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Reflections about the cultural differences of the Otavaleños and the Cofánes

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Abstract---The following review article presents the topic of the ancestral peoples of Ecuador such as the Otavalos and Cofánes, cultures that are identified by their traditions and customs that make them unique and incomparable within the country and on a global scale. The present study focused on analyzing the differences that exist between these cultures, for which the bibliographical research of the different digital repositories of some universities was used, where the transfer technique was used, which consists of the collection, analysis and systematization of the information. obtained. The results of this research let us know that both the Otavaleña and Cofán cultures are very different from each other, since their cultural identity has been forged over time, developing customs and traditions that attribute to the consolidation as ancestral peoples. . In the same way, due to the diversity that exists, they have stood out from other cultures for their clothing and gastronomy, but, above all, for their worldview. It is for this reason that it is considered important to publicize this type of research focused on the ancestral communities of Ecuador, since it is practical to know their traditions and customs so as not to disrespect their culture.

Keywords---otavalo, Cofán, traditions, customs, identity.

Introduction

The methodology used to write the article was a bibliographic review, since this methodology is based on the theoretical review of some sources on a specific topic, to later describe in detail the information found, to determine how important and relevant it is. is the subject investigated (Gomez, Fernando, Aponte & Betancourt, 2014). The design used was descriptive, since in this the researchers are limited only to describing the most relevant characteristics of a phenomenon or population, without altering or trying to discover something new (Veiga de Cabo, de la Fuente Díez, Zimmermann, 2008). In this case, the “phenomenon” to be investigated were two indigenous peoples from Ecuador.

To collect all the information, a literary review of documents that exposed data on the Otavalo people and the Cofán people was carried out. The search was carried out through Google Scholar, where titling works written within the Ecuadorian and Colombian territory were found. These works correspond to various authors found in the digital repositories of the Central University of Ecuador, the University of the Armed Forces, the Francisco de Paula Santander Ocaña University, the University of Otavalo, the University of Guayaquil, the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, the Technical University of Ambato, the University of Cuenca and the Higher Polytechnic School of the Coast. In the same way, information was found in pages of Ecuadorian newspapers such as El Comercio and books titled *worldviews* of De Wittand *Andean Philosophy* of Estermann. In addition to articles, web pages or blogs that contributed key information for the writing of this article.

Discussion and Results

The clothing of the people of Otavalo

According to the authors Mendoza and Moncayo (2012), the clothing of the Otavalo community stands out from the other towns of Ecuador due to its meaning and aesthetic symbolism, which persists despite the influence of Western fashion. With the passing of time, the new generations are gradually changing their traditional clothing, however, a feature that identifies them and still persists in the majority of Otavaleños is their braided hair. Women's clothing attracts a lot of attention due to their necklaces, bracelets, bracelets and other accessories. The anaco is one of the most representative garments of this town, it is a rectangular piece of cloth, when worn it takes the appearance of a skirt that covers the part from the waist to the ankles. Under the anaco they use the white cloth (ucunchina) in the same way it is a skirt that extends to the ankles. In this way, the colors come together, the white inner fabric stands out from the blue or black color of the anaco, giving a sensation of luminosity (Jaramillo, 1990).

The shirt is white with long sleeves, generally decorated with floral figures. The shawl is a rectangular piece of cloth and can measure around 15 to 3 meters, it is

larger than the fachalina. It is a garment with which the entire torso is covered, its material is velvet or fine cloth, likewise its colors are turquoise, sealing wax, light blue and fuchsia. The garment, apart from protecting the head, also serves to carry their children. (Jaramillo, 1990). The traditional shoes are the espadrilles, a shoe like sandals. The soles of the espadrilles are made of rubber or cabuya and the fabric is black or navy-blue velvet that combines with the external anaco. The fachalinas (rectangular piece of cloth that extends from the head to the lower back) are traditional and essential pieces that only Otavalan women use (El Comercio, 2016).

The men's clothing consists of a shirt with edges covered with lace. Small pink flowers and green leaves are used in the embroidery, symbolizing the colorful flowers and large leaves found in the community (Jaramillo, 1990). His white canvas breeches, wide at the hem and without pockets or fly, reach the height of the shin. Currently it has changed for the use of white pants made of industrial fabrics. The espadrilles are the same as the women's design, the only difference is that they always use white. The poncho highlights the status of the man, so that whoever wears the poncho called two faces means that he has achieved a good economic situation, this poncho is characterized by its blue color; the top is deep blue, while the underside is light blue. Likewise, the other economic situations are represented using the expensive chulla poncho and a single color on both sides; any poncho is made on waist looms (Guerrero, 2019). The hat is made of abatana wool that makes it hard, with a round crown and a vast white or ocher brim. The men and women of the community use it as a distinctive of other cultures, apart from that their long-braided hair also stands out, these features identify them as representatives of the Otavalo people. Jaramillo, H. (1990).

Clothing of the Cofán people

The colorful flowers of the forest are transformed by the Kofan women into beautiful necklaces and bracelets that combine with the chambray leaves. They also decorate them with small stones from the river and pieces of bright green beetles, so that their artisans stand out for their impressive creations (Plan de Safeguarda Pueblo Cofán A'I, 2011). The clothing that distinguishes the Cofán community, according to Erazo and Verdugo (2012), consists of "cushma for the man and folera for the woman." The cushma is the same as the cotton cushma, only the style and its function change since its colors can be blue, white, or black, depending very much on the spiritual level reached over the years. This garment is worn by both the community shaman and the men. It is vertical and has turquoise tones like a watery ocean. On the contrary, women's clothing consists of only two garments: pants and a blouse, often known as "fuña" and "cuntun" to the skirt (Quizhpe, 2018).

Otavalan gastronomy

The roasted guinea pig in the town of Otavalo is one of its traditional foods and represents one of the national dishes most tasted by Ecuadorians, so much so that in community celebrations it cannot be missing from their tables. In this regard, Zumárraga (2011), states that in family events such as baptisms or marriages, the guinea pig cannot be missing since it constitutes an important

part of culture and identity. The colada de churos is one of the most exquisite native drinks of the Otavalo people, according to El Telégrafo (2011), cited in Bustos (2018) they say that the colada de churos or known as churro soup, is prepared only in the Andean region Ecuadorian, specifically in the city of Ibarra. The main ingredients are broad bean and pea flour, from these a thick mixture is made, and this is accompanied with cooked churros (native snails), parsley lemon and coriander.

In the same way, the fritada is considered one of the typical dishes of Otavalo and Ecuador in general, due to its delicious flavor it is considered part of Ecuadorian gastronomy. Chiluisa (2013), states that the fry comes from the pig, the meat is chosen and fried in a pan and when it is ready to eat it is accompanied by mote, maduro and potato. For all the servings it has, this dish packs a lot of nutritional benefits, plus it's very delicious. Throughout the Ecuadorian highlands this exquisite dish is known, since it is traditional and above all an emblematic dish.

Cofan Gastronomy

Traditional Cofán dishes include tacacho, which is made with green plantains that have been cooked and ground into a kind of dough and then added with salt and oil. Other dishes include the rayana, a type of soup made with green plantains and fish, as well as the Casabe or arepa de yuca. The most common drink of the Cofanes is the chucula, a colada made from yellow plantains or cooked chiro that they mix with water, drink it every day, at breakfast, lunch, and as a snack. Chicha is another kind of drink, made from chontaduros, corn or cassava, it is so refreshing that they drink it when they work in the fields, because it gives them strength and energy to continue their work sowing and harvesting their crops. It is also known as a typical drink in the carnivals of the Ecuadorian highlands. When there is an abundance of meat, they can use smoking, it is a process that allows the meat to be preserved in good condition. In February, March, and April they feed on the chontaduro, while in November and December they enjoy the various species of guava. In May they harvest peanut seeds from the mountain (Guevara, 2013).

Amazonian Cosmvision of the Cofán People

The political, religious, and ethical model of the Cofanes was shamanism. The wisest member of the community, the shaman, led and made decisions for the people. Cures and social ceremonies were the center of attention. The shamanism of the ancient peoples was a way of life that allowed them to reach levels of spiritual awareness with their body and their environment. The shaman uses plants such as ayahuasca to enter a trance and establish a connection with the spiritual world. The yagé ceremony is the gateway through which one can communicate with beings from the afterlife such as Cuan Cuan, the dead, and learn about the near future. Understanding the meaning of the word "Ayawaska", of Kichwa origin and better known as the yagé ceremony, is fundamental to understanding Andean-Amazonian shamanism. Ayawaska word that is divided into two where Aya means soul and spirit and waska: vine or liana. Older people reproduce yagé on their lands and use it for their own needs and that of their community.

The preparation consists of a cooking of about seven hours that is baked. The Kofan drinkers and the shaman dress up for the rite with their crowns adorned with plumes, the *cusma*, which is their traditional attire, and a profusion of necklaces. The ceremony takes place at night. The trance lasts two hours with a single dose, but it can also take four or five days to complete. Even when movements and actions can be as rigid as when drunk, the mind never completely fades while taking *yagé* (Méndez & Viera, 2011). The Shaman sings songs that are essential to carry out the ritual throughout the ceremony. Each Shaman has their own distinctive singing style, and they may be accompanied by flutes, harmonicas, and other instruments if available. The *yagé* plant ceremony is a way to get to know the Cofán people up close and learn about their worldview and perceptions of knowledge. They will keep this mystery to themselves, trying to figure out how one can see the future or become wild animals. Shamans can communicate with evil spirits and invisible people.

Andean Cosmvision

The definition of Andean worldview refers to the interpretation of the world and nature, using accumulated ancestral knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to understand the meaning of the word "Rune" and the depth of meaning it carries within its cosmological context to understand the interpretation of the Asian world. Indigenous thoughts center on the Rune and the idea that humanity's relationship with the *pacha mama* (Mother Nature) constitutes a harmonic system. *Pacha* is a word with many different meanings for the Andean peoples. It is fascinating that both Quechua and Aymara know the word *pacha*, which can be used to define the universe as it exists now (Méndez and Viera, 2011).

The *chakana* serves as a symbol of complementarity and correspondence. The horizontal line denotes the polarity between men and women, while the vertical line symbolizes the contrast between small and large. *Pacha* sophists refer to the region above the horizontal line as *hanan pacha*, the space above, while the region below this line is called *kay pacha*, space, the region of now (Estermann, 2015). In addition, they are based on the concepts of rationality, correspondence, complementarity, and reciprocity. In rationality, reality in the androcentric world is seen as a whole and has arisen as a result of a series of connected events. Reality turns out to be both subjective and objective and has the quality of being conceptual (Coba Andrade, 1992).

Correspondence includes quantitative, symbolic, celebratory, ceremonial, and affective relationships. In the cosmos, the reality of the 34 celestial spheres *hanan* and *urin pacha* agree with terrestrial reality (*kay* or *kay pacha*) including the spaces of the underworld (*uku* or *uku pacha*) (De Witt, 2013). However, there is also a correspondence between cosmic and human phenomena, such as good and evil, life and death, etc. Through the ritual of celebration, the complementary positions within Andean philosophy truly come to complement each other. Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, truth, and falsehood, masculine and feminine, for the *Runa* they are not incompatible opposites, but complementary elements, essential for the manifestation of a greater being (Estermann, 2015). The Andean conviction is the harmonious union of the two complements. Table 1 shows the differences between the Otavalo and Cofán towns.

Table 1
Differences between the Otavalo and Cofán towns

	Otavalan Community	Cofan Community
Outfit	Women: Anaco, blue skirt, white shirt, scarf, blue espadrilles. Men: hat, blue poncho, white canvas pants and white espadrilles.	cushma (male) and folera (female)
Gastronomy	Roasted guinea pig- colada de churos	tacacho-chucula
worldview	Interpretation of the natural world	shamanism

Figure 1 shows (A) the female clothing and (B) the male clothing of the Otavalo people.

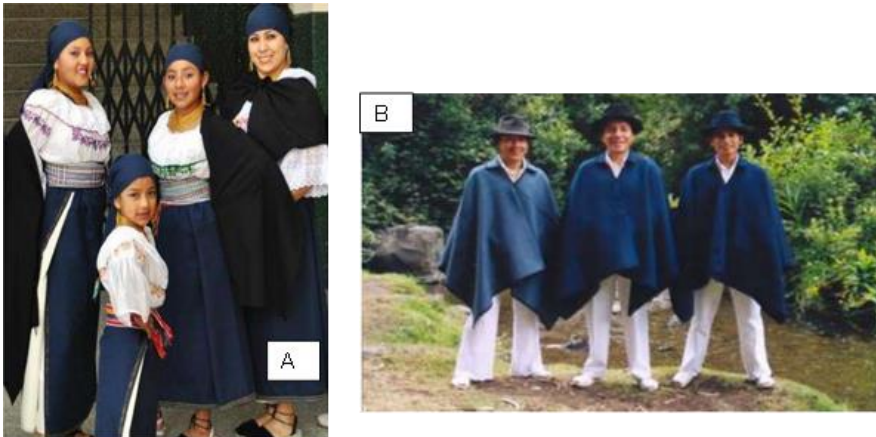


Figure 1. Traditional female clothing of the Otavaleño people (A) and traditional male clothing (B)

Source: The Road to Light, (2009, as quoted in Egas, 2018), The Time (2018)

The differences between the clothes is something that differentiates them between the towns as shown in figure 2 (A) the feminine and (B) the masculine of the Cofán people.

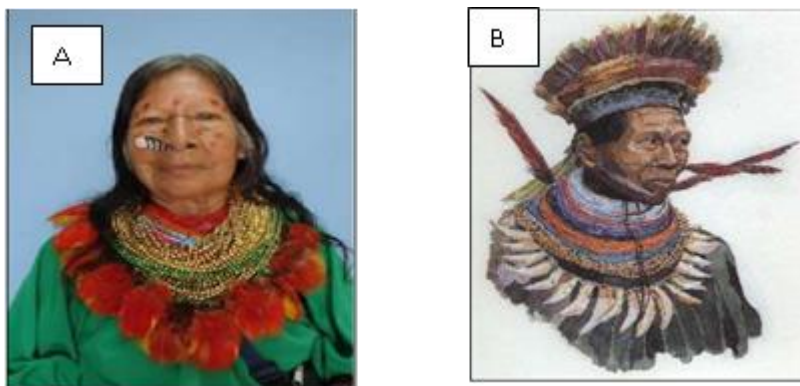


Figure 2. Women's clothing of the Cofán people (A) and men's clothing of the Cofán people (B)

Source: Review of ethnic groups Ecuador, (2012), Becker, (2021)

Based on the position of the different authors, it can be said that even though in Ecuador coexist 18 cultures, all are heterogeneous. Such is the case of the towns of Otavalo and Cofán, these have well marked differences, both in their customs and traditions. Their worldview, clothing and gastronomy have reflected their unique identity among other peoples, despite the years, social changes, and the influence of foreign cultures, they have managed to remain current, and their heritage has transcended several generations to the present.

Conclusion

The Otavalo and Cofán peoples leave a great legacy in their medicinal and nutritional knowledge and ways of appreciating the universe. The Otavaleña culture leaves its impressive crafts, considered this an important market in South America, apart from its festivities with cries, queens, and blessings towards food. The Cofán culture are excellent horticulturists and hunters and are considered ambassadors of Ecuador for promoting their customs and traditions with people from all over the world.

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