

Traditional Colombian cuisines objects and ritual

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ABSTRACT: Traditional Colombian cuisines are intangible heritage of the country, and even when globally they still have a way to go to reach high recognition, they have great potential, and along the last years an important work of rescue and highlight of them has been taking place. They have been also a focus of interest of academic work from different knowledge areas, however designers are barely involved. Many aspects of Colombian culinary dimension need to be analyzed yet, and in that way strength the highlighting work. This paper is an effort to characterize and analyze attributes of preparation and consumption rituals in some Colombian traditional dishes, specifically plates for the region of Valle del Cauca, as a matter of an exploratory work, in order to approach a model based on the ritual analysis that allows to create a dish “taxonomy” for the future work in different fields of knowledge including design, mainly because it is part of a future undergraduate thesis. For the field work ethnographic techniques as participant observation and semi structured interviews were used, the obtained information was organized in consumption ritual categories of an own diagram model created from several authors perspectives, however, to fulfil it in a more complete way, techniques that dig further in the symbolic aspects are necessary.

Keywords: Culture, Colombian Culinary, Ritual Analyses, Ethnography, Knowledge.

1 INTRODUCTION

Practices around cooking have been over history, a topic of interest of many professionals. Much has been written about it not only for the purpose of collecting recipes, but with the purpose of explaining symbolic issues, social behaviors, inequalities, among others.

This is how gastronomy and the work on it can strengthen or preserve tradition, promote the development of a territory, become an attraction to tourists and, especially can contain a whole cultural legacy of a region or country. As the Colombian Ministry of Culture expresses:

Practices related to the production of food, its distribution, preparation and consumption, as well as the social relationships established in each of these processes, configure a cultural group that is not only the product of a certain community, but at the same time decisively influences their way of life and their way of relating to the world around them. (COLOMBIA, 2012b, p. 7).

Internationally Colombian cuisines are not as known as Mexican or Peruvian cuisines, and even when, according with the Ministry of culture, cuisine as profession has presented great advances and professionalization in the last years, this same professionalization has sometimes approaches that threaten with leaving out the whole process of maturity of the food and the country traditional cuisines.

However, an important work for the rescue of the vernacular and the recognition of own cultural value through the gastronomy has been taking place. An example is the project called Biblioteca básica de cocinas tradicionales colombianas from now BBCTC (COLOMBIA, 2015), that collects a research work done by important authors over the last decades about different issues of our country cuisines focusing in the traditional and in increasing the value of the gastronomic heritage. Other important work, that is also quoted in this article is the thesis of Duque-Mahecha (2017). And finally, there are also several articles recently developed by the country brand and Procolombia, about the national food and status of the sector in Colombia (COLOMBIA..., 2018; LA GASTRONOMÍA..., 2017).

From the field of research, a lot can be contributed to the aim of strengthen the recognition of the Colombian gastronomy, which can be beneficial in many

ways for the country, so it is important to continue this process of recognition and is even more important to find tangible uses for the information and material collected in these researches.

There is a lot of work done about traditional Colombian food, but most of the time to frame them, to establish theoretical basis to work on the field, that is why this work tries to create a concrete way of approaching through the ritual analysis. This research project wants to dig in Colombian cuisines practices, to delve into its definition as traditional food, to recognize some rituals of preparation and consumption of concrete plates and to emphasize in the the exercise of cooking with the aim of facilitate a whole vision of the activity, that way future works, including design-related ones, could take advantage of it.

This paper gathers two different projects done in the frame of an Industrial Design undergraduate thesis, related with the theoretical approach, one of it was a field work to recognize part of the preparation ritual and the other mainly a literature review, but in general it has the character of an exploratory investigation.

2 METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory qualitative investigation, it is made from the Industrial Design perspective, it has an ethnographic approach because of the social and cultural topic, the techniques used were participant observation, specialized bibliographic consult and expert interview. The research was made in the frame work of the undergraduate thesis.

The main objective of this work, that as said before contains two efforts for a common work, is to identify attributes of the ritual of preparation and consumption of traditional Colombian dishes after making an approach to the main characteristics of the Traditional Colombian Cuisines (hereinafter TCC).

The research universe involves on the one hand all the literature that could have been written about TCC, mainly research or works with an anthropological approach, that had representativeness and authority to deal with the issues and literature that explored the ritual related to food consumption. By the other hand traditional Colombian and specifically Valle del Cauca preparations to observe, and finally experts on TCC which beyond the empirical, understood theoretical and contextual aspects of them. A convenience sample was used due to the time and character of the project, six observations of five different Colombian preparations were done and an expert was interviewed.

For the specialized bibliographic consult, most of the material related with TCC is part of the BBCTB, besides other more recent researches done by other authors. Also, several recent articles that resume qualities of the ritual applicable to the consumption of food where consulted to generate the categories for the study.

The focus of the participant observation where preparations instead of people, the aim was to emphasize on them, and then, to characterize its way of preparation and stakeholders involved. The observations were recorded in a field diary by way of narrative and the most important stages of the preparations were registered in a judicious photographic record.

The preparations for the observation were chosen based first in the categories proposed for Ordóñez Caicedo (2012), so the idea was to observe at least one case for each of the following categories: Bread or “dough”, Drink, “sweet” or dessert and one of the follow two: soup or main course, considering that due to the effects of time and resources, this work was focused on the Gran Cauca region, emphasizing in the Valle del Cauca gastronomic culture.

Then, to support the quality of the traditional dish and getting focused on the region mentioned above, the book of Garcés Arellano was consulted in its latest version published by the Ministry of Culture, in which it is accompanied by another book based on her work (GARCÉS ARELLANO; BARNEY CABRERA, 2015) and

a consultation to the Introductory Manual to the BBCTC. So, at first instance a list of the “observable” preparations (table 1) was made and then the achievement and subsequent observation of the cases.

After identifying the preparations, it was needed to look for the place and opportunity to register the preparations. The first observation was made in Guacarí, there an expert cooker showed how to make a traditional chicken Sancocho cooked in firewood. The second case was the preparation of the traditional Arroz con leche (Rice pudding), in third place, and this enters as a main course, was the elaboration of the Tamales Vallecaucanos, the fourth observation was made during the preparation of Champús, then the manufacture of the Pandebonos and finally it was possible to register another way of cooking Sancocho, this time in a home and cooked in the common stove.

Table 1 - Eligible preparations to observe

<i>Bread or Dough</i>	<i>Drink</i>	<i>Dessert or sweet</i>	<i>Soups</i>	<i>Main course</i>
Pan de yuca	Champús	Dulce cortado	Sancocho	Arroz atollado
Pandebono	Masato de arroz	Arroz con leche	Sancocho de gallina	Tamales de pipián
Pan batido		Dulce de brevas	Sancocho de guineo	Tamal Vallecaucano
			Sopa de Carantanta	Zamba de zapallo
			Sopa de tortilla	Indios con relleno de abstinencia

Font: Own creation

For the expert interview it was possible to contact with an anthropologist, investigator in TCC, in this research the interview helps to support the first part of the research which focuses on characterize the Colombian cuisines. In this case for the analysis of the obtained data, as the required information was qualitative was analyzed in an analogous way, however a frequency analysis was done using a tool named Voyant Tools, to highlight the concepts with the highest incidence.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 About Cuisine and Colombian Tradition

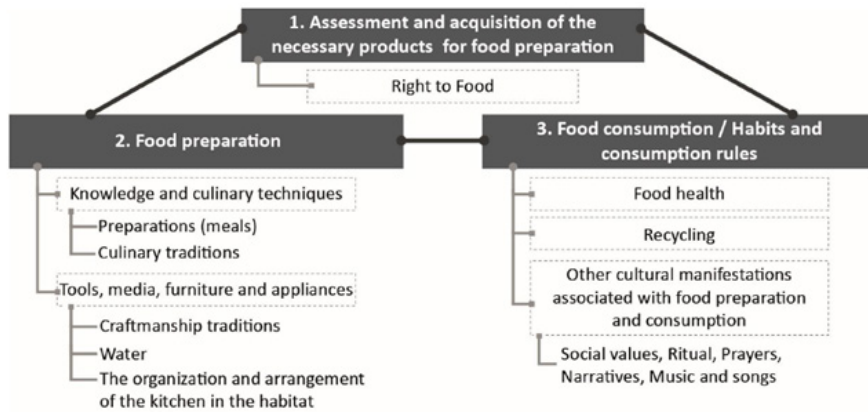
It is worth to clarify the concept of cuisine (cocina, with multiple meanings in Spanish) that is used here, it is a “further concept of cooking, understanding it as a process that involves production and purchase of food, transformation of feedstock, its distribution, preparation, consumption, and the use of its waste”(COLOMBIA, 2012a, p. 14) this always framed by a set of social relationships that makes the culinary practice understandable, this definition is proposed by the Colombian ministry of culture.

With the interview to the expert, professor at the University of Cauca, researcher in TCC, an answer was obtained, among others, to the questions “Fundamentally, what makes a dish traditional?” and “What characteristics or outstanding attributes does traditional Colombian cuisine or traditional Colombian cuisines have?”. After the analysis and the readings, it can be determined that primarily what makes traditional to Colombian cuisines is the transfer of their knowledge over time.

This approach is supported, on the one hand by what is described by Mincultura, where a fundamental characteristic of these cuisines is that “They are the result of a long historical and collective process that results in knowledge transmitted mainly within the family, generation in generation.” (COLOMBIA, 2012b, p. 9). Likewise, the expert states that for a dish to acquire the quality of traditional, it must have been prepared and transmitted for at least three generations (about fifty years), but that the rooting is bigger when the number of years is exceeded. (Illera, C. Personal communication, June 13, 2019).

Another characteristic that makes traditional the Colombian cuisines is the use of traditional ingredients, techniques or instruments that compose culinary system (COLOMBIA, 2012b, p. 22-23) that are described below in fig. 1.

Figure 1 - Culinary system, adapted from “Política para el conocimiento, la salvaguardia y el fomento de la alimentación y las cocinas tradicionales de Colombia”



Font: Colombia (2012b, p. 23).

About the general characteristics of TCC, two are essential. The first is the quality of Criollas (Creoles), which present the TCC, the Creole comes from the mix, from the Spanish, African and Indigenous culture (COLOMBIA, 2012a, p. 25). The second characteristic is the division that makes them plural, recently researchers recommend using the term traditional Colombian cuisines, in plural, as the expert clarifies in the interview he granted in favor of the research. Estrada shares this point of view and expresses it in one of his (OCHOA ESTRADA, 2016) e.g. the regional categories proposed by (ORDÓÑEZ CAICEDO, 2012) mentioned before.

3.2 About the Ritual

A ritual is an act, an action that takes place on different occasions with a specific motive, the definitions presented in this section are not necessarily related with the religion. Marshall cites in his text the following definition of Roof: "A type of expressive, symbolic activity, constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in a fixed episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time" (MARSHALL, 2005, p. 72).

Amati and Pestana, present the dimensions that Rook proposes for the ritual, in the text of Ratcliffe, Lyle Baxter and Martin, these are presented as elements of a ritual and are the following: Actors-participants, audience, script and artifacts (AMATI; PESTANA, 2015; RATCLIFFE; LYLE BAXTER; MARTIN, 2019).

Ratcliffe, Lyle Baxter and Martin, propose some typologies to classify the rituals, certain criteria with which the rituals can be better characterized, like the scale at which they are performed, the context in which they occur, a "stage" that can be relative to the very specific moment when it occurs. Finally, they talk about personal involvement in the ritual, either as an executor or viewer.

Are Amati and Pestana who propose a very specific framework for the analysis or taxonomy of the ritual as they call it, which will be very useful for this investigation even though it has been created for the purpose of studying rituals created by brands. This includes the following categories: Stars and guest roles, contexts and moments, meanings and symbols, frequency, sequence and structure, performance and esthetics (in this case artifacts) and finally learning and propagation (AMATI; PESTANA, 2015, p. 235-236).

In sum, based on the consult of those articles, the definition of ritual and categories for a ritual that they proposed, the following model was applied to the preparation of the traditional Colombian preparations previously selected. The

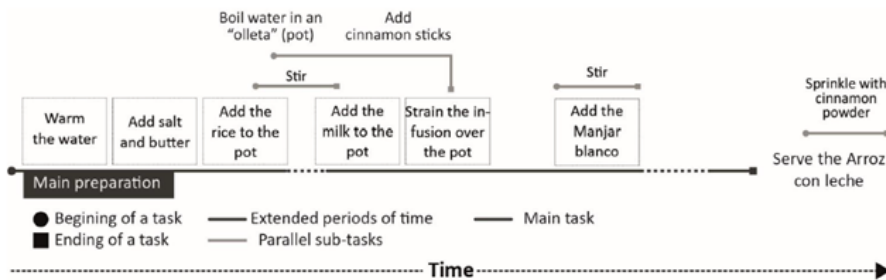
script of the ritual is illustrated as a matter of chart first, and then the information of the other categories is described in a subsequent table.

Due to the article length only three of the six cases are registered here.

Case 1. Arroz con leche

Below it is expressed the process of preparation of the Arroz con leche, a sweet pudding made at boiling rice and milk. It has an Arabic origin, over time it became traditional. On this occasion, it is sweetened with Manjar blanco, another traditional dessert.

Figure 2 - Preparation of Arroz con leche, script



Font: Own creation

Below the extra information is classified in the categories proposed for the analysis.

Table 2 - Details of the ritual preparation, Rice pudding

Type of preparation	Sweet or dessert
Frequency	They prepare it sporadically, when there is craving
Context and moment	It is usually prepared for weekends, it is a special sweet dish
Scale	On this occasion, the dish is prepared at home, prepared around portions, it is a single cook who cooks it
Stage	It is usually eaten after the main dishes or between meals
Personal involvement	Who makes it, puts her personal touch, because she does it in her own way

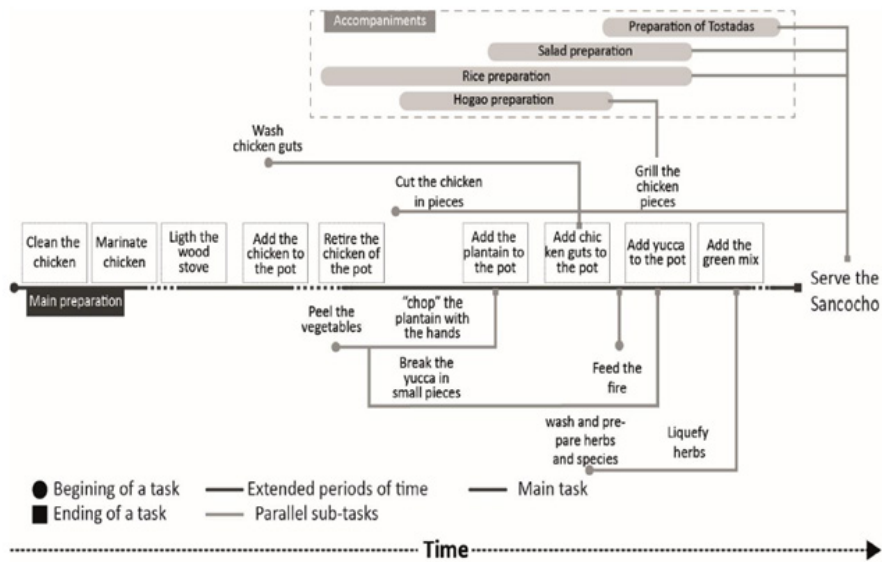
Stars and guest roles	The only actor is the cooker
Audience	The members of the home witness the preparation, listen and smell
Meanings and symbols	The cooker is happy to prepare a special dish. It is a special occasion because it is not a daily dish
Learning and propagation	She learned the recipe in a dessert and snack course

Font: Own creation

Case 4. Chicken Sancocho

This next preparation is a chicken and vegetables broth seasoned with herbs, usually accompanied by fried plantain and boiled rice, bellow its preparation is described.

Figure 3 - Preparation of Sancocho on firewood, script



Font: Own creation

A Below the information related to the preparation is classified in the categories proposed for the analysis.

Table 3 - Details of the ritual preparation, Sancocho. Own creation

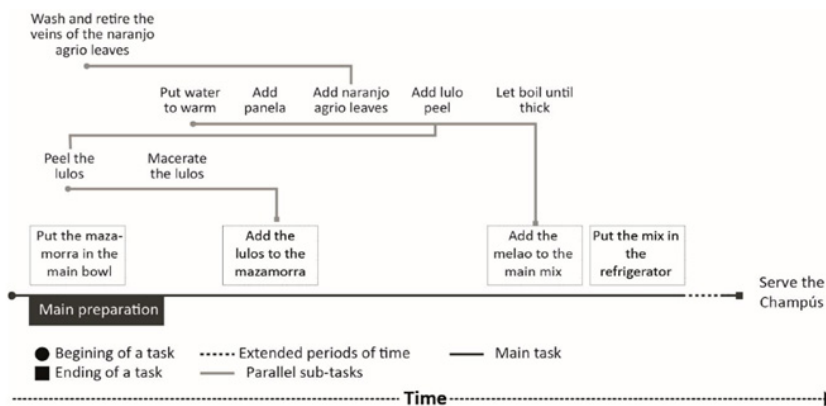
Type of preparation	Soup - Main course
Frequency	It is prepared everyday. Only on Sundays it is cooked on firewood
Context and moment	It is consumed for lunch at noon, it is sold on a restaurant in the market place in Guacarí
Scale	It is prepared for many people (approx.. 40), and in its preparation 3 people participate.
Stage	It is usually eaten, in the Cauca Valley region for lunch. As a soup it is consumed usually before the accompaniments
Personal involvement	In this case who consumes it does not get involved at the time of preparation, who prepare it do have a personal involvement because it is their own recipe and they do it in their own way
Stars and guest roles	The main cooker is the most important, followed for two assistants
Audience	Some restaurant workers witness the preparation the cooker's children also do it
Meanings and symbols	For the cook, to make the Sancocho the way he does it is to preserve the tradition, as it is a family legacy.
Learning and propagation	The recipe was learned from his mother, oral tradition.

Font: Own creation

Case 5. Champús

This is a refreshing drink made of corn and Lulo (native citric fruit) seasoned with cinnamon usually served cold.

Figure 4 - Preparation of Champús, script



Font: Own creation

Below the information collected is described in the ritual categories.

Table 4 - Details of the ritual preparation, Rice pudding. Own creation

Type of preparation	Drink
Frequency	It is prepared about once a week
Context and moment	It is a special main course
Scale	It is prepared for about six people, members of the family
Stage	It is usually eaten, in the Cauca Valley region for lunch.
Personal involvement	The main cooker prepares it for the house where she works, so there is an involvement but not big because it is not her own recipe, it is her boss's recipe even though they are very similar.
Stars and guest roles	The main cooker (Who executes most of the actions) and her boss (Who owns the recipe and gives the directions)
Audience	The members of the family witness the preparation, listen and smell.
Meanings and symbols	The preparation is recognized as traditional, there is certain proud of the way it is represented by them.
Learning and propagation	The owner of the recipe said that she is not sure, probably her mother taught it to her, she says she prepares it since she got married. The main cooker said she learn it form her mother when she was a teenager.

Font: Own creation

4 CONCLUSIONS

The TCC are a complex system, which contains many important points, this system touches important issues of the country, mainly cultural matters and that is why the TCC are national intangible heritage, but also points related to agricultural production, industrial production of goods, services, and at characterizing cuisines, many areas susceptible to intervention and innovation projects emerge.

It can be appreciated in the article a general perspective that is just a modest and insufficient framework to understand the entire universe of TCC, the strategies for working with these must focus on the regional.

One strategy for exploring the regional, could be to characterize the preparation of a traditional Colombian dish in its rituality, to study it in a segmented manner and although the intention is not to reduce the legacy of the tradition to

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tables and schemes, it is to present a way of analyzing these preparations, a new way to approach to the study to the TCC.

With this work, the characterization of the general elements has been achieved, and the basis for the “taxonomic” model that can be used to analyze the preparations has been left, however, to achieve a much more complete development it is necessary to apply other instruments that give access to the symbolic and aesthetic quality of the ritual of preparation and consumption, a more extensive work with a more significant sample is necessary to achieve common behaviors, in that way the ritual dimension and the importance of traditional Colombian food could be understood much better today.

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