



THE HISTORICAL RIVIVAL IN GASTRONOMY: An Element Of Contribution To Tourism Development In The Southern Region Of The State Of Santa Catarina

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ABSTRACT

The present study intends to develop the discussion about gastronomic rescue as an inspiration for the development of cultural formation. From the historical point of view, it is hoped to revive the food culture of the extreme South of Santa Catarina, such as the minestra, chicken with polenta, solda de ovos (a dish prepared with eggs) and fish pirão, essential for the survival of some families and emotionally linked with the citizens of the municipality. We sought, therefore, to understand the most important dishes of the local gastronomic culture from interviews, and to promote the debate about the need for entrepreneurs in the gastronomy sector to return to supplying them in the region.

Keywords: Gastronomy. Culture and History. Tourism. Extreme South of Santa Catarina.



1 INTRODUCTION

This article proposes a discussion regarding historical retrieval of gastronomy as an element of a tourism upgrade, thus to promote the recognition of gastronomy as a part of the cultural process of a region. In this context, the aim is to understand the culture of gastronomy in the south of Santa Catarina, through a study on the background of that region and the relationship of local colonisers with food.

In this context, it should be noted that the relationship between gastronomy and its practical/historical formation in the local scenario is conceived on a perception based on survival, as the difficulties encountered in the dense forest region hindered the possibilities of cultivation, access to products necessary for production, and even the possibility of distribution of products. In the same way, the cultivation of the land consisted of heavy work as there was not agricultural machinery, and the cultivation of the soil was basically developed by animal traction, or even by colonisers themselves who settled in the region.

Another element that highlights the local gastronomic condition is the establishment of two main gastronomic cultures, the Italian and the Portuguese, the latter with links to the Azorean culture. In addition, the constant route of “tropeiros”, in some of the areas, also brought rich information which contributed to the dissemination and strengthening of product consumption, that were considered exotic, becoming an important part of the gastronomic culture of that region.

Therefore, the present study has the purpose of deepening the discussion of the relationships between cultural nourishment and tourism, along with the perspectives based on characteristics of food consumed in the region of the South of Santa Catarina. It is intended to bring up clashes of ideas, the academic approach with the local gastronomic market, to start seeking alternatives that may contribute to historical recipe recovery and their application in a contemporary context.



2. GASTRONOMY AS A HISTORICAL FACTOR: CULTURAL PERCEPTION THROUGH DISHES

The historical relationship to the tourism movement is, indeed, one of the most significant approaches established to this contemporary phenomenon. The relation of history and human analogy to applied social science conceptions has shown to be rather forceful and continuous, given the high number of tourists who travel frequently to places that are abundant in the history of the world, with traditions represented there and with the contextualization represented in materiality. There are a lot of examples in this combinatorial process, from the Eiffel Tower in France to the Taj Mahal in India; from Petra in Jordan to Pelourinho in Brazil; from Parthenon in Greece to the Colosseum in Italy; the relationship of historical identity has always been closely linked to tourism.

Thus, in order to shape the historical perception of this work, the concept of history in Kalduhm (XIV apud Hobsbawm, 2013, p. 10), that he affirms that history is:

[...] the record of human society, or world civilization; of the changes that take place in the nature of this society [...], of resolutions and insurrections of one group of people against another, with the consequent kingdoms and States endowed with their various levels; of the different activities and occupations of men, whether to earn their living or in the various sciences and arts; and, in general, of all the changes suffered by society by reason of its own nature.

Thus, conceptual relations of history are not only through the constitution of concrete or material elements, but also through immateriality, by relationship of memory and the constitution of elements beyond the concrete. These elements are constituted as removed deliberately from inertia and, therefore, history may be the science of mutation and the explanation of that change (LE GOFF, 2003, p.15). However, it is necessary to consider, especially in this study, that despite cultural formation and comprehension of the elements that permeate culture, there is a position based on dialectical historical materialism, even if one understands the immaterial relation, that conceives the necessity of materialization for the applicability regarding gastronomy as a tourist complement, or as the main attraction of a region.



In this perspective, culture also becomes a tool of tourism as a possibility of exploration (the good meaning of the term), and its condition on historical composition since the studies of cultural history. Thus, the cultural relationship and its materialization through gastronomy can be fundamental to the development of tourism as a phenomenon and its consequent formatting as an activity.

Furthermore, culture is also determined as a social concept, implicit in the social relations between time and space and transforming the compositions of culture into a 'societal' relation. Thus, culture is formed as a social structure, based on the determinants of a specific society and it is characterized, as conceived by Geertz (2003) or by a series of English anthropologists, as the social web that permeates the behavioural relations in that specific space.

Accordingly, one must also consider the duality contemplated by the formation condition of the concept of culture. If on one hand the perception of this social context is deflagrated, on the other, it is constituted philosophical relations characterized by a phenomenological relationship. Therefore, epistemologically, it is necessary to establish two frameworks, spirit and matter, mind and body, norm and fact or subjective and objective (BAUMAN, 2013). Culture is, therefore, taken from its complexity of acquaintance, as the complexity of its appropriation and representation in contemporaneity.

Thus, even if it is conceived a metaphorical perception of culture, and elements of conceptual discussion, one can affirm that among the conceptual poles, innumerable formulations on the concept of culture can be constituted, culture is preceding any theory that intends to conceive itself (HALL, 2006; BOURDIEU, 2011).

The composition of cultural history is based much more on the philosophical conception, constituted by the American school, cultural thinking from subjectivity. It is treated on the opposite relation to the conceptual practice proposed here, although it is understood of what Bauman (2013) called liquid modernity, 'cultural hybridism' and its variations can be more understood in the contemporary cultural process than the so-called 'cultural modernization'.



In this perspective, gastronomy as a phenomenon inherent to man's nature, and complementary practice to contemporary tourism, has as a necessity the strengthening of elements that can stimulate the search for historical-cultural relations, unique knowledge, eccentricities or characteristics that can establish the relationship of the product offered. Gastronomy and tourism are linked and have their market value related to the possibility of exclusivity and uniqueness.

It is based on the assumption of cultural formation from the geographic space, as well as from the concepts constituted by its territory, where it is established the constitution of its use, that is human activity (LEFEBVRE, 1986; SANTOS 2013), the gastronomy, based on the society that is inserted, is the materialization of culture and its representation in the dishes, constituting itself as its most objective concept. It is about to constitute the theory in practice and to promote the literal 'consumption' of local culture through taste.

In this way, gastronomy plays an important role in the historical recovery of culture, establishing itself as a tool for the perception of local cultivation, production relations and the possibility of supplying the necessary nutrients to man, especially if related to its application as fuel for work, considering the condition of the region.

Thus, when contemplating gastronomy as a historical element, it is necessary to understand its conception and formation, as well as gastronomic heritage as a fundamental instrument for tourism consolidation.

It is important to emphasize that the gastronomy originated from the evolution of man, when he was only a hunter and a food collector, he also became the producer of his own food and acquired techniques of food manipulation and conservation during the medieval period, and contributed to the emergence of high gastronomy, producing, thus, many typical products that constitute a decisive part of the gastronomic patrimony. (MONTANARI, 2008, p. 41).



In this perspective, the gastronomic patrimony created by the settlers of southern Santa Catarina can also contribute to the relations of cultural perception, helping as possible tourist / gastronomic attractions that conceive the revival of historical relations, of flavours and of the formation of differentials, which can be motivation for displacement. In this context, offering attractions that are within local identity, in this specific context, the identity by gastronomy, can be a primordial element in the tourism offer.

With that, it is possible to notice that the cultural formation is also due to gastronomy and, consequently, the symbolic issues related to the food and gastronomic production constituted, these are treated from the anthropological point of view (even if materialized) by Da Matta (1987) on constituting the thought that food is not just a substance, but it is also a means, a style, and a way to feed itself.

3. CHARACTERIZATION OF SPACE, METHODOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES

The present study is characterized by the historical understanding in its relation to space and territory, and the consequent gastronomic relation with its context. For this purpose, the geographic area to be studied was determined, the area characterized as the extreme south of Santa Catarina, named for its commercialization as 'Canyon Way'.

The place is located in the southern region of the State of Santa Catarina, bordering Rio Grande do Sul, and it is characterized by cultural similarities that are established, in a common sense, as related to the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In addition, the strong presence of Italian and Portuguese immigrants and their respective descendants also strengthened the local cultural contexts, emphasizing a multiculturalism that consists of the characterization of distinct identities in their aegis, but resulting in a unique cultural symbiosis.

Map 01: Location of the Southern region of the state of Santa Catarina.



Source: Santur, 2017.

Thus, the present study is characterized as a case study, as it is limited to studying a very specific element, indicated from the nature proposed for the study and the characteristics of the population surveyed. Considering Yin's (2001, pp. 32-33), the case study is an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. The study also deals with a collection of testimonies, objectified through interviews, which are defined by Severino (2007, p 124) as a technique for collecting information on a certain subject, directly requested from subjects. It is, therefore, an interaction between the researcher and the subjects.

In this context, a series of 12 interviews (testimony collection) was carried out, appropriating the experience of former residents, and searching through the respective gastronomic perceptions, the historical context for the representation of the dishes constituted by historical memory. These interviews / testimonies were collected in the period from August 26, 2016 to October 3, 2016, aiming to understand the local gastronomic customs. In order to accomplish the research, it was emphasized the presence of interviewees over 60 years old, establishing the historical heritage and the constitution of gastronomic memories that could represent the cultural contexts related to that time. The characteristic by age was one of the reasons for the small amount of testimony, although



the treasures found in the collected responses could somehow face the needs related to sampling.

4. RESULTS AND PERCEPTIONS

From the interviews and the analysis of the testimonies, the continuous decrease in the consumption of traditional and historical dishes of the region was observed, establishing a new culture among the children and grandchildren of the interviewees and conceiving the gastronomy as a result of the current media interactions. For Interviewees 1 and 4 (E1 and E4), for example:

Culture is our heritage and the gastronomy is to understand this culture. Today, young people want more hamburgers than the dishes we ate. It seems like this burger-eating thing is more important than what we ate, as if one food was fancier than the other (E1).

Nowadays people eat everything. There is plenty of choice. During that time, there was one thing (to eat). It was not shown on TV what we should eat. We did not even have a tv! I ate what was offered [...] and it was good and healthy. It is not like today. Full of commercials and ads, but you eat a lot of bad, contaminated food (E4).

Still, for the interviewees, the food culture of their parents is still very concrete, highlighting the list of dishes presented here, and from which it is intended to promote the local historical / gastronomic culture. In this sense, the dishes most cited were: minestra (a kind of soup made of beans and pieces of rice), chicken with polenta (a dish made from corn flour), fish pirão (a mix of water, flour and fish, seasoned with salt and herbs) and egg solder, as well as, the use of lard to fry food. The statements and their contexts can be perceived through the following statements:

We used to eat everything fried ... like that, in pig´s lard. We always had a can of lard. I used it to fry, but I left some pieces of meat inside as well (to keep conserved). Even today we use pig´s lard. When we killed an animal at home we already separate the fat to use later (E1).

At home we still eat some recipes my mother used to make. The chicken with polenta, a lot of minestra! We eat and remember when the family was reunited. Nowadays, people do not even get together to eat. It is each by himself (E8).

I have a brother who is a fisherman and that's why we do the fish pirão almost every day. Sometimes along with other food, but we always have it! My mother always made it with a lot of flour, it got thicker and helped us with the hard work (E11).

The traditional minestra is usually made from leftover beans and rice, especially from broken grains, thus avoiding the waste of food as it would not be used for sale in the food industry. The minestra was usually served with radicchio sheets as a side dish. Egg solder, also widely used in the cooking of their ancestors, is characterized as a low-cost dish, using green seasonings, onions, water and salt, making a broth and then cooking it with eggs and forming a kind of dough with cassava flour.

The egg solder was what we ate the most. There was a chicken coop near the house and we sold eggs in the neighbour's house (E3).

The minestra I remember well. There was no grain separator. We separated everything by hand and the broken ones we kept to eat. You could not sell these broken grains. Those were for us. And the minestra was good. I never made another minestra like the one we used to that time (E7).

Image 01: Minestra and Solda de Ovos



Source: Authors, 2016

In addition to these, other outstanding dishes are fish pirão and chicken with polenta, the latter being a traditionally Italian dish, linked with the formation of Italian culture in Brazil, also dealing with the use of economic ingredients in its creation. It starts with the preparation of a chicken with sauce, usually made from tomatoes, added to the chicken after it is cooked. This accompanies the polenta, made from corn flour. The fish pirão was quite characteristic of the coastal municipalities, considering that Sombrio (SC) was extended to the Atlantic Ocean, in the area that today is known as the municipality of Balneário Gaivota (SC). The pirão was made, in general, from the mixture of cassava flour with the broth extracted from the fish. This broth, some of the respondents say, was made from the head of the fish because the other parts were stored to serve as a base for other dishes.

The pirão that we ate was made of catfish. I think it was catfish. But it was good. Sometimes I go to one of those beach restaurants just to eat pirão. I do not even pay attention to the fish that comes along with it. For me, I could only eat the pirão! (E2)

Whoever was Italian ate polenta almost every day. My sister liked polenta more with milk. I think because it was sweeter. I liked it better when I had chicken. Sometimes we would fight to see who would eat the thigh. One thigh was always for my father and only one other left was for the other six of us. It was the one who got there faster (laughs) (E4).

Image 02: Fish pirão and Chicken with Polenta



Source: Authors, 2017.



When questioned about the possibility of having some of the dishes mentioned in local restaurants, all the interviewees said they would attend the establishment, as can be seen in the following statements.

Sometimes when my relatives come from Rio Grande do Sul I think about making chicken with polenta. But I do not know if it tastes as good as before. I know it will not. It had to have a chef, one that could do it as they did in the past, but in a restaurant (E5).

If I had chicken with polenta in a restaurant I would go to this place every day! (E7)

Professor, do you think you can make some kind of television dishes with these recipes? Do you think people would eat them? I've already thought about doing it at home and selling it, because there are a lot of people near where I live who miss those dishes (E9).

Thus, the formation and characterization of these dishes can stimulate the creation of a themed restaurant in the locality, or use of enterprises that use the buffet system to dynamize part of the vats with local dishes, thus favoring consumption and stimulating the new generations into experimentation. The Mangai Restaurant, in João Pessoa, which has established numerous preparations for Northeastern cuisine and become a tourist spot for visitors to the capital of Paraíba, stands out as a characteristic example, keeping due proportions of business. It creates, therefore, a cultural identity based on local history and having gastronomy as the motor of development. It gives the tourist a concept of local cultural diversity and stimulates the consumption not only of a product, but of a whole historical story represented there.

In this context, the stimulus of this type of production consists not only in cultural valorization, but also in directing the establishment as a tool for cultural empowerment, local development and a proposal of profitability, since the cost of production is relatively low in all the mentioned preparations. Another important element is the strengthening of the entire productive chain, since the option of the first inhabitants of the region was established by the easy access to the products, which are still the basis of the local



productive chain, thus favoring the relations of logistics, supply and production in a system which contributes to the maintenance of local farms.

Thus, up to the finalization of this article, 6 restaurants in the region were contacted with the proposal of adequacy and the possibility of using the mentioned dishes, and 2 of these started some conversations for the insertion into the menu and readjustment of the recipes, one in the buffet system, and another in the regular menu. Until the beginning of the summer, it is hoped to promote a cycle of discussions and present proposals for the training of staff to present the dishes along with their historical context.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gastronomy as a cultural element can favor the tourist appeal and stimulate the development of attractive possibilities. The culture, established there, favors the approximation with the local population and gives unique characteristics to the products, thus determining, curiosity as a fundamental element to the tourist/ gastronomic experience.

Experiencing a geographic space and appropriating this territory as an experience of tastes and knowledge can be decisive for the return or permanence of tourists in a certain place. In this way, gastronomy and tourism need to promote experiences that are conceived as unique, distinct from other localities and stimulated by local historical relations. To strengthen this historical-cultural link is to keep the memory alive and to encourage all generations, at least from the palate, to experience what the local residents had as an experience.

From this perspective, it is expected that the search for traditional dishes from the southern region of Santa Catarina can serve as an aid and encouragement to local gastronomic entrepreneurs for a revival of cuisine traditions. It is expected, from this article, to generate a debate and the approach to the market, since the group reorganized all the recipes, giving them contemporary presentations and distributing them for free as a practical insertion mechanism. It is also worth noting that, with the help of other members, the project today seeks to identify local plants that can be reinserted into a current gastronomy, stimulating



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the consumption of products that are abundant in the region and establishing the link between old and modern.



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