leadership of family farming in Búzios disappeared. That reality changed in 2014 with the market's reorganization.

THE MARKET AS A TERRITORY OF RESISTANCE FOR FAMILY FARMERS

We treat the Market as a territory: beyond a point of sale for produce from Búzios (and neighboring municipalities), it is a meeting ground for residents and tourists—a convivial space linking producers, processors, and eaters.

This territory is inherently multiscalar and hybrid, straddling material and ideal worlds, nature and society, across economic, political, and cultural spheres (Haesbaert, 2004). It is a cultural territory where artisans, musicians, dancers, teachers, researchers, farmers, and cooks transform objects, music, movement, lived experience, and food into knowledge and culture. As such, it encompasses an "arena of cultural identity, an instrument of a cultural and/or religious group," while also functioning as an instrument of political power (Saquet; Briskievicz, 2009, p. 5).

Figure 5 – Location of the Peri-Urban Market of Armação dos Búzios



Source: Field research (2021). Compiled by: Silva (2022).

The Market is held at Praça Benedita Santos da Silva[1] (Figure 5) every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Thursdays from 7 p.m. to midnight. Saturdays feature organic products and crafts; Thursdays it becomes a multifaceted cultural space with food and craft stalls plus live shows or a resident DJ, turning the street into a dance floor.

According to H.C.[2], beyond his battles for rural workers' rights, Sebastião Lan left another important legacy in the region: the family farmers' markets of Búzios and Cabo Frio. The first "version" of the Búzios Family Farmers' Market, H.C. recalls, took place at Praça Santos Dumont, in the center, near the former third-district administrative building (now Búzios City Hall). With Búzios's emancipation in 1995, however, that market ceased to exist, leaving only the one already operating in Cabo Frio.

In 1998, H.C. retired from union work and settled permanently in Búzios, practicing law locally for the first two years. Upon arriving, he learned that the market he had seen in the 1980s had ended. As he put it, the idea "kept fermenting in my head" for years. "I couldn't let go of bringing the market back".

> [...] in 2000 I started organizing the small producers who were still in Búzios. We first set the market up in a lot—a borrowed parking area in central Búzios, near the Itaú bank. With eleven small producers we revived that Santos Dumont Square market. We spent two months in that parking lot, but markets belong on the street, right? Not inside a parking lot! So we moved to the street. We had no government support; we just went for it [...] (H.C., 68 years old).

Of the eleven initial stalls, only four or five producers held on for nearly fourteen years. In 2014, H.C. again mobilized the vendors, "now much more organized than in 2000." They formed a farmers' association and submitted a proposal to the mayor to relaunch the market. According H.C., a bill to regulate the Market was drafted, and Praça da Ferradura— close to the town center but at the entrance to a largely residential neighborhood with low foot traffic—was selected as the site.

> We also drafted a regulatory bill. I knew a bit of legislative technique because I'd served as a parliamentary aide in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro (ALERJ). We sent a bill to the administration; the administration sent it to the council and it came back somewhat altered. The modification did not meet our interests, so we presented a substitute to the councilors and it is this substitute that "is" valid to this day. so we submitted a substitute to the

1 Longtime resident of the municipality of Armação dos Búzios, locally known as "Vó Dita" or "Dona Dita."

2 Interview conducted via Google Meet in May 2021.

> councilors, and that substitute is what still stands. The market is regulated! (H.C., 68 years old).

At the time, in 2014, the association (already, according to H.C., an organic farmers' association) secured a cooperation agreement with Rio de Janeiro's Rural Extension and Technical Assistance Agency (EMATER) to train farmers. Although registered as an organic association, formal certification had not yet been obtained, he noted. Even so, there was strict care from the outset to ensure products were free of agrochemicals.

H.C. mentions that, over time, the market moved beyond fruits and vegetables and broadened its range to include cured meats, cheeses, artisanal breads, and preserves. At the mayor's request (André Granado, 2013–2020), the association also created a "Gourmet Space." Using the same stall infrastructure on Thursday evenings—distinct from the Saturday morning Family Farmers' Market—this space (Figure 6) features cooks, craft brewers, and artisans offering a variety of foods and beverages, always with music. Within a short time, the Thursday event grew into the largest public gathering in the Região dos Lagos, drawing an average of 1,500 people (pre-pandemic). HC (2021) emphasizes that the two events are totally managed by the association, without any interference from the local government, which in his view was "the great leap" the organization from the marketers themselves. The association's only ties to the municipality, from inception to the present, are the site permit and support from the Municipal Guard and Military Police.

Figure 6 – Búzios Family Farmers' Market

Source: compiled by the author from the Market's Facebook page (2022).

Given the scarcity of agriculture—and thus family farming—within Búzios itself, the study asked H.C. about the origins of the market's current farmers.

> This has to do with our territory's size relative to Cabo Frio. Our cultivable area is much smaller and receives little encouragement, right? We needed to increase product supply. Those were the limits: arable area and production diversity. And some products don't grow here because of climate. Heart of palm, for instance, isn't suited to our climate. So, we turned to agrarian reform settlements in Cabo Frio and Rio das Ostras to give small family farmers an outlet for their goods. That became even more pronounced during the pandemic. We work with small producers who, say, can't transport their goods; through the Rio das Ostras Family Farming Producers' Union they aggregate all these smallholders— those with one crate of chayote, two crates of bananas—who otherwise couldn't market them and would end up donating the food or feeding their backyard animals (chickens, pigs)" (HC, 68 years old).

Several foods commonly found at the Búzios Family Farmers' Market (such as bertalha, pitanga, ora-pro-nóbis, jabuticaba, pink peppercorn, or guriri) reaffirm the Market as a territory of resistance for local food culture and biodiversity. Their very presence also signals the resilience of other territories—productive home gardens in quilombola communities and peri-urban areas.

Production constraints arising from soils, rainfall regimes, and temperature—which at times limit crop diversity—can be mitigated through specific techniques and the adoption of Agroforestry Systems (SAFs). According to farmer P.B., most local farmers still lack access to these options.

H.C. notes that in the farmers' home municipalities (Figure 7), prices were set by middlemen, rendering sales economically unviable for producers.

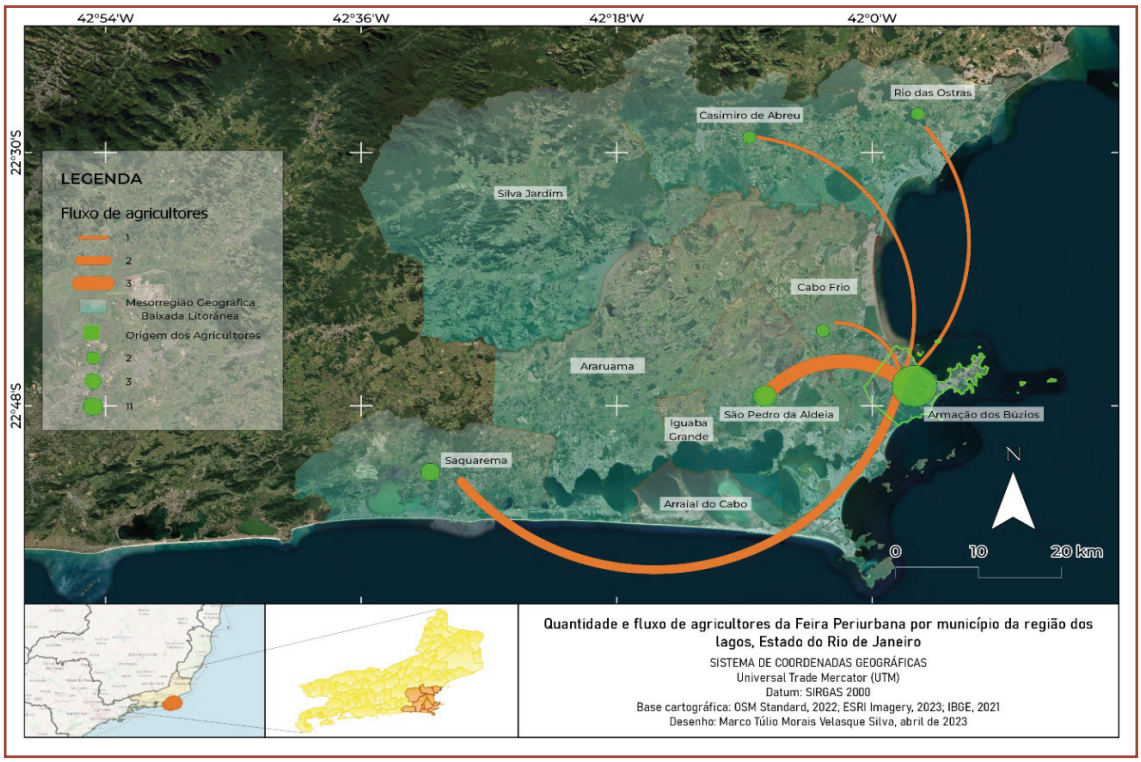
This dependence usually stems from the fact that these farmers (from Rio das Ostras and Cabo Frio) live in agrarian-reform settlements, and local markets require the INCRA credential. Their only outlet was to sell to middlemen. "That's why our decision to broaden the origin of participating producers was the right one", H.C. explains.

> Previously, farmers from Rio das Ostras and Cabo Frio moved their produce through a couple from the Market—Fred and Karla. Soon after, we partnered with the Rio das Ostras Family Farming Producers' Union. How? The union aggregates the goods from all these small producers so they can be sold here (at the Market). The union buys at the CEASA Pedra[3] benchmark, a fair wholesale price. Today, though, this is the reality. The middleman shows up at the farm gate, buys at his price, then adds a markup for freight, and sells at CEASA. At CEASA another margin

3 CEASA (also known as the Pedra) is the common term for Brazil's central wholesale supply markets—state-owned or mixed-capital enterprises that handle the wholesale distribution of fresh produce in a given region.

is added, and so on until the supermarkets and greengrocers. What we secure for family farmers is direct sale at the Pedra price, which is extremely fair. This setup lets us bring in other producers to expand the range of clean products (from organic farming) at the Market. Because these producers are in settlements, they cannot obtain the DAP credential, so they cannot sell at their municipalities' markets. They're excluded. The middleman gets in instead. We solve that by bringing them to Búzios so they can sell directly (H.C., 68 years old).

Figure 7 – Origin of all farmers at the Búzios Family Farmers' Market



Source: fieldwork (2022). Org.: Silva (2022).

H.C. emphasized that the Búzios Family Farmers' Market was the only market in the Região dos Lagos that never ceased operating during the pandemic, strictly observing WHO public-health protocols as early as 2020. Precisely then, the Market consolidated itself as an alternative to processed food, expanding beyond a fixed address to engage the wider public. In that moment, the vendor–public relationship came to be understood as something that transcends the simple sale of a consumer good.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES OF THE MARKET DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and the need to eliminate crowding, the Búzios Family Farmers' Market was required to suspend in-person operations in the square. This measure directly affected

vendors' livelihoods. For consumers, staple items could still be purchased at local supermarkets, which remained open with limits on customer numbers, whereas the Market could not operate.

The suspension was warranted, first, because entrance control could not be guaranteed; second, because many vendors (farmers) are older adults, a high-risk group identified by public-health research[4]. Facing this constraint, vendors organized and, using available digital tools, transformed the Búzios Family Farmers' Market into a virtual market.

Despite the abundance of greengrocers in town, Market customers remained loyal. Purchases shifted to social-media postings of each vendor's weekly product list and order management via messaging apps. Payment was processed online— by bank transfer or credit card—with either home delivery or pickup of pre-assembled baskets at a designated distribution point. Beyond simple supply–demand transactions, H.C. noted that the shift to online commerce made two consequences of the Market's long-standing social ties especially visible.

First, regulars expressed immediate concern about their diets, given their trust that Market goods were high-quality and produced without agrochemicals. Second, there was a heightened awareness of the need to sustain purchasing, since for most vendors (who are farmers) Market sales constitute their sole source of income. Interruptions in patronage would therefore have had incalculable impacts on vendors and their families.

This awareness was fostered throughout the transition to *online* sales and was broadly embraced by regular customers. Ensuring food security for both customers and vendors is a core function of the Market. Moreover, the Market makes explicit the tight linkage between food security and food culture. If, by definition, food culture is the set of culinary practices inherited within a group and grounded in its relationship to place, then maintaining food security in the territory also depends on preserving and enacting its food culture. In addition to this guarantee (Contreras; Gracia, 2011, p 29), the Fair proves the close relationship between the concepts of food safety and food culture.

We asked H.C. about the absence of fishers and the quilombola community at the Market. He responded:

> At the beginning we tried to bring both groups in, but a few issues got in the way. For selling seafood, we had a set of rules: there could be no lingering fish smell

4 Estimating the clinical severity of COVID-19 from the transmission dynamics in Wuhan, China — Nature Medicine (WU *et al.*, 2020).

> at the end of the market; products had to be fresh, cleaned, and packaged. You couldn't just show up with a cart full of fish and put it on the stall without care for hygiene, odor, and refrigeration... Unfortunately, it didn't work. That niche ended up with the fishmongers. Beyond the rules, there wasn't much interest from fishers in general. As for the quilombola community, we couldn't make it work either. We had a stall for them, but at the time they didn't have enough products to offer. That doesn't mean items originating in quilombola communities (like bolo puba, starch, flour, and non-conventional edible plants) aren't sold— those products are present at the Market (H.C., 68 years old).

We also asked how the Market handles the "xepa [5]. H.C. explained that leftovers are rare. During the pandemic, orders were placed directly with farmers, so most produce arrived already sold; any excess was moved on site. This pattern has continued in the return to in-person operations, yielding very little xepa. When leftovers do occur, vendors donate them to organizations assisting unhoused people (or directly to individuals, depending on the item); as a last resort, residues become feed for animals raised by the farmers themselves.

In H.C.'s view, the Market has proven to be far more than a sales venue for farm goods and crafts. He described some of these broader functions:

> I can say with complete confidence that one of the biggest events—and one of the most important partnerships—we have had is with the Instituto Federal Fluminense, through you and the gastronomy faculty. You bring the theoretical foundation and professional kitchen techniques and demonstrate them right there at the market! Plus, the terrific talks on food production in Brazil and around the world! You bring future cooks closer to producers, helping students grasp the "from forest to plate" philosophy. Alongside the talks and the remarkable dishes you have prepared at past editions, this partnership helps market-goers understand the fundamental role of education and of markets for the municipality, prompting new reflections on food! This shows how democratic the market is: it is open to all these encounters. We also have participation from municipal and private schools, where students learn basic care for the land, meet vendors, see the simplicity of their work, and begin to respect the entire process. After these experiences at the market, when they sit down to eat, they better understand the characteristics of foods, the path they take to reach the table, and—above all—who produced them! This is priceless (H.C., 68 years old).

Admission to the Búzios Family Farmers' Market follows specific criteria: vendors may offer only organic foods, i.e., with no agrochemicals or synthetic fertilizers. In the fresh-produce section, the vendor must be a farmer

5 Xepa refers to leftover food from daily open-air markets which, when perishable, is donated or sold at a steep discount.

(even if their stall aggregates items from other producers who also grow without agrochemicals).

Several vendors working with minimally processed foods were interviewed. A.G., a cook who produces jams, antipasti, pickles, and spice blends, stated that most of his inputs are sourced from farmers at the Market. He noted that this internal commerce not only supports farmers but also prevents waste by absorbing potential end-of-day surplus.

> Unfortunately, I can't source everything at the Market. Depending on the fruit, I need to buy from outside. Blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries are hard to find here, but I have a supplier in Espírito Santo who works with agroforestry and provides excellent product. Still, I can source much of what I need right at the Market— Mr. Severino's vegetables for pickles, Sandra's herbs, or fruit from Flávia for jam (A.G., 47 years old).

Despite constraints on local production—stemming from real-estate pressure and the absence of policies for agriculture and fisheries—the Búzios Family Farmers' Market has become a multifaceted space that goes beyond selling "clean" foods, serving as a venue for promoting and preserving local culture.

According to Afune (2020), a 2013 report from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on Latin America identifies Brazil's urbanization and deregulated food-processing markets among the main drivers of rising ultra-processed consumption. In addition, economic policies in several countries have "empowered" multinational corporations that, buoyed by tax incentives, reap increasing profits (Afune, 2020).

Although food industry shelves appear to offer variety and brand choice, that choices available in supermarkets are often illusory. Findings here show that the fruits and vegetables sold by the main supermarkets and greengrocers in Armação dos Búzios are sourced exclusively from Rio de Janeiro's wholesale supply center (CEASA) via intermediaries.

> The commercialization of these products involves long transport routes and, therefore, high energy use and pollutant emissions. The volume of water consumed across production stages is immense. The common outcome is environmental degradation and pollution, reduced biodiversity, and the depletion of water, energy, and many other natural resources (Brasil, 2014, p. 46).

Locally, hegemonic sectors—real estate, tourism, and retail—appear to have directly shaped dietary habits, contributing to the partial erasure of local food culture. The advance of corporate food regimes, which promote new consumption habits centered on ultra-processed products, further distances residents from natural and minimally processed foods grown in

their own territory. Beyond clinical impacts, this dynamic directly reshapes food cultures.

Moreover, the lack of public policies to strengthen family farming has led to the near absence of local agricultural production, worsening food insecurity, obscuring local culture, and intensifying environmental impacts tied to tourism as the municipality's primary economic base. Even so, the Market stands out as a viable pathway not only to recover Búzios's food culture—preserving collective memory and valuing local natural resources—but also to strengthen residents' ties to land and to secure their food sovereignty.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is evident that the Market—born of agrarian struggle in the Lagos Region and now frequented by residents and tourists alike—shows that the urgent debate over land distribution in Brazil is anything but remote. Agrarian reform provides farmers and their families with access not only aimed at productivity, but also at reframing human–nature relations: nature ceases to be a mere resource provider and is recast in symbiosis with society. A productive rural holding yields more than food; it reproduces and preserves cultural lifeways and local socio-biodiversity, turning people and places into a virtuous socioecological chain.

In Armação dos Búzios, the original market created by Sebastião Lan—today the Búzios Family Farmers' Market and the Búzios Peri-urban Market—inspires new initiatives by demonstrating its social, environmental, and economic roles for the local population. These include Municipal Bill No. 78/2022 (establishing the Cultural and Traditional Market of the Baía Formosa Quilombo); Indication No. 96/2020 (proposing a municipal market in the Rasa neighborhood to expand employment for street vendors, market traders, and small producers, and to open work opportunities for women survivors of domestic violence); and Municipal Bill No. 80/2018 (heritage listing of the open-air market in Ferradura), the last of which was rejected by the City Council. Even so, such proposals attest to the Market's reach and impact on local society.

More broadly, the Market demonstrates the power of food to bring together different spheres of society—from production to sale to consumption—making eating at a market, first and foremost, a political act. According to Slow Food (2007), responsibility in food production is shared between production and consumption, producer and consumer.

The producer's role is to align product quality with environmental balance to sustain the craft over time; the consumer's role is to steer markets through purchasing power. Once this agency is recognized, consumers become part of the productive act—indeed, "co-producers".

A market that prioritizes farmer-vendors is a site of **fair** commerce**:** it shortens the value chain and enables returns to be promptly reinvested in improving production. It privileges agroecological methods and **"clean"** products, sustaining a commitment to the environment, producers, and consumers alike. Fair and clean practices are reflected in food quality: buyers take home products of **known** origin and process—foods whose flavors, colors, and aromas differ markedly from those found in large-scale retail—and a diversity that conventional logistics, organized around profit maximization, typically cannot accommodate.

For these reasons, the Búzios Family Farmers' Market stands out as a singular social and political instrument for envisioning a more inclusive and socioenvironmentally sustainable Armação dos Búzios. It is precisely from the production of healthy, clean, and fair foods that a distinctive gastronomy should be reborn—yet the city's gastronomic sector still engages only weakly with this territory. ●

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