



Núcleo de Meio Ambiente
Universidade Federal do Pará
Rua Augusto Corrêa, 01, Guamá
Belém, Pará, Brasil

<https://periodicos.ufpa.br/index.php/agroecossistemas>

Victor Miranda Leão

Universidade do Estado do Pará
victor_mirandaleao@yahoo.com.br

Flávia Cristina Araújo Lucas

Universidade do Estado do Pará
copaldoc@yahoo.com.br

Maria Antonia Ferreira Gois

Universidade do Estado do Pará
mariah.botanica@gmail.com

Jéssica Caroline Mendes da Costa

Universidade do Estado do Pará
botanica.jessica@gmail.com

CASSAVA FLOUR AT THE VER-O-PESO FAIR: SOCIOECONOMIC AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

ABSTRACT: Manioc flour (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) is a food of historical reference and an invaluable cultural and economic product in the Amazon region. This study aimed to investigate the types of cassava flour marketed at the Ver-o-Peso fair (Belém, Pará), evaluating the associated socioeconomic and cultural aspects. The data collection included non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, application of the free list and consultation of specialized works. At the Ver -o- Peso fair, three types of flour were identified (water, dry and tapioca), 12 subtypes of flour and three by-products (crueira, carimã and gum), with the. Flour of d'água var. the maximum value of importance. It is a flour that integrates the economic and cultural aspects, being the sellers' favorite because of its expressive market demand, and by consumers because it is traditionally mandatory accompaniment to meals. The typologies expressed individual values, the result of a laborious process of production, sale and consumption that transited between the economic and the cultural field.

KEYWORDS: Amazon, Cultural heritage, Cassava flour.

FARINHA DE MANDIOCA NA FEIRA DO VER-O- PESO: SOCIOECONOMIA E SABERES TRADICIONAIS

RESUMO: A farinha de mandioca (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) é um alimento de referência histórica e produto de inestimável valor cultural e econômico na região amazônica. O estudo objetivou investigar os tipos de farinha de mandioca comercializados na feira do Ver-o-Peso (Belém, Pará), considerando a historicidade, socioeconomia e suas expressões bioculturais. A coleta

Received: 2021-12-09
Evaluated: 2022-06-20
Accepted: 2022-07-28

de dados incluiu observação não participante, entrevistas semiestruturadas, aplicação da lista livre e consulta à obras especializadas. Na feira do Ver-o-Peso foram identificados três tipos de farinha (d'água, seca e tapioca), 12 variedades de farinha e três subprodutos (crueira, carimã e goma), tendo a *Farinha tip. d'água subtipo. comum* o valor máximo de importância. Trata-se de uma farinha de forte apelo econômico, sendo a preferida dos vendedores por significar venda garantida e, pelos consumidores, por ser tradicionalmente acompanhamento obrigatório das refeições. Cada tipologia expressou concepções individuais, resultado de um laborioso processo de produção, venda e consumo, que transitam entre o campo econômico e o biocultural.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Amazônia, Patrimônio cultural, Farinha de mandioca.

HARINA DE MANDIOCA EN LA FERIA VER-O-PESO: SOCIOECONOMIA Y CONOCIMIENTO TRADICIONAL

RESUMEN: La harina de yuca (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) es un alimento de referencia histórica y un producto de inestimable valor cultural y económico en la región amazónica. El objetivo fue investigar los tipos de harina de yuca vendidos en la feria Ver-o-Peso (Belém, Pará), considerando la historicidad, expresión socioeconómica y biocultural. La recolección de datos incluyó observación no participante, entrevistas semiestruturadas, aplicación de la lista libre y consulta de trabajos especializados. En la feria Ver-o-Peso se identificaron tres tipos de harina (agua, seca y tapioca), 12 subtipos de harina y tres subproductos (crueira, carimã y chicle), con la harina punta agua var. común el valor máximo de importancia. Es una harina con un fuerte atractivo económico, siendo la preferida por los vendedores porque significa ventas garantizadas y por los consumidores, porque tradicionalmente es un acompañamiento obligatorio de las comidas. Cada tipología expresa conceptos individuales, resultado de un laborioso proceso de producción, venta y consumo, que se mueven entre los campos económico y biocultural.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Amazonia, Patrimonio cultural, Harina de yuca.

INTRODUCTION

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) is a tuberous root of great versatility in the use and exploitation of food, in

addition to the rusticity of cultivation, with few nutritional requirements (for soil) and cultural traits (MUNDIM, 2014). These characteristics allow the species

and its varieties to be widely spread, constituting the food base of traditional indigenous, riverside and quilombola populations, of small farmers, as well as of residents of peri-urban and urban areas in Brazil (FUKUDA et al., 2006; DUARTE, DUARTE, PASA, 2016).

Long before the arrival of Europeans on the American continent cassava, along with corn (*Zea mays* L.), piquia shells (*Caryocar villosum* (Aubl.) Pers.) and pumpkin (*Cucurbita maxima* Duch), was already cultivated by local populations who extolled it as indispensable food of their diets. The food practices of these peoples with cassava were substantially transmitted to contemporary societies and were strongly expressed through the consumption of cassava flour. The strong identity of this product, especially in the Northern region of Brazil, resulted in the denomination of "Papa Xibé" to ¹the residents of Belém do Pará, due to the daily consumption of this mixture (ALBUQUERQUE, 1996).

The transit of the memories of cassava cultivation and consumption was named by anthropologist Jane Beltrão as the "cassava civilization", which emphasizes the trajectory and diffusion of the plant in South America, being possible to identify central Amazonia as the most likely place for the geographical origin of its cultivation (SCHAAN, 2010). Due to this popularity, it is known as the "Bread of the Tropics", a name given by Europeans when they arrived in America, being referenced by them in documents sent to the court (FERRÃO, 2005; APOLLINÁRIO, 2019).

Historically, in the capital Belém, its cultural and immaterial aspect shares space with the commercialization of peasant production in a political and economic dimension, with the establishment of a model that prioritized its commercialization to that of manufactures (SOUZA, 2002). This period was marked by the decline in agricultural and livestock production and "flour" standing out for its

¹ *Papa* – eat; *xibé* – Flour with d'água; people who eats flour with water.

commercial, food and cultural protagonism in the province of Grão Pará and in the northeast region. The cassava flour batches assumed the role of exchange coins in negotiations, including of slaves (SILVA et al., 2013). Still in the 21st century, it preserves the status of commercial and political reference in the Brazilian Amazon, especially in Pará, where it is sold in several establishments integrated into a broad trading system (LOBATO; RAVENA-CAÑETE, 2015) and cultural exchanges (BOURDIEU, 1989).

Located in the historic center of Belém, the Ver-o-Peso fair is a great hub for its sale. It is a space of intense flow of people and knowledge associated with biodiversity and by-products, displaying what is the greatest in the plurality of Pará's culture (SILVA et al., 2010). In this place, you can find the indigenous, agricultural and commercial cultural heritages

involved in the social construction that streamlines the local economy (BARROS, 2009; Souza, SOUZA, PIRAUX, 2015).

The flour that supplies the Ver-o-Peso comes from family farming, as well as its by-products, the tucupi¹, the gum¹ and the maniva² [crushed cassava leaves] (VELTHEM; KATZ, 2012). Foods of this nature were called by Cruz (2019) as "products of the land", as they are manufactured locally from processes that reach the environmental, social and economic dimension. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE (2021) show the state of Pará as the largest Brazilian producer of cassava between the years 2019 - 2020.

The flour industry is part of a wide network established between producer/nature-trade/transit-consumption/tradition, in which the farmer/producer, the middleman, the

²*Tucupi* – Partially fermented liquid from the manipueira (root-making water, mixed with their washing water, generated at the time of pressing the grated dough for the manufacture of table flour. In the State of Pará, this residue receives the regional name of tucupi, when it

originates from yellow pulp cassava roots; and manipueira, when it is extracted from white pulp roots). *Gum* – Sedimented starch in the decanting of the manipueira. *Maniva* – Aerial part of cassava consisting of the main stems, branches and leaves.

seller and the final consumer are inserted. The producer may be on a commercial and/or industrial scale; or developing knowledge systems within the scope of a more endogenous agriculture, with ethnic influences that are maintainers of subsistence swiddens, with sale of the surplus (CARDOSO et al., 2001). The result of these influences is manifested in a vast repertoire of botanical, ecological and plant/product management characteristics (root aspect, flavor, texture and flour color) to obtain the numerous cultivars so frequent in the Amazonian peasantry (VELTHEM; KATZ, 2012).

The current market economies with sociobiodiversity products bring to light challenging realities with natural resources, such as climate change, that alter the calendars, landscapes and their components, seasonalities; modify management, and weaken the continuity of work in the swiddens with the transmission of knowledge. In this sense, the research aimed to identify the types of cassava flour sold at the

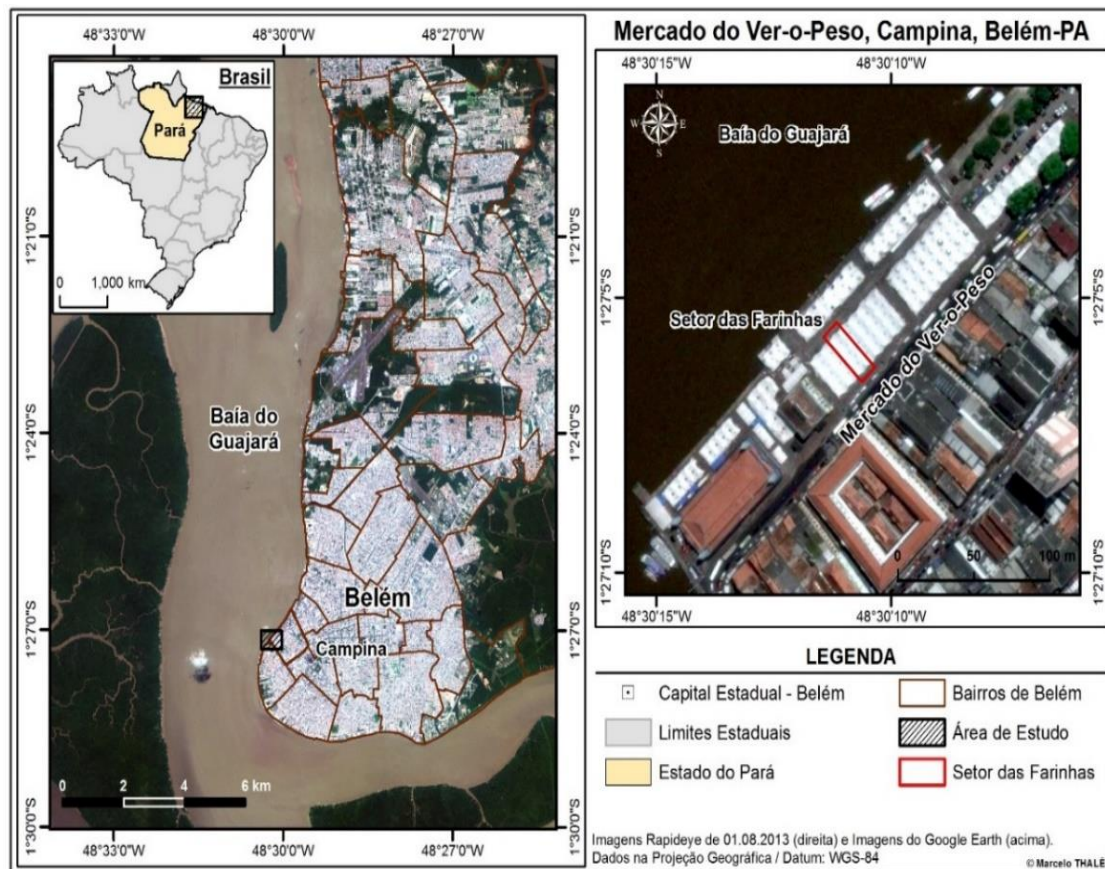
Ver-o-Peso fair, in Belém, Pará, considering the sociocultural and economic value as a result of the time transits of this resource to urban centers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

STUDY AREA

Located on the shores of the Guajará Bay, in the city of Belém, in the state of Pará, the Ver-o-Peso complex houses one of the largest street markets in Latin America. Thousands of people visit it weekly in search of plants, animals, medicines, crafts and foods typical of the region (MEDEIROS, 2010). It is one of the main centers of redistribution of cassava flours coming from the interior of the state to Belém and other commercial centers of the metropolitan region (CARDOSO et al., 2001). In 2001 (Decree No. 39,326/2001), flours began to be sold in their own sector in the market, creating positive convergence of demand and appreciation of the product, as a key part in the local economy (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The flour sector at the Ver-o-Peso fair, Belém, Pará.



Source: Image of the author (2015).

AUTHORIZATIONS AND SELECTION OF INTERLOCUTORS

Preliminary visits to the flour sector aimed at: I. establish the first contact with traders and create links in the research environment; II. request authorization from the industry leadership to start the research; III. observe other parameters of interest of the investigation (local structure, number of vendors, work routine, daily

practices of traders, types of flours, among others). Out of a total of 21 vendors in the sector, only 13 agreed to participate in the study and the work schedule at the fair strictly respected the scheduling established by each vendor, aiming at minimal interference in the sales routine.

The study was interpreted in a qualitative-quantitative perspective, aiming at evaluating the pattern of

commercialization of the product at the fair, relating to the local culture, of those who sell and of those who buy, as well as the symbolism of this market that houses a product of historical heritage. The study also took into account the experiences of those involved and the generations that succeed and inherit the work with flour, all of which are articulated in sales strategies.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data were collected in weekly visits, alternating morning and afternoon periods, where non-participant observation was performed and semi-structured forms were applied (ALBUQUERQUE et al., 2019), containing 21 questions that addressed the socioeconomic profile, types and characteristics of flours, marketing, origin and transit of the product. The experiences in the sector were fundamental for the establishment of links and proximity to the fair's environment for the continuity of the study.

To complement the qualitative approach, the Free Listing Method was used (BREWER, 2002), in which the participant was invited to list the types of flour marketed in his stall, following a decreasing order of importance. The order of the listing of the types and subtypes was ranked so that the first type mentioned is considered the most important within the explored domain (Types of flour marketed at the fair).

With the data from this free listing, the relative importance of flour types was calculated using the Importance Value Index (IVI) (BYG; BALSLEV, 2001), which indicates the proportion of vendors who mentioned a certain type as the most important. The closer this value is to one, the greater consensus among vendors that the type is the most important. Thus, it was possible to evaluate which flour is most valued by vendors for commercialization and relate it to consumer preferences.

Then, through the Smith's Saliency Index (SSI) we sought to quantitatively assess the cultural consensus, that is, within the universe of "flours

commercialized at the Feira de Ver-o-Peso", which would be the types of flours most valued by traders. The SSI values were calculated with the Anthropac 4.0 program (BORGATTI, 1992) and tabled, so that the values closest to the 1 INDICATE a greater importance of the type of flour in the sample universe.

The types (Tip.) and subtypes (sbtp.) of flours were defined by the vendors according to the characteristics of granulation and texture; color and preparation mode. Flour samples were acquired at the fair for incorporation into the Biocultural Collection of the Herbarium MFS - Profa. Dra. Marlene Freitas da Silva, from the State University of Pará, in order to create a collection of types in its biocultural collection, where they received voucher number and informative label with name of the species, botanical family, tip./sbtp. name, use, donor and year of incorporation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THE FLOUR SALES SECTOR

In the flour sector, 21 vendors work who manage 38 stalls, whose age varies between 33 and 73 years old, with an average of 48 years old. The oldest salesman (D.F.B, 72 years old) has been at the fair for 50 years, has had his own plot and used to produce flour by hand, in a home-made way. The youngest (R.V.C, 38 years old) has been working at the fair for two years and inherited the stall from her mother, a former flour vendor who worked at the fair for more than 20 years. These people live and perform routines that begin in the early hours of the morning, with the arrival of distributors and that are extended to business hours, which are from 8:00 am to 07:00 pm.

The way each one sells his products shows a peculiar aspect of the flour culture and that was assessed as a learning from tradition: " learnt the ropes from my brother, I've been coming here since I was a kid; it's not just to sell, you have to have the buying and selling knack" (R.G. dos D.S, 39

years old). In addition, cooperation and solidarity among vendors at the time of sales, with swaps and loans not to lose the customer, are traits of fidelity and respect established as rules that prioritize a good relationship of complicity, supported by well-established rules of coexistence, and by the length of work that allow for the creation of emotional bonds (BARROS, 2009).

The flour sector is a predominantly a male environment (64%) in which the figure of the owner of the stall and/or family members and, exceptionally, of the "employees" emerges. The stalls are made of wood and identified with the name of the "owner" and the registration number of the space. The low female representation is linked to the difficulty in performing certain tasks that require a lot of physical strength, such as loading and organizing bags, or to the working hours at dawn, because women report the need to take care of their children and homes. In the interpretation of Rocha et al. (2010) there is a pattern that classifies

male work as "manual" and that does not belong to the female person.

The site's infrastructure, safety and hygiene are serious, permanent problems and cause of complaints by vendors and customers. The cleaning of hands and work objects is done with tap water located outside the flour sector and stored in buckets. The Sanitation Department – SESAN does the daily garbage collection and cleaning of the site, however this is not enough in the face of the turnover of goods and flow of people. The proximity of garbage of various types (organic and inorganic waste), traffic of cars, buses and people, in addition to the presence of urban pests such as rats, cockroaches, etc., they all compromise the minimum health standards required.

THE TYPES OF FLOUR AND THEIR SUBTYPES

At the Ver-o-Peso fair, three types of flour (d'água, dry and tapioca), 12 subtypes and three other cassava by-products (crueira, carimã and gum)

were identified (Figure 2). Associated with each type there are subtypes; for Type Dry, there are the subtypes white (white root), yellow (yellow root or stained with turmeric) and mixed (combination of white and yellow).

White and yellow dry flour can also be classified into thin, medium and coarse subtypes (Table 1), determined by grain size (selected by the supplier or by the vendor through sifting).

Figure 2. Types and subtypes of flour sold at the Ver-o-Peso Fair.



Note: A - Type d'água Subtype common; B - Type dry Subtype fine yellow; C - Type Tapioca Subtype coarse; D - Type dry Subtype fine white (Suruí); E - Flour stall.

Source: Images of the author (2016).

Tapioca flour (Figure 2 - D) can have differentiated granulation and roasting, with coarse or fine grains, roasted or softer, respectively; and variation in flavor, when coconut milk is added in the preparation, being then classified as tapioca flour with coconut, which is sweeter. A Type d'água Subtype washed differs from the common Var. as it goes through the selection of

grains and elimination of impurities generated in the production process itself, such as woody pieces of cassava root or grains outside the quality standard (coarse, dark, mis form) defined by the seller as a tasty product (roasting, reddish, consistency) and aesthetically attractive (freshness and coloring).

Table 1. Types of cassava flour at the Ver-o-Peso fair with their respective subtypes, descriptive characteristics, and respective cultural salience index for each subtype.

TIPOS DE FARINHA DE MANDIOCA	SUBTIPOS	CARACTERÍSTICAS DESCRITIVAS	ÍNDICE DE SALIÊNCIA CULTURAL	
D'água	Comum	Torrada e saborosa	1	
	Lavada	Farinha d' água selecionada (sem impurezas)	0	
Seca	Branca	Fina	Leve com grãos finos. Efeito esponja	0,392
		Média	Leve, crocante, com grãos médios. Efeito esponja	0,061
		Grossa	Leve, crocante, com grãos médios. Efeito esponja	0,061
	Amarela	Fina	Leve e corada com grãos finos	0,438
		Média	Leve, corada e crocante com grãos médios	0,173
		Grossa	Leve, corada e crocante com grãos grandes	0,077
Misturada	Farinhas secas misturadas	0		
Tapioca	Com Coco	Textura esponjosa e sabor levemente adocicado	0,138	
	Fina	Textura levemente esponjosa e grãos pequenos	0,077	
	Grossa	Textura esponjosa e grãos grandes e crocantes	0,204	

Source: Prepared by the author. Interview information (2016).

The Importance Value Index (IV) and the Cultural Salience index presented maximum value (1) for flour Type d'água Subtype common because it was listed as the most important by all

interviewees on the free listing. This data reflects its integration with the economic and cultural aspects in the city of Belém, since it is the preferred by vendors due to the great market

demand, because it is a crucial element of the Belenense's food. This fact was attested in conversations with customers, who mostly searched for flour Type d'água Subtype common.

The maximum value of Cultural Saliency for flour Type d'água Subtype common meant the cultural domain of the vendors, but this is strongly tied to the selling power. The preference for this type by all vendors is intrinsically geared to market demand, with a view to guaranteed profit. In the rationalization of culture, which promotes a reordering of values, the commercial appeal overlaps and resignifies the symbolic/patrimonial value of the product at the fair.

It was found that the knowledge about the planting and production of flour, which passes by the knowledge of the techniques of cultivation and production of cassava, is not in the cultural domain of most vendors, as they receive the product ready. On the other hand, the work at the fair has a strong traditional expression that is present in the relations established

between vendors and customers, in the routine of the fair and in the preference of customers for a certain subtype of flour. The erosion of the symbolic and cultural values of the products coming from the vegetal resources since their origin, especially from cultivation and production, was discussed by Shanley and Rosa (2005) as a trend in the dynamics of crop management, leaving such repertoires restricted to memories of the farming communities and, when it reaches the urban space, these values are re-signified.

The Cultural Saliency showed high values for the Type d'água Subtype common (1), Type dry Subtype fine yellow (0.438), Type dry Subtype fine white (0.392) and Type tapioca Subtype coarse. (0.204) (Chart 1). Those with a value equal to zero were not mentioned. It is clear that the types with greater presence in the cultural domain are those with the highest commercial engagement, as it will be presented in the following paragraph, with the exception of flour Type d'água Subtype common which, according to the oral

records of the conversations with the vendors, was noticeable an appreciation beyond the commercial aspect.

When asked what type of flour was best-selling, Type tapioca Subtype coarse, Type d'água Subtype common, Type dry Subtype fine yellow and gum were predominant. The Type tapioca although not mentioned as the most important by the vendors, on the free listing, is a flour that complements desserts, is consumed with açai and coffee and, therefore, has expressive demand. This issue is clear since, in addition to the clientele that consumes flour for personal use with the clear preference for d'água flour, there is also another class of customers who prefers to purchase tapioca flour and the fine dried flours, which are widely used as accompaniment for dishes in restaurants and sales.

ORIGIN, TRANSIT AND SOCIO-ECONOMY OF THE PRODUCT

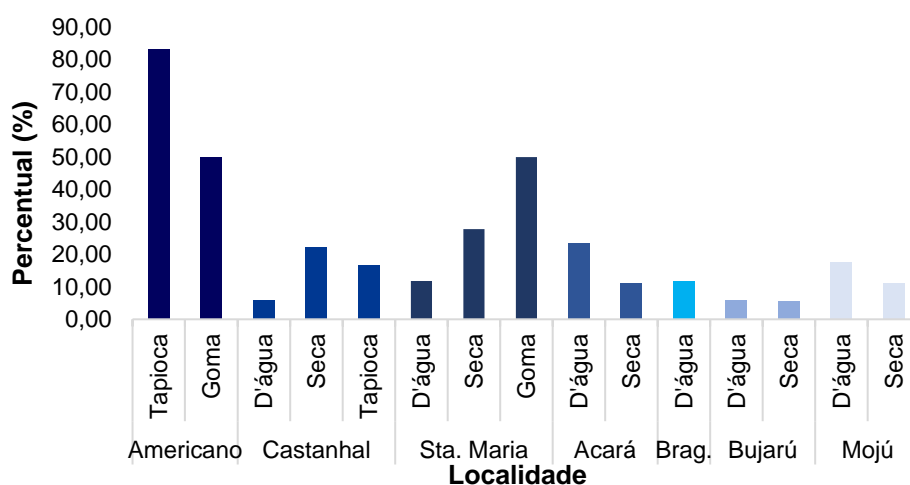
The flours that supply the sector in Ver-o-Peso come from swiddens

existing in 16 locations in the state of Pará - Americano, Sta. Maria do Pará, Castanhal, Acará, Bragança, Moju, Bujaru, Sta. Izabel, São Sebastião, Genipaua, Irituia, São Domingos do Capim, Vigia, Colares, and region of the islands Americano, Sta. Maria do Pará, Castanhal and Acará - are the main suppliers, and these places usually make available to local fairs and shops the flour types d'água, dry and tapioca (Figure 3).

Agricultural data from the state of Pará (SEDAP, 2021) indicate the municipality of Acará and Santa Maria do Pará as major suppliers of cassava flour in the state, however, data obtained from SEDAP 2021 attest that Acará has been maintaining the status of largest producer since 2010. The study on the production of flour carried out by SEBRAE (2008) pointed to Acará as one of the best quality cassava producers at the national level, being considered specialist in the types of d'água and dry. Even so, it loses space to the municipalities of Americano and Castanhal because

they are the most sought after due to their proximity to the capital, along with the ease of access to purchase.

Figure 3. Most representative localities for the supply of flour and typologies, at the Ver-o-Peso fair. Bragança = Brag.



Source: Prepared by the author (2016).

Much of the flour found in Ver-o-Peso comes from northeastern Pará, from localities near the capital Belém. These places, may seasonally have their production reduced, for reasons of cultural tract and phytopathology, failing to meet market demands, as it is the case of the popular flour of Bragança, recognized for excellence of quality and flavor, linked to the cultural dimension. Since 2009 the production from Bragança started to specialize in

the processing of flour only, triggering a decrease of planting areas, and the consequent dependence on the cultivation of other localities, such as those in the southeast region of the country to meet the demand (BEZERRA, 2014).

When the demand is not met by the suppliers of the state it is customary to import cassava flour from other states such as Paraná. It is important to highlight that the market of the Ver-o-

Peso considers the table meal of these localities as inferior, mainly due to the flavor and texture, not appreciated by the consumers of the fair.

The transit of flour from localities in the interior of the state, as well as the import from other states, such as Paraná, impacts the final value of the product. Depending on the distance traveled, whether by boat, truck, bus or chartered car, there is considerable change in the final price. The division of freight costs among the traders is commonly proposed as an alternative to reduce transport expenses (CARDOSO et al., 2001).

With so many obstacles in this flow of circulation, most of the flour of the fair (75%) arrives through middlemen, who have become a viable alternative for the vendors, who do not have the availability of time and resources to travel to the producers. On this aspect, one of the interviewed vendors states: "Here, it is very good to have a middleman, when you work with a lot of flour. [...] you lose practically two working days if you go to the cultivation

places to buy [...]" (D.F.B., age 72). In this case, the middleman is a facilitator/maintainer of this network of contact with producers (SILVA, 2011).

The socioeconomic chain resulting from the sale of flour generates circulation of financial currencies among the social actors involved: producer, middleman, vendor. Data published by the National Supply Company – CONAB (2019) indicated that the 50kg bag in the North/Northeast region has a nominal price for the producer of approximately 114.13 reais and may have an approximate wholesale cost for the vendors of up to 160 reais. Silva et al. (2013) highlighted the existence of differences in the revenues since the middleman (key element of the chain) acts as controller and directly influences the final value of the product, so that the revenue of each one is different and the value of the bag may vary.

Flour production in Pará coexists with tensions that polarize and contrast the industrial/mechanized production profile in the south and southeast

regions and the predominant artisanal/solidary production in the North and Northeast regions of the state. This situation was discussed by Araújo and Arruda Junior (2013) and Souza and Piraux (2015) as being a result of the lack of investments in the sector as a factor that makes it impossible to maximize a large-scale production that caters for a larger and demanding market. Pinto (2010) considered that the small producer has no awareness of the importance of his artisanal agricultural practices for the market, but the lack of socioeconomic support from public and private sectors hinder their progress in the production chain.

SALES DYNAMICS AND MARKETING CONCEPTIONS

The transit of goods and trade with flour creates and strengthens relations of friendship between the workers of this commercial sector. The interrelations present there promote exchanges of experiences, revenues,

and openness for negotiations among the vendors themselves.

The sale of flour also revealed another particularity between seller and consumer, which extrapolate the commercial act, observed in the statements of those interviewed: "For more than 10 years he comes here to buy flour, he is my friend" (D.F.B, 72 years). "There are people who come here who say 'Oh where's your dad?, because my mom used to buy from your dad, my grandmother also used to buy from your dad and she says I'm supposed to come buy from him too.' Sometimes the person has even passed away, and so it goes by" (M.K.B da S, 36 years old).

Communication in the commercialization interposes spontaneously a network of solidarity, knowledge and experiences through which a certain degree of trust and proximity between seller and customer is established (GODOY; DOS ANJOS, 2007). It is a type of loyalty built when the purchase occurs according to the charisma and the good oratory of the

vendor (OLIVEIRA; SANTOS, 2014). It is common to invite the consumer to taste the types of flour: "*Here customer! This is the good one! Try it here!*". To Lima et al. (2015) tasting is an entrepreneurial act and a great *marketing* resource, to attract the customer.

Vendors organize flours in stalls according to their sales preferences. For some, those with lower demand should be highlighted in the eyes of the consumer, and often with promotional appeal; the best known and high-demand are behind: "*I put the dry flours in front so people know that I have it [in stock]; d'água flour is behind because everyone knows I have it*", says T.B.S (39 years old). In a study conducted in a different sector, but also at a fair, the herb vendors also adopt the sectorization of products to attract the consumer (CARMO et al., 2015).

The calendar of local festivals and holidays also have a direct impact on sales, especially because the Ver-o-Peso is a cultural reference space. The more promising months are June,

October, November and December. Of these, October stands out because of the religious festival of the *Círio de Nazaré*, which attracts tourists from other parts of the country, but mainly residents of the interior of the state who are lovers of good flour (SILVA et al., 2014). Another factor pointed out by Lobato and Ravena-Cañete (2015) that has a direct impact on sales is the açai crop that occurs in the second half of the year, because it is a product consumed almost necessarily accompanied by flour.

CONCLUSION

The strengthening of the national production chain of flour, especially that of agricultural microeconomies needs to be linked to the offer of new market opportunities for the rural workers, with a view to their autonomy and survival. This becomes fundamental, since these people lose marketing power when they face the middlemen, lack of resources and labor

support to reach the large metropolises.

The sale of cassava flour in Ver-o-Peso functions as an integrator center of production cultures, which converges both those produced by hand, with their historical and symbolic baggage, as well as those of mechanized systems and coming from other states such as Paraná. The great pressure of the flour market (macro-marketing) has turned to what is produced more quickly, which follows the marketing time to the detriment of the cycle of nature and its rhythms. This is evident when the vendor himself is unaware of the production process of the product he sells, that is, even if a type of flour presents great biocultural expressions tied to planting, harvesting, family tradition and quality, such as d'água flour, this assumes a secondary role in the face of commercial aspects.

Investment in family farming is crucial in the appreciation of the small-scale workers, since they are responsible for most of the cassava produced in the state. Policies of

assistance to small producers, as well as the provision of resources and technical support are necessary for production and the final product (flour) to achieve excellence. In a way, these actions would contribute to a greater homogenization of the cultural domain at the fair, adding value to the particularities of each type of flour with its consequent appreciation in the cultural aspect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To all the vendors of the flour sector of the Ver-o-Peso Fair for the receptivity and attention dispensed throughout the study and to CNPQ for concession of the PIBIC grant.

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