

# Creative economy and eating in slow and comfort food modes: resistance movements in the city

## *Economia criativa e o comer em modos slow e comfort food: movimentos de resistência na cidade*

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### ABSTRACT

The city is intrinsically dynamic, expanding through interconnections, reorganizations, performances and consumption patterns. The city not only exists, but, above all, provides experiences that amalgamate subjectivities and objective realities. In the urban context, intense resignifications are experienced. One can perceive the transit between flows of meaning of communicational phenomena such as commensality, eating together. Food and affection are intertwined in the city. Based on these observations, the objective of this work is, with a view from creative economy, to shed light on the possible dissonances between the food offerings that are presented in the city in *slow* and *comfort food* modes and the legitimate search of consumers from a politicized niche, engaged in socio-environmental and anti-capitalist agendas. These themes manifest themselves as resistance movements in the urban context that involves an accelerated and productivist society. These searches stood out in the city during a time of pandemic and disruption, notably on the internet. We also propose a reflection on how the market appropriates these guidelines that generate engagement to promote its product or service, but often does not support its proposal, since they may not promote a perception of value to those who consume it. The work is part of a qualitative approach, from a socio-anthropological perspective, in posts on social networks and online publications. A search was carried out for topics related to *comfort food* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Commensality. *Slow* food. *Comfort food*. Creative economy.

### ABSTRACT

*A cidade é intrinsecamente dinâmica, ampliando-se por meio de interconexões, reorganizações, desempenhos e padrões de consumo. A cidade não apenas existe, mas, acima de tudo, proporciona experiências que amalgamam subjetividades e realidades objetivas. No contexto urbano, são vivenciadas intensas ressignificações. Pode-se perceber o trânsito entre fluxos de sentido de fenômenos comunicacionais como o da comensalidade, do comer junto. Alimentação e afetos estão imbricados na cidade. Partindo dessas observações, o objetivo deste trabalho é, com o olhar a partir da economia criativa, lançar luz sobre as possíveis dissonâncias entre as ofertas do comer que se apresentam na cidade em modos slow e comfort food e a legítima busca de consumidores de um nicho politizado e engajado em pautas socioambientais e anticapitalistas. Essas temáticas se manifestam como movimentos de resistência no contexto urbano que envolve uma sociedade acelerada e produtivista. Essas buscas sobressaíram na cidade em tempo de pandemia e de rupturas, notadamente na internet. Propomos também uma reflexão sobre como o mercado se apropria dessas pautas que*

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Received on: 06/01/2023. Accepted on: 01/30/2024.

*geram engajamento para promover o seu produto ou serviço, porém muitas vezes não sustenta sua proposta, uma vez que podem não promover percepção de valor aos que consomem. O trabalho se inscreve em uma abordagem qualitativa, sob um olhar socioantropológico, em postagens nas redes sociais e publicações online. Fez-se uma busca por temáticas relacionadas ao comfort food durante o período da pandemia de COVID-19.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Comensalidade. Slow food. Comfort food. Economia criativa.*

## INTRODUCTION

The city is intrinsically dynamic, growing through interconnections, reorganizations, performance and consumption patterns. The city not only exists, but, above all, provides experiences that amalgamate subjectivities and objective realities. In the urban context, intense resignification is experienced. It is possible to observe the transit between communicational phenomena meaning flows such as commensality, eating together. Food and affection are intertwined in the city. In this scenario, of a city-experience notion, representations of foods and commensality are communicational phenomena that can relate to creative economy, making room for new business opportunities and creative expression in consumption networks (HOWKINS, 2002). The act of eating together becomes a place to look at the appropriations which tend to circulate in the city. Nurturing affections, memories, types of intelligence, social relations, coexistence and commensality, the act of eating produces individual and collective experiences. According to Freitas and other authors, "cities and food are still communication channels that work as a central point to get to feel and know others and ourselves, in the different compositions and arrangements of social categories" (FREITAS *et al.*, 2020, p. 162, our translation).

It is worth to mention that commensality, the act of eating together, is related to the table culture, being the guests related to codes and social and cultural conventions of their time and means. According to Wollz and Prado (2016, p. 39, our translation),

[...] the messmate, the one that shares the table with us, may be a friend, a stranger or an occasional guest, who can eat at the same table even without having been invited to, so that he can eat with other people without even exchanging a smile or any kindness. Commensality, therefore, can be pleasant and active when food is shared in a friendly manner, and, on the other hand, can be passive, unpleasant and "bearable" if the person next to us does not share the same social codes.

A tour around town is sufficient to scale the eating experiences. In this asymmetrical and accelerated rhythm space, there are places that promote experiences that renovate consumption and engagement patterns. In fact, the city is constituted as a field of symbolic disputes, being a producer and a product of mentalities, and spares no efforts for that.

In a movement that is articulated with the incessant performance of its actors and trends, it is observed the search for maximum performance, which leads to the generation of what Han calls "Burnout society". "As a counterpoint, the society of

performance and the active society generate excessive fatigue and exhaustion [...] The excess of increasing performance leads to a heart attack of the soul” (HAN, 2017, p. 71, our translation).

In this accelerated space, many narratives that are part of the construction of the “new” echo refer to the act of eating sensibilities. Editions and idealization intertwine in the imaginary of the cities among food practices that evoke eating experiences. It is necessary to think about these processes of editions and resignification. For Baccega (1994, p. 9, our translation), we need to “be informed about the construction and edition of this ‘world of representations’. Thus, when ‘receiving’ the cultural products, their perception will be unique, enabling a more adequate reading of the world”. This learning process that considers the complexity of the language enables the individual to reconfigure circulating experiences; after all, this learning process reedits and consumes media narratives. Communication and education processes sharing a theoretical and practical ground, dimension that is close to the reflections by Freire (1987, p. 58, our translation) about praxis that, “being a truly transformative reflection and action of reality, is a source of reflective knowledge and creation”.

And what do the experiences of eating in the city communicate? How can food care of self (FOUCAULT 1985) and of others for survival in this society of performance? In this paper, we aimed at strengthening a broader discussion of the symbolic socioanthropological elements present in food and commensality based on a multicultural perspective. After all, food is language, communication, symbolic exchange. Food is one of the invitations for congregation, for embracement, sharing of ideas, values, traditions, celebration. In many cultures and civilizations, it is constituted as a place of experiences of being human and humanization in large and diverse dimensions.

Food establishes deep roots in culture and in civilization, and is deeply connected with the constitution of more elementary bonds among individuals, creating plural connections. As mentioned by Maffesoli (2004, p. 49, our translation), “there is a plurality of worlds, a plurality of appreciations and sensations”. Based on these observations, the objective of this study is to shed light, from the creative economy perspective, on the possible dissonances between the offers of slow and comfort food eating modes, which are presented in the city, and the legitimate search prioritized by consumers from a politized niche, engaged in a socioenvironmental and anti-capitalist agenda, translating into movements of resistance in the city, in a context that involves an accelerated and productivist society. The analysis we tried to work on this article is a result of a study carried out in 2021 about eating experiences in slow and comfort food modes, as movements of resistance in the city<sup>1</sup>.

The study has a qualitative approach with a socioanthropological look and aims at provoking a reflection about what is offered and what these slow and comfort

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1 This study was presented in the Communication and Urban Cultures RG, in the 44<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences, in October, 2021, and derives from the Narrative, Experience and City discipline, ministered by Prof. Ricardo Freitas/PPGCom/Uerj.

food modes of eating represent based on concepts that awakens sensitivities, shared by movements with logics that are approximated, such as slow fashion (FLETCHER, 2010). To investigate these articulations, we used other studies, by Félix Guattari, Michel Foucault, Paulo Freire, Ricardo Freitas and Luisa Ferreira da Silva, among others, especially regarding the city, experiences, subjectivation and commensality.

## WHAT IS THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT?

Food involves many dimensions in life, is one of the main elements that shape our identity and our relations with the world. Food is connection with territory and nature. It is memory and affection, history and heritage; it permeates all cultures and many rituals, besides defining economic, social and political relations. (SLOW FOOD BRASIL, 2020)<sup>2</sup>

According to Andrews (2008), *slow food* had already taken its first steps in the 1970s, when one of its founders, Carlos Petrini, became a councilor in the Italian region of Piemonte. There, he encouraged young people of the left wing to mobilize in favor of regional cultural identity and national gastronomy. The slow food movement's historical landmark, however, happened in 1989, when a manifestation was organized against the opening of the first McDonald's in Rome. After that, the movement became stronger and, on December 10 of that same year, the Slow food International Association was launched in Paris, represented by members of 18 countries.

Specifically, slow food's motto is good, clean and fair food<sup>3</sup> for all, and that comprehends a series of changes in the basis of what is now established, but especially the deceleration in the way of eating and living. This involves making changes concerning politics, economy, modes of production, sustainability and appreciation of local food culture. Besides, through projects that promote the dignity of workers and respect towards nature, it values the knowledge of traditional cultures, local diversity and social innovation (SLOW FOOD BRASIL, 2020)<sup>4</sup>. This movement tries to create connection and partnerships among people, be them the ones who eat, the ones who plant or the ones who produce food.

The movement cherishes empathy and the group, and understands that eating is also a political act; when we make our choices related to food or ways of living, we are aware, or at least should be, of the process involved. So, here we propose that the entire food process presents itself in a transparent manner, from production to the appreciation of the small producer, regarding nature through the search of sustainability and consumption of seasonal foods until the respect towards local gastronomic traditions and the appreciation of the people's history. To publicize the pillars on which the movement was build, the organization created a manifest<sup>5</sup> with the practices considered to be essential for the establishment of its proposals.

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2 Available at: <https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento>. Access on: Jul 30, 2021.

3 Information collected at: <https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento>. Access on: Feb. 12, 2021.

4 Available at: <https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento>. Access on: Feb. 6, 2021.

5 Available at: <https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento>. Access on: Feb. 6, 2021.

From a more comprehensive perspective, slow movement was an act of resistance that went beyond the matter of ways of eating, and put in check the ways and means through which contemporary capitalism works, forcing us to live a fragmented life due to the speed of information, the demands and the multitasks we need to respond to in order to keep us productive, and, therefore, competitive. The picture of a depressed society with broken social bonds. "The subject of post-modern performance, which disposes of an exaggerated number of options, is not capable of establishing intense connections. In depression, all connections and relationships are broken, and also the connection with ourselves" (HAN, 2017, p. 92, our translation).

Not without reason, the slow food movement is resistance against the way of life that is conditioned to acceleration, to speed and fluency in relations, to individualism, and to all strategy used by capitalism with the purpose of no longer taking possession of the materiality in production and consumption, but of capturing our time. Slow food, therefore, defends commensality, calmness for the act of eating and food and affections sharing. Do cities allow us to live in a slow mode?

### **FROM SLOW FOOD TO AN ACCELERATED CAPITALIST CITY**

Here, we find a disruptive moment that tries to slow down the rushed life and to promote new awareness that dives into new codes, rules, values, representations and a network of consumption permeated by the ingredient of sensitive experiences that affect us.

We are in fact affected all the time by volumes, colors, images and sounds, as well as by narratives and aphorisms. The sensitive is that persistent background rumor that compels us to something without being able to separate real from imaginary; therefore, without being able to turn to structures and laws to define the unity of the world, because then what prevails is the continuous drift of a form, or, better yet, of a manner. (SODRÉ, 2016, p. 219, our translation)

Considering that acceleration represents one of the strategies produced by capitalism to perpetuate itself as the dominant system, it is proposed, after this point, to analyze how it produces its subjectivities.

Guattari understands that capitalism, which was called, in the contemporary scenario, Integrated World Capitalism (IWC), produces subjectivities in an industrial and mechanical scale, and that the logic of the system is to control the subject considering the articulation of its existence. "Capitalism is empowered by human beings from within" (GUATTARI, 1977, p. 205, our translation), therefore, through arrangements, the subject begins to understand and exist in the world in a controlled and massified manner. So, the product of capitalism is to build subjectivities. Its logic is to decentralize itself from the production of goods and services and to be centered in the production of signs; these signs, when intertwined and in constant transformation, shape a form of existence.

Understanding how the aforementioned process is given, we propose to focus on a determinant factor for the success of capitalism, that is, the fact that it

appropriates from other subjectivities that escape the dominant models built by it. As mentioned, the capitalist system is plastic, permissive, and, therefore, accepts that different singularity processes coexist, since these can be potentially useful and can also feed it. And what would be the strategy to make these escape lines a potential for capitalism? The concept of territorialization/reterritorialization, built by Deleuze and Guattari, partly explains how it can be used as a strategy.

The territory is a synonym of appropriation, of closed subjectivation about itself. It is the set of projects and representations which will pragmatically lead to a whole series of behaviors, investments, in times and in social, cultural, aesthetic, cognitive spaces. (GUATTARI; RONILK, 2010, p. 388, our translation)

While these territories are represented by this set of projects and, in general, a way of existing, it also does not exist without an output vector, which always allows the possibility of escaping, a vanishing point, that is, deterritorialization. On the other hand, there is no deterritorialization without the effort to reterritorialize in another part. Back to the idea that capitalism allows the existence of vanishing points, we understand that the logic of territorialization and reterritorialization is put in practice by it effectively. This process of appropriation occurs constantly, and it is possible to identify it in the very movements that appear every day as alternatives for the way of living and eating in big cities. Resuming the idea that capitalism is plastic and shapes itself to singularities, promoting experiences that get close to dissonant movements, and adding it to the notion that slow food cherishes the sharing of food and affection, it is pertinent to reflect on the initiatives that dialogue with slow food.

We looked for some actions that resonate in the city starting with media in the digital environment and referring to affection in the ways of eating, counterposing the oppressive logic of healthy consumption, which understands health simply as the absence of disease.

Considering the complex matter of food, redefined with social and cultural aspects and eating practices every day, often dominated by the oppressive logic of consumption of health act of eating, the dissemination of content through new communication technologies is a phenomenon. Without a doubt, we are facing a battlefield that is related with the multiplicity of means and messages, complementing itself and promoting symbolic arrangements and materialities of all sorts. (BARBOSA *et al.*, 2020, p. 221, our translation)

Healthy act of eating is more than the intake of nutrients, and incorporates symbolic plural dimensions that moves through relations among people, affecting them. Food is identified as a "social act inserted in a subjective logic, imbued with symbolisms that integrate other values beyond that of biological health, of medical-scientific rationality" (SILVA, 2013, p. 63, our translation).

Therefore, in this scenario of circulating experiences about eating that promote affective engagement, remarkably in the internet (social network and online publications), during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a search for themes related

to affection and comfort promoted by food. There was information of all sorts, and the ones related to comfort food, which will be presented next, were listed to illustrate the reflections of this study. For example, in Instagram we could find, using the hashtag comfort food (#comfortfood), more than nine million representations.

The hashtag is the name that highlights meanings marked by the punctuation mark "#", which precedes the words chosen by the user, and also a hyperlink. The hashtags classify and recognize the representations of common sense: a code of social recognition of elements that are constituted as a common reality for those involved in the communication process. Based on the interaction between users of the networks, in the course of communication and cooperation, the hashtags enable communication and reinforce common ideas that come both from scientific information and cultural ideology and the practical experience of the subjects. (GLORIA *et al.*, 2021, p. 640, our translation)

There is a comprehensiveness in subjective spaces that exhibit images and messages of ways of eating that affect people, producing public opinion effects. The aggregations raised by the internet, which became a global communication network (CASTELLS, 2009), configure real socialization spaces (BACCEGA, 2009) that can cause both "educational" and "devastating" effects. This is precisely the question that must be thought about the movements that transit with strength and vigor in our contemporary urban routine.

## **WHAT DOES THE CITY HAS TO OFFER IN THE COMFORT FOOD MODE?**

The Comfort food concept has appeared as a gastronomic term in the 1990s, and gives food a role that goes beyond its nutritional value, taking on the responsibility of awakening emotions and affective memories related to flavors, scents, places, social events and significant people. The emotional relation is established not with food itself, but instead, with everything it represents and means. (SOUSA *et al.*, 2018, our translation)

As aforementioned, the term had been used in gastronomy since the 1990s; however, in times of pandemic and consequent social isolation, the meaning of comfort food gained new dimensions and made room for a more intense demand around this type of experience. "What one eats or does not eat reflects the symbolic uses of each food that integrates our cultural choices and our specific lifestyle in urban centers. Biological needs and cultural habits provide feedbacks in this process" (FREITAS *et al.*, 2020, p. 160, our translation).

A story published in September, 2020, by the Versatille magazine<sup>6</sup>, specialized in trends related with art, culture and gastronomy, explains comfort food as the cozy power of food with an emotional appeal, which tries to refer to the sensations of comfort and affective memory, and is prepared with foods that stimulate the production of serotonin, neurotransmitter related with the feeling of happiness. This way of eating has become stronger with the pandemic.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://versatille.com/tag/comfort-food>. Access on: Jul. 08, 2021.

When we go through troubling moments, sometimes caused only by the rushed routine, it is normal to look for escape alternatives to relieve stress. Sometimes, it can be a conversation with a friend, physical exercises, binge watch series. But with social isolation, an alternative that ended up growing is coziness through Comfort food. (TORQUATO, 2020, our translation)

The idea of creative economy has been an alternative to articulate sectors such as economy, culture and Society. For De Marchi (2013, p. 3, our translation),

In the past years, the idea of creative economy has been adopted by several governments and international organizations as a guideline of public policies for the sectors of communication and culture. Implicit in its concept, there is a perspective that rearticulates the relationship between culture, economy and society. Based on the principle that creativity has become key to the promotion of new development, one that is socially inclusive, ecologically sustainable and economically sustained, the proposal is to encourage different productive sectors whose common denominator is the ability to generate innovation based on local knowledge, to aggregate symbolic value to goods and services, besides generating and exploring intellectual property rights.

Based on the proposal of creative economy as a policy that integrates culture and economy, in which creativity is the main bias for socioeconomic development, gastronomy appears as a promising sector. Therefore, gathering gastronomy and creative economy and, based on that, promoting experiences that involve important topics in the agenda, such as “ethical food”, “slow food”, and “comfort food”, generates engagement of a specific niche of consumers, since they point out to socioenvironmental and anti-capitalist policies.

Many restaurants, betting on this demand imposed by the pandemic, have used the #comfortfood in their social media posts to engage this audience that searches for comfortable and cozy experiences through food. For example, Mocotó café, traditional restaurant in São Paulo, run by chef Rodrigo Mocotó, published in Instagram, in July, 2021, one of the dishes of the menu with this hashtag. In the text he also used the sentence “this is the mummy’s food that comforts us<sup>7</sup>”.

Another restaurant that works with the concept of comfort food is Balcone, specialized in Italian food, also in São Paulo. In October, 2020, Vogue magazine, in a story about gastronomy, listed seven restaurants that were launched that year to be visited by its readers. Balcone was presented as “the Italian comfort food news that offers a simple menu, one that holds you in the very first bite<sup>8</sup>”.

In August 2020 Claudia magazine published “10 affective food recipes that are just like a hug”, emphasizing the fact that “besides nourishing, some simple and classic preparations can bring comfort, well-being and good memories<sup>9</sup>”. It is about

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7 Available at: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CR3luJElyFK/?utm\\_medium=share\\_sheet](https://www.instagram.com/p/CR3luJElyFK/?utm_medium=share_sheet). Access on: Jul. 29, 2021.

8 Available at: <https://vogue.globo.com/lifestyle/noticia/2020/10/7-restaurantes-que-inauguraram-em-2020-para-conhecer-ja.html>. Access on: Jul. 29, 2021.

9 Available at: <https://revistacasaedjardim.globo.com/Casa-e-Comida/Receitas/noticia/2020/08/comfort-food-10-receitas-de-comida-afetiva-que-valem-por-um-abraco.html>. Access on: Jul. 29, 2021



showing that comfort food has gained new shapes facing the need of cooking at home caused by the pandemic. This context led many people to rescue or discover the pleasure of preparing meals to share experiences. Many restaurants took advantage of this demand to offer kits with pre-prepared ingredients, easy to execute, as was the case of chef Rafa Costa, owner of the restaurant Lasai, in Rio de Janeiro, which elaborated the “Menu Lasai<sup>10</sup>”. The idea was to put together a box with all of the necessary ingredients to produce a menu with an entry, a main dish and a dessert. The initiative was publicized in a restaurant’s Instagram post (@restaurantelasai), in June, 2020. Therefore, it produced not only a box with ingredients to prepare a meal, but the materialization of the cooking experience. The level of personalization, unlike the level of impersonality, leads to a level of hospitality and identity that is connected with the symbolic dimension, and transmutes the food to the healthy level. “Home-made food is perceived as healthier, not because of the ingredients with which it is made, but because of the effort and care that is put into its production [...] It is the socializing function of the kitchen, which gives identity to food ” (SILVA, 2013, p. 59, our translation).

Considering that, in contemporaneity, food activism has become stronger, and considering that this phenomenon has become a promising niche for entrepreneurship, we observed its presence in the narratives that intend to offer such ways of eating. Inspired by creative economy concepts, we reflected on the eating narratives of the city that are close to slow and comfort food, and whether they are aligned with the original ideas of these movements. As commented by Azevedo (2017, p. 296, our translation),

Food activism appears as an interdisciplinary umbrella that accommodates different movements and discussions with wide reach in societies, in which food appears as a cross-sectional element, such as Agroecology and Family Agriculture; the Food and Nutritional Security movement; Organic Agriculture and other sustainable agri-food systems (Permaculture, Biodynamic, Natural, Ecologic Agriculture); Fair Trade; Slow Food; Locavorism; Vegetarianism; Veganism; Freeganism, among the most famous ones.

As observed in the presented examples, there is a sometimes affective, sometimes active atmosphere to serve as a shield in a movement that resists the acceleration, isolation, sickening and precariousness of life conditions that are equally visible in large cities. A range of experiences is rapidly disseminated and, in this sense, many of their directions get close to self-care, care towards others and the society, as encouraged by comfort food, embraced by the slow food philosophy.

## **CARE OF THE SELF AND SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS**

When we go back and look at the engagements proposed by slow food, we can see narratives of power that support consumption networks. “The more powerful

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<sup>10</sup> Disponível em: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CCD6oFPAI31/?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CCD6oFPAI31/?utm_medium=copy_link). Acesso em: 29 jul. 2021.

power is, more silently it will act" (HAN, 2019, p. 9, our translation). Then comes the interest to combine the slow and comfort food philosophy to the ways of eating that echo sensitivities and take up the urban space and the media very fast, in order to reach the condition of happiness, not by coercion, but using seduction.

Capitalism triggers the search for happiness through reaching things, and this ends up deflecting people from the focus of what the search for the "art of existence" is"<sup>11</sup> (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 50, our translation), which is the search for knowledge, for philosophy, for the memory work to reach the truth. The search for the truth was taught before Christ, by Socrates and other thinkers. Foucault, two thousand years later, presented us with what was called "care of the self", which is the search for knowledge. In this context, it is an invitation to observe the several narratives, be them slow, comfort or others, and realize what is the best way to find the truth that is given by the knowledge journey. It is an invitation to be set free from the oppression of one or more stories and, after that, make our own genuine choices. The term coined by Foucault comes from the Greek: "care for oneself (*heautou epimeleisthai*)". The French philosopher resumes the Greek thought to capture the concept. Thus, he quotes Socrates to declare to the sovereign that has not learned what is "necessary to know in order to rule: first, one should care for oneself" (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 49, our translation).

The care of the self can be a problem for the capitalist system when facing it through knowledge, because it goes through matters such as autonomy for the individual to make his own choices, through a critical reflection that aims at observing and transforming the world. According to the reflections by Freire (1996, p. 18, our translation), it is necessary to enable the construction of an autonomous citizen who, "through thinking about practice, naïve curiosity, seeing oneself as such, becomes critical". Therefore, for the author, "the more critically the capacity to learn is exercised, the more is built and developed in what I call 'epistemological curiosity', without which we do not reach the total knowledge of the object" (FREIRE, 1996, p. 13, our translation).

If, in fact, I am not in the world to simply adapt to it, but transform it; if it is not possible to change it without some sort of dream or world project, I should use every possibility I have to not just talk about my utopia, but to participate in practices that are coherent with it. (FREIRE, 2000, p. 33, our translation)

A critical consciousness can be able to lead to processes of transformation of reality based on wishing, buying and discarding and, in case of food, of reaching the *Super Size Me*<sup>12</sup> point, that is, of eating with exaggeration. This becomes clear in

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11 The text has quotation marks and apostrophe because this is how it is in the text; Foucault himself used quotation marks to present the concept of self as the "art of existence", and that is how we quote that part.

12 Reference to an independent documentary by Morgan Spurlock, "Super Size me. For one month, the director only ate "Mc products", which assured him a lot of weight gain and worsened medical rates.

promotional actions, such as “free refill” and “twice as many chips”, in a system that offers more to the client, obviously earning more, but also favoring waste.

This obsessive search is strategically programmed to handle a continuous movement of producing desires, needs, consumption and the consequent disposal, for the immediate appearance of new desires, needs, consumption and, in this awareness, individuals feel impelled to go on an adventure of looking for happiness. (BARCELLOS, 2016, p. 39, our translation)

In the Greek vision, the concept about this care also went through the rational use of goods, or the use of only the bare minimum. In other words, without excesses or luxury, because Foucault, inspired by the Socratic philosophy, reminds us that men “should care not about their richness, nor their honor, but about themselves and their souls” (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 50, our translation).

“Know thyself”, from Antiquity, which gains strength as a line of thought, needs to be more conjugated with the caring of oneself, and, apparently, in this process, caring for oneself can even allow individuals to get to know themselves better, since it is about wishes. Actually, the will, or better yet, the intention of the individual regarding caring for himself, as mentioned by the Greek, is the search of happiness. This knowledge for the truth (aletheia<sup>13</sup>) will lead to the caring of the soul, the knowledge of philosophy.

In Bauman’s vision about utopia in the liquid modern world, certainty and permanence are in the constant search to reach the condition of happiness. “The singular idea of removing uncertainty from its incapacitating power, at the same time transforming happiness in a safe and permanent condition (facing the continuous and uninterrupted variation of the self, through a change in costumes), is now the very incarnation of utopia” (BAUMAN, 2013, p. 29, our translation). As the author describes it, the objective of a life in utopia is the search for happiness. It is understood that this happiness is the redemption of troubles, compensation of ethical-moral debt and re-humanization of social relations which also take place in the ways of eating.

The multiple significations of eating impose themselves, resist and are constituted as ways of resistance against the acceleration of contemporary life. At the end, the impact of a network of consumptions around happiness resonates in the society of performance.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Considering that, these days, the engagement in food activism is growing and, at the same time, recognizing that this phenomenon appeared as a promising field for entrepreneur activities, the objective of this study was to shed light, from the perspective of creative economy, on the possible dissonances between the offers of eating that are presented in the city in the slow and comfort food modes, and the legitimate search for consumers of a politized niche, engaged in socioenvironmental

<sup>13</sup> Without a veil... the veils that come loos etc. and reveal the truth. Aletheia, unveiling.

and anti-capitalist agendas. These themes manifest themselves as resistance movements in the urban context, involving a rushed and productivist society. Among current experiences about the act of eating that promote affective and political engagement, based on questions that involve sustainability and anti-capitalist policies that dialogue with the slow, we chose comfort food for this study.

These initiatives are understood as parts of a process of making things differently and resisting; therefore, they are in a territory of subjectivation considered as an escape; such an escape is to be continuously resignified by capitalism, and appropriated of creative modes by a powerful consumption network.

Even though the definition of what is or is not comfort food for an individual depends on subjective contents directly related with their personal history, it is possible to observe constancy in criteria and delicacies in social groups whose members have experienced similar socioeconomic and cultural references. And this has not gone unnoticed by the food industry and the food market outside the households, which incorporate expressions such as “from grandma”, “home-made”, and “traditional” in many products and in their marketing speech. (GIMENES-MINASSE, 2016, p. 100, our translation)

The matter of sensitivities that search for alternatives to meet their affective demands in the city are also utopic; demands that cannot be fulfilled only with food, as proposed by comfort food, since they involve other values that cherish care of self that are structuring in life. Referring to a depressed society, with broken social bonds, fragile and, at this time, adding the impacts imposed by the pandemic, people look for compensation in comfort food to meet these demands generated at this time of speed, of more and more, and, finally, exhaustion.

The “strength” of the capitalist machine induces individuals to produce all the time. In this logic of productivity, paid vacation or weekly rest, or simply a break to eat, do not comfortably fit this productivists pattern. Companies only grant this right by force of law. And if it were possible, the worker would not even stop to eat. Would recomforting foods be able to meet the necessary affective demand to exist in a society that imposes such an accelerated rhythm? In a society that is subordinated to the imperative of productivity and performance, there is no room for pause, in a tendency of optimizing time in which all space should be filled with tasks. Without pauses to think and reflect critically. Escapes and rest are seen, usually, as escape places.

Among the many eating experiences offered in the city, and looking for the ways of eating critically, it is observed that they follow the same pattern of productivity and strategies of seduction to reach specific groups, promoting experiences of belonging based on the several dimensions that food can trigger. Multiple senses and meanings given to food are built to guide lifestyles and projects of happiness, thus opening up the possibility for the individual to choose, however, based on the affective and digital engagement that marks the context of this time.

Even if they are understood as movements of resistance, it is not possible to say that the experiences that look for the pleasure of eating are not genuine and valid, but need to be carried out with a critical awareness and reading of the world,

thus appreciating the personal and subjective experiences of thinking and feeling. The ways of eating are not an end in themselves, but instead, they represent small resistances looking to transform an established and oppressive reality. The pauses to rescue subjectivities of affective memories, as suggested by the slow and comfort modes, can be ways of resisting acceleration. And recognize and realize the subtleties of the construction and edition of these experiences is also a way of resisting to the subordination of a productivist society; after all, as mentioned by Freire (1996, p. 41, our translation), “nobody is a subject of anyone’s autonomy”. The critical debate about the ways of eating cannot be emptied by the capitalist logic and the escape moments can also be understood as care, rest, pause, and not escape from the contemporary rushed routine.

In this context of contrary forces that are installed in contemporary society, between the established system and the singularities, the search is to answer the following question: based on the experiences of ways of eating that are offered, it is possible for a person to live according to a resistance philosophy against the ways of existing and eating inside the metropolis? Our perception is that there is a big gap between the philosophy proposed in these movements, and that are looked for by the individual, and the offers that are made. The act of eating (and here we extend to lifestyle) in slow mode, inside this society characterized by an accelerated rhythm focusing on productivity, becomes utopic, even if such offers provide us with minor resignified experiences that get close to these singularities, even though for these offers to sustain themselves and generate perception of value by the consumer, they need to be revisited in deeper dimensions.

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**Conflict of interest:** nothing to declare – **Funding:** none.

**Authors' contributions:** Barcellos, D.M.N.; Reis, L.F.; Gonçalves, V.A.B.Q.: Concept. Barcellos, D.M.N.; Reis, L.F.; Gonçalves, V.A.B.Q.: Writing – First draft. Barcellos, D.M.N.; Reis, L.F.; Gonçalves, V.A.B.Q. Writing – Review and editing.

