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# THE CHALLENGE OF THE CULTURAL ASPECT OF THE CITY OF TOLUCA BEFORE CLIMATE CHANGE: From the Perspective of Cultural Geography

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### **Abstract**

Culture, from the geographical perspective, is a primary source of identity, which gives an individual the sense of belonging to the place and to value their behavior to care for the environment, the question arises can you change your habits to give it a treatment more effective in the trash and this does not cause problems?, in this era in which ideologies, economies, poverty have been globalized and where the end of particular ideologies has been proclaimed, submitting to a single type of general norm; To answer this question, a general empirical and evaluative study of the City of Toluca is carried out to know the conception that its inhabitants have of themselves and of their environment, as identity, that takes care of their environment to which they have to be recognized as a territory equipped, organized that of the possibility of interpreting their way of thinking by symbols created as a cultural aspect.

**Keywords:** Cultural Geography, Territorial Identity, Climate Change

# Introduction

When man became interested in the knowledge of the soil, on which he lived and of the surrounding physical environment, he discovered that it had important meanings by reflecting more or less reliably the man-nature relationship, distinguishing the physical and social qualities that evolution and economic and cultural development, which became natural manifestations that were transmitted as a heritage of the ancestors who inhabited the place.

Therefore, by exalting the natural manifestations of a geographical space, it represents studying the qualities of the environment that have been created as symbols which have become attributes that give identity to the individuals of a society that inhabits a place, which takes to reflect on the different forms, scales and levels of complexity in which they are organized, to coexist, creating cultural bonds that are part of the personal idiosyncrasy.

Therefore, to carry out a geographical study from the cultural perspective represents identifying the cultural elements that serve to guide the human actions of a place, inscribing them in normative tables that give meaning to the individual and collective life, being the foundation of identity ( Claval, 1999: 28). Understanding the role played by the territory in the construction of cultural frameworks, its structure and the elements that comprise it represent the

expression of communication and social coexistence, which is preceded by actions that highlight personal habits, which have often been molded by the influence of the values of the society of which it is a part.

Habits are considered as a form of human behavior repeated regularly, which predisposes an individual to the performance of a task, which have been shaped by tradition and feelings that emanate from a society that, when conjugated with values, result in behaviors good or bad, which were generated by imitation. For this reason, social habits that threaten the environment can be observed, deteriorating it through the solid waste that increases day by day in an excessive way, encouraging and accelerating climate change.

To understand the process, it is worth highlighting the carrying out of a literature review and the theoretical background related to Cultural Geography, which synthesizes the meanings of the landscape, which will allow us to assess the conjunction between location and distribution with material and immaterial aspects. that are part of a society, which uses natural resources on a daily basis and becomes a habit, which leads us to think if these activities deteriorate the environment and that is why it is taken as a reference to the use and management of the trash, the stage to the City of Toluca.

# **Problem Statement**

Undoubtedly, geographic knowledge helps interpret the perceived spatial configuration. Thus the great mountains are the seat of the gods, from Olympus for the Greeks to the Annapurna for Nepalese populations. The water is full of meanings springs or lakes are sacred, although the sacred can be related to the precise use of an element of space. Each human group has its own perception of the space it occupies and in some way belongs to it (Dollfus, 1990: 53).

Today the world faces serious problems that require a better understanding of human knowledge, how it is acquired and how it is acted, building and Deconstruction the space, emphasizing the economic and political differentiation and not the cultural that is the one that joins the space with the man, generated the relationships and the form of social coexistence of a community in particular as it is the City of Toluca.

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That is why the study of historical variables within the geographical framework of the City of Toluca, allows to identify spatially those areas with greater vulnerability to physical events of various kinds that are generally associated with social and cultural inequalities, planning and infrastructure, that when presented, the locality is susceptible to floods or forest fires, which would cause the spread of diseases, where women and children are the most affected.

Therefore it is important to study Toluca society from the perspective of Cultural Geography, which with its methodology will allow us to recognize what is the natural, social and cultural diversity that influence the deterioration of the environment and contribute to climate change, derived from behaviors, habits and customs that the population has as the management of garbage and that is established as a culture.

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the need to carry out studies to deepen the issue of vulnerability to climate change, with the aim of raising awareness and mitigating negative impacts.

# The Importance of the Subject

Geography as a science has a great thematic breadth, the historical evolution and the disciplinary concern leads us to look for the theoretical-methodological aspects that allow us to study and understand a place or a place and understand how the influence of the environment with man is established and how the powerful breath of the correlation of forces between them is manifested.

Realizing the influence of the environment on man, invites us to reflect on the actions that may be the work of the climate, the sun, vegetation, animals, mineral resources, topographic features such as mountains, rivers, lakes and coasts have influenced the life and culture of each human group (Johnson, K 1967; 39), generate a type of landscape, community and a way of distributing activities and works, which is observed as that relationship is established and how Zapata mentions it in his article "Cultural Geography and Consumption", the reflections made from the Cultural Geography offer the possibility of understanding a dynamic society, in its different dimensions, both material and symbolic, of the geographical spaces (Zapata, 2011; 165).

That is why geographical studies represent the first way to describe and analyze the data generated in the different landscapes, inserted in human groups, such as latitude, longitude or altitude, proximity to the sea and the existence of pathways access. Paul Claval "the passage from the study of the land surface to the space in which societies evolve marks a break in the image we have of geographic studies, because it marks a double slope, as is the social and material dimension of the organization" (Claval, 2002: 27).

Therefore, space, nature, culture and society are social realities as well as individuals, which are constructed from the symbolic representations acquired from others, through communication processes; pinpointing the link between society and space has been a constant concern of geographers. Reasons are not lacking to understand that it is a man-space relationship, therefore a small analysis of the

natural component and the social component is presented separately, seeking to generate a greater definition of Cultural Geography, in these aspects (Goycoolea, 2003: 1).

#### **Natural Component**

The geographical space is the natural component, where geographers not only distinguish the physical part, but also the places that are linked to the feelings of identity, which are constructed from the representations transmitted and acquired through the conjugation of three elements of the natural landscape, which are relief, altitude and climate, which are the basic referents considered for the study (Sauer, 1925, cited in Luna, G: 76) The other element is altitude, where the permanence of the population in elevations greater than 1,500mm determines a personal and social behavior different from that of the populations that are located at sea level; when performing the analysis a series of physiological phenomena is observed, due to the adaptation to the environment, such as the increase of the respiratory capacity, the heart rate with which the respiratory movements are made and the proportional acceleration of the pulsations are some of the main changes physiological factors that determine the adaptation of organisms to these altitudes, facilitating a life as active and normal as that which can be enjoyed at sea level (Galindo, 1927; 346).

With regard to the climate, the increase or decrease of the temperature in the atmosphere produces in the individual reactions that can be negative or positive, by the climatic conditions of cold or heat, that is to say, that with the high or low temperature there are attitudes in people, such as: excitement, laxity, decreased ability to work, depression, sleep and weakness, among others. By combining these elements, a particular cultural topographic anatomy, which includes color, smell, noise and a landscape vision, which has obviously influenced the life and culture of each group (Galindo, V.1927, page 347).

# **Social Component**

The study of the social component, in Cultural Geography, is done by identifying culture as an object of study, which includes societies in nature, interested in the knowledge of man / environment relationships in the sense of ecological pyramids and that of man / medium relationships, but within the broader framework of the analysis of the situation, exploring forms of coexistence and affectivity (Claval, P. 2002, p.26).

Defining the concept of spatial culture it is mentioned that it is "the set of values, customs, beliefs and social practices that constitute the way of life of a specific group, recognizing in space the existence of its natural and human components and its form of relationship ", What derives in dividing the geographical culture into material and immaterial or ideational, detaching from here the study, considering that matter, nature, culture and social life are realities learned by each individual, becoming experience, in social conscience, where all the categories are inscribed in the same ontological level (Claval, P. 2002; 36).

Supported with the ideas of Bordieu and Soja, the theory is located with everyday situations, analyzing the customs of a society, beliefs, the way of relating and the behaviors that constitute a way of life, a social being and a social conscience, generating identity in a rapidly changing environment, as is the case of the city, which has been considered as a case study (Bourdieu and Soja, cited by Zapata Salcedo, 2011; 169).

Studies of the new Cultural Geography have focused mainly on issues such as: identity, trade, consumption or eating habits, attributes that determine customs or lifestyles of the inhabitants, which allows establishing a parameter to measure the development of a country, through the culture and the analysis of ideas that becomes social conscience.

Lora Cam mentions that "the social conscience is equivalent to the immaterial or spiritual culture, to the ideological and to the representations that are held about nature and society", that is why it becomes the perception of the world and considers the symbolic aspect as a form of communication and coexistence, which determines the construction of traditions, customs and beliefs that are transmitted from generation to generation. The immaterial culture is conceived as the immaterial spatiality that determines the idiosyncrasy of a territorialized individual and that is composed of religion, moral, education, art, politics, law, science and philosophy that coexist at the same time. Fig 1 refers to it (Lora C., 2001; 20).

Fig. 1: Elements of the conception of the world

# Religión PAISAJE CULTURAL Derecho Estética o Arte Política

**Source:** Own elaboration, based on the description made by Lora Cam.

# Methodology

The present study is structured on the basis of the Cultural Geography approach, which conceives space as a scene where human beings develop, which is based on the conceptions of traditions, beliefs, customs and habits that value their environment, show that offers and with the variables that are expressed, considering as an immaterial organization to the space (Claval, 2002; 38), therefore we devote ourselves to review the frameworks in which the culture of a place is developed and in that sense it is explained which were considered for this work. The approaches made from Geography and Culture, specifically supported by the ideas of Paul Claval, aim to contextualize the particular situations of an intermediate city, which builds its cultural pattern by selecting the configuration of interests and activities, which identify it with its surroundings and your society.

## Methods

To know the cultural aspect of the City of Toluca, analyzing the geographical space, the methods were used: geographical, statistical, scientific and ethnographic, with the main purpose of systematically guiding the collection of information and discover the meaning that human beings give the symbolism created in the environment, which have largely built and how can be a parameter, concept or variable in relation to another or others (Hernández 2008).

Therefore, having the cultural knowledge of the City of Toluca allows us to assess the changes that are taking place, how they affect the environment and how they contribute to climate change, identifying the constant influence of parameters that influence and bring about social movements that provoke transformations, to the detriment of the environment and the weather.

The City is the capital of the State of Mexico and is characterized by having an altitude of 2,680 meters m.s.n.m.m., which has determined specific climatic conditions, which at the same time derive in very particular characteristics of flora and fauna. The most important mountain is Xinantécatl or Nevado de Toluca, whose maximum elevation is 4,650 m.s.n.m.

It is located between the coordinates 19  $^{\circ}$  17 '33 "N and 99  $^{\circ}$  39' 25" W, with an area of 420.14 km2. Its territory extends over the so-called Valley of Toluca, huge plain surrounded by mountains of volcanic nature. It includes two natural microregions: the microregion of the Northern zone, which is a wide valley in which most of the urbanized population is based, while the Southern microregion rises to 4,600 meters above mean sea level, at the top of the Nevado de Toluca, which is the third highest elevation in the State of Mexico, after Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl.

The municipality has 96 localities, of which five were chosen at random to know which are the cultural expressions that

characterize the inhabitants of the city of Toluca, which is considered as the most important commercial center of the Toluca Valley that includes 66 municipalities, creating a conurbated zone with municipalities such as Metepec, Zinacantepec, Almoloya de Juárez and Lerma. Its main economic activities are the transformation industry, first of all; followed by the trade that has two aspects of

presentation, the informal street and the formal one that is established in shopping centers and places and the tourist services whose main attraction is the Botanical Garden "Cosmovitral", followed by churches, museums and their gastronomic richness. Based on a wide variety of tacos, which generates territorial identity. The data is integrated into The following Fig. 2.

Estado de México

Fig. 2: Location of the City of Toluca

## Source:

https://www.google.com.mx/search?q=Mapa+Geografico+de+Toluca&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source =univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjkPXbp\_XUAhUOx2MKHb0lCCIQsAQILw&biw=1920&bih=950&dpr= 1#imgdii=3iZVcToAdoHG1M:&imgrc=drxvAlVcTu4DDM

#### **Results**

Starting from the idea that in Cultural Geography there is no clear definition of the categories and variables of study, they are presented as variables that Lora Cam defines as "Conception of the world" and are religion, moral, aesthetic education, politics, law and science philosophy, elements that enrich the human idiosyncrasy and makes homogeneous environments have different social representations, by integrating traditions, customs, beliefs and the organization of the space in a different way and according to the natural products that are provided, resulting in Culture, material and immaterial, Kollman 2007: 1).

From the phenomenological point of view, culture represents natural intersubjectivity and allows the observer

to introduce it into the characteristics of life forms that, when conjugated with spatial analysis, result in identifying the material objects created by the men of a society, in addition to the numerous traits that the members of a society hold in common, such as the symbols, behaviors, rituals, feelings of belonging, facial expressions, language, exclamations, gestures, drawings, emblems and belief systems that are present (Kollman, 2007; 1).

Considering the contribution of Claval, who mentions that the spatial culture is composed of the set of values, customs, beliefs and social practices that constitute the way of life of a specific group, recognizing in space the existence of its natural and human components and In their relationship, Table 1 shows the categories and variables that were considered for the study, which are registered at an ontological level (Claval, P. 2002; 36).

Table 1. Concentration of categories and

Analysis categories	Variables
Beliefs and traditions	Religion
	Values Moral standards Universal values Economic values Political values Legal rules
Education	Language Communication scholarship

	Science Habits
Politics	How to organize the territory
Philosophy	Symbols: Natural Social
Gastronomy	Typical food of the place

Source: Own elaboration, based on definitions of the Dictionary of the Royal Academy

Based on this classification, the observation, identification and analysis of the cultural spatiality of the city of Toluca and its repercussion on climate change is made, an important issue at international level, due to the negative impact it has on humanity, in the natural systems that register considerable increases in the temperature of the earth, the melting of the poles, the increase of the level of the oceans and with it fires, floods, hurricanes, frosts and droughts that have impacted the planet causing enormous damages.

Addressing the cultural spatiality of the City of Toluca through the methods presented gives us the landscape setting (Claval, 1999), of the inhabitants in terms of customs, traditions, beliefs habits, combined with the geographical factors of the place, generate a way of thinking and a specific profile of the inhabitants, reflecting more or less reliably the relationship between man and nature, distinguishing the physical qualities and evolution as a society.

Geographical factors that influence the character formation of the individual, which makes them hard, resistant or predisposed to sacrifice, that is, their personality is shaped, their way of thinking is shaped, assuming the moral and ethical values of the environment, they are the product of a historical heritage, so when doing field work, we proposed to interview random inhabitants, whose profile is indistinct, only consider that it was originally from the place, the chosen people some had no studies and others with studies, their The age fluctuated between 55 to 80 years.

Generates as it is the religious aspect, almost immediate response that leaves no doubt when questioning the individuals, whose profile of the informants were elderly people, aged 55 years - 80 years, with a primary school degree completed or without studies, that have always inhabited this place.

And according to what has been observed and the information collected, we have an appreciation of the assembly of inherited and transmissible traits that contribute to consolidating a territory (Kollmann, 2007: 7) whose way of organizing the environment is through the proposed categories and variables, they generate specific scenarios (Bordieu, 1989), in which the habits, beliefs, traditions and customs are manifested, with which space is homogenized and is the reference for the recognition of the form of social integration and thus we have the most relevant aspects from the perspective of the immaterial culture that affects the material.

Culture as a quality of life The religious aspect plays a very important role in the development of the social life of the inhabitants historically, who have St. Joseph as their patron saint and with festivals in their honor, the most important

being that of March 19 of each year, from there the others are derived in no lesser importance, as is the celebration of the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, on December 12. 90% are Catholics, therefore the rules of behavior are governed by this important element that gives identity.

The moral bases are based on religious beliefs and in that sense they apply to daily life, they unite society and serve to better organize the space, make the best decisions, unifying the social coexistence between the good and the bad, as a synonym of good habits; creates symbols and meanings both natural and social, in this sense the natural symbol par excellence is the Nevado de Toluca volcano and the most representative social symbol is the Cosmovitral.

In the same way the right is grouped, valuing mainly in having equal opportunities in education, health, public services. This shapes our culture, which is integrated by opinions and values that give meaning to the different ways of life, creating very strong social bonds, as Crang (1998) points out. In terms of education, this term has three connotations. In this territory, in the first place having Education is synonymous with good habits, such as greeting well-known people, being attentive, and helpful; in the whole municipality this habit is practiced, it is the crucial point of the study where it is denoted what has been learned familiarly in terms of caring for the environment and that is learned unconsciously, as is the handling of garbage.

Immediately we have schooling, which the City of Toluca has been considered as the capital of education for the large number of educational institutions it has, from initial education to higher education. Of the 66 municipalities that make up the Valle de Toluca region, its population attends this municipality to prepare. It has an average grade of 10 years, that is, on average its inhabitants have the first grade of High School.

Therefore science is a little significant aspect for the society of Toluca and this has much to do with the average level of schooling, which is considered in 8, that is, only second of secondary school, so they do not appreciate the benefits of this concept, feeling very abstract and very far away Finally, language as an essential means of human communication at the local level, considering that they are the interactions that allow us to understand ourselves as a social group, for that reason its peculiarity of transmission of ideas when using Spanish and Otomi. (Claval 1999; 32).

Considering art as part of the culture of a people, this allows us to appreciate the creations made by the human being to express a sensitive vision about the world, through plastic, linguistic or sound resources. Under this perspective in the City the expression is given in the religious sense and the inhabitants arrange in a colorful way the streets and the

churches, according to the patron saint, with the colors that represent the divinity.

The frames of the churches are adorned with litters that are true works of empirical art, which include materials such as natural or synthetic flowers very colorful, with folkloric-religious dances that are the product of the place of the cultural heritage of the ancestors.

When talking about politics as an integral element of culture, we have to organize a territory, to govern it, and it originates as an ideologically oriented activity in decision making, in order to solve or minimize the clash of conflicting interests that occur in the local society. However, there is a great problem in the environment, because the population does not feel part of this process and considers that only a few people can exercise it to the detriment of the communities that are increasingly marginalized.

Finally we can talk about the deterioration of values in recent years, as can be seen in the actions that are carried out on a daily basis, over the last few years. People are less responsible and less valued, since previously most of the neighbors went out to sweep their streets, they had the delicacy to pick up the trash and deposit it in its place and at the moment there are very few who practice the cleaning in the locality. A very clear example are the days of the square, where most sellers do not collect their garbage after selling, young people no longer show respect towards others and often damage society, such as painting neighbors' walls or destroying lamps, among other things, perhaps because of the landscape disorder that exists, in the environment, poorly constructed streets, unfinished houses and the lack of public services.

This is where the philosophy of the place is changing and seeks to respond to the questions that arise from the change of social mentality, therefore thinking that things have to be done well represents a change in behavior that is often learned in the community and are the values we have, so it is very difficult to understand this and improve our environment.

#### **Conclusions**

The Cultural Geography is a branch of the Geography that is in charge of the ethnographic study of a site showing diverse attributes that propitiate and give an identity to this site and its inhabitants, thus showing a sense of belonging within a social environment in which is unfolding and developing through the experiences, feelings and various factors that can make the individual feel an area of belonging.

This study shows the relationship between man and nature, where invariably altitude, relief and climate play a very important role in shaping the culture of a place, by the traditions, customs and beliefs that are formed around the natural compounds. Undoubtedly, Cultural Geography teaches us to measure the development of a country, state or people, through the culture of a society that identifies it and the culture of each person that determines in a certain way the economic level and the development personal of each one. The conjugation of methods allows to create study possibilities, as shown in the development of this work carried out in the City of Toluca and peripheral zone,

considering as categories the analysis of customs, traditions, beliefs, habits and language that, conjugated in the geographical environment, generate the identity of the environment and idiosyncrasy.

When concentrating the information of the people to whom a survey was applied, originating from the place regardless of their schooling, their age considered was from 17 to 50 years, which concluded that it is a highly religious society; the localities have a patron saint to whom they organize a great annual festival, where all the inhabitants cooperate economically and collaboratively, without prejudices or questioning, and all are part of the same ideal, so their social life revolves around religion.

The other concepts are learned under the religious premise, becoming relevant in their social and individual behavior, leaving on the scale almost to the last what represents the study of science, knowledge, which is not attractive to them, by the type of answers that they gave much ignorance, which leads us to conclude that culturally difficult economic development of this region, by the way of thinking derived from this form of relationship and interaction between the geographical, social and economic components.

It is highlighted that this ethnographic study allowed to describe the cultural characteristics of the City of Toluca, in an inclusive treatment that brings together the social, religious, educational, political and philosophical, elements that integrate culture and cannot be separated from space, rather it can be said that it is the result of the interactions between the medium and man, where material objects take on meaning because of the symbolism that characterizes the community.

This is the part of Geography that leads us to reflect on the cultural aspect, basis and foundation of what we are. It exists in us before we were born and is the moral and intellectual contribution of our parents at the beginning and our environment later, which leads us to reflect on whether we can change our behavior, customs and values in favor of the environment, in the City of Toluca. Finally, it is commented that without a doubt the Cultural Geography deals with the multiple relations and interactions of society with the geographical space, distinguishing the natural, social and economic components that generate a defined cultural expression of a territory, which determines its very particular way of thinking and organizational structure of society in a natural way.

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