

Struggles over an ‘Old, Nasty, and Inconvenient Monopoly’: Municipal Slaughterhouses and the Meat Industry in Rio de Janeiro, 1880–1920s

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Abstract. This paper examines the meat supply system in Rio de Janeiro from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s. For a period of time the city’s monopoly over meat processing and retailing guaranteed a steady supply at predictable prices. However, at the turn of the century, ‘interlopers’, as municipal officials labelled those who attempted to introduce their product into Rio’s market, began to question this century-old monopoly. Hence, for a relatively short period, Rio de Janeiro implemented a number of measures: curtailing the long-standing custom of clandestine slaughtering; establishing a centralised and somewhat regulated public abattoir system; and, finally, introducing meat-packing companies. This study considers these developments by undertaking a broader inquiry into how they affected per capita meat availability in Rio de Janeiro from the 1890s to the 1920s.

Keywords: Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, meat trade, meat packing, foodstuffs, consumption

Introduction

The final decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a sharp increase in the number of urban centres in the Americas and the size of their populations. Rio de Janeiro was no exception; it had approximately 270,000 inhabitants in 1872, and that figure had increased more than fourfold by 1920.¹ This created a series of challenges with respect to satisfying the basic needs of the city’s

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¹ Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano VI, 1938* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do IBGE, 1939), p. 417; Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil 1850–1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 112–16.

residents, as the old transportation, sewage, water and food supply systems proved to be increasingly inefficient in the face of growing demand. While the urban elite expected to live in the style of their European counterparts and imitated the latter's manners and consumption habits – from foodstuffs to perfumes – the lower classes, though lacking access to such amenities, were also involved in this process due to uneven improvements in city services. At the turn of the twentieth century, even *carioca* workers had access – though limited – to streetcars and electricity.²

Until recently, scholars have paid little attention to the food supply system of Brazil in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as it was simply assumed that Brazilians experienced dire circumstances and scarcity.³ When it comes to animal-derived foods, it is taken for granted that during this time the provisioning of fresh meat was unorganised and virtually non-existent, so much so that even in the country's capital consumption should have been 'low'. While national data may corroborate low-consumption figures, statistics from urban centres like Rio de Janeiro do show a substantially higher rate of beef rations per capita than that seen nationwide.⁴

This assessment, nevertheless, complicates the traditional view of early twentieth-century Brazil. Historians have emphasised that the integration of the country into the world economy in the late nineteenth century accentuated its vulnerability to external downturns, while leaving domestic needs subject to international interests.⁵ However, the struggles over the introduction of meat-packing companies and the municipal slaughterhouse in

² Benjamin Orlove and Arnold J. Bauer, 'Giving Importance to Imports', in Benjamin Orlove (ed.), *The Allure of the Foreign: Imported Goods in Postcolonial Latin America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 4–6; Kit McPhee, "'Immigrants with Money Are No Use to Us': Race and Ethnicity in the Zona Portuária of Rio de Janeiro, 1903–1912', *The Americas*, 62: 4 (2006), pp. 623–50; Zephyr Frank, 'Layers, Flows and Intersections: Jeronimo José de Mello and Artisan Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1840s–1880s', *Journal of Social History*, 41: 2 (2007), pp. 307–28.

³ That this premise has remained unchallenged by contemporary historiography, with no critical analysis of the available sources, only speaks to the need for further research on this topic. See Boris Fausto, *Trabalho urbano e conflito social (1890–1920)* (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo: Editora Difel, 1976), p. 59; Maria Yedda Leite Linhares and Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, *História política do abastecimento (1918–1974)* (Brasília: BINAGRI, 1979); and Pedro Henrique Pedreira Campos, *Nos caminhos da acumulação: negócios e poder no abastecimento de carnes verdes para a cidade do Rio de Janeiro (1808–1835)* (São Paulo: Alameda Casa Editorial, 2010), pp. 227–8.

⁴ With the exception of the Argentine and, perhaps, Uruguayan cases, this suggestion can be extended across Latin America. For Mexico, see Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *The Sausage Rebellion: Public Health, Private Enterprise and Meat in Mexico City, 1890–1917* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2006). However, Shawn van Ausdal confirms that nationwide beef consumption in Colombia was much higher than in neighbouring countries: see Shawn van Ausdal, 'Mucha res y poco cerdo: el consumo de la carne en Colombia', *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, 29 (2008), pp. 86–103.

⁵ Linhares and Silva, *História política do abastecimento*, p. 20.

Rio de Janeiro reveal a more complex picture that does not concur with the dependency school of thought.⁶ The public abattoir system that replaced the decentralised and poorly supervised meat provisioning arrangements of the early 1800s appeared to work relatively well until the turn of the century. Yet, when this was no longer the case, cattle suppliers and city officials still wielded sufficient leverage to sustain what a Brazilian functionary called an 'old, nasty and inconvenient monopoly'⁷ that succeeded, in fact, in blocking the entry of meat processed outside Rio de Janeiro's city limits (called *carnes forasteiras*, 'alien meat') into its market for several decades.

In focusing on the struggle over the conditions of meat provisioning in Rio de Janeiro from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s, this study proposes that the public abattoir system allowed city officials to guarantee a steady supply of meat (especially beef) at predictable prices, though this entailed a cost in the form of monopolisation by a small number of cattle suppliers. However, by the turn of the century, accelerated population growth and the advent of meat-packing companies constituted pressing challenges to the traditional provisioning structure. The transition towards the industrial slaughterhouse was contentious, not only because it threatened to disrupt the vested interests of cattle purveyors and city officials alike, but also because one of the meat packers' main promises – providing affordable meat to the working poor – became more difficult to keep than its promoters had envisioned.⁸ Thus, the analysis of data from Rio de Janeiro suggests that the industrialisation of meat production alone could not have altered the eating habits of city-dwellers.

The emergence of these conflicts in late nineteenth-century Brazil is ultimately the tale of a struggle between two views on how to supply Rio de Janeiro with a product increasingly associated with public welfare. Whereas the municipality considered that, due to its perishability, meat deserved a special status in the free market of commodities, the federal government and groups linked to the modern meat industry saw the rationing and provisioning

⁶ For alternative explanations of Latin America's relationship with the international economy, see Roberto Cortes Conde, 'Export-Led Growth in Latin America: 1870–1930', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 24: 51 (1992), pp. 163–79; Stephen Haber (ed.), *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1–33; Zephyr Frank, 'Exports and Inequality: Evidence from the Brazilian Frontier, 1870–1937', *Journal of Economic History*, 61: 1 (2001), pp. 37–58; and Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal and Zephyr Frank (eds.), *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500–2000* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 1–24.

⁷ 'Parecer do diretor geral da fazenda, Dr. Antônio Geremario Telles Dantas, sobre uma proposta apresentada em 1928, tendo por fundamento o decreto no. 3932 de 12/01/1927', Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ).

⁸ 'Memorial apresentado pela Companhia Armour of Brasil Corporation', 14 Dec. 1926, AGCRJ.

practices of the city council as symbols of paternalistic economics that no longer had any place in twentieth-century Brazil. For a relatively short period, Rio de Janeiro implemented the following measures: curtailing the long-standing custom of clandestine slaughtering; establishing a centralised and somewhat regulated public abattoir system; and finally, introducing meat-packing companies.

This paper asks how those concurrent meat supply systems shaped urban meat provisioning in Rio de Janeiro from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s. It does so firstly by describing commercial cattle circuits in Brazil as they related to the national capital; secondly, it traces the establishment of the municipal slaughterhouse in the 1880s, and its consequences for meat production and distribution (particularly beef) in an emerging consumer market. The essay ends with a discussion of how the arrival of the railways and packing plants empowered 'new interest groups' (cattle suppliers aligned with domestic and foreign investors) to challenge the monopoly held by the municipal abattoir and a limited number of purveyors. The study considers the developments described above by undertaking a broader inquiry into how they affected per capita meat availability in Rio de Janeiro from the 1890s to the 1920s, based on official data prepared by the city's government. It is crucial to note that although these are the only figures of this kind available for Rio de Janeiro, they are consistent with information from the municipal archive.

Livestock and Commercial Circuits

Cattle ranching in pre-industrial economies, like Brazil's, depended heavily on environmental conditions such as the availability of free land, water resources and native vegetation for grazing. In areas of low population density, cattle were raised on vast plains and then driven by cowhands to fattening pastures; once matured, they were taken to corrals near centres of urban consumption, where they would be allowed to rest (lairage) for a few days before slaughtering. However, in the late nineteenth century, traditional livestock breeding and trailing operations faced the prospect of modernisation. Brazil's 'vast expanses of pasturage available ... for cattle-raising'⁹ began to attract the attention of national and foreign investors. As in other areas of the Americas, the implantation of technology to improve livestock production – as part of economic development and its stimuli, whose roots can be traced back to Great Britain and the United States – not only prompted changes, albeit very slowly, in the conditions described above, but also challenged actors linked to

⁹ This assessment appeared in the *Latin-American Yearbook*, paraphrasing a report by the Brazilian Railway Company published in 1912; *Latin-American Yearbook for Investors and Merchants for 1918* (New York: Criterion Newspaper Syndicate, 1918), p. 87.

long-established ranching and trading networks. This section describes how cattle and salt-beef production in central and southern Brazil supplied the needs of Rio de Janeiro, and how investments in livestock and transport technology began to affect those along this supply chain.

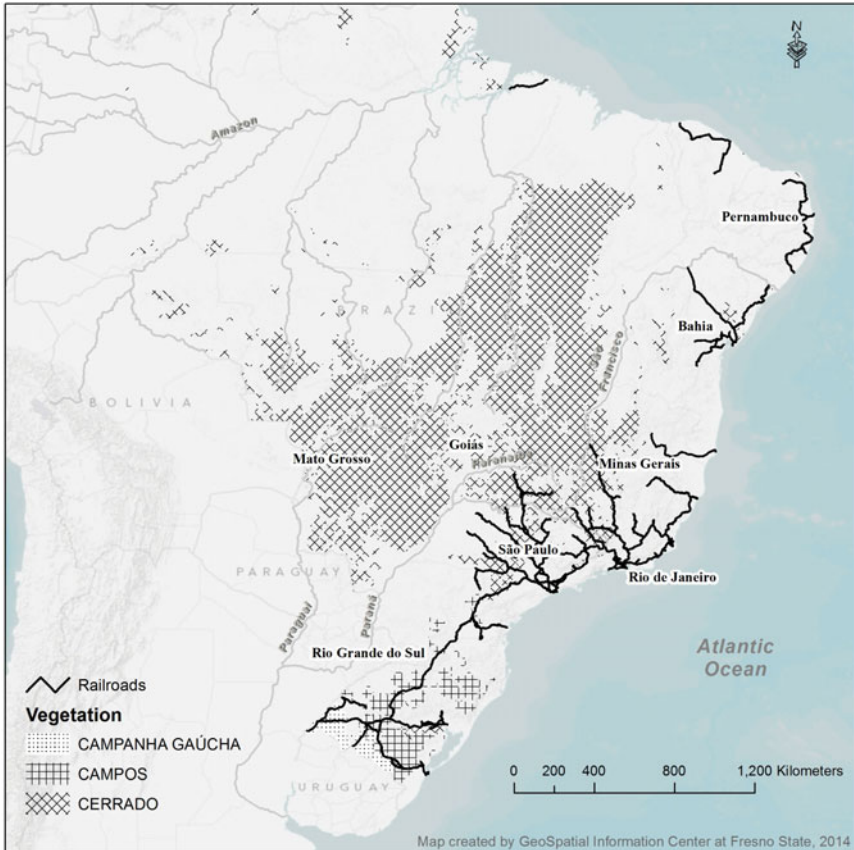
At the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazilian government officials considered that environmental conditions in certain regions of the country were ideal for the development of the livestock industry. With propagandistic fervour, these reports equated the broad extensions of uninhabited territory – where traditional free-range ranching systems prevailed – with the inevitable growth and prosperity of cattle herds.¹⁰ Despite these optimistic descriptions and predictions, however, intensive cattle production and meat industrialisation were introduced late into Brazil, compared to other regions in the Americas such as Argentina and the United States. In addition, improving the quality of cattle proved to be more complex than envisioned in those prognostications. Tropical and semi-tropical areas posed serious challenges to the adaptability of imported pedigree animals, and moreover, any investment in livestock technology required expensive, long-term commitments which only a limited group of livestock ranchers could take on.¹¹

With respect to pastoral conditions, Brazil can be roughly divided into two main areas: tropical and temperate (see [Figure 1](#)). During the first decade of the twentieth century, cattle populations were concentrated mainly in the so-called 'central' region – which comprised most of Mato Grosso and Goiás to the north of Paraná state – and the southern pampas area shared with Uruguay and Argentina.¹² The central plateau and southern areas were dominated by woodland/savannah (*cerrado*) and abundant, year-long prairie grass formations (*campo limpo*). Because of extreme climatic events, such as droughts and floods, the cerrado terrain was not entirely suitable for either agriculture or raising livestock. The flat, tropical lands, however, were favoured by a regular rainfall pattern that intensified in the summer months (November–March), thus maintaining grass and legumes that represented a highly nutritious source of forage for the *crioulo* breed (cattle descended from

¹⁰ See Governo do Brasil, *Annuário estatístico do Brasil, 1^o. ano (1908–1912)*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia da Estatística, 1917), pp. iv–xiv; Roberto C. Simonsen, *The Meat & Cattle Industry of Brazil; Its Importance to Anglo-Brazilian Commerce* (London: Industrial Publicity Service, 1919), pp. 2–5.

¹¹ Richard Perren, *Taste, Trade and Technology: The Development of the International Meat Industry Since 1840* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 33; David Zimmerman, 'Live Cattle Export Trade between United States and Great Britain, 1868–1885', *Agricultural History*, 36: 1 (1962), pp. 47–52; John Walton, 'Pedigree and the National Cattle Herd circa 1750–1950', *Agricultural History Review*, 34: 2 (1986), pp. 149–70; Carmen Sesto, 'The Vanguard Landowners of Buenos Aires: A New Production Model, 1856–1900', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 82: 4 (2002), pp. 721–3.

¹² Governo do Brasil, *Annuário estatístico do Brasil*, p. xi.

Figure 1. *Main Railroad Lines and Vegetation Regions in Brazil (c. 1920)*

Sources: Ministério da Aviação e Obras Públicas, *Inspectoria Federal das Estradas, Estatística das estradas de ferro do Brasil relativa ao ano de 1920* (Rio de Janeiro: Soares Dias, 1924), various pages; Moacir M. F. Silva, 'Geografia das estradas de ferro brasileiras em seu primeiro centenário (1854–1954)', in *I Centenário das ferrovias brasileiras* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1954), pp. 3–6.

Iberian stock brought to the Americas). Ranching activity in that region was limited to steers that were herded 'on the hoof' to Minas Gerais and São Paulo, where they were pastured during the winter, before being processed.¹³ The campo limpo included zones located in southern Mato Grosso and parts of Goiás and Minas Gerais states, and extended into the southernmost areas of

¹³ Robert W. Wilcox, "The Law of the Least Effort": Cattle Ranching and the Environment in the Savanna of Mato Grosso, Brazil, 1900–1980', *Environmental History*, 4: 3 (1999), pp. 339–43; 'Campo cerrado', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 2: 3 (1940), p. 478; Fernando Segadas Vianna, 'Os diferentes tipos de vegetação do Brasil e sua possibilidade de exploração e utilização', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 26: 2 (1964), pp. 241–2.

Brazil. A temperate climate and undulating topography characterise the open plains (*campanha gaúcha*) in Rio Grande do Sul, where grasses and legumes combined with rivers and streams to produce the best natural forage in the country.¹⁴ In contrast, the forest areas (*zona da mata*), where the soil was 'shallower and weaker', provided less nutrient-rich pastureland.¹⁵

The quality of animals in Brazil, in relation to the vegetation described above, also hindered livestock improvement in several areas across the country. The local crioulo was quite small and lean, 'weighing on average not more than 400 lbs. when dressed';¹⁶ by way of comparison, a purebred weighed approximately 1,000 lbs. European breeds did not adapt easily to the tropical climate of central Brazil, and as a result, contrary to experiences in temperate areas of the continent, these imported animals were severely affected by heat, humidity and cattle ticks.¹⁷ Moreover, any attempt to improve livestock quality required decades to bear fruit. Hence, during the period discussed in this paper, the only noticeable development in that direction was the introduction of the zebu in Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro in the 1870s. The resulting cross-breed – as long as it was accompanied by better management, pursued over generations – was reliable, resistant to disease and drought, and fit for long trail drives, and therefore complemented meat and salt-beef (*charque*) production.¹⁸ By the end of the nineteenth century, only the *campanha gaúcha* had the natural conditions for raising the high-quality animals required by the refrigeration industry. Yet, in relation to their neighbours, cross-breeding efforts by Rio Grande do Sul ranchers came late.

¹⁴ This is not a minor detail for it speaks to the facility with which natural grasslands were transformed into systematic pasturelands. Moreover, animals there were less prone to disease than in tropical and semi-tropical zones, which was certainly not the case in other areas of Brazil. Leo Waibel, *Capítulos de geografia tropical e do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1958), pp. 9–13.

¹⁵ Maria Thereza Schorer Petrone, 'As áreas de criação de gado', in Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (ed.), *História geral da civilização brasileira*, vol. 1, book 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bertrand Brasil, 1993), pp. 218–27; 'Campos de criação do Rio Grande do Sul', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 2: 2 (1940), p. 262; Maria da Glória de Carvalho Campos, 'Notas para um estudo da distribuição do rebanho bovino no Brasil meridional', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 17: 3 (1955), pp. 334–9; Bertha K. Becker, 'Expansão do mercado urbano e transformação da economia pastoril', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 28: 4 (1966), pp. 297–303.

¹⁶ Manuel José da Costa [illegible], 'Demonstração discriminada do gado bovino abatido no matadouro de Santa Cruz por nossa conta nos anos de 1893–1896', 14 May 1900, AGCRJ, Carnes e Matadouros; J. C. Oakenfull, *Brazil in 1911* (Frome: Butler & Tanner, 1912), p. 240.

¹⁷ See the experiences of Percival Farquhar in Brazil: Charles A. Gauld, *The Last Titan: Percival Farquhar, American Entrepreneur in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Institute of Hispanic American and Luso-Brazilian Studies, 1964), pp. 218–27.

¹⁸ Contrary to chilled beef, charque production did not require improved cattle. Robert W. Wilcox, 'Ranching Modernization in Tropical Brazil: Foreign Investment and Environment in Mato Grosso, 1900–1950', *Agricultural History*, 82: 3 (2008), pp. 375–8.

While pure pedigree animals had arrived in Argentina as early as the 1850s, with results in the local herds two decades later, in Rio Grande do Sul scattered records seem to indicate that they were only systematically introduced in the twentieth century.¹⁹

The question of how these conditions shaped the quality of Brazilian herds and how they connected to the meat demands of Brazil's capital can be summarised as follows. Minas Gerais and São Paulo functioned mainly as grazing areas, where farmers combined agriculture with livestock-raising to satisfy Rio de Janeiro's urban appetite. Situated near the national capital and surrounded by river valleys, Minas Gerais was a gateway from, and to, Rio de Janeiro. In the early nineteenth century, Minas received cattle from the adjacent north-eastern region via the São Francisco river valley. Later, breeders in the states of Mato Grosso and Goiás, in Brazil's central plateau, used the Paraná and Paranaíba river valleys to reach the pasturelands of São Paulo and Minas Gerais.²⁰ Livestock production in the latter state was also oriented towards the production of milk, butter, cheese and charque for local and regional consumption. One observer calculated that by 1910 the state had approximately 100 dairy factories and 25 salt-beef processing plants (*charqueadas*).²¹

However, the largest national seller of salt beef to Rio de Janeiro was Rio Grande do Sul. Two variables illustrate the importance of Rio Grande's charque for the internal market. First, while refrigeration technology pushed salt-beef production out of prime pasturelands in Argentina and Uruguay, southern and centre-west Brazil attracted major investments in this industry.²²

¹⁹ Moreover, any genetic improvement must be accompanied by fencing and cultivated pastures, which only occurred consistently in Rio Grande do Sul after the First World War. Wilcox, 'Ranching Modernization in Tropical Brazil', pp. 375–8; Sesto, 'The Vanguard Landowners of Buenos Aires', p. 724; Stephen Bell, *Campanha Gaúcha: A Brazilian Ranching System, 1850–1920* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 110–15; Waibel, *Capítulos de geografia tropical*, pp. 9–30.

²⁰ For descriptions of the Brazilian cattle trails (*boiadas*), see Pierre Deffontaines, 'The Origin and Growth of the Brazilian Network of Towns', *Geographical Review*, 28: 3 (1938), pp. 382–4; Néelson Werneck Sodré, 'Travessia do gado', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 12: 2 (1950), p. 337; Carlos Borges Schmidt, 'Tropas e Tropeiros', *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 1: 2 (1959), pp. 105–6; Moacir F. Silva, 'Geografia dos transportes no Brasil', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 1: 3 (1939), pp. 68–9; Elza Coelho de Souza, 'Distribuição das propriedades rurais no estado de Minas Gerais', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 13: 1 (1951), pp. 47–70.

²¹ José Augusto de Souza Destro, 'Café e pecuária em Juiz de Fora – 1896–1930', *Revista de História Econômica & Economia Regional Aplicada*, 1: 1 (2006), pp. 14–21; Oakenfull, *Brazil in 1911*, p. 240; *Refrigerating World Incorporating Cold Storage & Ice Trade Journal*, 56: 6 (1921), p. 32.

²² Raúl Jacob, 'La inversión uruguaya en Brasil: los saladeros de la frontera', paper presented at Segundas Jornadas de História Regional Comparada, Primeiras Jornadas de Economia Comparada, FEE, UNISINOS and PUCRS (Porto Alegre, 2005), p. 10; Augusto Farinatti, 'Criadores de gado na fronteira meridional do Brasil (1831–1870)', paper presented at Segundas Jornadas de História Regional Comparada (Porto Alegre, 2005), p. 8; Bell,

Second, during this period freight arrivals in Rio de Janeiro from Rio Grande do Sul increased significantly for charque and a variety of livestock by-products, including lard, bacon, tallow, leather and skins. Data for coastal shipments (*cabotagem*) show that from the 1880s onwards no other state sent nearly as much salted and dried meat to Brazil's capital.²³ These variables seem to indicate that Rio Grande do Sul had no national competitor when it came to charque production; it is important to stress, however, that at least until 1904 the bulk of salt beef that landed in Rio's ports was imported from Argentina and Uruguay, as will be discussed later.²⁴

The complex circulation patterns of cattle and by-products described above required a series of intermediaries, whose interests and livelihood would be threatened with the advent of the railways. Before their introduction, breeders would typically sell their cattle to trail drivers who herded the animals 'on the hoof' for several months to pasturelands for fattening. There, cattle were kept in winter pasturage until they reached a size suitable for sale. Depending on the level of technology involved, this process could last up to a full year, after which the herds would be sold again, this time to merchants at local fairs. Those dealers then transported the cattle to suburban corrals, where they rested for a few days; as well as replenishing the health of the cattle, this served to control supplies within the limits of the urban market. The animals' long journey finally ended at the municipal abattoir. Local governments oversaw the meat retailing process, determining consumer prices through a system of annual public auctions.²⁵

There were, nevertheless, variants to the process described above. By the mid-nineteenth century in Rio de Janeiro, breeders (*criadores*), fatteners (*invernistas*) or trail drivers (*boiadeiros*) could introduce cattle into the municipal slaughterhouse, provided they were recognised (*habilitado*) as cattle suppliers (*marchantes*) by local authorities. Hence, according to a monopoly

Campanha gaúcha, pp. 145–8; J. Colin Crossley and Robert Greenhill, 'The River Plate Beef Trade', in D. C. M. Platt (ed.), *Business Imperialism, 1840–1930: An Inquiry Based on British Experience in Latin America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 293–6.

²³ *Mapas estatísticos da navegação e do comércio marítimo do porto do Rio de Janeiro*, ano civil de 1891, Table 8, 'Importação de gêneros nacionais por cabotagem' (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1894), pp. 157–62; Renato Leite Marcondes, 'O mercado brasileiro do século XIX: uma visão por meio do comércio de cabotagem', *Revista de Economia Política*, 32: 1 (2012), pp. 150–60.

²⁴ Susana Bleil de Souza, 'Charqueadas e instalações frigoríficas a la frontera gautxa: el trànsit pel port de Montevideo a principis del segle XX', *Recerques: Història, Economia, Cultura*, 45–6 (2002–3), p. 89; *Jornal do Commercio*, 3 Oct. 1917.

²⁵ See Herbert S. Klein, 'The Supply of Mules to Central Brazil: The Sorocaba Market, 1825–1880', *Agricultural History*, 64: 4 (1990), pp. 6–7; Schmidt, 'Tropas e Tropeiros', pp. 105–6; Clarence F. Jones, 'A fazenda Miranda em Mato Grosso', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 12: 3 (1950), pp. 363–8.

contract established between Rio's city council and João Vicente Brito Galvão in 1876, this merchant obtained the right to buy livestock from feeders, fatteners or drivers, at fairs or elsewhere, for slaughter at the local abattoir. The animals thus acquired would supply existing municipal butchers' shops, but in addition, Galvão was allowed to open new facilities in various neighbourhoods or carioca parishes.²⁶

A major but gradual change in these commercial cattle circuits occurred after the introduction of the railway, but this is not to suggest that the old production areas described above were replaced by new ones – rather, they were strengthened and soon entered a phase of expansion. By 1890, southern Minas Gerais was connected to Rio de Janeiro via the Minas e Rio and Oeste de Minas lines to the Leopoldina Railway and the Central do Brasil.²⁷ Although over scattered and poorly articulated lines, by the late nineteenth century some areas of Rio Grande do Sul were also crossed by railways. While most cattle were still driven 'on the hoof' from grazing lands to the main railway stations – indeed, 'exotic grasses' were cultivated near the tracks to feed the animals²⁸ – the railways helped reduce shipping costs, expand cattle production areas and integrate markets. Ultimately this resulted in savings on time and feed, and most importantly lessened the deterioration of animal quality during the journey.²⁹

²⁶ Letter from Jeronimo Teixeira to Illmos. Srs. Presidente e Vereadores da Câmara Municipal, Rio de Janeiro, 25 May 1840, AGCRJ, Mercados de Carnes Verdes, Carnes e Matadouros; monopoly agreement concluded between the municipal council and Mr João Vicente de Brito Galvão for the purpose of establishing municipal butchers' shops, Rio de Janeiro, 31 Jan. 1876, modified 9 Feb. 1876, AGCRJ; 'Mapa demonstrativo do movimento geral do gado cortado no matadouro público de Santa Cruz no primeiro trimestre de 1882', AGCRJ; *Almanak Laemmert*, 1889, p. 207; letter from Antonio Justiniano Monteiro Resende, 23 Feb. 1900, AGCRJ.

²⁷ Moacir M. F. Silva, 'Um guia ferroviário brasileiro do fim do século XIX', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 16: 2 (1954), pp. 253–8.

²⁸ Warren Dean, 'A economia brasileira, 1870–1930', in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *História da América Latina, de 1870 a 1930*, vol. 5 (São Paulo: EDUSP/Imprensa Oficial São Paulo, 2002), p. 689.

²⁹ Paulo Roberto Cimó Queiroz explains that in 1919 the Estrada Federal Noroeste do Brasil offered a 50 per cent discount on freight tariffs, depending on the weight and quantity of the animals shipped. This author also notes that battles between the railways and cattle raisers over high freight rates lingered, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. However, given the conditions under which animals were driven prior to the advent of the railways, not necessarily in droving operations but in terms of deterioration of animal health/quality, the railway lines represented a major transport improvement (though an imperfect one, as they did not reach several areas of Brazil and were, in fact, poorly interconnected). See Paulo Roberto Cimó Queiroz, *Uma ferrovia entre dois mundos: A E. F. Noroeste do Brasil na primeira metade do século XX* (Bauru, Campo Grande: EDUSC/Editora da UFMS), pp. 272–83; and William R. Summerhill, *Order Against Progress: Government, Foreign Investment, and Railroads in Brazil, 1854–1913* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 85–98. See also the excellent website on Brazil's railways, available at www.estacoesferroviarias.com.br. All internet references were last checked in July 2014.

Another way to assess the impact of the railways is to consider the volume of cattle transported. Cargo records from the Brazilian railways suggest that from the 1890s to the early years of the twentieth century, Minas e Rio shipped approximately 70,000 head of cattle per annum.³⁰ The transit of 'animals' on the Central do Brasil railway, which in 1898 extended from central Rio de Janeiro all the way across the state to the municipality of Três Rios in Minas Gerais, increased from 9,000 metric tonnes in 1885 to 90,000 in 1905. In the same period, data from the Mogiana railway in São Paulo show that cattle freight rose from 20,000 units in 1889 to more than 100,000 in 1906.³¹ From 1908 to 1920, the Viação Férrea do Rio Grande do Sul – which took control of all the railway lines in the state in 1905 – shipped approximately 70,000–80,000 head of cattle annually. Although these data do not provide details of the kinds of animals transported or their final destination, it is probable that in the case of São Paulo, Minas Gerais or Rio de Janeiro the cattle shipped were destined to satisfy the needs of urban centres in the south-east. In Rio Grande do Sul, the track length and extension of railway lines over the years indicate improved links inside the state between cattle-raising areas and *charqueadas*. They also show direct connections with Uruguay, whose railway system and better port facilities were used to trans-ship *charque* from Rio Grande do Sul to other regions of Brazil.³²

It is not exactly clear when the refrigerated wagon was introduced into Brazil, but it was certainly not before 1920. Thus, prior to that year, any attempt to implement refrigerated storage facilities or refrigerated transport was at best at an experimental stage. From 1913 to 1914 the country's purchases of refrigeration machinery from the United States increased fivefold. Although these investments shrank abruptly in 1916,³³ the capacity accumulated in those years gave meat-packing companies incomparable advantages

³⁰ Ministério da Indústria, Viação e Obras Públicas, Directoria Geral de Obras e Viação, *Estatística das estradas de ferro da união e das fiscalizadas pela união em 31 de dezembro de 1904* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1906), Table 13; Bruno Nascimento Campos, 'Tropas de aço: os primeiros impactos da Minas and Rio Railway sobre a economia de abastecimento do sul de Minas (1884–1902)', *Cultura Histórica & Patrimônio*, 1: 1 (2012), p. 102.

³¹ *The Brazilian Year Book 1908*, (Rio de Janeiro: Offices of the Brazilian Year Book, 1908), pp. 607–17.

³² Ministério da Viação e Obras Públicas, *Estatística das estradas de ferro da união e das fiscalizadas pela união relativa ao[s] ano[s] de 1908 to 1920* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, various years), Table 13; Bell, *Campanha Gaúcha*, pp. 142–8. It is important to stress that beasts of burden continued to link production areas in the interior with nearby ports and railway stations, from where goods were carried to their final destination. Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, 'Comércio de animais de carga no Brasil imperial: uma análise quantitativa das tropas negociadas nas províncias do Paraná e São Paulo', unpubl. Master's thesis, UNESP, Araraquara, 2006, pp. 5–8.

³³ *Refrigerating World*, 54: 1 (1919), p. 22.

in the meat supply business. Later, those advantages would come in handy given the difficulties that Rio's city government faced due to limited technology. For instance, because the Central do Brasil railway refused, or was unable, to provide refrigerated wagons to transport carcasses from the Santa Cruz slaughterhouse to the São Diogo warehouse in the downtown area, in 1915 the municipality 'transformed' regular wagons into refrigerated ones. According to a city official, 'this adaptation work followed the American model, invented ... more than half a century ago'.³⁴

In the late nineteenth century, therefore, the central plateau and southern regions of Brazil were the main providers of beef cattle and charque to the national capital. While those areas contributed to supplying Rio de Janeiro, they were also involved in operations at the local and regional levels: delivering fresh meat to residents, breeding cattle to be fattened in the hinterlands and processing salt beef. Cattle were still driven on foot from those areas to official municipal fairs in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, from where they were taken to the capital city's slaughterhouse by rail.³⁵ The advantages of the new transportation systems and the introduction of meat-packing companies (*frigoríficos*) spurred outside actors to challenge the dominant group of cattle suppliers and city officials in Rio de Janeiro. High freight rates notwithstanding, the railways eliminated a series of intermediaries from the livestock marketing process, thus reducing shipping costs. At the same time, the technology employed by the frigoríficos facilitated the distribution of meat in the capital city from cattle slaughtered beyond its borders. Another effect of these changes was to make it possible to bypass the city council's inspection policies, which raised conflicts over control of the meat market in Brazil's capital.

The Santa Cruz Slaughterhouse and the Apogee of the Public Abattoir System

In the late nineteenth century, foodstuffs arrived in Brazil's largest city from a variety of national and international sources through a complex transport network. Sugar, coffee, rice, beans, corn, manioc meal, charque and all sorts of dried and salt fish were shipped from abroad and from the provinces of the interior by mule and river transport, coastal shipping and, later, rail – as long as this proved cost effective. Fresh meat (*carne verde*), however, was prepared 60 kilometres from the city centre and closely monitored by the municipality. This section discusses how the provisioning of the latter functioned relatively

³⁴ Luiz Raphael Vieira Souto, 'Transportes em vagões frigoríficos', 11 June 1915, AGCRJ, Carnes.

³⁵ Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, *Remodelação, extensão e embelezamento, 1926–1930* (Paris: Foyer Brésilien Editor, 1930), pp. 93–4; Bertha K. Becker, 'O mercado carioca e seu sistema de abastecimento', *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, 28: 2 (1966), pp. 139–40; Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil*, pp. 53–60.

well until 1917, when the traditional abattoir system could no longer handle the needs of the growing population. At the same time, supplies of charque began to decline. Together, these conditions put pressure on the municipality to improve meat output and provided additional incentives for packing companies to enter Rio's meat market.

It is easy to picture the streets of Rio de Janeiro in the late nineteenth century, crowded with vendors offering customers all sorts of foods, from yams to herbs, fruit, fish and bread. Ideally, this 'street menu' was to be combined with a variety of other provisions. For example, the recommended diet for Brazilians included beans, rice, coffee, meat and vegetables.³⁶ With respect to products of animal origin, at the turn of the century cariocas' main dishes consisted of dried or salted codfish, cured pork and some fresh meat, complemented by regular consumption of charque, offal and, often, meat from other animals (especially pigs) raised and butchered by city residents in their own yards. Lard was also an essential condiment added for taste and was commonly offered by vendors in front of their homes, despite city officials' attempts to regulate such open-air street trading.³⁷

With the intention of eradicating or at least curbing clandestine slaughtering of livestock, and to guarantee a steady supply of animal protein and by-products, the local government in Rio de Janeiro opened the Santa Cruz slaughterhouse in 1881. Its aim was to inspect the sanitary conditions of products in the abattoir, regulate prices and collect taxes from livestock merchants, whose operating licences were issued by the city government.³⁸ This was the second slaughterhouse built in Rio in the nineteenth century. Santa Cruz was inaugurated by the emperor, Dom Pedro II, with opening festivities preceded by a ceremony of blessing, a Mass and a musical performance. The slaughterhouse (*matadouro*) is described in a laudatory book as a 'majestic building complex'. The author stresses, above all, its good sanitary conditions, cleanliness and organisation. Indeed, the location chosen to establish the new modern matadouro was ideal. The Santa Cruz fields, originally a

³⁶ Francisco Ferreira da Rosa, *Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição Oficial da Prefeitura, 1905), p. 239.

³⁷ Eulália Maria Lahmeyer Lobo, *História do Rio de Janeiro: do capital comercial ao capital industrial e financeiro*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: IBMEC, 1978), pp. 471–2; Alexandrino Freire do Amaral e Ernesto dos Santos Silva, 'Condições para o commercio ambulante de miudos de rezes', in Governo do Rio de Janeiro, *Consolidação das leis e posturas municipaes* (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Tipográficas de Paula Souza, 1906), arts. 752–3, pp. 177–8.

³⁸ In the same context, other countries in the Americas and Europe experienced similar transformations related to urbanisation and industrialisation. See Kyri Claffin, 'La Villette: City of Blood (1867–1914)', pp. 41–5, and Dorothee Brantz, 'Animal Bodies, Human Health, and the Reform of Slaughterhouses in Nineteenth-Century Berlin', pp. 82–5, in Paula Young Lee (ed.), *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse* (Durham, NC: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008); and Pilcher, *The Sausage Rebellion*, pp. 57–87.

Jesuit farm and later the Imperial Fazenda de Santa Cruz, were a grazing area located 60 kilometres west of central Rio. In 1884, the Central do Brazil railway connected Santa Cruz to the city centre, establishing the Matadouro station. The whole project was an attempt to leave behind what a Rio public health commissioner described as the ‘empire of filth’ (‘império da imundice’) of the old São Cristóvão slaughterhouse. In addition, a new storehouse (São Diogo) was built in the city centre to receive and distribute meat from Santa Cruz, accompanied by the expansion of ice storage facilities in Rio de Janeiro.³⁹

As part of the industrialisation and urbanisation that Rio de Janeiro experienced during the late nineteenth century, the city government regularly recorded and published data on all manner of structural changes in urban life, including information on housing construction and the extension of public transportation and communication services, and statistics on livestock slaughtered at the municipal abattoir. Although these official figures do not indicate fully the amount of meat that actually reached the tables of cariocas, and their precise accuracy must be questioned, they do provide a reasonable estimate of local per capita consumption, for they were gathered on the basis of the taxes collected on each animal slaughtered at Santa Cruz, tariffs that were a crucial source of income for the municipality.⁴⁰ In addition, the patterns of meat availability in Rio are consistent with those observed in other cities with similar technological characteristics, which show a much higher rate of fresh meat consumption in the urban setting than in rural areas.⁴¹ The erratic nature of beef availability – and its downwards tendency – should not overshadow the fact that throughout this period beef maintained its position as the main source of animal proteins available in Rio’s matadouro.

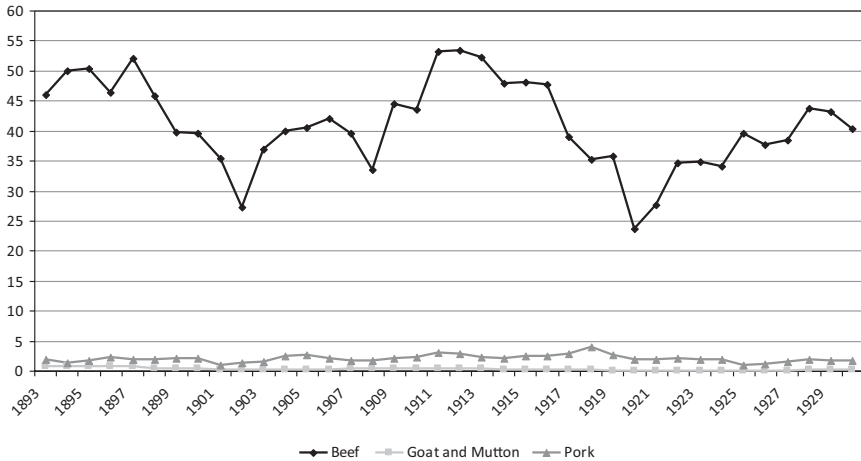
Figure 2 shows that the quantities of beef in the municipal slaughterhouse exceeded, by far, those of other types of meat (goat, mutton, and pork). According to wholesale data, beef was also the cheapest kind of fresh meat available; for instance, between 1910 and 1912 a kilo of pork oscillated between 600 réis and 1.1 mil-réis, mutton between 1 and 1.7 mil-réis, and beef

³⁹ *Almanak Laemmert*, 1889, pp. 286–7; Benedicto de Freitas, *História do Matadouro Municipal de Santa Cruz* (Rio de Janeiro: Irmãos Pongetti Editores, 1950), pp. 26, 85–91; Brantz, ‘Animal Bodies, Human Health’, p. 80.

⁴⁰ ‘Regulamento para o matadouro público’, 14 Feb. 1882, in *Annaes do Parlamento Brasileiro*, Câmara dos Senhores Deputados, Sessão de 1882, vol. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1882), p. 32.

⁴¹ Indeed, consumption patterns at the national level did not exceed 15 kilos per capita annually. For a comparative perspective see also the cases of Spain, in Gelabert González and Enríquez Morales, ‘Un aspecto del consumo alimenticio en la España de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX’, *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia*, 38: 140 (1978), pp. 621–4; and Mexico, in Gobierno de México, *Anuarios estadísticos de la república mexicana, 1893–1907* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Estadística, various years).

Figure 2. Available Per Capita Meat Supply for Rio de Janeiro (Kilograms), 1893–1930



Sources: Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano VI, 1938* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do IBGE, 1939), p. 417; *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano IX, 1941* (Rio de Janeiro: Publicação do Departamento de Geografia e Estatística, 1942), p. 298.

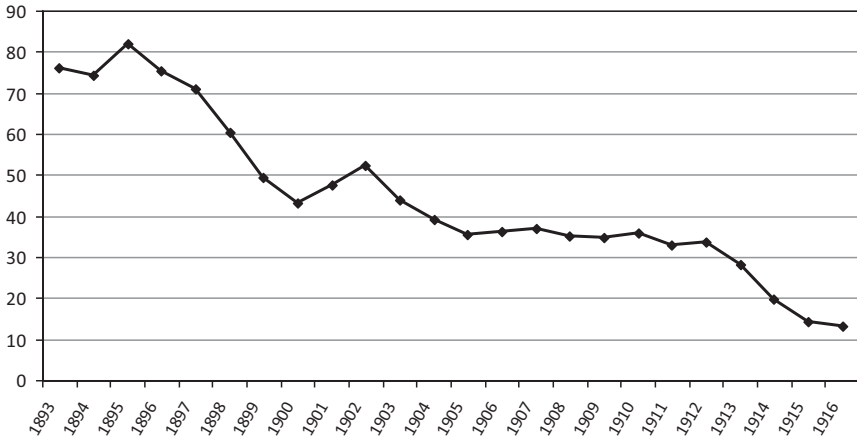
between 400 and 800 réis.⁴² Figure 2 also shows an irregular cyclical tendency in the amount of beef available per capita, with significant downturns in 1902, 1908 and 1917–20, when –regardless of population growth – real production fell behind that of previous years. The conditions that led to the decreases in 1902 and 1908 will be suggested below. The continuous decline from 1917 to 1920, though related to the First World War and the economic crisis that followed, should also be seen as a turning point in the development of Rio de Janeiro's meat supply system. While the municipal slaughterhouse system struggled to keep up with population growth, demand for carne verde increased, most likely because charque deliveries to Rio de Janeiro fell sharply during those years.

Based on Rio's imports of charque from 1885 to 1889, per capita availability can be estimated at around 60 kilos.⁴³ This is certainly a high number, but one consistent with a series from the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth (see Figure 3). In October 1917, the *Jornal do*

⁴² Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Brasil*, p. 140. The Brazilian unit of currency was the *mil-réis*, which equalled 1,000 réis.

⁴³ Calculation based on Rio imports of charque from 1885 to 1889: see *Jornal do Commercio: Retrospecto Comercial, Rio de Janeiro, 1889* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de J. Villeneuve, 1890), pp. 16–17.

Figure 3. *Available Per Capita Charque Supply for Rio de Janeiro (in kilograms), 1893–1916*



Sources: *Jornal do Commercio: Retrospecto Commercial* for 1895 and 1898 (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Jornal do Commercio, 1896, 1899), pp. 10, 34; *Jornal do Commercio*, 3 Oct. 1917.

Commercio published several articles on food price increases in Rio de Janeiro. Though tentative, these figures are useful inasmuch as they illustrate the availability of charque in comparison to carne verde, and indicate a clear downward trend in the amount of salt beef entering Rio from the late nineteenth century that, according to these newspaper articles, must be attributed to high prices. Indeed, while from the 1890s to 1903, wholesale minimum and maximum prices of domestically produced charque – less expensive than imported products – were considerably lower than those of carne verde, this gap apparently narrowed between 1905 and 1912, when prices for both became comparable; minimum and maximum wholesale prices for fresh beef were 400 réis to 1.2 mil-réis per kilo, and for charque were 300 réis to 900 réis per kilo.⁴⁴

Explaining the steady decline illustrated above in detail would go beyond the scope of this paper; however, the following conditions seem to have been behind it. While in Argentina and Uruguay – the main providers of salt beef to Brazil up to the end of the nineteenth century – some charqueadas were being displaced by the dressed beef industry, the Brazilian government placed high tariffs on imported charque with the aim of protecting national production. In fact, salt-beef shipments from Rio Grande do Sul to Rio de Janeiro increased considerably after 1904–05, and by 1907 they had surpassed those from the ‘La Plata’ countries. Unfortunately, the output from the charqueadas

⁴⁴ Governo do Brasil, *Anuario estatístico do Brasil*, p. 139.

of Rio Grande was insufficient to meet the cariocas' demand. This would explain the high prices identified by the *Jornal do Commercio* and, most likely, the greater demand for other sources of animal proteins, such as carne verde.⁴⁵

The data presented in [Figure 2](#) do not pretend to argue that beef was accessible to everyone; rather, they are intended to point out that, given the circumstances in which the Santa Cruz abattoir was set up to function, it did improve supply conditions by centralising the slaughter of cattle under an inspected process that made beef both more plentiful and comparatively cheaper than pork, mutton or goat meat. Nevertheless, given the extensive nature of stock-raising and the technological lag in Brazil, the country's provisioning system was constantly subject to natural disasters and political manoeuvring. As the guardians of the urban populace's food needs and sanitary well-being, municipal governments prohibited the introduction of meat from cattle slaughtered beyond their purview because, as city officials argued, it could not be adequately inspected. However, the new system ended up fomenting monopoly practices, because arrangements between suppliers and city officials made the municipality more dependent upon revenue from the local abattoir and taxes collected on each animal brought to slaughter. Any disruption, natural or otherwise, thus affected the provisioning system, resulting in shortages and social upheaval, as elucidated below.

In 1902, editorial writers at the *Jornal do Commercio* described in dismay what they called a city in turmoil ('cidade em alvoroço') as they reported on a popular riot protesting against the carioca city government's mandate to confiscate and dispose of meat from cattle slaughtered outside Rio de Janeiro. In 1901, suppliers from the rural communities of Maruhy and Maxambomba, supported by a federal mandate, had begun to introduce their meat into Rio's market. However, just a few months later, the city's mayor, Joaquim Xavier da Silveira Júnior, alleged that the central government's permit had opened the doors of his city and the shelves of its butchers' shops to unauthorised, uninspected meat. Consequently, he ordered that all such 'alien product' be seized. On 23 May 1902, approximately three metric tonnes of meat were impounded from markets in the city centre and subsequently burned. Despite opposition from butchers, altercations in the downtown area and a judicial appeal from the suppliers, city officials continued to carry out confiscations in the districts of Santana and Candelária, safeguarded by local police. By then, however, government staff and law enforcement agents were facing harsh resistance from butchers and consumers alike, both clearly concerned over shortages. For several days, mobs burned meat transportation carts, looted

⁴⁵ *Refrigerating World*, 56: 6 (1921), p. 32; Souza, 'Charqueadas e instalações', p. 89; Sandra Jatahy Pesavento, *República velha gaúcha: charqueadas, frigoríficos, criadores* (Porto Alegre: Editora Movimento, 1980), pp. 57–61, 142–8.

butchers' shops, destroyed street lights and damaged streetcars. In Praça da Harmonia, 'two small dynamite bombs' were detonated. Shortly thereafter, the unrest spread to Morro da Pedra do Sal, where residents armed with stones, bottles, clubs, guns and knives confronted the police. The riot ended a week later with several military policemen (*praças*) injured and a good number of rioters incarcerated. By the end of that year, the amount of meat available per capita in Rio fell to its lowest level since 1893.⁴⁶

Then, in 1906, a new controversy over 'alien meat', as any meat processed outside the Santa Cruz slaughterhouse was called, erupted. It coincided with floods in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais that harmed agriculture and cattle production and interrupted the flow of trade between them. While these might be partial explanations as to why, two years later, *carne verde* output fell by 4,000 metric tonnes, they clearly underscore two structural problems that intermittently affected meat supplies in Rio de Janeiro: political deliberations over the city government's right to maintain its monopoly, and the irregular fluctuations to which traditional livestock production and marketing were subject.⁴⁷

The revolution in transportation (as it became viable to ship cattle by railways, despite relatively high freight rates), demographic changes and, eventually, growing attempts to industrialise meat processing in Rio de Janeiro posed new threats to traditional suppliers and city officials alike. While some suppliers began to slaughter their cattle outside Rio's abattoir (Santa Cruz) in the name of a non-monopolised meat supply (*livre matança*) system, and defended the right to trade their meat in the city before the courts,⁴⁸ local administrators in Rio blocked *carnes forasteiras* officially for sanitary reasons. However, they did not hide their main concern: the decreasing revenues from taxes collected on the transport and slaughtering of animals within city limits.⁴⁹

Carioca city officials alleged that such 'alien meat' was not subject to regular sanitary inspection and that tax revenues on cattle brought to Rio and slaughtered at Santa Cruz were declining steadily because of this 'illegal competition'. Despite these arguments, an accord between the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro and the Federal District in 1902 stipulated that cattle from those areas would be allowed to enter the city's market. The basis

⁴⁶ *Jornal do Commercio*, 5 Oct. 1901; 3, 23, 26, 30, 31 May 1902.

⁴⁷ *Jornal do Commercio*, 10 Feb. 1906.

⁴⁸ *Diário do Commercio*, 27 Nov. 1891; *Mensagem do Prefeito do Districto Federal lida na Sessão do Conselho Municipal de 2 de abril de 1908* (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Graphicas do Paiz, 1908), pp. 94–5.

⁴⁹ In 1904, those revenues amounted to almost the same sum that the prefeitura collected from sanitary fees. *Mensagem do Prefeito de Districto Federal lida na sessão do Conselho Municipal de 2 de abril de 1904 and 1 de setembro de 1904* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia da 'Gazeta de Notícias', 1904), pp. 23, 65–6.

for this agreement was as follows: 'the local government authority cannot act beyond its territorial boundaries; therefore, it cannot reach the fairs or fields of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, which provide nearly all the cattle for consumption in this capital'.⁵⁰ Parallel to this discussion, a major change in Brazil's fiscal policies was also under way, as the monarchy had been overthrown in 1889, and two years later the republic had adopted a federal constitution that abolished all taxes between states but established their right to impose duties on exports. This prompted waves of resistance and reactions from state governments with a limited export base, which continued taxing inter-state trade in order to boost revenue. However, federal tribunals often condemned this anti-constitutional practice, even in cases occurring in the capital, as described above.⁵¹

In 1902, a private abattoir, Matadouro da Penha, was constructed in Rio de Janeiro, but the battle over the introduction of 'alien meat' raged until the 1930s.⁵² In 1903, one newspaper, *Correio da Manhã*, engaged in a controversy with Mayor Francisco Pereira Passos over a process of public bidding for the construction of experimental slaughtering plants (*matadouros modelos*) in the city. Though its editorialists questioned the municipal monopoly, they stopped short of endorsing the 'free slaughter system', noting that prices had remained high. The solution they offered was a subjective 'moralisation of commerce in fresh meat'.⁵³ The dilemma was that while maintaining the monopoly seemed to contradict Pereira Passos' goals of urban modernisation, traditional slaughtering could not be abandoned easily or replaced smoothly by a new system. Not only did the establishment of meat-packing companies require large sums of investment, but consumers, city officials and some suppliers also feared that twentieth-century liberalisation and foreign technology together would radically alter one of mankind's most fundamental aspects: its eating habits.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Letter to the mayor, 26 Oct. 1900, AGCRJ; 'Bases para o acordo entre o Estado de Minas Gerais e o Distrito Federal', 25 Jan. 1902, AGCRJ.

⁵¹ Dean, 'A economia brasileira', pp. 665–8.

⁵² *Mensagem ... 2 de abril de 1908*, p. 12; *Correio da Manhã*, 9 May 1908; Nina Maria de Carvalho Elias Rabha (ed.), *Planos urbanos: Rio de Janeiro, o século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo Pereira Passos, 2008), pp. 147–8.

⁵³ *Correio da Manhã*, 22 Jan. 1903; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 26, 28 Feb. 1903; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 March 1903.

⁵⁴ Urban populations in general resisted the systematic distribution of chilled and frozen meat – that is, until consumers were eventually swayed by lower prices and other structural changes. For a discussion of food consumption behaviour in relation to income, price, and cultural determinants, see Sidney W. Mintz, 'Food, Culture and Energy', in Alexander Nützenadel and Frank Trentmann (eds.), *Food and Globalization: Consumption, Markets and Politics in the Modern World* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), p. 29.

Redefining the Municipal Slaughterhouse: The Menace of a Meat-Packing Company

The previous section has argued that, amid severe ups and downs in the late nineteenth century, Rio's municipal government seemed to manage carne verde supplies and maintain predictable prices. After 1917, though, increasing demand, higher prices and threats from new interlopers made the local government's position even more complicated. However, the solution to the 'carne verde question' – as the *Jornal do Commercio* labelled the meat supply crisis in 1917⁵⁵ – did not entail a simple choice between traditional or modern animal slaughter and meat preparation methods, for multiple factors hindered improving meat supplies in Rio de Janeiro. This section focuses on the endurance of the old abattoir system vis-à-vis the first industrial slaughterhouse to enter Rio's market, the Matadouro Mendes.

The long-lasting sense of satisfaction that products of animal origin provide to people's nutritional needs seemed to offer the perfect justification for establishing and expanding packing-houses in the early twentieth century. This technological innovation promised to make meat not only affordable, but also available in larger quantities and in good sanitary condition, to urban workers who laboured under strictly constrained time management rules.⁵⁶ Yet, the success behind modern livestock and meat marketing methods, and the resulting rise in consumption rates, entailed a complex chain of events that extended far beyond the meat industry itself. Describing US meat markets in the 1900s, John Roberts, an official of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), summarised conditions as follows:

There are a number of things which point to the certainty of the U. S. ranking high in the scale of meat-consuming nations of the world. Some of the most prominent of these are: The presence in the country of enormous herds of animals intended for food; the vastness of the highly developed industries which handle and market these animals; the comparative cheapness of our meat-food products, and, lastly, the increasingly prosperous condition of all classes of our people.⁵⁷

Of the four conditions highlighted by Roberts to explain the high rate of meat consumption in the United States, Brazil fulfilled – at least partially – the first two; the large cattle holdings of the country notwithstanding, initially its

⁵⁵ *Jornal do Commercio*, 2 Oct. 1917.

⁵⁶ J. Contreras, 'Meat Consumption Throughout History and Across Cultures', *Sciences des Aliments*, 28 (2008), pp. 293–4. See also Jérôme Bourdieu et al., 'Crise sanitaire et stabilisation du marché de la viande en France, XVIIIe–XXe siècles', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 51: 3 (2004), p. 26.

⁵⁷ John Roberts, 'Annual Production of Animals for Food and Per Capita Consumption of Meat in the United States', in USDA, *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Animal Industry for the Year 1905* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 282.

crioulo breed only permitted the production of low-grade preserved or canned beef.⁵⁸ As for the other two elements, the main reason behind the decline in meat prices in the United States was the expansion of integrated packing-houses in the 1880s, which connected stockyards with refrigerated railway wagons and meat retailing operations. In Brazil, however, this process was still in its infancy in the early twentieth century, as discussed at the beginning of this paper. Finally, although it is difficult to make any conclusive assessment of urban workers' living standards, by the 1920s city residents in Rio de Janeiro were spending approximately half of their monthly income on foodstuffs, a reality that precluded expenditure on large quantities of meat.⁵⁹ On the other hand, they were prime targets for the mass-produced meat that packing plants offered.

As mentioned above, the First World War provided Brazil with an opportunity to boost its refrigerated meat industry. Extraordinary circumstances obliged Europeans to lower their meat standards, which in turn opened a channel for Brazilian exports of low-grade frozen beef.⁶⁰ Records show that exports of frozen meat jumped from just 1 ton in 1914 to 66,000 metric tonnes in the space of three years, while the cattle shipments that represented only 6 per cent of all Brazilian sales to foreign countries in 1913 had doubled by 1919.⁶¹ The wave of exports was so intense that in 1918 the minister of agriculture actually warned of a shortage of herds for the domestic market and prohibited the slaughter of breeding stock. He also expressed deep concern that only refrigerated meat-packing plants and slaughterhouses were subject to inspection by the Ministry of Agriculture, and not the *charqueadas* spread throughout Brazil's rural areas. Indeed, a considerable decline in per capita beef rations in Rio de Janeiro began in 1917 and lasted until 1920 (see Figure 2), when they reached their lowest level since the 1890s. This was accompanied by substantial price hikes and prompted a new confrontation between suppliers and Mayor Amaro Cavalcanti Soares de

⁵⁸ This process, of course, entailed improving stock lines to comply with the needs of the refrigerated industry and international consumption demands. Horacio C. E. Giberti, *Historia económica de la ganadería argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editora Raigal, 1954), pp. 168–9.

⁵⁹ Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano VI, 1938*, p. 218. See also Roger Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 29–33; Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 23–6.

⁶⁰ Waibel, *Capítulos de geografia tropical*, pp. 28–30.

⁶¹ Governo do Brasil, *Agriculture Report*, 1918, p. 181, and 1920, p. 191; Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano IX, 1941* (Rio de Janeiro: Publicação do Departamento de Geografia e Estatística, 1942), p. 298; *Refrigerating World*, 54: 1 (1919), p. 24.

Brito, who intervened in the market by establishing minimum and maximum prices for meat.⁶²

The emergence of meat-packing plants in Brazil was the direct result of national and foreign investment spurred by incentives offered by the federal and state governments. The federal government established experimental ranches (*fazendas modelos*) that sought to improve the breed of crioulo cattle and native forage in stock-raising areas, and then opened several matadouros modelos to develop refrigeration techniques. States provided tax incentives to foreign and national investors – São Paulo, for instance, exempted packing plants ‘from export taxes for up to 10 years’, and Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais later followed its example.⁶³ The leading role of São Paulo in meat industrialisation is explained mainly by the coffee interests in that state. In the late nineteenth century, São Paulo and neighbouring areas had large stocks of cattle, a growing urban population that constituted a relatively vibrant consumer market, and a web of railway and port structures that facilitated both internal connections and exports. Additionally, as the productivity of their exhausted coffee plantations declined, Paulistas (São Paulo residents) began to look for other sectors in which to diversify their investments.⁶⁴ Thus, it is not surprising that the first concession for a frigorífico in Brazil was granted to a prominent coffee planter with extensive interests in railways and exports, Antônio da Silva Prado. In 1910 Prado and Alexandre Siciliano, an Italian immigrant, founded the Companhia Frigorífica e Pastoral de Barretos in São Paulo (linked to the Paulista Railway, owned partly by Prado). Later in that decade, two other companies were founded, one in São Paulo, the other in Rio de Janeiro. In 1915, the Continental Products company began

⁶² Likewise in Argentina, this process coincided with increasing beef prices due to the expansion in exports. See Peter H. Smith, *Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 74–5; *Jornal do Commercio*, 2 Oct. 917; Roberto C. Simonsen, *The Meat and Cattle Industry of Brazil: Its Importance to Anglo-Brazilian Commerce* (London: Industrial Publicity Service, 1919), pp. 2–5.

⁶³ Joseph L. Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation 1889–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980), pp. 258; Earl Richard Downes, ‘Brazil’s “Essentially Agricultural” Old Republic and the United States, 1910–1930’, unpubl. PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1980, pp. 165–6; Freitas, *História do Matadouro Municipal*, pp. 111–16.

⁶⁴ See Wilson Suzigan and Tamás Szmrecsányi, ‘Os investimentos estrangeiros no início da industrialização do Brasil’, in Sérgio S. Silva and Tamás Szmrecsányi (eds.), *História econômica da primeira república: coletânea de textos apresentados no I Congresso Brasileiro de História Econômica, setembro de 1993* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec/FAPESP/ABPHE, 1996), pp. 267–9; Bell, *Campanha gaúcha*, pp. 136–55; Downes, ‘Brazil’s “Essentially Agricultural” Old Republic’, pp. 160–1; Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil*, pp. 196–7; and Flávio Azevedo Marques de Saes, ‘Estradas de ferro e diversificação da atividade econômica na expansão cafeeira em São Paulo, 1870–1900’, in Tamás Szmrecsányi and José Roberto do Amaral Lapa (eds.), *História econômica da independência e do império* (São Paulo: EDUSP/Imprensa Oficial/Editora Hucitec, 2002), pp. 177–96.

operations in Osasco. It was part of the Matador Land and Cattle Company, a subsidiary of the Chicago-based Schwarzschild & Sulzberger Company until 1917, when it was acquired by Wilson and Co. In that same year, British and US investors in the firm commonly known as Frigorífico Anglo installed the Matadouro Mendes in Barra do Piraí (Rio de Janeiro state).⁶⁵ By the end of the decade, all these plants were regularly exporting frozen meat to Europe.

When European demand for imported foods collapsed after the end of the First World War, and 'third-grade' Brazilian beef was no longer deemed exportable, meat packers turned their attention inwards to the domestic market. As Richard Downes argues: 'in the long term ..., São Paulo's cattle and beef sector found that the internal market held the true solution to their quest for a market'.⁶⁶ Thus, pressure on the monopoly of municipal slaughterhouses increased, as did the battle to control Rio de Janeiro's meat provisioning system. At some point between 1917 and 1919 the Matadouro Mendes began to supply the national capital with 300 head of cattle daily. Though it was a frigorífico, city officials authorised (*habilitaram*) the matadouro as a cattle supplier (*marchante*), as if the transaction had taken place in the mid-nineteenth century, under the conditions discussed in the first part of this paper. Then, in 1925, the owners of the Matadouro Mendes asked for an increase of up to 1,800 animals, together with a definitive contract with the city council; but that petition was denied by the municipality on the premise that the 'licence is annual ... [It] is not perpetual ... in order not to harm the slaughterhouse of Santa Cruz, where there is the need to maintain a daily average service.'⁶⁷ When the dispute reached higher levels of government, the arguments of the city government (*prefeitura*) were discarded as obsolete and inconvenient. Antônio Geremario Telles Dantas, director-general of the

⁶⁵ The Brazilian Extract of Meat & Hide Factory Ltd. had started operations in Rio Grande do Sul in the late 1880s, but it produced meat extract and canned foodstuffs. Consul A. W. Bennett to Marquis of Salisbury, Foreign Office, 1890, 'Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, Brazil, Report for the year 1889–1890 on the Trade of Rio Grande do Sul', Annual Series, no. 702 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1890), p. 9; W. M. Pearce, *The Matador Land and Cattle Company* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 128–9; Simon G. Hanson, 'The Farquhar Syndicate in South America', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 17: 3 (1937), p. 317; 'Mensagem de 14 de julho de 1915', in *Mensagens apresentadas ao congresso legislativo de São Paulo pelos presidentes e vice-presidentes em exercício desde a proclamação da república até o ano de 1916* (São Paulo: Typographia do Diário Oficial, 1916), pp. 672–76; *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, 14 (July–Dec. 1917), p. 59 n. 286–91.

⁶⁶ Downes, 'Brazil's "Essentially Agricultural" Old Republic', p. 479.

⁶⁷ Letter from Sociedade Anônima Frigorífico Anglo ao Exmo. Sr. Prefeito do Distrito Federal, 9 Sep. 1925, AGCRJ; reply from Antonio de Souza Pereira Botafogo, Diretor Geral da Diretoria de Abastecimento e Fomento Agrícola, 9 Sep. 1925, AGCRJ; Downes, 'Brazil's "Essentially Agricultural" Old Republic', pp. 476–9.

Treasury, explained that the population's initial disapproval of chilled or frozen meat notwithstanding, this reluctance was a 'temporary and cost-dependent condition' that was bound to change:

The consumption of 'alien meat' grows each day, though one can say with certainty that the use of refrigerated meat has not become a habit of our population. It is also true that people generally prefer fresh meat, but this is a time-dependent condition ... Thus, the only slaughterhouse in Rio to survive with oppressive measures against 'alien meat' actually [did so] while there was a monopoly. When the Brazilian Meat Packing Co. was able through the judiciary to crack the barrier of the City tax, the slaughterhouse suffered its first telling blow. Thinking about restoring that old, nasty and inconvenient monopoly is a mere illusion, in the face of which this statement supports the fiscal interests of the prefeitura.⁶⁸

When the Matadouro Mendes' representatives filed their petition, they pointed out that consumption, especially on the outskirts of the city (*subúrbios*), had increased, mainly because of their product's low price and good quality, as well as the company's 'efficiency in distribution'.⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the data available are insufficient to corroborate their claims. It is true, though, that at least from 1919 until 1922 – years for which official accounts detail the output from each matadouro that supplied Rio de Janeiro – beef supply from the Matadouro Mendes increased considerably, representing 20 per cent of the total in the latter year.⁷⁰ However, until the end of the decade, the amount of beef available per capita did not surpass the levels documented for the 1890s (see [Figure 2](#)). Moreover, there is no solid evidence of any decline in meat prices in Rio in the late 1920s. Despite Telles Dantas' efforts and good omens for the packers, the industrialisation of meat unaccompanied by any significant decrease in prices had little impact on the diet of low-income cariocas.⁷¹ In this context, the extension of the prefeitura's monopoly seemed all the more suitable.

This is not to suggest that city officials rejected free-market policies, for they were well aware that those economic principles supported the arguments of the federal government and meat-packing companies. It seems as though they had an understanding of liberalism that observed the law of supply and demand but reserved a crucial role for government, so its agents could regulate the marketplace, establish the conditions to set 'just' prices, and supervise meat

⁶⁸ 'Parecer do diretor geral da fazenda, Dr. Geremario Telles Dantas, sobre uma proposta apresentada em 1928, tendo por fundamento o decreto no. 3932 de 12/01/1927', AGCRJ.

⁶⁹ 'Memorial apresentado pela Companhia Armour of Brasil Corporation', 14 Dec. 1926, AGCRJ.

⁷⁰ Ministério da Agricultura, Indústria e Commercio, *Relatório dos trabalhos da superintendência do abastecimento durante o anno de 1922* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1923), pp. 46–7.

⁷¹ Governo do Brasil, *Anuário estatístico do Distrito Federal, ano VI, 1938*, pp. 218, 446.

quality.⁷² For instance, in 1906, one administrator declared, 'meat is a special good ... It is a good not subject, like others, to the law of supply and demand, irrespective of municipal intervention.'⁷³ The nature and extent of this 'municipal intervention' was what set local officials at odds with authorities at the state and federal levels. Not surprisingly, meat packers capitalised on this struggle using the judicial system, as in the case of the Matadouro Mendes. Vested interests – of cattle suppliers, city officials and, ultimately, consumers – explain why the demise of Santa Cruz was a long-term, highly politicised process. While consumer preference might be perceived as an excuse used by the municipality to defend its interests, city administrations had historically protected meat-purchasing customers against those people labelled as intermediaries – that is, outsiders who were viewed by every actor involved in this process as interlopers. More than a century earlier, as Rio's meat market transitioned from the old regime to liberal practices, the municipality gained unprecedented power over the monopolies held by middlemen. Thus it had to regulate cattle commerce and slaughtering while also overseeing the retailing of this highly perishable product.⁷⁴ Finally, because the production and commercialisation of carne verde were geographically limited, the municipality was gradually able to administer every step in the meat-processing industry. In that context, Santa Cruz represented the pinnacle of these policies and the rate of meat available per capita observed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is testimony to the active role of the city government.

By the early twentieth century, however, new technologies had widened the marketing of meat, which in turn threatened the municipality's supervisory duty. Thus, the old supply system – alongside its promoters, such as purveyors, cattle merchants and city officials – came to be identified as an obsolete collection of paternalistic policies, despite the city council's role as mediator to ensure fair competition. Additionally, a rapid increase in population, along with concerns about public health at Santa Cruz,⁷⁵ with its antiquated

⁷² This argument is inspired by the case of France, especially Paris: see Clafin, 'La Villette', pp. 41–2.

⁷³ Governo do Rio de Janeiro, *Consolidação das leis e posturas municipais*, 1906, p. 478.

⁷⁴ For an in-depth analysis of this topic, see Maria de Fátima Silva Gouvêa, 'Poder, autoridade e o Senado da Câmara do Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1780–1820', *Tempo*, 7: 13 (2002), pp. 111–55; Alcir Lenharo, *As tropas da moderação: o abastecimento da Corte na formação política do Brasil* (São Paulo: Edições Símbolo, 1979), pp. 41–54; and Richard Graham, *Feeding the City: From Street Markets to Liberal Reform in Salvador, Brazil, 1780–1860* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), pp. 191–207. For the experiences of New York, Mexico City and Paris, see Roger Horowitz, Jeffrey M. Pilcher and Sydney Watts, 'Meat for the Multitudes: Market Culture in Paris, New York City, and Mexico City over the Long Nineteenth Century', *American Historical Review*, 109: 4 (2004), pp. 1067–74.

⁷⁵ In the 1880s, the population of the Santa Cruz *subúrbio* (on the outskirts of the city) was still less than 100,000, but by the 1920s it had tripled. See Teresa A. Meade, 'Civilizing' Rio:

production practices, evidenced serious limitations not only in terms of output, but also because by barring middlemen the city council ended up creating a series of obstacles and monopolies that hindered any improvement in the supply network. In this context, the industrialisation of meat production was seen as the ultimate solution for feeding carioca workers, although it alone could not accomplish such an ambitious goal.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Santa Cruz municipal slaughterhouse in late nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro aimed to remedy the anarchy of clandestine slaughtering of animals for human consumption. To this end it encompassed a whole series of sanitary measures and price controls. For a time, this system kept the capital city relatively well provisioned, as the figures on per capita rates of beef consumption suggest. By the early twentieth century, however, pressure from emerging interest groups linked to the railway and related meat-packing industries was threatening the monopoly of the municipal slaughterhouse. The sponsors of these new technologies promised that cost reductions and increased productivity together would eventually lower meat prices for urban consumers. In the light of those challenges, city officials, as well as other actors involved in the supply chain of beef cattle, resorted to a series of political manoeuvres to combat meddling by the promoters of industrialised slaughterhouses in their traditional operations. Thus they enjoyed momentary success in barring 'alien meat' from urban markets.

With respect to the impact of the Matadouro Mendes on the urban provisioning system, the analysis of Rio de Janeiro's meat supply data from the 1920s reveals no significant changes, either in per capita beef rations or prices. Though not conclusive, one reason for this may be that the plant was responsible for only a fraction of the market, as its product continued to compete with fresh meat, which sceptical consumers preferred. Thus, the output of the frigorífico was insufficient to force a downward turn in total costs. Finally, the meat packers' claim that industrial efficiency would lead to greater meat consumption is undermined by the US experience, which suggests that technological advances alone cannot alter consumption patterns – only an accompanying improvement in income distribution is capable of prompting such a change. Consequently, the meat industry's limited modernisation must be understood to have taken place in a historical context in which income distribution remained largely unchanged, even while the modern

twentieth-century state emerged as the national arbiter of wages for the working and middle classes.

Evaluating the impact of those changes on the well-being of workers in Rio de Janeiro would require expanding the analysis on meat intake in relation to other food items and different social sectors. But this work does contribute to the study of living conditions in Brazil's capital city by addressing some of the issues involved in the complex transition between a traditional system of food provisioning and the industrial slaughterhouse. It shows how different levels of government (federal and municipal) struggled to determine the right approach to supplying urban residents. Moving away from 'centre-periphery' assumptions, this paper questions the claim that foreign interests were superimposed upon national needs, as the prefeitura's maintenance of the old monopoly – despite its technological limitations – revealed. Indeed, what makes this struggle all the more intriguing is that while traditional abattoir output could not keep up with population growth, the municipality was able to sustain its monopoly, in part because locals and officials alike still relied on fair supply assumptions as a core principle of good governance. A radical change in income distribution, among other adjustments, would have been necessary to change their convictions and expectations.

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. Este artículo examina al sistema de distribución de carne en Río de Janeiro desde los últimos años del siglo XIX hasta la década de 1920s. Durante este periodo, el monopolio del procesamiento y venta de carne en la ciudad garantizó un abasto constante a precios predecibles. Sin embargo, en el siglo XX los "intrusos", tal como los funcionarios municipales denominaron quienes intentaron introducir su producto al mercado de Río, empezaron a cuestionar este monopolio centenario. Durante un periodo relativamente corto, Río de Janeiro implementó las siguientes medidas: frenó la vieja costumbre del sacrificio clandestino de ganado; estableció un sistema público centralizado y de alguna forma regulado de rastros; y, finalmente, introdujo compañías emparadoras de carne. Este estudio toma en consideración estos eventos al ubicarlos en un cuestionamiento mayor sobre cómo afectaron la disponibilidad de carne per cápita en Río de Janeiro entre las décadas de 1890 a 1920.

Spanish keywords: Brasil, Río de Janeiro, comercio de carne, emparadoras de carne, productos alimenticios, consumo

Portuguese abstract. Este artigo examina o sistema de abastecimento de carne no Rio de Janeiro entre o fim do século XIX e a década de 1920. Durante este período, o monopólio da cidade sobre o processamento e venda em varejo de carne garantiu um abastecimento constante com preços previsíveis. No entanto, na virada do século, "intrusos", designação dada por funcionários municipais àqueles que tentaram introduzir seus produtos no mercado do Rio de Janeiro, passaram a questionar este

monopólio centenário. Deste modo, durante um período relativamente curto, uma série de medidas foram implementadas no Rio de Janeiro: o combate à prática comum de abate clandestino; o estabelecimento de um sistema de abatimento público centralizado e relativamente regulamentado; e, finalmente, a introdução de frigoríficos. Este estudo considera o desenvolvimento dessas medidas realizando uma investigação mais ampla no tocante ao efeito da disponibilidade de carne per capita no Rio de Janeiro entre as décadas de 1890 e 1920.

Portuguese keywords: Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, comércio de carne, frigoríficos, produtos alimentícios, consumo