



Year V, v.2 2025 | Submission: 12/27/2025 | Accepted: 12/29/2025 | Publication: 12/31/2025

Together at the table: inclusive food culture as a path to promoting cultures of peace.

At the table: including food culture to promote cultures of peace

At the table: inclusive food culture as a way of promoting cultures of peace

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Abstract:

This article presents considerations about food culture as a path to dialogical and peace-oriented social construction. Based on Paulo Freire's theoretical framework of dialogicity and conscientization, and through theoretical-conceptual research, this article presents considerations about concepts that integrate food culture, the relationships between food and social history, and the impact of eating on each individual's worldview, situating the act of eating as a dialogical moment for women and men in communion. This study also addresses the importance of a paradigm shift from healthy eating to responsible and conscious eating, which integrates the need for healthiness in contemporary eating habits and the sociocultural and emotional importance of food, including in the promotion of cultures of peace and sustainability.

Keywords: food; nutrition; dialogue

Abstract

This paper presents considerations about food culture as a way of dialogical and peace-oriented social construction. Based on the theoretical framework of dialogicity and consciousness in Paulo Freire, from theoretical-conceptual research, this article presents considerations about concepts that integrate food culture, the relationships between food and social history and the impact of eating in the way of reading the world of each individual, placing the act of eating as a dialogical moment of women and men in communion. This study also addresses the importance of changing the paradigm of healthy eating for responsible eating, which integrates the need for healthiness in contemporary eating habits and the socio-cultural and emotional importance of food, including in the promotion of cultures of peace.

Keywords: food; nutrition; dialogue

Summary

This article presents considerations on food culture as a path to dialogic and peaceful social construction. Starting from the theoretical framework of dialogue and consciousness in Paulo Freire, based on a theoretical-conceptual investigation, this article presents considerations on concepts that integrate food culture, the relationship between food and social history and the impact of food on the reading of each individual's world, situating the act of eating as a dialogical moment for women and men, in communion. This study also addresses the importance of changing the healthy eating paradigm for responsible and conscious eating, which integrates the need for health into contemporary eating habits and the sociocultural and emotional importance of eating, including the promotion of cultures of peace and sustainability.

Keywords: food; nutrition; dialogology

Introduction

Culture is a social construct, resulting from exclusively human activities. It is born

From the fusion of experiences, actions, creations, values, and habits. The sum of everything that a group of



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Men and women create their own culture: what they feel, how they express themselves, their dialects, their
Their practices, beliefs, values, and, of course, their eating habits. They are part of
intrinsically linked to diverse human cultures are not only the foods that each group selects,
but also the practices they use to produce their food. Eating and... are cultural practices.
to cook.

The study of ancestral cultures reveals important aspects for understanding the...
Contemporary cultures are constructs, since all culture reflects the paths...
chosen by each group of women and men based on the concrete reality of their lives.
Whether closer or more distant, ancestral history and culture are important pieces in
understanding of human development (SILVA, SILVA and OLIVEIRA, 2015)

In this study we explore the importance of food culture within a culture of peace.
This movement of school experiences that take place in a state of peace and not in a search for future
peace (AUTHOR 1, 2020), based on the concepts of non-violence and rooted in the Ubuntu tradition¹ ,
It involves all questions regarding human relationships that occur in social spaces.
Eating habits are an important part of a culture of peace within
a society.

The importance of food-related issues within a cultural context.
Peace is fundamentally justified because food is a historical and cultural element that relates to
personal, subjective, family, and historical aspects that can be understood both in consumption
both in food preparation (SILVA, SILVA and OLIVEIRA, 2015), and in the selection of
ingredients from the local culture when the food selectivity of students who belong to a
a specific social group.

Food is an act of the material culture of a society (CARNEIRO, 2003), constituting its
Infrastructure and its social superstructure. Therefore, it is inseparable from the formation of culture, given
which forms part of each person's social identity, stemming from values and beliefs shared by
The society to which one belongs. Food is, therefore, a symbol of individual identity and a factor.
inextricable from collective identity.

Peace and food have direct and indirect connections. The failure to guarantee the human right to
Adequate and healthy nutrition, a problem that still plagues many societies in the 21st century, implies
directly impacts proposals to promote a culture of peace. The denial of the basic right to food.
It deeply wounds the dignity of women and men, and just like preventing them from achieving their goals...
any basic human needs, it hinders their emancipation. According to the report "The

¹ The word "ubuntu" is most closely translated as "humanity for all." It is a notion of fraternity originating from the
South African Zulu tradition, which deals with compassion among humans in an organic universe where individual
parts only exist as aspects of universal unity.



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"State of food security and nutrition in the world" (FAO, 2020) approximately 8.9% of the population

The world was affected by hunger in 2020, and this equates to almost seven hundred million people.

Hunger as it exists today is a result of political and ideological issues, not a lack of...

Available food is often an instrument of control in a movement of extreme oppression.

Food is wasted in some parts of the planet while, in others, populations suffer.

due to a lack of basic necessities. World food production is greater than consumer demand, or

In other words, hunger is directly related to inequality, and in this context, the construction of cultures of peace is crucial.

Beyond the barriers to dialogue, it faces the physical difficulties of existence.

Indirectly, eating habits can be points of social unity or disunity. Furthermore...

While in the popular imagination, gathering around a table is synonymous with celebration and joy,

Differences in food culture can be instruments of exclusion and disrespect for other cultures and values.

of certain social groups. Food culture reveals social identities and is an instrument of

reinforcement of group cohesion (LEVI-STRAUSS, 1964), the way men and women select

Sharing food, cooking, and eating it can either create a strong social bond or distance between people.

This study, of a bibliographical and conceptual nature, addresses questions concerning the concept of

Culture of peace or non-violence and its contemporary interpretation, drawing relevant connections.

with food culture and its characteristics of identity value and craftsmanship that provides opportunities for relationships

respectful and conflict resolution, presenting a bias towards human integration in processes of

peaceful coexistence.

The theoretical framework of this article focuses on Paulo Freire, in his considerations on the

peace as a continuous process of coexistence based on autonomy and freedom, and in Janet

Flammang, in its proposal for food culture as a promoter of civility and which provides opportunities

the exercise of citizenship. The authors' theories converge on the need for...

Interpretations of the processes of peaceful coexistence permeate, at all times, the relationships of

Cultural respect for identity and the real possibilities for men and women to be subjects of their own lives.

their own stories and recognize themselves as such.

Cultures of non-violence

The concept of peace is often cited as synonymous with the absence of violence because

There is a lack of a more assertive definition that encompasses the full extent of being socially at peace; however, this

The definition must always be distanced from the concept of passivity. Even though there is a consensus that peace

and violence cannot coexist in the same relational space, the "being"² in peace (FREIRE,

² We will use the term "being" in this work since the expression, coined in the work of Paulo Freire, makes direct reference to a process of continuous movement and dialogue of women and men with their existence, relating the peace process to a continuous personal process of change.



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2011a) differs from simply not being at war; it has a deep connection with the recognition of men and women regarding their permanent state of interaction and integration with the world in which they live, from the history they write based on their awareness of being and existing in the world. Therefore, being at peace is a non-violent and continuous movement, often translated into a struggle for autonomy and liberation.

Since peace is a process that involves raising awareness among individuals about their own existence, this clearly involves respecting issues of individual and group identity in its construction. The different cultural interactions between individuals must be considered in order for it to exist. A dialogue between their stories, so that dialogicity can be established in relationships in all spheres of social.

Dialogue is a fundamental principle of Freire's ontological and epistemological conception of being human. Through dialogue, men and women recognize themselves as subjects of their own stories. (FREIRE, 2011a). It is important to emphasize, however, that the dialogue proposed here, a tool of emancipation and the fight against oppression, differs from the word as spoken and written, it is the expression that humanizes man. To speak is to transmit, to dialogue is to exchange – and it is independent of words. The dialogical process often begins even before the meeting between men and women. The dialogue proposed here is one that allows the world to be pronounced through words; it is action, transformative, since “to exist, humanly, is to pronounce the world, is to modify it” (FREIRE, 2011b, p. 91).

Critical reflection is pertinent so that the oppressed do not become, as soon as they acquire something... Freedom from the state of oppression, and even from the oppressor himself, begins with dialogue. The evolutionary process. The formation of new cultures from disruptive events occurs through exchanges between individuals. Revolution emerges from intertwining. Thus, “dialogue is this encounter of men, mediated by the world, in order to *pronounce it*, therefore not being exhausted in the I-Thou relationship” (FREIRE, 2011b, p. 93).

It is impossible to conceive of cultures of peace where there is no dialogue, freedom, and mutual respect. Different choices for women and men, considering the contours of the freedom to be and to do. Those who define the space for being and doing of the other. Far from any anarchic structure, the promoting of cultures of peace is rooted in honest authority and understanding the boundaries of others. The rejection of authoritarianism, which translates into a form of oppression (FREIRE, 2011b), should not be confused with the absence of regulations. For life to be at peace, freedom is a prerequisite. Respectful, since human relationships are built dialectically, within the tensions between space one's own and that of others.

Once in the world, in their history, men and women seek self-understanding. even to understand their own humanity. Knowledge, creation, and transformation allow them to



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Women and men take ownership of the world and its history in a collective and uninterrupted process.

Peaceful and non-violent coexistence is possible through understanding differences, not their absolute truth.

Absence, since difference will always exist. Because nobody liberates anybody, and nobody...

liberates oneself alone (FREIRE, 2011a), and through communion, subjects achieve freedom in

relationship.

The profound differences between being at peace and passively waiting for a state of

Peaceful living relies on non-violent practices and the important preservation of spaces.

Social spaces are potential venues for dialogical encounters, and among these spaces is the field of food.

It gains fundamental *status* if we consider its importance in the history of civilization and in

promoting civility.

Food and peace

Cooking and eating are habitual human activities. And like all habits, they are connected.

with social rites and cultural heritage. Food preparation and meal formats are rituals.

which are part of the education of women and men, boys and girls (FLAMMANG, 2009),

emphatically integrating their own perception of themselves into the world.

The gathering of social groups around food is quite significant in social narratives.

because this is a moment common to all civilization. In different times and social structures the

The model of how food is consumed differs, but the fact that it happens in gatherings permeates the...

history.

Modern societies have increasingly less time for meals with their groups.

family and social factors, which directly impacts the dialogue they establish with their

peers (FLAMMANG, 2009). The crisis of civility that is emerging globally with intensity.

The increase each day reflects the lack of sharing between individuals, lack of time for

coexistence so that they can, in communion, dialogue about their life stories, in what

The shift away from social food cultures has a major impact.

Reflection and generosity are part of cooking and eating, far beyond the techniques.

employees (FLAMMANG, 2009). The moments that are shared at the table, as well as the heritage

Culinary culture, passed down from ancestral generations to new ones through recipes and culinary practices, are

potential paths to peace, and sometimes they are being sidelined in the name of productivity.

greater or more suitable eating conditions for a modern and independent lifestyle.

However, if liberation is based on dialogue and a common movement of emancipation (FREIRE,

2011b), the distancing from these ancestral roots and these moments of communion is a movement

counterproductive, and this apparent independence championed by a ready-made meal culture,

Frozen and ultra-processed products go against the process of acquiring autonomy.



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Eating together is part of the process of human evolution and development.

civilizational. Its importance in the history of societies is so significant that it is linked to

The very institution of democratic processes (FLAMMANG, 2009), the division of

Food is one of the earliest forms of social organization – and can be an important asset.

when we consider existence in peace, due to its connotations of power over quantities and, in

On a larger scale, it depends on whether or not there is enough food for subsistence.

Cooperation between individuals and even conflict resolution can be

fostered by food culture (WOOLLEY; FISHBACH, 2017). Cooking with other men and

Women's exchange of dialogical knowledge and movement for peace, eating food prepared by

Interacting with other men and women demonstrates trust and generates a sense of belonging.

The simple fact of following a similar diet can help individuals reach a consensus with

more easily, agreeing even partially with each other and speeding up processes of

decision (*id, ibid*), implying more peaceful and harmonious coexistence processes.

The sense of belonging fostered by food culture should be considered here.

In order to understand the connection between food and peace. Taste is a socially learned trait, the

An individual inevitably enjoys flavors that their social group has allowed them to sample. And

Even the perception of taste largely derives from local culture and dietary repetitions.

These changes become established in children's lives – which is why food culture within schools should...
to be viewed with great attention.

According to Poulain (2008), food is, in itself, a social construct. Nutrition

It would therefore be, in addition to being a way of interpreting cultural diversity, a structuring point of
own social organization.

When we consider food as a social narrative, we can understand it from...

of two major concepts, the practice of eating and the voice of food (AMOM; MALDAVSKY,

(2007), linked to the concepts of a culture of peace. The practice of eating would be the set of

everything related to the cooking/eating process, including the techniques used, the recipes, the

execution, the time of day when a particular ingredient is ingested, the tools used

like cutlery and pans, the habits built around each type of meal or place of

food and, especially, the way a prepared meal is presented – including its arrangement on the plate –

These are reflections of a culture. In Brazil, for example, we have the discussion about the disposal of rice and...

of beans and, although the dish is part of the country's food culture, the change in the arrangement of

The items on the plate are indicative of local cultures and may eventually act as a mechanism of

inclusion or exclusion of an individual from the group.

The voice of food refers to attributing linguistic characteristics to food, with

distinct meanings and capacity for expressing personal and collective identities. Food and



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gastronomy, from this perspective, is considered a means of communication (AMOM; MALDAVSKY, 2007). Food is an important form of communication because it conveys meaning between cultures without idiomatic and linguistic barriers and therefore have invaluable symbolic value in building cultures – including cultures of peace. From this perspective, the voice of food would have the power to... change and conflict resolution (*id, ibid*) and would be a relevant instrument for the beginning of several fundamental dialogues for contemporary societies, revolving around gender, ethnic, and other issues. ancestral and ethical.

THE GLOBAL FOOD EXPERIENCE

Eating is necessary for human survival and, to a certain extent, cooking is too. Therefore, Eating and existence are not separate activities, but this process goes through refinements that... They go far beyond food for the maintenance of the physical body and constitute a sphere of the field. of social relations.

Food has intrinsic cultural aspects within a given society, community, and religion (SILVA, SILVA and OLIVEIRA, 2015). The simple fact that men or women report Knowing certain dishes or ingredients sometimes demonstrates one's socioeconomic status or their participation in specific ethnic groups.

Food is a cultural element that is established at the intersection of local cultures and of world cultures. Although it is a portrait of relationships, traditions, symbolism and identities of specific cultures are also influenced by transnational agri-food corporations and the Large-scale socio-environmental impacts, but that doesn't make it a unique culture. With the Human mobility is becoming increasingly pronounced, and geographical differences are becoming ever more easily understood. In this context, the food culture specific to each society is subject to many external influences and, in this This issue can be a significant barrier to the adaptation of individuals undergoing migration. becoming a factor that hinders the integration process and peaceful coexistence of these men and women.

Food cultural practices, in a multicultural context where they are necessary Strategies for sociocultural integration can constitute elements of social differentiation. (FRANZONI, 2016). This is reflected, even within school spaces, fostering eventually stereotypical perceptions of cultural diversity (*id, ibid*) where integration is sought horizontal.

Globalization, with regard to food, has followed the opposite path of... homogeneity – given that food culture is, fundamentally, a transcription of heterogeneity human. Although we have many conceptual uniformities derived from globalization, based on Due to cultural imperialism, in food culture we have two ambivalent processes: internalization and accentuation of regionalisms (POULAIN, 2013). In internalization we can identify the production



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mass production and cost reduction, in addition to the need to transpose the concept of the same food.

For long stretches, this phenomenon is well represented by the large networks that offer the same type of service.

Snacks are prevalent in thirty different countries, where the social functions of food are being lost. In

Conversely, in response to this movement, regionalisms exalt the soul of food and the

gastronomic heritage, which is justified by the close relationship between food culture and identity.

individual and collective. "The history of food has shown that every time local identities are

"When these spaces are threatened, the kitchen and table manners become privileged places of resistance."

(POULAIN, 2013, p. 35). This resistance movement, however, can prove to be exclusionary and

It is cruel for those who arrive in a new culture, such as refugees, therefore care must be taken.

so that the fine line separating the just defense of local traditions does not tip towards excess, which is not...

It allows for peaceful coexistence with difference. Food should be an instrument of inclusion and...

Welcoming, cultural exchange, and "knowing in order to respect" seem to be a good path to...

integration.

Thinking about food culture from the perspective of differences allows for ethnic and class-based claims.

...and even the understanding that local cuisine also results from an ancestral cultural construct.

Education about food diversity is essential so that we have food to eat and cooking to do.

such as integrative activities. Living together in a cultural exchange environment presents many challenges, including

Regarding gastronomy, it's about the meeting of different traditions, but it's possible to make food...

A bridge between cultures in a significant project of peaceful coexistence.

The paradigm of healthy eating

The pursuit of healthy eating is a predominant theme today. People seek, therefore...

through increasingly scientifically proven models of nutrient combination, a

A diet that makes women and men stronger is biologically more suitable. However, the

Standardizing eating habits in pursuit of a perfect food culture would not eliminate the

Social groups with significant ancestral cultural heritage in cooking and eating?

Even though we have increasingly higher levels of identification of potential problems of

contamination and strong indicators of food safety and quality, resulting from policies

national and international, according to Poulain (2013) there is a feeling of unease

growing among those who eat. This may be due to an excess of misinterpreted information or

due to the number of food-related scandals, resulting in a growth of phenomena of

Eating disorders (*id, ibid*). These disorders often reinforce each other.

social conventions, such as obesity going against the cult of the perfect body, being that

Frustration over the lack of the perfect body leads some individuals to compulsive eating, which results in obesity.



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The food we eat transcends the individual-world barrier, becoming part of our being.

intimately connected with the capacity for reconstruction and transformation (POULAIN, 2013). However, this

This relationship can be damaged when food is seen as merely a supplier of nutrients, when

Healthy eating becomes synonymous with deprivation when the act of eating ceases to be a moment of enjoyment.

It's a time for integration and becomes a moment for counting calories and vitamins.

Considering that the cultural characteristics of food are essential to

progression of societies (PROENÇA, 2010), the cult of healthy eating is equivalent to a

A diet that doesn't consider all dimensions of eating can become a source of alienation.

According to Freire (2011a), the alienated person seeks a non-existent, inauthentic world. In this way, men

And women end up separating themselves from their culture, which hinders the process of raising awareness.

The illusory feeling of security is one of the reasons that lead individuals to disorders.

Eating disorders such as orthorexia nervosa, which translates into a pathological obsession with a particular food, include:

Healthy eating (RODRIGUES *et al*, 2017). The desire to have total control over one's own life.

and health, especially to prevent chronic non-communicable diseases caused by diet.

Inadequate nutrition can also be a cause for women and men to follow discontinuous and unbalanced dietary patterns

(*id, ibid.*, SÁNCHEZ; MORENO, 2007), in cases of orthorexia that

They can result in nutritional deficiencies. In other words, in addition to distancing individuals from their

culture and dialogical interaction with society, a path to awareness of one's place in the world, the

interpreting eating as a mechanical process of ingesting the "correct" foods distances us from the truth.

The subjects of their history and compromise their understanding of the world.

The issue of orthorexia is currently so prevalent in Western societies that it reflects...

This includes its impact within higher education nutrition courses, from which key players emerge.

Social studies are closely linked to the development of a society's food culture.

as Rodrigues *et al* (2017) point out, indicating traits of orthorexia nervosa being developed by

more than half of the sample of nutrition students, which, added to the finding of inadequacy

Regarding dietary habits, the authors assess this as demonstrating a dichotomy between theory and...

practical application in a university course where issues of food culture are fully explored.

Considering that this population, when titled, begins to act directly, influencing habits.

Food sources for society, the situation demands attention.

The lines between healthy eating and cultural alienation are thin. While...

Separation between individuals and their environment can be caused by the spread of unbalanced diets.

In addition to exclusionary eating behaviors, promoting healthy habits is also of paramount importance.

importance for social evolution, especially given the supply of ultra-processed products.

being done in an abusive manner and with little explanation to consumers.

The paradigm of healthy eating lies in the understanding that food and health should be linked.



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to be understood holistically, considering all the dimensions that determine it and not just

The biological aspect, since focusing the importance of nutrition solely on biological issues can lead to behaviors such as orthorexia (SÁNCHEZ, MORENO 2007). This

Understanding tends to be superseded by a paradigm of responsible and conscious eating, where

Biological aspects are taken into account with respect to the dietary cultures of individuals, their

Production methods and everything that food brings with it when ingested by a human being.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cooking and eating, as well as the rituals involved in the activities specific to the culture.

Feeding behaviors are behaviors that spark interest because they allow for an understanding of

The reality of women and men in societies, from their daily habits to their potential for belonging.

Food has its own language; it's a form of communication and, therefore, can be...

a form of non-violent communication, especially when the food culture of the groups...

It focuses on the exchange and dialogue between beliefs and values, becoming an instrument of inclusion.

Several ancestral peace practices revolve around food, during moments of...

Collective feeding, based on the provision of food, etc. Eventually, these practices translate into contemporary daily life in small activities that go unnoticed, such as

sharing a cake with the new neighbors who are moving into the house next door, but

They remain translating the fundamental role of the act of eating as an integrative factor of Societies. Eating is an integrative human activity.

With an increasingly rich and diverse global food experience, the possibilities

There are countless interpretations of food and gastronomic culture as a factor of social cohesion.

However, it is always necessary to reflect on the cultural invasion that food culture represents.

Globalization can represent the very specific eating rituals of each group, which, in addition to Being part of their history constitutes their identity.

Concern about the link between food and health is extremely important so that

so that societies can properly structure themselves around an appropriate food culture and to stay informed about how to improve their health through responsible eating.

Information is extremely important in defending culinary and gastronomic traditions.

valuable pieces of civilization. This issue has been receiving close attention from many sectors.

social issues, given the number of new titles being offered to the population – in Brazil and in

world – with the aim of clarifying the relationship between food and a healthy physical and mental life.

emotionally. Just as the richness of coexisting food cultures is important for the

The way women and men read the world is through the information and knowledge they construct.

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The very act of eating allows these men and women to appropriate their culture.

feeding and taking ownership of their relationship with food in a dialogical way, including with regard to understanding the problems caused by an unbalanced diet without falling into...

The complete opposite of orthorexia.

People's food choices speak volumes; they reveal a great deal about their history, values, and... Beliefs. Food cultures are translations of life stories, both individual and collective, and when Viewed in this way, they become places of reflection and encounter for men and women to establish the Dialogue that leads to peace (AUTHOR 1, 2020). The peace that is possible is the one that happens all the time. While the subjects are being and dialoguing, constructing their worldviews together, the which often happens around a table, a campfire, or a picnic blanket.

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