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What if one day we recover the Choros in Callao?

On artisanal fishing, cooking and socio-ecological transitions

Materials to build a dream

The world has declared war on life. Sentence the anthropologist and environmental activist Yayo Herrero. Our system - he continues - has devoured precisely what we It allows us to sustain ourselves as individuals and as a society. It has been radically unrelated to the nature of culture, and to the economic development of the environment in which it operates. Of In fact, the civilization trap of our perpetual growth model is that a healthy economy implies a healthy landscape. sick. Anything goes to grow, a polluted sea "produces more" than a clean sea, since the former contributes more to GDP than the second. And in the middle of a system full of cracks came the covid. However, the day after the pandemic disaster, it was possible to notice an inspiring community rearmament that reinforces Rebecca Solnid's statement : "The most surprising about disasters is not that so many people live up to the circumstances, but do it with joy.

From these materials this dream is born. Degradation of the sea, loss of underwater species, cultural erosion of the oldest fishermen in Peru, inspiring cases in other latitudes and the enormous challenge of breaking the pernicious dichotomy to think about the world and, at the same time, disengage from the task of want to transform it

boarding proposal

If those who have to do are not doing what they have what to do, what we cannot do is wait forever for they do. Yayo Herrero

It has been more than twenty years since Callao has not extracted the black mussels, best known by all Peruvians as the Choros. And very few know that the Mussels a la Chalaca (name of the person who was born in Callao) have not been prepared since a while ago, with seafood from the first Peruvian port.

Something happened in our sea, not only to let the mussels, but also so that the sea that encouraged many generations of the most experienced fishermen Experienced from all over Peru. The loss of the choro is a symbol of something bigger than the loss of a landscape, and its Recovery can mean something much bigger than the recovery of mussels to the chalaca with own inputs. At some point we all have some degree of responsibility.

We are responsible for a part of the millions of decisions that impact for better or worse in the small agriculture, artisanal fishing, the landscape, the water, the air that we breathe and the erosion or preservation of our patterns cultural. These decisions in the aggregate have intensely deteriorated the biosphere, the terrestrial atmosphere, the oceans, continents, cities, rivers, crops and in the





along the way we have lost valuable information about our cultures basic. And just very recently we witnessed the most abrupt handbrake that we live in the middle of the quarantine and how the abandonment of the car detoxified the cities, or how companies, study centers and events of all kinds could sustain themselves from virtuality, and above all the new habits generated by the reduction of our consumption to the indispensable, mainly in relation to the feeding.

The moment is opportune to install transversally the themes that articulate the socio-environmental sciences: Anthropocene, social metabolism and socio-ecological transitions; maintaining its strength and relevance and even universalize them to take them to various levels of reflection; I propose to approach them from the kitchen. A trustworthy token family, transversal and vehicle from which Peruvians easily understand each other. From a private kitchen, the kitchen marina, in a singular context, the sea of Cantolao in Callao and from very punctual carriers, artisanal fishermen of the Cantolao Association, whom I know from my participation in the Patronato por la Cocina del Callao.

With whom I have had one-on-one interviews, I have shared group spaces both on the high seas, shore and I have cooked with them the catch of the day.

This essay gathers reflections from this experience, from she was authorized to share her plans, dreams and historical demands; all from their status as artisanal fishermen, with the pride, authority and power of an entire historical saga of fishermen reborn in them. of the importance of your identity, lineage and high ecological sense of this particular group. From their holistic perspective, each time they address their small boats, and where the kitchen becomes a decisive factor in the construction of their collective identity.

Given the nature of subsistence cooking is a natural environment for socialization, provides them with safe spaces, encourages intergenerational communication and is also a indicator from the catch of the day - in dishes prepared by themselves - of the cleanliness and health of its waters. to measure that he shared with the older fishermen who with nostalgia described the same beach in front of us only

A few decades ago, I became truly aware that we are going through the era of the Anthropocene, the period in which our species affected the planet, that sad privilege of being a species whose actions shaped an era (since the industrial revolution).

Our sea, once considered one of the richest in the world, has been declining -according to the Peruvian society of environmental law - in the last 60 years, where species such as the Peruvian sardine or the choro have disappeared. I am aware that I cannot be categorical from these first





approximations to settle any discussion regarding the Responsible fishing, sustainable gastronomy and preservation of the Marine food heritage. What I can from these lines is to propose at the center of the debate and in the design of the territorial development strategies of Callao, to the fisherman craft in its natural habitat and that in the chapter imperative of the socio-ecological transition involve them, not only as suppliers of hydrobiological products, but also and above all as cultural carriers of the primordial identity of the first port of Peru.

From the fishing of Callao, the marine cuisine cultivated by them and their families, it will be much more viable to explain and understand the complexity of the issue of ecological preservation, and from a dream shared by all of them, which is the recovery of Choro in the waters of Callao, it is possible to trace actions that would imply an interdisciplinary look where the social sciences and natural sciences lay the foundations for that we finally understand that the landscape of Cantolao beach, in words of Stefania Gallini "...it is not a simple backdrop that serves as a stage for the development of the deeds human, but precisely another protagonist of the work".

Cuisine, identity and Artisanal Fishing

The kitchen is inherent to the trade of the artisanal fisherman and the I received the best testimony from the Abad, Urbina and Hernández de La Punta, comprising more than three generations of fishermen. With them I understood that the character of subsistence from artisanal fishing is naturally linked with the need to prepare their food at sea. Part of the interactions between the older fishermen and the more young, they reveal themselves in the first tasks that beginner fishermen are entrusted to: tying (ropes) and cooking.

“Every fisherman knows how to cook for survival. is the minimum that everyone who aspires to fish should know”, he tells us Cesar Abad, 73-year-old fisherman. According to Alex Urbina, the Artisanal fisherman is a survival professional.

His life is marked by uncertainty and fear. "The fear it moves us, it makes us take the initiative...it makes us be anchored in the best sense of the word, we approach life challenging it, otherwise we can lose it by staying still...for that, I think that from time to time, we cook together and share the catch of the day, it is a space that we need, it gives us security". From their cooking styles and habits, it is possible project some traits of his personality: simplicity, practicality, solidarity and high sense of community. The subsistence kitchens are rich not because of everything they have, but for everything they have to do without with dignity and much ingenuity. Hence, his cuisine is based on raw foods:



Julio Abad, Alex Urbina and Chocolate, in full fishing

Members of the Patronato por la Cocina del Callao (Andrés Ugaz, Gabriela Wuest), Cantolao Fishermen's Association (Alex Urbina, Cesar Abad among others), Roberto Haudry.



cebiches, tiraditos and chalacas (inspired by mussels), for a side, and soups, chupes and chilcanos; for another.

It is possible to affirm that, in the longest-lived families of fishermen in Callao, cooking was not only important for the construction of their identity, but also articulated and promoted other factors such as family legacy and awareness ecological. But above all I verified that the treasure of the fishermen is first in their responsible practices of fishing, and then in its exquisite simplicity to cook the fishing of the day, a huge contribution to our cuisine and national identity. According to the third structured survey of artisanal fishing prepared by the Ministry of Production, the artisanal fishermen of this part of Callao are considered the most experienced in Peru, because half of them have at least three decades dedicated to the trade of the sea. The engineer Fisherman Renato Gozzer points out "His fishing techniques are low impact on the landscape and respect the minimum carvings and closed seasons. This alone represents a living heritage invaluable to the country." However, carelessness on the part of authorities for decades has generated in the fishermen high levels of informality, little power of influence in their value chains and, in turn, made it impossible for them to access to capacity building programs and achieve recognition of the significant heritage value that have.

The contribution of artisanal fishermen goes far beyond to the supply of sea products: cooking workshops in High seas, shore and shared spaces where they prepare the catch of the day make up a gastronomic cultural legacy that is still little known that, in addition to enriching the repertoire of our cooking, are one of the most important factors that configured the identity of the fishermen of Cantolaola Tip. The kitchen of artisanal fishermen, from the ways of obtaining their inputs, culinary transformation and commensal spaces, provides information on traits characteristics of their families such as solidarity, simplicity and practicality. It is also possible from emblematic preparations to know part of the social dynamics that, due to the disappearance of some species and associated preparations to them, they have been lost. According to Juan Hernández, one of the fishermen considered a mentor to many of the most ancient, the preparation of the Choros to the Chalaca, was associated what they called is descharque. Every two weeks the small boats had to be cleaned of algae, stones and mollusks that accumulated at the bottom of their boats and for this, they took them to the beach of Chucuito where descharcaradores were in charge of cleaning, for which all the day without fishing was used by the fishermen to prepare on the shore the choros a la chalaca and aguadito de choros, which were shared reciprocally with the descharcaradores and among the fishermen of Chucuito and La Punta. Unfortunately a few decades ago that bivalve mollusk disappeared from Callao.



Roberto Haudry, Andrés Ugaz, Lidia Siles and Juan Hernandez (Don Guissepe).
Members of the Board for the Kitchen of Callao



Bread with pejerrey. Typical fisherman's breakfast

Of the degradation of the marine landscape

According to Cesar Abad, for almost 30 years in Callao no Choros are extracted, and consequently the well-known dish chosen as one of the two hundred of the bicentennial- Mussels to the Chalaca; It is not prepared with mussels from our first port. This fact, beyond the gastronomic value, implies a degradation of the marine and underwater landscape of the Sea of Cantolao which, in turn, affects the day to day of the fishermen longest in Peru.

This comment was made the same week that Peru was Recognized for the eighth consecutive time as the best destination Gastronomy of the World 2022 by World Travel Awards. As part of the paradoxes that have coexisted with cooking, understood as a social movement of great impact in the last two decades. The same one who, however, has been little analyzed as such from the social sciences. Readings most recurring have been limited to their economic contribution or the exaltation of the enormous richness, variety and flavors memorable moments of gastronomy itself, falling many times in chauvinistic and repetitive discourses.

In fact, there was already a discussion before the pandemic about of the enormous disarticulation between the gastronomic growth and the small farmers, artisan fishermen and the so-called culinary artisans; the cultural erosion of our food heritage and the perverse paradox of a country


world champion cook and children with hunger, malnutrition and surrounded by school kiosks full of barcodes. TO what I would add, the scandalous absence of the debate on land degradation and the marine landscape in a country where 70% of the fish that families eat is provided by the artisanal fishing.

Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield, from the text Degradation of land and society point out to us the parcellary gaze of the phenomenon, without addressing its complex nature of land and sea degradation. And they propose us in their place, an interdisciplinary look where the social sciences and the natural ones lay the foundations to discuss the changes desired and necessary.

Land degradation should be a social problem, and the management of the land - and of the sea - should apply the known or discovered knowledge in order to minimize or repair the nature of the degradation. This same us confronts addressing the complex phenomenon of recovery of the marine biota of Cantolao as a social fact that, under certain conditions and in a particular context, may also to become a linchpin for new markets and provide better living conditions for fishermen, establish the minimum guidelines for its care, conservation and gradual recovery of the underwater fauna, species emblematic and their respective rituals of commensality associates.



Mussels to the Chalaca



This action is part of the work that the Directorate Decentralized Department of Culture of Callao has been carrying out the recognition of this group of fishermen as Living heritage and that, in coordination with the Board of Callao's cuisine, promote Pescaturismo. It is important to note the great work of the researcher and territorial development expert Claudia Ranaboldo who, from Italy, generated this encounter.

<https://diversity-development.com/en/platform/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Bioculturaldev>

The recovery of the mussels in Callao

This November 5th was an important day for the fishermen of this part of **Callao***. Under the agreement

of understanding between the Patronato por la Cocina del Callao and the Biocultural Diversity and Territories Platform¹, came to

Cantolao Roberto Haudry, co-creator of the Capital Foundation who knows closely the experience that Marco Dadamo, President of the Protected Area of "Mare Piccolo" where artisanal fishermen from Taranto, in the South from Italy managed to regenerate the mussels.

During his visit, he met with members of the Board of Trustees for the Kitchen and representatives of artisanal fishermen, where began the dream of the recovery of the marine biota of Cantolao for productive diversification for the benefit of local artisanal fishermen. According to Haudry, a potential opportunity to analyze the feasibility of this initiative of the Chalaco fishermen and restaurateurs through of an exchange with mussel growers from the Bay of the Mare Piccolo. This area was seriously contaminated with dioxin and other lethal substances by chemical and iron and steel industries and managed to reconstitute itself. Its artisanal fishermen come from the poorest segment of the population and although facing enormous difficulties have recovered activity and the biotic and economic ecosystem in partnership with many stakeholders territorial: businessmen, authorities, naval guard, networks like Slowfood/ Slowfish, researchers.

"Gather both territories for a peer dialogue; for determine the feasibility or not of the fishermen's initiative chalacos seems to us a valuable idea that requires practical action. We are not yet clear when and how; but both the fishermen of Callao and those of Taranto agree I agree to meet soon," Haudry said.

It is not about looking for the climate in history, but history in the climate

towards the first steps

This phrase by Andreas Malm taken from his book Fossil Capital, sets an initial guideline for what could be the first steps of this dream shared with the fishermen of Cantolao. According to Malm all events important of our history are recorded in the different climatic indicators, subtle changes in the tides, in the temperatures, as oxygen in underwater waters.

Following his postulate it is possible to reconstruct the passage of the man from this part of Callao since the small changes in the salinity of its beaches, its rainfall, the nuances of its seabed, the infrequent changes of the tides, the underwater fauna, the migration of new bird species, the loss of species such as mussels and the Peruvian sardine.

It will be possible to resignify the climatic data to decipher the human activity translated into the consumption of only some marine species compared to others -that stressed the sea by disrespecting the closed seasons and minimum sizes, extending the model





growth of the ports, increasing the flow of large-tonnage vessels, removing by means of dredge the underwater reliefs, polluting the sea with the domestic sewage.

It is possible that the tragedy has already occurred and we are living the day after it, but it is also possible that cases like that of the fishermen of Taranto, give us clues for one, involve the authorities and neighboring companies to stop the damage and two, create the conditions for the recovery of the minimum conditions for planting some species like the choros.

It is in this line that the trips programmed with the fishermen oldest, Don César Abad and Juan Hernández with the fisheries engineer Rosa Vinatea and marine biologist Andrea He will go on to explore areas of possible recovery of the choros they will be fundamental. So also the visit of three "Tarantinos": a miticulturist who lives from the activity and is also experimenting and stocking oysters and other shellfish, a miticulturist entrepreneur who values the product of fishing artisan in the markets, the director of the Mare Piccolo area scientist and regional representative of Slow Food. The three for a period of about 10 days, with continuous trips to the areas identified with potential for regeneration and co-creation of potential feasibility solutions discussed with stakeholders of the local ecosystem.

The possible recovery of choro, and all efforts to achieving this represent firm steps for a socio-ecological transition, since warning about the care of the ecosystem sailor of Cantolao and its recovery to make it part of the sustainable food systems, calls into question the paradigm of dematerialized infinite growth and where new technologies solve everything (from pollution and availability of resources).

In the same logic from another level, recognize the fisherman craft as a decisive factor in the safeguarding of the landscape and bearer of the cultural heritage of Callao, situates us in one of the principles of agroecology (Altieri and Toledo) that "recognizes and values local wisdom and traditions and proposes the creation of a dialogue with local actors to through participatory research..." this wisdom includes his knowledge of culinary transformation of marine products and given the possible recovery of choro, one of the Strategies to generate rapid attention and understanding of possible marketing channels: homes, programs, food and restaurants. Drawing a parallel between the cook-farmer bond and the cook-fisherman bond it becomes necessary to install the never more adequate metaphor of social metabolism.



Finally, I consider that by locating a particular landscape as that of the beaches of Cantolao, central actors such as the fishermen and families who will be able to access their products, recognize the kitchen from the Choros to the chalaca as a means to narrate a process and be quickly understood; HE It also opens up the opportunity for us to be part of the models of territorial development, the basic concepts of science socio-environmental issues with the lucid calculation of making this brief chronicle - of a shared dream - a bottle thrown into the sea for public and private institutions that coincide that no prize received by our kitchen will have real value if we are not capable of safeguarding the fishing culture of the Shut up.

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