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Savoring Heritage: Exploring the Slow Food Movement's Role on Colombia's Cultural and Economic Development

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Master of Science in Tourism Development and Culture

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, who have sacrificed so much over their lifetimes to allow me to excel in mine. I am eternally grateful for you both. To my uncles Jaime, Santiago, and Geoff, my Aunt Sandra, and my mom for instilling in me a deep love of food and a connection to Colombia through it. Your cooking means everything to me and watching you all in the kitchen is one of my favorite things.

To my sister and nephew, who have called me almost every day throughout this process, thank you for your company and for being the only two people who truly understand my palate. Thank you for celebrating my victories and encouraging me every step of the way.

To my entire family, and more importantly all the incredible women in my family who have shown me what it means to be resilient. Words cannot express the amount of gratitude I have for each and every one of you. To my cousins, thank you for helping me find my focus, guiding, and supporting me through this journey. And to Cami , thank you for showing me around Cali and exposing me to a different culinary side of Colombia. Thank you all for your time and care, I love you all infinitely.

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A las cocineras que tomaron el tiempo para hablarme de sus experiencias en SF y de sus sueños para Colombia. Sin ustedes, esta tesis no sería posible.

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Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Erasmus+ program for awarding me with a scholarship that enabled me to pursue this Master's degree.

With heartfelt appreciation and gratitude…xx

Resumo

Esta pesquisa explora o papel do movimento Slow Food (SF) na preservação das práticas culturais e na promoção do turismo sustentável na Colômbia. Investiga como as iniciativas da SF podem apoiar o desenvolvimento comunitário, aprimorar economias circulares e promover a transmissão cultural. Através de entrevistas com quatro cozinheiras envolvidas no movimento SF, o estudo revela a interconexão do sucesso da SF com a participação comunitária, a transmissão de conhecimento e o compromisso com práticas tradicionais. Os resultados destacam a capacidade da SF de revitalizar conexões culturais por meio de oficinas, eventos e programas educacionais, enfatizando a importância de preservar o patrimônio cultural para as futuras gerações.

Apesar das preocupações sobre a acessibilidade da SF no Sul Global, a pesquisa demonstra que a SF pode ser, de fato, um movimento viável e impactante na Colômbia. Ela cria oportunidades de emprego, apoia mudanças sociais e conecta comunidades a nível nacional e internacional. O estudo ressalta a importância do apoio contínuo e do desenvolvimento das iniciativas da SF para garantir benefícios duradouros para as comunidades locais e o patrimônio cultural. Além disso, salienta a importância de mais estudos de caso sobre as ações da SF no Sul Global e pesquisas comparativas de pesquisas comparativas de forma a reforçar os resultados obtidos nesta dissertação.

Por último, este estudo visa promover a SF como uma causa social transformadora, em vez de uma tendência passageira, defendendo os recursos essenciais necessários para sustentar as práticas culturais e o bem-estar da comunidade.

Palavras Chave: Movimento Slow Food, Gastronomia, Economia Circular, Desenvolvimento Comunitário, Patrimônio Cultural, Colômbia

JEL: Z32 - Turismo e Desenvolvimento
Q01 - Turismo e Desenvolvimento

Abstract

This research explores the Slow Food (SF) movement's role in preserving cultural practices and promoting sustainable tourism in Colombia. It investigates how SF initiatives can support community development, enhance circular economies, and foster cultural transmission. Through interviews with four cooks within the SF movement, the study reveals the interconnectedness of SF's success with community involvement, knowledge transmission, and commitment to traditional practices. The findings highlight SF's ability to rekindle cultural connections through workshops, events, and educational programs, emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Despite concerns about SF's accessibility in the Global South, the research demonstrates that SF can indeed be a viable and impactful movement in Colombia. It creates job opportunities, supports social change, and connects communities nationally and internationally. The study underscores the importance of continued support and development of SF initiatives to ensure lasting benefits for local communities and cultural heritage. Additionally, it calls for more case studies on SF's actions in the Global South and comparative research to solidify findings.

Ultimately, this study aims to promote SF as a transformative social cause rather than a fleeting trend, advocating for the essential resources needed to sustain cultural practices and community well-being.

Keywords: Slow Food Movement, Gastronomy, Circular Economy, Community Development, Cultural Heritage, Colombia

JEL Classification Codes: Z32 - Tourism and Development
Q01 - Sustainable Development

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Globalization has profoundly shaped societies worldwide in both positive and negative ways. On one hand, it has facilitated the fusion of cuisines, tourism, and financial circulation. On the other hand, it has also introduced western influences, which raises concerns about the potential loss of cultural identities. This has led to gastro-nativist movements where countries strive to preserve their heritage and morals through gastronomy (Parasecoli, 2022). While some countries apply gastro-nativism in an exclusionary manner to define who belongs in a community and who does not (Parasecoli, 2022), others focus on how their culinary traditions can help them overcome hardship. This includes using traditions to uphold cultural values, sustain local economy, and support community development, all while overcoming traumatic experiences and negative connotations associated with the country's image.

To explore the positive implications of gastro-nativism, this thesis investigates how focusing on local ingredients and reverting to gastronomy as a catalyst for change can sustain culture and unite communities. Specifically, it explores the Slow Food (SF) movement in Colombia and its impact on transforming the local economy while preserving cultural heritage through gastronomy. As it stands, Colombia is mostly known for its history with crime, but the country is now leveraging its rich culinary traditions to promote peace and showcase its unique culture (Colprensa, 2023; La Via Campesina International Peasants Movement, 2022; One Earth Future Foundation, 2021; Slow Food Foundation, 2021). Colombia's culinary heritage offers numerous opportunities for creative development and gastronomic tourism as it is incredibly diverse thanks to its geographical location. The country boasts over 2,000 traditional recipes across its 32 departments[1] (Duque Mahecha, 2023), two cities recognized by UNESCO for their culinary creativity (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2020), and one of the world's most renowned coffees (Duque Mahecha, 2023). Additionally, Colombian cities are gaining recognition for their culinary efforts. Cali is implementing a sustainable food network (Alliance of Bioversity International & International Center for Tropical Agriculture, 2020), Bogotá was named South America's next food capital by National Geographic for its use of local ingredients (Picon & Gill, 2024), and in 2020, Colombia was recognized as the best culinary destination in South America at the World Travel Awards, demonstrating its growth and prominence in the culinary world.

The choice to focus on Colombian gastronomy for this thesis stems from this emerging global recognition of Colombian cuisine, and my personal connection to Colombia and its cuisine. As a child of

[1] Departments are the administrative divisions of Colombia's unitary republic (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

Colombian immigrants growing up in Canada, food was a vital link to my heritage and a connection for my parents to their homeland. Having previously studied creative industries, I developed an interest in the intersection of art, gastronomy, and storytelling, as family stories were often shared around the kitchen and food, creating a bridge to our cultural roots as well as connecting my family. Similar to some of the cooks that I interviewed for this thesis, I have always been curious about my heritage and the central role of food in connecting identities inspired my focus on traditional Colombian practices, how food intersects with cultural identity, and how that identity can be upheld in an increasingly globalized and westernized world. Initially, my research question was broad, aiming to explore how Indigenous communities use gastronomy to preserve and promote their heritage and land rights. This interest stemmed from my past research on Indigenous tourism. However, upon reflecting on my connection to Colombian food, I realized my true interest lay in the link between tourism, gastronomy, storytelling, and heritage - a topic with limited research in the context of Colombia. Thus, my research question shifted to examining the role of gastronomy in preserving and promoting cultural identity and sovereignty. As I learned more about gastronomic movements, the history of Colombian cuisine, and engaged with local cooks, the focus shifted to the SF movement's impact on Colombia. This came as a realization that Colombia was using SF to strengthen heritage, address malnutrition, and boost the local economy. The SF movement has found greater success in South America compared to Europe, where the focus has shifted to quality marks like DOP[2]. In South America, the SF movement's principles have been embraced, supporting not only heritage preservation but also women's involvement in culinary practices. This thesis aims to fill the gap in literature by examining the SF movement's role in promoting local ingredients, boosting the economy, and attracting tourism in Colombia, with a focus on female-identifying cooks who often go unrecognized for their contributions in the culinary sector.

1.1 Objectives and Goals

As mentioned, information on the sociocultural study of cuisine in Latin America, and specifically within Colombia is limited. Within Colombia the study is a recent field and historical records or accounts are difficult to find (Patiño Ossa, 2016). Despite this, institutions offering traditional technical cooking have recently multiplied, reflecting Colombia's recognition of its importance (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). However, a lack of academic research remains, highlighting the need to analyze policies, as well as testimonials from cooks, food and gastronomic researchers, anthropologists, and other scholars. One

[2] Denominazione di Origine Protetta “Protected Designation of Origin” is a certification from the European Union ensuring that products are locally grown and packaged.

clear finding from these accounts is that the lack of a single interpretation of Colombian cuisine has hindered its recognition on an international level. Despite this, Colombia's culinary diversity reflects the country's varied cultural influences and regional specialties, offering vast possibilities for creativity, dissemination, and future development (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Consequently this thesis aims to answer how SF can be used as a tool for circular tourism and safeguard cultural practices. Through this question I aim to;

1) Create a better understanding of how the SF movement works within the global south.
2) Examine how SF intersects with ancestral practices and beliefs that need safeguarding.
3) Uncover what opportunities SF can support beyond its scope such as economic and financial.

1.2 Structure of the Dissertation

This research begins with a literature review on Colombia's history and its socio-cultural ties to food, alongside an explanation of the SF movement and its presence in Colombia. Key concepts such as Slow Food, gastro-nativism, Colombian cuisine, biodiversity, and food storytelling were explored to establish a foundation. Following the literature review, the theoretical and methodological framework are presented in chapters 3 and 4. For this study, qualitative primary data was collected through interviews with four cooks in Colombia. Due to limited information on the SF movement in Colombia, personal interviews were essential in gathering insights into why individuals join the movement and how it operates within the country. Furthermore, the interviews provided a deeper understanding of participants' desired trajectory of the SF movement and its intersections with socio-economic concerns. After the methodology, the main findings from the interviews are summarized in chapter 5. Findings are then examined in chapter 6, where the cook's interviews are analyzed and compared to existing contributions on the subject. The discussion also explores the future of SF in Colombia, delving into its socio-economic implications while safeguarding and celebrating Colombian heritage. Lastly, recommendations for further studies are provided in chapter 7. In summary, this thesis explores SF's potential to positively impact Colombia's economy and cultural heritage by fostering sustainable practices, enhancing tourism, and preserving traditional culinary knowledge. Findings contribute to a broader understanding of the movement's role in shaping Colombia's gastronomic identity and its intersection with social, economic, and environmental factors.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Colombia, Rich in Culture and Land Struggles

Located at the pinnacle of South America and connected to both the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean, Colombia is a country rich in history, diversity, crops, and culinary cuisine thanks to its geographical location (Cárdenas, 2022; Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Echeverri et al., 2024; Patiño Ossa, 2016). Through centuries of transculturation between the Indigenous peoples, Spanish colonizers, and the slave trade, Colombia has built a vibrant culture that draws from each source and has led to a wide range of regional blended cuisines and techniques (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Echeverri et al., 2024; Avianca, 2017; Patiño Ossa, 2016; Pohl-Valero, 2016). In a 2017 campaign by the airline Avianca, Colombia was described as: "*...a place full of colors and flavors that sprout from land as if from the art of magic, our biodiversity is one of the most important in the world"*[3]. Duque-Mahecha, a socio-cultural anthropologist and food and culture thinker, found that in her conversations with Colombian cooks, many shared similar perspectives due to the abundance of local ingredients (2017). This abundance comes from Colombia being the second most biodiverse country in the world (Cárdenas, 2022; Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Although boasting a diverse culinary heritage, Colombia remains less recognized globally for its gastronomic offerings compared to its Latin American counterparts such as Argentina, Peru, and Mexico (Duque-Mahecha, 2017, 24). Some cooks and scholars attribute its unrecognition due to the fact that Colombians cannot agree on what is considered as traditional foods or techniques (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). In food wrapping[4] techniques alone, there are over 130 different methods in Colombian cuisine (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). The one thing that is agreed upon, is that Colombian cuisine's centuries of transcultural influences and the diverse array of traditional culinary practices in each region makes it special (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Patiño Ossa, 2016). Aside from the missing cohesion of identity, the historical context of Colombia's gastronomic scene reveals that socio-economic conflicts and waves of displacement have significantly impacted the land and identity, contributing to the slow emergence of its culinary identity (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Prada, 2020). These issues are linked to broader themes such as the importance and connections between land, food, and community,

[3] Quote in original language "Colombia es un lugar lleno de colores y sabores que brotan de la tierra como por arte de magia, nuestra biodiversidad es una de las más importantes del mundo"

[4] Certain traditional foods require food to be wrapped in leaves and natural fibers for either the preparation or preservation of the dish - ex; tamales which are cooked and stored in plantain leaves.

and the roles of Indigenous and land movements, which are essential to understanding the evolution and potential of Colombia's food movement.

2.1.1 History

Beginning with colonization, Indigenous communities suffered greatly from diseases brought by Spaniards, loss of land, high mortality rates, and displacement (Cuturi, 2022; Donati, 2005; Goyes et al., 2021; Pohl-Valero, 2016). Aside from visible loss, a sense of community began to deteriorate as the Spanish introduced the debt system and money (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022, 2; Pohl-Valero, 2016). Over time, this system rendered Indigenous communities dependent on external economic activities, such as labor during the rubber boom in the 1850s, the cocaine boom in the 1970s, and now precarious jobs (Goyes et al., 2021, 972; Turner et al., 2020). These events were complicit in the collapse of farming in the Americas, deteriorated political autonomy in Indigenous communities, and further increased the death toll of Indigenous peoples through exploitative efforts (Goyes et al., 2021; Velasco et al., 2023).

Proceeding with internal armed conflict, at the beginning of the 19th century over 400 petitions were filed for land dispositions from landowners who were considered peasants (Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024, 4). Although the grievances grew over time, the state tended to side with the interest of settlers who co-opted legal authorities or abused the system (Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024, 4). As the value of land increased, tensions were heightened in the 1920s with the coffee boom (Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024, 7). By the mid 1930s, the agrarian conflict became a national political concern as Colombia was being divided between extreme poverty and wealth (Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024; Prada, 2020). In 1948 the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán—a prominent liberal leader—kicked off "*one of the longest running armed conflicts in recent world history*" (Prada, 2020), and a chapter of Colombia's history titled 'La Violencia' or 'The Violence' in English (Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024). During this period conservatives repressed liberal citizens with tactics such as displacing liberal landowners and/or sharecroppers to seize additional land (Cuturi, 2022; Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024, 5). As a response, an armed resistance was created ensuing further loss of territorial control, and saw to the rise of guerrillas and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Goyes et al., 2021; Lopez-Uribe & Sanchez Torres, 2024). While armed conflict continued, during the 1970s narco traffickers exploited 'illicit' plants and used Indigenous peoples, their knowledge, and the prime location of their land (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Green 2005,139; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023). Considering these 'illicit' plants are used in traditional Indigenous medicine, the drug trade is another example of how external forces commercialized something sacred,

and rendered Indigenous people dependent on economic opportunities (Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023; Maysels et al., 2023). To combat the drug trade, the Colombian government conducted aerial spraying with glyphosate which further damaged traditional and farming lands (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Jackson, 2007; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Maysels et al., 2023). This practice continued until 2018 and was suspended due to its association with human rights violations, population displacement, crop displacement, deforestation, and environmental contamination (Goyes et al., 2021, 969; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023, 53; Turner et al., 2020; Velasco et al., 2023). Aside from damaging lands, according to the Truth Commission in Colombia, the armed conflict and drug war has taken an estimated 800,000 lives since the 1980s and has forcibly displaced 7.75 million people (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Fleck, 2022; Jackson, 2007, 207). This loss and displacement directly impact the connection to culture and the preservation of ancestral knowledge. According to Goyes et al., "*the peak of physical attacks against Indigenous Individuals in Colombia*" occurred between 1997 and 2004, with 4,632 Indigenous people targeted due to their active role in attempting to reclaim and protect the land (2021, p.973). This data supports Labate & Rodrigues sentiment, based on Paley's (2015) *Drug War Capitalism*, that wars and armed conflict significantly contribute to "*repressive state intervention over traditional peoples and their lands in Latin America*" (2023, p.48).

2.1.2 Return to Land

Although narcotics continue to play a role in land conflicts and the economy, in 2003 Colombia saw the first attempt for peace with paramilitary groups through a signed agreement (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Goyes et al., 2021; Parasecoli, 2022; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023). By 2016, a treaty was established with FARC, facilitating a slow reinstatement of land access for many families who had previously lost it (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Goyes et al., 2021; Parasecoli, 2022; Prada, 2020). Despite the treaties and agreements, these conflicts continue to be a problem in Colombia due to state corruption and gradual socio-political changes (Goyes et al., 2021, 973; Jackson, 2007; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023; Turner et al., 2020). Be that as it may, the country's history and mistrust in the state has led to many grassroots organizations, Indigenous collectives, and activists to rally and actively work on collective rights to protect and preserve land and culture (Jackson, 2007; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023).

2.1.2.1 Social Movements

Through peaceful protests, awareness campaigns, political participation, and additional activities, Indigenous and minority[5] activists have successfully organized to act collectively (Jackson, 2007; Wallis, 2019). Together, they confront injustices, support one another, and safeguard the land. A prime example of this collective action is the formation of the Indigenous Guard (Guarda Indigena) in the late 1990s which now has over 60,000 active members and continues to grow despite constant threats and assassinations (Wallis, 2019). Leaders of the Indigenous Guard have extended their efforts by training Afro-Colombians and farmers to develop their own peaceful guards in Cauca such as 'Guardia Cimarrona', and 'Guardia Campesina' (Pogrebinschi, 2017; Wallis, 2019). In the face of danger, threats, kidnappings, and unjust policies that disrupt their unity and spiritual practices connecting them to the land, the guard mobilizes by showing up, voicing their needs, and engaging in conversations to find solutions (Jackson, 2007, 214; Wallis, 2019). Regarding daily practices, Indigenous groups like the Inga are actively eliminating foreign elements that have deteriorated their lives through a process they call the principle of 'Living Well' (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022). This process addresses the negative effects of globalization and colonization, aiming to preserve cultural practices and customs while strengthening cultural identity despite the many waves of displacement and oppression (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022). Additionally, it aims to protect and care for the land by returning to 'chagra' practices, a farming system that ensures food security and embodies Indigenous views (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022). This involves both cultivating and safeguarding nutrients that may have been depleted or reduced in crop yields due to crop loss or diminished significance in everyday diets (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022). Movements like the 'Living Well' principle, and efforts like the Indigenous Guard, showcase the resilience of Colombian peoples and their commitment to preserving important elements of their diverse culture. Food studies, politics author, and academic Parasecoli, indicates that food cannot be separated from politics, as it plays a central role in issues related to individual and collective identities - highlighting that principles, land, and food are interconnected (2022). In most collective actions tied to land, there is a connection to community and a willingness to recover traditions. According to Prada, "*small-scale agriculture has taught Colombians about resilience and innovation*" (2020). Culinary practices which are tied to agriculture reflect the daily lives, needs, and values of the people while bringing them together (Parasecoli, 2022).

[5] In this context minority is alluding to what literature has deemed to be a minority population in Colombia in the face of agrarian and environmental conflicts, which includes farmers, village peoples, mestizos - of mixed race, and from low socio-economic backgrounds.

In Colombia's case, politics have significantly influenced traditional culinary practices and the formation of identities, particularly in the face of cultural loss. To understand the emergence of social food movements in Colombia, it is important to trace their origins. Working for and with the land has always been an Indigenous practice. In the 1960s, caring for the land was explained as an Indigenous community theory and political process using resource mobilization theory (RMT) (Oslender, 2001). RMT focuses on how social movements emerge and develop, emphasizing organizational structures, goals, and the availability of resources that make these goals actionable (Oslender, 2001). This theory views social movements as progressive elements for society and works with the idea of networks or groups to voice and coordinate efforts (Oslender, 2001). Although social theorists lack a common definition of social movements, it is widely agreed that they are organizational forms of social actors based on a shared understanding of values and collective identity (Haber, 1996; Oslender, 2001). Applying this understanding of social movements and RMT to the Colombian context, where the objective is cultural preservation, reveals that from an Indigenous perspective, land is a pivotal resource required to achieve this goal.

2.1.2.2 Gastronomic Movements

While Indigenous communities have made significant contributions, their impact has primarily been confined to their own communities. Coincidently, various gastronomic movements have emerged, focusing on land and agricultural practices to reconnect with traditional methods (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Matta, 2021; Oslender, 2001; Prada, 2020). In Colombia, food holds a lot of meaning and cooking, as well as consuming food, is symbolically a cultural act (Duque-Mahecha, 2017, 2). Drawing from Indigenous theories and movements like 'Living Well' which reclaim land and traditional knowledge (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022, 2), cooks in major Colombian cities have started integrating similar concepts into their restaurants. This shift is partly motivated by concerns raised during the 2013 agrarian strike and the additional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems (Prada, 2020). These events, alongside campaigns promoting local produce by organizations like The National Network of Family Farming (Renaf), have fostered a renewed appreciation for farmers and local ingredients (Prada, 2020). As a result, many culinary trends such as native, local, artisanal, and authentic have emerged (Duque-Mahecha, 2017, p.28). Other gastronomically established countries use more popularized terms such as 'Farm to Table,' 'Social Gastronomy Movement,' 'Eco-Conscious,' and 'Slow Food'. In Colombia's economically driven culture, people often quickly embrace trends for their financial benefits (Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023). This inclination traces back to the colonial era, which instilled a

commercialization mindset for land and resources (Goyes et al., 2021; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Rojas Herrera & Dessein, 2023). Among the numerous trends influencing cooks and restaurant owners, one stands out for its focus on community, dedication to longevity, and cultural preservation (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). This 'trend' being the SF movement, is examined in this thesis for its distinctive role within Colombia's culinary landscape, impact on local communities, and cultural preservation.

2.2 Understanding the Slow Food Movement

2.2.1 Slow Food in Colombia

Founded in Italy in 1986 as a response to the opening of the first McDonald's in Rome, the SF movement emerged as a critique of fast food and mass production, aiming to ensure access to good, clean, and fair food (Askin Uzel, 2021; Shawki & Hunter, 2022; Gonçalves Rodrigues et al., 2020). Official SF members can now be found in over 160 countries (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). Although the SF movement and foundation have existed for many years, they have been heavily concentrated in Europe and the United States (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). The movement officially reached Colombia in 2012 which saw the opening of a local produce market in Bogotá with an emphasis on native foods (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). Whilst this was the first recognized establishment, Colombia had been engaging in SF practices long before. Notably, the Ecological Farmers Market in Cali, established in 2001, was recognized by the SF Foundation (SFF) in 2020 when it joined the alliance (Slow Food International, 2020). Additionally, many cooks in Colombia worked with the SF mandate in the early 2000s, yet were not officially recognized until the Slow Food Cooks Alliance reached Colombia in 2017 (Slow Food Foundation, 2017). These occurrences, along with others have led critics to wonder if the movement is making an impact, or if it is a 'naturally occurring social process' as positioned by physical and nutritional anthropologist Chrzan (2004). To this day, many cooks and restaurants are not internationally recognized or listed for their work in the movement unless they pay a membership fee (Chrzan, 2004; Shawki & Hunter, 2022; Slow Food Foundation, 2020). This requires cooks to be aware of the SFF, have the means to pay for the membership, as well as dedicate their craft to the foundation's mandate (Chrzan, 2004). It also raises the question of accessibility to the movement (Donati, 2005). In Colombia, awareness of the organization itself poses a challenge, particularly given that since the inception of the Cooks Alliance, only nine additional cooks and restaurants have officially joined the movement (Slow Food Foundation, 2017; Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). Within the Colombian SF alliance there are 27 cooks in total. This slow development of recognition is what presents Colombia as a recent addition to the SF movement, when in reality it has been unofficially active for over a decade. Notably, 48% of the officially listed cooks and

restaurants are located within the country's capital Bogotá, and 33% in other major tourism destinations such as Cali, Medellin, and San Andres (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). Therefore, 81% of the country's recognized SF efforts are tied to locations with greater access to external information, including knowledge about food movements and current trends. These areas benefit from better access to technology and a steady influx of tourists who introduce external concepts. Although the movement is primarily concentrated in major cities, it is important to not overlook the contributions of those involved in unofficial capacities. Disregarding unofficial participants risks neglecting significant aspects of the movement's impact (Chrzan, 2004; Oslender, 2001). This sentiment is further supported by the belief that while collectiveness can advance movements, individual efforts help craft authenticity and integrity within the movement (Haenfler et al., 2012). After pressure from Global South leaders in 2017, SFF expanded their efforts to include 'communities' which allowed for membership status under the SF umbrella (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). This allows cooks to join without having to follow bureaucratic structures and paying dues (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). While those with 'community' status get a voice in conferences, they do not get to use the SF brand to promote their actions (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). Regulations like the ones imposed on 'community' members, lead ethnographers and food theorists to regard the movement as exclusionary (Donati, 2005). Within Colombia there are 23 'community' groups, of which 16 are in rural areas, proving that finances can be a barrier to join (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). Aside from financial barriers to joining the movement, there are also challenges related to the affordability of dining at these restaurants[6]. Generally, the cost of a meal in an inexpensive restaurant in Colombia ranges between 12,000 COP and 40,000 COP (NUMBEO, n.d.). A three-course meal at a mid-range restaurant, ranges between 32,500 COP and 100,000 COP, with breakfast prices typically being lower than those for lunch and dinner (Budget Your Trip, n.d.; NUMBEO, n.d.). Notably as of January 2024, the average annual salary in Colombia is 56,500,000 COP, which equates to 12,920.80 Euros[7] (Time Champ, 2024). The median salary is 4,050,000 COP per month (Time Champ, 2024), indicating that 50% of the population earns more than the other, highlighting the socio-economic divide in Colombia. Despite the criticism the movement receives, many academics continue to believe it has vast potential due to its values (Chrzan, 2004; Laudan, 2001; Shawki & Hunter, 2022). Therefore, it is important to look at SF not only through its current global objectives, regulations, and actions, but also through its values.

[6] Chapter 5 provides the pricing information for the restaurants of the participants in this research.
[7] Prices in Euros were calculated at the rate of 1 COP being valued at 0.00023 euro on July 21st 2024.

2.2.2 Food for Change

When the SF movement was established, it aimed "*to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions*", to counteract fast-paced lifestyles, and address declining interest in understanding the origins and impacts of food choices (Slow Food USA, n.d.). Advocating for local and traditional foods, as well as food production, aligns with the goal of cultural preservation, thereby positioning SF as more than just a lifestyle movement (Chrzan, 2004; Haenfler et al., 2012; Laudan, 2001; Shawki & Hunter, 2022). In utilizing food consumption as a means for leisure education, the movement can help restore and revitalize individuals and communities by fostering a connection with one's culture (Dunlap, 2012). Centering discussions around the dinner table enables SF to resist economic greed by creating a space for conviviality, mindfulness, and ethical consumption through eating (Dunlap, 2012). Taking mindfulness further, SFF has recognized the importance of protecting Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and interests over the years, as traditional food systems are tied to marginalized producers which are central to the movement's goals (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). As a result, the movement expanded their work in 2017 to 'communities' – as an alternative form of membership – making SF more accessible to Indigenous voices and supporting countries that lack the financial means to join (Nässén, 2017; Shawki & Hunter, 2022). This expansion, which made the movement more financially accessible, supports why cooks in Colombia began to join the movement in 2017 as previously mentioned (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). Additionally, the expansion serves as a bridge in involving more conventional politics "*oriented towards authentic identities and social change*" without directly targeting the state (Haenfler et al., 2012, p.15). According to SFF's manifesto, food is tied to many aspects of life, making this movement more of a social cause with a socio-cultural motivation, aimed at empowering and preserving food cultures (Askin Uzel, 2021; Nässén, 2017; Shawki & Hunter, 2022). By focusing the movement on Colombia, , its impact can be assessed through its principles and transformative potential. Contextualizing the SF movement is important as it did not originate as a social cause, but rather as a critique, and it continues to be perceived in this light in Western countries. In the past, despite efforts to industrialize Colombia's food systems, farmers, who represent 30 percent of the country's total population and produce 70 percent of its food, have been the ones to resist and maintain many traditional food systems (Prada, 2020; Maysels et al., 2023). Although the dedication to traditional food ways in Colombia is clearly present, SF helps connect this resistance to Indigenous knowledge, which is often undervalued yet essential to address challenges such as climate change and food security (Shawki & Hunter, 2022).

2.2.3 Economic Opportunities

In addition to its socio-cultural effects, SF intersects with the economy by fostering social capital which strengthens connections and loyalty amongst producers and restaurants (Pietrykowski, 2004). In forming relationships, businesses obtain mutual sustainability and aid local economies (Gonçalves Rodrigues et al., 2020). Mutual aid as a practice could significantly benefit Colombia whose local economy has suffered from low food importation taxes (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; La Trobe & Acott, 2000; Maysels et al., 2023). In 2023, from the United States alone, Colombia spent 3.4 billion euros on agricultural imports from the United States alone, making it the 6th largest agricultural export market for the U.S (United States Department of Agriculture & Global Agricultural Information Network, 2024). Colombia has also become the second largest market in South America for U.S processed food exports, surpassing its direct neighbors Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru (Food Export Association of the Midwest USA & Food Export USA–Northeast, 2024). This level of food importation is alarming considering that 10% of the world's biodiversity is located in Colombia, making the country vulnerable during world crises that restrict international trade (Castellanos, 2022). For Colombia, the challenge is to leverage its abundant biodiversity and promote the consumption of local foods, a goal that SF can support (Castellanos, 2022).

Examining Brazil, which has a more extensive and established SF network and is more gastronomically advanced compared to Colombia, shows that strengthening local gastronomy has boosted tourism by creating unique gastronomic experiences (Askin Uzel, 2021; Gonçalves Rodrigues et al., 2020). SF's impact on Brazil's tourism sector demonstrates that other countries, such as Colombia, can benefit from incorporating SF into their gastronomy and tourism sectors (Donati, 2005; Gonçalves Rodrigues et al., 2020). Additionally, leveraging local gastronomy to rebrand from a conflict-ridden destination to a gastronomic hotspot has proven effective. Peru, for example, underwent a 'gastronomic revolution' between the 1990s and 2010s, successfully transforming its image and boosting its international profile through its culinary scene (Matta, 2021). To date, in addition to the accolades in the chapter 1, Colombia has been recognized for taking "*giant steps in the gastronomic tourism world*' by the World Food Travel Association, (Cárdenas, 2022), and Time Out magazine listed Medellín as the third best city in the world for food and drink in 2022 (Field, 2022). These accomplishments demonstrate Colombia's potential to leverage gastronomy for tourism and positively impact the economy and change the country's international perception. Presently, Colombia's tourism sector contributes to 2% of its GDP and its tourism figures have been growing steadily since 2019 (Cárdenas, 2022; Echeverri et al., 2024). Seeking to enhance and benefit from the increase in tourism, Colombia's current president Gustavo Petro aims to shift the economy from a mining centric one, to a bioeconomy focused on agriculture and

tourism (Echeverri et al., 2024). In recent years, ecotourism and biocultural tourism have been gaining prominence in Colombia which has led to an increase in research (Echeverri et al., 2024). It has also led to the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Tourism to draft a legislation to reform Colombia's tourism law to include sustainability efforts (Jebara, n.d.). To support tourism, Gustavo Petro's administration aims to position Colombia as a sustainable tourist destination that empowers Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities (Echeverri et al., 2024). Although gastronomy is not a primary focus, this initiative creates opportunities to shift towards SF gastronomic movements and their impacts. On a micro level, cultural recovery projects related to the safeguarding of ingredients have provided economic opportunities for matrifocal families, as well as underprivileged communities (Cuturi, 2022; L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Recognizing the potential of recovery projects, organizations have been actively collaborating with communities to develop entrepreneurial efforts related to food (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). In Matta's research on Indigenous female cooks in Mexico, he notes that women are often the target of these projects as they are more likely than men to share their knowledge with their families and communities (2019). However, as noted by writer and academic Patiño Ossa, handling food projects with care is essential, as food and kitchens reflect the economic and political dynamics of a region and its cultural production (2016). Notably, tourism has been criticized for its potential to destroy cultural authenticity and causing the loss of identity (Cassel & Maureira, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the impacts of tourism on the environment, culture, and economy, and to plan tourism-related activities more thoughtfully (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). When designed to support communities, these projects can integrate with SF networks and contribute to a circular economy (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Although restaurants are criticized for contributing to cultural homogenization, many argue that they play a significant role in affirming and reshaping local cultures (Beriss & Sutton, 2007, as cited in Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Matta, 2021). With Colombia's restaurant, catering and bar services experiencing a 24% increase in sales in 2022, followed by a 24% decrease in 2023 due to food inflation (United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service & Salinas, 2023), SF practices offer a potential solution. By encouraging and promoting local food production and consumption, SF practices could help stabilize the economy and mitigate the effects of food inflation (Askin Uzel, 2021).

2.3 Social Connection to Food

Recentering the topic on community, the dinner table and the politics involved in getting food to the table via SF facilitates socio-cultural connection (Pietrykowski, 2004). Without connection both socially and culturally, it would not be possible to use food as a tool for change. In Colombia food has a significant

cultural importance to communities (Maysels et al., 2023). Certain regions in Colombia link food, its production, and its consumption to their "*values, worldviews, history, and social relationships*'' (Maysels et al., 2023, p.9). For Patiño Ossa, this link derives from the notion that food and kitchens have symbolic ties to people as they serve as a method of communicating cultural values (2016, p.7). According to Duque-Mahecha, the connection to these traditions, dishes, and ingredients comes from childhood memories (2017). Abarca & Coby take this concept further by explaining that experiences with food memories begin with an individual sensory and emotional implication that is socially and culturally grounded (2016). This aligns with Cruz Miguel Ortíz's concept of 'Palate Memory' which addresses the bond between sensory and emotional reactions to food (Abarca & Colby, 2016). This bond comes from socio-cultural experiences and consequently blends individual reactions to locations, events, and moments (Abarca & Colby, 2016; Romagnoli, 2018). However, not all feelings evoked by food are tied to a location or time, they can also be tied to flavor, taste, or texture (Abarca & Colby, 2016).

Beyond childhood experiences and pallet memories, sharing, exchanging, and gifting ingredients with family and friends were common provisioning practices to combat food deficits and unite communities (Turner et al., 2020; Velasco et al., 2023). In rural areas of Colombia, these practices continue to support communities (Turner et al., 2020). While direct gifting is less common, exchanging a meal for labor remains an important socio-cultural practice (Turner et al., 2020). Significant settings that foster socio-cultural exchanges include garden spaces around homes, kitchens, and azoteas, which are traditional raised garden beds (Maysels et al., 2023; Turner et al., 2020). These spaces provide opportunities to share and learn traditional knowledge, maintain essential cultural practices, and preserve cultural heritage (Maysels et al., 2023; Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Cultivating gardens and harvesting food are ancestral practices passed down matrilineally to this day, particularly in the Pacific regions (Maysels et al., 2023; Turner et al., 2020). In addition to gathering and cultivating, safeguarding traditional seeds is an important practice often involving rituals and lunar phases (Maysels et al., 2023). These practices help form local identity and connections to ancestral territories, which are tied to both individual and collective well-being (Turner et al., 2020). Wellbeing in this context is both mental, through social connections and identity fostered by revitalizing traditional practices (Romagnoli, 2018), and physical, as organic produce is believed by Indigenous communities to double as traditional medicine (Turner et al., 2020). For Indigenous communities in Colombia, territories are more than physical spaces; they are the essence of life where identity is revitalized through cultural practices (Maysels et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2022). The connection and knowledge of and with the land are so significant that four

Indigenous groups[8] in Colombia have been recognized by UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) list for their Ancestral System of Knowledge (UNESCO, 2022). This system includes a sacred mandate that maintains the harmony of these communities with the physical and spiritual universe by communicating and connecting with nature (UNESCO, 2022). It is transmitted from generation to generation through cultural practices, community activities, and the use of Indigenous languages (UNESCO, 2022). Urban restaurants can maintain this connection to knowledge and the land by incorporating cultural practices in their food preparation (Matta, 2021). Furthermore, the production, preparation, and consumption of traditional and Indigenous ingredients are regarded as cultural heritage by the Ministry of Culture in Colombia (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). In 2012, the Ministry of Culture recognized the importance of safeguarding traditional culinary practices by releasing the policy '*Knowledge, the Safeguarding and Promotion of Food and Traditional Cuisines of Colombia*' (Ministerio de Cultura, 2012). Although this policy was a response to UNESCO including gastronomy on their list of ICH in 2010 (Romagnoli, 2018), UNESCO has not recognized culinary dishes or ingredients from Colombia on their ICH list (UNESCO, 2023). However, not being part of the UNESCO list is not necessarily a disadvantage. Matta (2019, 2021) argues that such recognition can lead to the homogenization of culinary practices, impose limits and create expectations from tourists and bureaucrats. To raise awareness of its unique gastronomy, the Colombian Ministry of Culture has begun formally recognizing products such as viche/biche[9]—an ancestral, traditional, and artisanal sugar cane drink requiring precise cultural practices—as ICH (Ministerio de Cultura, 2021). Nevertheless, viche/biche is the only item the Ministry of Culture has inscribed on their national ICH list, indicating a long way to go before gaining broader international recognition.

Due to the important social connection and cultural practices surrounding ingredients and their consumption, many cooks in Colombia ensure their culinary style is loving, welcoming, comforting, and representative of Colombian culture (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Culturally important dishes, often originating from Indigenous and afro-Colombian communities, are prepared with regional staple crops like beans, potatoes, cacao, and corn (Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Maysels et al., 2023). Ingredients like corn are used to create many popular dishes and drinks such as arepas, tamales, viche/biche, and sancocho, which are daily staples and also featured in special occasions (Cuturi, 2022; Maysels et al., 2023). Featuring local ingredients and culturally important dishes activates sensory connections through taste and memory, which in turn keeps cultural heritage alive. These flavors and experiences bond people to

[8] Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui, and Wiwa of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta have been recognized by UNESCO.

[9] The name of the drink differs based on the region in Colombia and pronunciation from different Afro-Colombian groups who first distilled the drink over 300 years ago (Ministerio de Cultura, 2021).

each other and places, allowing movements like SF to become integral parts of daily life and consequently create peaceful waves of change. Without Colombia's deep-rooted connection to food, flavors, and community, ingredients would not be capable of driving socio-cultural and economic changes.

2.3.1. Narrative Practices

Alongside the act of preparing and consuming traditional foods, storytelling plays a prominent role in preserving traditional practices, seeds, information on staple foods, gardening methods, and recipes (Maysels et al., 2023). Narratives, which are the act of storytelling, create space for expressions surrounding food-based memories (Abarca & Colby, 2016). As a result, narratives are important practices that give significance to personal and collective subjects (Abarca & Colby, 2016). Narrative practices are often used in Indigenous and low socio-economic communities where oral transmission is the primary means of communication, making it a longstanding tradition (Maysels et al., 2023). Within Indigenous communities, knowledge is traditionally shared via narration from elders who are the keepers and transmitters of knowledge (Maysels et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2022). Narration creates space for intergenerational learning while recovering and promoting traditional knowledge and practices (Maysels et al., 2023). Transmission of knowledge predominantly occurs at home, making the information difficult to find in books or online (Maysels et al., 2023).

Connecting narrative practices to the act of eating, known as 'edible memory,' demonstrates how food narratives can inspire actions that generate cultural memories and, in turn, shape the social and material world (Jordan, 2015). Learning from narrative practices, which includes gestures and experiences, is an act of culinary preservation that goes beyond recipes in books as it engages people (Sebastia, 2017). In fact, culinary practices and narratives go hand in hand as traditional foods evoke cultural heritage through word of mouth and shared experiences of knowledge (Sebastia, 2017). Consequently, words, facts, stories, and knowledge can be acquired through exposure to oral or written food histories (Abarca & Colby, 2016)**.** In '*Fogon de Negros',* Patiño Ossa explores that knowledge can be gained by analyzing Jorge Isaac's novel '*Maria',* which reveals insights into colonial times in Colombia and the origins of food (Patiño Ossa, 2016). In recounting social practices often tied to traditional foods with African and Indigenous heritage, the novel provides a rich source of knowledge (Patiño Ossa, 2016). As highlighted by Abarca & Colby, "*In telling what 'we eat', we are showing who 'we are'*" (2016, p.7). This raises the question of how this crucial narrative practice can be utilized alongside food as a tool to understand and safeguard Colombian identity.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework

This research explores gastronomy, cultural heritage, and community within Colombia in relation to the SF movement. These concepts are crucial for understanding the impact of food practices on heritage preservation, the local economy, and tourism. Consequently, to address the research question, this thesis draws on the work of scholars in the SF, gastronomy, and tourism sector. Additionally, it incorporates insights from sociologists and anthropologists who study culture, heritage, and traditional practices to tie in the social implications of gastronomy and movements on local communities. To contextualize these theories within Colombia, the research also uses media sources, information from the SFF, and participant interviews.

3.1 Contextualization

In recent years, academic research has been conducted on tourism practices and gastronomy in Colombia, as well as on the SF movement. However, literature on the intersection between SF, tourism practices, and gastronomy in Colombia is scarce. According to environmental researchers and theorists, "*there is a gap in the literature exploring Alternative Food Networks in the Global South*" (Maysels et al., 2023, p.2). As conventional food systems become more problematic and less reliable in Latin America, it is important to explore alternative food networks such as SF (Maysels et al., 2023). Currently, the only information exploring SF in Colombia comes from the SFF and media sources. When linking gastronomy to tourism, the potential of gastronomy to enhance the sector has been recognized. However, there remains a gap in the literature focusing on the relationship between tourism and gastronomy within Colombia (Echeverri et al., 2024). Despite this, various media sources and social media accounts have highlighted the uniqueness of Colombian gastronomy, which has positively impacted tourism numbers (Cárdenas, 2022; Field, 2022). As Colombia is currently working towards shifting its image from war to peace via gastronomic campaigns like '*Cocinas para la paz*' focused on culinary traditions on a global and national level, the SF movement provides a strong guidance and network to propel this movement forward (Colprensa, 2023; La Via Campesina International Peasants Movement, 2022; One Earth Future Foundation, 2021; Slow Food Foundation, 2021). Considering these campaigns involve international presentations of Colombian gastronomy (Colprensa, 2023), it is likely that tourism numbers will rise as a consequence. This presents an opportunity to use SF as a base and framework to connect gastronomy and tourism, while respecting and promoting culinary heritage in Colombia. Given the lack of literature

intersecting tourism, gastronomy, and the SF movement in Colombia, this thesis aims to fill the gap by examining initiatives within Colombia that safeguard local ingredients while boosting the economy. This dual effort not only attracts tourism but also sustains the country's heritage. This leads to the question of how SF can be used as a tool for circular tourism and safeguarding cultural practices.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

This chapter will explore the study's approach, research design, data collection methods, and limitations. It begins by explaining how data was collected and the rationale behind the chosen methodology. Subsequently, it details the interview process and the selection criteria for participants. Finally, it addresses the limitations of the study and examines how these limitations affected data collection.

4.1 Methodology Approach

Following the discourses and practices of SF, it was essential to center the methodology as a narrative inquiry with a thematic analysis. Using a mix of realism[10] and interpretivism[11] as a research philosophy (Dudovskiy, n.d.), the goal was to have small qualitative samples that are appropriately connected to SF. As culture and histories are traditionally shared orally, it was important to use semi-structured interviews to allow room for storytelling and honor traditional forms of knowledge dissemination. A semi-structured interview permitted open-ended questions, under a method of narrative methodology within arts-based research. Arts based research further validates traditional methods of knowledge sharing in Latin American communities, drawing on lived experiences and knowledge of cooks and practitioners in the sector.

This thesis also draws from participatory action research (PAR) for its connection to storytelling. This methodology founded by sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda, aims to obtain knowledge as a dialog oriented to the social situation in which people live (1987). Fals-Borda, in accordance with Indigenous perspectives, states that storytelling and other expressions of oral tradition are effective forms of maintaining culture and values (1987). Fals-Boarda believes that storytelling will always exist so long as the practice is kept alive (1987). Working with PAR, which values and applies folk culture while tying the research back to community, is an act of decolonization, a goal that SF also aims to achieve. Additionally, PAR has an activist agenda similar to SF, in which it seeks to advance society and help create a more just system (Fals-Borda, 1987; Slow Food Foundation, 2020). Both PAR and SF aim to tap into collective memory to recover histories that are often buried yet still exist within communities (Fals-Borda, 1987). PAR goes a step further by explaining that these narratives are often found in oral traditions in the form of stories, poems, and other artistic practices, which are typically rooted in particular environments,

[10] Realism: understanding the underlying structures that cause observable events to explore how societal aspects are related to society.

[11] Interpretive: a social reality is not fixed or objective, but shaped by people's experiences and social contexts.

customs and people (Fals-Borda, 1987). This explanation aligns with SF practices and traditional culinary practices, which tend to be specific to a collective group and their history. The similarities in goals between PAR and SF motivated the use of PAR as a research concept. The narrative and people centered approach of PAR pushed the strategy to be ethnographic and capture information and perceptions from participants in their natural environment. However, there were some limitations as I was only able to travel to Colombia for three weeks in January 2024, where connections were established but did not necessarily lead to an immediate interview. Additionally, PAR was not used exclusively, as the methodology tends to focus on oppressed people. While it can be argued that those working in the SF movement in Colombia face oppressive conditions due to lack of governmental support, economic conditions, and unbalanced gender roles in the culinary sector, this research focuses on female-identifying figures who have been recognized for their work in the SF movement.

4.2 Research Design

To conduct this research, a semi-structured interview was utilized. The approximate 8 questions for this interview (Appendix A) were developed using a deductive research approach. Based on information gathered from the literature review, and an initial understanding of the SF movement, a hypothesis was established regarding how this movement operates within Colombia in connection to culture. The hypothesis being that narrative practices play a significant role in preserving culinary culture and that SF in Colombia utilizes this knowledge to sustain cultural heritage and unite Colombian communities. Although the questions were established with a confirmatory approach—indicating a preconceived notion about the relationship between the variables under investigation—the research evolved into an inductive process. As interviews were conducted and narratives emerged, participants interpreted the questions in varied ways, leading to a broader exploration of the topic. The questions were designed for interviews lasting 30 minutes to one hour, with flexibility to accommodate participants' availability and interest in speaking on the subject matter. From the outset, it was decided that the sample size would be small to ensure high-quality data while considering time limitations.

4.3 Data Collection

Data collection began with selecting potential participants from various groups within the SF movement including cooks, practitioners, organizations, and farmers. Due to time constraints and lack of responses, the focus was shifted solely to interviewing cooks involved in the movement in Colombia. There was also a desire to include both recognized SF cooks and those using SF practices without formal SF association.

This posed a limitation as it is difficult to identify those who follow SF practices and principles but do not use the symbol or participate in organized SF activities. Identifying these individuals would have required reaching out and learning more about their practices, which is time-consuming. Ultimately, these limitations provided an opportunity to refocus the participants on female-identifying cooks within the movement. Although this may seem restrictive, traditionally, women are the knowledge keepers and practitioners of culinary traditions, seeds, and histories (Turner et al., 2020; Patiño Ossa, 2016). Additionally, most of the academic journals focused on Colombian culinary heritage interviewed women as they safeguard traditional knowledge (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Cuturi, 2022; Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Maysels et al., 2023; Oslender, 2001; Turner et al., 2020). Outside of Colombia, Matta's research on heritage politics in Mexico emphasizes the important role of female cooks and the need to empower them to preserve culinary heritage (2019). Given that women often face more challenges in gaining recognition in the culinary industry, it is important to shed light on their work, as women's roles tend to be normalized within kitchens, thus diminishing the value of their contributions (Matta, 2019; Turner et al., 2020). Although women in the SF movement have been recognized as more involved than men (Slow Food Foundation, 2023), there is limited literature linking women's empowerment in food culture to the Slow Food movement, which this thesis seeks to address.

Once the scope was set, the list of 27 recognized cooks in the SF alliance of Colombia was re-examined. From this list, 16 are women, and of those 16, two of the spaces are co-shared with men, reducing the count to 14 women-led spaces (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). However, one of the interviewed cooks is not listed on the roster but is recognized by other sources as part of the movement (Regeneración En Acción, n.d.). This fact raises the question of how often the list of cooks is updated on the SF alliance page, whether it is up to date, and how many more cooks are not explicitly tied to the movement. Contact with interviewees was initiated through extended connections or direct messages via email, WhatsApp, or Instagram. Invitations through extended connections were kept simple and included an introduction of the researcher and interest in the movement. Messages on social media platforms differed in size depending on platform message restrictions (Appendix B) and were slightly personalized with the name and practice of the individual. Many professionals in the industry do not have their contact information easily available on the internet which prompted the interview requests via social media. Others were contacted through their restaurant's WhatsApp accounts which is a common method of communication in Colombia. Those who were emailed had their contact information listed in a SF Alliance directory (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.). After initial contact, the conversation was moved to WhatsApp to arrange interview dates. All the messages followed the same pattern: an introduction about

the researcher, an expression of interest in the movement and the individual, and a brief description of the interview length and format (Appendix C). Interview requests, correspondence, and interviews were conducted in Spanish to facilitate communication.

Interview requests were sent out at the beginning of December and were followed up on until early April. Those who were available received dates and times for the interview. Time permitting, participants that were available on short notice were interviewed in Colombia. The interview audios were recorded via mobile phone and then transcribed digitally. Cooks that were unavailable to meet during the three weeks in Colombia, were kept in contact to meet at a later time virtually. Given the demanding nature of the individual's profession, interviews were arranged based on the participants' availability and remained flexible. Due to this flexibility, data collection spanned over five months; January to May. Virtual interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and Google Meets to utilize the transcription feature and allow for attentive listening. Each participant was relayed the interview length and provided with a brief outline of the interview structure. Permission to record was obtained, and participants were invited to speak freely for as long as they needed. As a result, interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to two hours in length. In addition to written consent to participate, verbal consent for recording and using their remarks was obtained before the interview began following ISCTE's code of ethical conduct (University Institute of Lisbon, 2022). Participants were also informed about how their information would be used.

4.3.1 Selected Participants

After contacting seventeen cooks—ten from the SF roster and 7 from connections and internet searches—one agreed to an informal conversation, and six agreed to be interviewed. Of the six only four were available within the research time frame. The remaining two had busy schedules and it was difficult to coordinate interviews. As a result, the four female cooks in Table 1 were interviewed:

Table 1

Interviewed Participants

Name of Cook	Title	Based in	Years cooking and in the SF alliance	Link to business page
Martha Jaramillo	Cook & Restaurant Owner of El Ringlete (The Pinwheel)	Cali, Colombia	23 years of working with SF concepts, 20 years of owning her restaurant	Instagram: @rringlete

Jennifer Rodriguez	Cook & Restaurant Owner of Mestizo Cocina de Origen (Mestizo Cuisine of Origin)	Mestizas del Colegio, Colombia.	16 years in the restaurant industry, 9 in the SF Alliance	Website: https://www.mestizococina.com/
Margarita Arredondo	Cook and co-founder of Restaurant Palo De Agua Senderos (Water Stick Path)	Chía, Colombia	20 years in the restaurant industry 10 in the SF Alliance	Instagram: @palodeaguasenderos
Luisa Acosta	Cook, Historian, Journalist, and owner of La Cocina de Luisa (Luisa's Kitchen)	Chía, Colombia	working with SF concepts since the age of 7. 10 years in the SF Alliance	Instagram: @_lacocinadeluisa

All these cooks are actively involved in the SF movement both nationally and internationally and have been recognized for their contributions. Each cook has been engaged with SF concepts for many years, proving their dedication to the movement. Their extensive experience in the industry and with SF concepts ensures a deep understanding on the subject matter.

4.4 Limitations

Overall, the research was primarily limited by time and financial constraints, as participants lead busy lives and are located in various parts of Colombia. The geographical distance made it challenging to visit different regions within a short time frame, and financial limitations prevented in-person meetings at their restaurants or SF events. SF events occur regularly across Colombia and internationally, facilitating global connections and understanding. A larger scope of research, with more time and budget, could have deepened the connection to the movement and enhanced the overall understanding. The research remains valuable, as there is limited focus on the SF movement in Colombia, and especially regarding women cooks within the movement. Most existing academic literature either discusses SF approaches without explicitly mentioning SF or explores gastronomy as a tourism practice without examining its economic or social impacts on Colombian communities.

CHAPTER 5

Research Findings

5.1 About the Cooks

To fully understand the research results, it is important to understand each cook and their involvement in the SF movement. Consequently, this section will provide an overview of each cook's career and include menu prices from the restaurants owned by three of the participants. Detailed information about each participant's career will be further explored in Chapter 6, as their responses are closely tied to their careers and experiences with SF. It is also important to note that while some publications refer to them as 'chefs', each participant identifies as a 'cocinera' which translates to 'cook'. In using the term 'cook', the participants emphasize a more inclusive and accessible concept of cooking, free from the institutional connotations associated with professional titles and roles in kitchens.

5.1.1 Martha Jaramillo

Martha Jaramillo has been working with SF concepts for 23 years. Her acclaimed work has made her one of the leading female cooks in the region of Cali, Colombia (García, 2023). Jaramillo has won national awards, such as the Tourism ProColombia award for her contribution to culture in 2021 (Perilla Santamaria, 2021), and the national award for traditional cuisines from the Ministry of Culture in 2023 (Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia, 2023). Jaramillo has also been nominated for other awards such as Premios La Barra—which recognizes gastronomy in Colombia—for the best proposal of traditional Colombian cuisine in 2023 (Morales, 2023). Aside from her nominations and awards, Jaramillo is often cooking for large events and fundraisers with the SF alliance, as well as international networking events like the Délice network in 2022—which focused on regenerative local food economy (García, 2023; Personal Interview, 2024). In addition to her commitments with the SF network and her restaurant, Jaramillo is also part of a program called 'Intercambios' (exchanges), where she visits Indigenous communities to exchange recipes and knowledge as an effort to strengthen traditional cuisines and safeguard recipes (Personal Interview, 2024).

Jaramillo's restaurant El Ringlete is located in the Granada neighborhood in Cali, Colombia, which is the capital of the Cauca Department[12] and the third largest city in Colombia (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023). Located on the north end of Cali, Granada was one of the first residential

[12] Cauca Department is one of the 32 departments in Colombia located in Southwestern Colombia.

neighborhoods on the north side of the Cali River (Farago & Vloggs, 2023). Today, Granada is recognized nationally and internationally as a gastronomic and commercial tourism destination with many of its restaurants being housed in repurposed houses from when the neighborhood was first erected (Farago & Vloggs, 2023). Prices for dishes at El Ringlete can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Prices at El Ringlete in Colombian Pesos (COP) and Euros (€)

Appetizers	Main Dish	Desserts	Beverages
15,000 - 35,000 COP	20,000 - 58,000 COP	8,000 - 15,000 COP	4,000 - 11,000 COP
3.4 - 7.94 €	4.54 - 13.16 €	1.82 - 3.40 €	0.91 - 2.50 €

5.1.2 Jennifer Rodriguez

Jennifer Rodriguez founded her restaurant Mestizo; Cocina de Origen, 16 years ago in her hometown Mesitas del Colegio—a remote mountain village two hours and 60 kilometers away from Bogotá, the capital of Colombia (Bianconcini, 2022; Talero G., 2023). Situated in one of Colombia's lesser-known regions, Mesitas del Colegio is enveloped by lush green hills and mountains, offering "*pristine natural beauty, unique culture, and warm hospitality*" (Agoda, n.d.). Since opening her restaurant Rodriguez has won the TV cooking show "*Cocinerso al Límite*" in 2013 (Duque Mahecha, 2023), won the National prize for traditional Colombian cuisine in 2016 (Mahtani, 2022), awarded revelation chef at the La Barra awards in 2016 (Duque Mahecha, 2023), won best Restaurant at the La Barra awards in 2019 (Duque Mahecha, 2023), and was listed as the only Colombian in The World's 50 Best Restaurants for game changing producers in 2021 (50 Next, 2021). Rodriguez has also cooked at Colombian embassies in Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, the United Kingdom, and Sweden, which led to her being featured in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' book *Colombian Cuisine for the World* (Duque Mahecha, 2023, 211). In 2023, Rodriguez was invited to cook for the United Nations security council in New York to showcase peace through gastronomy (Mena, 2023). Rodriguez seeks to promote nourishment, the consumption of local products, and direct trade with farmers to promote self-sustainment (Duque Mahecha, 2023; Personal Interview, 2024). Displaying her commitment to these goals, 70% of the ingredients Rodriguez uses at her restaurant are grown in her region (Duque Mahecha, 2023). Although some may argue that the prices for dishes at Mestizo are high (see Table 3), they are set to cover administrative costs and fair salaries (Mena, 2023). Rodriguez emphasizes that teamwork is central to the

restaurant's operation (Mena, 2023).

Table 3

Prices at Mestizo; Cocina de Origen in Colombian Pesos (COP) and Euros (€)

Breakfast	Breakfast Combo	Appetizer	Main Dish	Dessert	Beverages	Cocktails & Liquors
12,000 - 23,000 COP	16,000 - 23, 000 COP	9,000 - 27,000 COP	52,500 - 70,000 COP	18,800- 19,500 COP	4,700 - 22,000 COP	28,000 - 33,000 COP
2.72 -5.22€	3.63-5.22€	2.04-6.13€	11.91-15.88€	4.08-4.42€	1.07-4.99€	6.35-7.49€

5.1.3 Margarita Arredondo

Having initially studied to be a veterinary technician, Arredondo was able to connect with local farmers and learn about their care for land and animals (Personal Interview, 2024). Wanting to reconnect with her creative side, Arredondo switched to gastronomy and introduced SF practices to her family restaurant to blend her passion for the land, creativity, and community (Personal Interview, 2024). Coming from a family that has been located in Chía for over 70 years, and in gastronomy for 40, Margarita Arredondo now represents the third generation of female cooks in her family (Barón Chivara et al., 2021; Gobernación de Cundinamarca, 2022). Aside from Co-owning the restaurant Palo de Agua Senderos, Arredondo is also the founder of 'Herencia la Mesa' (Heritage of the table)—an interdisciplinary collective that conducts research on ancestral cooking, and generates gastronomic experiences accompanied by sensorial installations (Gobernación de Cundinamarca, 2022). Arredondo's restaurant and work is primarily situated in Chía, a city within the Cundinamarca department in Colombia (Barón Chivara et al., 2021). Located 10 km from Bogotá, Chía was once home to the Muisca Indigenous group during the pre-Columbian era and is known for its green landscapes and fertile lands (Barón Chivara et al., 2021; HelloMondo, n.d.). Although primarily residential, Chía is now celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and the ongoing practice of traditional crafts and cuisines, establishing it as a gastronomic destination for ancestral cuisine. (HelloMondo, n.d.). Recognized for her work with ancestral cuisines and techniques, Arredondo is featured in the book *Mesa y Cocina, Aromas y Sabores de Chía,* which highlights ancestral and traditional foods from Chía (Barón Chivara et al., 2021). In 2022, Arredondo was awarded the Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Development Award by the government of Cundinamarca for her contributions as a rural woman in the Cundinamarca department of Colombia (Gobernación de

Cundinamarca, 2022). Aiming to keep menu prices accessible to the local community, Palo de Agua Senderos offers a range of price options and combo deals to make meals more affordable.

Table 4

Prices at Palo de Agua Senderos in Colombian Pesos (COP) and Euros (€)

Breakfast	Breakfast Combo	Main Dish	Drinks
3,000 - 7,000 COP	19,000 - 21,000 COP	18,000-35,000 COP	2,500 - 6,000 COP
0.68 - 1.59€	4.31 - 4.77€	4.08 - 7.94€	0.57 - 1.36€

5.1.4 Luisa Acosta

Luisa Acosta is the only participant in this data set that does not own a restaurant, but boasts a long career in cultural and gastronomic work across Colombia. Acosta is a historian with over 20 years in investigative work and teaching history and culture (TRAVOLUTION, 2022). Although Acosta has been a part of the SF movement for 10 years, her work in gastronomy can be traced to over 15 years in community work aimed at recovering memory and food culture as well as empowering women, youth, and Indigenous communities (Ortiz, n.d.; TRAVOLUTION, 2022). Acosta's connection to kitchens began at a young age, as she spent much of her childhood with her grandmother, who worked for the Colombian Red Cross, owned a bakery in Bogotá, and shared a catering business with Acosta's mother (Jaramillo, 2024; Ortiz, n.d.). Although Acosta is skilled in the kitchen, she pursued studies in journalism and history. Her academic background led her to teach at several universities in Colombia and to serve as the director of a technical program in ancestral cooking at the Escuela de Taller de Boyacá—Trade School of Boyacá (Jaramillo, 2024; TRAVOLUTION, 2022). In academia, Acosta surrounded herself with many intellectuals, including Antonio Montaña—one of the first gastronomers in Colombia—who attempted to introduce SF to Colombia in the late 1980s (Personal Interview, 2024; Rodríguez, 2013). Although the movement did not gain traction at that time, Acosta, dissatisfied with the stagnation in the journalism sector, shifted her focus to community work and began applying concepts from the SF manifesto (Jaramillo, 2024). During this period, Acosta worked for the Ministry of Culture, where she established memory centers to recover history through taste and created the country's first program for ancestral cooking (Jaramillo, 2024; Ortiz, n.d.). When Acosta reconnected with SF in 2014 through friends, she joined the movement by conducting culinary experiences through La Cocina de Luisa for different audiences and territories in Colombia (Ortiz, n.d.; Personal Interview, 2024). These experiences include consulting services in safeguarding traditional

cuisines, food security, food production, and food pedagogy (Ortiz, n.d.; TRAVOLUTION, 2022). Amongst these is her workshop in Chía, where participants exclusively use produce from her garden to learn traditional recipes (Personal Interview, 2024). In addition to workshops and experiences, Acosta attends SF events nationally and internationally, as well as runs entrepreneurship projects related to native ingredients with Indigenous communities (Jaramillo, 2024; Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta also has many investigations and publications on Colombian cuisine which include: *Gastronomy, culture and tradition for Guaviar', Knowledge and flavors of Dibulla Guajira. Tourism in the territory through its kitchens, The kitchens of peace, life stories, and inventory of culinary heritage of the municipality of La Paz, Cesar,* and *Food culture and development of a food guide for the Wayuu community in three municipalities of La Guajira: Manaure, Maicao and Uribia*[13] amongst others (TRAVOLUTION, 2022). For her work with gastronomy, Acosta has won the national gastronomy prize from the Ministry of Culture in 2011 (TRAVOLUTION, 2022). Currently, Acosta is working on an entrepreneurial project called *Cooking, Culture, and Tourism*, with 30 youths in the Manaure town within the department of La Guajira[14] (Personal Interview, 2024).

5.2 Findings

After speaking with all of the cooks, it is clear that they are all passionate about what they do and about the SF movement. They are especially passionate about what the movement can do to help advance communities and form identity. To find similarities in the interviews, each transcription was initially analyzed manually to remove any interruptions, such as employees asking questions in the midst of the interviews, and to remove filler words like 'uhm' and 'uh'. After the transcripts were cleaned, they were run through LiGRE, a data analysis application which identified patterns and themes in the interviews. Through the LiGRE analysis 20 keywords were identified (Appendix D), and the following 5 themes were found: community and purpose driven work, educational and pedagogical efforts, personal journeys and inspirations, challenges, and critiques, and finally, sustainability and future vision. Each of these themes will be analyzed in chapter 6.

[13] The titles of these publications were translated to English for comprehension. The original titles in order are: 'Gastronomía, cultura y tradición para el Guaviare', 'Saberes y sabores de Dibulla, Guajira. Recorriendo el territorio a través de sus cocinas', 'Las cocinas de La Paz, historias de vida e inventario de patrimonio culinario del municipio de La Paz, Cesar', 'Cultura alimentaria y desarrollo de guía de alimentación para comunidad Wayuu en tres municipios de la Guajira: Manaure, Maicao y Uribia'.

[14] More information on Acosta's community work and reconnection to SF will be disclosed in upcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion of Slow Food in Colombia

6.1 Community and Purpose Driven Work

As pointed out by Maysels et al., food has a significant cultural importance to communities in Colombia (2023). Through the interviews, this became increasingly evident as each participant talked about how they felt that working with the SF movement has a meaningful purpose. This implication of purpose aligns with Askin Uzel, (2021), Nässén (2017), and Shawki & Hunter (2022)'s perspective of the SF movement being more of a social cause with a socio-cultural motivation. These authors also state that SF socio-cultural motivations are rooted in empowering and preserving food cultures, which all the participants spoke about (Askin Uzel, 2021; Nässén, 2017; Personal Interviews, 2024; Shawki & Hunter, 2022). Although preserving local ingredients is important to the participants, they also mentioned that they found meaning and purpose in maintaining cultural heritage, and supporting community well-being (Personal Interviews, 2024). Jaramillo stated this value when explaining that "*It is important to make intentional moves to help each other and community, not to make moves just for the sake of it, [SF] it's not just an image, the goal is to help community*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This value comes from the notion of care that is expressed by each participant. The notion of care amongst the participants is reflected in their motivations to work with SF, due to what it can offer communities in terms of wellbeing, identity, economics, and connection to others. To the participants, SF considers the needs and interests of those involved, and is grounded in the moral and ethical obligations that they all connect to. Recognizing that there are multiple motivations for those within the SF movement, is what distinguishes it from other community movements referenced by Amaya-Castellanos et al. (2022) and Wallis (2019). These motivations also counter Rojas Herrera & Dessein's view of Colombian people joining movements or trends for its economic benefit (2023). As such, it is important to understand the significance of these motivations in attracting and retaining people in the SF movement.

6.1.1 Preserving Local Ingredients and Their Associated Knowledge

Beginning with preserving local ingredients, as previously mentioned, when the SF movement was established it aimed to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures (Slow Food Foundation, 2020). In actively preserving local ingredients, one is not only combating their disappearance, but consequently revitalizing culinary traditions that use these ingredients. When speaking to the participants, they all

mentioned the abundance of available ingredients in Colombia, a sentiment echoed by Duque-Mahecha (2017). In fact, there are so many ingredients that each year Arredondo's collective conducts investigations in different regions of Colombia to access new ingredients, and to learn more about each region. As Arredondo noted, "*there is so much out there we don't know about…[and] there is so much diversity and capacity in our land that we have access to*" (Personal Interview, 2024). However, despite the land's ample resources, a new concern arises over utilizing these ingredients in a culinary setting:

> "*Now when new ingredients come out, in what they call high class cooking, there isn't that feeling of respect towards the ingredient, because sometimes when we find a new ingredient, we want to do 1000 different things with it, and we dream big, but we forget to take care of it*" (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024).

What Rodriguez is referring to is the overuse of an ingredient to the point where it becomes over cultivated, raising questions about the sustainability of the ingredient. There is also a concern that once a new ingredient comes along others are forgotten. For this reason, Arredondo claims that she works with 30 different plants at any given time (Personal Interview, 2024). When speaking about how Rodriguez chooses which ingredients to use in her restaurant, she states "*I don't have a favorite ingredient because it would be irresponsible, so I would say that my favorite to work with is what's available that day and that season"* (Personal Interview, 2024). Due to the diversity of plants and the misuse of ingredients in the culinary industry, the participants feel that SF is a way to consciously work with these ingredients. For Rodriguez, SF elevates working with ingredients to another level as it:

> "*looks at nutrition in a deeper way by looking at themes of seed conservation, and conserving traditions and cultures, and I feel that it's deeper than just a restoration… there is a big network of protection for these ingredients in the world*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

In Jaramillo's view, SF offers the opportunity to "*do something for the planet, do something to save the ingredients, and keep knowledge alive*" (Personal Interview, 2024). For cooks like Jaramillo, who are dedicated to giving back to Colombia, the diversity of the land inspires a commitment to maintaining it. As Jaramillo says, "*There's so much diversity, and we should all do something to maintain it. Even if it's not in my own region, helping in all regions can create a network where people can inform each other*" (Personal Interview, 2024). The SF movement supports this type of connection and dedication by encouraging the use of clean, just, and local ingredients. The desire to support Colombian foodways aligns with Parascoli's observation that low and middle-income countries feel the need to take charge of their food futures (2022). Working with SF makes it easier for cooks to engage with local foodways, as it helps them feel like part of something bigger than themselves (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024).

Rodriguez expressed that having a network of like-minded people makes her more comfortable discussing how to change existing systems to preserve local ingredients and identity (Personal Interview, 2024). For these cooks, their motivation to work in gastronomy and join the SF movement extends beyond the physical space of a restaurant, which is where the movement is most experienced by the public. In the previously mentioned Avianca video series, they discuss not only the diversity of ingredients but also the small communities of farmers and cooks who are rescuing ingredients to create a new chapter in the country's gastronomic history (2017). This effort connects communities from the coast to regions, jungles, mountains, and coffee plantations, to forge strong connections with local products (Avianca, 2017). These connections help elevate the country's gastronomy to unimagined levels. To the participants, movements such as SF with all its connections, help make this possible. However, at its core Rodriguez expressed that it comes down to being:

> "*fascinated and thankful that I'm in this land where there are ingredients available for large periods of the year, and that we can have and nourish in order to continue to have in abundance, so long as we don't cut down the trees or the crops*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Rodriguez's perspective helps centralize that Colombia only has these crops because they are cared for (Personal interview, 2024). This quote showcases the precariousness of these ingredients and the need to safeguard them through efforts like the SF movement. These ingredients are being protected thanks to the transmission of knowledge through local communities, families, and networks such as SF, which educate others on the care needed to nurture and cultivate each ingredient (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Cuturi, 2022; Maysels et al., 2023; Oslender, 2001; Turner et al., 2020). This notion of care that is emphasized in this section focuses on the importance of protecting and preserving these ingredients by taking appropriate measures. This includes the willingness and motivation to preserve these ingredients, as well as sharing and providing the necessary knowledge and resources to do so. Care is important to the participants as it affects both the community and the environment symbiotically.

6.1.2 Maintaining Cultural Heritage

Returning to the notion of care, this section examines the need for cultural heritage and why one should care for it. This section also ties in how preserving local ingredients and safeguarding their longevity is a gateway for SF members to work on maintaining cultural heritage. Although maintaining cultural heritage is not a direct consequence of food preservation, Arredondo feels that by safeguarding and using local ingredients in her dishes community will not die; *"if the ingredient dies, lots of other things go with it too, we won't have the ability to recreate traditional recipes and cultural things become historical artifacts"*

(Personal Interview, 2024). Consequently, to Arredondo SF allows culture to be present, and facilitates the continuation and transmission of traditions (Personal Interview, 2024). Despite SF's assistance, Rodriguez expresses that maintaining culture is very difficult:

> *"The big battle is sustaining culture through cooking, through nutrients, through food, and through understanding why we have these products today, and what we currently think in terms of patrimony, products, or ancestral recipes*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Tying cultural heritage to the kitchen is logical as food and kitchens have symbolic ties and facilitate the communication of cultural values (Patiño Ossa, 2016). Aside from the participants identifying the connection of culture being sustained through cooking, governmental entities in Colombia have also been contemplating the relationships between cuisine and culture (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). On a national level the Colombian government views the subject of cuisine as one that includes two important concepts: the right to food and to cultural rights (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). This view coincides with SF practices and with Acosta's opinion of gastronomy being an important subject whilst Colombia is trying to form an identity (Personal Interview, 2024). In Duque-Mahecha's perspective it is hard for Colombia to form an identity in gastronomy because of the lack of agreement on what Colombian food is (2017). Although solidifying an identity is important, when looking at the following statement by Acosta:

> "*We talk about gastronomy because we are trying to find an identity. Today we have advanced this identity and everything has become a trend. With a trend we can lose our focus and I'm worried that we may lose our focus and/or intention… but in the end, by discussing the worries we have, we start to find new solutions, for example, instead of just looking at Colombian identity through food, we are looking at it as a means to find identity and safeguard it while ensuring there is access to food*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

It becomes clear that forming a collective gastronomic identity is no longer enough, as without safeguarding elements that make up this identity, cuisines can be overlooked like passing trends. Acosta's statement aligns with the National government's important concepts under the subject of cuisine, and helps clarify the Ministry of Culture's general definition of traditional cuisine, which reads:

> "*Traditional cuisines, like language, will never be static. It varies between families, it will be lost or be enriched in recipe books or through oral tradition, it will change depending on the mood of the cook and his or her tastes; ingredients will be added or omitted, depending on the possibilities of the region. In spite of the variations, many recipes are preserved almost intact in time and will be known as 'traditional cuisine'*" (2014: 9-10, as cited in Duque-Mahecha, 2017, p.30-31).

Understanding the connection between cuisine and heritage is essential for facilitating workshops and programs that integrate these concepts to preserve cultural heritage. Without this understanding, initiatives like 'Intercambios'—where the Ministry of Tourism sends cooks to aid Indigenous communities safeguard their traditions—would not be as successful (Personal Interview, 2024).

> "*In 'intercambios' we empower communities to respect their heritage, to take care of it, and their knowledge, so that tourism does not drain it or move it away from its essence…some communities have moved away from their traditional foods and make hamburgers and lasagnas for tourists, despite the fact that they are on an island or in the middle of nowhere, and that they have amazing access to vast ingredients*" (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024).

Jaramillo's example of how these programs work demonstrates the close connection between culinary practices and heritage. To justify why Colombians need to reconnect and explain why they have strayed away from culinary traditions, Arredondo explains that: "*During colonial times, colonizers made us serve. We are so good at giving and serving that we don't receive from our knowledge and resources*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Without an appreciation of traditional culinary practices, heritage can easily get lost. This is especially true for a culture focused on giving and sharing with others, as per Turner et al. (2020) point out. Jaramillo's example of Indigenous communities serving hamburgers to tourists to make them feel welcome, highlights this tendency. Consequently, there is a growing interest in local and traditional foodways, which has garnered the attention of national and international cooks (Parasecoli, 2022). Aside from participating in community focused workshops with SF, three out of four participants engage in their own community projects with other organizations. All the participants recognize that engaging in traditional practices with community helps form local identity, and foster connections to ancestral territories and knowledge (Maysels et al., 2023; Personal Interviews, 2024). Although there are government programs seeking to preserve cultural heritage through gastronomy, Acosta explains that the government is always changing, along with its policies, making it difficult for programs to last (Personal Interview, 2024). For this reason, when Acosta retired from the Ministry of Culture she started working directly with communities and organizations as she wishes "*to leave communities with an awareness of the heritage value of many of their manifestations that were in danger, [and] for the communities themselves to make those reflections*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Additionally, Acosta found that people were more willing to trust organizations as they have more permanence than government initiatives (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta also explained that working with the Ministry was becoming harder, as their methodologies were increasingly developed based on UNESCO's ICH goals (Personal Interview, 2024). These goals are a set of actions required by UNESCO for an ICH gastronomic element to be

recognized. However, they do not account for the complexity of heritage and often fail to understand which communities an element encompasses and how social groups use it (Romagnoli, 2018). The problem Acosta found with working from UNESCO's perspective was that:

> *"There is a narrative construction that does not belong to a community, and the community no longer feels rooted in that narrative…there is also a difference between how the elite and actual community members view heritage…now heritage events and products have brand deals, and people have to pay for certain things that were meant to be free, but instead everything is being commercialized and used for tourism purposes"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

To Acosta, there is a disconnect between UNESCO's goals, and the locals who are meant to engage with heritage (Personal Interview, 2024). In fulfilling UNESCO's goals, there is a risk of commercializing heritage, which supports Acosta's reasoning for working directly with local communities (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). In his research on the rise of Peruvian cuisine, Raúl Matta also shares concerns about the delicate balance of incorporating heritage into commercial ventures (2019, 2021). He warns about the risk of negative exoticism that can arise from focusing on settler colonial structures and logic, which emphasize extraction over collaboration (Matta, 2019, 2021). This aligns with Parasecoli's observation of people establishing organizations focused on their specific necessities and priorities (2022). The focus of these organizations often overlaps with wider themes like SF, making collaboration easier, as demonstrated by Acosta, Arredondo, and Jaramillo.

6.1.3 Community Wellbeing

Preserving local ingredients and maintaining cultural heritage is important to the participants not only from an environmental or symbolic perspective, but also because of its impact on community well-being (Personal Interviews, 2024). All the participants discussed well-being in a context similar to that of Turner et al., which considers both mental and physical aspects (2020). Interestingly, the discourse on wellbeing varied amongst the participants. Some emphasized how being part of SF benefits the wellbeing of those within the movement, while others focused more on SF's impact on external communities. In some cases, external and internal community wellbeing were mutually exclusive. For example, all participants discussed how the SF movement provides numerous community-based opportunities for cooks to support their local communities (Personal Interviews, 2024). These opportunities include local events like Disco Soup Day[15], which directly feeds community members, to international events such as Terra Madre

[15] Disco Soup Day is an international Slow Food event started in Berlin in 2012. Hosted by the Slow Food Youth Network it seeks to use local food waste that can be reutilized to make soup and feed the community. The event also features a local DJ to entertain at the community gathering and support the arts.

in Turin, which indirectly support the community via the information and skills that are gained at the conference (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Events like Disco Soup Day are valuable not only for reducing food waste and feeding communities but also for replicating the traditional experiences described by Turner et al., where sharing serves as a provisioning practice to combat food deficits and unite communities (2020). Participating in these events benefits those in the SF movement by motivating them with the direct results of their work in the community and by placing them in settings where they can share experiences with like-minded cooks (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024).

Within Colombia, each year the leader of the SF Alliance chapter organizes events, community harvests, and one large four-day event focused on a collective theme:

> "*For this event we choose a region where this [SF] is practiced, and where there are less people in the alliance - or people that do similar work [outside of the alliance], to help connect them to the movement"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

This four-day event brings cooks in the SF Alliance from all over Colombia to one region in order to share knowledge and fundraise for events that support communities in Colombia facing complex nutritional challenges (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024). Events that impact communities both directly and indirectly provide the space that Maysels et al. (2023), and Duque-Mahecha (2017) emphasize as crucial for sharing and learning traditional knowledge and cultural practices to preserve cultural heritage. These gatherings amongst SF practitioners are also valuable, as Acosta explains:

> *"Many of the cooks in Slow Food are singular and unique because they each have propositions that don't look anything like the others. They can be very framed from their own regions but are still connected through the aspiration to have a culture of culinary nutrition in Colombia that allows us to salvage practices"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

Although participants agree that community events within the SF network are beneficial for forming a community of like-minded individuals, some are more focused on events that directly benefit the wider community. For Arredondo, working with the community is important as "*community gives knowledge*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Although these events may seem like an opportunity to push the SF agenda, Arredondo argues "*we are not indoctrinating people, it's a community and a way of life*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Echoing the need to work with different communities, Jaramillo explains that this movement is about what you can do for others:

> *"We aren't expecting Slow Food to do something for us [cooks], it's about 'what can we do for SF?' It's not about me. The intentionality is not for me to gain something, the task of changing people's consciousness does benefit my restaurant as more people will come, BUT when you decide to align*

with a movement, the intention is not 'how do I benefit from this', it's about how this will help others'' (Personal Interview, 2024).

Focused on supporting others, some cooks like Arredondo make their food affordable by avoiding high cuisine, aiming to make it more accessible both economically and conceptually (Table 4; M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Others, such as Jaramillo and Acosta, work with rural communities to create opportunities for women, and to teach children about alternative career paths (M. Jaramillo & L. Acosta, Personal Interviews, 2024). This is crucial as many people in these areas turn to the drug trade and other precarious jobs, believing these are their best options for survival (Goyes et al., 2021; L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024, Turner et al., 2020). In this context, safeguarding goes beyond preserving knowledge; it involves protecting community members from dangerous life choices. To ensure long-term wellbeing and address community needs beyond nutrition, education is essential (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

6.2 Educational and Pedagogical Efforts

Each participant emphasized the importance of educating the public about traditional practices, the value of local ingredients, and food pathways to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of these systems (Personal Interviews, 2024). In educating others "*we don't just give value, we give it [SF] meanin*g" (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). The fact that each participant brought up the subject of education, despite not being asked about it during the interview, highlights its importance. Across all the reviewed literature related to nutrition, sustainability and food pathways, education was also deemed important (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Askin Uzel, 2021; Cuturi, 2022; Dunlap, 2012; Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Echeverri et al., 2024; Jackson, 2007; Maysels et al., 2023; Sebastia, 2017; Turner et al., 2020). However, some sources did not specify the methods for education or which elements should be emphasized. Most literature focused on either skills directly related to their subject matter (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Cuturi, 2022; Duque-Mahecha, 2017; Maysels et al., 2023; Turner et al., 2020), or on education in general (Askin Uzel, 2021; Dunlap, 2012; Echeverri et al., 2024; Sebastia, 2017). Consequently, the following subsections will explore the elements participants consider important, how the SF movement addresses these elements, and how this information is communicated to consumers.

6.2.1 Traditional Practices

Teaching traditional practices that make these culinary dishes possible, is crucial for preserving traditional dishes and maintaining cultural heritage. From cultivation to harvesting, these traditional practices are still applied today and use the notion of care to safeguard the land and its resources (Maysels et al.,

2023). However, 3 out of 4 participants stated that traditional practices tied to this step are only seen as standard practices, and not for the added value they bring (Personal Interviews, 2024). For centuries, Colombians have used farming tools from Western countries rather than fully utilizing their traditional practices, which are environmentally friendly and rooted in community (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). In fact, existing sustainable agricultural processes are rooted in traditional knowledge (Maysels et al., 2023). By using traditional farming practices Colombian's can resist the erasure of their traditions, cultures, and identities (Maysels et al., 2023). Traditional farming practices often occur in community settings, which are conducive to sharing narratives and preserving heritage (Maysels et al., 2023; Turner et al., 2020). These settings also positively affect community wellbeing.

In chapter 2.3, the socio-cultural connection between Colombian's and food highlighted community spaces such as gardens, traditional azoteas, and workshops (Duque-Mahecha; 2017; Maysels et al., 2023; Turner et al., 2020). Recognizing the need for tactile education in community spaces, Acosta joined SF by offering workshops in her garden (Personal Interview, 2024). Traditionally, garden spaces and the skills associated with them have fallen under women's responsibilities and have been transmitted matrilineally to strengthen connections between women of different generations (Cuturi, 2022). Notably, most of the participants learned culinary skills from maternal figures and predominantly share their knowledge with women in rural communities (M. Jaramilllo, L. Acosta, & M. Arredondo, Personal Interviews, 2024). While conducting projects in rural areas, Acosta aims to show people how "*in a territory one can survive based on what one knows*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta's goal demonstrates that although the land matters, what is most important is having the knowledge to make the most out of it. Acosta exemplifies this through one of her community projects, which sought to harvest traditional ingredients in the desert through traditional practices (Personal Interview, 2024). This example also shows that traditional harvesting spaces are not limited to green areas typically associated with gardens. Harvesting spaces are not only a source of food, but also a place for social relations, the promotion of knowledge, and creativity, which is expressed through culinary preparations (Cuturi, 2022), as seen through Acosta's work.

Nowadays, traditional cooking practices are passed down through families, as in Acosta's case, or can be learned in training centers (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). These training centers were established in response to the demand for recognition and respect in the interpretation of Colombia's culinary traditions (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). According to Duque-Mahecha, as long as restaurants are using local ingredients, cooks must apply some form of regional traditional culinary techniques and knowledge (2017). Thus, those without familial knowledge must learn these practices through training

centers. This claim is rooted in the belief that Colombian cuisine cannot evolve without rescuing culinary traditions (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Many ingredients in Colombia require special techniques to be edible. These techniques are often traditional, and part of the investigations conducted by collectives like Arredondo's (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Taking knowledge a step further, Acosta emphasizes that the most important element for safeguarding these traditional practices is education: "*the most important part, which is pedagogical, isn't being taught, which is how to take care of the resources and the land*" (Personal Interview, 2024). However, without valuing the ingredient, it becomes difficult to convey to others why they need safeguarding.

6.2.2 Value of Local Ingredients

Although the participants shared that one of their motivations for working with SF was to preserve local ingredients, the value of these ingredients is tied to the discourse of education. Traditional cooking methods for certain ingredients would not be possible if the ingredient itself is lost (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Educating others on the value of using local ingredients is important for their conservation and proper utilization. As Arredondo states, "*We have so many ingredients with beautiful textures that are very versatile, and we need to learn how to appreciate them again"* (Personal Interview, 2024). This aligns with the *De Colombia Pa'l Mundo* series, which emphasizes the importance of educating people about the historical origins of dishes and the ingredients that compose them (Bancolombia, 2023). Each participant mentioned a different approach to teaching others about the value of these ingredients. For Jaramillo and Rodriguez, their main method is through direct conversations with their consumers and sharing their knowledge in SF engagements. Additionally, Rodriguez uses social media to share recipes featuring local ingredients, educating people on their use (Personal Interview, 2024). Similarly, Arredondo communicates the value of ingredients through research conducted at 'Herencia la Mesa' and disseminates this information through social media and her restaurant (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta, being the only professor amongst the participants, has taught the value of ingredients in university courses and through community work (Personal Interview, 2024). Although all the participants view the value of the ingredients as a connection to culture and identity, Jaramillo and Acosta also emphasize the health benefits of eating local ingredients. According to Acosta, some imported ingredients even cause negative health effects:

> "*Our bodies still have a hard time processing nutrients that were brought by the Spanish during colonial times. [for example] gluten has harmed our organisms a lot. When the Spanish arrived in the 15th century, in Europe they had already gone through a lot. So imagine when they arrive, people*

who have only eaten corn, root vegetables, and fruits are being introduced to distilled organisms that have never entered their bodies before, and suddenly people get cirrhosis and are introduced to alcoholism" (Personal Interview, 2024).

In another example, Acosta identifies refined sugars as an ingredient introduced by colonizers, which has also contributed to declining health conditions—especially amongst rural communities that have easy access to sugary commercialized goods (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). This coincides with Amaya-Castellanos et al.'s research findings on the correlation between loss of ancestral food practices and its effects on children's health in Nariño, Colombia (2022). In this perspective the value of the ingredient comes from caring about the community's physical health.

All participants agree on the abundance of local ingredients available. This perspective is shared by most of the cooks that Duque-Mahecha spoke to about traditional culinary practices in Colombia (2017). The consensus on the abundance of local ingredients, which not everyone has access to or the knowledge to use, demonstrates a gap that needs to be addressed to improve food systems. The participants' awareness of this gap and the need for educational efforts supports Maysels et al.'s assertion that preserving, recovering, and applying traditional knowledge is the primary method of strengthening food systems (2023). While Maysels et al. focused on the Cauca region (2023), the participants' insights indicate that it extends beyond Cauca. Additionally, the participants' insights demonstrate that Colombia is part of the growing global trend described by Parasecoli, where cooks and food experts are working to revive traditional crops and customs by making them relevant to communities and visible to outsiders as sustainable and healthy options (2022).

6.2.3 Food Pathways

To make food pathways relevant and visible, each participant emphasized the need to educate others on the journey of an ingredient from cultivation to the dinner plate. For Jaramillo, understanding this chain of events leads to more value being placed on ingredients as well as respect for those involved in the process (Personal Interview with Jaramillo, 2024). In order to share accurately it is important for those in the SF movement to educate themselves as well. For this reason, each of the participants spoke of the value of attending SF events (Personal Interviews, 2024). "*Everyone that goes to large [SF] events is very attentive through the long days, and [SF] activities are very pedagogical*" noted Acosta (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Jaramillo, "*Every time we gather and talk about things like ingredients at risk, it also opens my mind and my consciousness, giving me purpose, dreams, pathways, and I benefit heavily*" (Personal Interview, 2024). For Acosta engaging with SF is important as she believes:

> "*It's important—to go back to roots—in terms of pedagogical nutrition and I feel like SF does this and makes us agents of change. When you talk to others, people always ask questions and we always explain [what] Slow Food [is] and invite people to the space so we can all learn and grow together*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Attending SF events, which connect members with communities both nationally and internationally, equips them with the tools and the language to share their initiatives (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta explains that the pedagogy and tools acquired at these events helps: "*change their [people's] mindset and to learn how to act as co-producers. In doing that you can transform your life, inspire others, and show people there's a more responsible way to do things*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Jaramillo clarifies that the people that this newfound education is being shared with—aside from those in the movement—is diverse communities:

> "*There are many lonely communities. People in Colombia have great goals like clean agricultural efforts, and even though they struggle with these goals they push through, but this [work] can be easier if people work together. Often people tend to get exhausted in their goals and give up if they aren't seeing their efforts pay off*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

What Jaramillo is alluding to is that in communicating with other communities, organizations, and people with similar goals, accomplishing said goals becomes easier. Many people feel isolated in their efforts, and having a community of like-minded individuals makes it easier to sustain their mission for good, clean, and fair food (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024). As per Acosta:

> "*Not a lot of people know that their way of thinking and doing things can lead them to connect with people that have similar visions through Slow Food. This has happened to all of us that are a part of the movement*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Connecting with others makes it easier to protect local ingredients and animal species, promote sustainable agriculture, and foster social change (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Acosta adds that:

> "*People are connecting with others who see culinary nutrition as an option for sustenance—a different one from what is currently in the nutrition industry—and very few of them have in mind farmer culture and the lives of the people that live in those territories. Instead, these people tend to have a business mindset focused on market demands. I believe that the more people—and this is a vision many of us have in Slow Food—are conscious of the fact that we are the consumers and define the markets, we can stimulate change in what is available*." (Personal Interview, 2024)

Acosta's view of the lack of consideration for farmer culture that most of the nutrition industry has, and her desire to change that, echoes Shawki & Hunter's outlook on traditional food systems being tied to

marginalized producers who are central to SF's goals (2022). As such, the goal of education is not only important for people within SF and potential partners, it is also essential for each person that takes part in the food's pathway. Seeking to reach multiple people in the chain, Jaramillo looks for:

> "*Donations and opportunities that can help further the movement. Through this we get to know that we have helped create consciousness in each person that was a part of the process from the cultivator to the consumer and everyone in between. This alone is a benefit, and knowing and understanding your path in Slow Food, it's a big win*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

The awareness that Jaramillo speaks of comes from involving producers and individual players in SF projects, such as inviting local DJs to perform at Disco Soup Day. The work these cooks are doing through SF coincides with Duque-Mahecha's view that addressing traditional culinary knowledge is essential for strengthening connections with local producers and communities (2017). Supporting this view, Jaramillo believes that "*for there to be a conscious change in the world, we need to be active*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This active engagement leads to the revitalization of local gastronomic expressions that Duque-Mahecha speaks of (2017). While Acosta agrees with educating each person along the food chain, she also raises the question of *"what good is it to teach people of all these things if the water in their town continues to be contaminated?" People will not necessarily care about making social changes when they have bigger concerns at play"* (Personal Interview, 2024). This underscores the need to address fundamental issues and for this reason Acosta's pedagogy is:

> "*Oriented towards political formation so that citizens are trained in rights and the enforceability of Law demands, so that they can go and demand their assets, and participation in the spaces that the Constitution opened. For people to go to the heritage tables, the agriculture tables, the culture tables, all the tables that currently exist, and influence public policy - as policy hasn't been public, it's been more for people that are academically trained*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

In addition to teaching political formation, Acosta believes that the process of teaching about food pathways needs to begin at a young age:

> "*kids with more awareness of the importance of understanding the difference between a real piece of corn and a genetically modified one, who can recognize what tastes like colorants versus original flavors, is important. We need citizens with that skill*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

To educate children about local ingredients and how to use them, Acosta offers a cooking workshop in her garden (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). However, education does not stop there. As the current SF leader for education in Colombia, Acosta is developing her latest project: creating a SF chair where "*the masters of it are people from territories that have traditional practices and knowledge*" (Personal

Interview, 2024). Culinary practices tied to agriculture can help bring people together, as these practices reflect the daily lives, needs, and values of people (Parasecoli, 2022). For Acosta, people living in cities are not as connected to agricultural practices and are missing elements in their discourses (Personal Interview, 2024). With this chair, Acosta hopes people will realize that "*those of us that live in the city aren't the ones that need to be teaching these concepts*" (2024). Once this chair is established, Acosta hopes it will be connected to universities so that "*students can hear and learn from people who are still alive, have clean and sustainable agricultural practices, and raise animals.*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

6.2.4 Storytelling

Aside from reflecting on those who educate and those within the food pathway, the participants also spoke about the importance of sharing this knowledge with consumers. When looking at the full story, a dish is "*more than just a dish, it has a purpose*" (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). As such, each cook has found different methods for sharing the stories of the ingredients and the people involved in creating the consumer's dish. When asked how she transmits stories through her work to uphold narrative practices, Rodriguez provided a holistic viewpoint, stating:

> "*All of this work from a gastronomic level is about maintaining the essence of flavor. I feel that in every community, every territory, and country there are very particular smells and flavors that develop from experiences tied to that place. As humans, we are always surviving difficulties and creating other paths. In a way, I have found that there is an essence of flavor and pain in the kitchen that I'm interested in maintaining. Additionally, I want to adapt those smells and flavors to the corresponding ingredients that we still have access to within our territories and tell their stories. So effectively, all the dishes have a story, all the ingredients have a story, and the task is to get the team to know these stories to be able to transmit them*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

The pain that Rodriguez speaks of relates to the historical moments these ingredients have witnessed and the labor involved in their cultivation and preparation. By conveying the ingredients essence in flavors and smells, Rodriguez showcases the resilience that Amaya-Castellanos et al. (2022), Jackson (2007), and Wallis (2019) allude to in how Colombians protect their land and endure difficult times. Ensuring that her restaurant team understands the stories behind these dishes and ingredients aligns with Sebastia's view that learning from narrative practices is an act of culinary preservation that engages the community (2017). Sebastia emphasizes how gestures and experiences in narrative practices aid culinary preservation (2017), and Rodriguez embodies this by using a traditional wood stove to enhance the food's aroma in the restaurant, adding to the overall experience and evoking food memories.

Similarly, Arredondo embraces the concept of 'Palate Memory' by arranging multisensorial experiences for her consumers (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). To prepare for these experiences, Arredondo conducts a three-month investigation to learn about an ingredient and how to transform information into food (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). This information is then used to create a 7-stage tasting menu where Arredondo recounts the entire history of the territory while guests are eating (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). In conducting this investigation and recounting history, Arredondo supports Duque-Mahecha's view of restaurants as a means to revive culinary traditions at risk of vanishing and reintroduce rare or previously limited ingredients (2017). To make the experience multisensory, Arredondo incorporates audiovisual components produced by artists and musicians (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Arredondo's goal is to have guests feel present while eating by positioning it as an art experience (Personal Interview, 2024). In being creative with her approach, Arredondo exemplifies Debs's opinion on how cooks play an essential role in interpreting territories and adding value through their creativity (2013). For Arredondo, innovation and creativity are vital to engaging people in storytelling (Personal Interview, 2024). Arredondo believes that:

> "*There's that creative aspect where art has a universal language, so it doesn't matter if we aren't from the same country. We all feel hunger and connections to nutrients, and the audiovisual side helps you feel emotions that are stronger than just sitting and eating, which is what we usually do.*" (Personal Interview, 2024)

To further engage people and address the bond between sensory and emotional reactions to food that Abarca & Colby discuss (2016), Arredondo adds:

> "*When we do a full production, we attract a more modern crowd, so we use dishes that are traditional and present them in more modern ways. In ways that people will recognize them. For example, if we have a traditional dish that requires folding food we present it like a burrito - it's something that is recognized worldwide, and eating it is an instinctual approach. I want people to see the ingredients and see them as accessible by using language and presentations that are easier to associate.*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Presentation is important to Arredondo as she views it as an opportunity to showcase producers: "*If we don't have the opportunity to go to the people [that cultivated the nutrients], then we can at least showcase them and their work. It's not just me talking about myself and my work, it's about the people*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Agreeing with that mentality Acosta shares:

> "*When you join Slow Food, the vision is more than just culinary practices, it's not just the dish being served but also the picture you have in the menu, what connections does it have with the material*

and immaterial culture of a territory? And behind that, what communities still live off this culture and which ones don't?" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Taking a different approach, Jaramillo shares narratives in both subliminal and explicit ways. Her menu includes images of each dish and paired with a full list of ingredients, a description of how the dish is prepared, and the story behind the dish itself. Jaramillo states that each menu she produces includes this information as "*telling a story needs to be done visually as well as orally*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This viewpoint coincides with Abarca & Colby's assertion that explaining what a dish is shows people who you are (2016). Additionally, each menu that Jaramillo produces subtly showcases quality and sustainable products by using ecological ink and paper (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). In the restaurant, Jaramillo and her team share stories of each dish orally with their guests, and make people feel comfortable with their attentiveness and the positive environment created by the closeness of the team. This dynamic amongst the team and their welcoming nature is a testament to Jaramillo's efforts to transform a kitchen—typically known for being hostile for its high-stress, fast-paced environment with long hours—into a space where everyone feels welcome (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). In addition to fostering a welcoming environment, Jaramillo adds subtle messages about her work through the logo, the colors she chose for the restaurant—which each have a meaning—and by welcoming each guest with a quote when you enter the restaurant that reads '*Traditional cuisine requires respect, love, and time'* (Personal Interview, 2024). For Jaramillo, El Ringlete is a place with:

"Permanent storytelling, because I believe, if you get stuck on the dish you make it to the trunk of the memory quite quickly. If you have a purpose in life and your restaurant says 'I'm more than a dish served at the table', you start to take care of the people, the planet, and everything that has to do with the chain of value, and in the chain of value enters the taxi driver, hotels, universities, and everything, so it's not just Slow Food. Slow Food is just a small piece of the safeguarding of a product, of the land, of care for the farmer that does the work - and is often not valued. People see lettuce on a plate but don't see the value in the chain that brought the food there, a chain that is mystical and spiritual, so when you understand that value and you want to share it, you do more" (Personal Interview, 2024).

When conducting special events that showcase a specific ingredient, Jaramillo collaborates with local decorators to bring the theme to life (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). For instance, when she hosted a SF meeting to showcase corn, the centerpieces in the restaurant were made from corn (M. Jaramillo, Personal Interview, 2024). Through her dedication to showcasing culture, Jaramillo actively affirms that restaurants play an important role in shaping local cultures (Duque-Mahecha, 2017).

Outside of the restaurant environment, Acosta shares her knowledge orally through workshops, university lectures, and community work (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Through these methods, Acosta designs experiences to establish trust between the rural community, herself, and the eventual consumer. When co-creating a product Acosta explains: *"I am selling a deeper idea that has to do with the territory and with the value the territory has, so that every traveler who comes to my territory can live this experience*" (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Dunlap, food consumption as a method of leisure education can help restore and revitalize individuals and communities, strengthening their connection to their culture (2012). Through their dedication to sharing stories through food and multi-sensorial experiences, all cooks are actively working to strengthen communities and their culture.

6.3 Personal journeys and inspirations

The interview format allowed participants to speak freely about their personal journeys and inspirations. They shared anecdotes about what led them to join the SF movement, often citing traditions, family, mentors, or friends as sources of inspiration. Additionally, some expressed a desire to connect with their cultural roots and communities as they explore their identities. Although this section coincides with their motivations, section 6.1 examines motivations that adhere to SF goals, whereas this section reveals personal interests and gains from being a part of the SF movement.

6.3.1 Traditions, Family, Mentors & Friends

According to Acosta, you don't join SF to participate in an ideology, "*You join because you have an angle or vision of the territory that aligns with the principles of 'good, clean, and just food for all'. For me these principles connected me a lot to my grandmother*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Elaborating how the SF movement connects her to her grandmother, Acosta adds:

> *"My grandmother came from a family who worked the fields, had a love for the land, and she loved caring for the land. I learned a lot about the kitchen from my grandmother and her friends. They were women that were passionate about it [cooking] and connected their passion to helping others as a service. They cooked in their daily lives for pleasure and as a way to be happy. Eating and sharing food with others was a social thing that brought joy. From [witnessing] this, I started to feel this connection of happiness to food*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

This explanation from Acosta is important as it exemplifies Abarca & Coby's take on how experience with food memories begin with emotional implications that are socially grounded (2016). This connection also illustrates Patiño Ossa's view that the link to food and kitchens stems from symbolic ties to people (2016).

Notably, Acosta did not formally train as a cook and learned her skills in traditional settings. Her connection to her grandmother inspired her to link food and tradition when she began working with the Ministry of Culture, and continues to influence her work today (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Similarly, Jaramillo also had a previous career as a fashion designer and was raised with a connection to history and cooks through her father, and learned to cook from her mother - a story she shares in her menu. For Jaramillo, her connection to culinary traditions is one she considers as spiritual and mystical, representing a deep connection with the land (Personal Interview, 2024). Jaramillo's connection to food supports Maysels et al.'s claim that certain regions in Colombia link food, its production and its consumption to their values, history, and social relationships (2023). Her expression of this connection aligns with Matta's findings, where *cocineras* use terms like 'magic' and 'energy' to express their emotional ties to culinary traditions (2019). Additionally, Jaramillo's view of food being connected to spirituality resonates with Cali's strong links to Afro-Indigenous cultures (Velasco et al., 2023). This connection is partly a result of many people from the Pacific Coastal region, which accounts for 93.5% of the ancestral farming territories, having been forcibly displaced due to armed conflict, resulting in their relocation to Cali (Velasco et al., 2023).

For Rodriguez and Arredondo, who formally trained as cooks, their connection to food was also formed in their youth through their families and communities. Arredondo's connection to SF was facilitated by a teacher at culinary school who recognized her passion for community and creativity (Personal Interview, 2024). In Rodriguez's case, her involvement with SF stemmed from connecting with many cooks in her region, which led her to meet Antonella Ariza and Eduardo Cañas—the leaders of the SF chapter in Colombia (Personal Interview, 2024). Interestingly, Ariza and Cañas are also friends of Acosta and helped her formally join the movement. However, Acosta first heard about the SF movement from Antonio Montaña (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta had studied with Montaña, who, despite being an intellectual and novelist, dedicated himself to the pleasure of cooking (Personal Interview, 2024). Montaña introduced Acosta to the manuscripts released by Carlo Petrini—the founder of the SF movement (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). To this day Acosta remains inspired by Carlo Pertini and Micheal Polland—an author and journalist focused on clean gastronomy—and shares their teachings with her students hoping to inspire the next generation (Personal Interview, 2024).

6.3.2 Connection with Communities and Cultural Roots

When it comes to community, each participant uses the term in different contexts. Some describe the SF community, while others refer to local or rural communities. However, for some participants, it is

important to reflect on their SF community before branching out to their connections with other communities in Colombia. This is because being a part of the SF community has provided them with a sense of identity and a safe space. Arredondo expresses her comfort in SF by sharing:

> "*Slow Food has given me hope in what I do and that no one is going to take away my beliefs. I am convinced that while the world is in action—for example [in SF], there are thousands of women in the movement who are talking to each other and its magic—I don't think there is anything to lose*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Arredondo also adds that SF transforms kitchen environments for women from what a traditional culinary setting tends to look and feel like:

> "*We are women with knowledge, and finding a dignified place is not easy anywhere. The kitchen continues to be a very complex setting in Colombia where one works hard, yet it has a strong or exaggerated sense of manliness. This [SF] makes the environment more dignified, responsible, and equal, and allows me to have a safer space to transform what I have learned. Through that, I can now enjoy the fruits of my labor as a cook from the Andean region and say, 'I do this, and yes I am a woman, but I am also a businesswoman, and this is what I want, and I am going to continue working with communities and do work that I'm proud of'*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Notably, Arredondo also mentions that SF gives her the comfort to work with communities outside of the movement as well. Similarly, Acosta finds SF to be a safe space as she believes that:

> "*These practices that have been getting lost are salvageable, and that's what guided me to Slow Food, because it's something that makes you feel comfortable and not like an imposter. In Slow Food you get deeper into a lifestyle; it's a way of living that inspires others. Working in this movement, you become an example to many people - to those you work with, family, and friends*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

For Rodriguez, joining the SF community made her feel like she was not alone in her mission to do things differently in the culinary world (Personal interview, 2024). Learning about SF added logic to the work she was doing and was a natural fit:

> "*Finding this movement cleared up a lot of things that we were already doing in a big but silent way. We had similar ways of operating for a long time focused on the social part of the process, the product, and its development, so when I found the movement, it made me understand that what I am doing is on the right track"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

Finding a community and feeling a sense of belonging also reflects on the well-being of those in the SF community. For Rodriguez, the effect is positive as she shares the same sense of safety that Acosta and

Arredondo expressed (J. Rodriguez, L. Acosta, & M. Arredondo, Personal Interviews, 2024). Matta's research (2019) supports these findings, showing that empowered female cooks, like the participants, gained self-esteem, self-sufficiency, agency, and pride in their cultural roots, which encouraged them to "dream" and feel supported (p.198).

Branching outside of the SF community, Jaramillo seeks to connect with rural and Indigenous communities through her work (Personal interview, 2024). Jaramillo seeks to empower these communities to safeguard their heritage through cooking (Personal interview, 2024), which coincides with Patiño Ossa's view of the kitchen serving as a method to communicate cultural values (2016). However, this connection to rural and Indigenous communities requires trust. Acosta explains her success in working with these communities:

> "*The reason I get along well with communities is because I don't just go to simply carry out an action to safeguard a demonstration. I'm not simply training people to devise a tourist product to sell to tourists and get money from them. I principally work with communities as a base. I work with female cooks, fishermen, weavers, carpenters, and I have been doing it for over 4 years on cooking and tourism issues, and we propose projects as developments. I research with elders in the community to have them share how things were done in the past with younger generations. From there we see what interests them to generate a business idea*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

While respecting the community and its past, Acosta seeks to connect with the cultural roots of the communities she works with (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta believes it is possible to connect to these cultural practices as "*they have survived precisely because they have to do above all with health, more than with commerce"* (Personal Interview, 2024). By working with rural, Indigenous, and local communities, the participants are effectively connecting with their culture and exploring their identities.

6.3.3 Exploring Identities

Considering Colombia's tumultuous history referenced in chapter 2.1, there are many examples of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities seeking to safeguard their customs and traditions (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Cuturi, 2022; Goyes et al., 2021; Jackson, 2007; Maysels et al., 2023; Oslender, 2001; Turner et al., 2020; Velasco et al., 2023; Wallis, 2019). What is not referenced in the literature is the role that cooks play when it comes to identity. Given the many waves of displacement and oppression in Colombia (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Velasco et al., 2023), it is natural for people outside of rural and Indigenous communities to want to explore their identities and origins. For Rodriguez, exploring one's identity is an important exercise:

> *"In my case, I think it's an important exercise to think about and know what my roots are, where I come from, and why I'm like this. These types of questions we ask ourselves might not interest everyone, but if someone is interested, there is information available"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

Additionally, Rodriguez finds that knowing about identity and sustaining culture are related exercises:

> *"For me, trying to sustain culture is to generate a strong sense of identity, which I believe we are all constantly looking for. Who are we? Where are we going? What do we do? Where do we come from?...I think that in understanding ourselves as a living culture, as people connected to a specific place on earth, and recognizing the ways in which we think and exist is important. Perhaps it is more of a mental shift within ourselves, and understanding that technology can suddenly change our methods and ways of being. I feel that the greatest challenge is sustaining culture through food and through understanding* (Personal Interview, 2024).

In this quote, Rodriguez manages to express both her understanding of the need to seek and generate identity, and the difficulty of this task. In connecting the struggle to sustain culture through food, Rodriguez indirectly supports Parasecoli's assertion that there is extensive literature suggesting a relationship between food and identity, which plays a role in identity formation (2022). Linking Rodriguez's and Parasecoli's perspectives, Duque-Mahecha (2017) and Romagnoli (2018) explain that knowledge of culinary traditions and sharing them can help generate a sense of belonging. For Duque-Mahecha, understanding where one comes from and having a clear sense of identity is connected to wellness (2017). For this reason, many organizations, cooks, and consumers are calling for the respect and recognition of Colombia's culinary past, as it can help form identity, leading to wellbeing (2017). Acosta, in particular, believes that learning about all the distinct traditions that Colombia has benefits everyone, regardless of what part of Colombia someone is from (Personal Interview, 2024). In exploring Colombia's territories and traditions, Amaya-Castellanos et al. state that efforts to preserve cultural uses and customs are underway to address the negative effects of globalization and colonization (2022). According to Rodriguez, "*things can change but we can continue to preserve certain things that identify us and make us different and unique*" (Personal Interview, 2024). In addressing the negative effects of globalization and focusing on preservation, a sense of identity is being formed, which leads to wellness.

Aside from seeking safeguarding identity, participants also spoke of how being a part of SF made them feel more comfortable to explore who they are within the movement. Both Arredondo and Rodriguez found that they identified with the SF movement and its ideologies (Personal Interviews, 2024). For Arredondo, SF offered the opportunity to act on her desire to:

> "*work with a more anthropological approach in the kitchen, to see the origin of ingredients, and really take food one step further. When I met the movement I identified with it, and felt that this was a lifestyle, there are musicians, there is art, there are activists here, and I thought it linked the arts and creativity into cooking" (*Personal Interview, 2024).

Now being a part of the SF movement Arredondo feels that:

> *"It is something that I identify myself with and that fulfills me. There are actions that really motivate me and are really tied to my work and my professional development. It is a movement that allows me to study, to travel, to make connections with people globally, and to learn from others that have similar challenges*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Arredondo's perspective of SF exemplifies how ideological connotations can be linked to gastronomy when it "*becomes part of larger networks of meaning that support political ideals, strategies, and activities*" (Parasecoli, 2022, p.95). Seeing as SF is a global movement, understanding what personally connects each cook is important. For Parasecoli, the connection lies in food facilitating the construction, maintenance, and manifestation of identities (2022). This view aligns with Acosta and Arredondo's opinions on SF providing members with tools and language that help them feel identified and explain concepts to others (Personal Interviews, 2024). For Arredondo, these tools have enabled her to:

> "*Work with communities that are often very conservative and have specific ideologies that were embedded into them from a colonial time. Slow Food is very radical, so it's not so easy to do a mindshift in ideologies within these rural communities that have more antiquated European customs—when funnily enough in modern Europe they're now all about farm to table and fresh produce—but in Colombia it's not all good*."

The tools in question that enable SF members to have these conversations with rural communities leverage concepts like tradition, heritage, and authenticity to drive social change through a tangible and experimental medium that is easier to grasp—food (Parasecoli 2022). Parasecoli explains that this is possible as food and these concepts speak to people's immediacy, their everyday lives, and their emotions though the emotional weight the ingredient or dish carries (2022). By incorporating these concepts into food, SF makes its mission more understandable to the communities it serves, while also facilitating a deeper connection for its members. This connection to food and the movement is particularly significant in Colombia, where the social link between people and food is strong. According to Parasecoli, "*Instability has made the desire for community and rootedness more urgent*" (2022, p.191). Given Colombia's history of turmoil, SF members are not only seeking identity, but also community, which, as discussed in section 2.3, is often linked to food in Colombian culture. For Arredondo, being part

of SF and connecting with a global community is *"very beautiful because what is global becomes very close to home*" (Personal Interview, 2024). When sharing her story, Arredondo makes note of the sense of community amongst instability that Parasecoli speaks of, and that SF offers a safe space:

> *"Recently, I was asked what I would say to women that face disrespect in the kitchen and still want to work in this field. I tell them to do it. It's a space for creativity, where you can do research. The kitchen is magical and for me it's very powerful, and with Slow Food, its tools and its global, conscious approach, it allows you to empower yourself and make a positive impact. Through your passion, you can find freedom, especially in a complex world and in a country with so much violence. I believe the kitchen with it [SF] is a safe space*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Arredondo's statement demonstrates the deep attachment members have to the SF movement and the sense of comfort and community they find within it. Regarding empowerment, Acosta notes that by engaging with SF, *"you stop being a consumer and become a creator, a farmer, a cook, and more… you can create your own life"* (Personal Interview, 2024). This statement not only speaks to empowerment gained from being part of the movement but also the sense of freedom that Arredondo mentioned. For both Acosta and Arredondo, being in the SF community means envisioning oneself in diverse roles; you are no longer just a cook but also a change-maker (Personal Interviews, 2024). Echoing this sense of comfort and empowerment in the kitchen, Rodriguez shared her perspective on joining the community:

> *"Access to these places [restaurants and kitchens with themes] is expensive and very limited. I'm from a different part of the population that does not have that privilege [to be in those places], so when we break out of that bubble, we recognize that you have to change your mindset from an individualistic to a more collective one*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

In this quote Rodriguez explains that most culinary spaces tend to be individualistic and often overlook issues of accessibility and community connection when they label themselves as local gastronomy. Coming from a rural community, Rodriguez values movements like SF for their collective perspective, which resonates with her sense of identity and belonging (Personal Interview, 2024). For all the participants, being part of SF has provided a sense of connection and empowerment. This empowerment, fueled through SF meetings and events, sustains their commitment despite the challenges they face in advocating for the movement and implementing its principles in Colombia.

6.4 Challenges and critiques

Although the participants were not asked to critique the movement or discuss challenges they have faced, each participant expressed that being part of the SF movement in Colombia has not been easy.

Whether it was bureaucratic hurdles, the impacts of modernity and Western practices, a lack of political advocacy, or even perceived elitism and accessibility issues with the SF movement, all the cooks have experienced some kind of hurdle and continue to do so. As Arredondo expressed "*the movement is not easy, but when you believe in regeneration, there are ways of accomplishing this*" (Personal Interview, 2024). For all the participants their link to food, their motivations, and their experiences are what sustain their involvement in the SF movement, despite the challenges that will be explored in this section.

6.4.1 Bureaucratic Hurdles

As previously noted by Acosta, the SF movement was introduced to Colombia in the late 1980s but initially struggled to gain traction (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta attributes these difficulties in establishing a chapter to a range of factors, including political instability (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Acosta, the challenges with political entities are not a recent issue but have historical roots, extending from when the Spaniards first set foot in Colombia, to the present day: "*Our politicians who are governing today, and those that have been governing for the last 500 years since the Spanish arrived, have never proposed an equation where the people would benefit; the equation they work with benefits the businessmen*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta's words showcase the recognition of a debt system imposed by the Spanish, which as discussed by Amaya-Castellanos et al. (2022), and Pohl-Valero (2016) prioritizes economic opportunities over community welfare. This economic focus is evident through Colombia's trade policies, such as the Colombia-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA), where products that are produced in Colombia are being imported and sold at lower prices, thereby creating competition for local markets (Maysels et al., 2023). As Acosta points out "*at grocery stores you can buy lentils imported from Portugal for cheaper than Colombian lentils*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Such trade policies have been shown to negatively impact community diets and increase market competition for staple foods (Maysels et al., 2023). Acosta and Jaramillo, as discussed in section 6.2, argue that if the government does not address these issues directly, they can at least educate the public on its effects (Personal Interviews, 2024). Feeling the impact of unsupportive policies, Arredondo expressed:

> "*There are moments that are beautiful [being in SF] and others that are hard, especially when agricultural practices lack support and we're an agricultural country. We have all the resources and more, but we don't have political policies to support us.*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

These types of policies also demotivate the next generation, as they struggle to see the value of farming (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Low importation taxes have significantly affected Colombia's local economy, as noted by Duque-Mahecha (2017), La Trobe & Acott (2000), and Maysels et al. (2023).

Consequently, movements like SF, which offer a form of mutual aid through their network can develop the local economy and benefit Colombia. Given the current policies and the history of corruption, participants and the public often see the Colombian government as primarily focused on making money, leading to a sense of distrust. When it comes to managing nutrition systems, the participants felt that the government only cares about its own financial interests (Personal Interviews, 2024). Rodriguez expresses that when it comes to efforts in supporting community and local economies: "*Not even the government is focused on this because their only interest is to make money from nutrition systems that don't work, and that we know don't work, but the government doesn't care. So the fight is much stronger*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This is not to say that the government has made no efforts to support movements such as SF in Colombia. In fact, the Ministry of Culture has ushered in many cultural projects such as the multimillion-dollar portfolio of culinary projects developed for Colombia's bicentennial Independence Day in 2010, safeguarding projects, heritage investigation projects, and Memory Centers created in 2009 to preserve and share heritage (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). The Ministry of Culture has also set up a public library to safeguard traditional culinary practices, which has been both praised and criticized:

> "*We were the first to do this - not even Mexico or Peru had this - and it's easy to find through the Ministry of Culture in Colombia. All the info is there, but it's just there for access and there is no deeper action with it or on this subject matter*" (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024).

Arredondo's view aligns with Echeverri et al.'s findings regarding the lack of reports on cultural data, including artisanal crafts, gastronomic diversity, and other forms of cultural expression (2024). According to Echeverri et al., information on cultural heritage and practices is available in narrative form, and formal reporting would provide a better understanding of the link between cultural expression and the biocultural richness of Colombia (2024). Additionally, the government and the Ministry of Culture have recently increased financial investments to support heritage conservation projects through culinary practices (L. Acosta & M. Arredondo, Personal Interviews, 2024).

> "*There is investment in projects to change mentality on food systems and heritage conservation, and with this new government you can see that the investment has augmented, I have been working in the cultural sector for 15 years with heritage, material and nutrition… in these 15 years I have seen how the investments have changed*" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

According to Arredondo this growth is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as financial incentives to work with cultural heritage and nutrition increased as a reaction to the circumstances (Personal Interview, 2024). However, Arredondo notes that increased funding does not mean an increase in projects; "*we are doing investigative work, but access to these funds is limited to those in academia or culinary institutions,*

so it's not easy to access" (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta echoes this sentiment, pointing out that many of these investments are heavily influenced by commercial interests (Personal Interview, 2024). She remarks, "*More importance and value is given to commercial manifestations, and brands like 'Areparina' [brand of Arepa flour], which is now found worldwide and represents Colombia, but it's not Colombia, it's a commercial brand*" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). This focus on commercial goals and limited access to funding for projects that benefit Colombians contributes to the distrust in the government's intentions and strategies (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). One of these strategies, as previously noted, is the Ministry of Culture's alignment with UNESCO's goals, which Acosta criticizes for holding "*everyone to the same standard without understanding that Indigenous communities in parts of Colombia are becoming Westernized, and the production of the material and immaterial world is blurred*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This critique aligns with Romagnoli's observation that many nations are reluctant to inscribe gastronomy-related elements with UNESCO due to concerns about potential misinterpretations or misunderstandings of culinary heritage and its evolution (2018). Additionally, Matta critiques the UNESCO ICH list for operating as an elite driven competitive global concept rather than an inclusive tool for development and safeguarding (2016). Acosta further expressed her skepticism about the government's cultural programs, noting:

> "*you already know what kind of politicians end up implementing our programs. They're the same ones that enacted Law T100*[16]*, which turns health into a commercial product and not a cultural right. And this patrimonialization [through UNESCO guidelines] can have a negative impact on the population, as we have seen with other cultural celebrations in Colombia"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

This concern of patrimonialization is shared with Romagnoli, who expressed worries about objects being exploited as economic resources particularly in the tourism field (2018). Acosta further notes that, even when there are good programs and projects offered by the government, there is a lack of continuity:

> "*Today the problem isn't just in Colombia but in Latin America and the world. Political projects are led by people and when the government changes, those projects end. Then the new government creates its own projects, leading to a loss of continuity*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

To overcome depending on government support, many grassroots organizations, collectives, and activists have mobilized to protect and preserve culture, as noted by Jackson (2007) and Rojas Herrera and Dessein (2023). This includes independent movements like SF, where some cooks, such as Acosta, use the platform to promote political awareness and education:

[16] Distrust rose in the nutrition sector when the government released the law T100 in 1993, which sought to commercialize health (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

> *"Through all of this [referring to her work] what I end up doing is political formation so that the youth understand what's happening around them. This is something that Slow Food suggests in three lines, biodiversity, political advocacy, and education. These are Slow Food's strongest lines today. Why political advocacy? Because how do you know that you live in a system where things are unfeasible? This knowledge of injustice is invaluable if you are living in conditions where you can't do anything about it because you have other obligations, like work and school that keep you from basic solutions. For instance, you might have land for gardening but don't have water. How do we get water? We need to advocate for access to it"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

As Acosta suggests and Parasecoli argues, food cannot be separated from politics as it plays a role in identity and wellbeing (2022), rendering it important to teach political formation (Personal Interview, 2024). Once again, this brings up pedagogy as Acosta believes that:

> "*today's training tools have to be more oriented towards the pedagogy and didactics of political training, so that people do not remain simply on ideas and abstractions of safeguarding the herniate with these nice concepts, when fundamentally, the problem is structural and it's the economic model that we have, which is an extractivist model*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

This reflection by Acosta highlights the need to advance from merely safeguarding culture to safeguarding people through political formation. This shift aims to move away from the commercialized model that the government has promoted and that has been culturally absorbed since the Spanish arrived (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Pohl-Valero, 2016). Realizing the impact of being in SF and working with political ideals, Rodriguez comments:

> *"It's a big commitment, not just with ourselves but with hoping for what happens around you [in SF] makes a small difference. Because we know it's going to be hard, in general it's hard to change a lot of things, but the network is so big that little by little we each play a role that can build a completely different way of life*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Placing their trust in collective movements and finding a way forward despite what is happening with the government, tracks with literature discussed in section 2.1.2.1, where Colombians are inclined to find their own solutions amongst community. As witnessed in previous sections, the participants' involvement with different communities and SF is what keeps them engaged and motivates them to address the repercussions of the violence in the country, despite bureaucratic hurdles they may face.

6.4.2 Impacts of Modernization

Aside from having to navigate bureaucracy, the participants all touched upon the effects of modernization, and how it affects their work. According to Duque-Mahecha, Colombia's entry into the modern and globalized world has created a cultural shift in Colombian attitudes towards food (2017). Tying in SF concepts to this reflection, Arredondo expresses "*Good, clean, and just food is complex in a world that is used to immediate access to things nowadays. Most people think 'I have half an hour to eat so I want something fast'*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Other examples of modernity and immediacy can be seen in grocery stores with precooked meals and through modern apartments in cities that have eliminated kitchens. As Acosta explains, "*the narrative of modernity and civilization is where the industry imposes the conditions and not the citizens […] this narrative has eliminated the flame from houses to cook and eliminated kitchens around the world… because people just eat out*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Although globalization and modernization have influenced eating habits, Duque-Mahecha asserts that the devaluation of traditional culinary practices began during colonial times through the reinforcement of discrimination against peasant diets based on cultural and class categorization (2017). According to Jaramillo there is a "*lack of pride in local culinary traditions… [and it's a] result of the taste of local elites for what's European and a disdain for what's native*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Supporting Jaramillo's opinion, the government claims that this devaluation of practices is due to cultural globalization, violence, forced displacement, and social exclusion (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Similarly, Peru experienced a lack of pride in local cuisines for the same reasons before their 'gastronomic revolution' (Matta, 2021). Consequently, production and consumption have changed, affecting the use of farming lands (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Aside from the devaluation of these practices and land use, access to foods have also been affected by illicit crops and glyphosate (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Jackson, 2007; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Maysels et al., 2023). As a result, some traditional crops have been abandoned due to the labor they require, placing them at economic risk (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Parasecoli, 2022). Despite the challenges with traditional farming lands, the financialization of food production has rendered agricultural land an asset (Parasecoli, 2022). For this reason, available farmlands have been prioritizing the growing demand in international markets for cash crops, leading to overproduction of crops like coffee, sugarcane, and bananas, and contributing to a decrease in agrobiodiversity (Maysels et al., 2023). To meet these demands, conventional agricultural methods have been used more widely (Maysels et al., 2023), further contributing to the loss of traditional farming practices (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Additionally, the continuity of agricultural practices and the production of diverse crops is threatened by the lack of interest amongst youth in farm work (M.

Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). To Acosta, "*the culture of nutrition has to do with the fields, it has to do with adaptability, and with those of us who still make artisanal products. We still exist, but we need more people to do it*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Arredondo suggests a solution to this lack of interest from rural communities by highlighting the emergence of 'Neo-farmers'[17] who are interested in farming: *"It's a hard life, but it's a more spiritual one, and you have to be passionate about it because if not, it gets really heavy.*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Arredondo claims that movements like SF and Neo-farmers "*show how you can sustain yourself economically in these movements*" (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Maysels et al., farming enables people to resist aspects of conventional food systems that reduce social and economic sustainability, as the act of farming actively resists the erasure of culture, traditions, and identities (2023). While there is interest in farming, which helps sustain culture, Rodriguez claims that "*there's a big battle between maintaining our culture and the technology that shows us other ways of doing things*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Rodriguez's point of view illustrates that even if farming practices are improved and traditional ingredients are made more available, it does not guarantee that culture will be sustained or that people will want to consume these products. For the participants, this challenge stems from the current mentality of Colombians.

According to Rojas Herrera & Dessein, Colombians tend to join trends if there is an economic benefit (2023). Although the participants counter this narrative through SF, Rodriguez acknowledges that it applies to most Colombians:

> "*In Colombia, Slow Food still isn't really a thing, and people think it doesn't generate money. If there's no money, people think it doesn't work and they are not interested in it, and it's [the mentality] a cultural problem in Colombia*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

This narrative, which views the general population in Colombia as disinterested in sustaining cultural practices, is shared by other cooks interviewed by Duque-Mahecha (2017). They expressed concern about the lack of pride and the shame many communities feel about their own customs and cuisines, as Colombians are immersed in value systems that create a constant cultural anxiety (Duque Mahecha, 2017). Acosta claims that this cultural mentality is even evident in the government, where "*there are lots of people working on material heritage, but I feel like it's very Eurocentric"*, explaining that there is a desire to follow European practices which may not be suitable for Colombia (Personal Interview, 2024). The general cultural perception in Colombia is strong, and when Rodriguez stated to go against the norm with her sustainable practices, she felt crazy:

[17] Urban citizens who move to rural areas to work the land.

"*Switching to Slow Food helped us get stronger because we felt crazy since selling things like burgers brings in more money, economic stability, and it can be easier. But we were choosing to do this instead, and we felt lost and frustrated at times*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Rodriguez believes that movements like SF, along with the mentality shift embraced by those working within or around it, are progressing faster than the societal mental shift needed to fully understand and appreciate it (Personal Interview, 2024). For Acosta aside from this being an effect of colonization and globalization, she believes that this mentality can be found in the world in general as:

"*We have forgotten the basic services that human beings need, to feed themselves for health and well-being. In general health has become a product, and we have been growing in this area where there is commercial and business competition, and a competition to be the richest, the most powerful, and gain access to political power. Everyone has culturally entered into those competitions"* (Personal Interview, 2024).

Despite the participants outlooks and their perspectives on the current mentality, they believe in what they are doing and have hope in the movement:

"*I'm inspired by the possibility of transferring these ideologies, and that all of us in Slow Food are working to promote a different kind of lifestyle. One where we can unmark ourselves from that narrative and development… unlearn many things, and relearn from the land"* (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

Similarly, Duque-Mahecha believes that reconnecting with local values and heritage can overcome the deep-rooted colonial mentality that values the foreign (2017). According to Arredondo, this shift can be achieved in a non-confrontational way by utilizing modern symbolism and knowledge (Personal Interview, 2024). For example, in her restaurant, she references modern foods that people are familiar with while explaining traditional foods. This approach helps bridge the gap between mentalities and seeks a middle ground to advance collectively. As a result, Arredondo works with SF practices but does not embody all its ideologies, such as believing that fast food is the enemy (Personal Interview, 2024).

6.4.3 Critiques on the Slow Food Movement

As much as the participants support the SF movement and its principles, they acknowledge the movement is not perfect. Both the participants and the authors cited in the literature review have critiqued the movement in various ways. From Laudan's perspective, SF can negate modernization amongst the Global South and promotes Westernized trends of 'authentic' and 'organic' (Laudan, 2001). However, Rodriguez contradicts this criticism stating that when she first connected with SF, it aligned with

what she was already doing (Personal Interview, 2024). In fact, the movement helped clarify her goals (J. Rodriguez, Personal Interview, 2024). Regarding modernization, for Arredondo, SF does not negate modernization but offers a challenge to creativity blend modernization with tradition:

> "*People say fast food is the enemy of Slow Food, but what is key and traditional about these foods [fast food], is that you are still using your hands to eat - this is something very traditional and part of the appeal -subconsciously- is using your hands. We have moved out of this practice to use forks and knives like the Europeans taught us to, but we feel it's a natural instinct, so we need to use this in our process of modernization. We have to be very creative and innovative but still respect the traditional ingredients*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Other common criticisms from academics include the movement's goals being elitists, demanding, too costly, and above all counteractive (Askin Uzel, 2021; Chrzan, 2004; Donati, 2005; Laudan, 2001). Before 2014, some of the participants would have agreed with these critiques as representatives from the SF movement had not yet visited Colombia:

> *"Before Carlo Petrini traveled internationally this [SF] seemed very elitist…I agreed with the thought process, but it seemed out of reach as mostly academics were involved. That's what I thought until 2014 when someone came from Italy to do outreach and give clearer information on options for joining Slow Food"* (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024).

Aside from viewing the movement as elitist due to those involved, critics of the SF movement also highlight the limited access to these 'specialized' restaurants (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). According to Duque-Mahecha, many restaurants focused on culinary heritage and developing a distinctive cuisine are too expensive for most Colombians (2017). To attract a wealthier clientele and ensure financial viability, these restaurants are often upscale, making them inaccessible to the people who make this discourse possible, such as farmers and traditional cooks (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Since these individuals often lack the financial means to participate in these experiences, there is a risk that these culinary initiatives will perpetuate neo-colonial inequalities and exclude marginalized or disadvantaged groups, which is contrary to SF's goals (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Although this is occasionally the case, cooks like Arredondo demonstrate that it is possible to have a restaurant that is affordable and follows SF practices (Table 4). On the other hand, even if a restaurant is affordable, there remains an element of exclusivity and elitism with the SF fundraisers and gatherings, as these events often require travel from members and feature expensive dishes (Donati, 2005). Countering this narrative, Arredondo explains that SF helps certain members attend events that require travel, and Rodriguez explains that the funds collected go towards helping communities facing complex nutritional challenges (Personal Interviews, 2024).

When it comes to sustainability, Askin Uzel claims that the SF movement can be counteractive as focusing on local ingredients may influence an increase and overconsumption of at risk cultural nutrients (2021). However, as explained by the participants in section 6.1.1, they agree that focusing on one ingredient can lead to overconsumption of nutrients. This is why they consider it irresponsible and instead work with a variety of local seasonal ingredients (Personal Interviews, 2024). To Acosta, the real issue concerning sustainability is that many SF leaders are no longer discussing the topic (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Acosta, many leaders want to redirect their focus from sustainability:

> "*Many SF leaders don't want to talk about sustainability anymore. They want to focus on land and territorial practices without utilizing language that can instrumentalize the vision. Language can sometimes place a Eurocentric perspective on the problem -which has happened with heritage in Latin America. UNESCO's guidelines for conservation and safeguarding, tangible and intangible heritage, hold everyone to the same standard*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Even though SF is not talking about sustainability as much, all the participants spoke about how being a part of the movement allows them to focus on elements of sustainability (Personal Interviews, 2024). The lack of discussion about sustainability, was offered as an explanation as to why some may believe that SF practices are counteractive to sustainability (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

Two other critiques the participants mentioned, which are also noted in the literature, were the demanding aspects of the movement and the associated costs (Chrzan, 2004; Donati, 2005). Regarding the movement being demanding, Jaramillo stated that at times there was a lot of paperwork to fill out for SFF's reporting, which could be repetitive (Personal Interview, 2024). Although all the participants stated that the movement can be difficult at times, none of them complained about the event commitments. They find these events and the connections they make with communities and other cooks to be worthwhile, as stated in section 6.1.

When it comes to cost, although some participants, like Rodriguez, noted that selling burgers can be more profitable, none of them discussed the expense of being part of the movement. Instead, their main concern was SF's profitability. During the interview, Rodriguez mentioned that the SF chapter in Colombia lacks sufficient funds to market themselves and increase visibility for their activities in Colombia (Personal Interview, 2024). Arredondo and Acosta also noted the lack of information available for the work they are doing through SF channels by stating:

> *"We currently don't have any documentation of what Slow Food has been doing in Colombia, or the aspects of culinary practices we're focusing on. Not all of us in this movement are cooks - like me, I'm*

not in the kitchen but I'm conducting analyses and it's a different formation" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024)

Arredondo added, "*chefs are very creative, but this work needs to be documented*" (Personal Interview, 2024). The factors of cost and the demanding nature of the movement are reasons why academics like Donati question the ability for people to join the SF movement and consider it inaccessible (2005). However, for Rodriguez, these factors explain why it took so long to receive information on the movement: "*we're in a village, so information gets here a lot slower*" (Personal Interview, 2024). This perspective aligns with Chrzan's assertion that cooks need to be aware of SF to consider joining the movement (2004). Limited knowledge about SF, as Arredondo once did, can lead individuals outside of the movement to believe that they must have the financial means to pay for a membership and dedicate their craft to the foundation's mandate (Chrzan, 2004). This misunderstanding helps explain why many cooks and restaurants are not recognized for efforts similar to those of SF. Possible reasons include not wanting to pay a membership fee, not knowing that there is an option to join for free, being unsure about how to join the movement, or finding the work too demanding and thus not wanting to commit solely to SF practices (Chrzan, 2004; Shawki & Hunter, 2022; Personal Interviews 2024). The amount of misinformation or the lack of information available is why the participants stated that SF and the work done for them needs to be better documented.

In her search for culinary traditional dishes, Duque-Mahecha reviewed restaurant menus that focus on traditional dishes (2017). Interestingly enough, none of the restaurants mentioned in her review are tied to the SF movement (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). There is only a slight mention of SF efforts when Duque-Mahecha discusses markets and their relation to local producers (2017). This once again speaks to the lack of awareness of the movement's efforts. The fact that many cooks, restaurants, and local producers that are not formally affiliated with SF, has also led critics to question if the SF movement is truly making an impact, or if it is a naturally occurring social process, as Chrzan suggests (2004). Considering that Acosta and Rodriguez, along with many others such as the Indigenous groups and collectives mentioned in chapter 2.1.3.1, already embodied SF practices before joining the movement, Chrzan's point is well-supported. Whether this is a naturally occurring process or not, and despite criticisms, SF continues to be valuable to its members as it unites people under a common cause.

6.5 Sustainability and Future Vision

Reflecting on the value of SF, the participants discussed the importance of sustainable practices. The sustainability in question covered concerns over environmental impacts of modern agriculture, food

security, financial security, and identity. These topics stemmed from an expressed need for systemic change to support more sustainable and just food practices, as well as the local economy. Despite critiques of SF, and the challenges that the participants have faced and will continue to face, they all feel that SF will help them achieve their vision for the future of Colombia and its food security. As Rodriguez noted, "*What we are doing is more significant over time, than now. There's a lot of people that don't understand it [SF] now, but it's important work*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

6.5.1 Environmental Impacts and Food Security

As previously noted in section 2.1.1, many traditional farming lands in Colombia have been lost due to displacement or damaged from spraying glyphosate to combat the drug trade (Amaya-Castellanos et al., 2022; Jackson, 2007; Labate & Rodrigues, 2023; Maysels et al., 2023). Besides land damage, bodies of water used for fishing have also been contaminated (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Without the ability to engage in traditional farming and fishing practices, the knowledge of these practices is at risk of being lost. Acosta highlights the severity of this situation in rural communities, stating, *"without the river there is no life, without the river there is no fishing, there isn't food"* (Personal Interview, 2024). By saying '*without the river there is no life*', Acosta addresses the loss of life as a threat to food security and the loss of vibrant cultural traditions (Personal Interview, 2024). Sebastia elaborates on the dire environmental conditions, emphasizing that the negative impacts of intensive farming and the loss of biodiversity, among other factors, showcase food access inequalities (2017). Regarding the loss of culture through traditions, Maysels et al. reinforce the connection between culture and food by asserting that certain regions in Colombia link food, its production, and its consumption to their values, history, and social relationships (2023). Therefore, it is important to protect the natural environment that permits these traditional and social practices to thrive.

In Acosta's formation as a cook, she learned that practicing traditional farming and fishing practices is a way of learning from the land. She explains, "*you learn to value the product, and you learn to value the flavor of a clean product, as my grandmother did not put pesticides on her farm*" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Unfortunately, nowadays the financialization of food commodities has made agricultural land highly valuable, disregarding its social and economic effects on local communities (Parasecoli, 2022). Acosta's family farm, for instance, "*suffered greatly from having to compete with prices when products were put on the market*" (Personal Interviews, 2024). It was challenging for her family to sell produce because, despite their clean harvests, intermediaries, large organizations, and grocery stores sold produce at lower prices (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta also noted that sometimes it was

even cheaper for her family to avoid the hassle of taking their produce to markets (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta's personal experience mirrors Parasecoli's observation that traditional crops are being abandoned due to low yields, perceived inferior quality, or being seen as outdated, threatening their survival when they clash with economic interests (2022). While many producers want to farm organically, they often lack the necessary time, labor, and capital, prioritizing earning money and feeding their families (Maysels et al., 2023). Other cases, explored by Parasecoli, include the loss of forests where Amazonian tribes traditionally hunt and farm, making way for commodity crops (2022). Despite the challenges in sustaining these practices amidst environmental impacts and modern agricultural practices, Rodriguez believes that:

> "*Even though methods of agriculture change and people's eating habits change, I think that one should not lose that essence. Even if we change to different systems like hydroponic agriculture, we can keep conserving certain things that help us self identify and keep us different and unique*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

All the participants believe that this essence that Rodriguez speaks about can be supported by SF, as traditional knowledge helps resist negative changes (Personal Interviews, 2024). This traditional knowledge is essential for addressing both global and local changes that SF is tackling, such as climate change and food security (Shawki & Hunter, 2022). In certain regions of Colombia there are high rates of poverty and food insecurity (Maysels et al., 2023). A 2023 report by the World Food Programme, found that 30% of the Colombian population was moderately to severely food insecure, 51% was marginally secure, and only 19% was secure. Despite these statistics, the Colombian government claims that the majority of the population does not go to bed hungry, a statement that Jaramillo questions: "*Lots of people don't go to bed hungry, but what are they eating? Is it actual food security? I don't think so. You need diversity in nutrients*" (Personal Interview, 2024). As explained by Duque-Mahecha, consumption models nowadays favor industrialized and artificial flavors over traditional foods (2017). Agreeing, Parasecoli adds that sustainable traditional foodways developed over centuries to cater to local conditions have slowly been replaced by 'modern' diets (2022). These diets are often mass produced, calorie heavy, and nutrient poor (Parasecoli, 2022). As Acosta succinctly puts it, "*not everything that is edible is nutritious*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Unfortunately, due to cost, many prefer to purchase fast foods, imported foods, and ready-made meals from grocery stores (Maysels et al., 2023; L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta also notes that the increase in sugary foods amongst children is driven by the industry targeting them "*the industry has attacked children through flashy colors and toys, it doesn't taste great but it's attractive and exciting*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Although food insecurity and modern food trends have been concerning for both academics and the participants, they agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these issues even more. "*The pandemic forced us to re-look at things and see what other options we have*" (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). In general, the pandemic revealed society's over-dependence on the global movement of food systems (Parasecoli, 2022). Jaramillo recounts that during the pandemic "*roads were blocked, and food trucks could not access cities. The prices of food rose exponentially, so people turned to local farms*" (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Parasecoli, focusing on locally sourced food is a way to protect the economy, support locals, and become less dependent on importation (2022). In Colombia, the motivation to focus on local produce began in 2013, spurred by concerns raised during the agrarian strike, and was heightened by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic (Prada, 2020). Despite the increased attention to locally sourced food production, Jaramillo states that "*after everything went back to normal [post pandemic], people went back to the grocery store. So now we need to talk and find a way to agree and remember that we are vulnerable*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta believes that these conversations can also be trainings and fears that without them, society will retreat to packaged foods, increasing food insecurity:

> *"If there's no training and people don't begin to have a bit more awareness, we'll end up with only packaged foods. Imagine in the future, it can be terrible. No one will know how to make eggs, bread, nothing, and everything will come from a package*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Coinciding with Acosta's fear, Sebastia observes that many modern foods are unhealthy and suggests that a return to traditional foods could be beneficial (2017). Despite Acosta's fears of worsening food access and cost inequalities, Sebastia notes that the revival of traditional ingredients—valued for their nutrition, agricultural benefits, and sustainability—has gained global traction (2017). Going back to section 2.2, addressing food inequality is a social-cultural phenomenon, activated for these participants through SF. Arredondo claims that to address food insecurity, SF focuses on regeneration (Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta underscores the urgency of regeneration and SF's role, stating:

> "I *can't imagine what the next pandemics will be like. I can't imagine what's going to happen with the issue of food, the earth, and water, because we have a serious problem with food production. Food is being imported, local production is being outsourced, and we have too few producing a variety of ingredients at home*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Although SF, its members, and collectives in Colombia are addressing these issues, Duque-Mahecha argues that solely focusing on culinary and agricultural projects may not be enough to legitimize cuisine as a tool for social change in Colombia (2017). For this reason, the participants believe that these efforts

need to be integrated into broader systems through SF (Personal Interviews, 2024). This includes forming a circular economy to aid their local economy by linking producers to a cohesive network.

6.5.2 Circular Economy

As previously mentioned, during the colonial period Indigenous communities were introduced to the 'debt' system, leading to the promotion of precarious jobs among Indigenous and rural communities today (Goyes et al., 2021; Turner et al., 2020). In recent years, recovery projects have gained popularity (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Noticing their potential, large organizations, collectives, and foundations have actively been working with communities to develop entrepreneurial efforts related to food (L. Acosta & M. Arredondo, Personal Interviews, 2024). According to Arredondo, it is "*super important to work with both public and private companies. Since Slow Food is like a lifestyle, it's cool to work with it. It allows you to enter many areas like academia and businesses*" (Personal Interview, 2024). The movement's focus on food helps integrate SF into various aspects of life and sectors. Having worked with a large organization, Arredondo shared her experience collaborating with a flower producer in Colombia to create a safe afterschool space for 150 youth in the Cordillera Oriental region, where they can learn about food pathways while being fed (Personal Interview, 2024). She states:

> "*When projects like this open, we can begin to associate with other people and build alliances that can expand the movement and its efforts… and this makes me happy that there are people willing to support this mission and spread knowledge*" (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024).

From an entrepreneurial perspective, Acosta recounts her work with rural and Indigenous communities, where she helps them form cooperatives and associations to create and package their own products (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). "*The few projects where people are present are the ones where the community organizes itself and forms cooperatives. These cooperatives are training their people so that they don't get exploited by large operators*" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Acosta explains that for these projects to be effective, people need support from a foundation, community, or family throughout the process (Personal Interview, 2024). As an example, in one project Acosta assisted a young woman in developing the concept of distilling a spirit from cactus fruit in the desert (Personal Interview, 2024). To help her get started, Acosta connected her with the chamber of commerce, tour operators, and restaurant owners in the SF network to bring her product to market (Personal Interview, 2024). For the participants, experiences like those of Acosta and Arredondo allow them to use their knowledge to show rural and Indigenous communities that more opportunities are available to them (Personal Interviews, 2024). Acosta expresses the importance of working with rural and Indigenous communities by explaining,

"*most of the youth in the region dedicate themselves to informal jobs that end in sex work, drugs and more"* (Personal Interview, 2024). Jaramillo also feels that working within the SF network "*gives people other options aside from working in the drug trade*" (Personal Interview, 2024). As previously mentioned in section 2.2.3, according to Cuturi, cultural recovery projects such as Acosta's provide economic opportunities for matrifocal families and underprivileged communities (2022). Within these rural communities creating a product, sourcing the materials, and packaging locally, provides jobs for other community members (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). However, Acosta claims that for these projects to succeed and for these communities to achieve sustainable employment, the community itself needs to have buy-in and organize itself (Personal Interview, 2024).

> "*We design experiences where there needs to be trust…I propose developments by taking an example of something from the ecosystem of culinary traditions dissecting it. From there, I develop practices based on what I know each community has. With the community, we build a path to where we envision something going. Last year - a project that I won a tender for - no one in the community was interested, despite the project offering support in developing culinary or tourism projects that could become their livelihoods. The challenge was to figure out what interested the youth in the community, by looking at what commercial products they are interested in outside of their community. I researched with elders, did an inventory of what grows in their region, and together we generated business ideas*" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024).

To Acosta, "*when projects are created with the intention to support community, the outcome often finds its way into restaurants via Slow Food networks, making way for a circular economy"* (Personal Interview, 2024). This series of events, as Acosta explains, builds connections and loyalty among producers and restaurants, which, as Pietrykowski explains, is a social capital that intersects with the economy (2004). However, Matta (2019) cautions that this connection can blur into economic greed, as seen in government-run entrepreneurial programs through the Mexican Ministry of Tourism.

In using a holistic approach, SF can embed various elements through the restaurant industry, creating employment, strengthening the local value chain, and fostering community engagement. To Jaramillo "*Slow Food extends beyond the movement itself through a circular economy*" (Personal Interview, 2024). For this reason, Jaramillo incorporates multiple elements into her restaurant to support a circular economy: "*there are a lot of employment opportunities in a restaurant that bring people together—musicians to perform, consumers who come to eat, decorators, technicians, and more*" (Personal Interview, 2024). In addition to hiring locals for any crossover endeavors, whenever a plate breaks at Jaramillo's restaurant, the pieces are collected and repurposed as artisanal crafts and jewelry by

local artists through the initiative 'Platos Que Curan' (Plates That Cure) (Personal Interview, 2024). According to Gonçalves Rodrigues et al., forming relationships between businesses and individuals can achieve mutual sustainability and support local economies (2020). Beyond typical restaurant activities, Rodriguez expands her network by hosting artisanal workshops at her restaurant and collaborating with a hotel (Personal Interview, 2024). This partnership is beneficial given the remote location of her restaurant, and their services complement each other. For Arredondo, extending the SF movement beyond her work is crucial, she believes:

> "*What I do doesn't work for anything if we are not finding bridges between people and making a diverse network. We are a bridge between farmers and meals, and we take the ingredients and make something creative with them, that is a method of projecting an edible memory, that makes you feel like you are living an experience or think about a past experience. These experiences give permanency to the movement and what we do*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Additionally, Arredondo feels that offering experiences and sharing the stories of those who produce the ingredients helps showcase the producers and brings them closer to consumers: "*it's about the people, and I hope that guests will be inspired to go to the fields and support them. Receptive guests will help take this one step further*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Supporting this practice, Duque-Mahecha states that valuing culinary traditions can improve the connection between producers and consumers, promote artisanal methods, and give visibility to cooks who focus on traditional practices (2017) Agreeing with using the kitchen as a platform to connect to others, Rodriguez explains:

> "*If we go to the beginning of the kind of businesses that are on the radar, I think the intention was for people to live experiences through nature and connect with it. Through this, people can motivate themselves to go to the fields and understand what is important about these nutrients. Then we look towards cooking and gastronomy*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Rodriguez alludes to the need to integrate oneself with nature and the fields to truly understand gastronomy and what it has to offer. By achieving this, one can recover, preserve, and use traditional knowledge in all aspects of the food chain, including using cultural recipes, learning from elders, using more plant-based packaging for food, and saving seeds as suggested by Maysels et al. (2023). Focusing on these aspects of the food chain highlights opportunities for growing the agricultural sector from a business perspective (Maysels et al., 2023). In expanding their work, the cooks are effectively using RMT to coordinate social efforts. For Jaramillo, the overall goal is to "*share with others, and make their paths shine as well*" from an economic perspective, as the "*value chain strengthens and this [SF] can make a change*" (Personal Interview, 2024). The change that Jaramillo speaks of is a socio-economic one that

aligns with the rise of the gastronomic industry in Colombia, as discussed by Duque-Mahecha, which coincides with the beginning of the end of armed conflict, economic growth, and growth in tourism (2017), examined in section 2.2.3. For this reason, Jaramillo expresses that everything she does is not for her own financial growth: "*if they [consumers] don't buy from me it's okay. It's about what ideas I can plant and how, so that the movement goes beyond me*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Once again, the mention of the movement growing beyond the participants and their work alludes to integrating other means of employment to grow the local economy (Personal Interviews, 2024). This is especially important as tourism grows in Colombia.

6.5.3 The Importance of a Strong Identity in Supporting Tourism

With the recent rise in tourism, referred to by Cárdenas (2022) and Echeverri et al. (2024) in section 2.2.1, it is important to safeguard and effectively build a strong local identity. Jaramillo emphasizes that when identity is firmly rooted, "*people can maintain their essence without letting tourism diminish it*" (Personal Interview, 2024). What Jaramillo is referring to is the phenomenon where many destinations worldwide cater to tourists' needs, presenting their identity in a performative manner (Cassel & Maureira, 2017). This is especially worrisome when tourists seek authentic cultural experiences but often fail to understand local realities (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). Consequently, in an effort to promote tourism and satisfy tourists, corporations and government bodies are focusing on providing cultural experiences that no longer reflect the local communities or have become too expensive for locals to engage with, leading to the loss of the cultural product's essence (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). These concerns highlight the negative side of tourism.

Despite concerns, each participant envisions a future for Colombia where sustainable and authentic tourism promotes gastronomy and supports local economies. However, as previously noted by participants and authors alike, Colombia's diverse regions each have unique identities that must be preserved. To ensure sustainable tourism, specific measures need to be taken first. For Acosta, this begins with community development (Personal Interview, 2024). In Indigenous Wayuu territories in Colombia, the Wayuu people Acosta works lack basic services such as water and electricity and live in houses made of sticks (Personal Interview, 2024). Although there is in interest in Indigenous tourism and visiting these communities (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019), tourists are unlikely to spend money on local food or drinks as "*the microbiota of the food is different, there are no official hygiene practices or food handling practices, and there is no light"* (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). For these communities to benefit from tourism, "*there needs to be social investment so that they can live better, have drinking water, and*

running water, so that people can wash their hands from a faucet and not from a tank" (L. Acosta, Personal Interview, 2024). By providing communities with basic necessities and teaching them how to leverage their cultural knowledge and practices, as Acosta and Jaramillo do, these communities can control their interactions with tourism practices. This approach empowers them to benefit from tourism while preserving their unique cultural identities.

According to Echeverri et al., when local communities are prioritized in tourism planning, they gain the power to shape and influence the type of tourism they wish to develop and share (2024). This approach not only empowers communities but also instills a sense of pride in their traditions as travelers seek to experience their unique cultural offerings (Cassel & Maureira, 2017). However, this can only be accomplished once a sense of identity is firmly rooted. As Abarca & Colby stated, "*In telling what 'we eat' we are showing who 'we are'*" (2016, p.7).

For Acosta, working directly with communities to create authentic and non-performative tourism following necessary social investments, is the key to create sustainable tourism:

> "*You have to investigate; you have to invest in community tourism…we have to be willing to change our perspectives about the realities of the communities. Most businesses don't want to change their perspectives and just want to use them, and that's another reason why we need to look at sustainability*" (Personal Interview, 2024).

Bringing it back to gastronomy, Duque-Mahecha believes that respecting and understanding traditional knowledge, along with creating a sense of belonging and community through culinary practices, can empower cooks to innovate and showcase the richness of Colombia's biodiversity (2017). This process has proven effective through Acosta's entrepreneurial work with Indigenous and rural communities. Empowering communities through culinary products and incorporating them into SF, or the production chain within the envisioned circular economy, helps strengthen connections between different social groups. (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Just as important, building tourism with communities and identity in mind contributes to the community wellbeing referenced in section 6.1.3. Adding to her concept of sustainable tourism, Acosta states "*when we talk about sustainable tourism In Colombia, we are talking about the tourism value chain, and with Slow Food those technical terms of 'sustainability' are broken down to their core, which are traditional practices*" (Personal Interview, 2024). Supporting this perspective, Echeverri et al., explain that tourism planning efforts can include community outreach and education programs that celebrate the biodiversity and cultural diversity of each region (2024). These programs can emphasize preserving and restoring local traditions and culturally significant species, ensuring these places can share their heritage with visitors indefinitely. According to Duque-Mahecha,

traditional cuisines, foods, and culinary practices in Colombia increasingly symbolize collective goals of democratization, as well as values like solidarity and reconciliation (2017). Culminating these collective social goals through gastronomy, as referred to by Duque-Mahecha (2017), and learning to highlight traditional gastronomy, as shown by Acosta, can lead to a form of rural and Indigenous tourism linked with gastronomy that is genuine and does not harm locals in the long run.

Currently, Colombian traditional cuisines are being interpreted and featured in fine dining restaurants, comfort food establishments, and marketplaces (Duque-Mahecha 2017). However, many fine dining restaurants are owned or operated by cooks that have once left Colombia, and have now returned (Duque-Mahecha, 2017), creating some of the elitist spaces that Rodriguez speaks of. For this reason, SF practices and spaces are crucial in showcasing Colombian cuisine to all types of travelers. Once identity and pride in that identity are established, numerous types of tourism in Colombia can intersect with gastronomy and SF practices.

Urban sustainable tourism, for instance, can attract tourists to cities through gastronomy. As previously mentioned, Colombian cities like Medellin have even been listed as top cities in the world for food and drink by Time Out magazine (Field, 2022). Expanding tourism beyond urban centers, as noted by Arredondo, and supported by Jaramillo, can enhance rural sustainable tourism by generating interest in farming lands through SF practices (Personal Interviews, 2024). Jaramillo explains that by using social incentives and gastronomy to promote peace, tourism routes for specific ingredients can be made safer for people to travel and explore (Personal Interview, 2024). This coincides with Echeverri et al.'s goals of promoting biocultural tourism, which has been gaining prominence in Colombia (2024).

Using biocultural tourism to frame tourism practices, opens the possibility to connect biodiversity to cultural diversity, which are attractive factors for tourism destinations (Echeverri et al., 2024). Combining cultural diversity and biodiversity through gastronomy, SF restaurants, farms, projects, and workshops can create a unique tourism experience. Reflecting on SF's tourism reach, Jaramillo also notes the importance to, "*not only think about international tourism, but local and regional as well"* (Personal Interview, 2024). Amongst its network, SF itself promotes tourism nationally and internationally, as members travel to different cities for workshops, conferences, and events regularly. Seeing as SF is located in over 160 countries (Slow Food Foundation, n.d.), and national events are always in different cities, members are encouraged to travel and explore different gastronomic practices. Changing locations also increases the likelihood for members to continue traveling as they can always learn something new; "*I always come back with ideas of sustainable tourism when I travel for events*" (M. Arredondo, Personal Interview, 2024). Whether it's bringing people to Colombia or moving cooks within the country, SF

promotes both national and international tourism that highlights cultural practices and histories through gastronomy. Supporting gastronomic tourism, Colombia also hosts food festivals, gastronomy awards, cooking shows, and educational initiatives (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). Additionally, several fine dining restaurants offering traditional cuisine have opened in Colombia over the last decade (Duque-Mahecha, 2017). The collaboration between tourism, gastronomy, and heritage is well-founded. According to Sebastia, culinary practices and narratives are deeply interconnected, as traditional foods transmit cultural heritage through oral traditions and shared knowledge (2017). As participants aim to work within a circular economy or with circular tourism, increased gastronomic tourism focused on local cuisines will greatly impact the local economy and its network.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

When this research process began, the primary curiosity was to explore SF, its operations in Colombia, and its overarching goals. With time, the aim evolved to understand how SF can serve as a tool for circular tourism and the safeguarding of cultural practices in Colombia. The research has demonstrated that SF's success relies on the interconnectedness of various factors, including community involvement, knowledge transmission, and commitment.

7.1 Findings and Discussion

Through the participants' accounts, it became clear that community plays a crucial role in transmitting cultural knowledge and generating a connection to food. However, when a sense of community or identity is dwindling, SF offers additional platforms for this transmission of knowledge through community events, workshops, and educational programs. These platforms help rekindle a connection to culture and community. As emphasized by the participants, without this transmission of knowledge, many elements of Colombian culture can cease to exist over time. Therefore, preserving and transmitting cultural practices is not just about traditions but about care and responsibility towards future generations, as traditional practices are mindful of the environment and community. Once cultural knowledge is secured, dishes can be seen in a different light and for their power to bring communities together. Food can then be used as a tool for reconciliation and development in a country like Colombia, which is seeking peace after many years of civil war. As gastronomy has already been attracting tourism to urban centers, SF can help expand the tourism sector into rural and less visited destinations. Together, SF and tourism can create job opportunities and foster social cohesion for economic growth. However, to accomplish this cohesion, there needs to be community buy-in and commitment for change, as displayed by the participants.

Although the goal of this research was to learn more about SF in Colombia, the takeaway was that Colombian's have shown great resilience and determination in working towards their goals. Aside from literature accounts, the participants' stories made this evident, as despite postcolonial trauma, a civil war, an unreliable government, and the negative effects of globalization, they continue to work towards finding peace and achieving their goals. This commitment shows that while SF is beneficial, Colombian's can achieve their objectives independently. However, in this case, it may take longer as SF has helped connect individuals and communities, expedited progress, and promoted travel. Not only has it

connected cooks within Colombia, but it has also connected Colombia on a gastronomic level to other nations. As a result, SF plays a significant role in boosting both national and international tourism as cooks want to learn from each other and tourists are eager to experience authentic Colombian cuisine. Heightening tourism through gastronomy to those outside of the SF movement is also helping Colombia replace its negative external perception of drugs and civil war with that of a peaceful gastronomic tourism destination.

This research also demonstrates that the existing discourse surrounding SF and its impact are partially correct. Although many academics criticize the movement for being inaccessible, they often base their opinions on Western SF chapters. This has led some to believe that it would be even less accessible from an economic standpoint for countries in the Global South. While the participants confirmed this perception to some extent, they also proved that it is more a matter of perception than reality. Some SF critics also noted that although SF may seem inaccessible, the movement has potential to do good. The participants' accounts confirmed and exemplified this potential through SF's ability to help communities connect and support physical and mental wellbeing. Additionally, SF in Colombia has created job opportunities and empowered cooks to enact social change, leading to improved basic services, wellbeing, and security. More importantly, the literature suggests that SF is a plausible movement in Colombia due to Colombians' social connection to food. The research confirmed this, highlighting that community and knowledge transmission through narrative practices, which often happen around food, are essential to keeping culture alive. One area that has not been examined, which the research revealed, is SF's potential to better showcase the work its members conduct. By doing so, SF can further promote their establishments, projects, and tourism. Increasing discourse on the subject matter could encourage more academics to write about the link between SF, tourism, and the economy, addressing an existing gap. Greater academic attention can also generate governmental interest. As Arredondo noted, there is more financial support in academic research over community projects. An increase in academic research and criticism of the lack of support, may prompt the government to extend funding to community projects and research. Consequently, cooks will feel more supported in their mission, something that is missing in Colombia compared to Western SF chapters. This type of support can systematically and economically uplift communities in the long run, reducing the wage gap in Colombia, and making restaurant spaces more accessible to low-income communities.

7.2 Suggestions for Future Research and Limitations

The research conducted on the SF movement in Colombia made one thing evidently clear; there are many intersecting parts that need detailed studies. Firstly, more case studies on SF's actions in the Global South are necessary, as most existing accounts focus on Western countries. Positioning this research amongst its neighboring countries, as well as globally, would further solidify findings by comparing how SF works in different contexts. Although there is research on the economic or gastronomic advantages to local foods in countries within the Global South, few reference SF. This gap makes it harder to compare data and see the extent of SF impact. Additionally, exploring how SF can enhance circular tourism and the economy is crucial. While both terms are gaining prominence, most research focuses on the economic and sustainable aspects of these concepts, and not on elements that can facilitate them, such as gastronomy. Due to research limitations, circular and economic tourism were not examined in depth, as these topics require extensive exploration on their own. Their relevance in this research emerged through interviews where participants emphasized how their networks effectively work towards circular economies and tourism. Furthermore, research on the transmission of cultural practices in various contexts is necessary. The literature detailed the transmission of cultural practices in Colombia through gardening and cooking but did not examine how to make these practices attractive to others. While academics describe their value, only the participants provided solutions for engaging communities and individuals who are less interested in traditional knowledge in an increasingly globalized world, and how to make it accessible. Alongside the transmission of knowledge, the notion of care which was mentioned by each participant needs to be further examined. Researching traditional practices through the lens of care—in terms of community, well-being, the land, and preservation—can help clarify its connection to community and food. Furthermore, examining the role of women in upholding these practices needs to be further researched within Slow Food, as existing literature investigates this topic outside of this movement. These steps are essential to enhance the understanding and effectiveness of SF initiatives. Due to lack of funds and time, future research should also increase the geographic scope in Colombia, diversify the types of participants in the movement, and include more personal experiences by attending SF events to engage with cooks, farmers, academics, and clients.

7.3 Final Reflections

All in all, through the participants' experiences, SF has demonstrated its value in preserving cultural practices and promoting sustainable tourism. The findings of this research have helped establish a point of reference for underscoring how SF operates within Colombia and its ability to support community

members while boosting the local economy. Beyond being a point of reference, this research can be used to further promote SF within Colombia and serve as an awareness piece on the transformative power of food due to its ability to socially connect people. It is my hope that this research further supports the voices of cooks and community members advocating for basic services in their territories so they may gain the resources and ability to promote and share their culture. Continued support and development of SF initiatives are essential to ensure lasting benefits for local communities, cultural heritage. This will help prove once and for all that SF is not just a trend but a significant social cause.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Interview Questions

1. What motivated you to get involved in the Slow Food movement
    a. How long have you been working as a chef?
    b. How long have you been working in the Slow Food movement?
2. What has your experience working in the culinary industry been like with a focus on Slow Food?
3. Why is the Slow Food movement important?
    a. Why is it important to you?
4. Do you find this movement to be important on a cultural and community level? If so, why?
5. What does being part of the Slow Food movement mean for your restaurant/work?
6. Aside from your dishes, how do you share the history tied to the ingredients and the intent behind the work?
7. Do you work with any other organizations related to culinary heritage and Slow Food principles?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss or comment on that we haven't talked about?

Appendix B.

Social Media Template to Request Interview

B.1 . Original Template in Spanish

Hola,
Espero que este mensaje les encuentre bien. Mi nombre es Hana Glaser, y me estoy poniendo en contacto con la esperanza de poder conectar con [CHEF]. Tengo un gran interés en su prácticas culinarias y he estado siguiendo su trabajo con gran admiración. Me ha impresionado su compromiso con el (ENFOQUE, ex: preservación de tradiciones culinarias y ancestrales).

En este momento estoy haciendo mi maestría en Desarrollo TurÍstico y Cultura y he decidido investigar el movimiento de slow food y su capacidad de volver conectar a uno con la cultura y las raíces de la tierra. Como parte de mi investigación, estoy buscando perspectivas de expertas y practicantes cómo [CHEF] que están activamente involucradas en la base del movimiento Slow Food. Sus conocimientos serían invaluables para mi investigación y me honraría tener la oportunidad de entrevistarla para aprender más sobre sus experiencias y perspectivas en gastronomía. La entrevista sería entre 30-45 minutos dependiendo de sus respuestas, y virtualmente.

Sus conocimientos no sólo enriquecerán mi investigación, sino que también contribuirán a una mayor comprensión de la importancia del movimiento Slow Food en la promoción de prácticas culturales, más sostenibles y justas. Quedo esperando su respuesta y agradezco su ayuda.
Atentamente, Hana Glaser

B.2. Template Translated into English

Hello,
I hope this message finds you well. My name is Hana Glaser, and I am reaching out in hopes of connecting with (CHEF). I have a great interest in their culinary practices and have been following their work with great admiration. I have been impressed by their/your commitment to (CHEFS FOCUS, ex; preservation of culinary and ancestral traditions).

I am currently doing my Master's degree in Tourism Development and Culture, and have decided to investigate the Slow Food movement and its ability to reconnect one with the culture and roots tied to the land. As part of my research, I am seeking perspectives from experts and practitioners like [CHEF], who are/is actively involved in the Slow Food movement. Her insights would be invaluable to my research and I would be honored to have the opportunity to interview her in order to learn more about her experiences and perspectives in gastronomy. The interview would be between 30-45 minutes depending on their/your answers, their/your availability, and will be conducted virtually.

Their/your knowledge will not only enrich my research, but will also contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of the Slow Food movement in promoting more sustainable and fair cultural practices. I look forward to your response and appreciate your help.
Sincerely, Hana Glaser

Appendix C.

Email Template to Request Interview

C.1 . Original Template in Spanish

Hola (CHEF),
Espero que este mensaje le encuentre bien. Mi nombre es Hana Glaser, y me estoy poniendo en contacto con usted con un gran interés en el movimiento Slow Food y [su impacto en las prácticas culinarias y la cultura alimentaria/ su impacto en la cultura alimentaria, en la conservación de la tierra, y en el conocimiento tradicional].

He estado siguiendo su trabajo con gran admiración y me ha impresionado su compromiso con la [promoción de sistemas alimentarios sostenibles / la preservación de tradiciones culinarias / la defensa de la justicia alimentaria]. Sus contribuciones han sido inspiradoras, y creo que sus conocimientos serían invaluables para mi investigación de tesis.

En este momento estoy haciendo mi maestría en Turismo y Cultura y he decidido investigar el movimiento de Slow Food y su capacidad de volver a conectar a uno con la cultura y las raíces de la tierra. Como parte de mi investigación, estoy buscando perspectivas de expertos y practicantes como usted que estén activamente involucrados en la base del movimiento Slow Food.

Me honraría tener la oportunidad de entrevistarte y aprender más sobre sus experiencias, perspectivas e iniciativas en gastronomía. Específicamente, estoy interesada en discutir temas como [agricultura sostenible, sistemas alimentarios locales, preservación del patrimonio culinario, participación comunitaria].

La entrevista tendría una duración aproximada de 30-45 minutos dependiendo de tus respuestas, y soy flexible para adaptarme a su horario. La entrevista puede realizarse a través de llamada en whatsapp, o Zoom, lo que sea más conveniente para usted ya que no estoy en Colombia en este momento.

Sus conocimientos no sólo enriquecerán mi investigación, sino que también contribuirán a una mayor comprensión de la importancia del movimiento Slow Food en la promoción de prácticas culturales, más sostenibles y justas. Quedo a la espera de su respuesta y agradecida de antemano por su consideración.
Atentamente, Hana Glaser

C.2. Template Translated into English

Hello (CHEF),
I hope this message finds you well. My name is Hana Glaser, and I am contacting you with a strong interest in the Slow Food movement and its impact on [culinary practices and food culture/its impact on food culture, on land conservation, and in traditional knowledge].

I have been following your work with great admiration and have been impressed by your commitment to [promoting sustainable food systems / preserving culinary traditions / advocating for food justice]. Your contributions have been inspiring, and I believe your insights would be invaluable to my thesis research.

I am currently doing my master's degree in Tourism and Culture and have decided to investigate the Slow Food movement and its ability to reconnect one with the culture and roots of the land. As part of my research, I am seeking perspectives from experts and practitioners like you who are actively involved in the Slow Food movement.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to interview you and learn more about your experiences, perspectives, and initiatives in gastronomy. Specifically, I am interested in discussing topics such as [sustainable agriculture, local food systems, culinary heritage preservation, community engagement].

The interview would last approximately 30-45 minutes depending on your answers, and I am flexible to adapt to your schedule. The interview can be done via a WhatsApp call, Zoom, or whichever is most convenient for you since I am not in Colombia at the moment.

Your knowledge will not only enrich my research, but will also contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of the Slow Food movement in promoting more sustainable and fair cultural practices. I look forward to your response and thank you in advance for your consideration.
Sincerely, Hana Glaser

Appendix D.

Keywords from the data analysis

- Slow Food - 10
- Community - 31
- Sustainability - 4
- Education
- Tradition -15
- Cultural Heritage
- Local Ingredients -2
- Pedagogy - 3
- Circular Economy -3
- Bureaucracy
- Advocacy - 2
- Modernity
- Agriculture - 4
- Political Challenges
- Food Security
- Personal Journey
- Mentorship
- Environmental Impact
- Systemic Change
- Food Practices - 1