

KANHGÁG FOOD EG VĚJĚN: BUILDING THE DIGITAL FOOD SPACES

COMIDAS KANHGÁG EG VĚJĚN: A CONSTRUÇÃO DO ESPAÇO ALIMENTAR DIGITAL

COMIDAS KANHGÁG EG VĚJĚN: CONSTRUIR LOS ESPACIOS DIGITALES DE LA ALIMENTACIÓN



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ABSTRACT: This article presents an ethnography conducted among the Kanhgág to analyze the food spaces they created, considering them as cultural organizations, social network groups, and everyday eating habits. "Ēg vējēn" means "our foods" and represents an anthropological food space created by the Kanhgág, sometimes referred to as "typical food." The study utilizes anthropological literature on food to analyze a series of posts in a virtual social media group dedicated to Kanhgág food. Between virtual activism and promoting cultural centers, the Kanhgág construct their food practices.

KEYWORDS: Kanhgág (Kaingang). Anthropology. Food habits. Indigenous.

RESUMO: O presente artigo elabora uma etnografia junto aos Kanhgág para analisar os espaços alimentares por eles criados, considerando-os como organizações culturais, grupos de rede social e os hábitos cotidianos de alimentação. "Ēg vējēn" significa "nossas comidas" e representa um espaço alimentar antropológico criado pelos Kanhgág, que às vezes é chamado de "comida típica". Para tanto, o estudo utiliza bibliografia antropológica sobre alimentação a fim de analisar uma série de postagens em um grupo de uma rede social virtual dedicado à alimentação Kanhgág. Entre o ativismo virtual e a promoção de centros culturais, os Kanhgág constroem sua alimentação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Kanhgág (Kaingang). Antropologia. Alimentação. Indígena.

RESUMEN: El presente artículo elabora una (n) etnografía con los Kanhgág para reflexionar sobre los espacios alimentarios creados por ellos como organizaciones culturales, grupos de redes sociales y hábitos cotidianos de alimentación. Ēg vējēn significa nuestros alimentos, y es un espacio alimentario antropológico creado por los Kanhgág que a veces se denomina comida típica. Para ello, el estudio se basó en bibliografía antropológica sobre alimentación para analizar una serie de posts en un grupo de red social virtual dedicado a la comida Kanhgág. Entre el activismo virtual y a través de centros culturales, los Kanhgág construyen su comida.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Kanhgág (Kaingang). Antropología. Hábitos alimentarios. Indígena

Introduction

When analyzing the food of the people connected to the southern Jê linguistic branch, a perspective on the emergence of identities is revealed. Around fifty thousand Kanhgág are estimated to live in the territories of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. The last census conducted in 2010 recorded 35,000 members of this ethnic group, which is believed to have increased over time. The choice was made to use the spelling "Kanhgág" with a capital letter to refer to the collective of the people, while "kanhgág" with a lowercase letter is used as an adjective. This spelling choice follows Úrsula Wiesemann's dictionary, as the research participants also do. Kanhgág ãg vĕjĕn, a term present in the title of this article, means "Kanhgág food." It is a semantic location of the expression used by the research participants to refer to typical foods. The ethnographic journey aimed to observe a digital space for content sharing as a form of cultural existence, as emphasized by Leitão and Gomes (2017).

The first section presents the ethnographic context, analyzing the relationship with the main interlocutor, the environment in which the virtual page is inserted, and the activist actions. Thus, in "Vĕjĕn - Alimentar-se" (Feeding), an ethnographic study was carried out mainly based on the activities of a memory and culture center, as well as the page on a social network called "Typical Kanhgág Foods [...]." Through testimonials, accounts, and bibliography, the food preferences are exposed in the most discussed topics: Ĕmĩ; Mĕn-hu (pisé) and Gãr, ashes cake, pixé, and corn. This food space opens up new possibilities, whether on social networks or in communities, memory centers and researched virtual pages. In this segment, there is a subsection dedicated to the ethnographic aspects developed in conjunction with the group "Typical Kaingang Foods and Indigenous Kaingang Photos," where it was possible to connect theory and ethnography, identifying the most recurring foods in the posts and establishing analogies with the bibliography.

In the second textual section, titled "Anthropology of Food: fire, smoke, ash, water are indispensable ingredients," a discussion is presented based on ethnographic data, considering anthropological literature. It became necessary to strike a theoretical balance between articles and texts on the anthropology of food to discuss the academic categories underpinning the first stage and the empirical sources. The emic category, which relates to the theoretical classes, addresses "typical food - ãg vĕjĕn," which is how the interlocutors refer to an essentially Kanhgág diet. These foods and dishes have a unique meaning and a specific semantic place in

the language and everyday life. This typical food presents itself as an *offline* Kanhgág food space, which converges with the digital activism provided by the social network page.

Vējēn – Feeding

As demonstrated in this article, nourishing oneself and others within the *Kanhgág* culture is equivalent to providing resources for oneself and assisting others. This practice represents a way of life manifested in a group dedicated to Kanhgág culture on a social network. Through regular posts and interactions with other members, the aim is to nurture a cultural collection. In the *Kanhgág* language, the verb *jēn* means "to eat", while *vējēn* refers to food, meal, or nourishment. Therefore, it is believed that the verb *jēn* can express both the act of eating and the cultural assimilation of content available on the digital platform.

The textual section that presents (n)ethnography, in other words, ethnography in digital environments, according to Leitão and Gomes' understanding (2017), adopts an approach that values transient sensitivity. While traversing through messages and posts, the researcher ends up "[...] navigating paths amidst the multitude of images and messages, which can be fruitful when applied to the observation of platforms characterized by intense transit and ephemerality" (LEITÃO; GOMES, 2017, p. 46, our translation). The authors establish an analogy between ethnography in digital environments and the practice in large urban centers, with an intense flow of interlocutors and landscapes. In a way, the researcher wanders through these environments, encountering the familiar and the unfamiliar. Thus, the practice of this article situates itself as a methodology that combines contact with the most active participant in the indigenous food culture group to analyze the posts and photos, establishing connections with anthropological literature. Therefore, the study focused on the period from 2018 to 2023 and aimed to identify the most recurring themes in the posts to present a significant sample. Unlike in-person field ethnography, this approach used virtual contact and forays into the digital environment of the "Typical *Kanhgág* Foods [...]" group, interviewing the user with the highest number of posts and bringing the virtual field notebook closer to writing.

The contact and exchange of messages with the young *Kanhgág* cultural activist, Cléber Kronun, residing in the Apucarantina Indigenous Land (TI), located in Paraná, a state in southern Brazil, established a (n)ethnographic and interethnic dialogue that directed me to the digital space of the group present on a social network. Cléber presents himself as a filmmaker, independent researcher, and advocate for *Kanhgág* culture, and his name, Kronun, is associated

with traditional food. I met Cléber while completing my undergraduate studies in History and starting my master's degrees in Anthropology, History, and Social Sciences. Kronun assisted me in understanding youth and their projects, which were essential for writing my monographs. As a (n)ethnographer, I approached various indigenous leaders, mainly *Kanhgág*, through social networks. Another necessary experience occurred during my undergraduate studies in History and Gastronomy when I worked as a famous educator in a preparatory course focused on *Kanhgág* youth in São Leopoldo-RS, with whom I have collaborated since 2010. In this way, I could establish contacts in the field and exchange phone numbers and social media profiles. Due to these subjective reasons mentioned earlier, Cléber Kronun's posts caught my attention, as the young man shared a lot about food from a cultural perspective, which proved highly relevant to the anthropological analysis of *online* and *offline* food spaces.

Based on this, I requested a recorded interview with Cléber Kronun and permission for dissemination. After obtaining authorization, Cléber informed me that they use social technologies to record, archive, and share the knowledge transmitted by the *kofá* (the elders). The production of photos, films, and accounts serves as a means of dissemination and memory preservation and creates new ways of living. The interview was conducted asynchronously, in video format, recorded, and sent through a messaging app. The researcher's approach to indigenous leaders could be initiated through social networks, as many indigenous people today have internet profiles precisely for this exchange of experiences and to reaffirm their territorial identity.

My name is Cléber Kronun, and I am from the *Kanhgág* ethnic group. I live in the Apucarantina Indigenous Land. I am part of the *Kanhgág* Center of Memory and Culture within our village and an indigenous filmmaker. I have made a short film. The *Kanhgág* Center of Memory and Culture operates in the following way: we film the elders within our village, capturing their stories about where they used to live and reside in the past. We also film the day-to-day life within our community, but due to this pandemic, our activities are currently on hold. We plan to release a book, which will be ready in October. I am also part of the dance group and the youth group. We used to go to different places to perform, but we could not do so due to the pandemic. The roads leading to our village are closed to prevent indigenous individuals from contracting the coronavirus. The dance group, called *nên ga*, was initiated within the school. The students gathered to form this group to perform (ALMEIDA, 2020^a, our translation).

The Memory Center mentioned by Cléber Kronun is a project and activist initiative aimed at providing a space for caring and strengthening the culture of the *kofá* (elders), representing the *Gufã* tradition, and the *uri*, representing the contemporary time of the current

Kanhgág. This project serves as an activist space by preserving and creating collections of *Kanhgág* and other indigenous cultures' memories, promoting their goals and references, and gathering resources to address common issues. Therefore, the *Kanhgág* Memory and Culture Center (CMCK) established itself as a space for discussions, actions, research, and the dissemination of projects related to *Kanhgág* memory and culture. The introductory text of CMCK clearly outlines how this collective presents itself, aiming to include and make the proposal familiar to participants.

In the year 2014, we and the non-indigenous teachers began working together. From there, together, we filmed the stories of our village elders to preserve them in memory. Afterward, we filmed the daily happenings within our village, and each person was also filmed in their town, just like in our village. Together, we created a feature-length video. And after some time, we decided to make a book in collaboration with our team from the Kaingang Center for Memory and Culture (CMCK, 2016, online, our translation)

The text begins with the pronoun "we," indicating the existence of a collaborative group composed of *kanhgág* educators, *fóg*/non-indigenous individuals, and young students who communicate through culture and technology. Among the projects developed by this group are a blog, profiles, and pages on social media. The city of Apucarantina, where the project is based, comprises several different villages, and the headquarters is named after the Indigenous Land (T.I). According to CMCK, debates were brought into the villages involving the ideas of the youth. Cléber's participation in the Center for Culture and Memory was undoubtedly a means, a justification, and a reference for developing his objectives, such as his trajectory as a researcher of *Kanhgág* food on social media.

As Amorim (2022) highlights in their research on the life projects of *kanhgág* youth, initiatives like CMCK fit into life projects, which are projections related to people's lives:

This passage discusses articulating life references within the social organization, language, and collective memory. Socialized livelihoods, such as craftsmanship, agricultural work, and education, create common bonds among community members. It is not simply about "having something in common" but instead characterized by reciprocal relationships involving these livelihoods. This includes teaching craftsmanship, sharing agricultural work opportunities, and assisting others in acquiring academic and employment positions. The community project intervenes in life problems collectively and assumes each other's demands, involving itself in the lives of others (and oneself), ensuring food security, adhering to community organizational rules, and promoting healthy relationships between couples (AMORIM, 2022, p. 132, our translation).

Considering the ethnographic data of this research and following the perspective of the mentioned study, online posts and projects of the Center for Culture and Memory constitute ways of articulating justifications, objectives, references, and means to solve cultural problems. The *offline* space of this Memory Center becomes conducive to community life projects and cultural and identity affirmation activism, characteristic of indigenous education, across multiple digital platforms. As Leitão and Gomes (2017, p.46, our translation) emphasize, digital spaces and their engagement "[...] do not mean a detachment from other environments".

Cléber Kronun de Almeida, along with other young people and educators from the *Kanhgág* ethnic group, coordinates CMCK in the Apucarantina Indigenous Land, where they promote the dissemination of culture through film production, informative posts, and initiatives for education about indigenous heritage. This is important for the youth to identify themselves and develop an appreciation for their *Kanhgág* identity, thus nurturing the desire to know and preserve the places and ways of life of the *kofá*. The documentation of the center's activities resulted in the bilingual Portuguese/*Kanhgág* book titled "Os kaingang do Apucarantina e suas histórias - *Karynĩnh ki kanhgág ag joke kãme*" (ZACARIAS, *et al.*, 2021; CMCK, 2021). According to a report from the Paraná State News Agency² the books will be distributed to 39 schools belonging to indigenous peoples in the state and partners. Additionally, the book link is available on the educational website³ of the Paraná government, where pedagogical resources are provided for teachers in the state and interested individuals. The physical and digital distribution of the work is essential to increase both the visibility and knowledge about the *Kanhgág* and strengthen intercultural education.

CMCK plays the role of bridging the contemporary food space and past generations, highlighting the ethical and aesthetic values of the *kofá* and recording them. The objective is to create educational materials based on the knowledge/*jykre* of the *kofá*. Recently, *Kanhgág's* knowledge about food was systematized at the Memory Center by Cléber Kronun in a chapter of the book organized in 2021. From Kronun's perspective, ancient *kanhgág gufã*/indigenous food is presented as strong and healthy, in contrast to the food of the *fóg*/non-indigenous, which is seen as mere subsistence. By observing this incorporation, it is evident that not all foods and ingredients from the white culture are used in *Kanhgág* cuisine, but when incorporated, they are modified in terms of seasoning, cooking methods, and forms of use. The following is an

² View Paraná (2022).

³ View Paraná (2023).

excerpt from the Center of Memory's *blog*, illustrating the duality present on the border between *fóg* and *Kanhgág* foods:

(ALIMENTAÇÃO DOS KAINGANG) Previously, our Kaingang elders gathered many foods from the forest, which is why they were strong. Their children also grew up strong and healthy, rarely falling ill. This custom is almost extinct, so we rely on non-indigenous food to avoid hunger. Nonetheless, when we come across some of these traditional foods, we prepare and eat them. Here are some names of our traditional foods: mandioca brava (bitter cassava), varana, *fuá*, fish, Ortigão, green corn, *piche*, sour cake, *coró* de taquara (bamboo coró), *coró* de palmeira (palm coró), mushrooms, etc. These were our traditional Kaingang foods (ALMEIDA, 2021a, p. 70, our translation).

According to the text, these foods are identified as "ours," "strong," "healthy," and "typical" among those who consider themselves part of this group, functioning as a form of communication among peers. Thus, the digital space, whether on social media, through a *website*, or a *blog*, proves promising for the *Kanhgág* to recognize themselves in content that considers the life references carried by these people. This enables coexistence accompanied by activism, education, and identity affirmation.

"Comidas típicas dos kaingangs e fotos indígenas kaingang" Group

The group "Comidas típicas dos Kaingangs e fotos indígenas Kaingang", hosted on a popular and widely-reaching social media platform, aims to gather information about *kanhgág* food. By breathing new life into the culture through social media, it presents itself as a form of digital activism. The group was created in 2016 with just over 900 members, but it only gained engagement during the pandemic in 2020. Although membership is restricted to approved individuals, it maintains a public nature as it is hosted on a social media platform and can be found by Internet users. The group is *fueled* by individuals from different indigenous peoples throughout Brazil and has an open policy regarding the admission of new members. The content is shared by those who consume the posts, serving as cultural nourishment/*jên*.

Therefore, it represents a movement of cultural understanding and digital gastronomic activism through social forms and interactions on social media and *blogs*. This movement of learning is evident in posts about ingested, incorporated, digested, and once again made available knowledge. This dynamic also converges with CMCK, a physical and imagistic space that serves as another site of cultural digestion, housing videos, photos, testimonials, and archaeological ceramics: "The Kaingang Memory and Culture Center (CMCK) is located in the

Apucarantina Indigenous Land, 30 km from the municipality of Tamarana-PR and the district of Lerroville (municipality of Londrina)" (CMCK, 2016, online). In this way, the group, as an online extension of *offline* activities, allows for the convergence of physical and virtual identities: "On Facebook, more than any other previous or contemporary digital platform, identity convergence is a fundamental characteristic, both in terms of identification with individuals' *offline* names and identity data" (LEITÃO; GOMES, 2017, p. 52, our translation). Assim, a equipe funciona como um espaço digital de afirmação das referências culturais já experimentadas, dentro de um Centro de Memória formalizado na Terra Indígena, sendo ingerido, digerido e disponibilizado para um novo ciclo de consumo, reações e compartilhamento.

The image below portrayed a moment of sharing captured by Kronun and posted within the group. These moments exemplify the relationship with the territory, the foods planted, harvested, fermented, pounded in the mortar, displayed on the table, and consumed by us (*ẽg*), the group. We can observe fish (*pirã*), roasted cassava, and pumpkin sprouts (*peho fej*) on the table. The dissemination of these photos, accompanied by texts in *Kanhgág*, manifests ways of life, consolidating and transmitting identities through far-reaching educational tools, such as posts. The foods and their preparation methods and serving and sharing play an essential role in this gastronomy. Therefore, the seats in the group aim to share with internal circles of exchange and those outside, becoming a form of cultural food activism that teaches, showcases, and preserves.

Figure 1 - Today we from Aldeia Água Branca made *Kanhgág* foods



Source: Almeida (2022)

Traditional cuisine not only nourishes the body but is also intrinsically linked to aesthetics, ethics, politics, and culture: *Kanhgág ēg vējēn* - the food of the *Kanhgág* people. Through a comprehensive analysis of the posts in the group from 2019 to 2023, I have identified the most frequent topics shared by the page members.

Firstly, the *Ēmĩ* stands out, also known as sour cake. It is a preparation made with harvested and dried corn, soaked in water with husks for fermentation for several days until it acquires a characteristic aroma. Then, the corn is ground in a mortar, becoming a dough that serves as a base for bread, cakes, and stuffing. The image from the group refers to a 2019 post announcing a themed party dedicated to *Ēmĩ*. This post demonstrates the sharing of cultural precepts among the residents of the communities in the Barão de Antonina Indigenous Land in Paraná. The use of digital platforms to share the invitation accompanied an *offline* campaign that mobilized leaders and residents to organize the event. It is evident that the party itself is a form of activism, and the dissemination of the invitation and corresponding photos represents digital food activism, as it establishes a dialogue with other forms of expression, reaffirms identities and spaces, and shares community projects.

Figure 2 - *Ēmĩ*, Sour Cake Festival on October 25, 2019



Source: Almeida (2019a)

It is evident that *Ēmĩ*, or "cake in the ashes," holds a prominent place in the Barão de Antonina Indigenous Land as a typical food representing local culture. Moreover, it is a substantial energy source, making it a daily presence among the people, bringing together *kanhkó* (allies) and *regré* (relatives). The festival dedicated to *Ēmĩ* provides an opportunity to share ways of life, knowledge, hunting techniques, food preparation, and gathering. In the previously presented image, the term "typical food" refers to this specific food context under discussion.

Figure 3 - Post in the group "Typical Foods of the Kaingang"



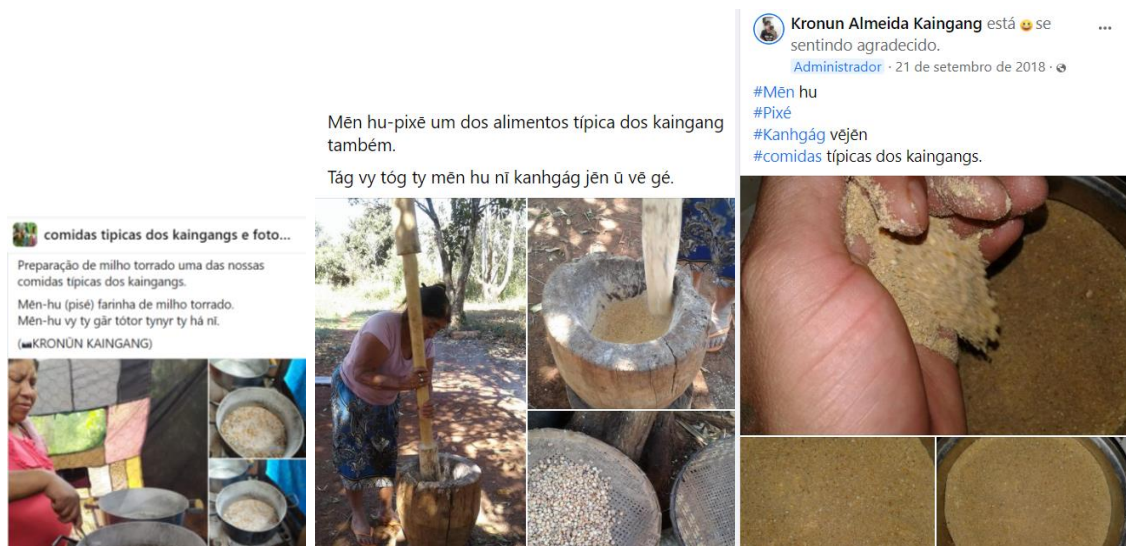
Source: Almeida (2019b)

The above image depicts the meats accompanying the sour cake, *Ēmī*: armadillo and armored catfish, highly valued during the festival and typical of the village region. Community members' virtual and in-person engagement creates bonds of trust and reciprocity among them. Furthermore, showcasing the hunted game asserts one's identity and skill as a hunter. Feats previously shared *offline* are now disseminated on social media, becoming a form of activism that reaffirms dietary habits. Through photos and descriptive texts, culturally identifiable material is created, sharing stories, hunting and fishing techniques, methods of preparation, and seasonings, socializing all of this on digital platforms. Feeding the virtual page represents cultural nourishment, sustaining other community members and non-indigenous individuals

(fóg). This creates a second moment of engagement through likes, which demonstrate interest, and comments, which generate new interactions about the same content. Nourishing the page with information about traditional foods is an active participation in constructing this space. Every day and organized events, such as the *Êmĩ* festival, also become opportunities to take photos, write texts, tag people in the posts, and share the content.

Similar to language, cooking, and preparation methods have innovations, accents, and regional variations. In this sense, digital environments related to food, built by indigenous social actors of the same ethnicity, are conducive to comparing the variations that characterize the culture in question. *Mên-hu* or *pixé* (pixé) is made from flour obtained through toasting corn with ashes in a pot, resulting in an alkaline *pH* that aids in separating starch and husk while contributing to nutritional absorption. The sifted ashes are added to the grains, then crushed in a mortar, resulting in a toasted powder ready for consumption with a smoky and slightly sweet flavor. The hot ashes and embers help distribute heat evenly in the mixture, ensuring uniform cooking in each grain. There are variations in the amount of ashes used, the type of mortar used, and the chosen corn variety.

Figure 4 - *Mên hu-pixé*, one of the typical foods of the Kaingang



Source: Almeida (2019c) - Apucarantina – Paraná

As Sandra de Paula, an indigenous educator from Toldo Imbu in Santa Catarina, reported in her monograph, *gār*/corn is an essential element in these *Kanhgág* food communities found in different Indigenous Lands. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of interviewing the *kofá* as sources of knowledge and wisdom regarding traditional food habits:

My grandmother often made *kumĩ* (bitter cassava) accompanied by *farĩnh totor* (toasted corn flour) or *ẽmi* (ash cake), *fuva* with *régró* (beans), *pyrfé* (nettle), accompanied by *pisé* (corn flour made with *pilão*) and *kirera* (hominy). My grandparents cultivated for consumption, not for commercial purposes. The meats I remember from that time were the swamp rat, armadillo, dove, etc" (PAULA, 2020, p. 44, our translation).

Farmers Fermino Bento de Oliveira and Cenilda Ventura, residents of the Guarita Indigenous Land in the northwest of Rio Grande do Sul, shared with researcher José Manuel Palazuelos Ballivián about the wide variety of corn and how they are used for different purposes in the *Kanhgág* food space. These habits are shared both *online* and *offline*: "To make *pisé* (a typical *kanhgág* dish made from toasted corn flour in ashes), *kajyka* (hominy), ash cake (typical bread, sometimes with fermented dough), *gãru* (popcorn), and *entô* (corn cooked in embers)" (BALLIVIAN, 2007, p. 8, our translation).

The following post, presented as an example, illustrates the frequency of the third most mentioned topic on the analyzed page. *Gār*, corn, is used as a raw material for other preparations. The photo (fig. 5) depicts the sociability among different generations during the corn threshing process in the food space. As noted by Cléber Kronun Almeida (2021b, our translation): "[...] When shelling the corn, preparing it to make ash cake (*ẽmĩ*), it is crucial for children to *participate* because it is already a learning experience. We learn according to time, nature teaches us, our school, we learn with freedom". Parents share this family activity to encourage the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of corn and reinforce their adherence to *Kanhgág* food habits.

Figure 5 - Shelling corn



Source: Almeida (2021b) - Apucarantina – Paraná

The reciprocity between different types of seeds and the *Kanhgág* people is evident, as the preservation of technologies and plant species is accompanied by the substantial supply of nutrients from corn, allowing this dynamic to repeat. The black seeds are called "*gar pê*" (true corn), just like "*kanhgág pê*". The practice of shelling corn, which was once restricted to private settings, is now captured, documented in photos and texts, transformed into a group post, and consumed in the form of likes, shares, and comments.

Fire, smoke, ash, and water are indispensable ingredients: anthropology of food

Edibles typically manifest themselves through the environmental adaptation of ingredients, techniques, ways of eating, dishes, and preparations, which the *Kanhgág* people recognize as their own *eg vējēn*. For the *Kanhgág* people in southern Brazil, the beings of nature and the methods of preparation become symbols to talk about "typical foods," classifying them as such. The *kanhgág* cuisine represents a space that combines the symbolic and the material, in line with Poulain and Proença's proposal (2003, p. 252, our translation): "[...] the space of the edible is, therefore, the choice made by the human group within the set of plant and animal products made available to them by the natural environment, or the group's decision can implement that." The food category "typical foods" is used by *Kanhgág* populations, encompassing aesthetic, ethical, and dietary practices related to their food, reflecting the interaction between environment and culture. Thus, the name and purpose of the group on social media indicate the affirmation of this marker, referring to "our foods" (*eg vējēn*), and serve as a translation for non-indigenous people (*fóg*) to understand the uniqueness of *Kanhgág* food (*kanhgág jēn*).

The production of this digital space results from a long process of preserving differences, which distinguishes it from non-indigenous (*fóg*) cuisine that is available for planting, purchasing, or gathering to showcase and exchange knowledge. Furthermore, it is related to incorporating languages derived from digital media, such as interaction, likes, and information sharing. As reminded by *Kanhgág* social worker Angélica Domingos in her thesis: "Nen ã ty eg vejen nim ti, *A Mata é que mostra nossa comida*" (DOMINGOS, 2016, p. 59). These regional examples of dish preparation and techniques can be compared, as pointed out by Domingos (2016), to a piece of Forest and family farm within the monocultures of the internet.

In the group's posts, one can observe the creation and reproduction of typical *Kanhgág* dishes, which belong to art and technique. The food known as *vējēn*, in particular, is a culinary expression that must be adequately documented while also playing a nutritional role in daily life. Typical foods embody the technique dimension, using instruments, specific knowledge, and preparation skills. On the other hand, the size of art is present in the meanings attributed to the practices within a cultural framework. Mary Douglas (2009, p. 121, our translation) emphasizes, "All goods are bearers of meaning, but none is so by itself". For example, a sautéed dish of leaves differs from burning a medicine due to its meaning, even though both

preparations use the same cooking method. They also need to adhere to the expected conventions of typical foods, such as "fire, smoke, ash, and water", as highlighted by *Kanhgág* psychologist Rejane:

After undergoing a ritual with the kujá, we must follow a diet that excludes non-indigenous (fóg) foods, only adhering to our *typical foods*. *Fire, smoke, ash, and water are indispensable ingredients*. Grilled fish in bamboo (*krakufār kénpu*), baked cake in bamboo (*êmi kénpu*), and *kumi* (bitter cassava leaf) are some of the foods used after the ritual, representing a small part of *Kanhgág* cuisine that is integral to our traditional medicine (CARVALHO, 2020, p. 33, our translation).

Through the posts in the digital space, we can perceive the presence of typical *Kanhgág* consumption, which manifests through its ritualistic significance. It is a mark of identity, a reference to be preserved, and a way of sharing ways of life with others. Typical foods and their conventions, disseminated on the internet, universalize the boundary that separates indigenous cuisine from the non-indigenous world, representing ways of making, eating, and existing. The *online* culinary space seeks to reflect the techniques adopted by the people, such as the use of mortar and pestle and gender-based agriculture, both in preparing dishes and in elaborate rituals. These are "[...] consumption choices that become the vital source of culture [...] People raised in a particular culture see it changing during their lifetime: new words, new ideas, new ways" (DOUGLAS, 2009, p. 102, our translation). Everything related to the construction of nutritional identity, in the choices that create, renew, dismantle, and maintain boundaries, is embedded in the food space. This space can refer to physical locations, such as the kitchen, and virtual spaces of epistemological nature (POULAIN; PROENÇA, 2003, p. 252).

Bilingual *Kanhgág* professor Dorvalino Refej Cardoso (2017) approaches food from a structural and emic perspective. In this sense, the *Kanhgág* food space is influenced by tribal halves, indicating the complementarity of this typical food, which is considered alive, clean, fair, and sacred. A specific rule governs this life-sustaining food: "As the people are divided into two tribal halves, *Kamẽ* and *Kanhru*, *Kamẽ* makes food for *Kanhru* and vice versa. Some foods are typical of *Kamẽ*, as well as those of *Kanhru*. *Kamẽ* should only eat *Kanhru* food, and vice versa" (REFEJ CARDOSO, 2017, p. 51, our translation). When a couple of forms, this rule is applied, meaning that it is only allowed for the opposite exogamous halves to unite, i.e., *Kamẽ* marries *Kanhru* and vice versa, and thus they cook food, drinks, and remedies for each other. However, this rule is not as rigid as depicted in the posts, as the foods are shared among

families and even with people from different villages. Thus, the clinical marks present themselves as familiar cultural resources.

Through social media posts, it is possible to observe that children learn from a very young age to recognize the essential foods for their sustenance and to nurture respect for them. This is evidenced, for example, when a young child handles a freshly cleaned armadillo to be cooked (Fig. 6) or when children participate in farm work or corn threshing (Fig. 5). These temporalities are present in the kanhgág diet, which has multiple temporal frameworks that depend on various factors, including the life cycle and markers that determine what is consumed. The *kofá* must consume specific foods for their age, just like the *gir*/children, as revealed by *kanhgág* historian Bruno Ferreira. The child learns dietary habits from the elders in the process of cultural transmission and food education:

Along with the other *Gir* (children), our daily life involved going to the fields to help with small plantings of *Gār* (corn), sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, going into the forest to gather fruits and collecting firewood to cook our food, such as *fuva*, brava cassava leaf, assisting in the preparation of *ēmĩ*, which is a cake baked in ash, made from pounded corn flour (FERREIRA, 2020, p. 27, our translation).

Culture establishes limits, boundaries, and potentials for identity, determining what can and cannot be consumed through permissions and prohibitions that vary according to age, gender, clinical markings, or economic conditions. The kanhgág food space articulates different times, cycles, work seasons or craft sales, community activities, and collective or family celebrations and is also associated with the "[...] alternation between periods of abundance and scarcity" (POULAIN; PROENÇA, 2003, p. 253, our translation). This food space is also intersected by beliefs and gender, as exemplified in the widow's diet described in Rejane Carvalho *Pafej's* monograph:

The *pêj* take the widow to the forest, where a hut is built with thatch, near the *goj jânhkri* (flowing and clean water) for her to stay alone in the dense forest, away from the community's eyes. She is bathed as many times as necessary in running water to purify herself, using medicinal herbs, teas, *only typical foods*, with *kamê* eating drier foods and *kairu* eating more moist foods (CARVALHO, 2020, p. 35, our translation).

Kanhgág typical food is considered a social act, as described by Maria Eunice Maciel, the "[...] material culture that prints representations and imaginaries, involves choices, classifications, symbols that organize the diverse worldviews in time and space" (MACIEL, 2004, p. 25, our translation). According to Maciel, a nutritionist and anthropologist, food goes

beyond the purely biological. One of the most critical dimensions of the study of the Anthropology of Food is the problem of social and cultural identities. Through the construction and affirmation of typical foods, group meanings are articulated, renewing symbols of identity claimed individually and collectively, as the author points out.

The cuisine of a people is created through a historical process that combines a set of elements referenced in tradition, aiming to create something unique - particular, singular, and recognizable. Understanding social identity as a process related to a collective project that includes constant reconstruction, rather than something given and immutable, these kitchens are subject to ongoing transformations to endless recreation. Thus, a cuisine cannot be reduced to an inventory, a repertoire of ingredients, or converted into formulas or combinations of elements crystallized in time and space (MACIEL, 2004, p. 29, our translation).

The *kanhgág* cuisine, present in the literature and social media posts as ethnographic material, is marked by the Jyikre/knowledge of the culture, which functions as an element of mutual recognition among group members, as Maciel (2004) suggested. This cuisine is also influenced by history, highlighting the epistemological violence of colonialism, which had negative consequences for daily life, as pointed out by *kanhgág* psychologist Rejane: "As territories are not demarcated or are reduced, as rivers become polluted, medicinal herbs disappear, typical foods become scarce, and hunting, don't even mention it" (CARVALHO, 2020, p. 17, our translation). These implications are reflected in problems for the reproduction of family farming, restriction of spaces for cultivation in urban areas, extinction of various traditional food plant species, and the interest of young people in preserving food spaces.

Thus, the *kanhgág* food space articulates traditional elements with the newer ones in constructing a continuous feeding process marked by transformations and affectations in individual identities. Kitchens are markers of peoples' and individuals' identities. In ethnographic terms, it is observed that *online* group users, by appropriating new knowledge provided by social media and digital resources, transform their ways of life to build a shared identity or common projects. Therefore, the cuisine is not only about recipes, measurements, or culinary techniques but also reveals the way of life of different peoples, with a perspective of common coexistence. The preparation of typical foods and digital activism within the group sharing posts on social media emphasizes social belonging, sharing not only food but also common life goals.

Eating together and sharing content on social media become social distinctions as they require the necessary means, such as internet access, a computer or mobile phone, knowledge

of digital languages, and spaces to interact, like, and share. As a result, agreements are established, achievements are celebrated, and abundant food is exalted. This celebration is not limited to the quantity of food but also the importance attributed to the preparations of typical dishes, how one eats, with whom, and where these moments are experienced. These situations involve social display and competition, expressed through clothing, language, selected ingredients, and behavior. These events are shared so that others know about the occurrence, the food, and the guests, thus consolidating a specific image and narrative in the digital space, both in collective groups and individual profiles.

Eating together creates communicative gestures beyond mere nutrition or eating, as observed by Montanari (2008, p. 157). Typical foods have both a biological and cultural dimension because, as Montanari quotes from Roland Barthes, "[...] the symbolic charge of food is even stronger when it is perceived as an instrument of daily survival [...] the table as a metaphor for life" (MONTANARI, 2008, p. 158, our translation). For the *Kanhgág*, typical foods are intrinsically linked to work activities, whether in the production of medicines, cultivation of native foods, collection of plants, hunting, fishing, or honey harvesting. Eating together is an act of collective healing, as Dorvalino *Refej* Cardoso (2017) pointed out, where food is seen as medicine: "It is recommended to prepare the food with water that is alive, taken directly from the source. It is essential to share the food with those in need and those who are hungry because it comes from God" (REFEJ CARDOSO, 2017, p. 51, our translation).

This tradition in *kanhgág* culture occurs in various situations, such as when relatives come to share a meal, during family barbecues, community festivals, meat roasts, or during a fishing trip by the river. Who pays, who buys, who cooks, who is the host, and who is the visitor, as Massimo states: "[...] the expressive character of the meal is never distinct from the concrete value (economic and nutritional) of the consumed food. It is therefore essential to identify a grammar of food and decode its rules" (MONTANARI, 2008, p. 164, our translation). Similarly, those who share photos and content in the group can be seen as preservers and references for the community, as is the case with Cléber Kronum, the most active member. The sociability of these food spaces, like the group on the social network, goes beyond the act of eating and sharing but is related to the construction of just life, in which each individual has a functional role and preserves references: "Another essential aspect of eating together is the sharing of food. The allocation of one piece instead of another is never random [...] but reproduces power and prestige relations within the group" (MONTANARI, 2008, p. 163, our translation). The consumption of posts in the virtual environment of the group occurs as a form

of nourishment, in which some individuals produce content while others consume, like, and share, and others engage in both activities. However, this nourishment occurs unequally among group participants.

In the context of *kanhgág* food spaces, it is possible to identify ethics that guide actions based on life references, as argued by *kanhgág* psychologist Rejane Carvalho *Pafej* (2020) in her work on ways of living about capitalism: "Eating industrialized foods, for example, because our *typical foods* are increasingly disappearing with the introduction of pesticides into our communities" (CARVALHO, 2020, p. 24, our translation). Carvalho describes typical foods as opposed to industrialized ones, linked to territoriality, and emphasizes that the experiences lived, and the posts related to these experiences can educate and awaken the desire to act. Currently, typical foods are considered those collected or explicitly created to preserve, educate, and put ethical and aesthetic potency into practice. On the other hand, industrialized foods are referred to as "foods for sale," with the "sale" term synonymous with a small grocery store or market. Narratives about nutrition from the past often describe how everything was different, as *Kofá* Maria commented: "[...] pounded in the mortar, our porridges, nowadays the foods don't even have taste anymore, they're filled with seasoning to remove the taste of the drying agent, that's killing us *kanhgág*" (CARVALHO, 2020, p. 24, our translation).

Regarding knowledge and flavors, *kanhgág* educator Onório Moura reports that there are possibilities in an educational proposal that guarantees the right to a pedagogy formulated and implemented by intellectuals from the communities themselves, especially regarding food, that can be adapted to the local reality. In this sense, community schools preserve tradition by offering school meals "[...] for example, at least once a week, *typical foods* prepared by indigenous cooks are served" (MOURA, 2021, p. 55, our translation). Even with the change in the menu established by the state based on nutritional criteria, there are still obstacles to incorporating *kanhgág* dietetics. The account encourages preserving food systems and the ecology of flavors and knowledge. The Memory Center (CMCK) and the "typical foods" sharing group are driving initiatives for implementing these changes in schools, including providing recipes for school meals.

The term "*vëjên my há jykre*," which combines the meanings of eating, good, and knowledge, can be flexed to approach the fields of Nutrition, Gastronomy, or Food. It refers to a life project that involves the person in question, their relatives, allies, and specific groups. According to Amorim (2020b) the "use of a hyphen in 'projeto-de-vida' [life project], as a linguistic resource, refers to the combination or separation of objectives, means, and references

that make up the project and the person's life. The life project, separated from life, is a form of outsourcing" (AMORIM, 2020b, p. 238, our translation). The sharing of posts follows the logic of sharing everyday moments, commensality, sharing, and abundance. Being together with *kanhkã*/relatives can mean being close to the extended family core and other Indigenous people and supporters since being in the group implies having the same life objective.

In the book "*Vacas, Porcos, Guerras e Bruxas: os enigmas da cultura*" (1978), Harris Marvin discusses markers of human differentiation, namely primitives, underdeveloped, and belonging to the Third World, which create an ideal type of life and food. Outside the monoculture of existence, as argued by Santos (2002), other forms are considered absent and "[...] only a small portion of the range of alternatives relative to ways of living [...]. In common social life, it is invariably the case that some control or exploit others" (HARRIS, 1978, p. 15, our translation). Therefore, when we mention the organization of food projects that promote cognitive justice, we are referring to the subject's economy, as Santos and Meneses (2009) pointed out. According to Amorim⁴ (2020a, 2020b, 2022) equitable valorization of local, traditional, and native discourses and knowledge, along with formal, academic, and scientific lessons, is essential to mitigate the gaps created by modernity and allow for the emergence of culturally subjective-based responses. The criteria and parameters of *fóg* (non-indigenous) are used to understand *kanhgág* food.

⁴ According to the author, indigenous youth plan or "Projeta-a-vida" [Projecting Life] "[...] refers to the sociological form, pointing to an experience of being able to be that tries to escape the colonial, governmental, and state apparatuses of modernity. A mode of producing life unaffected by life problems, such as coloniality, the single option of life and work. A translation of "ēmīn eg my rá" is "Our good life," the ecological life, the ecology of knowledge, in dialogue with Boaventura de Sousa Santos" (AMORIM, 2022, p. 131, our translation).

Figure 6 - Today has fãfãn (armadillo)



Source: Almeida (2020b)

Final Considerations

In large numbers, the *Kanhgág* people possess a rich gastronomy that has not yet emerged as a lifestyle or project in the *fóg* world, particularly in terms of food and way of living. This richness is related to the long history of interaction with beings inhabiting the country's southern regions. Therefore, to study *Kanhgág* food, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach that considers life in its various dimensions: recognizing the polysemy, which refers to the multiple voices that compose and construct the food environment, both *online* and *offline*.

Within the *Kanhgág* ethnic group, the linguistic presence of typical foods is evident - *Kanhgág ãg vëjën*, which means traditional foods or (POULAIN; PROENÇA, 2003, p. 252), *food space, gastronomic space, or eating area*. The creation of this space occurs in accordance with cultivation techniques, the relationship with the land, and the availability of resources. For the artistic dimension to manifest, empirical support is necessary: the ingredients obtained through *rãnhřäj* (work). This created space is present in contexts such as the analyzed group, "*Typical Foods and Photos of Kanhgág*." Art manifests itself in the production of images that can be captured by photographic devices or remain in the memory of the guests.

The distinction that characterizes typical food is related to the boundary with the *fóg* world, which includes processed foods, sugars, refined oils, and "white" eating habits. As mentioned in the article, an anthropological trait in *Kanhgág* food is the presence of essential components: fire, smoke, ashes, and water, which differentiate *Kanhgág* food from *fóg* food. Lastly, Mary Douglas (2009, p. 123) the notion that "[...] goods and expenditures are used to mark meaning" is highlighted. They mark values, identities, intentions, and recognition. Therefore, moments of food and sharing are significant for the *Kanhgág* people. Individuals recognize themselves in others and their ways of being, preparing food, and nourishing themselves.

The sociability between generations preserves references by involving the younger ones and allowing the *kofá* people to speak, thus enabling the youth to participate in documenting these references. It is observed that the sociability of the younger generations transforms the culinary space into an opportunity to transcend food categories and establish guidelines for the population. Traditional foods break away from the monoculture of coloniality *fóg*, as described by Santos (2002), who proposes the existence of a single way of living. Social media networks have become ideal for socializing life projects towards an ecology of knowledge and food.

The digital platform "*Comidas Típicas Kanhgág*" presents itself in this work as a community project that first articulates the need to address the preservation of traditional foods and overcome isolation in sharing experiences and cultural aspects of the *Kanhgág* people. The project also includes forming a specific group dedicated to posting about *Kanhgág's* traditional dishes. These posts are mainly created using mobile devices, such as cell phones and computers, to share memories that deserve to be preserved in the group's compendium.

The *Kanhgág* Memory and Culture Center served as the foundation for developing the group's proposal and training the young individuals who initiated this undertaking. The organizers of the group justify their efforts by aiming to promote the dissemination of dietary habits through this sharing, which can be considered a form of digital, gastronomic, and indigenous activism. Ultimately, these posts represent a form of activism that integrates community references and the knowledge of older individuals/*kofá*, their techniques, learning about ingredients, ways of eating, and ways of living.

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