

Regional, national or global cooking: a narrative review of the *Manifesto Regionalista* of 1926 written by Gilberto Freyre

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Abstract

The article aims to analyze Gilberto Freyre's contribution for the intellectual debate of the 1920s and 1930s on the construction of national identity, focusing the centrality of regional cooking in the Brazilian society's identity process, according to the book *Manifesto Regionalista*, issued in 1926. The *Manifesto* was published in the First Regionalist Congress in February 1926, in Recife, Pernambuco state, as opposed to the 1922 Modern Art Week, held in São Paulo state, Brazil. In the book, Freyre discusses the concepts of *regionalism*, *nationalism*, *internationalism*, among others. He describes the traditional values of the Brazilian northeastern culture, identifies the threats to which they were submitted and proposes strategies for its valorization. Among the exalted cultural values, aspects of regional architecture and cooking stand out. The review draws the attention to the pioneering spirit of the strategies recommended for the preservation of the Brazilian northeastern cuisine, considered by Freyre as the one that best expressed the syncretism of the cuisines of the three ethnicities (Amerindian, Portuguese and African). The analysis points to similarities between the *Manifesto* and the second edition of the *Food Guide for the Brazilian Population*, emphasizing Freyre's approach contemporaneity. Both embrace conservative assumptions, anchored in the appreciation of the past (traditions) and hostility towards transformations (modernity): in the *Manifesto*, the advocacy of the Brazilian northeastern agrarian-patriarchal regional cuisine and the hostility towards foreign cuisine; in the Guide, the appreciation of the domestic cooking based on food in its natural state and hostility towards highly processed products.

Key words: Regional Cooking. Brazilian Cuisine. *Manifesto Regionalista*. Food Guide. Food and nutrition. Gilberto Freyre.

Introduction

From the last two decades of the twentieth century, with the advent of phenomena known as economic globalization,¹⁻⁴ demographic/epidemiological/alimentary/nutritional transitions⁵⁻⁶ and the advance of obesity and other chronic diseases associated with it,⁷ one has seen in the global context and Brazil, both in the academic and scientific environment as in other social environments, a relevant movement seeking to discuss and resume the appreciation of food and/or culinary traditions.⁸⁻¹⁸

In Brazil, public policy instruments of nourishment and nutrition and health promotion published in recent years have also emphasized the relevance and recommended the adoption of practices and culinary skills in people's daily lives as nourishment and nutritional reeducation strategies and the adoption of healthy lifestyles. One of such instruments is the *Marco de Referência de Educação Alimentar e Nutricional para as Políticas Públicas* (Benchmark for Food and Nutrition Education for Public Policies) published in 2012. Among the principles laid down for carrying out actions for food and nutrition education (EAN), the document defines the value of *cooking as an emancipatory practice* to ensure healthy eating (principle IV, page 26).¹⁹

Another instrument, published in the end of 2014, is the second edition of the *Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira* (Food Guide for the Brazilian Population) which in the fifth chapter devotes a section to discuss the importance of people developing culinary skills as a strategy to understand and overcome obstacles to guarantee healthy eating (pages 103-124).²⁰ Moreover, among the *Ten steps for a proper and healthy diet*, the second edition of the *Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira*²⁰ proposes as the seventh step “to develop, exercise and share culinary skills,” which is expressed as follows:

If you have culinary skills, try to develop and share them, especially with children and young people, without gender distinction. If you do not have culinary skills – and this goes for men and women – try to acquire them. To do this, talk to people who know how to cook, ask for recipes from family, friends and colleagues, read books, search the Internet, occasionally take courses and... start cooking! (page 127).

This contemporary movement that seeks to encourage the act of cooking or the development of culinary skills as a strategy to promote an adequate and healthy diet leads us to revisit the movement of effervescence and intellectual debate of the 1920s and 1930s around reflections on educating Brazilian society, focusing on studies of ethnicity, climate, diet and the construction of a national identity or Brazilian nationality.²¹⁻²⁵

In a previous study, when analyzing the intellectual production by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto (de Mello) Freyre KBE (1900-1987), published in the 1930s, particularly the classic *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ [The Mansion (slave owner's residence) and the barracoon (slave quarters)], Vasconcelos²⁵ observed that

[...] when emphasizing the concept of culture in the discussion of the validation of the Brazilian people, Freyre became one of the main interlocutors in the debate taking place in the 1920s and 1930s among different Brazilian intellectual currents about the construction of a national identity (page 318).

Vasconcelos²⁵ considered *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ the first and most comprehensive sociological essay on the Brazilian society's eating pattern and habits (page 318). Moreover, he observed that the socio-cultural approach to the miscegenation process advocated by Freyre has found

a close identification within the Brazilian health and medical movement that sought the affirmation of eugenic theories, among them the validation of a Brazilian race/ethnicity (mestizos) through rational nutrition (page 319).

This article aims to analyze Gilberto Freyre's contribution to the 1920s and 1930s intellectual debate about the construction of a national identity, focusing his approach in the centrality of the regional cuisine in the Brazilian society's identity process, contained in the 1926 work *Manifesto Regionalista*.²⁷

First notes on the 1926 *Manifesto Regionalista*

The 1926 *Manifesto Regionalista*, according to Freyre²⁷ himself (pages 10-13), was read at the First Regionalist Conference, partially broadcast by newspapers at the time (*Diário de Pernambuco*) and first published in full in 1952 by Brazilian publishing house Editora Região after the one carried out by Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisa Social (a Brazilian Social Research Institute) (presently Fundação Joaquim Nabuco) in 1953. In the *Manifesto Regionalista* of 1926,²⁷ for the first time in the country, Freyre would draw the attention to the threat of mischaracterization of regional cuisine and would propose some strategies for validating the aesthetic and tradition of Brazilian northeastern cuisine.

It should be highlighted that the First Regionalist Conference, held in February 1926, in the Brazilian city of Recife, arranged by Gilberto Freyre and his peers, brought together intellectuals, architects, urban designers, painters and artists of Pernambuco and other Brazilian states (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) with “the purpose of discussing urbanization as a regional problem

in an ecological and technical manner”²⁷ (page 10). It was held, according to some analyses,²⁸⁻³⁰ as opposed to the 1922 (arts festival) Modern Art Week held in São Paulo. There is evidence of similarity between the *Manifesto Regionalista of 1926*²⁷ and the *Manifesto Antropofágico* (the Cannibalistic Manifesto), a work written in 1928 by Brazilian modernist writer Oswald de Andrade [José Oswald de Souza Andrade (1890-1954)].³⁰ There are also indications that the regionalist movement started in Recife with Freyre’s active co-participation has attracted intellectuals from different fields of knowledge (anthropology, architecture, economics, history, sociology, etc.) and influenced the regionalist literature of writers like Brazilians José Américo de Almeida, José Lins do Rego, Graciliano Ramos, Jorge Amado, Rachel de Queiroz, Érico Veríssimo, among others.^{27, 29-32}

The *Manifesto* has already been a specific subject of some analyses,²⁸⁻³⁰ besides being discussed/mentioned in another of the different analyses of Freyre’s works.³³ Previous reviews from different methodological and analytical prisms have already made significant interpretations of the *Manifesto*,²⁷ identifying the central elements of Freyre’s theoretical, philosophical, political and ideological frameworks of thought contained in this work.^{28-30,33}

Amaral Jr.,²⁸ for example, seeks to demonstrate in the analysis that he has performed on the works *Manifesto*²⁷ and *Nordeste*³² (Northeast), that in them Freyre carries out a theorization/idealization of the Brazilian northeast region, as opposed to the hegemony of the southeast region in the two main academic contexts in which he gained national notoriety: modernism in the 1920s and the institutionalization of Brazilian social sciences from the 1930s. The author concludes that the theoretical interpretation of Freyre denotes a political and ideological content that has been sustained by two romantic reasons of idealization of the northeast region of Brazil: *the dream of the ideal community and the hostility towards the Western bourgeois rationality* (page 227).

In turn, Santos’²⁹ analysis has sought to identify how the *Manifesto*²⁷ was inserted in the sociocultural debate of the intellectual field of 1920-1930 through an intervention highlighted in the discussions about modernism. Roughly, the author concludes that the *Manifesto*²⁷ has tried to resume the northeastern colonial rural past, establishing a clash between tradition and modernity, expressing a relatively conservative strategy of interpretation of social changes.

The edition we have used to carry out this review of the *Manifesto*²⁷ was published in 1955 and it is a 54-page text. Besides the preface with three pages, an introductory text with seven pages, called “Twenty-five years later,” precedes the specific body of the *Manifesto*. This one corresponds to the speech made by Freyre on the night of March 20, 1951, at an event held by the then Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisa Social, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the First Regionalist Conference. Therefore, the specific content of the *Manifesto*²⁷ encompasses a set of 44 pages distributed in 21 sections.

In the first sections, Freyre introduces his theoretical-conceptual and political-ideological assumptions, addressing the concepts of regionalism, nationalism, internationalism, federalism, localism, separatism, inter-regional coordination, among others, and then he maps the northeastern culture traditional values to identify the threats to which these were submitted and propose strategies for its validation/preservation. Among the cultural values exalted, aspects of housing architecture (with emphasis on *mucambos*, houses built by hand, often fragile) and regional cuisine stand out. In the background, other regional customs such as clothing and the harmonious relationship with the fauna and flora appear.

Our analysis of the *Manifesto*²⁷ is limited exclusively to reviewing the contents of eight of these sections (X to XVII), located between pages 30-45, where Freyre deals with the *valuation of the northeastern regional cuisine*, a topic that is relevant to our field of knowledge and action. In this rereading, freely and flexibly, we shall take as interpretation guides some concepts and conceptions. Among these concepts and conceptions, we make explicit: *food*, according to Josué de Castro;³⁴ *food system*, according to Hernández & Arnáiz;³⁵ *food social environment*, according to Poulain and Proença;³⁶ *cuisine*, as adopted by Diez-Garcia and Castro;¹¹ *the scientific field, habitus and symbolic capital*, according to Bourdieu;^{37,38} *paradigm*, according to Kuhn,³⁹ and *society in networks*, according to Castells.⁴⁰

Cooking Regions of Brazil according to the *Manifesto Regionalista*

Throughout the *Manifesto*,²⁷ as well as in Freyre's works that we have reviewed,^{26,31,32,41} we have not found an express and explicit concept of regional cooking, cooking region and/or regional cuisine. By deduction, we believe that this concept should be very close to that used by Josué de Castro (1908-1973) in his classic *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ – *área alimentar*, (The Geography of Hunger – food area) which is defined as a specific geographical region which

[...] featuring typical resources, with its usual diet relying on certain regional products and its people reflecting, in many of its features, both somatic and psychic, both biological and cultural, the strong influence of its diet types (pages 58-59).

One must, however, assume that the conception of cooking region for Freyre²⁷ must have been founded on much more historical, cultural and political-ideological paradigms than geographic ones. In the same train of thought, one must also recognize the extent of the geographic conception contained in Josué de Castro.³⁴ To guide us and, above all, to update the understanding of the concepts of *Regional Cooking* and *Food Area* (in view of the historical context in which they were employed/formulated), we refer the reader to the concepts of *food system*, according to Hernández and Arnáiz;³⁵ of *food social environment*, according to Poulain and Proença,³⁶ and *cuisine*, as adopted by Diez-Garcia and Castro.¹¹

At the time of the *Manifesto* (1926),²⁷ Freyre highlighted the existence of three *principal* [a term used by Freyre] Cooking Regions in Brazil: 1) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Bahia; 2) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Northeast Area; and 3) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. However, without describing what characterized these three *principal* Cooking Regions, he would state that “other ‘less important’ [emphasis added] culinary traditions could be added, with their own colors, to the map that would be organized for the foods, dessert and trays variations in our country” (page 31). In this sense, he points to the existence of four Cooking Regions, namely: 1) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Far North; 2) the Cooking Regions of the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro and the Western Area of the Brazilian state of São Paulo; 3) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul; and 4) the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Backcountry (the Sertão, one of the four subregions of the northeast of Brazil).

According to Freyre,²⁷ the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Far North, with a predominance of Brazilian Native population influence, was characterized by the culinary complex of turtle, Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and açai palm (*Euterpe oleracea*). The Cooking Regions of the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro and the Western Area of the Brazilian state of São Paulo were characterized by identical agrarian-patriarchal traditions and the same abundant use of sugar as in the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Northeast Area. The Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul was described as having “somewhat rustic foods, though more abundant than the others in good meat, characteristically eaten as an almost raw barbecue and with knives” (page 32). Finally, the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Backcountry, comprising areas

[...] characterized by a still unrefined cuisine; the use of dried meat, carne-de-sol (Portuguese for “sun-dried meat,” literally “meat of sun,” also called jabá; it consists of heavily salted beef, which is exposed to the sun for one or two days to cure) or Brazilian state Ceará meat with milk flour, umbuzada (also known as imbuzada, a typical drink of northeast Brazil) and requeijão (a milk-derived product, produced in Portugal and Brazil); also by using quibebe (a kind of winter squash puree), of Franciscan simplicity, and rapadura (a solid form of sucrose); and in the forests of the center of the country by the use of hunting and river fish – all ascetically and rustically prepared (page 32).

The characterization of the Cooking Regions of Brazil carried out by Freyre in the *Manifesto*²⁷ have much resemblance to the concepts and characterization of Brazilian *food areas* presented by Josué de Castro in *Geografia da Fome*,³⁴ a subject of analysis in a previous study.⁴² Let us remember that, instead of working with the concept of *cooking region*, Castro used in *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ the concepts of *food areas and sub-areas, diet system, habitual diet, basic diet, food culture, food habits, dietary patterns and Brazilian food mosaic*. We highlight that in a very rare passage of *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ (page 163), we identify the use of the expressions *Brazilian Northeast Cuisine* and *Brazilian state of Bahia Cuisine*, an expression (*cuisine*) used by Freyre both in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ as in his other works,

such as *Casa-grande e senzala*,²⁶ *Sobrados e mucambos*⁴¹ (The Mansions and the Shanties), *Nordeste*³² and *Açúcar*³¹ (Sugar). In Freyre's works, the most used related expressions are: *nourishment*, *food*, *cooking*, *cuisine*, *diet*, *dietary habits*, *recipes*, *diet system* (also used by Josué de Castro), *culinary traditions* and *culinary values*.

It should be noted that, compared to the characterization of the *cooking regions* of Brazil held by Freyre in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ the map of the five Brazilian *food areas* outlined by Josué de Castro in *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ is much more complete, comprehensive and detailed. One should notice, however, the advance of Freyre's approach, since the *Manifesto* was originally published in 1926^{27, 33}; *Casa-grande e senzala*, in 1933;²⁶ *Sobrados e mucambos*, in 1936;⁴¹ *Nordeste*, in 1937³² and *Açúcar*, in 1939,³¹ while the first edition of *Geografia da Fome* was published in 1946.^{34,35}

It seems to us that this line of analysis used by Freyre in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ taking regional cooking as one of the central pillars of explanation/composition of a population's identity process was quite unique and daring for the context of its disclosure. In fact, as pointed out in a previous study,²⁵ the sociological approach that Freyre introduced in the early 1930s on the Brazilian society's eating pattern and habits, particularly focusing its socio-cultural aspects, had a strong influence on Brazilian scientists participating in the nutrition field constitution process. In this sense, *Casa-grande e senzala*,²⁶ originally published in 1933, was regarded as the first and most comprehensive sociological essay on the Brazilian society's eating pattern and habits.²⁵

As a result, continuing the analytical framework started in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ it is possible to consider *Sobrados e mucambos*,⁴¹ originally published in 1936, as the second and most complete socio-anthropological essay on the Brazilian society's eating pattern and habits. In *Nordeste*,³² originally published in 1937, less densely than in *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ and *Sobrados e mucambos*,⁴¹ it is also possible to identify an important and unique contribution on positive and negative aspects of the sugarcane monoculture influence on the Brazilian society's eating pattern and habits. In *Açúcar*,³¹ originally published in 1939, also in a unique and daring way, Freyre makes an important compilation of traditional recipes of Brazilian northeast cakes and pastries, closing, it seems to us, the analysis cycle started in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ which takes *cooking* as one of the pillars of the authenticity of the Brazilian social formation.

It is also noteworthy that the map of the five different Brazilian *food areas* outlined by Josué de Castro³⁴ seems to be characterized by the centrality of the "geographical aspects," while the approach of the seven *cooking regions* described by Freyre in the *Manifesto*²⁷ seems to highlight the "cultural aspects." Both approaches have elements of agreement as well as disagreement.

Thus, the five different food areas defined by Josué de Castro in *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ were distributed as follows: (1) *Amazon Food Area* – At the time, it would cover the states of Amazonas and Pará, part of states of Mato Grosso, Goiás and Maranhão and the territories of Amapá

and Rio Branco. By the characteristics reported, it corresponded to the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Far North identified by Freyre in the *Manifesto*;²⁷ (2) *Northeast Sugarcane Mill Food Area or Northeastern Wood Zone* – at the time it would correspond to the entire northeastern coast from the states of Bahia to Ceará, comprising a territorial range with an average width of 80 km (49.7 miles). By the characteristics reported, it would correspond to the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Northeast Area identified by Freyre in the *Manifesto*;²⁷ (3) *Northeastern Backcountry Food Area* – corresponding, at the time, to the central lands of Brazilian states Piauí, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe and Bahia. By the characteristics reported, it would partially correspond to the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Backcountry identified by Freyre in the *Manifesto*;²⁷ (4) *Central-West Food Area* – it would cover Brazilian states Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso. By the characteristics reported, it could correspond to the Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais and partially to the Cooking Region of the Brazilian Backcountry identified by Freyre in the *Manifesto*;²⁷ and (5) *Brazilian Far South Cooking Region* – which at the time would cover Brazilian states Guanabara (a Brazilian city-state that existed from 1960 to 1975), Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. By the characteristics reported, it would correspond to the Cooking Regions of the state of Rio de Janeiro, the western area of São Paulo and of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, identified by Freyre in the *Manifesto*.²⁷

One should also highlight that, regarding the Brazilian Far South Cooking Region, Josué de Castro has emphasized the presence of different food subareas in the region: (1) Subarea of Italian influence, characterized by a wide wheat consumption in the form of macaroni, ravioli and spaghetti; (2) Subarea located in Rio Grande do Sul, characterized by the food complex of barbecue and (traditional South American caffeine-rich infused drink) mate; (3) Subarea of Japanese influence, located around the city of São Paulo and other urban centers, characterized by an abundant consumption of vegetables; and (4) Subarea of Germanic influence, characterized by a more frequent consumption of oats, rye, lentils, potherbs, fruit, pork (sausages, bacon, ham, smoked food), rye bread, sauerkraut and beer.^{34,42} Therefore, the only one among these food subareas of *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ that would have a corresponding cooking region according to the description in the *Manifesto*²⁷ would be the one from Rio Grande do Sul (Cooking Region of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul). However, in other passages of the *Manifesto*²⁷ and in other works by Freyre previously mentioned, such as *Sobrados e mucambos*⁴¹ and *Nordeste*,³² it is possible to see passages in which the author refers to the influences of other ethnic and cultural groups (German, Arabic, Spanish, Dutch, Israelis, Italians, Syrians) in composing the Brazilian cuisine.

In turn, regarding the Northeast Sugarcane Mill Food Area, Josué de Castro has pointed out the existence of different food subareas in the northeast region. Initially, he distinguished between two food subareas: the coastal and the forestal or sugarcane-based. Throughout his approach, he has referred to a food subarea of (mollusk) sururu (*Mytella charruana*) in the state of

Alagoas and the specificity of the cuisine from Bahia. In the end, he has also described the food area of cocoa which at the time stretched from Recôncavo in south Bahia until Espírito Santo.^{34,42} Therefore, the points in agreement between the *Manifesto*²⁷ and *Geografia da Fome*³⁴ are the culinary characterizations of the Northeast Sugarcane Mill and the cuisine from Bahia.

The ethnic-cultural influences in shaping *Brazilian Cuisine*

In a previous study,²⁵ which focused on the analysis of the Brazilian colonial society's consumption pattern and eating habits held by Freyre in *Casa-grande e senzala*,²⁶ it was identified that this author's approach had as a presupposition the simultaneous articulation of three explanatory approaches: ethnic-cultural, socio-economic and geographical.

In the ethnic-cultural approach, Freyre sought to show that it was the mixture of cuisines of the three ethnicities (Native Brazilian, black African and white Portuguese) which formed the mestizo cooking: for him the authentic Brazilian cuisine. In the socio-economic approach, he understood that the Brazilian cuisine, particularly in the sugarcane wood area, was the product of an economic and social system based on a slaveholding latifundium monoculture. And in the geographic approach, he considered that certain physical and geographical conditions, such as soil, climate and rainfall, contributed to shaping the national cuisine.²⁵

In the *Manifesto*,²⁷ however, perhaps by the characteristics of the works, Freyre's approach to the enhancement of regional cooking had as a central focus the ethnic-cultural influences. In this sense, he advocated the hypothesis that the base and the aesthetics of the main Brazilian regional cuisines are the products of three major ethnic-cultural influences: *Portuguese, African and Amerindian*. However, throughout his argument, as mentioned earlier, he also points to the existence of other ethnic and cultural influences that contributed to the diversification and specificities of regional cooking.

The geographical distribution map of these ethnic-cultural influences was thus traced by Freyre:²⁷ 1) On the coast, from Maranhão to Rio de Janeiro or to Santos, the Portuguese influence would prevail; 2) In Bahia, the African influence would prevail; 3) In the far north, the Amerindian influence was particularly notable; 4) In Rio Grande do Sul and in Santa Catarina, "considerable traces of Spanish and German influence would be found, giving new flavors to the dishes and new looks to old food habits from Lusitanians, Azoreans or the people from São Paulo" (page 32); 5) In São Paulo and in Paraná, he identified the existence of "signs of Italian influence and some Syrian or Arab influence, as well as Israeli, also present in Rio de Janeiro" (page 32); 6) In the agrarian northeast region, according to him, it seemed to experience a better balance or harmonization of the three dominant influences: there would not be "an excessive Portuguese influence as in

the capital of Brazil [at the time, Rio de Janeiro], nor an excessive African influence as in Bahia, nor the almost exclusively Amerindian influence as in the far north” (page 33). Therefore, for Freyre,²⁷ the northeastern cuisine was the one that best expressed the synthesis or syncretism of the three ethnicities’ cuisines (Amerindian, Portuguese and African), being the best to represent/express the Brazilian cuisine.

Criticism of this understanding by Freyre is frequent in the literature analyzed.^{21-24,28-30} Amaral Jr.,²⁸ for example, upon criticizing the idea that the northeastern ethnic-cultural type would be representative of the national identity, argued that it should be seen in the historical context that generated it – a time of shock between traditional and modern sociabilities arising from the slaveholding agrarian-patriarchal society decline and the rise of an urban-industrial capitalist society. It should be remembered that Freyre’s life story was closely identified with the slaveholding agrarian-patriarchal society in Pernambuco.²⁵ For Amaral Jr.,²⁸ Freyre’s approach to the northeast region was one of the main elements in the historical construction of the concept of a northeastern identity (*nordestinidade*) and even of northeast as an identity and ideological emblem. This approach by Freyre, according to Amaral Jr.,²⁸ could be explained by two romantic reasons: “the dream of the ideal community and the hostility towards the Western bourgeois rationality” (page 229).

The duality between traditional and modern, rural and urban, past and future, preservation and transformation, regional and universal and other ambivalences shall characterize Freyre’s approach to hybridism or interpenetration of cultures contained both in the *Manifesto*²⁷ as in all of his works, as pointed out by many of his interpreters.^{28-30,33}

In the sections that follow, this discussion on the approach of the ethnic and cultural influences that contributed to shaping the regional/national cuisine contained in the *Manifesto*²⁷ shall be resumed since we shall examine the specific contributions identified by Freyre for each ethnic-cultural element.

The Portuguese cuisine contribution

In Freyre’s approach contained in the *Manifesto*²⁷ on the ethnic and cultural influences of Brazilian cuisine in general and the agrarian northeast region in particular, the role of the white colonizer (Portuguese) has gained an obvious centrality. For Freyre, without the contribution of the Portuguese colonizers, “the cuisine situation of Brazil would be very different. There would be no national unity under the regional variety” (page 33).

The interesting analysis that Freyre²⁷ carries out on the process of constitution of the Portuguese cuisine itself should be emphasized, highlighting that the culinary values brought by the Portuguese to Brazil were historical products assimilated from different culinary cultures:

The Portuguese, with their suitability for assimilation, brought to table food, spices, sweets, flavors, colors, dish adornments, customs and food rites from the finest civilizations of the Eastern world and North Africa. These values and rites were joined to longstanding combinations of Christian dishes with Moors and Israeli delicacies, among which, it seems, must be placed the famous Portuguese stew, related to the “puchero” (a type of stew originally from Spain). The custom of the so-called “slept” feijoada seems to have been assimilated by the Luso-Brazilian from the Israeli, a friend of those mysteries for spending and the need to hide certain delicacies as for ritual or liturgy, from the eyes of Old Christians (page 33-34).

Indeed, as pointed out by Freyre,²⁷ the Portuguese colonizer already brought to Brazil a Lusitanian cuisine merged by the interpenetration of different culinary values, arising from the economic, commercial and social interrelations made among Portugal, its colonies and trading partners within the context of mercantilism and the big navigations.

Freyre's²⁷ analysis also identifies evidence of how the culinary traditions brought by the Portuguese were “reinvented” in Brazil, due to different environmental, economic and socio-historical conditions:

*All these meal and dessert traditions from Portugal – the Christian, pagan, Moorish, Israeli, courtly, bourgeois, peasant, monastic or friarly, the nunlike – were somehow forwarded from Portugal to Brazil, where Portuguese matrons [...] did not take long to venture into new combinations with meats, fruits, herbs and spices from the American land. Adventures in experimenting continued by Brazilian sugarcane mill ladies, the mansion lady owners, some, great delicacy makers, others, confectioners, almost all experts in making cashew wine, passion fruit liqueur, the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) and sugarcane juice: all symbols of a patriarchal hospitality in this part of Brazil before “coffee time” became widespread as a sign of politeness or welcome. On the other hand, where a monastery, a religious people gathering or a nunnery were raised it is almost certain that a new stronghold of culinary values was also rising in Brazil. A new laboratory in which monks or nuns would specialize in inventing new culinary combinations, in the good Portuguese traditions [...]. (pages 34-35).*

Importantly, the description made by Freyre on the role of women (Portuguese matrons, sugarcane mill ladies, mansion lady owners) in the foreground and in the background religious people (monks or nuns) in the process of transmission and invention of culinary traditions/values. Within the patriarchal society, focused on male hegemony, the kitchen/cooking were an important locus for feminine power exercise. Such passage leads us to interpret it in the light of the concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *symbolic capital* contained in (French social scientist Pierre) Bourdieu's.^{37,38}

Another highlight concerns the reference to the incorporation of the food habit of offering/taking “a small cup of coffee” as opposed to the cashew wine, passion fruit liqueur and sugarcane juice of tamarind – symbols of patriarchal hospitality Freyre. It is an interesting culinary example of Freyre's ambivalence in portraying the opposition between traditional culinary values and

modern culinary values, between Regional Cuisine and Global Cuisine. In this case, one can see a certain rejection/denial by the author of the *Manifesto*²⁷ incorporating a new food habit arising from the rise of the economics of coffee, as opposed to the desire to preserve eating habits linked to the declining sugar economics.

The contribution of Brazilian Native population cuisine

Although in the *Manifesto*²⁷ Freyre mentions the Amerindian and African influences in shaping the Brazilian cuisine, the records on the specific contribution of the Amerindian cuisine are very scarce or almost nonexistent. In one of the few passages in which the participation of this cuisine is mentioned, he says that “such masters [the Portuguese and their descendants] were joined by female peasants and black women from Minas Gerais with their also considerable knowledge on herbs, spices, roots, fruits of animals from the tropics” (page 35).

Therefore we stress this important limitation of the *Manifesto*²⁷ in relation to not having explored with due depth the Amerindian culinary contribution in shaping the national cuisine. This gap can also be extrapolated to other works of Freyre, such as *Casa-grande e senzala*.²⁶ Other authors, such as Santos,⁴³ have also identified this *underestimation* of Freyre’s approach on the contribution of the Native Brazilians’ culture in shaping the Brazilian cuisine. For Santos,⁴³ the hierarchical approach that Freyre makes on the three major cultures that influenced the shaping of Brazilian cuisine, placing the Native Brazilians’ culture in a lower level, below the African and Portuguese cultures, may be explained by the fact that the Native Brazilians are not the focus of socio-economic relations in the agrarian-patriarchal society, nor as close to the sugarcane mill families’ daily lives (the *mansions or the slave owner’s residence*), as black Africans were – the central focus of the *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ author’s analysis.

Analyzing the works by Gilberto Freyre and (Brazilian anthropologist, folklorist, journalist, historian, lawyer, and lexicographer Luís da) Câmara Cascudo (1898-1986),⁴⁴ Tempass⁴⁵ also seeks to list possible reasons for such authors’ neglect and hence the invisibility of pastry from Native Brazilians in the national culinary shaping process. For Tempass,⁴⁵ far from being simple suppliers of native ingredients, Indigenous people in Brazil contributed with a complex know-how for Brazilian cuisine. In view of environmental, historical and social conditions of the first centuries of colonization in Brazil, the use and/or adaptation of the *food system* (based on the concept proposed by Hernández and Arnáiz³⁵) of Indigenous people in Brazil were vital strategies that enabled the Portuguese and other European peoples to settle in the country.

In the specific case of national sweetmeats, Tempass⁴⁵ advocates that the Portuguese and African women had the role of replacing in the native preparations the honey used by the Indigenous people in Brazil with sugar or molasses from sugarcane used by the colonizers. He also argues that

the Portuguese women also adapted the numerous native ingredients in the already traditional sweetmeats recipes brought from Portugal.

In relation to the reasons for the invisibility of the Brazilian Native population's culture, he points out factors linked to origin and social class distinction, gender and social representation of the first settlers, chroniclers and classic authors, who influenced the historical underreporting of the Brazilian Native population's culinary contribution in shaping the national cuisine.⁴⁵

The African cuisine contribution

African cuisine contribution, in turn, is registered in several passages of the *Manifesto*.²⁷ In one of these passages, Freyre states:

In the meantime, tradition was kept, coming from Portugal, of many Moorish and African delicacies: alfenim (or alfinim, a white dough of sugar and sweet almond oil), alfeolo (also alfelô and aflô), (North African Berber dish of small steamed balls of semolina) couscous, for example. They were kept on the trays alongside Brazilianisms: the cocadas (traditional coconut candy or confectionery, maybe an adaptation of the Indian sweetmeat), candied cashew nuts, rapaduras, dried cashew sweetmeat, tapioca [(a starch extracted from cassava root (Manihot esculenta)] cake, canjica (or mungunzá or munguzá, a Brazilian sweet dish), pamonha (tamales, a corn-based starchy dough, steamed in corn husks), dry and wet tapioca, sold in banana leaves, Brazil nut (Bertholletia excelsa) flour inside a cylindrical paper package, manauê ou manuê (a dense mass of cake; ingredients vary according to the custom of the region) (page 36).

The “baianas” (street food vendor women from the Brazilian state of Bahia; their delicacies and their trays) are extolled in several passages of the *Manifesto*,²⁷ denoting the importance of their contribution to shaping Brazilian cuisine in Freyre's approach:

And the tray went on, becoming, in the main cities of Brazil, not only in the northeast region, an art, a science, a specialty of the “baianas” or black women: often huge fat ladies sitting at a street corner or the shadow of a church, they seemed to grow and become so corpulent and the center of the street or the church courtyard. Their majesty was sometimes as of monuments. Gigantic statues in flesh. And not simple women like others (page 36).

In this passage, which draws our attention is one of the characteristics of the “baianas” nutritional profile drawn by Freyre – *often huge fat ladies*, which may be associated with the emergence of obesity from the slaveholding agrarian-patriarchal system. In fact, in other of Freyre's works we have identified, in several passages, statements that remind us of the existence of an obesogenic food and nutrition environment shared by all segments of society. In many of these passages, such characteristics of the population's nutritional profile, related to obesity, are

reported by Freyre as associated with eating habits based on consumption of sugarcane and its derivatives. An interesting issue that would need to be explored in future research.

In our understanding, however, in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ perhaps because of the characteristics of the work, although emphasized, the role of the African influence in shaping the northeastern cuisine in particular and Brazilian cuisine in general has also been underestimated or little explored. In others of Freyre's works, such as *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ and *Sobrados e mucambos*,⁴¹ the record of such influence is done with great accuracy and preciousness.

In a previous study, analyzing *Casa-grande e senzala*,²⁶ Vasconcelos²⁵ has noted that in this work Freyre sought to record a series of pieces of evidence in order to demonstrate that it was the mixture of the cuisines of the three ethnicities that shaped the mestizo cuisine – for him, the authentic Brazilian cuisine. However, for Vasconcelos,²⁵ throughout the analysis of that work,²⁶ it seems that Freyre would seek to assign greater weight to the African slaves' contribution. One of the passages highlighted by Vasconcelos²⁵ demonstrates the concept of hybridity of the three ethnicities:

For food needs, almost the same indigenous or imported plants were being grown from north to south throughout the first colonial centuries. In cassava flour, the basis of our food system was established. Besides flour, maize was grown. And everywhere almost the same colonial table would be seen, with regional specialties only with fruit and vegetables, providing more color or local flavor, at certain points the largest of the Brazilian Native population's influence. In others, lively and exotic colors, showing the greater proximity of Africa. And in Pernambuco, as the point closest to Europe, keeping a balance between the three influences: the Brazilian Native population, the African and the Portuguese (page 32).

Contributions of patriarchal sugarcane mills for a regional cuisine

In describing the possible contributions of sugarcane mills (patriarchal sugarcane mills) to the cuisine of the northeast region, Freyre²⁷ makes, in fact, a valuable account of the sugarcane mill owners' eating habits or the mansion (slave owner's residence) owners. However, in relation to a more detailed description about the patriarchal society's eating habits contained in *Casa-grande e senzala*²⁶ and in *Sobrados e mucambos*,⁴¹ it is observed that the report on this topic contained in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ although relevant and interesting, was greatly underestimated. As for the culinary values of the sugarcane mill owners, the account of the *Manifesto*²⁷ praises the tables diversity and abundance, especially on days of festivity:

Of the old sugarcane mills of the region, one which has not had their specialty cuisine, even if modest, is rare: a quibebe or a pirão (mush, a traditional dish of Angola and Brazil cuisines, made with cassava flour) or a farofa (a toasted cassava flour mixture eaten in South America), all so delicious. [...] And from several wealthier sugarcane mills it is know that, for the pleasure of the pirão eaters, they have until recently kept

the tradition of rich meals, always ready to receive guests, as if every day were holy or a feast day: Holy Saturday (the Saturday of Holy Week), gladdened by fried crabs; São João (John the Baptist, also known as John the Baptizer), colored by the yellow of canjicas sprinkled with cinnamon and the pamonhas wrapped in unripe corn straw; or Carnival, sweetened by filhoses (a traditional Christmas dessert in Portugal) with honey from the sugarcane mills. This tradition of abundant meals in the sugarcane mills comes from a remote time (page 37-38).

Regarding the ruling classes' meals abundance, in a certain passage of the *Manifesto*²⁷ a brief and ironic mention to the possible contribution of Dutch cuisine to regional eating habits appears. In fact, there is a clear underestimation made by Freyre²⁷ as to the Dutch influence in shaping the regional cooking:

The chronicles about the Dutch rule in the northeast region also record dinners and even sumptuous feasts, some given by Conde Maurício de Nassau (Maurice of Orange, also known as Maurice of Nassau, stadtholder of all the provinces of the Dutch Republic) himself, to important men of the region, of course to soften in them the hate towards the so-called Nordic invasion which, incidentally, has left in the northeast region language a Dutch dish name: brote (page 38).

In another passage of the *Manifesto*,²⁷ Freyre reports the culinary refinement of nobility houses and mansions of the city of Recife, seen from the late eighteenth century, with the decline of the agrarian-patriarchal system:

They were houses where one would eat princely well, the ones from the Recife princes of trade, judiciary, politics, literature, weapons. Where since childhood spoiled slave owners would have their India-imported tea with sequilhos (dry and sweet cookies made of cassava starch) [...]. And all this in the best, finest, most beautiful china. Eaten with silver cutlery, stirred with the best Portuguese silver spoon (pages 38-39).

However, when reading the *Manifesto*,²⁷ a complete failure to mention the consumption and eating habits of the residents of the slave quarters and the poor residents in the sugarcane mills and their vicinity is verified. In others of Freyre's works, previously mentioned, especially *Sobrados e mucambos*⁴¹ and *Nordeste*,³² however, a precise and detailed characterization of consumption and eating habits of these social segments is observed.

In *Sobrados e mucambos*⁴¹ (page 196), in one of the numerous passages on consumption and eating habits of the poor, Freyre describes:

Unlike domestic slaves in the two-story mansions, who would participate, as in the sugarcane mill mansions, of the patriarchal eating, the poor, free since colonial times, had to be happy, in mucambos, huts, tenements, in their own single-story houses, their own two-story houses or rental houses, with cod, dried meat, flour and less blemished potatoes, which they would buy in grocery stores. And with a pittance of fresh meat and beef.

In another passage of *Sobrados e mucambos*⁴¹ (page 202), Freyre also describes the consumption of another animal food – fish – by the lower classes:

Almost the same happened with regard to fish, which at first glance is supposed to be an easy food for the poorest people of the cities, for the population of single-story houses, mucambos and tenements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But the supply of fish also became a trade dominated by big landowners, owners, in the northeast region, of corrals between the beaches and the reefs or with a nursery within the site, by intermediaries and the bourgeoisie of the mansions.

In *Nordeste*³² (page 109), for example, when analyzing the negative effects of the sugarcane monoculture on the working population's life and eating conditions, he says:

Hence deep imbalances in the life and eating of the “coastal” and “woods” people, especially the people of mud houses, the poor and apparently free people living in the sugarcane mills, but prevented, like slaves, from raising animals, planting vegetables, cultivating the land in any other way other than as a service – and an immediate service – for the sugarcane monoculture and its masters. Hence the lack of meat, milk, cheese, vegetables, fruit on the table for much of the people of the sugarcane mill northeast region [...], contrary to the assumption that the old patriarchal mills were all idyllic pieces of some extraordinary Land of Cockaigne.

Threats to culinary values of the Brazilian Northeast according to the *Manifesto*

The changes that would occur from the years 1920-1930 in the population's food and culinary habits, particularly in the northeast region, were foreseen by Freyre in several passages of the *Manifesto*.²⁷ The arrival of the urban-industrial society brought with it threats to the culinary traditions of the northeast region and especially in the area inhabited by Freyre – the capital of the Brazilian state of Pernambuco (Recife). In this perspective, already in the first years of the 1920s he would foreshadow that “all traditional and regional dishes in the northeast region are under threat of disappearing, subdued by foreigners and by the ones from Rio”²⁷ (page 39).

Freyre's²⁷ report on the products served (sold) in the coffee houses of Recife in the early 1920s is a precious record of the changes in eating habits that were already beginning to occur. The

replacement of the consumption of food and traditional/regional drinks for processed foods, for recipes and foreign preparations, was thus identified:

Coming back from Europe three years ago, one of my first deceptions was to know that coconut water was a soft drink that would not be served in the elegant cafés of Recife, where no one should remember to ask for a rice pudding bowl or a munguzá dish or a wet tapioca. [...] The stylish cafés of Recife serve only frenchified sweets and pastel and bottled drinks (page 40).

In this passage, there is another interesting culinary example of Freyre's ambivalence in identifying threats to traditional culinary values of the northeastern cuisine from the apparent opposition between green coconut water (a plant introduced in the country by the Portuguese)⁴⁴ and the bottled drinks (possibly the introduction of soft drinks into Brazilian eating habits), among rice pudding, *munguzá* and tapioca (traditional culinary preparations that synthesize the hybridity of the three ethnicities)^{26,34,44} and frenchified sweets and pastel (the so-called Europeanization of the northeast regional cuisine).^{27,41} In this example, it is also possible to see the sensitivity of Freyre's cultural approach in early warning about the risks of incorporating unhealthy foods to regional cuisine. In this sense, we identify the relative contemporaneity and synchronicity of the *Manifesto*²⁷ in view of the modern movement that seeks to encourage the act of cooking or the development of culinary skills as a strategy to promote an adequate and healthy food.^{8-18,19-20}

Similarly, he has also identified the changes that have begun to occur in the eating habits of the ruling classes of Recife in the years of 1920:

*Not even at Lent these houses go back to their former days of splendor. Already there is almost no home in this decadent northeast region of sugarcane mill owners and nouveaux riches (new money), where the days of fasting succeed, as in the old days, an abundance of coconut fish, fried blue land crab, pitu (*Macrobrachium carcinus*) or shrimp, crab shells and crab pies prepared with pepper²⁷ (page 40).*

At that time, Freyre²⁷ would already identify the increasing replacement of traditional homemade preparations for processed preparations and foods:

Never repudiate so precious traditions to replace them with uncharacteristic canned food, as already prevail in the city houses and begin to prevail in the countryside. The northeast region houses where orthodox regional meals and dessert are still found are rare: oven and stove where one would cook good old-fashioned and traditional delicacies. Sweet desserts in cans abound. Preserved food is plentiful. The French-like pastel (different typical dishes of many countries of Hispanic or Portuguese origin) is king (page 41).

In *Sobrados e mucambos*,⁴¹ first published in 1936, in several passages Freyre resumes his approach on the “Europeanization” of the regional cuisine, describing in a detailed and sophisticated way the changes that would occur in the Brazilian society’s consumption and eating habits, especially since the arrival of the Portuguese royal family (the House of Braganza) to Brazil. Let us look at one of these excerpts:

With the increased Europeanization and wider urbanization of lifestyles, Brazil went through a period of many fake and old goods being presented as good and new, coming directly from Paris to the stores of Brazilian cities Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Salvador, São Paulo, São Luís do Maranhão, Porto Alegre. [...] The kitchens of mansions and two-story houses were certainly filthy. But the food prepared therein was healthier than most coming preserved from Europe. Than the food sometimes served in French hotels or by Italian cooks. However, French-, Italian-, and English-style eating was becoming chic. The English tea and beer would quickly spread among the gentry of the two-story houses. Also the Italian pasta and pastel. The Flemish or Swiss cheeses. The confection of sweets in the mansions, by spinsters, by nuns at convents, by the black people and their trays would be disappearing, losing their charm even for the boys. And the sweets and elegant confectioners becoming French and Italian, as indicated by newspaper ads (pages 366-368, emphasis in the original).

Following the identification of threats to the culinary values of the northeast region, Freyre²⁷ makes clear his *conservative* approach to the *traditional role* of women in the process of maintenance/preservation of regional culinary tradition – the act of cooking as a female attribute:

The new generations of girls do not know anymore, among us, except among the most modest people, to make sweets or traditional and regional stews. They no longer appreciate nor have the time to read the old family recipe books (page 42).

In the conservative perspective on women’s role in Brazilian society and in particular in the northeast region, he praises a blend of duties of the female universe (maternity, cooking and religion):

After the liturgical books, the sweets and stews recipe books are those which should receive from women a more attentive reading. The sense of devotion and obligation should be completed in women from Brazil, making them good Christians and at the same time good confectioners, in order to better raise their children and contribute to national happiness. No people are happy when their women lack cooking skills. This absence is almost as serious as the absence of religious faith²⁷ (page 42).

In Freyre’s perspective contained in the *Manifesto*,²⁷ regional cooking (as well as regional architecture and literature) would have a central role in the regional *civilizing process*. In Freyre’s words,²⁷ regional cuisine “is also an expression of civilization, character or regional genius” (page 43).

For the author of the *Manifesto*,²⁷ as well as the agrarian-patriarchal economics, other values such as culinary tradition were declining or, at least, in crisis, in northeastern Brazil. Therefore, assuming the centrality of regional cooking in the civilizing process of a population, the prospect envisioned by Freyre²⁷ was quite pessimistic: “Crisis in the cuisine means an entire civilization in danger: the danger of being impaired” (page 42).

In this sense, the *First Regionalist Conference of Northeastern Brazil*, arranged by Freyre and his peers, would be a relevant locus for discussion of alternatives against the mischaracterization of regional cooking. Then, some recommendations were proposed by Freyre²⁷ in order to avoid the dangers of regional cooking mischaracterization. On the one hand, such recommendations to be adopted denote, as a whole, *such a conservative* character as his way of addressing/identifying such dangers was:

1st – May someone take the initiative to establish in Recife a café or restaurant not lacking in local color – some palm trees, some strings for kites, an aquarium for blue land crabs at the door and a black woman by the stove, making glue or tapioca – a café or restaurant specializing in good traditions of the northeastern cuisine; 2nd – May the all-girls schools provide cooking courses in which the same traditions be kept; 3rd – May all who possess at home notebooks or ancient manuscripts of desserts, cakes, stews, roasts recipes cooperate together for gathering this wealth, now scattered in family manuscripts²⁷ (page 43).

On the other hand, the recommendations in the *Manifesto*²⁷ also express the characteristic ambivalence of Freyre’s approach:

*Ideally, Recife should have its regional restaurant where the confectionary and ancient cuisines would be fostered in the middle of some old and regional forest such as the one in Dois Irmãos (a district in Recife), where the native inhabitants or outsiders would quietly enjoy eating their roast lowland paca (*Cuniculus paca*) or fried blue land crab with pirão (fish sauce) and pepper sauce in the shade of tabebuia trees, visgueiros (*Parkia pendula*), mango trees; where children would enjoy candied nuts, tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) and sugarcane juice, tapioca cake [...] (page 44).*

It should be noticed that, from the recommendations formulated in the *Manifesto*²⁷, at least number 3 Freyre was able to partially achieve with the publication in 1939, of *Açúcar – Uma sociologia do doce, com receitas de bolos e doces do Nordeste do Brasil*³¹ (*Sugar – A sociology of sweets, with recipes for cakes and sweets from Northeastern Brazil*).

Final thoughts

This rereading of the *Manifesto Regionalista* of 1926²⁷ denotes Freyre's pioneering nature to draw attention to the perils of mischaracterization that the northeastern regional cuisine, especially in Pernambuco, would undergo from the decline of the slaveholding agrarian-patriarchal society and the rise of an urban-industrial capitalist economy. What also stands out is the pioneering spirit of the strategies recommended for validation/preservation of the aesthetics and tradition of the northeastern cuisine, which he considered one that best expressed the synthesis or syncretism of the cuisines of the three ethnicities (Amerindian, Portuguese and African) – therefore, the one that would best represent the Brazilian cuisine, one that would express the national culinary identity.

In reviewing the *Manifesto*, what surprises us is the realization of the centrality of the cooking topic as an interpretative element of shaping and transforming the Brazilian society. What surprises us even more is the fact that this topic is recurrent in the four works published in the 1930s, which complement our review of the *Manifesto*. Moreover, according to some analyses, it appears that the cooking topic permeates Freyre's entire intellectual history and he can be considered a pioneer of "History, Anthropology and Sociology of Food and Nutrition" in Brazil.

Except for the historical and temporal distance of almost a century, the profound technological, economical, social and cultural changes that have occurred and the intense movement of paradigms, it is still possible to observe a certain proximity among some of the strategies for the preservation of regional cuisine contained in the *Manifesto*²⁷ and those proposed by the second edition of *Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira* (Food Guide for the Brazilian Population), centered on the contemporary paradigm of promoting healthy eating, in the validation of consumption of food that is fresh or minimally processed and the hostility towards processed and highly processed products. In this perspective, we identify the relative "contemporaneity" of this work by Freyre. When the *Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira* recommends that people, without gender and age distinction, develop and share culinary skills as a strategy for *overcoming obstacles* to ensure healthy eating, it resembles, updates and corrects the gender bias (prejudice/discrimination) of the recommendations of the *Manifesto*, targeted exclusively to women.

Although located in different historical contexts, in the case of the *Manifesto*, the moment of transition between the agrarian-patriarchal society and the urban-industrial capitalist society and, in the case of the *Guia*, the moment of transition between the financial capitalist society and the informational capitalist society, it is possible to identify other similarities between the two. Both adopt assumptions considered relatively conservative, anchored in the appreciation of the past, traditions, habitus and hostility towards changes/transformations, the new, the modernity. In the case of the *Manifesto*, the advocacy of the agrarian-patriarchal regional cooking or the

northeastern culinary traditions and the hostility towards foreign cuisine (the Europeanization of regional cooking). And in the case of the *Guia*, the appreciation of *home cooking* based on fresh food and the hostility towards the industrialization of food, especially those highly processed products.

Another similarity that can be seen in both movements (*Manifesto* and *Guia*) is the romantic conception of an ideal society. In the *Manifesto*, the ideal of the northeast region and the preservation of the *northeastern cuisine* seemed to propose some kind of closing for the cultural boundaries of the region to external threats. The *Guia*, centered on contemporary paradigms such as those promoting an adequate and healthy food, the ecological sustainability of the planet and the slow food movement, seems to propose the closing of *Brazilian cuisine* to some “benefits” of the current stage of development of the informational capitalist society.

Old and new paradigms accompany the profound technological, economical, social and cultural changes that have occurred with the advancement of the informational capitalist society. The central topic discussed in this article – the food or cooking system, the extreme speed at which the production and circulation of food products (goods) occur and the ideas about food (symbolic values) – makes us reflect on the limitations and possibilities to support arguments in favor of a regional cuisine. In view of the new global geopolitical configuration, what are the possibilities and limitations of a regional cuisine? Would it be possible to trace or impose boundaries among regional, national and global cuisines? Is the global integration of cuisines possible? Or, as a certain author says, is the global standardization of cooking or eating habits going to be possible?

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