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### The recognition of foods and food-related knowledge and practices as an intangible cultural heritage

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#### Abstract

The article analyzes some recent initiatives of patrimonialization of food, knowledge and eating practices at international and national levels. UNESCO analyzes the recognition processes, as an "intangible cultural heritage," of the Mediterranean diet, the traditional Mexican cuisine, the gastronomic French food, *Washoku* (the Japanese culinary system), and Croatian gingerbread. IPHAN has recorded as intangible cultural heritage: the craft of *acarajé* from Bahia, the traditional production of *cajuína* in Piauí; the artisan way of making white cheese in Minas Gerais, and the traditional agricultural system of the Rio Negro, Amazonas state. There are other ongoing initiatives such as the craft of the *tacacazeiras* in Pará. The article discusses the main questions around such initiatives, and the potential improvements they can pose in promoting food diversity as an expression of cultural diversity.

**Keywords**: Food. Food-related Knowledge and Practices. Cultural Heritage. Biodiversity.

#### Introduction

### Food, knowledge and eating practices, a cultural heritage

The recognition that human food eating is much more than a biological fact, but a social and cultural act, is already consolidated in anthropological studies.<sup>1-6</sup> Food culture has been understood as "the set of representations, beliefs, knowledge and inherited and/or learned practices that are associated with food and are shared by individuals from a given culture or a particular social group."<sup>3</sup>

For Matta,<sup>7</sup> food heritage, more broadly, can be defined as "a set of tangible and intangible elements of food cultures considered as a shared heritage or as a common good by a collectivity." Food heritage involves tangible components – such as the food itself, artifacts and culinary utensils – and intangible ones – like practices, knowledge, representations, etc. It is not possible to understand cultural assets without considering the values and meanings invested in them (their intangible dimension), and it is not possible to understand the dynamics of an intangible heritage without the knowledge of the tangible culture that supports it.<sup>8</sup>

Food products as well as the objects and knowledge used in the production, processing and consumption of food, have been identified as cultural objects carrying a social group's history and identity.<sup>2</sup> Food implies the imaginariness and representations, involving choices, symbols and classifications. And different forms of food production and consumption reveal cultural identities.<sup>1</sup>

In a world increasingly dominated by a homogeneous and industrial food model, a strong appreciation movement of local and territorialized food systems is paradoxically raised, bearing important cultural references that must be preserved. If the different food systems correspond to different cultural systems<sup>3</sup>, local food products, practices and knowledge have become a symbol of cultural resistance against homogenization. After all, food expresses cultural traditions and practices of the communities that produce and consume it, and are embedded in specific social and cultural systems that attribute different meanings to what, how, when and with whom is eaten.<sup>1</sup>

It is in this context that we must understand the growing recognition of food, knowledge and eating practices as a cultural heritage, both by international agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and national ones, such as the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN).

# UNESCO and the recognition of foods, traditional dishes and food systems as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Internationally, the recognition of food systems as a cultural heritage has taken place mainly within the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003 but which entered into force in 2006. According to this document, an intangible cultural heritage refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills – instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with them – that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. For UNESCO, an "intangible cultural heritage" is manifested in particular in the following fields: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; artistic expressions; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craft techniques.

Among the Brazilian intangible cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO, are a capoeira circle, *Círio de Nazaré* (The Taper of Our Lady of Nazareth) in the city of Belém, Pará, and *Frevo*, performing arts of the Carnival of Recife. The Indigenous Festivity dedicated to the Dead in Mexico, Marimba music and traditional chants from Colombia's South Pacific region and Huaconada, ritual dance of Mito, dance ritual of the Peruvian Andes, among others, have also been recognized.

The recognition as an intangible cultural heritage implies the country's obligation to adopt safeguard measures, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage." Moreover, it entails the right to access cooperation funds and international assistance to safeguard the asset recognized.

More recently, UNESCO has included several foods, knowledge and eating practices in its Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists. Here are some examples, and then an analysis will be done.

**Mediterranean diet** – recognition was originally proposed (and approved by UNESCO) in 2010 by Italy, Spain, Morocco and Greece, but in 2013 Portugal, Croatia and Cyprus were also included. The Mediterranean diet is associated with cultivation and consumption of olive oil, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, some grain and wine as well as the skills, knowledge, practices and traditions associated with the production and consumption of these foods ("from the landscape to the table"), and is considered nutritious and healthy, as well as responsible for the longevity of the communities that adopt it. The practices of camaraderie among diners and their importance to strengthen social ties were also compelling reasons for their recognition.<sup>9</sup>

**Traditional Mexican cuisine of the Michoacán region** – recognized in 2010, it is defined by UNESCO as a "comprehensive cultural model comprising farming, ritual practices and celebrations (as the Day of the Dead), customs, skills and traditional cooking techniques involving the collective participation in the entire food chain: from food planting and harvesting to its preparation and consumption. The system is based on maize, beans, and peppers, but includes other native ingredients, such as a wide variety of tomatoes, squash, avocados, cocoa and vanilla. It includes unique agricultural practices, such as *chinampas* ("islands or floating gardens," built on wood braided on lake areas in which agricultural cultivation is carried out) and *milpas* (crops rotation of maize and other crops, especially beans and squash, in which, after two years of cultivation, the land "rests" for about eight years for the soil to recover its fertility); cooking processes such as nixtamalization (a process for cooking and maceration of ripe maize in an alkaline solution). Unlike the Mediterranean diet, that highlights common elements of a food system present in several countries around the Mediterranean, the Mexican designation has focused on a specific regional cuisine (Michoacán), seen as a metonymy of the country's food culture as a whole<sup>10</sup>, despite the great cultural diversity of the Mexican food traditions.

**Gastronomic food of the French, or "French-style" meal** – also recognized in 2010, the "French" designation emphasizes not a specific or regional cuisine, or even typical food, dishes or ingredients, but what is perceived (in the so-called "culinary imaginariness"<sup>10</sup>) as a traditional French way of consuming food. It is described as a French social practice or custom to celebrate important events such as births, birthdays, weddings, etc., in which eating together and meeting people to pleasurably eat and drink in a structured and ritualized form is emphasized, including the combination of food and wine, table decoration and structure of the meal course sequence (with appetizer, starter, main course, cheese and dessert), among other elements.

**The traditional gingerbread craft from northern Croatia (Licitar)** –recognized in 2010. Although the gingerbread recipe has simple ingredients (sugar, flour, water, yeast, ginger and spices) and is widespread in other countries, the Croats argue that they were the ones who developed various ways to shape and decorate it with bright colors and messages for weddings and other celebrations. For the Croats, although the tradition of making gingerbread is multinational, it was in Croatia that it "became an art," and one of the symbols of Croatian cultural identity, especially in Zagreb.<sup>11</sup>

*Washoku*, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year – recognized by UNESCO in 2013. As explained by Kumakura Isao,<sup>12</sup> one of the authors of the Japanese proposal sent to UNESCO, *Washoku* is not a specific dish, but an entire system comprising the daily household meals (which include rice, soup, a main course and two or three side dishes

and pickles), foods associated with feasts and ceremonies (such as *zoni*<sup>\*</sup> *and osechi*<sup>\*\*</sup>) and regional culinary specialties. *Washoku* uses various seafoods, agricultural products and edible wild plants, and respect for nature is one of the characteristic features of this food system, in which local and seasonal food is emphasized, seeking to respect and enhance the natural flavors. In terms of tastes, *Washoku* attempts to highlight *Umami*, one of the five basic tastes, along with sweet, sour, bitter and salty. *Umami* is a word of Japanese origin meaning "pleasant savory taste."\*\*\* The request for recognition by the Japanese government was motivated on the one hand, by its concern about the low food self-sufficiency of the country (very dependent on imports), by a nationalist sentiment, as the traditional food culture is closely associated with the Japanese cultural identity, and the increase of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity associated with the consumption of Western fast food, especially in large towns and among young people.

Other foods recognized by UNESCO were *Keşkek*, also known as *Kashkak* and *Kashkek*, a traditional and ceremonial Turkish wheat and meat dish (2011); Turkish coffee culture and tradition (2013); and South Korean *kimchi*, also spelled *kimchee* or *gimchi*, made of pickled vegetables during the traditional *gimjang*, also spelled *kimjang*, the traditional process of preparation and preservation of *kimchi*, shared by families, relatives and neighbors (2013).<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Italy submitted the candidature for the traditional art of Neapolitan pizza makers, and Peru submitted the candidature of Peruvian cuisine, both not yet recognized by UNESCO.

The Japanese designation followed a trend similar to the French and Mediterranean ones: instead of proposing the recognition of a specific food and practices and knowledge specifically related to such food (such as the Croatian gingerbread, Turkish *Keşkek* and coffee culture) or related to a specific region (such as Michoacán, in the case of Mexican cuisine), the Japanese government defended the *Washoku* candidate as a food system that marks a national identity, emphasizing cultural values associated to food, such as health and well-being, which are shared by the Japanese society and transmitted from one generation to the next.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> *Zõni* is a vegetable soup containing mochi rice cakes traditionally eaten on New Year's Day, considered an auspicious food (which brings good luck).

<sup>\*\*</sup> Osechi is a Japanese special meal traditionally eaten on New Year's Day in special boxes called jūbako, and whose dishes have special meanings, such as Konbu, a kind of seaweed associated with joy, Kazunoko, herring roe symbolizing prosperity, Kuro-mame, black soybeans, symbolizing health, Kamaboko, broiled fish cake (a type of cured surimi), associated with the rising sun (symbol of Japan), among others.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> For a long time, scientists debated whether *umami* was even a basic taste, but today it is widely accepted as the fifth basic taste and recognized as the scientific term to describe the taste of glutamates and nucleotides. *Umami* taste is common in foods containing high levels of glutamic acid, guanosine monophosphate (GMP) and inosine monophosphate (IMP), especially in fish, crustaceans, cured meats, vegetables (for example cabbage, spinach, etc.), mushrooms, ripe tomatoes, or green tea and fermented and aged products (for example cheese, shrimp paste, soy sauce, etc.). *Umami* has a mild but lasting aftertaste that is hard to describe. It induces salivation and a sensation of furriness on the tongue. By itself, *umami* is not palatable, but it makes a great variety of foods pleasant.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> For more information, see: www.UNESCO.org/culture/ich

Some critics <sup>10</sup> consider that UNESCO has focused food systems already internationally recognized, and that candidatures are primarily motivated by commercial interests and the promotion of culinary tourism. It is argued that the UNESCO indications would have turned to food systems internationally less known but equally important from the point of view of biological and cultural diversity that they contain. Furthermore, it is argued that the criteria for the choice of food systems "worthy" of recognition as cultural heritage are not clear, which aspects of food systems should be valued, etc.

To other analysts <sup>7</sup>, in the context of commercialization of culture, patrimonialization has allowed certain aspects of cooking to be selected by different social groups to assert their cultural/national identity and their differences from other groups, while ensuring a niche in the global market of ethnic and national cuisines and valuing the human activities involved in them.

One of the advances in the UNESCO Convention is precisely the participation of local communities in processes of recognition and safeguard of protected cultural assets. According to the Convention, only the expressions and cultural events which have a "sense of identity and continuity" for local communities may be considered as an intangible cultural heritage, which represents a new paradigm.

UNESCO's heritage policies have always raised questions regarding their social and political legitimacy: Who selects the cultural assets that should be preserved? From what values, on behalf of which interests and which social groups? After all, the role of selecting the assets to be protected used to be primarily attributable to technicians and experts <sup>13</sup> and not to local communities. The new paradigm adopted by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage shifts the focus from the assets themselves to the subjects who assign meanings and values to them, i.e., it acknowledges that the value of the assets is always assigned by specific individuals and on the basis of certain historically situated criteria and interests.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, the concept of "local community" established in the Convention has been criticized for not considering the complexity and conflictions inherent therein. Often local communities are not homogeneous and consensual, and there may be conflicts motivated by specific interests or power inequalities within their own communities.<sup>14</sup> It is not easy to define which communities are the owners of knowledge and practices that are intended to be preserved, especially when it comes to cultural events shared by different communities or widely spread outside their regions of origin. There are also situations where the definition itself of the entitled community can generate conflicts and rivalries among communities, or even generate exclusionary rights claims on the protected assets, which contradicts the very notion of "common" property to which is associated the recognition of a property as a "heritage of humanity." In the case of the Mediterranean diet, for example, eating practices defined as such are mainly characteristic of communities Cilento in Italy, Chefchaoun, Morocco, Soria, Spain, and Koroni in Greece, where research to support the candidature by UNESCO was developed.<sup>15</sup> Such practices would be representative of the so-called Mediterranean diet. Given the great cultural diversity in the Mediterranean, as well as the local specificities and adaptations, the true representativeness of these communities can be questioned. Furthermore, Portugal, Croatia and Cyprus have requested (and gotten) their subsequent inclusion, revealing the difficulties of the protected food system geographical boundaries.

On the other hand, the election of Michoacán traditional cuisine as representative of Mexico has also raised questions, particularly from the state of Oaxaca, which is trying to get equal recognition from UNESCO. Oaxaca is one of the Mexican states with the greatest ethnic diversity, where at least 15 different indigenous languages are spoken, and it has managed to remain relatively isolated from the North American cultural influence, which is reflected in its rich and diverse cuisine.

Many typical dishes are associated with Oaxaca, such as *chapulines* (fried seasoned grasshoppers), *tlayudas* (large stuffed *tortillas* with beans, pork fat, avocado, cheese and meat), *quesillo* (string cheese), *gusanos* (larvae found in agave plants, used to make (distilled alcoholic beverage) mezcal and tequila, used as an ingredient for making *salsa* (sauce)). Therefore, the election of Michoacán's cuisine and not Oaxaca's to represent Mexico is not consensual.<sup>16</sup>

The broader candidatures – such as the French cuisine and the Peruvian proposal – may create difficulties for the adoption of safeguard measures such as nutrition education, awareness campaigns, etc., that should be destined to specific communities, established in precise geographic areas. However, they have a more inclusive and integrating <sup>7</sup> character than the candidatures from specific regions (like the cuisines from Michoacán and Oxaca).

# Legal protection of the Brazilian cultural heritage and safeguard instruments of intangible cultural assets

Even before the entry into force of the UNESCO Convention in 2006, the Brazilian Constitution approved in 1988 had already adopted a new concept of cultural heritage, more comprehensive and democratic, encompassing not only tangible as intangible cultural assets.

In 2000, the Presidency of the Republic, by means of Decision No. **3551**<sup>17</sup>, established the Registry of Intangible Cultural Assets, created the National Program for Intangible Heritage (PNPI) and consolidated the National Inventory of Cultural References (INCR), based on the new

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constitutional concept of cultural heritage. The Constitution is clear when it states that tangible and intangible assets constitute a Brazilian cultural heritage, including, among them, the forms of expression, ways of creating, making and living, and scientific, artistic and technological creations by the different Brazilian social groups.

Besides listing properties, which is especially designed to protect tangible cultural assets, such as buildings and urban historic areas, the Constitution also provided for the implementation of inventories and records, which are more appropriate instruments for the recognition and preservation of procedural and dynamic intangible cultural assets. After all, the intangible cultural assets – knowledge, crafts, ways of doing, celebrations and forms of expression – are constantly recreated by communities and groups due to their interaction with nature and their history.<sup>18,19</sup>

Decision no. 3551/2000<sup>17</sup> rules the process of recognition of cultural assets as an intangible heritage and establishes the State's obligation to inventory, document, produce knowledge and support the dynamics of the intangible cultural assets. The registry is a legal instrument to recognize and value these assets and is divided into the following categories:

1) Registry Book of Knowledge, where knowledge and ways of doing that are rooted in the daily lives of communities are entered (for example, the potters' craft in the Goiabeiras neighborhood, in the Brazilian city of Vitória, in the state of Espírito Santo;

2) Registry Book of Celebrations, where rituals and celebrations that mark the collective experience of work, religiosity, entertainment and other practices of social life are entered (e.g., *Círio de Nazaré* (The Taper of Our Lady of Nazareth) in the Brazilian city of Belém, Pará and the (popular festival involving mounted horses which takes place 45 days after Easter) *Festa do Divino Espírito Santo* (Feast of the Holy Spirit) in the Brazilian city of Pirenópolis, Goiás);

3) Registry Book of Forms of Expression, where literary, musical, artistic, scenic and playful manifestations are entered (e.g., *Wajapi* indigenous people's *Kusiwa* oral and graphic expressions, in the Brazilian state of Amapá, and *Toque dos Sinos*, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais);

4) Registry Book of Places, where markets, fairs, sanctuaries, parks and other areas where collective cultural practices are concentrated and reproduced are entered (e.g., *Cachoeira de Iauaretê* (waterfall), a sacred place for the indigenous peoples from the higher Rio Negro (the largest left tributary of the Amazon, the largest blackwater river in the world, and one of the world's ten largest rivers in average discharge), located in the district of Iauaretê, municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the Brazilian state of Amazonas, and the Feira de Caruaru, in the Brazilian state of Pernambuco).

The registry should always have the support of the social groups involved, but the protected cultural assets do not necessarily generate products and services with an economic value, even if they have a strong cultural, symbolic, political, social, etc. value. <sup>20,21</sup>

In addition to granting the title of "Brazil's cultural heritage," the registry creates an obligation from the public authorities to promote safeguarding actions in order to support their continuity and the social and material conditions that enable their existence. IPHAN should do the revaluation of the cultural assets recorded at least every ten years in order to decide on the reinstatement (or not) the title of Brazil's cultural heritage. In addition to the registry, the National Program for Intangible Heritage (PNPI) adopts as instruments the National Inventory of Cultural References (INCR) and the Safeguard Plans.

INRC is a research methodology developed by IPHAN to produce knowledge about the areas of social life to which meanings and values are assigned and therefore constitute landmarks and identity references for a particular social group. INRC is organized from the categories established by Decision no. 3551/2000 – celebrations, crafts and ways of doing, ways of expression and places – plus the category buildings, targeting the identification of real estate, its uses and social representations associated with them. INRC is an identification instrument for tangible and intangible cultural assets.<sup>18,19</sup>

The knowledge generated during the inventory and registry processes allow the identification of the most appropriate ways to safeguard intangible cultural assets. For IPHAN, safeguarding an intangible cultural asset is an action towards the improvement of social and material conditions of transmission and reproduction that enable its existence. Safeguard Plans aim at supporting the transmission of knowledge and skills related to the intangible cultural asset, promoting it, spreading it and valuing its teachers and performers. The safeguard measures can range from financial aid to specific knowledge holders with a view to its transmission to community organization or providing access to raw materials.<sup>18</sup>

Some intangible cultural assets already registered or in registration process by IPHAN, and others inventoried by the INRC methodology, will be discussed, attempting to show how the foods, practices, and knowledge associated with food systems are critical cultural references for social groups, justifying their recognition as a cultural heritage and the adoption of plans and policies to safeguard them.

Beforehand, however, it should be noted that at a meeting held in 2005, IPHAN Intangible Heritage Chamber understood that the registration instrument is not intended to recognize food recipes. For IPHAN, food and its production and consumption processes will always be considered as part of recording celebrations, places and forms of expression, or as part of agricultural or culinary systems, in which are identified and clearly described the knowledge, skills and techniques involved in the processes of selection, presentation, production and/or obtaining food and its preparation and consumption processes related to groups and/or communities that give them meaning and significance. Thus, its cultural and heritage value lies not in a typical dish or in its recipe, but in the eating practices, rituals and meanings assigned to it.<sup>22</sup>

Based on such grounds, IPHAN has denied the registry request for Brazilian popular sandwich *Bauru*, requested by the Brazilian Bauru Municipal Government (SP), as well as for the delicacy *Chica Doida* (much appreciated in Goiás, it is made with unripe maize, sausage, scarlet eggplant, cheese and pepper), Brazilian *pastel de angu* (fried pie) (Itabirito, MG) and the way to cook *polenta* (dish made by boiling cornmeal into a thick, solidified porridge) by the descendants of Italian immigrants of the Vale do Itajaí, SC, although it has recommended conducting more extensive research on the cuisine and gastronomy created around maize crops. Below follow the assets already registered and/or inventoried by IPHAN.

### Traditional production and sociocultural practices associated with cajuina in Piauí

Its registration in the Registry Book of Knowledge has taken place in 2014. Cashew tree (*Anacardium occidentale*) is a plant originally native to northeastern Brazil. Form cashew are made juice, sweets, honey, liqueurs and ice cream, among other products. *Cajuína* has already been described as "the *champagne* from Brazilian state of Piauí," but it is a non-alcoholic drink made from cashew juice separated from its tannin by addition of a precipitation agent (originally, the cashew tree resin, for many decades toluene, and currently gelatin in the form of powder), and percolated several times on mesh or cloth filters. This process of juice tannin separation receives the name of clarification, and the clarified juice is then baked in a water bath in glass bottles until the sugars are caramelized, becoming a yellowish drink, which allows it to be stored for periods up to two years.<sup>23</sup>

According to IPHAN, *cajuína* is not a cashew wine, and it is not a carbonated soft drink, or just a natural juice either. *Cajuína* is the result of eliminating the bitter and astringent taste from the cashew juice. IPHAN even considered the possibility that *cajuína* were included in a broader registry of knowledge and practices related to the cashew cultural complex. However, "the same identity relation with other products from cashew was not identified in the survey by the Piauí population, despite the nut extraction being a strong source of income by its listing on the national and international markets."<sup>23</sup>

*Cajuína* is strongly linked to the Piauí people's identity. Praised in prose and verses, *cajuína* has become a must drink for all who want to know the main aspects of Piauí culture, and (Brazilian composer, singer, guitarist, writer, and political activist) Caetano Veloso has included in one of

his songs: "*A cajuína cristalina em Teresina*." (The crystalline *cajuína* in (Brazilian city) Teresina). Even though it is a drink, it has a food symbolism, being inscribed in the same tradition of sweets, cakes, cookies and other gastronomic knowledge cultivated in Brazilian Northeast.<sup>23</sup>

The registration request for the traditional way of making *cajuína* in Piauí was presented to IPHAN by the Cooperative of Piauí *Cajuína* Producers (CAJUESPI). To justify the application for registration, the cooperative stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of small family farms in the production of *cajuína* in Piauí due to the concern that industrial and large-scale production of *cajuína* would negatively impact its artisanal production process and relation to the Piauí cultural identity. Such a threat would become more concrete due to the news that a large multinational company (Coca-Cola) intended to launch a soft drink named "Crush *Cajuína*." After all, the traditional way of making *cajuína* had already been declared by a Decision (no. 13068/2008) from the governor of Piauí, as "of relevant cultural interest." Due to the strong reaction from the Piauí society, Coca-Cola stepped back and changed the refrigerant name to "Crush *Caju,"* responding, in part, to the protests from the Piauí citizens.

Due to such a threat, the registration of the traditional production and sociocultural practices associated with *cajuína* has become an important tool for strengthening the traditional conditions of *cajuína* production, and conservation of the local biodiversity and the associated cultural practices.

#### Registration of the traditional agricultural system of Rio Negro, AM

The Association of Indigenous Communities of the Middle Rio Negro (ACIMRN) has requested IPHAN the registration of the agricultural system of the region as an intangible cultural heritage in the Registry Book of Knowledge in 2007, and this was done by IPHAN in 2010. According to Emperaire, Velthem & Oliveira,<sup>24</sup> the traditional agricultural system of the Rio Negro is a structured set, made up of interdependent elements: the cultivated plants, spaces, social networks, tangible culture, food systems, knowledge, norms and rights. This system is anchored in the cultivation of cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) and has as a social base the more than 22 indigenous peoples, representatives of linguistic families *Tukano Oriental, Aruak* and *Maku*, located along the Rio Negro, in an area covering the municipalities of Barcelos, Santa Isabel do Rio Negro and São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the state of Amazonas.

According to the authors<sup>24</sup>, in the context of the Rio Negro, the agricultural system can be understood as knowledge, myths and stories, practices, products, techniques, artifacts and other associated manifestations involving managed spaces and cultivated plants, the forms of processing the agricultural products and the local food systems. The notion of system links the cultural asset to a more complex set of relations and opens the perspective of registration (by IPHAN) of wider elements of Brazilian cultural heritage such as agricultural systems, including the one from Rio Negro, which are characterized by a set of interdependent elements and not by a single specific object or asset.<sup>24</sup>

It is an agricultural system that has a rich agricultural biodiversity. In addition to the diversity associated with cassava, a high diversity of peppers, pineapples, yams and bananas was identified, which confirms the regional significance of Rio Negro in terms of conservation of agricultural diversity. Emperaire, Carneiro da Cunha & Tozzi<sup>25</sup> point out that the ways of practicing agriculture, taking care of plants, transforming the farm products and producing their food constitute a shared cultural reference among the peoples of Middle and High Rio Negro. According to the authors, the application for registration of the agricultural system of Rio Negro as an intangible cultural heritage is a concrete example of how the tools and policies of cultural heritage safeguard can be used in favor of agricultural biodiversity, cultural diversity and local agricultural systems.

# The Cultural Inventory of *Quilombos do Vale do Ribeira* and the registration request of the agricultural system of the Vale do Ribeira (SP and PR)

This inventory has identified 180 intangible cultural assets related to the lifestyle of 16 (residents of a *quilombo* in Brazil; descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves) *quilombola* (or *maroons*) communities living in Vale do Ribeira (a region located in the southern state of São Paulo and in the eastern state of Paraná, Brazil), classified as celebrations, forms of expression, crafts and ways of making, places and buildings. It was conducted by the Socio-Environmental Institute (CSO; Civil Society Organization) with the participation of *quilombola* communities in all phases of the survey of cultural references.<sup>26</sup> The inventory has identified the *quilombola* agricultural system as the support base of several cultural expressions, and since 2013 the request to be recognized as an intangible cultural heritage and registered in the Registry Book of Knowledge is pending at IPHAN.

*Quilombolas* employ the slash-and-burn system, also known as assarting, swidden, and firefallow cultivation, and rotate plantation areas, leaving them in fallow for a few years until they are productive again. Pasinato, Andrade & Wiens<sup>27</sup> explain that the fields are not important only for the food security of the *quilombola* communities and the biodiversity of the (terrestrial biome and region) Atlantic Forest.

The farming way appears as a cultural asset associated with many areas of social life. Food production is related to a set of knowledge and practices anchored on values and family and community relations. This set is the basis of the *quilombola* social and cultural organization, in which the farm has a central and structuring position. Highlights are cultural assets such as the farming procedures, food processing (rice, maize, sugarcane, cassava), artisan craft and the wattle and daub composite building material used for making walls.

Pasinato, Andrade & Wiens<sup>27</sup> note that there are a number of factors threatening the survival of *quilombola* fields, including environmental restrictions on cutting native vegetation, the difficulties to maintain native seeds, restrictions on territorial space due to third-party invasions in the *quilombola* territories and the lack of manpower, due to young people leaving the countryside for the city in search of work and income. The recognition of the *quilombola* agricultural system as an intangible cultural heritage is part of a recovery strategy of traditional practices and knowledge held by the *quilombola*s.

### Registration of the artisanal cheese production process in Minas Gerais and the request for registration of the colony artisan cheese making process in Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul

Entered by IPHAN in the Registry Book of Knowledge in 2008, the artisanal production making of cheese from raw milk is a striking feature of the cultural identity of the mountain regions of Minas Gerais (Serro and Serras da Canastra and of Salitre/Alto Paranaíba). Each region has its own recipe, expressed as milk handling and maturation time (cure), but the use of raw milk and the addition of the "drop," a natural lactic yeast collected from the serum draining from the cheese itself, are common aspects.

In 2002, *queijo do Serro* (colony cheese) was recognized as a cultural heritage of Minas Gerais and State Law no. 14185/2002 (changed by State Law no. 19492/2011) began to regulate the artisanal cheese production process, allowing the artisan to market cheese made from raw milk in the state of Minas Gerais. In December 2012, a new law (no. 20549) was sanctioned by the governor of Minas Gerais, aiming to create favorable conditions for health regularization of cheese producers. Among other innovations, it caters to demands from producers, traders and consumers such as the marketing of half-matured cheese (a product which has recently been drained).

Other new features of the law are: marketing through Municipal Inspection Services (SIM), the creation of a fund to compensate producers who have sacrificed animals for brucellosis or tuberculosis, and also the cheesemakers' registration (dealers transporting the product from the farm to urban centers). However, federal law continued to prevent the artisan producers of cheese made from raw milk to market this product outside the limits of the State of Minas Gerais, mainly due to the requirement of minimum maturation time of 60 days, which runs counter to the traditional production method.<sup>28</sup>

To solve the problem, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (*Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento*, abbreviated MAPA) has initially edited Normative Instruction no. 57/2011 and later Normative Instruction no. 30/2013, which now allow artisan cheeses traditionally made from raw milk to be matured for a period less than 60 days when technical and scientific studies

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demonstrate that reducing the maturation period does not compromise the quality and safety of the product. Normative Instruction no. 30/2013 went on to establish that the definition of the new maturation period of artisan cheeses would take place after the evaluation of the studies by the state and/or municipal agencies of industrial and sanitary inspection recognized by the Brazilian System of Inspection of Animal Products (SISBI/POA). According to Lima,<sup>28</sup> periods of 17 days of aging for *Serro* cheese and 22 days for *Canastra* cheese have been established.

Also pending at IPHAN is the request for registration of the colony artisan cheese making process in Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, formulated by the *Associação dos Produtores de Queijo e Derivados do Leite dos Campos de Cima da Serra* (Aprocampos, RS; Association of Producers of Cheese and Dairy Products of Campos de Cima da Serra (also called Campos de Vacaria) and by the *Associação de Produtores Rurais de Capão Alto* (Farmers Association of Capão Alto), SC. According to that application for registration, the colony artisan cheese is made from cow's milk on small-scale farms, exclusively in the rural facilities of the high fields of the mountainous region of SC and of the Campos de Cima da Serra of RS. Its production is mainly carried out by family ranchers, and constitutes their main source of income. The colony artisan cheese making process is a deeply rooted practice in the farming families' daily lives.

In an interesting article on the production of Brazilian artisan cheeses, in which the focus is mainly on the homemade *queijo coalho* or *queijo-de-coalho* (literally "rennet cheese") of the Brazilian Sergipe hinterland and the colony artisan cheese, <sup>29</sup> it is emphasized that the families producing artisan cheeses hold cheese production learning and techniques acquired and shared for generations, and that such foods are part of lifestyles that join culture and tradition of rural communities and the urban population, which seek in the consumption of these cheeses to feed the body and strengthen their identity.

# National Inventory of Cultural References (INCR) of the Production of Traditional Sweets of Pelotas (RS) and the registration request.

This INRC was held between 2006 and 2008 by the *Laboratório de Ensino e Pesquisa em Antropologia e Arqueologia* (Laboratory of Teaching and Research in Anthropology and Archeology) of the Federal University of Pelotas. In 2009, the *Câmara de Dirigentes Lojistas de Pelotas* (Chamber of Shopkeepers of the Brazilian city of Pelotas), supported by the *Cooperativa das Doceiras de Pelotas* (Cooperative of Confectioners of Pelotas), forwarded to IPHAN the registration application of the "production of traditional sweets from Pelotas." However, IPHAN<sup>30</sup> understood that the object of registration should be the "confectionery region of Pelotas and old Pelotas," to be entered in the Registry Book of Places and not in the Registry Book of Knowledge, as initially requested.

According to IPHAN,<sup>30</sup> the municipality of Pelotas and other adjacent municipalities are a point of convergence that combines cultural, historical, demographic, geographic, ethnic, technological and economic elements which, together, have developed a specific personality for the confectioner activity performed there. For IPHAN,<sup>30</sup> this confectionery region should be understood as "the space where collective cultural practices related to the confectionery activity are concentrated and reproduced and that have become cultural references for social groups." INRC has identified the social groups involved with the confectionery production and has proven knowledge and practices associated with the process of appropriation and transformation of natural resources and cultural practices. Likewise, INRC indicated the production and consumption of sweets in social areas such as celebrations, as well as a collective practice rooted in social groups everyday life. The assets inventoried were the sweets from Pelotas, subdivided in gourmet sweets (or the ones served on trays, such as (popular Brazilian baked dessert, made chiefly from sugar, egg yolks, and ground coconut) quindim, (Brazilian candy, consisting of a beijinho candy inside a dried plum) olho de sogra (motherin-law's eye in Portuguese), pastel de Santa Clara, (walnut fudge covered by fondant and decorated with a walnut) camafeu (cameo locket brooch), etc.) and colony sweets (or the ones made with fruit, such as peach compote, dried peaches, candied figs, white quince fruit confection, origone,\*\*\*\* etc.).<sup>30</sup>

INRC has gone far beyond the mere characterization of recipes and delicacies, and has analyzed the transmission of knowledge, production, circulation and consumption of sweets, covering a complex social dynamics. INRC also establishes a distinction between the urban area of Pelotas, which concentrates the production of gourmet sweets, mostly of Portuguese tradition, and the rural area, where there was a great influx of immigrants from France, Italy, Germany, and other European countries, and mainly produce fruit jams. Thus it indicates a cross between the cultural and ethnic cartography and the dessert geography.<sup>30</sup>

#### Registration request of the *tacacazeiras* craft

This request for entrance in the Registry Book of Knowledge was based mainly on the information contained in the *Inventário Nacional de Referências Culturais do Tacacá em Belém* (National Inventory of Cultural References of (soup common to North Brazil) *Tacacá* in the Brazilian city of Belém)\*\*\*\*\*\*. According to Pinto,<sup>31</sup> the *Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular* (CNFCP; National Center for Folklore and Popular Culture) has drafted the project "Implementation of Inventories: Celebrations and Knowledge of the Popular Culture," covering different thematic fields, including the making processes related to culinary systems in Bahia and Pará.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Origone is a sweet made of peach strips dried in the sun.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> The inventory of *tacacá* is an offshoot of the inventory on the cassava flour making processes also held by the *Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular* (CNFCP).

In the case of Pará, it was decided to take stock of cassava, the main product used in the local cuisine, which plays an important role in building a regional identity and is presented as an important cultural reference. Cassava and flour, its main derivative, are used by all layers of the population and are present both in the simplest everyday dishes as in other finer and more elaborate. But it is in the Amazon region, especially in Pará, where the many and varied aspects involved in its cultivation, processing into food and various culinary uses give it considerable historical, economic and social importance.

According to Pinto,<sup>31,32</sup> the way flour is used in Pará brings singularities to it since, besides being the staple food of the poorest people, it is also a basic component of various dishes of its typical cuisine, constituting an important symbol of regional identity. References to *pato no tucupi* (duck in *Tucupi* sauce), (festive dish in Brazilian cuisine) *maniçoba*<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> and *tacacá* immediately lead to an association with Pará, specially the city of Belém. However, it should be highlighted<sup>31,32</sup> that although many cassava flour-based dishes be presented as a cultural reference, *tacacá* is noteworthy due to the ritualized process of its preparation and consumption.

Made with *tapioca* (starch extracted from cassava root) and *tucupi* (a yellow sauce extracted from wild cassava root in Brazil's Amazon jungle), cassava byproducts, *tacacá* is served in bowls, typical of Pará craft tools, and usually eaten in the evening on the corners of the main streets of Belém. The *tacacazeiras* (*tacacá* makers), with their tents, are part of the landscape of the streets of Belém.<sup>31-33</sup> To serve *tacacá*, a bowl is necessarily used, whose output is an activity linked to the *tacacazeira*'s. *Tacacá* can only be served and enjoyed in a bowl (calabash gourd); it is not eaten or drunk, but ingested with the aid of a toothpick to pick the shrimp and the *jambu* (a native variety of paracress). The calabash gourd making processes in the Lower Amazon are also the subject of a registration request as an intangible cultural asset.

#### Registration request of the baianas de acarajé craft

Held in 2004 in the Registry Book of Knowledge, the registration request was formulated by the Associação das Baianas de Acarajé (Association of Baianas de Acarajé; street vendor women, easily recognizable by their all-white cotton dresses and headscarves and caps), Porridge, Receptive and Similar of the state of Bahia, by the Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais (Center for Afro-Oriental Studies) and by the Terreiro (backyard) Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá. Three Inventários Nacionais de Referências Culturais (National Inventories of Cultural References) related to this cultural asset were held: of the Ofício das Baianas de Acarajé (Baianas de acarajé craft), of the Acarajé in Salvador and of

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *Maniçoba* is prepared with crushed and boiled cassava leaves, plus pork, beef and other smoked and savory ingredients.

the *Tabuleiro das Baianas em Salvador* (Baianas' Trays in Salvador). The INRC of the Ofício das Baianas de Acarajé included the *Feira de São Joaquim* (Saint Joaquim Fair), a market where it is possible to find all the typical products of Bahia and is also a mediator place between production and consumption of the main ingredients needed to prepare both the daily foods as those that make up the *baianas*' trays.

The baianas' craft is a traditional method of producing and selling on a tray the so-called "baiana's foods," linked to the worship of orisha (spelled orichá or orixá in Latin America, a spirit that reflects one of the manifestations of God (*Eledumare, Olorun, Olofi*) in Yoruba religion), such as the acarajé (or akara) It is a peeled black-eyed cowpea beans, onions and salt formed into a ball dumpling dish, and then deep-fried in dendê (palm oil). It is a delicacy from African origin, having come with slaves during the colonization of Brazil.<sup>34</sup> Acarajé has a religious meaning: it is holy food in Candomblé, offered to orisha deities, especially to Shango (known as Changó or Xangô in Latin America) and his wife, Queen Oya (known as Oyá or Oiá; Yansá or Yansã; and Iansá or Iansã in Latin America), a warrior goddess and a deity of the winds and storms.<sup>35</sup>

The *baianas* of *acarajé* blend spices such as peppers with palm oil, okra, beans, dried shrimp and ginger to make delicacies like *acarajé*, *abará*,<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *acaçá*,<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *bolinho de estudante*,<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *cocadas* (traditional coconut candy or confectionery), cakes, etc. The *baianas* establish links between *Candomblé* and public spaces of the city, keeping alive an ancient tradition, an important component of a cooking system that, in addition to feeding and satisfying the palate, articulates different dimensions of social life, linking men to gods, the sacred to the profane, tradition to modernity.<sup>34</sup>

Beans, which are the basis of *acarajé* and other delicacies on the *baiana*'s trays, are also the basis of Brazil's food, occupying a privileged position in our culinary systems, and having an important role in the construction of regional identities, given the diversity of the domesticated varieties and the unique uses in each region of the country, whether in daily life or ritualized consumption. According to *Empresa Baiana de Desenvolvimento Agrícola* (Agricultural Development Company of Bahia; *apud* IPHAN<sup>34</sup>), the black-eyed cowpea beans are just the name of one of the many varieties of Vigna beans, among which are *massaca, boca-preta* and cowpea. It is possible to see the appropriation, taken to the everyday and general consumption spaces, of the African influence on the use of food such as, for example, beans in the preparation of *acarajé*<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Abará is ground black-eyed cowpea beans formed into a ball and cooked wrapped in banana leaves. It is also a *Candomblé* ritual food. It is made with the same mass as of *acarajé*, but *abará* is baked while *acarajé* is fried.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *Acaçá* (àkàsà or *eko*) is made from a paste of grated or ground white maize involved, still hot, in banana leaves.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Bolinho de estudante is made of tapioca and grated coconut and after fried it is mixed with sugar and cinnamon.

As highlighted by Bitter & Bitar,<sup>36</sup> the registration of the *baianas de acarajé* craft was a form of their professional valuation. They wanted to differentiate from the cooks who operate within a domestic kitchen, while the *baianas* are linked to public spaces of cities. They also wanted to differentiate from other street vendors who sell food on the streets of Salvador. One of the reasons for the application for registration was also the conflicting relationship between the *baianas de acarajé* and Evangelicals with their "*acarajé de Jesus.*" For the *baianas*, the Evangelicals would be depriving *acarajé* of its characteristics by associating it with Jesus and Evangelicalism, as opposed to *Candomblé*. Registration as an intangible asset would be configured as a threshold demarcation between the *baianas* and the "others": the street vendors and the Evangelicals.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> In addition, the *baianas* suffered (and suffer) with supervisory actions from health authorities, and the registration has been used as a defense and legitimacy tool of their craft before the very public agencies, which tend to adopt disjointed and conflicting policies.<sup>36</sup>

Other records and registration applications related to food systems are: 1) The craft of the *paneleiras* of Goiabeiras, ES, registered as an intangible cultural asset in the Registry Book of Knowledge in 2002. The clay pot of Goiabeiras is an indispensable support for the preparation of the typical *moqueca capixaba*; and 2) the calabash gourd making process in the Lower Amazon, registered in June 2015 in the Registry Book of Knowledge.

#### **Final thoughts**

Cultural diversity and human creativity are expressed in many different forms of use of natural resources and people's interaction with the environment they live in. Food systems are closely tied to culture, understood as memory and identity.

The safeguard policies of the intangible cultural assets depend, however, of a better integration with other economic and social development policies to be able to include and enhance Brazilian biodiversity and social diversity.

Much of the difficulties faced by holders of traditional knowledge (exclusion made here) are associated with the performance of other public agencies that develop policies and actions that are contradictory with the cultural preservation. Here are some examples.

The traditional *cajuína* making process is threatened not only by the Coca-Cola initiative to make a soft drink named "Crush *cajuína*" but also by the SEBRAE's (*Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e* 

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Municipal Decision no. 12175/1998 by the mayor of Salvador regulates the location and operation of the informal trade exercised by the *baianas de acarajé* and porridge in public places. It states that the *baianas de acarajé*, in the exercise of their activities in public areas, will wear the typical all-white cotton dresses, according to the tradition of the African-Brazilian cuisine. Federal Law no. 12206/2010 has established the National Day of the *Baiana de Acarajé* (November 25).

*Pequenas Empresas*; Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service) initiative to promote the standardization of the drink in order to meet the necessary requirements to the registration of a geographical indication. In order to turn the production of *cajuína* into a large industry, able to attract foreign investment, SEBRAE began concentrating its efforts on the drink standardization, so that *cajuína* would always have the same color, sugar content and flavor, which runs counter to local practices that value diversity. Moreover, the production of *cajuína* from cloned cashew entails the risk that native cashew trees be disregarded in favor of cloned (genetically improved) cashew trees, impacting local biodiversity.

Artisanal Minas Gerais cheese producers have also faced serious difficulties to market their traditional product made from raw milk outside the boundaries of the state of Minas Gerais. The main obstacles are imposed by federal health legislation, which requires the adoption of maturation periods, equipment and innovations (such as the replacement of wooden stalls by slate) that significantly change the cheese modes of production, and consequently its consistency and flavor.

As for the *tacacazeiras*, they expect that the recognition of their craft as an intangible cultural heritage promote an improvement in their working conditions, as they struggle to get official permits to settle in their points of sale (POS). Also, the *tacacazeiras* suffer from the restrictions imposed by the health legislation, especially by Normative Instruction no. 01/2008 of the Agricultural Defense Agency of Pará.<sup>36</sup>

This Normative Instruction sets out the requirement that all *tucupi* producing establishments comply with a certain "standard of identity and quality of tucupi," incompatible with the craft practices used by the *tacacazeiras*, which consider that the above technical regulation is an invasive intervention in their craft.<sup>37</sup> Measures to safeguard this right shall include discussions with said agricultural protection agency so that it recognizes the importance of preserving the tacacazeiras' traditional practices, and review its legislation.

What happens to the *tucupi* and the *tacacazeiras* is paradigmatic of the difficulties faced by many other local and traditional products which fail to meet the legislation requirements developed for an industrial and large-scale food production. Health surveillance regulations tend to promote excessive homogenization and industrialization of products, disregarding their identity and typicality. Health surveillance regulations should seek a balance between food health and safety and the promotion of local and traditional practices relevant to biodiversity and sociocultural diversity.

In addition, it is essential that such policies promote social inclusion and improve the living conditions of producers and holders of the intangible cultural heritage. Social and economic development must be integrated into the conservation of the environment, and social and productive inclusion of traditional peoples and communities and family farmers with respect to their cultural and ethnic specificities. After all, there is no effective and genuine development without the incorporation of cultural references of the social groups involved.

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