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Changes over time in the typical dress of the Cholas Cuencanas

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Abstract--This article presents the title "Changes over time in the Typical Costume of the Cholas Cuencanas" valuing it as a great contribution to the ethnic diversity of Ecuador. We know that there are 14 nationalities and 18 indigenous peoples in a country with a relatively small territory. Therefore, the chola from Cuenca emerges as a cultural and traditional icon. The present investigation used the bibliographic review method since it investigates, collects and extracts relevant information on the transformations and evolution, in this case, the clothing of the Cuenca chola that with the new fashions has gradually been lost, having as result in an abandonment of the cultural identity of the city of Cuenca. Here we will try to expose the evolution that the clothing of the Cuenca chola has had and the importance it has as a culture and tradition.

Keywords--culture, tradition, clothing, crafts, identity, history.

Introduction

Clothing is very important in the field of culture; it is a feature of the concept understood as culture. One of the functions that clothing fulfills is to identify and define an individual's belonging to a society, group, or social class. Ecuador has a territory full of cultures, each one of them varies from one region to another. In the province of Azuay and with great specialty in the Cuenca canton, an icon character of the place called the Chola Cuencana stands out. This character dresses in colorful clothes, which enhance the beauty of Cuencan femininity. The clothing of the Chola Cuencana shines with great uniqueness among the other nearby communities, their clothing has a long journey, having its origin from colonial times, going through transitions through time until reaching the present time.

Method

This article was prepared under the bases of the bibliographic review method, since it allows us to conceive critical thinking about everything read. The production of a bibliographic observation enhances human talent both in writing and reading (Peña, 2010). This statement is essential, since it makes the interested reader carry out an exhaustive review of all the articles investigated, it also helps to compress the necessary information from various sources. It should be noted that not only these benefits are obtained, but also helps to find links with other texts and to confront different thoughts of the authors regarding a given topic. The bibliographic review helps to write texts with greater cohesion, simplifying the final work.

In addition, the bibliography helps to "extract, translate, condense and record the central ideas of other texts" (Peña, 2010, p.1). From an objective point of view, bibliographic verification is a fundamental step for any person who wishes to write a quality text, therefore, it is necessary to consider knowing the different steps that must be followed in its preparation. In this sense, all the research obtained has gone through the filter of a magnifying glass, capturing, and analyzing the data of real value that contributed to this article, these data give a reflection on how the clothing of the peasant woman of the Cuenca canton has evolved. as an icon of local society.

Discussion

The culture of the Chola Cuencana is a cultural and musical tradition, native to the Cuenca canton in the province of Azuay, Ecuador. This culture is characterized by its dancers, musicians, and unique clothing, being a way of expressing the cultural identity of Cuenca. To have a clearer picture of how the clothing of the Cuenca chola has evolved, strategic points will be addressed that give more information and context of the subject matter. This is how history is part of this explanation, in turn the identity of a people that undoubtedly leads us to think deeply about knowledge, beliefs, customs, habits and on this occasion leads us to reflect on something that the view is simple, but it is full of ancestral richness. With these hors d'oeuvres we will have the protagonist, who without a doubt are the typical costumes of the Cañari cholita and their evolution over time.

Historical Fact of the knowledge of the lady of Azuay, its anthropology, and Social Context

The culture of the Chola Cuencana arose in the 17th century in Cuenca, after the result of the biological and cultural miscegenation that began in America with the arrival of the Europeans together with the Afro-descendants and their expansion in the Cuenca territory. It is here, where the indigenous and Spanish race is syncretized, which favors the appearance of the aboriginal or mestizo woman known as the "Chola Cuencana". This woman embodies the best of the indigenous and colonial Spanish culture of the city and the countryside (Arteaga, 2002). During the biological miscegenation, various ethnic groups shared their cultural learning, which led them to implement their customs, traditions, culinary elements, language, religion and clothing, for which it helped give rise to the aboriginal woman. According to the Dictionary of Ludovico Bertoni of 1612, the word chola designates the product of the mixture of animals of different races (Arteaga, 2002).

The cultural identity of the Chola Cuenca is a symbol of the city of Cuenca in approximately 1600 referring to the Indian women of domestic service, since its name also gained strength when indigenous women related to the Spanish or important people in the city, which which caused their clothing of shoes, skirts, blouse and cloth to be modified, giving meaning to the transformation in clothing (Arteaga, 2002). In this way, the emblematic figure that reflects the union of cultures is born from a cultural context where customs, traditions and a new identity can be appreciated. La Chola Cuencana is a model woman, responsible for preserving the best aspects of both urban and rural indigenous culture, represents fertility and denotes the qualities of the landscape (2009). Therefore, this is a fundamental aspect of the cultural identity of the city of Cuenca, being a means to maintain and transmit from generation to generation the cultural tradition, music, dance and clothing that are key pieces of wealth and cultural diversity of Cuenca (Klaufus, 2009).

Therefore, in the town of Cuenca, a sculpture representing the Chola Cuenca has been made, paying tribute to the woman of the town and the identity of the citizens of Cuenca, this monument occupies a space in the so-called roundel "Chola Cuenca" (Tensaca, 2016). The monument reflects the strengthening and cultural development that the Cuencanos currently have, reflecting their roots in the nostalgic image of the countryside. In the traditions and customs of the city, the Cholas from Cuenca make their appearances showing the cultural traits that have been polished for years. In the festivities that are celebrated in the city, the Cuenca women dress as cholas as a sign of the conservative fidelity that the city has when venerating cultural identity. (Tensaca, 2016).

Identity of the Cuenca Chola

The identity of the Chola Cuencana is a fundamental aspect of the culture of Cuenca, it is a way of expressing social change since important elements such as the cultural values of our ancestors can be appreciated. In this sense, Peña, and Rodríguez mention that the cholas represent women with a marked religion, whose commitment is relevant to the community through the planning and

organization of religious festivals, honoring their patron. These characters put the traditions of the peoples in importance because dance skills, textiles, gastronomy, jewelry, among others, are highlighted through demonstration acts in each festivity that takes place in the center of Cuenca. (Peña and Rodríguez, 2022).

The music of the Chola Cuencana is a key element in the formation of the identity of each Azuayo since it is characterized by its happy and energetic rhythms, being a means to express joy, passion, and love for the province. Music is an integral part of the dances of the Chola Cuencana, since it allows the dancers to express their emotions, be they negative or positive. The dances are very important within the identity, since they are focused on how the province of Azuay has been welcoming the Cuenca culture as its own, the joyful movements of the albazo and parade, the use of clothing being lively and joyful, to the time the characterization of the fruits that are born in the Azuayo fields.

The most important thing that reflects the mountain culture is the distinctive clothing with the use of a long skirt, a cloak, and a hat in a colorful way. It is thus, that the Chola Cuencana is a cultural manifestation in all its aspects; it is an identity that is based on tradition, music, and dance. The author Medina mentions that the lady of Cuenca is a symbol of identity of the southern mountains, an example of Cuenca since the beginning of the 16th century, the peasant woman is designated in this way due to the recognition of her typical clothing where she always wears a typical skirt of intense colors and striking threads, well-made braids, a donut straw hat, a blouse, earrings and the macanas (2020). Therefore, the clothing of the Chola Cuencana is the essence and identity that makes Cuenca an emblematic place, where the color of each garment together with the Chola reflects the joy and cultural diversity that exists in the city.

Parts of the traditional garments of the Chola Cuencana

Guiracocha says that the typical costume of this Andean woman in contemporary times has been preserved in any way, the skirt, blouse, cloth and hat, which are clothing used in the conquest, which has not undergone a transformation process compared to the garment interior, the appreciation of precious metals currently loses its notoriety due to its high price or fear of disappearance, only on important traditional dates the cholas from Cuenca wear them (2016). In this way, the garments that make up the typical costume of this Andean woman have changed over time, which, at present, there are already new accessories that accompany the clothing, but likewise it is no longer easily accessible for all, due to its high price and the time it takes to make it. These two factors have led women to resort to using what we know today as modern clothing, even though the skirt, blouse, cloth, straw hat, shawl, and the other elements that will be described below are only for occasional use.

The skirt

The skirt, according to Medina (2020), "is a lap that covers the lower part from the pelvis to the calves, being a fundamental accessory in her clothing, it is embroidered in various primary colors and in the same way, it has a technique of

embroidery of striking objects in flora". Likewise, the garment is still maintained, but with different changes in the production time, since it takes more time to create a skirt and the way to make it with the use of different materials to give better elegance and quality.

The lap that covers the lower part of the body, starting from the pelvis and ending at the calf, with different variants depending on the styles of fashion (Guiracocha, 2016). In the typical costume of the Chola Cuencana, the most important garment is the skirt, since, when worn, it transmits the joy, identity and cultural secrecy from which the Chola arose, with its colors and embroidery that attract attention, it is like this which is the key piece, because it covers half of the woman's body, reflecting a large part of the clothing. According to Paz and Miño (2008), "The lap distributes the center and the Bolsicón, currently this garment is used in festive events, the central part that is on the lower side of this outfit, likewise has edges that stand out." Therefore, the bag is no longer very common to wear at the same time with the skirt because it becomes very uncomfortable and heavy to use daily. In this way, they are used more when the Cuenca festivities are held, demonstrating the quality of its variety of embroideries and striking colors.

Center

The centerpiece of the outfit is the long inner skirt, which is a full, elaborate skirt that reaches down to the Chola's ankles. It is made with colorful fabrics and decorated with lace and embroidery on the inside with the intention of symbolizing the femininity of the Cuenca woman. According to Guiracocha (2016), the center has the particularity of being made in bright colors, of which the one that stands out the most is strong yellow or as it was commonly called "onza de oro".", Another widely used color was the intense pink called "pink carnation". In the inner thread of this garment, the seam is visualized marking the pigments that vary designs that resemble the rural natural contour. The garment is placed first and then the skirt is placed on top where the movement of the skirt shows the colorful embroideries. Dos from the center and at the same time it helps the skirt look wider with a new round molded figure.

Pocket

The pocket is a skirt that is placed in front of the main skirt, which is hung from the belt. The design of the garment does not have embroidery if it is not composed of a single simple design with well-defined edges and they are in dark colors. "The authentic way to use it is by placing the sash on the cooked lap, lifting the sash to one side so that the center of the seam can be seen" (Peñaherrera, 2013). The bags used by the Cholas Cuencanas are commonly designed in black, yellow, purple and green colors. For its elaboration, the use of wool was replaced by velvet, which is a very woolly and soft fabric to the touch, giving a better quality and elegance, shine as well as striking.

The embroidery

The embroidery of the typical outfit is a traditional embroidery technique that has been developed in the city of Cuenca. This technique is characterized by its

elaborate designs and floral patterns, which are usually embroidered on traditional clothes such as the Chola dress in its blouse, skirt and cloth. The colors used in these embroideries are bright, striking and varied, depending on the occasion or the design requested. The embroidery on the garments expresses the joy and culture of Cuenca, since when visualizing it, the identity of the city can be recognized.

The embroidery according to Peña and Rodríguez is a complement to the suits; its importance is found in the cultural meaning that distinguishes it, likewise, it gives a value of greatness, it is synonymous with hubbub and aesthetics (2022). Embroidery is an essential piece within the typical clothing, since it allows to identify the Cuenca culture with its unique flower figures in the skirts, blouses, and cloths, with a meaning that they are very happy people, with a cultural diversity of customs. and traditions.

The embroidered shirt

It is one of the significant costumes that cannot be missing in the Chola clothing, accordingly, which covers a large part of the body when used with the accompaniment of the cloth. Its design is composed of wide sleeves and a rounded neckline, which is usually made of light fabric such as cotton. Also, use embroidery that usually includes floral patterns and intricate designs all over the outside of the blouse. These embroideries give a unique and vibrant touch to the garment, in the way that the designs can be differentiated with those of other cultures of the region.

According to Medina, the shirt covers the chest, and its manufacture is specifically made of white yarn, likewise, they are traded in warm pigments (2020). In the same way, in the embroidering of the shirt one can identify the elasticity in the part of the pelvis, with a short nose and marked neckline. Likewise, around the neck and sleeves, floral embroidery of the same color that the entire blouse is designed is applied, and these at the same time stand out from the garment, why they can be distinguished.

Cloth

The cloth is a scarf-type garment used by the Cholas Cuencanas to cover their chests, they are recognized for their bright colors and unique designs that include floral embroidery and traditional motifs. One of the most outstanding cloths is the one that is embroidered in the town of Gualaceo, Azuaya province, what makes it unique is that it always has large embroidery of the Ecuadorian shield, it also reflects the creativity and skill of local weavers and are considered an art. This cloth is a presumption of local crafts, which is aesthetically covered with ikat patterns, alluding to the styles chosen in color, being made of lada and cotton" (Paz and Miño, 2008). Therefore, the cloth that The Cholas Cuencanas use comes from the city of Guacaleo, where they are made by local artisans, going through a weaving process and painted with natural dyes to give it a more distinctive and elegant color. The colors that are most distinguished from the cloths are purple, black, red and pink light and at the same time dark.

The toquilla straw hat

It is a traditional Ecuadorian hat that is made by hand with the straw of the Toquilla palm. It is used in typical clothing for its elegance and quality as it is also a symbol of the City of Cuenca. This hat is used by the Cholas to cover their heads from the cold or the sun and at the same time they are white with a black ribbon around them. The spinning of the hat is distinguished in three parts, the insole, middle finish and seam, it is made from the last and with it give appreciation to the head (Guaracha, 2016). This garment is key in the clothing of the Chola, according to the fact that it is a symbol of the crafts that are made in the city of Cuenca, it is a piece that should not be missing in it, because it is manufactured in the same place and because At the same time, it is a worldwide export craft that demonstrates the work of Ecuadorian artisans and the cultural identity.

Zarcillo and Candongas

They are a type of traditional earrings from the city of Cuenca, and this is also used by the Chola Cuencana. These earrings are known for their elaborate decoration and for being a key element in the clothing of Cuencan women. The pieces are made by hand with materials such as silver and gold with bright colors of bird and crescent designs accompanied by precious stones. (Malo and Páez, 2019). Therefore, the tendrils refer to the earrings used by the Chola Cuencana with a brilliant, high-quality crescent design, made with precious materials. Its use is very important, since when used it helps the chola to look more elegant with the shine it reflects, and the materials used in its preparation.

Shoes or Slippers

The shoes, according to Peña and Rodríguez (2022) are made of leather, they are fundamental, since they highlight the typical outfit and give it a more elegant touch, being a piece made by the hands of artisans from the city. This type of traditional footwear from Cuenca, is known for its unique style and its elaborate decoration, it is also used for special occasions and festivals, when using the Chola it represents the crafts and cultural heritage of the place. The designs of the shoes vary from black or white, with an exposed design, that it is full of holes, when putting on the foot it must be attached to straps for a good placement and in this way, you can easily see the parts of the shoe. walk through the spaces that exist.

Changes in the traditional attire of the chola cuencana

Now, as it has already been known that the traditional attire is an emblematic symbol of Cuenca, but over the years it must be known that it has undergone several changes that up to the present time it has adopted new identities and fashions, according to designs, embroidery, colors, sizes, and details. The typical costume was not always what we know until today, since it has always been incorporating new styles to have a better improvement in quality and elegance.

In the colonial era between the mid-seventeenth century, the Chola used to dress in skirts made of local cloth and liglla with stripes of gold thread that were the clothing of indigenous and white women. At that time, he began using baize skirts that were long and well decorated, in the same way baize garters or blankets to cover the back and shoulders, then ruan shirts or earth canvas, made of wool with different colors and as Anacos underwear (Peña and Rodríguez, 2022). The mestizo women began incorporating the styles, materials and designs of the Europeans into their clothing to build this typical clothing that had its own meaning and characterization from the way in which they were created by hand, giving a quality of various details and unique embroideries with bright colors.

In the Republican era, with the passing of time, new changes arose in the clothing of the aboriginal woman with the diverse implementation of embroidery, colors and some garments, giving more meaning and presence in society to the Chola Cuencana. Medina assures that the clothing that was used over time was a hat, a scarf, a silk shirt, a long sash, a skirt with bright colors adorned with hand-embroidered flowers, a liglla or blanket, a jewelery basket, however, there were times when shoes or boots were used (Medina, 2020). The changes that were emerging, gave way to the improvement of the clothing and the quality of the garments with new details, giving an elegant style, which was becoming common in adapting it to the typical costume.

Likewise, as Diego Arteaga mentions in the Republican era, the use of various materials for the elaboration of the skirts was precarious, since only the cloth was used (Diego, 2002). At this time the importance of making the same garments with different materials was already losing importance, so they were based more on using few materials to make the clothing quite striking and of quality. In figure 1, you can see the traditional clothing of the Chola Cuencana.



Figure 1. Traditional clothing of the Chola Cuencana
Source: Belempro (2019)

Later, at the beginning of the 19th century, the clothing of the Cuenca chola was coupled with other new fashions and styles of the Spanish urban territory, with a more typical clothing with more striking colors and the use of handicrafts. Among the clothing that was used at that time is the skirt with a variety of flower decorations and globular shapes, the cloth, the white blouse with decorative borders, the cloth or macana that is perfected with various colors, the use of the

traditional cuencano hat, the slippers and the bolsicón. The chola used two very heavy skirts with various ornaments, wearing a white shirt with a short white trumpet and an opening attached to the body (Tenesaca, 2016). The use of the toquilla straw hat, the cloths and patent leather slippers were already making the clothing of the chola, therefore, these were styles of the urban sectors that were already another garment for clothing, leaving aside the use of the materials that were used in the first garments and the design of the embroidery and decorations.

On the other hand, changes were also applied to the fabrics for the preparation of the clothing from the use of lighter and shinier fabrics. The clothing was made of baize, silk, cotton, velvet, accentuating the soft pigments that stand out when they are reversed with the white of the shirt and the fustan. Among its utensils, the jewels and ornaments that embellish the suit are appreciated (Malo and Páez, 2019).

At present, the Chola Cuencana, has become an iconic and historical cultural character that preserves the culture of Cuenca when celebrations and festivities are held, leaving aside the importance of the working mixed-race aboriginal woman. In this way, both the presence of the chola and her clothing have had great changes according to the cultural context. The suit has two skirts, the pocket in cold, dark colors and the center with colorful embroidery, however, nowadays they are no longer used due to their high costs, which will depend on whether you have the possibility of using the Chola, at the same weight of the center and pocket that make it very uncomfortable to use (Paz and Miño, 2008). Today the typical native clothing has changed to the use of skirts with a thick and wide style, white blouses with a triangular neck and full of embroidery, with a variety of color combinations, in which each time it loses its originality and meaning. According to Malo and Páez (2019), they are comprised of two curved skirts with vertical waves, an interior one made with examples of colored fauna, and an exterior one made of a pigment; shirts embellished with tucks and bright threads and sequins on cuffs, sleeves, and collars; cloth woven with the ikat technique; Cuenca hat, string stockings; shiny shoes.

The changes that have been emerging in the typical dress is due to the way of making the garments applying new styles, materials, designs, embroidery, and accessories. So, with the passing of time and the advancement of technology, new dress fashions have been appearing, which has caused the production of typical clothing to change, but at the same time, women are leaving behind the use and decide to use modern clothing. Meanwhile, with the influence that the appearance of modern clothing has in Cuenca society, some changes will continue to be made in the typical clothing of the Chola Cuenca. For Tenesaca (2016), the production of identity is in continuous change, making people look to other horizons, which is why, nowadays, the inhabitants of Cuenca have been imposing new social practices wearing sports and casual clothing such as pants, shoes, t-shirts, sweaters, among others, leaving behind traditional clothing for use in festivities and celebrations of important dates of the year.

Conclusions

In the course of time, it has had some changes from the skirt, center, cloth, shoes, hat, embroidery, and blouse, from the way of making it, the use of new materials, which has made it have a high price for use. Therefore, the features of the first clothing that gave rise to the solemn character of the Cuenca chola as a tangible heritage of the city of Cuenca are no longer so visible in the current clothing, as new fashions have emerged and the appearance of new garments, which that has made the artisans who produce these typical garments choose to combine these styles. Trying to bring the typical clothing to the new fashions has meant that the women of the Cuenca cannot access to use the garments due to their high cost, while fewer and fewer women use these garments and at the same time the clothing passes to be a suit for celebrations and parties in the city and not for daily use.

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