

The trajectory of urban food supply policy: The Centennial Municipal Market of Campos dos Goytacazes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes a food supply chain from the perspective of Municipal Markets in urban spaces. The locus of this research is Campos dos Goytacazes Municipal Market, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Our main objective is to comprehend the determinants of the relationship between the local government and the licenses of the Campos Municipal Market, which has played a central role in the city's urban supply for over 100 years. The arguments are driven by a descriptive effort, following this research question: In what way or manner has the relationship between the local government and the licensed traders of the Campos dos Goytacazes Municipal Public Market been determined over time? This is an exploratory and descriptive study with a qualitative approach, complemented by some quantitative elements. Bibliographic and documentary research, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews compose the methodology. The results show that, even in the contemporary urban space, the market continues to play an important role in supplying the city, in addition to carrying memory and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Urban Supply Policy; Municipal Market; Historical Trajectory.

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Introduction

Urban food supply involves a wide range of individuals and public institutions engaged with interconnected producer and consumer services. Within this environment are the municipal markets, organizations that contribute to job creation, support family-based agriculture, food security, and constitute the city's tangible and intangible cultural heritage and memory.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the following research question: what is the nature of the relationship between the local government and the licensed traders of the Campos dos Goytacazes Municipal Market? Thus, according to Hulley et al. (2021), developing a good research question for a problem that needs to be solved, investigated, involves not only the study of an unknown phenomenon, but also the logical need to investigate it.

Galvan and Pyrczak (2023) mention that the most basic form of a research problem is to ask whether there is a relationship between two or more variables, as is the case in this study, which involves the government and the market licensees. Galvan and Pyrczak (2023) also point out that when the literature is not robust enough to allow a hypothesis statement, research questions can serve as a legitimate starting point.

This is exploratory research with a qualitative approach. Therefore, it seems appropriate to use a research question that allows investigation of various aspects of the topic without making prior assumptions. Also, studies that follow a qualitative approach usually begin with research questions to guide exploration, rather than testing specific hypotheses. (Hulley et al., 2021).

The article aims to comprehend the role of this public facility and its actors in the urban and cultural supply of the city. With this goal in mind, the specific objectives proposed are: i) to describe the interaction between the public control and inspection body and the licensees of the municipal market; ii) to identify the organizational and institutional structure of the market; iii) to analyze how the local government regulates the commercial activities and management; and iv) to outline the profile of the mentioned licensees, in order to understand private actors, conduct in this public space. Understanding this interaction implies going through the market's history, from its inauguration to its current configuration, highlighting the actors who use the space and the conflicts to better understand the social construction Campos' municipal market.

Municipal markets are often privately operated public facilities. They are environments in which take place the daily relationships between the public authorities and private agents, who occupy the space, sell food and deal with an essential public policy: urban food supply. This is a policy that encompasses a set of issues such as decisions on the type of production, planting, product attributes, consumer market, among others (Belik & Cunha, 2018; Maluf, 2012). Markets are spaces that include a set of actors (farmers, suppliers, public administration, traders, consumers), motivated by conflicting interests that may represent a challenge to the smoothness of its relationships.

The Campos dos Goytacazes Municipal Market, in Rio de Janeiro, has over 100 years of history and is not only focused on commerce; it also has a social and historical significance for the city (Freitas, 2006; Silva & Miranda, 2013). Located at the city center, it is part of the urban landscape as a privileged place for people to meet and sell food and other products. It encourages direct contact between people, generating a sense of common belonging, collective identity and intercultural exchanges among those who frequent it. In the markets, it is possible

to see elements typical of the city or region, reflecting the particularities present in those cultures (Alves & Ribeiro Filho, 2011).

The *locus* and the methodology

The *locus* of this study is the municipality of Campos dos Goytacazes, the largest in territorial extension in the state of Rio de Janeiro, making it a significant area of interest in terms of food distribution, marketing, and supply (Oliveira & Silva Neto, 2020). From the point of view of its economic dimensions, Campos is arguably of extreme importance for the northern region of Rio de Janeiro and the whole state. A position that can be thought of temporally, since it was driven by the sugar and alcohol industry, both distinguish hedbranches of XIX and beginning of the XX century economy. Campos, specifically, represented one of the main economic forces in this sector, with 27 plants at the beginning of the 20th century (Piquet *et al.*, 2006). According to the authors, this prosperity lasted until the first oil crisis in 1973, which led to a readjustment of the sector, with the creation of the National Alcohol Program (PROÁLCOOL) and a modernization of the sugar and alcohol park, with outdated industrial facilities. In this decade, the economic profile of the region changed, with the exploration of oil and gas in the Campos Basin, influencing the northern region of Rio de Janeiro, especially Campos dos Goytacazes¹ and Macaé. With the new source of wealth, there was an increase in demands and opportunities, given the volume of resources from *oil royalties* (and special participations) that were distributed to the municipalities in the region, which should be accompanied by local development (Carvalho & Totti, 2006).

Due to its long-standing economic and political dominance in Campos dos Goytacazes, the sugar mill owners did not welcome the arrival of the state-owned *Petróleo Brasileiro S/A* (Petrobras), either due to the change in the economic profile and the displacement of the gravitational center of the region's economy, or due to the competition for labor force (Piquet *et al.*, 2006). In addition to the lack of subsidies for the maintenance of this activity (Cribb, 2008), this reaction highlights the interests and profile of part of the Campos elite who sought to extract resources and prestige from political power (Alvez, 2013; Rodrigues, 2016), which shows a patrimonialist format – in the terms of Holanda (1936) – in relations with local public authorities. This format extends beyond the pendulum of the local (and regional) economy, bringing to light issues of the city's daily life, manifested in informal relationships, exchange of favors, proximity to political actors or street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2010), as is the case of some relationships established between traders in the municipal market and local authorities, which can be seen in the bureaucracy and in the management of supply policy.

Taking this space into consideration involve some description of the profile of the traders who work there, an understanding of their daily lives, other agents with who they deal and how they handle their products. In particular, it is necessary to revisit this historical path, so that it is possible to trace the organizational/institutional design of the Municipal Market, since its inauguration.

This article uses documentary research, analyzing “first-hand” documents and those already processed, with other interpretations. The aim was to collect and organize the data available at the city hall on the organizational/institutional structure of the market, in order to identify information about licensees over the years.

¹The municipality, according to the latest census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2010, has a population of 463.7 thousand inhabitants. In 2021, the number estimated by IBGE was 514.6 thousand, corresponding to 60.58% of the population of the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro (IBGE, 2010).

The fieldwork revealed issues related to the *modus operandi* of local public management, which initially made it difficult to access data² through the public agency responsible for the administration of the Municipal Market, the Campos Development Company (CODEMCA)³. This issue was resolved through informal relationships, given access to street-level bureaucrats and the discretionary power of their decisions (Lipsky, 2010; Lotta, 2010), which made it possible to understand and tabulate this data, which, in its entirety, was in physical form and archived at CODEMCA itself.

The data were taken from re-registration forms, declarations, authorizations, terms of commitments and notifications from market licensees. These documents were grouped in folders stacked in a room at the Company. They contained information such as personal data (which were suppressed), identification of the *stall* or tent, products sold, authorization period, time spent in the activity, working hours, reasons for the notification (in cases where they occurred and the public agent responsible for issuing it), among other information manually noted on the forms. Data collection took place between July and September 2018.

Field diaries, direct consultations, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were also used. The interviews were conducted with agents of the municipal public agencies: CODEMCA and the Municipal Department of Agriculture, with the market administrators, with the president of the Association of “Open-air Market” Retailers and with the oldest permit holders. This tool allowed the collection of information and the recording of variables that illustrate the relations between the public authorities and the market vendors.

The questionnaires were applied to dealers in the market, which consists of 690 commercial units, divided between *boxes*, stalls and stands. A calculated sample of 62 commercial units was used, based on a heterogeneity of 50%, with a 10 % margin of error and a 90% confidence level, using the *Netquest* tool. The questionnaires allowed us to extract from the dealers their perceptions about the market, the role of this facility in time and its importance for the city’s supply. The questionnaires were applied between March 20 and May 14, 2019.

Urban food supply in light of the Municipal Market of Campos dos Goytacazes

Food supply policy is an important way to ensure that people have access to food, especially in urban areas. Maluf (2012, p.2) defines this policy as “a diverse set of activities that mediate food production and consumption”, in a relationship that involves public and private actors. It encompasses the entire chain: production, transportation, storage and marketing, which must be in harmony to generate the effective functioning of this sector (National Supply Company [CONAB], 2005). Thus, municipal markets are part of the urban food supply policy, that is, they are public facilities that frequently supply consumers in urban areas.

From a historical perspective, it is important to highlight that, starting in 1970, a network of CEASAs and hundreds of retail establishments emerged, based on proposals from the Executive Group for Modernization (GEMAB), created in 1968, and COBAL. During this period, points of sale and large food stands managed by states and municipalities also emerged. The public administration, which was only responsible for municipal market concessions, began to manage and supervise retailers (Belik *et al.*, 2001). This is a common procedure in

²The recurring claim was that “(...) these files [of the licensees] contained personal information, that is, information relating to their individual persons, such as document numbers and addresses” (CODEMCA, 2018).

³CODEMCA, according to the city hall's organizational chart (2019), is not linked or subordinate to any City Hall Secretariat.

relations between the public administration and private actors for the execution of a public service or the use/exploitation of a public asset.

Within this context, municipal markets, whether itinerant or permanent, are part of the supply facilities located in urban spaces and are used by the population to purchase food and other products. In many places, persist the practice of using these markets to make product exchanges, which is necessary for the reproduction of life in society (Pintaudi, 2006). In this sense, commerce has a social character, because in addition to goods, it involves the exchange of ideas, experiences, and sensations that make up the enchantment of consumption so that the sale can be made (Vargas, 2012). Public markets remain alive thanks to their ability to dialogue with other more modern commercial forms such as super and hypermarkets.

Many public markets originated as street markets (Araújo & Ribeiro, 2018) that ended up being perpetuated, materializing in buildings, since the reproduction of life in the city required a permanent space to buy groceries (Pintaudi, 2006). This is the case of the Campos Municipal Market, whose history also originated in street markets and, over time, ended up materializing in the construction of its facility in the city center. Municipal markets occupy an important space in the trajectory of local supply and are *loci* of material and cultural exchanges, with actions carried out by private actors in spaces provided by the public authorities.

After this brief explanation of the general history of municipal markets, it is important to highlight the history of Campos dos Goytacazes' municipal market, which is the *locus* of this article. In the midst of the city center, the centenary market (the 100th anniversary was celebrated on September 15, 2021) has experienced all the *economic cycles* that the city has gone through. It is a privileged place for the sale of services, products, and food, as well as for socializing and meeting with the local population. It is not only a place for commercial exchanges, but it also has social and historical relevance. In municipal markets, it is possible to see elements and products typical of a place, region, or country, increasingly valued as goods that make it possible to attract flows and guarantee the permanence of these *facilities* (Alves & Ribeiro Filho, 2011).

The construction of the Campos dos Goytacazes municipal market began in 1918, in Azevedo Coutinho Square (Freitas, 2006). Three years later, on September 15, 1921, the municipal market was inaugurated by mayor Luiz Sobral. The construction of the market began in Mercado Square, located in Largo do Rocio, a previous building that was perceived by the population as very modest, no longer meeting their expectations *at that time*. For that reason, in 1917, Mayor Luiz Sobral, aiming to provide the city with a more dignified and suitable market, decided to build the current municipal market (Sousa, 2014).

The new market was not only a public facility for supplying food but, above all, a symbol for the city. The market not only met the quality requirements of the products sold, but also constituted a place that allowed the city to be compared to the metropolises of the time, taking into account the canons of modernization of Brazilian capitals, especially Rio de Janeiro (Freitas, 2006; Silva & Miranda, 2013). It is clear that, from the beginning, the municipal market was considered an important element of social representation for the local population, being perceived as a space of social prestige that alluded to *status* in relation to other cities.

Figure 1 illustrates what the Covered Market looked like before its inauguration in 1920. Since its construction, it has had symbolic value for the population (Freitas, 2006), and is now considered a historical heritage site of the city. The market is now recognized as a listed building, and is therefore officially recognized for its historical, cultural and architectural value in the city.

Figure 1 - Covered Market before its inauguration in March 1920.



Source: Campos City Hall *apud* G1 (2014).

It is worth describing the initial architecture of the Covered Market: to access its interior, four doors were installed, which were initially closed by carved iron gates, which were replaced over time. Today, they are steel doors. These gates are located at both sides and in the center of the building. The space is made up of two blocks of sale *boxes*: one in the center and one on the side. In addition, there is the administration room, responsible for managing the operation of the entire market. Over the years, the Covered Market has undergone several structural renovations. The first took place during the government of José Carlos Barbosa (1967-1971), when masonry partitions were built throughout the Covered Market. The divisions of the *boxes* were also changed at different times.

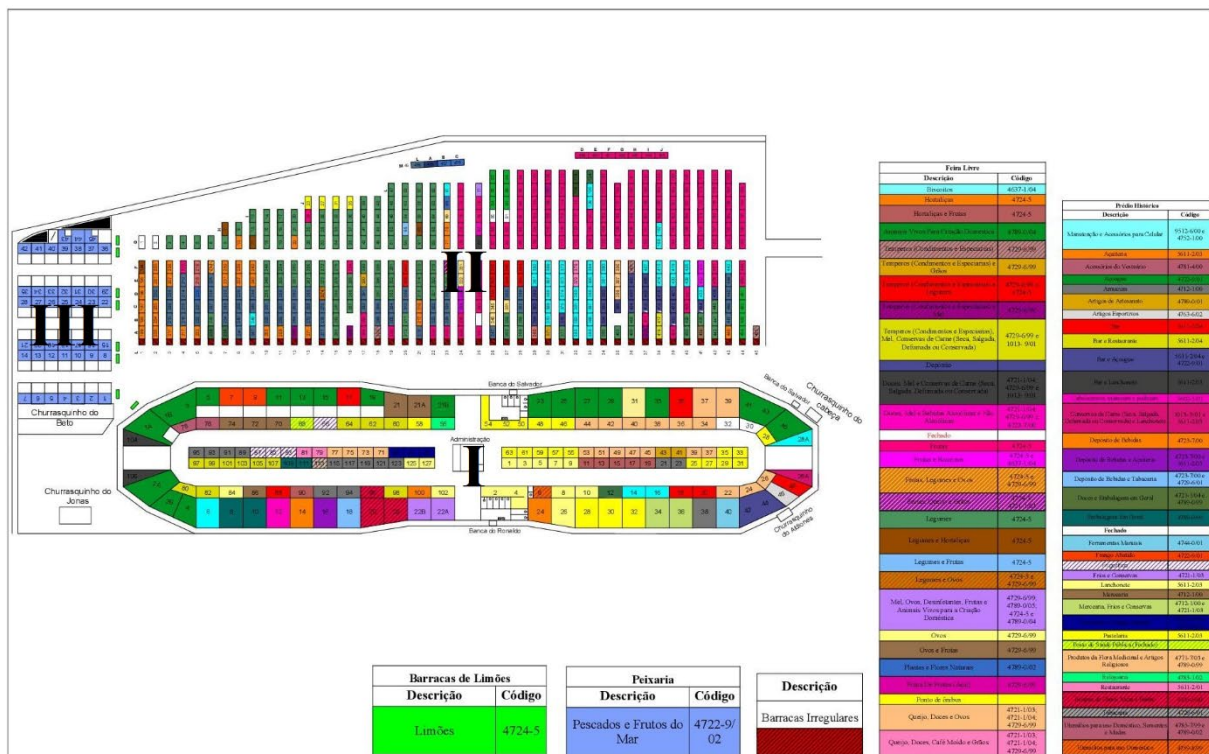
During the government of Raul Linhares (1977 to 1982), the roof of the Open-Air Market was started. During the term of Anthony Garotinho (1989-1993), the roof slab was installed, the roof was replaced and the floor was rebuilt. The masonry stalls were also built during the Garotinho government in 1990 (FREITAS, 2006). Before this period, the Open-air Market did not have an aluminum roof.

During the government of José Carlos Barbosa, in 1970, a new division of the internal stalls was carried out, increasing the number of stalls and, at the same time, reducing their area. The butchers and other spaces (which had their interiors facing the central part of the Covered Market, but sold meat and other goods in the external part of the market) lost contact with the interior of the market. In the internal part of the Covered Market, the distribution and number of stalls were changed due to the removal of the wooden and wire mesh structures, which were replaced by masonry walls and precast slabs (FREITAS, 2006).

According to Freitas (2006), the Open-Air Market and Fish Market are the most recent constructions in the municipal market. These parts of the market began to be built in 1981, during the government of Raul Linhares, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the municipal market. The warehouse was inaugurated in 1984, during the second administration of José Barbosa. The space consists of a steel structure that supports an aluminum roof. It is surrounded by low side walls that facilitate external visibility and the entry of natural light and ventilation (FREITAS, 2006).

Figure 2 illustrates the physical space of the municipal market today, after its latest restructuring, highlighting its respective subdivisions (I) Covered Market or Historic Building; (II) Open-air market; (III) Fish Market. It can be seen that the Campos municipal market is informally made up of three parts, each of which has a particular operating mode. Each of these parts sells specific products, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Zoning map of products and services sold in each *stall* and tent at the Municipal Market of Campos dos Goytacazes-RJ.



Source: Almeida (2019, p.81).

Based on the statements of our interlocutors, according to Mr. Ananias, Mrs. Dionea, Mr. Joel and Mr. Silvio, the oldest licensee in the market, who had worked at this location for over 50 years (verbal information, May 12, 2019), during the government of José Carlos Barbosa, wooden stalls were created for the Street Market and the Fish Market. During the administration of Raul Linhares, the zinc roof of the Street Market and the Fish Market was built. The masonry stalls were built during the first government of Anthony Garotinho (1989-1992).

The oldest traders in the market, who have been operating for over 50 years, have reported in informal conversations that it was common to sell vegetables inside the Covered Market, when there were only wooden and wire structures. However, over the years the

products offered in that space have changed. Today, vegetables and greens are only sold at the Open-air Market. Inside the Covered Market, other types of food products and services are sold.

These traders confirm that the buildings of the Open-Air Market and the Fish Market are more recent than the covered market. The Open-Air Market and the Fish Market were created when farmers, mainly from the Baixada de Campos dos Goytacazes, began to bring food to be sold near the covered market. This food was piled up on the floor of the Open-Air Market, without any type of stall or stand to accommodate it. Over the years, the Open-Air Market grew in size and took on the shape it has today, with an aluminum roof, cement floor and brick stalls, occupying, together with the Fish Market, almost the entire space of the warehouse next to the covered market.

From the historical trajectory of the Campos municipal market, it is possible to see that it has helped to supply the urban population with food since the beginning of the 20th century. The markets also a space that serves as a social gathering place for local residents and visitors who have been able to meet and interact for 10 decades. The place is full of stories and cultural elements and is responsible for moving and stimulating Campos' economy, with hundreds of people daily visiting it.

The century-old municipal market has survived over the years, even in the face of competition from other marketing channels, such as supermarkets, hypermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores, which are more modern and sophisticated. This competition involves the conflicts and interests present in the relations between the public and private sectors, in addition to the dynamics of coexistence between these actors in the Campos municipal market. And even in the face of these difficulties, the market is still a central piece of food supply chains and promotion of urban development in Campos de Goytacazes.

The relationship between traders at the Campos dos Goytacazes Municipal Market and the City Hall.

The relationship between the city government and the traders at the municipal market is established through the administrative act of “permission”, which grants the licensees the right to use and commercially exploit this location, under the responsibility of the municipal government. This information was obtained in a survey with [CODEMCA](#), the public agency responsible for managing the market.

Documentary research and qualitative analysis of data collected in the field allow for a broader description of the market as a public (private) urban supply establishment. Thus, based on the data survey carried out in 2019, together with CODEMCA, in 2019, it was possible to identify that the city government has 384 traders registered as permit holders of the municipal market. The majority of traders are male (64%), in the three spaces – Covered Market, Open-Air Market and Fish Market. The most frequent age groups are 41 to 50 years old, 51 to 60 years old and 60 years old, with the majority of traders being over 41 years old (75%).

Traders belong to the Municipal Market for a long time. The Covered Market is the oldest part of the market and has the longest average staying, approximately 25 years. Fishmongers and traders had the same average stay time: an average of 19 years, which was also expected, since they were formally recognized by the government and established themselves in the municipal market during the same period.

Almost half of the trader's state that the passage of commercial *boxes* and/or stalls is inherited (48%). It is common for merchants to transfer permission to use stalls to family

members such as children, siblings, parents, among others, preserving commercial activities, and the city government does not impose or demand anything in contrary. There has never been a bidding process to choose the occupants of these stalls, which goes back to the issue of informality in relations between the public and private sectors in this environment. This *modus operandi* observed in the field points to a model with a patrimonialist profile (Costa, 2012; Leal, 2012), which is reinforced by the appropriation of the public as if it were private, supporting individual or group interests, where no clear delimitation prevails between the public and private sectors.

It is worth noting that the appointment of market directors is carried out by the municipal government, therefore, the public authorities maintain influence over the market's operational structure. There was a lack of standards and regulation that explain the current scenario in which the social actors operate the market, as is the case with the internal regulations, unchanged since 1921, the year it was inaugurated. The last period of permission established for a trader to operate was in 2011, and only six years later, in 2017, a new re-registration of licensees was carried out. In addition, the "Land Use Permit" fee was no longer charged by the public authorities, and there was no regulatory endorsement to justify the decision.

This information describes how the interaction occurs between the public agency responsible for controlling and supervising the market (CODEMCA) and the permit holders who use the space. In addition, it contributes to the understanding of how the organizational and institutional structure of the market is established, based on the actions of the public authorities and traders over the years.

The relationship between these actors reflects not only the rules and regulations that govern the functioning of the market, but also the daily practices and challenges faced by permit holders throughout the history of the market. This dynamic is essential to understanding the social and economic interactions that support the functioning of Campos municipal market. From the data collected through the questionnaires, it was possible to characterize the profile of the municipal market permit holders. With this, it was identified how licensees make purchases to supply their *boxes* or stalls, which are made daily, or more frequently weekly, or monthly. The main states of origin of the products sold are: Rio de Janeiro (85%), Espírito Santo (41.5%), São Paulo (25%), Paraná (4.6%), Bahia (3.08%), Pará (3.08%), Ceará (1.54%) and Goiás (1.54%).

The Internal Market includes butchers, bars, liquor stores, snack bars, electronic accessory stores, crafts, sporting goods, religious and floral items, sweets and packaging in general, household utensils and seeds, seedlings, bedding, table and bath items, grocers, confectioners, watch shops, restaurants, beauty salons, tobacconists, among others. The opening hours of this part of the market are usually from 5 am to 6 pm.

The most common types of products for sale at the Open-Air Market are fruit and vegetables, but it is also possible to find cookies, live animals, plant seedlings, condiments and spices, grains, sweets, eggs, cheeses, drinks, smoked meats and preserves, among others. After the market closes, the food is covered with tarps. The street market is normally open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. However, it is not possible to set a fixed opening and closing time due to the arrival times of the wholesale trucks. They start arriving around 6:00 p.m. and go until around 7:00 a.m. The merchants remain on site, even when there are no customers, to receive and arrange the goods.

The Fish Market sells a variety of fish and seafood, including anchovies, catfish, whiting, shrimp, sea bass, dogfish, crab, croaker, sea bream, lobster, sand perch, tilapia,

snapper, hake, sea bass, salmon, mullet, and more. The market usually opens from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. The administration claims that the Fish Market closes earlier because the fish are washed by city officials every day at 5 p.m. The administration has left the opening hours unregulated, but tries to set the end of business at 4 p.m., which creates conflict with authorized personnel. After the fish are washed, some traders try to stay in the Fish Market, as they claim that it doesn't take long to sell all the fish.

A recurring complaint from traders interviewed is that the zinc coating of the street market and Fish Market makes the space very hot during high temperatures, which encourages putrefaction and reduces the shelf life of perishable and *fresh foods* such as fish, leaves, fruits, and vegetables. The street market is the largest space in the market in terms of size. According to Freitas (2006, p.93), “this is the space that concentrates the most intense public circulation and the largest volume of products and business”.

One fact worth highlighting is that more than half of the traders (54%) reported that they usually buy food from local family farms. However, the supply of food from family farms and artisanal fishing in the municipality and nearby regions is still small for the market. This is due to the logistical difficulties in delivering food, as well as the difficulty in ensuring supply in satisfactory quantities. Most traders who buy food from family farms are located at the Open-Air Market (66%). The other spaces –the Covered (17%) and the Fish Market (17%) – also buy food from family farms, but in smaller quantities.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the historical and cultural aspects that the municipal market represents in the city, materialized in its permanence, which survives amid the emergence of other food sales spaces. The results of the research allow us to consider the Campos municipal market from the perspective of the city's heritage, due to the maintenance of the Historic Building (Covered Market) and the role that all the parts that comprise it (Fair Market, Fish Market and Covered Market) play in the city's daily food supply, despite having a dilapidated physical structure, which reverberates in its hygienic conditions and physical appearance.

Concluding remarks

The article focused more on the stage of food marketing based on the description of the history of the public facility dedicated to the supply of food and other types of products and services – the Municipal Market of Campos dos Goytacazes. Thus, the aim was to understand how the trajectory of the municipal market was outlined, as a facility that directly participates in an urban food supply policy, from its creation to the present day.

The market represents the city's tangible and intangible cultural heritage and memory. Although it has had a degraded physical structure since its last renovation in the early 1990s, which is reflected in its hygiene and appearance, and poor operating conditions, the market has survived despite the existence of other sales channels.

An important point that was noted is that informal rules dictate the relationships between public bodies and authorized persons, interfering in their regulatory and supervisory roles with market traders. In this sense, it was found that in the market there are cases of inheritance, renting, donating and selling *stalls* or tents without the consent of the city government. These “informal agreements” made between private actors themselves and often without the authorization of the city government, can be legalized over time, thus becoming “formal rules”.

In the relationship between the city government and the market traders, it was verified that the public authorities have an influence on the conduct of the licensees because the appointment of the market directors is made by the municipal government. However, public management lacks legislation that understands the current scenario in which the social actors that make up the market operate.

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