

# Cultural Entrepreneurship Networks: Innovating at Feira de São Joaquim

## *Redes de Empreendedorismo Cultural: Inovando na Feira de São Joaquim*

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### ABSTRACT

This teaching case aims to encourage learning about the importance of networks and relational capital for cultural entrepreneurship. Its learning objectives are: (a) to characterize food markets as locus of cultural entrepreneurship; (b) identify the relevance of networks for cultural entrepreneurship, and (c) understand how relational capital supports cultural entrepreneurship. The case portrays the subscription process of Feira de São Joaquim in a world award for innovative food markets and tells the story of an entrepreneur, highlighting the innovation process and the role of the network for his business. While producing the innovation presentation video representing the market in the competition, it is possible to perceive the characteristics and singularities of innovation and food markets, the relevance of networks, and relational capital for the enterprise.

**Keywords:** Cultural entrepreneurship; networks; innovation; relational capital.

### RESUMO

Este caso para ensino visa fomentar uma aprendizagem sobre a importância das redes e do capital relacional para o empreendedorismo cultural. Seus objetivos de aprendizagem são: (a) caracterizar os mercados populares como *locus* de empreendedorismo cultural; (b) identificar a relevância das redes para o empreendedorismo cultural, e (c) compreender como o capital relacional sustenta o empreendedorismo cultural. O caso retrata o processo de inscrição da Feira de São Joaquim em um prêmio internacional para mercados inovadores e conta a história de um empreendedor, destacando o processo de inovação e o papel da rede para o seu negócio. Durante a produção do vídeo de apresentação da inovação que servirá para representar a feira na competição, é possível perceber características e singularidades da inovação e dos mercados populares, a relevância das redes e do capital relacional para o empreendimento.

**Palavras-chave:** Empreendedorismo cultural; redes; inovação; capital relacional.

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## Case

The case tells the story of Márcia, secretary of culture and tourism in Salvador, Bahia, who registers the Feira de São Joaquim in an award for innovation in food markets. With the support of the government and the mayor's office, Márcia meets with the leaders of the food market to discuss the requirements for entering the award, as well as gathering information and selecting the entrepreneur who will represent the food market in the entry video. During the production of the video, the ready-made acarajé batter is presented as the innovation chosen to represent the food market in the competition. Considering the process of registering and producing the video for the award, some questions arise: is there entrepreneurship and innovation at the food market? What are the characteristics and differentials of this entrepreneurship? How important are networks for entrepreneurship? How does the entrepreneur's relational capital help in the creation and development of their business?

### **AN AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE MARKETS AROUND THE WORLD**

Born in the city of Salvador, Márcia has always been proud of her Bahianity, and since she was a child, she has been interested in learning about the history and cultural heritage of her state. That is why, when she took up the post of secretary of culture and tourism for Salvador/Bahia, she declared it her mission to share her state's historical and cultural heritage with Brazil and the world at every opportunity. So, when she heard about the UNESCO prize for innovation in food markets, she thought that the São Joaquim Food market would be a strong candidate to represent her state. To find out what the entry requirements are, Márcia accessed the award's website and found the following information:

"The UNESCO prize for innovation in markets aims to highlight innovative food markets around the world. The initiative seeks to identify innovative practices carried out in food markets, which are environments characterized by their socio-economic importance, as well as their tradition and cultural heritage.

To enter the award, you must register on the website, fill in information about the market: its location, the year it was founded, a presentation text and a justification to show why the market is innovative. Once this information has been filled in, a video must be produced and sent, including a presentation and explanation of the innovation process by an entrepreneur chosen to represent the market".

Márcia also saw on the website that different markets around the world had registered and were preparing the next stage of the process, the presentation video. Markets in Mexico: Coyoacan Market, Mercado del Carmen and Mercado San Juan; in Portugal: Mercado da Ribeira, Mercado de Matosinhos and Mercado da Vila; in the UK: Portobello Market, Borough Market; in Spain: Mercado de San Miguel, Mercado de San Ildefonso and Mercado de la Paz. In Brazil, the Mercado Novo, located in Minas Gerais, and the Mercado Central in São Paulo had already registered. Márcia realizes that the competition is going to be tough and decides to contact the city's mayor, André Sousa, and the governor, Paulo Costa, to arrange a meeting to talk about the prize and the registration of the São Joaquim Food market as the state's representative.

A week later, Márcia meets with the mayor and the governor to discuss the award and seek their support. Everyone agrees that the food market would be an excellent candidate to represent Bahia in the competition, and that the award would bring visibility, presenting Bahian culture and its differentials to the world. Márcia reflects on what aspects of the food market can be emphasized in the video to show that a traditional space, such as a food market, can be considered innovative?

## ENTERING THE PRIZE

After agreeing on the details, Márcia and Roberto, who is Bahia's Secretary of Tourism, together with Leonardo Rodrigues, the producer responsible for preparing the video, met with leaders of the São Joaquim Food market to discuss the food market's entry requirements. Márcia needs to gather information to prepare a presentation text and justification to highlight the food market's innovation, as well as discuss who will be the entrepreneur selected to represent it in the video. The meeting was attended by the director of the food market traders' union, João Silva, and some vendors.

**MÁRCIA:** Hello, thank you for being here. I'm Márcia, Salvador's secretary of tourism and culture, and I'm here with Bahia's secretary of tourism, Roberto, to discuss the São Joaquim Food market's application for a UNESCO prize for innovative markets around the world. I've also brought Leonardo, who is the producer responsible for preparing our application video.

**ROBERTO:** We're sure that our food market is a strong competitor, but we need to discuss together who the entrepreneur will be who will represent the food market in our video and come up with a justification for why our food market is innovative. These two requirements are essential for our food market to be able to compete with the other markets that will also be applying.

**MÁRCIA:** Exactly, Roberto. As we need to organize this information, I spoke to João, who is the president of the food market traders' union and knows the food market well. As well as him, I asked him to invite some of the food market's leaders to this meeting and I thank them all for coming.

**JOÃO (union president):** Of course, we're very excited about the idea of bringing this award to our food market and being able to show the world what makes us different, not to mention attracting more people to visit the food market.

**MÁRCIA:** We can start by discussing what should be in the food market's presentation text. I want you to tell me some information that you think is important to present the food market and to show why it is different and deserves to win this award.

**JOÃO (union president):** I think it's important to say that our food market is the biggest in the state, and one of the biggest in Brazil. You can find everything here, ingredients for your recipes, handicrafts to tidy up your home, religious products, medicinal herbs, where the seller tells you how to use them to cure any illness, you can find everything here.

**ROSA (market vendor):** You can say that we're in the All Saints' Bay! In front of the sea, with a beautiful view. And many of the products sold here come from the Recôncavo region of Bahia.

**CARLOS (market vendor):** The food market is also a place that shows a lot of our Bahian culture. Anyone who wants to get to know a bit of Bahia can come here. There are spices, herbs, restaurants and a distinctive service that only the market has, which is the contact between the customer and the owner. You don't find that in a big supermarket, but here at the food market you do.

**JOSÉ (market vendor):** That's right, Carlinhos. Customers always come back because they know they'll be treated well. I also think that our market is always renewing itself. I've been working here for 25 years now, and I can see that over time things change to suit what the customer wants. For example, a few years ago at the food market there were several clothing and shoe stores, I used to sell clothes

I bought in another state, but now I sell sweets, candies and chocolate, which we call “*bombonieres*”. The food market is always renewing itself to meet trade and customer demand.

ROSA (market vendor): True, this renewal has always been present at the market, I remember my father, who was already selling here at the market when I was born, telling me how things have changed since he arrived at the food market some 45 years ago. At first, he sold bananas on a stand, then he started selling ingredients from our cuisine in a store: okra, palm oil, coconut milk, chili peppers, there is a bit of everything. Today, I'm the one who works in the store, that's where I make my living.

JOÃO (union president): That's right, Rosa. A lot of people make their living here at the food market, that's why it's so important to us. The history of the food market is intertwined with the stories of the vendors, many of the businesses at the food market are family businesses, passed down from generation to generation, from father to son.

ROBERTO: We can say that the food market, in addition to its economic and social importance, is a heritage of our Bahian culture.

NEIDE (market vendor): Certainly, São Joaquim Food market is what supplies the *terreiros* in Bahia, all the products for the *axé*, *umbanda* and *candomblé* religions, which are crockery, clay products, candles, saints, you can find them at the food market. This is part of the religiosity of Bahians, part of our culture.

JOSÉ (market vendor): What we have for the food market is love! We dedicate ourselves to keeping it running, even in difficult times and changes. That's why, despite the problems with the food market's structure, it needs to be renovated to solve the hygiene problems and so that we can better welcome our customers and tourists. Rainy days are always difficult because there's a lot of mud.

NEIDE (market vendor): That's right, José. You must talk about the food market's problems too, it's not perfect. The vendors are still waiting for the redevelopment project that was going to renovate the food market and improve its structure, but it's all very slow, only part of it has been done so far. Despite the problems, the food market is an important part of our lives, our stories.

MÁRCIA: A lot of information. I'm writing it all down and I'm going to put it in the presentation and justification text. I think it's going to be good. Now we must decide what the video will be like and the entrepreneur who will represent the food

market and explain their innovation. Starting with the video, about the entrepreneur, do you have any suggestions for someone who could make a difference at the food market? Who does something different? Or do you have a business that doesn't exist anywhere else, only here at the food market?

JOÃO (president of the union): I know that the food market supplies the baianas of acarajé with everything they need. Shrimp, palm oil, chili peppers and, above all, the ready-made batter for acarajé and abará, which began to be sold here at the food market. The sale of ready-made batter started here at the food market.

ROSA (market vendor): I think the ready-made batter might be one of the things that's different about the food market. Before ready-made batter, the preparation process was very artisanal, you had to break the beans, soak them, wash them several times, remove the husks and then put them through the mill. I know this because my aunt was a baiana of acarajé, and as a child I used to help wash and remove the shells from the beans. Now, with the ready-made batter, the baianas, restaurants or other customers come here to the market and buy a quantity of batter ready to be fried, in the case of acarajé. So, in addition to the other ingredients, they now have the ready-made batter in the quantity they want.

MÁRCIA: That's interesting, so now it's more practical to make acarajé because the batter is already sold here at the food market?

JOÃO (union president): Absolutely. And the São Joaquim Food market is one of the main supply points for acarajé ingredients, a delicacy of our cuisine and culture.

MÁRCIA: Does everyone agree that the ready-made acarajé batter will be the innovation of the food market?

All those present at the meeting agreed, choosing the ready-made acarajé batter as the innovation that will be presented in the food market's registration video.

MÁRCIA: Now I need to talk to the vendors who sell the ready-made batter, to talk about the video we're going to make to register for the food market and what their participation will be like. The idea is to show and explain how the process of preparing ready-made acarajé batter takes place, interviewing people and providing important information to present this innovation. What do you think?

CARLOS (market vendor): I think it's going to be difficult to get this prize out of the food market!

JOSÉ (market vendor): Not to mention that an award like this gives our food market more prominence, as it will become better known around the world.

NEIDE (market vendor): Our food market and our culture are like no other, we're going to win this prize!

## **INNOVATION OF THE SÃO JOAQUIM FOOD MARKET: ITS PRESENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION**

A few days after the meeting at the food market, Márcia works on the presentation text and the justification to be sent in the application process for the award. With the information provided by the vendors and additional research done by Márcia on websites, in magazines and in the news, she finalizes the text and contacts Leonardo, the producer in charge of the video, to arrange a meeting and discuss some ideas.

On the day of the meeting, Leonardo brings the first images he and his team have taken of the food market, and together they discuss how to insert the text into the video and which images will be used.

LEONARDO: Márcia, my team and I have already taken several images of the food market, showing the movement of people, the merchandise, the entrance to the food market, the view of All Saints' Bay. We try to get a good picture of the vendors, the movement of people and goods.

After Leonardo has presented the first version of the presentation video, he discusses with Márcia how the text she has prepared will be inserted.

MÁRCIA: The images are beautiful, Leonardo. Congratulations to you and your team! I think it will be very good when we insert the text. It looks like this: "The São Joaquim Food market is located in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. Situated in front of All Saints' Bay, founded in 1964, it is the largest food market in the state and one of the largest in Brazil. Its supply chain receives products from the Recôncavo region of Bahia and from various states and supplies the demand of several cities in addition to the state capital.

At the São Joaquim Food market you can find a bit of everything: fruit, vegetables, spices, medicinal herbs, handicrafts, religious articles linked to African religions such as candomblé and umbanda. As well as ingredients from Bahian cuisine, such as palm oil, coconut milk, pepper, dried shrimp, ready-made batter for acarajé

and abará. For the market traders, one of the advantages of the food market is the development of emotional ties and proximity to customers. Some have been going to the food market for many years, know the owners of the stalls and stores, bargain and buy their products and services. Others go to the food market on Sundays, do their shopping and enjoy a beer and an aperitif in one of the restaurants on the seafront.

Walking through the food market, you can see a mixture of tradition and modernity, the result of the need to renew a complex environment that is not just about economic exchange and commerce. The food market reflects the changes and transformations it has undergone over time, without losing its identity, characterizing a portrait of Bahian culture, which continually renews itself to serve its customers, those who depend on it to live and delight its visitors.”

LEONARDO: The text was wonderful, Márcia. Now it's missing the recording with the entrepreneur.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL NETWORK: INNOVATING IN THE TRADITIONAL MAKING OF ACARAJÉ**

On the day of the video shooting, Márcia meets Leonardo and his team. Also present are Rafaela Correa, the journalist and presenter who will be conducting the interviews, and Vera Ramos, director of the baianas of acarajé association. Together they head to Jorge Ramos' store, the first entrepreneur in the field of ready-made acarajé batter at the food market. As well as the batter, his business sells products related to Bahian cuisine, such as palm oil, dried shrimp, Black-eyed peas, etc.

MÁRCIA: Good morning, Mr. Ramos. Leonardo and his team are going to set up the equipment so we can start recording. Rafaela will be interviewing you. She's a presenter and journalist, and she'll ask questions about your business. In addition, Vera, director of the association of baianas of acarajé, will accompany you in the interview to talk a little about how the sale of ready-made batter has affected the baianas' business.

RAFAELA (presenter): Hi, Mr. Ramos. Nice to meet you. Our idea is for the interview to cover the beginnings of your business, your product and who helped you in this process. All right?

JORGE (entrepreneur): All right, it'll be a pleasure to talk about it.



RAFAELA (presenter): Vera is also going to accompany us and take part in the interview. She's going to talk a bit about the craft of the baianas and acarajé itself. Shall we begin?

Leonardo and his team authorize the start of the recording, and the video interview begins.

RAFAELA (presenter): Hello, my name is Rafaela Correa, I'm a journalist and presenter from Bahia. Today I'm here at the São Joaquim Food market to interview Mr. Jorge Ramos, an entrepreneur in the field of Bahian cuisine. His business specializes in selling ready-made acarajé and abará batter, as well as other ingredients from Bahian cuisine. And since we're going to talk about acarajé, a much-loved Afro-Brazilian delicacy, we invited Vera Ramos, director of the association of baianas of acarajé, to accompany us. Mr. Ramos, I'd like you to start by telling us when you started working here at the São Joaquim Food market.

JORGE (entrepreneur): I arrived at the market as a young boy, my grandfather already owned this store here. My brother and I used to help carry the bags of merchandise, do the cleaning, help with the service. Then the store was left to me, that was about 30 years ago. My brother also works here at the food market, but he has his own store, today he works in the peanut butter business.

RAFAELA (presenter): Has the business always sold Bahian cuisine? Since your grandfather?

JORGE (entrepreneur): Yes, since my grandfather's time we've been working with products from Bahian cuisine.

RAFAELA (presenter): At the beginning of your business, did you have help from anyone? Family, friends? From colleagues at the food market?

JORGE (entrepreneur): Apart from my family, my wife who works here with me, I didn't have much help at first, I worked hard to get where I am.

RAFAELA (presenter): When you started running the business, did you make any changes?

JORGE (entrepreneur): No, I continued selling dried shrimp, refried beans, palm oil, everything that people who sell acarajé need. Even this street here in the food market specializes in this business, everyone works with these ingredients.

RAFAELA (presenter): And about the ready-made batter, could you tell me how the idea came about?

JORGE (entrepreneur): I was already selling black-eyed peas, which are the base ingredient for acarajé and abará batter. Here at the food market, customers could already find the manual mill to make the batter. As I already sold beans to a lot of baianas, who came here to buy the ingredients, I talked to a man, Mr. José, who already sold these mills here at the food market, about creating a machine to make the batter to sell ready-made, an electric mill. That's when the idea of ready-made batter came up, I saw that there was a need for it in the industry I worked in and I thought about how I could better serve my customers, as well as expanding my business.

RAFAELA (presenter): So, you saw an opportunity to expand your business and launch a new product, you talked to another entrepreneur here at the food market, and he developed this electric mill?

JORGE (entrepreneur): No, I ordered my machine from someone else, who works in the machinery business, I explained the idea I had, and the person made it. Mr. José then supplied his machines here to colleagues who work in the pasta business, he invented and made a machine that helped wash the beans. The first batter mill here at the food market was mine, but Mr. José didn't want to be my partner at first.

RAFAELA (presenter): And what was the reaction of the customers? Did they like the product?

JORGE (entrepreneur): At first people liked the idea, especially those who already worked selling acarajé, some baianas, the restaurants, and the customers who bought in small quantities, for their own consumption. But there were people who didn't like it and still don't buy it because they prefer to make their own batter. Although the ready-made batter was designed to make the baiana of acarajé day-to-day life easier, because it's more practical, some prefer to buy the beans, or the beans that have already been washed and soaked, ready to make the batter. After I started selling batter, the store on the street started selling ready-made batter too.

RAFAELA (presenter): Vera, I'd like you to explain what acarajé and abará mean to Bahian culture?

VERA (baianas association president): Acarajé and abará arrived in Brazil through the enslaved, and here it is considered an offering from the candomblé terreiro to the Orixás, acarajé to Iansã and abará to Xangô. In African countries, Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, it is a common food, a dumpling known as *àkàrà*. These

enslaved people brought acarajé and abará to Brazil, especially to three states: Pernambuco, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. But it was Bahia that embraced this craft, making it part of the culture. Today, Salvador alone has almost 4,000 associated baianas, which we call craft of baianas de acarajé.

RAFAELA (presenter): About the ready-made acarajé batter, could you tell me what has changed in the baiana's craft with this innovation?

VERA (baianas association president): Look, Rafaela, the day-to-day life of a baiana is very busy. Considering that it takes a long time to make the batter at home, because you must wash the beans and that uses a lot of water and electricity. To optimize time, the baiana buys the ready-made batter. I'll give you an example: imagine the baiana has an event in the afternoon, so she prepares everything, goes to the event, sets up her tray, which is where she sells her delicacies, and orders the amount of batter she wants, and the store delivers it to the venue. This way, there's no risk of the batter spoiling because of the heat. I think practicality is essential in the case of batter.

RAFAELA (presenter): Apart from the practicality you mentioned, what other impact has ready-made batter had on the baianas' business?

VERA (baianas association president): The profit of the business has increased and the electricity and water bills have decreased. There's also no need to pay someone else to wash the beans, because as the baiana spends the day working, if she's going to make her batter at home, she needs to pay someone to wash the beans, pay to grind them, if she doesn't have a mill at home.

RAFAELA (presenter): Regarding the cultural significance of the baiana's craft and of acarajé itself, has the ready-made batter affected these aspects in any way?

VERA (baianas association president): No, because the baiana's craft comes from the heart, so when she's preparing the batter, she wishes for good things. It doesn't matter if the batter was bought ready-made at the market, what matters is the thought and the positive energy.

RAFAELA (presenter): About the São Joaquim Food market, how important is it for the baianas?

VERA (baianas association president): The food market is the place where baianas from all over Brazil, not just Bahia, buy their materials. It's essential! Without the food market, the baiana would struggle to find the ingredients she needs.

RAFAELA (presenter): Thank you, Vera. It was a real lesson in history and culture! Going back to your Mr. Ramos, about your business today, I'd like you to talk a bit about the reality of keeping a store here at the food market. Knowing who your partners are would help us understand who is part of the network that sustains your business. For example, you mentioned that your wife works with you, does anyone else in your family offer any kind of support? A friend?

JORGE (entrepreneur): Today it's just my wife. If it wasn't for her support, helping me through difficult times, I would have given up. There were a few moments when I thought about closing, but she helped me and we're still here at the food market.

RAFAELA (presenter): About your relationship with your fellow vendors, with the food market traders' union, do you partner up for any specific purpose? Could it be to improve the market, to get a discount from a supplier?

JORGE (entrepreneur): I'm a member of the union, but I think it needs to seek more improvements for the market traders and the food market, my relationship is only with the association, I don't think it brings many benefits to my business today, but I hope this will improve in the future. As for my colleagues at the food market, here in the street where my store is, we're all partners, we always talk about our businesses, we exchange information about the market, because we serve the same type of customer, and that helps a lot, especially in times of difficulty. If there's a shortage of goods here, for example, my colleague will give me a loan until my goods arrive, or I can send a customer there if I don't have the product here in my store. If I need to do some work here in the street, fill in a pothole, everyone helps each other out, because that way our customers are better served. Not about getting together to get a discount, everyone has their own suppliers and makes their deals individually.

RAFAELA (presenter): Would you say that the relationship between the vendors brings benefits to everyone? For example, does it help the credibility, the reputation of the business?

JORGE (enterprising): Absolutely! The benefit comes to everyone who is a partner.

RAFAELA (presenter): What about the relationship with your suppliers? Is it a relationship of trust, partnership?

JORGE (entrepreneur): Some of my suppliers, I've been a customer for a long time, I already have a trusting business relationship. But, as I run a business, I al-

ways try to keep a varied portfolio of suppliers because I'm not held hostage by any of them, and I can negotiate better.

RAFAELA (presenter): What about your relationship with your customers? Do you have any loyal customers who always come back to buy from you? Why do you think they come back?

JORGE (entrepreneur): Some of my customers are good friends, they always come to buy at my store, I always try to be open to negotiate and make my customers happy. I think they come back for the service, that's my differential, because there are many stores selling the same thing as me here at the food market. So, I need to stand out in some way.

RAFAELA (presenter): Do any organizations, such as SEBRAE (the Brazilian Service for Supporting Micro and Small Enterprises), for example, come or have come here to the food market to offer any training courses to the vendors? Do you think these institutions are or could be partners for the market traders?

JORGE (entrepreneur): SEBRAE did come, a year or so ago, to offer training courses for market vendors. I only remember this institution now. But I think there could be more partnerships of this kind, as it helps market traders to develop their business and improve customer service.

RAFAELA (presenter): Would you say that these partnerships, with family, customers, other vendors, that you've built over the years, have helped you maintain and develop your business?

JORGE (entrepreneur): I think so, because at many times these partnerships have been essential for me to continue my business here at the food market.

RAFAELA (presenter): About the food market, is there anything you would change today?

JORGE (entrepreneur): The main problem with the food market today is its structure, it needs urgent renovation. As the maintenance of the food market is the responsibility of the city hall, the state and the federal government, these institutions need to talk and create projects to help maintain and improve the food market. Today, we are still waiting for the Requalification Project so that these improvements can be carried out, and I hope it doesn't take too long.

RAFAELA (presenter): Thank you very much, Mr. Ramos, for sharing a bit of your story and your business with us. I'd also like to thank Vera for sharing with us

her knowledge of the history of acarajé, the craft of the baianas and their relationship with the food market. We hope our conversation has shown how tradition and innovation are present at the São Joaquim Food market, as well as how the food market is a strong representative of Bahia's historical and cultural heritage. We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to get to know our food market and all it has to offer. We will welcome you with open arms!

Once the interview was over, the team finished recording the video, and everyone decided to celebrate by eating an acarajé at one of the restaurants on the pier. In front of the view of All Saints' Bay, Márcia reflects that despite the problems, the food market portrays much of Bahia's culture and history and is an example of entrepreneurship and persistence in a time of change. But does the food market, as well as being traditional, also have the innovative potential to win the prize?

**Figure 1.** Black-eyed peas, an ingredient in acarajé and abará batter.



**Source:** Authors (2023).

**Figure 2.** Electric mill for preparing acarajé and abará batter.



**Source:** Authors (2023).

**Figure 3.** Ready-made batter for acarajé and abará.



**Source:** Authors (2023).

### **SÃO JOAQUIM FOOD MARKET: CRADLE OF BAHIANITY**

Preceded by the Sete Portas Food Market (1920-1934) and the Água de Meninos Food market (1934-1964), both of which were extinguished as a result of fires, the São Joaquim Food market, named after its location in the cove of the same name, is one of the largest and most important food markets in Bahia, responsible for supplying a large part of the local and regional market (Cardel & Souza, 2017; Paim, 2005). São Joaquim Food market was sanctioned by Decree No. 2,546 of September 8, 1964. Initially, the idea was that it would cease to be permanent, adopting a mobile character, the result of an attempt to modernize the city of Salvador, like the interventions and sanitation measures that had taken place in other capitals, such as Rio de Janeiro, a proposal that did not materialize (Paim, 2005).

The Food market, which covers an area of approximately 37,000 square meters, is the largest free food market in Bahia. It is recognized as a place of tradition, where fruit, vegetables, cereals, meat, handicrafts, religious items, medicinal plants, etc. are sold, but it is also a space that attracts visitors and tourists who want to get to know and experience Bahian culture (Cardel & Souza, 2017; Souza, 2010).



**Figure 4.** São Joaquim Food market and its products.



**Source:** Authors (2024).

In addition to the products, the food market has several attractions. Restaurants, which offer gastronomic experiences with delicacies from Bahian cuisine. The Food market's Samba, which takes place on Sundays, promoting musical events to the rhythms of samba and pagode. An art gallery with exhibitions by national and international artists. The food market is also the setting for films and documentaries, music videos, literary works, as well as serving as a stage for various artistic interventions, including paintings, graffiti and musical performances (Lima & Paim, 2017; Souza, 2019).

**Figure 5.** Food market's Samba.



**Source:** Authors (2024).



**Figure 6.** Gallery at the Food market.



**Source:** Authors (2024).

Due to its economic and cultural importance, the São Joaquim Food market has been in the process of being recognized by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute since 2005 to become an intangible cultural heritage of the country (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional - IPHAN, 2022). In 2024, a bill was sent to the Legislative Assembly of Bahia with the aim of making it Intangible Cultural Heritage of the state (Assembleia Legislativa da Bahia, 2024).

**Figure 7.** Panoramic view of the São Joaquim Food market.



**Source:** São Joaquim Food market Requalification Project (Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia - CONDER, 2018).

**Figure 8.** São Joaquim Food market and its activities.



**Source:** São Joaquim Food market Requalification Project (Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia - CONDER, 2018).

In July 2008, to preserve and develop the sustainability of the food market, an agreement was made between the Bahia State Department of Culture (Secult) and the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Culture, to draw up the São Joaquim Food market Requalification Project. The project sought to address the socio-cultural, management and physical dimensions of the food market, including the participation of the different levels of public power - the Union, State and Municipality, and the vendors themselves (Alban, 2011; Lima & Paim, 2017). In April 2024, the second stage of the requalification works was authorized by the government of the State of Bahia, and this stage of the project will benefit around 500 vendors (Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia - CONDER, 2024).

**Figure 9.** Planning the São Joaquim Food Market requalification project.



**Source:** Feira de São Joaquim Requalification Project (Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia - CONDER, 2018).

## Teaching Notes

### DILEMMA

The case tells the story of Márcia, secretary of culture and tourism in Salvador, Bahia, who registers the Feira de São Joaquim in an award for innovation in food markets. With the support of the government and the mayor's office, Márcia meets with the leaders of the food market to discuss the requirements for entering the award, as well as gathering information and selecting the entrepreneur who will represent the food market in the entry video. During the production of the video, the ready-made acarajé batter is presented as the innovation chosen to represent the food market in the competition. Considering the process of registering and producing the video for the award, some questions arise: is there entrepreneurship and innovation at the food market? What are the characteristics and differentials of this entrepreneurship? How important are networks for entrepreneurship? How does the entrepreneur's relational capital help in the creation and development of their business?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVE

The aim of the case is to encourage learning about the importance of networks and relational capital for cultural entrepreneurship. From the case, it is intended:

- Characterize food markets as a locus of cultural entrepreneurship.
- Identify the relevance of networks for cultural entrepreneurship.
- Understand how relational capital supports cultural entrepreneurship.

## SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHOD

The case is fictitious and based on information from an ethnography carried out by the first author at the São Joaquim Food market between 2021 and 2022. The ethnography took place in three phases: (a) ethnographic approximation - the aim was to learn about the history of the food market, the types of enterprises and to identify cultural innovations; (b) ethnographic selection - enterprises that characterized the presence of entrepreneurship and cultural innovation were selected, totaling five innovations; (c) ethnographic densification - three cultural innovations and their entrepreneurs were selected to compose the study, one of which is explored in this case.

Interaction with the empirical material took place physically and virtually through observation, documents, semi-structured interviews, visual and audiovisual recordings and field notes. The researcher analyzed documents on the history of acarajé and its preparation, followed the routine of the entrepreneurs at the food market and how the ready-made batter is prepared and sold.

The analysis of the empirical material included the analysis of narratives according to the three phases of the research. In the approach phase, the narrative focused on preliminary aspects, such as recognizing the São Joaquim Food market as a field of cultural entrepreneurship and creative economy, highlighting the identity, symbolic and cultural aspects of this environment, as well as the history of the food market and the cultural entrepreneurs. The selection phase emphasized cultural innovation and the cultural entrepreneur network. Finally, the densification phase focused on entrepreneurial activities in the context of cultural entrepreneur networks.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF A COURSE OR DISCIPLINE

In this case, it is possible to observe the need for constant renewal of food markets to meet new socio-economic demands, through a process of modernization

and re-signification of their spaces, with the help of cultural innovations and entrepreneurship. It presents the process of creating, developing and maintaining a enterprise and its innovation, based on an entrepreneurial network made up of different actors, the ties formed and their relevance, which help to sustain cultural entrepreneurship.

## SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THE USE CASE

Undergraduate business courses (Entrepreneurship, Organizational Studies, Creative Economy, Strategy, Innovation, Management Theories, Networks), post-graduate courses (professional master's degrees in subjects on Entrepreneurship, Management, Innovation and Networks). For pedagogical use, we suggest activities that can be adapted for two or the same class at two times.

## POSSIBLE CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION FOR THE USE OF THE CASE

The case can be applied in the classroom at three different times:

- 1. Case preparation:** Students should prepare in advance by reading the texts before the classroom meetings. The texts are: Marins and Davel (2020), Oliveira and Davel (2022) and Vale (2007, chapter 2). Prior reading is important for students to familiarize themselves with the content presented in the texts and which will be explored during the application of the case, making better use of class time and increasing student participation.
- 2. Reading the case:** A dramatic reading of the case for teaching should be carried out in the classroom. The following steps are suggested:
  - a.** Distribute the text of the case to all the students.
  - b.** Allow 25 to 30 minutes for everyone to do an initial, individual reading of the case.
  - c.** Select 14 students, one for each character in the case (one narrator and 13 characters), for a dramatic reading of the case.
  - d.** Position the chosen students at the front of the class, so that they are in a prominent position to do the reading. These students should be encouraged to try staged reading, to bring the characters to life and theatricalize the case; and
  - e.** Discuss the staged reading of the case, inviting students to express their perceptions of the events reported.

- 3. Analysis of the case.** Divide the class into groups, preferably of up to four students. These should answer the questions proposed, for later presentation and discussion between students and teacher. It is advisable for the teacher to ask and discuss any questions that may arise, to ensure greater retention and use of the knowledge covered in the subject or course.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Question #1 - Food markets as cultural entrepreneurship

Based on Marins and Davel (2020), what are the main singularities of cultural and artistic entrepreneurship? Based on the case studied, how do these singularities apply to food markets?

### Question #2 - Cultural entrepreneurship entrepreneurial networks

Based on Oliveira and Davel (2022), explain the relevance of networks for entrepreneurship in the case studied?

### Question #3 - Relational capital for cultural entrepreneurship

Based on Vale (2007, chapter. 2), explain how relational capital in the case studied supports cultural entrepreneurship?

## CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Question #1

Marins and Davel (2020) highlight the singularities of artistic and cultural entrepreneurship that relate to the work and the entrepreneurial process. These can also be observed in food markets and are discussed below:

- a. Value:** Cultural and artistic goods and services have a subjective value linked to their meaning (Elias et al., 2018; Khaire, 2017). This value, which exceeds economic value, is linked to the experiences that are translated into the artistic work, the consumers' perceptions of the good or service, and the processes pertinent to artistic and organizational daily life (Toghraee & Monjezi, 2017). In this case, the São Joaquim Food market, as well as being a place where economic and commercial transactions are carried out, where customers go to buy products and services with utilitarian characteristics, such as fruit and vegetables, some goods and services have a high subjective value attached to their utilitarian value. This



subjective value is linked to consumers' experiences and perceptions, and can be seen, for example, in the sale of religious articles, medicinal herbs, ready-made acarajé batter - which has strong cultural and religious symbolism. The visit to the food market itself can also be attributed subjective value, since the visitor can experience a cultural and identity immersion, characterized by the subjectivity of the experience.

- b. Consumption:** The appreciation of a cultural good or service is an experiential process (Davel & Cora, 2016). At the São Joaquim Food market, the consumption of handicrafts, for example, through the sale of religious sculptures, crockery and other products that are used in ceremonies linked to religions of African origin, mixes religiosity with the consumption of products. The cuisine, which also has a strong religious significance, in the case of acarajé and abará. The medicinal herbs, in which the sale of the products is linked to the process of instructions on how to use them to cure illnesses. Visiting the food market itself can also be interpreted as a subjective consumer experience (Davel & Cora, 2016), since there is an immersion in Bahian culture and identity.
- c. Innovation:** Artistic and cultural innovations represent new opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurship (Islam et al., 2016), while at the same time deepening characteristics of traditional innovation in the context of the creative economy, resulting in contemporary forms of innovation (Marins & Davel, 2020). In this case, the innovation process of the acarajé and abará ready-made batter represents a paradigm shift, since there is a strong religious and cultural element linked to the preparation and consumption of these foods. This innovation generated new opportunities, since it met a need observed by the entrepreneur, while at the same time creating challenges, since consumers could reject the product, to preserve the traditional preparation process.
- d. Cultural logic:** This refers to the social, community, family and affective spheres of culture (Marins & Davel, 2020). At the São Joaquim Food market, this logic is present in the identity of the food market, in the collectivity and cooperation present in the network formed by the vendors, customers and visitors, who try to preserve Bahian culture and, consequently, the food mar-

ket itself. There is also the incorporation of cultural and religious values in the creation of new ideas, as in the example of the ready-made acarajé batter, which helped shape entrepreneurship (Khaire, 2017). Cultural differences between visitors and their perceptions are also present in this dimension.

- e. Paradoxical logic:** Tensions arising from the paradox of tradition and modernity, and the tension between culture and commerce (Khaire, 2017), permeate the food market. The food market needs to be constantly renewed to meet new socio-economic demands, while at the same time not losing its identity and traditional, cultural and aesthetic meanings (Banks et al., 2000). If this happens, the food market loses its original characteristics and acquires an economic orientation, essentially focused on generating wealth (Elias et al., 2018), turning into a supermarket. In the example of ready-made acarajé batter, the tensions arising from tradition/religiosity and commerce also characterize a paradox that has resulted in new creations or business practices.
- f. Risky logic:** This is expressed by the everyday risks and uncertainties of cultural entrepreneurship (Marins & Davel, 2020). For the ready-made acarajé batter, these risks involve the uncertainty of the product's success, due to innovation and the presence of the religious aspect, consumer adherence and taste, uncertainty about the sustainability of the business, cultural changes, and the amount of information available. For the food market, the need to modernize, keeping up with the social and cultural changes of individuals also fits into this dimension.

To instigate the discussion, the teacher can encourage students to think about how the singularities of artistic-cultural entrepreneurship can be observed in food markets in their cities, or in cultural innovations developed by local entrepreneurs and their businesses, taking the opportunity to promote greater fixation of the concepts covered in the case in different realities.

### **Question #2**

Oliveira and Davel (2022) show that networks are relevant to entrepreneurship as a means of: (a) accessing different resources; (b) identifying new business oppor-



tunities; (c) sharing risks between partners; and (d) building reputation, credibility and legitimacy (Oliveira & Davel, 2022). The entrepreneur's network presented in the case, which made it possible to create and develop the business, is made up of family, customers - including the baianas de acarajé, other vendors, suppliers, the traders' union, SEBRAE, the city hall, the state and federal governments.

As a means of accessing different resources, networks enable entrepreneurs to obtain economic resources, such as capital and credit (Huang et al., 2013), and technological resources (Huggins & Thompson, 2015), which will help leverage the venture. Social and human resources can also be accessed through networks (Hayter, 2013; Maas et al., 2014), which can provide access to information (Halberstadt & Spiegler, 2018), advice (Neumeyer et al., 2019), emotional and emotional support (Bakas et al., 2019) and customers (Bouk et al., 2013). In this case, it can be seen that the resources most accessed by the entrepreneur in his network were of the social and human type, which provided affective and emotional support, as well as advice from his wife and family; economic resources, since the vendors lend each other goods; access to customers, as they are directed to other stores if their demands cannot be met; exchange of information, as the market traders talk about the market; and technological resources, as once the entrepreneur starts using the electric mill to prepare the batter, other entrepreneurs at the food market start using the same resource. These resources helped the entrepreneur make decisions to develop and maintain his business. It would be interesting to discuss with the students what other resources the entrepreneur can access, and which could help maintain and develop the business.

Through collaboration in networks, the identification of new business opportunities can also be favored, which can lead to the creation and development of new companies (McGrath & O'Toole, 2013). In this case, the entrepreneur invites another vendor to explore a business opportunity, which would be the creation of the machinery that would make it possible to sell the ready-made acarajé batter, an electric mill. However, the vendor refuses the invitation, making it impossible for an innovation network to be formed to exploit the opportunity identified, which would enable the development of both the ready-made batter and the machinery businesses. The opportunity is exploited by the businesses separately. To encourage discussion, the teacher could ask the students to point out what advantages and disadvantages

could be indicated if the entrepreneurs decided to exploit the opportunity jointly through the development of an innovation network.

Networks can also be used as a means of sharing risks, and this benefit is generated by the trust and reciprocity between the partners that create the network (Ring et al., 2010). In this case, the entrepreneur's invitation to a partnership could have helped to share the risks of innovation. As the invitation was declined, the entrepreneur took on the risks of developing his innovation alone. To encourage discussion, the discussion with the students could focus on the advantages and disadvantages of sharing the risks between the entrepreneurs and what possible consequences this sharing would have for the development and maintenance of the business.

Building the reputation, credibility and legitimacy of entrepreneurs can also be developed through networks, which can generate greater collaboration between their members and help the entrepreneur access other resources, such as financial assistance and social capital (Kilfoyle & Richardson, 2015). In this case, it is possible to identify the building of reputation, credibility and legitimacy in the network formed by the vendors. Consequently, through the network, the entrepreneurs access relational capital (which will be explored further in the next question), with the aim of collectively benefiting the members of the network. The trust between entrepreneurs favors collaboration to solve problems, exchange information about the food market and provide access to clients. To complement the debate with the students, the teacher could ask for suggestions on how the entrepreneur can build and maintain his reputation, credibility and legitimacy in the network formed by the food market vendors and what benefits he could exploit through the network that are currently not exploited.

### **Question #3**

Based on social network theory, Vale (2007) argues that connections between individuals are the basic elements of social relationships and can be represented by strong ties, in which there is greater group consensus and stability of connections; weak ties, which help to strengthen individual opportunities and social interaction; and social capital, a relational resource associated with networks of connection and interaction, capable of benefiting groups or individuals within these networks. So-

cial capital can be based on internal ties, defined by the intense bonds and internal cohesion between the members of a network. It can also be based on external ties, characterized as an individual asset and the ability of a social actor to connect to more than one network to achieve their goals.

Based on the concept of social capital, Vale (2007) presents the concept of relational capital. Relational capital is defined as a set of resources derived from the relationships available to a social actor, be they ties or contacts. This includes direct and intense relationships, known as strong ties; direct relationships, of a superficial and sporadic nature; and indirect relationships. Relational capital has the following characteristics: it is an asset of a durable nature, which can generate expectations of future benefits; it can be used for different purposes and its advantages can be transformed into economic benefits; it can replace or complement other resources and it requires maintenance (Vale, 2007).

In this case, the entrepreneur's relational capital includes: (a) strong, direct and intense ties, represented by the entrepreneur's family, other fairgoers and customers, including the *baianas* of *acarajé*; (b) direct relationships, of a superficial and sporadic nature, represented by suppliers and the traders' union; and, finally, (c) indirect relationships, represented by SEBRAE, the city council, the state and the federal government - through the food market's requalification project. The entrepreneur's speech shows that this relational capital has been built up over the years of working at the food market, in the form of ties and contacts, which can be used for various purposes, such as: forming partnerships to develop innovations and the business itself, access to customers, building credibility, leading to expectations of future benefits, such as increased sales, for example. The entrepreneur must also be aware of the need to maintain this capital, with the aim of maintaining and creating new ties and contacts that can bring new benefits and help sustain cultural entrepreneurship. To encourage discussion, the teacher could ask the students to make suggestions as to how the entrepreneur could create new ties, who these possible ties could be, what advantages these ties would bring, about the existing ties, how the entrepreneur could act to maintain them, whether it is advantageous for the entrepreneur to change the type of tie that already exists and why.

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