

*Informal gastronomy: food, territory and resistance in the
plazoleta of San Victorino, Bogotá Colombia.*

*Gastronomia informal: comida, território e
resistêncianapraça de San Victorino, Bogotá, Colômbia.*

*Gastronomía de la informalidad: alimentación, territorio y
resistencias en la plazoleta de San Victorino, Bogotá
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Abstract

This article analyzes street food and its relationship with the tensions and resistance associated with the dynamics of social inequality derived from labor informality in the Plazoleta de San Victorino in the city of Bogotá. The methodological horizon is oriented from a qualitative approach according to Páramo (2013) and as a method the ethnography of the places was achieved according to Vergara (2013). The information was systematized and analyzed using the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. The findings indicate that the sale of street food fulfills a social function by supplying food to an important sector of the Bogota population, which survives with very limited economic resources, understanding that the informal economy covers a good part of the city's inhabitants. It is concluded that informal gastronomy fulfills a role of social resistance in the context of the urban economy, since in the face of disabilities and abandonment by the state, it emerges as a possibility of employment and relief of food security for the most disadvantaged of the society.

Keywords: Street food. Informality. Unemployment. Resistance. Conflicts.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a comida de rua e sua relação com as tensões e resistências associadas à dinâmica de desigualdade social derivada da informalidade do trabalho na Plazoleta de San Victorino, cidade de Bogotá. O horizonte metodológico orienta-se a partir de uma abordagem qualitativa de acordo com Páramo (2013) e como método realizou-se a etnografia dos lugares de acordo com Vergara (2013). As informações foram sistematizadas e analisadas por meio do software de análise qualitativa ATLAS.ti. Os resultados indicam que a venda de comida de rua cumpre uma função social ao fornecer alimentos a um importante setor da população de Bogotá, que sobrevive com recursos econômicos muito limitados, entendendo que a economia informal abarca boa parte dos habitantes da cidade. Conclui-se que a gastronomia informal desempenha um papel de resistência social no contexto da economia urbana, pois, diante das incapacidades e do abandono do Estado, ela surge como uma possibilidade de emprego e de alívio da segurança alimentar dos mais desfavorecidos da sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Alimentação de rua. Informalidade. Desemprego. Resistência. Conflitos

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la comida callejera y su relación con las tensiones y resistencias asociadas a las dinámicas de inequidad social derivadas de la informalidad laboral en la Plazoleta de San Victorino de la ciudad de Bogotá. El horizonte metodológico se orientó desde un enfoque cualitativo de acuerdo con Páramo (2013) y como método se utilizó la etnografía de los lugares de acuerdo con Vergara (2013). La información se sistematizó y analizó a partir del software de análisis cualitativo ATLAS.ti. Los hallazgos indican que la venta de comida callejera cumple una función social al suministrar alimentación a un importante sector de la población bogotana, la cual sobrevive con recursos económicos muy limitados, entendiendo que la economía informal abraza una buena parte de los habitantes de la ciudad. Se concluye que la gastronomía de la informalidad cumple un rol de resistencia social en el contexto de la economía urbana, pues frente a las incapacidades y abandono del Estado, emerge como una posibilidad de empleo y de alivio a la seguridad alimentaria de los más desfavorecidos de la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Comida callejera. Informalidad. Desempleo. Resistencia. Conflictos

Introduction

From a certain perspective, gastronomy is a social construction strongly influenced by the environment, from which, food knowledge, preparations and modes of consumption are interrelated, allowing to establish similarities and differences between groups which contribute to the construction of interculturality and gastronomic identity, as components of collective memory and its rituals associated with its recreation (REVILLA and SANCHEZ (2018). Gastronomy establishes connections with lifestyles and ways of life, in which links are established with the history and culture that derive from the popular collective imaginary that are sustained in narratives, times and spaces determined.

Gastronomy materializes the expression of symbolic thought, therefore, food symbolizes reality from the codes and norms conditioned by culture, value systems and

beliefs, as well as exogenous contexts that influence food. Thus, for Adema (2006), gastronomy is conceived as a territorial symbol anchored to social dynamics in a specific geographic space, Nieto (2020), it is a formula of communication and cultural transaction endowed with capacities of expression and identity, understanding that culture is a set of attributes that constitute the identity of a specific people determined by factors such as language, codes, values, norms, forms of organization, spirituality, territory; every human act per se, and its way of understanding, feeling, living and building the world (SANJUÁN, 2007).

Gastronomy and culture derive in landscape, as a unique and authentic place; thus, a gastronomic landscape is determined by contexts and multiple dimensions, both exogenous and endogenous. Adema (2006, p. 13) defines gastronomic landscapes as "social, cultural, political, economic or historical landscapes that, in one way or another, have to do with food". A gastronomic landscape is essentially a social structure in which there are associations between the place and its food, from which a structure of relationships, meanings, representations, symbolic values and, above all, identity is generated in relation to what is produced and what is consumed in terms of food (NIETO, 2020a).

The local identity of a given territory is also manifested in the food that is sold and consumed in the street, not only related to the supply, but also how it is eaten, who consumes and the degree of appropriation of the vendors, Fusté-Forné (2016). In the contemporary city, the production and commercialization of food transcends the frontier of the home and regulated and sanitized establishments, towards the production and consumption of food in the street, constituting a gastronomy of informality that develops new eating habits that emerge as a necessity in the congested city, of the eagerness and resistance; a gastronomy of informality responsible for attacking rituality and domestic customs (QUIJANO, 2019).

Street food is an answer to the floating and moving population Torres (2019) responds to the economic limitations of impoverished diners, who in the urban mercantile dynamics seek to earn a living by satisfying their need to feed themselves at the lowest price, making the street a residual space of popular sovereignty, SARLO (2009). It is the gastronomy of the popular, of the marginalized, of the displaced, of the immigrants of those who, from the margin, seek to integrate into institutionalized, sanitized and normatized urban dynamics, Moira and Kontoudaki (2015). For vendors, it is the daily struggle to make a living; it is a form of resistance to the lack of formal job opportunities in a hegemonic economy that is selective for those who do not have the necessary resources to succeed in the economic and social competition in the cities.

Informal gastronomy recreates one of the most important cultural codes of community behavior, especially in the way public space is shared and the roles assumed in the construction of collective identities, (SCHLUTER and THIEL, 2008; MORA, 2022). Thus, food consumption in the public sphere is a socialization ritual in which cultural patterns are reproduced through food, generating symbolic meanings that are constantly redefined by new actors, customs and social codes.

Thinking about the gastronomy of informality will imply reflecting on the notion of modernity in a country like Colombia, García (1989) mentions that the "modern" is associated with the "cultured" already instituted from a Euro-centrist vision, because from this point of view, to be "cultured" is to be "modern" in terms of accessibility and appropriation of these cultural capitals. On the other hand, the popular and autochthonous can be antagonistic to the modern, two views that result in tensions, since it seems that the cultured cannot coexist with the popular, hence for García-Canclini (1989) culture is something hybrid. He agrees with what De Certeau (2000, p. 796) says about popular culture, when he says that it is "that which is constructed in everyday life, of trivial and renewed activities of each day". Thus, the gastronomy of informality that uses public space as a platform is in essence a manifestation of popular culture.

In this sense, the objective of this work is to analyze street food and its relationship with the tensions and resistances associated with the dynamics of inequity and social injustice derived from labor informality in the Plazoleta de San Victorino in the city of Bogotá (see figure 1). This article addresses gastronomy from nutrition as an artistic and cultural expression, given that gastronomy is the main motivation for tourists, given the level of importance of food in travel, in this way, the options of tourists range from simply visiting restaurants for staple foods to planning a full itinerary based on food-related activities (PAVLIDIS et al., 2020). Likewise, gastronomy offers a fundamentally new way of evaluating eating and drinking, this being customer satisfaction (DIXIT, 2019). In addition, gastronomy provides an approach to culture using food as the central axis (BERBEL et al., 2019). However, it is the relationship between people, their food, and their environment, which studies the various components that make up the relationship with food from a cultural point of view (BERTRAN et al., 2018).

Informal gastronomy in Bogotá has been little addressed by research, hence the importance of exploring the way in which this social phenomenon develops. Similarly, it is evident that there are several authentic flavors and different influences. Likewise, these social representations of a sector of the population allow us to recognize the genuine elements of a territory. Thus, informal gastronomy in Bogotá reflects the cultural diversity and culinary passion of a segment of the city (MELÉNDEZ, 2022).

Informal Gastronomy

The informal economy is considered a problem of great proportions, particularly in Latin America it has become a daily element in the economy. However, it has come to support millions of people with resources, although not stable, at least it allows subsistence (CASTILLO et al., 2020). Likewise, it is directly related to economic activity not registered or registered in State institutions (ESCRIBANO et al., 2020). Similarly, the informal economy is not always an individual choice, but rather a consequence of informal practices (MORÁN, 2021).

Informal gastronomy are those prepared foods sold in public places for consumption without further processing or preparation (CONTRERAS et al., 2020). It is also referred to as nutrition and heritage (CRUZ et al., 2022). Likewise, informal gastronomy is carried out through the preparation and distribution of food among informal networks of close relatives (CUBEROS, 2021). Similarly, they encompass different levels of processing, from minimally processed food to having maximum processing (MEDINA et al., 2022). However, they are dependent on food providers to meet their nutritional needs (HASAN et al., 2022).

Moreover, informal gastronomy continues being a crucial source of food for most households (GIROUX et al., 2021). However, food and nutrition security has not been achieved given that informal gastronomy is a challenge in many countries (ZUERAS et al., 2018; Fernandez et al., 2018). Even so, purchasing from informal food providers and suppliers and the use of coping strategies and more popular food consumption is important (BLEKKING et al., 2020). In fact, it strengthens food systems and fortifies informal gastronomy with nutritious food (REINEHR et al., 2021).

Informal gastronomy has both positive and negative effects (ARIAS et al., 2018), sometimes it harms the consumption and habit of healthy food (LOGROÑO et al., 2021). Even so, gastronomy has become one of the fundamental elements (BERBE et al., 2019). Therefore, food and beverages sold in informal food spots are not harmful to health (RUSTOMGY et al., 2020). In this way, the nutritional status of the population is formalized through consultations and adjustments (AGUIRRE, 2019).

Methodology

The methodological structure of the work was oriented from a qualitative approach seeking to understand informality, gastronomy, territory, and their complex relationships, with the purpose of extracting generalities that favored the socio-anthropological reflection of the gastronomy of informality in the Plazoleta de San Victorino in Bogota. The ethnography of places proposed by Vergara (2013) was used as a method, seeking to understand the intimate and recursive relationship between the place and the social subjects, as well as their imaginaries, routines, languages, customs and representations in relation to informal gastronomic practices based on three phases:

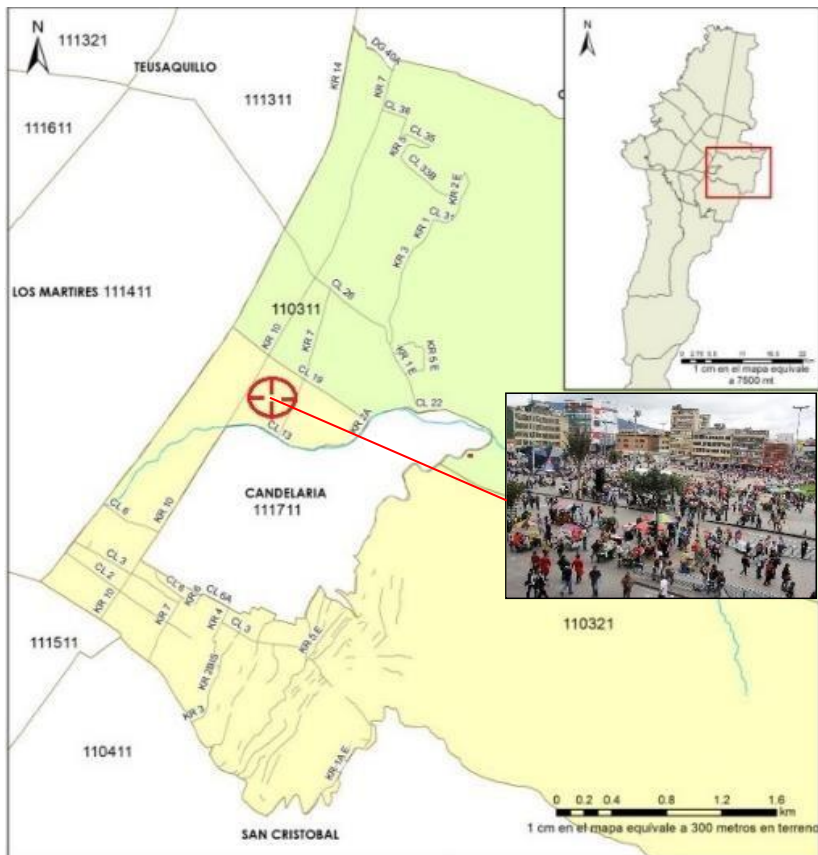


Figure 1: Geographic Location of the plazoleta de San Victorino.

Source: Subdirección Local de Integración Social Santafé y Candelaria. Planning Area (2022).

As an epistemological position, the hermeneutic phenomenology Mendoza (2019) was assumed, which, from the field exercise and the subjective experience of the researchers, allowed an approach to the knowledge and interpretation of street food as a contemporary social phenomenon. The grounded theory Grosser (2016) contributed with the theoretical structure that made it possible to contrast and reflect on the object of study, which was built from a documentary corpus oriented by three categories of analysis, as follows: a) street food, b) gastronomy and culture and c) gastronomy of informality.

The first phase involved the characterization of the gastronomic offer in terms of ingredients, preparation techniques and final product for sale to the public; it implied an exercise of participant observation recording what was observed in a field diary taking into account what Guber (2001, p. 7) proposes regarding ethnography as: "the set of activities that is usually designated as "field work" whose result is used as evidence in

the description". Thus, the ethnographic work required making contact, talking, listening, eating and reflecting on the different actors and their role in the development of the research, in this way, the information was systematized from an ethnographic characterization matrix following the model proposed by Cornejo (2009).






The second phase corresponded to the collection of primary information through the application of surveys. The sample used in the research was a non-probabilistic convenience sample (HILL et al, 2019). The participants of the study were the consumers of street food that frequent the San Victorino square. The sample consisted of N=120 diners, with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum of 63 years old.

The purpose of the third phase was to learn the opinions of informal street food vendors regarding their imaginaries and representations in relation to the daily dynamics of informal gastronomy. Four semi-structured ethnographic interviews were conducted, which were referenced as I1, I2, I3 and I4. The systematization of the interviews was carried out using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.Ti, allowing the visualization of relationships in the process of obtaining meanings, defining codes and variables that made analysis categories emerge, to find convergences that were captured in a graphic network. Likewise, the analysis process was supported by the grounded data theory of (ANDRÉU et al., 2007).

Data analysis and results

Located in the town of Santa Fe, it is a traditional Bogota square that bears its name in memory of a holy Roman bishop, considered the patron saint against ice. The potential of the sector is great, in the area of influence of San Victorino there is a daily floating population of approximately 400,000 people, which is interested in generating income from informal gastronomy (MARTINEZ, 2020). Likewise, it is usual that this activity is understood as a member of the informal sector in the San Victorino square, in addition to, the only productive activity that remained in the sector was street gastronomy, this due to urban efforts to convert the area into a business sector.

The Plazoleta de San Victorino is to this day one the enclaves in the most important dry port that the country had and that has been active in a mercantile dynamic for more than three centuries. This contrasts with its own problematics such as disorganization, smuggling, insecurity, corruption and the need to survive day to day in the context of modernity, globalization, increasing urbanization and rampant migration, which leads to a gastronomy of informality, as observed in the San Victorino square, tries to provide a solution to those who, when it comes to feeding themselves, may have problems of time and money when it comes to obtaining the minimum energetic requirements to survive the dynamics of the aggressive and inconsiderate city with the most vulnerable. Thus, an observation exercise of more than 30 hours was carried out to subsequently characterize the gastronomic offer (see table 1) that is present in the San Victorino square.

Location	nameofthepreparation	ingredients	Price	Image
Plazoleta de San Victorino Bogotá	Combinado	Rice, chicken feet and condiments	COP \$1.500 USD 0.34	
	Chinese Rice	Rice, Chinese root, onion, ham, sausage, chicken and condiments.	COP \$2.500 USD 0.56	
	Picada	Pork crakling, pork sausage, potato and plantains	COP \$4.000 USD 0.90	
	Sudado de pobre	Rice, cassava, pasta, chicken and condiments	COP \$3.500 USD 0.79	
	Cruzado Venezolano	Ribs, beef shank, beef feet, cassava, potato, corn, arracacha and plantain	COP \$3.500 USD 0.79	

Source: Own Elaboration (2022).

The field work in which the participant observation was carried out and the information collected had three different moments that correspond to the three phases mentioned in the methodology. The first moment was a familiarization meeting with the territory, to characterize the street gastronomic offer and from the participant

observation to carry out a field diary, these activities were carried out on August 12th - 14th, 2022. The purpose of the second moment was to carry out the surveys of street food consumers on September 12th -14th, 2022; and the third moment allowed to establish dialogues with the informal vendors regarding their daily lives; This process took place on October 22nd – 24th, 2022.

In Bogotá there are 3.7 million people working in various sectors of the economy, however, 1.3 million are in the informal sector, which represents a rate close to 36% (EL ESPECTADOR, 2022). Additionally, Bogotá has around 54,000 informal vendors and many of them have incomes below the legal minimum wage, which by 2022 was USD 9 per day (HERNÁNDEZ, 2022). Furthermore, the informal vendors in the Plaza de San Victorino have a daily income below the legal minimum wage; the average daily income of informal vendors is 6.3 USD, and 25% have a daily income of less than 3.6 USD, which is below the poverty line (SÁNCHEZ, 2023).

Observation and dialogue with the actors revealed five meals that are among the most consumed in the Plazoleta de San Victorino: Combinado, arroz chino, picada, sudado de pobre and cruzado venezolano. Some elements in common of these preparations are the copious presence of flour, fats, and proteins, with the caveat that the latter are cheap cuts of beef, pork, chicken and sausages. On the other hand, the cost of this food is particularly cheap, ranging between USD 0.54 and USD 0.90; they are food dishes that cost less than a dollar. The ingredients of the preparations and their cost are directly proportional to the segment of the population that consumes them: street vendors, the unemployed, the homeless, immigrants, sex workers and transients, who find in this informal gastronomy the necessary energy requirements for day-to-day life.

It is important to mention that popular gastronomy is not the same as traditional gastronomy, but it is the one that most resembles it and is the one that has been appropriated in the contemporary urban dynamics of a developing country like Colombia. The street food vendor of San Victorino is a survivor of everyday life, who, entrenched in the city, resists the onslaught of a system that persecutes and punishes in what Acevedo (2015) calls the gastronomy of resistance, given the difficulties faced by popular cooks, being in a context of informal economy, where they are persecuted by the public administrations and pressured by local mafias.

Capitalism and the market economy integrate and exclude, and the excluded must seek mechanisms to survive, reinventing aspects such as food. This manifests itself as a collective expression, a local product of the modernity they resist, but which also shows distinctive features such as tastes, customs and most importantly, the very realities of the people. The astronomy of informality turns out to be a snapshot of the economic reality of an impoverished and pandemic-stricken people, with high unemployment rates, low productivity, poverty and restrictions on access to capital, which has generated a subsistence economy, in which street food plays a decisive role in defining eating patterns and redefining the importance of public space and above all as an expression of local culture.

The gastronomy of informality transcends a basic physiological need to acquire a cultural meaning, since it is colored by ideologies, tastes, freedoms, creeds, and personal knowledge. For everyone it is a construction of codes that from the perspective of Carmona (2017) are traditions, illusions, routines, indifference, joy and discontent. In short, it is a communication vector that enables cultural relationships such as commensality, which helps to strengthen identities, group cohesion, bonds, and affective alliances Caro (2010). In any case, street food is a possibility to build identities and to configure territories, the gastronomy of informality is strongly influenced by exogenous contexts such as globalization and wild capitalism, which affect not only the structure and composition of food, but rather its forms of access, supply and budget defining by Valduga (2014) a new food order that under certain political, social and economic conditions can become a dimension of risk or security depending on the circumstances.

Street food is closely related to the city and its social, economic and cultural dynamics, it caters to pedestrians and street dwellers in its mercantile logic; it is the food of the common worker and of the marginalized and of a social class that remains on the margins, in a clear class division; From this point of view, the gastronomy of informality is considered as an illegal and not recommendable practice, alluding to its asepsis, health and hygiene conditions, but it is unquestionably the only food option for those with fewer resources and a few others with less time. Perhaps these same problems are the ones that legitimize its presence, because as mentioned by Coelho and Ewerton (2014, p. 17). "Its history dates back to times when the street was the main supply point for human settlements, and when commercial establishments, such as the market or the fair, had more to do with a crossroads than with a specific building".

Eating in the street will always be within the reach of any person, since the food stands are strategically located where there are movements of people trying to fit into the mobility routines of the city, however, and given the social complexities of the environment of the San Victorino square, its diners also have certain particularities (see graph 1):

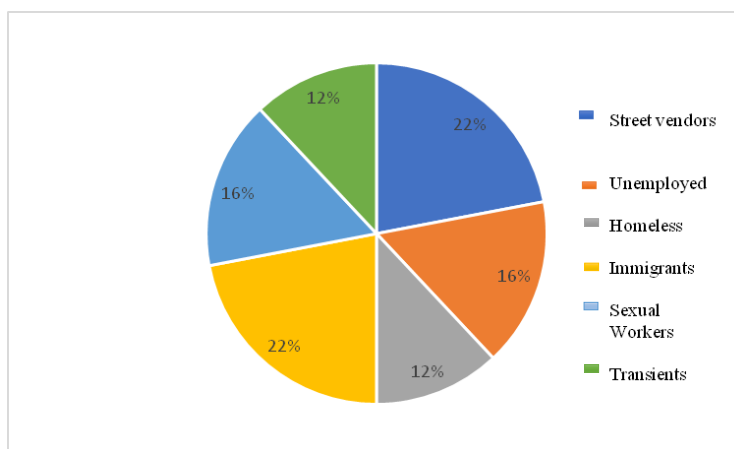


Figure 2: Profiles of street food consumers in the Plazoleta de San Victorino Bogota

Source: Own Elaboration (2022)

Regarding the profiles of the consumers of street food in the San Victorino square in Bogota (see Figure 2), it was found that 22% of the diners are street vendors working in the area, mainly engaged in the sale of seasonal products (textiles, toys, Christmas items, school supplies, etc.). Another 22% of informants corresponds to the floating immigrant population, mainly Venezuelan immigrants dedicated to scavenging and other activities. Another 16% of respondents are unemployed people who pass through, frequent or seek opportunities in the area due to its commercial importance. Another 16% of informants are sex workers who offer their services in the area of the small square and nearby places. The other 12% corresponds to homeless people who pass through or frequent the downtown area of Bogotá and finally 12% of respondents are passersby who pass through the center of Bogotá.

One of the most relevant factors in the consumption of street food is the poverty rate, which according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Eclac (2022), the poverty rate in Colombia was 36.3% in 2022 and is projected to rise to 39.2% by the end of 2023. These official indicators show the reality of food security in the country, where people living in extreme poverty consume only one meal per day, which is not enough to cover the daily energy requirement. Factors such as migration and overpopulation generate phenomena such as unemployment and underemployment, throwing millions of people and households into poverty. In this sense, informal gastronomy emerges as an employment alternative, but also as a solution for those who cannot access a complete and balanced diet and find in street food a very economical food option, in what (APAASSONGO, et al., 2016) call the economy of informality and scrounging.

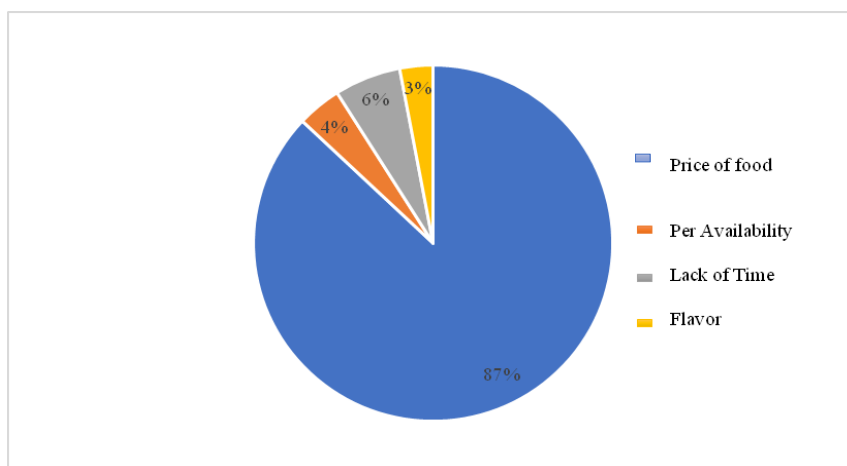


Figure 3: Main reasons for the consumption of street food in the San Victorino square in Bogota

Source: Own Elaboration (2022)

Regarding the main reasons for consuming street food in the San Victorino Plaza (see Figure 3), 87% of the respondents stated that they consume it mainly because of the economic price at which they get the food, since the values range between COP 1,500 (USD 0.34) and COP 4,000 (USD 0.90). A 6% of the respondents stated that they consume this type of food because they have little time to eat; another 4% considered that they consume street food because of the availability to access it and the remaining 3% of respondents stated that their consumption is due to the taste and enjoyment of the food that they get there.

Having to find the only meal of the day for less than a dollar describes the very poor economic reality that many people live in the other Bogota, the other city of poverty, insecurity, injustice, and inequality. Acevedo (2015) mentions that a whole complex reality is evident behind the popular gastronomic manifestations, all their difficulties, because in that way, there are many challenges and difficulties faced by informal diners. In sum, street food and its consumption reinforce the narrative that it is a necessary evil, since it provides food to the poorest people, what Crossa (2016) calls "food of the poor for the poor".

The indicators of street food consumption associated with price show the reality of a country like Colombia, where its main cities, called development poles, have very high rates of labor precariousness and multidimensional poverty that the state has not been able to solve in decades. In that way, Bakic (2017, p. 11) mentions that: "in the narratives of class and consumption, the sale of street food, does not seem to be a problem, but the symbolic representation of the poverty that it entails".

With the purpose of getting to know the opinions of informal street food vendors regarding their imaginaries and representations in relation to the daily dynamics of informal gastronomy. Four semi-structured ethnographic interviews were conducted, which were systematized using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.Ti (see figure 3). The categories of analysis that emerged were plotted and analyzed as follows:

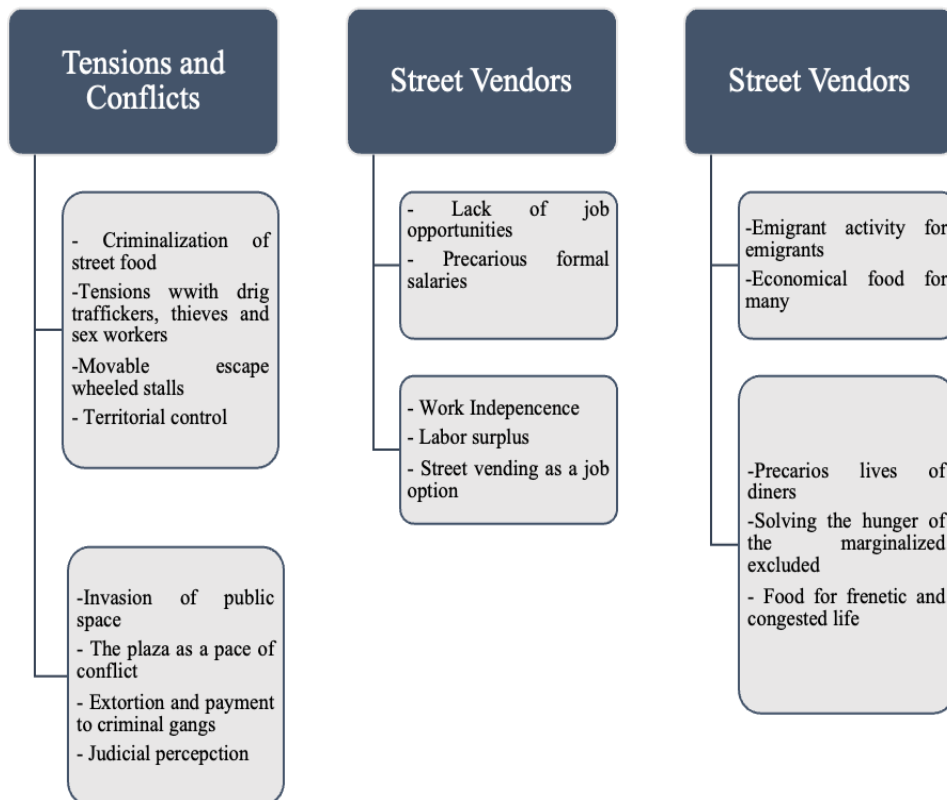


Figure 4: Coding of interviews with informal street food vendors (2022)

Source: Own elaboration based on the systematization of the semi-structured interviews by means of the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti (2022).

The first category of analysis that emerged in the systematization process of the interviews conducted with street food vendors were the tensions and conflicts (seeFigure 4) resulting from the criminalization of the authorities and local administrations, which makes them have to remain on the margins of the current legality and always subject to police persecution, who exercise control over the handling of food and the invasion of public space, which goes against the notion of modern and sanitized city in the modernization project of Bogota in the late twentieth century. On the other hand, the production, commercialization, and consumption of food that, although it may be the materialization of a democratized public space, according to Privitera and Saverio (2015). it is also a residual space of popular sovereignty.

It should be noted that the greatest persecution occurs due to the occupation of public space, since in the context of the San Victorino square, street food is not considered social heritage or cultural manifestation, while it is the gastronomy of the

marginalized and invisible. of the modern city project. Informal gastronomy is recognized as the "food of the poor" pointed out and discriminated against, it operates from the margin, since it is a focus of conflict and unhealthiness. These gastronomic morphologies have been separated from the processes of institutional gastronomic patrimonialization, since this is a process that selects and excludes in accordance with the returns that this heritage can grant, in short, in informal gastronomy there is no room for negotiation, but rather of persecution, as Il mentions in his account regarding the actions of the authorities.

"[...]We vendors have to have "four eyes" with the police, because they come by surprise and seize our foodstalls, they are very tough and have no respect for us, they put the carts on the trucks and almost always damage them on purpose; they have seized it four times and I have to pay under the table to get it back, they always come with an order from the mayor's office and do not consider that many of us live from this and above all we feed many [...]" (Chinese rice vendor, February 2022).

The pressures of the authorities force the informal vendors to adapt to the circumstances in a kind of natural selection, in which only the strongest who can overcome the vicissitudes of the "urban Serengeti" that is the San Victorino square, thus, all the food stalls have adapted wheels to be able to have mobility and to be able to escape when the authorities appear, these are subversive tactics in the eyes of the institutions in a conflict over the use and appropriation of public space, for as De Certeau (2000) points out, in the face of the manifestations of power and dominion over public space, resistance will appear to reinterpret this same space.

On the other hand, although the institutions claim ownership and control of public space, the fact is that control over this territory is in the hands of criminal gangs that extort informal food vendors by demanding payment of what they call "vaccination fees" to occupy a certain space and thus sell their food. For the criminals, this is not an extortion payment, but a payment for providing a "security service". I2 mentions the following regarding security payments:

"[...] Here in San Victorino, we all pay, from the owner of the large clothing or appliance store, the vendors in the surrounding malls and those of us who work on the street, those who sell food, those who sell popsicles and ice cream, shoe shiners and even prostitutes, there is no fixed rate, you pay from \$ 1. 500 (USD 0.34) and up: we street vendors are the ones who pay the least, and we have to do it, so we don't get into trouble, but they also take care of us, the street is hard..." (combination vendor, March 2022).

Cities such as Bogota, as well as many other Latin American cities, are experiencing an increase in insecurity and violence, crime, fear and impunity, which are not alien to street vendors, who live permanently with this phenomenon that

motivates current social debates. For many decades San Victorino has been considered one of the most dangerous areas of the city of Bogotá, since thieves, sex workers, street dwellers and other actors converge there, exerting direct and indirect pressure on street food vendors, who express the permanent fear they are exposed to of ending up involved in illegal activities in the face of permanent coercion from these actors. Regarding fear Robles (2014, (P. 2) mentions the following: "The importance of talking about fear of crime to measure citizen insecurity in relation to emotions lies in the real, tangible and potentially severe consequences that fear presents in both individual and social levels of the human being". Consequently, the street food vendor I3 says the following about fear:

[...] "one cannot hide the fact that San Victorino is a dangerous place, it has always been like that since I can remember, there are many criminals around here, more than you can imagine, we live with them, but one has to "eat quietly" (don't say anything) with what one sees and hears, the problem is when they look for you to get you into trouble; keep this, lend me this, warn me about this, it is complicated, what else could you do?" [...]. (Picada vendor, March 2022).

Thus, the San Victorino square as a space of conflict directly involves street food vendors, since the fear of different forms of criminality fractures the sense of community and in the case of the square, it becomes a red zone that no one wants to visit, and fear becomes the catalyst agent.

The second category of analysis that emerged in the systematization was the informal economy, where the activity of street food vending clearly responds to the need to earn a living and bring daily sustenance to their homes. It is evident that the vendors take advantage of the interview to denounce the lack of job opportunities in the hegemonic economic system that would allow them a contract in a company with legal benefits, although they are aware that in the current situation it is impossible for them, so they have no choice but to undergo the adversities of informality and accept the uncertainty of the day to day waiting for a better opportunity.

For the street food vendors of San Victorino, working on the street for long hours is a reality that they cannot elude; likewise, they consider it a dignified and honest job, which beyond all the difficulties they may have, generates economic independence, where there is no boss and where the rules and work schedules are defined by them. Being their own boss is also considered an achievement and a form of resistance on the margins of the hegemonic labor system; thus, I4 mentions the following about informal work:

[...] "I am selling food in San Victorino because I am an old man and nobody gives me a job, at my 52 years old they don't want me in a company, add to that I am from Venezuela and I don't have documents, so it is worse that way. I have tried to get a job in a company, and I have not succeeded, in the end I resigned myself, and I have made this my business, nobody controls me, I set my

own hours and I even define how much I want to earn" [...] (Venezuelan cruzado salesman, March 2022).

Colombian society, as well as Latin American society, has adopted the globalizing accumulative model, in which a large part of the population is excluded by not being able to integrate into the national productive system, significantly increasing unemployment rates and forcing them to labor marginalization, Pérez and Mora (2006). From this perspective, most street food vendors in San Victorino are a labor surplus, unskilled manpower that completed a short productive cycle and is forced into informality in heterogeneous and dissimilar activities. According to Eclac (2022), the ratio of formal to informal work is 1 to 4, i.e., for every person working formally with a contract and social benefits, four are working in the informal sector, with the implications that this entails: deterioration of working conditions and, therefore, deterioration of the quality of life of the worker and his or her family.

The third category of analysis resulting from the systematization addresses the social relationships that result from the constant or temporary interaction between the vendor and the street food customer, this relationship is given around the product, the quality and quantity in which it is offered, which allows to generate bonds of trust. On the other hand, cultural meanings regarding the vendor should be considered: whether he/she is male or female, whether he/she is young or adult, whether he/she is a Colombian or a foreigner, since as Cabrera (2018) argues, the existence of stigmas towards certain social groups undermines their symbolic and material possibilities of development.

Food has a social function that is associated with the representations and symbolic needs of the diners; thus, conversations are the bridge for interaction. Trandafioiu (2015) points out that it is possible to understand socialization as a "reciprocal repercussion" that occurs between participants for the pursuit of certain ends. Regarding the social interactions and relationships that arise in street food vending, II mentions the following:

[...] "one must be friendly with the customers and one also realizes that the people who come to eat also want to talk, many of them are lonely or marginalized people and at the food stand they are looking for conversation, in many occasions we even discuss politics without knowing about it, the important thing is to be friendly to attract and keep customers" [...] (Chinese rice seller, February 2022).

The sale of street food fulfills a social function in the informal economy that embraces a good part of the inhabitants of Bogotá; It is a simple and unvaried menu that makes it economical and within the reach of a sector of the population with very limited economic resources; this informal gastronomy is a solution to the hunger of the marginalized and excluded who pass through the center of the city (unemployed, prostitutes, shoeshine boys, recyclers, displaced persons, immigrants and others) in a relationship of inclusion and exclusion which for Sen (2008) is the sense in which

certain social groups will or will not have access (to different degrees) to human and elementary rights, beyond the minimum economic conditions of subsistence.

Most of the diners in the San Victorino square live precarious lives and are in places like this, simply to survive, they are people on the margins of all social conformity and excluded in multiple rights: health, education, work, housing, recreation, etc. Acevedo (2016). Street food has a direct relationship with the pedestrian, the common and the division of classes, making this type of experience something fragmented in the different worlds that can have the San Victorino square, in that way I4 mentions the following:

[...] "Look, all the people you see eating at the stalls in San Victorino are people who live from the daily grind, many of them do not even know where they are going to sleep tonight, they are people like us who survive on the street, who get up every morning to fight the fight, and with our food, we contribute to them so that they can have something to eat at an economical price, so that they can overcome their hard day to day. I am from Maracaibo Venezuela and most of my clients are fellow countrymen who have a very hard time, but I sell them food that reminds them of their homeland and believe me that helps a lot" [...]. (Venezuelan crusader vendor, March 2022).

In sum, there are many people who need this food since it is imperative to solve the issue of food security of the marginalized, in the spatial and temporal configuration of the San Victorino square, because in the face of a relative and generalized impoverishment of the city of Bogotá, the street vendors resist in front of a reality that condemns them to themselves, because the gastronomy of informality faces the difficulties and worries of the frenetic and congested life of the urban landscape, since eating in the street is a cultural code from which the public space is shared by different social groups.

This problem is nothing recent, nor does it emerge spontaneously in a particular situation, since what has been described above corresponds to several centuries of informality, contraband, disorganization, and manifest improvisation, even before we were constituted as a republic (ACEVEDO, 2015). Informal gastronomy in the context of the San Victorino square in Bogotá is a twilight territory that borders the legal world, but also allows transit for those individuals who deviate from the laws when they exceed their benefits (CROSSA, 2016). In this way, street food is the product of the pettiness of the current economic system that segregates, marginalizes, and subtracts possibilities for a dignified life. As a result of this, a gastronomy of resistance has materialized in parallel, which with its own language and codes contradict the institutional discourse of modernity, hygiene, planning and order, not meaning that they have an aversion to dialogue and negotiation if it was necessary.

Discussion y Conclusion

It is evident that the economic reality of Colombia has expelled hundreds of thousands of people outside the hegemonic economic system, either as surplus labor due to age, or because they are unskilled workforce that has no options to be linked to the current productive system. Thus, the sale of street food is the most immediate alternative to obtain money and daily sustenance for many families, who find in informality a labor option that gives them other advantages such as: being independent, setting their own work schedules and not being subordinate to a boss. Gradually it becomes a very competed labor option as more and more people seek to occupy a space in the San Victorino square to sell some type of article, generating conflicts for the appropriation of public space.

The San Victorino square has become a space of tensions and conflicts regarding the use and appropriation of public space, on the one hand, the administrative agencies that criminalize and persecute street food, considering it a public health problem and a source of insecurity, and the vendors who resist the manifestations of domination and power of these same agencies; However, crime and common delinquency have a leading role in the square, since it is the scenario of many of their activities which permeate the informal food sales, generating more tensions for the vendors.

The gastronomy of informality recreates one of the most important cultural codes of community behaviors, in addition, it is a use of public space as a platform which is essentially an expression of popular culture. Additionally, it comprises informality, gastronomy, territory, and its complex relationships with obtaining general aspects to contribute to the socioanthropological reflections on the informal gastronomy of the Plazuela de San Victorino in Bogotá. However, the need of the marginalized to find survival mechanisms, transforming aspects of nutrition is based on the integration and marginalization of the capitalism of the market economy.

However, the gastronomy of informality is not only conceived by street food vendors, but also by consumers, most of whom are excluded and marginalized from the productive system. Street food materializes voices of denunciation and resistance to the generalized conditions of inequity and social injustice. A progressive economic impoverishment that has null mourners from the institutionality and the formal productive system. In this way, informal gastronomy in developing countries fulfills a social, economic, and cultural function, because in the face of the incapacities and abandonment of the state, it emerges as a possibility of employment and relief to the alimentary security of the most disadvantaged in society.

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