

The craft sector: an approach to their identity and trade

El sector artesanal: un acercamiento a su identidad y al comercio

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze from a critical perspective the cultural identity and the commercialization of the artisanal sector in Mexico making an international comparison. Based on the fact that "handicrafts" are the identity of a town, community, person or country, on many occasions this "Identity" is lost when people called "intermediaries" take advantage of artisans and buy their merchandise at low cost, to sell them obtaining important profits at the expense of the work of the artisans; the "intermediary" is only interested in trade, sales, profits; that is to say, it only cares about the merchandise, without giving any value to the essence of the crafts than the cultural identity of who created it. The methodology of this research was qualitative with a documentary technique where articles were reviewed through ABI/INFORM Global Google Scholar, obtaining as results 12 articles that the words or keywords referred to. The main findings were that throughout Latin America it is observed that the artisanal sector is penalized in terms of costs and that it occurs more in the form of intermediaries instead of direct sales and this results in the artisanal sector not being valued as a town identity.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente artículo es analizar desde una perspectiva crítica la identidad cultural y la comercialización del sector artesanal en México haciendo una comparación internacional. Partiendo de que las "artesanías" son la identidad de un pueblo, comunidad, persona o país, en muchas ocasiones se pierde esta "Identidad" cuando personas llamadas "intermediarios", se aprovechan de los artesanos y les compran su mercancía a bajo costo, para venderlas después obteniendo ganancias importantes a costa del trabajo de los artesanos; el "intermediario", sólo le interesa el comercio, la venta, las ganancias; es decir, solo le importa la mercancía, sin darle valor alguno a la esencia de las artesanías que la identidad cultural de quién la creó. La metodología de esta investigación fue cualitativa con una técnica documental donde se revisaron artículos a través de ABI/INFORM Global google Académico obteniendo como resultados 12 artículos que las palabras o keywords hacían referencia a este. Los principales hallazgos fueron que en toda Latinoamérica se observa que el sector artesanal está castigado en cuanto a costos y que se da más de forma de intermediarios en lugar de la venta directa y esto trae como consecuencia que no se le de valor al sector artesanal como identidad del pueblo.

Craft sector, Trade, Identity

Sector artesanal, comercio, identidad

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Introduction

Article 2 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States currently contemplates and recognises the existence of "indigenous" peoples as part of the country's cultural plurality. In other words, it raises to a higher hierarchy of norms the conformation of a Mexico in which various ways of being, thinking and acting are integrated; a reason that gives modern Mexico a social reality; not only as it had been made to feel, that the thinking and way of life of Mexicans was only one. Therefore, the plurality among the social groups that make up the Mexican community is varied; and, in recognition of this, the Constituent Assembly stipulates and decides so (Carbonell, 2004).

In this regard, our Supreme Law determines that: "Awareness of their indigenous identity shall be a fundamental criterion for determining to whom the provisions on indigenous peoples apply" (Unión, 2006); this is a significant advance in the vision of equality, given that the "identity" of indigenous groups is recognised by it, fulfilling the historical commitment to put them on an "equal" footing when the administrative authority has to resolve controversial issues or questions of application of the Law. In other words, when the administrative authority has to apply norms or regulatory provisions, it will do so with full knowledge of the way of life, culture and language of the people belonging to the so-called "indigenous peoples".

Furthermore, our Magna Carta recognises that the reality of Mexican society is one and that which is embodied in the norm is another, which is why "contrariu sensu" it stipulates in its content that this is not the case in daily life and that it needs to be integrated in writing so that the authorities, above all, avoid discrimination against this sector of the population at all costs.

In the same constitutional precept in its fourth paragraph, the constitutions of the federal states must also recognise indigenous peoples and communities and their autonomy, which states: the recognition of indigenous peoples and communities shall be made in the constitutions and laws of the federal states, which shall take into account, in addition to the general principles established in the previous paragraphs of this article, ethno-linguistic and physical settlement criteria (Unión, 2006). (Unión, 2006).

It is clear, then, that the constituent has managed to elevate equality in Mexican society to constitutional rank, through the express recognition that the basis of society itself are the "indigenous peoples". The question then arises: what is constitutional recognition?

Constitutional recognition of indigenous groups is equivalent to institutional recognition, i.e. the acceptance of the existence and the rights and obligations of a sector of the population by the state, not only in a political discourse, but to raise it to constitutional rank is to place public institutions at the service of this sector of society, to safeguard those rights and enforce compliance with state norms; and if the Constitution itself obliges public institutions to such recognition, it also obliges them to promote their way of life.

Since 2000, there has been significant progress in the world with regard to the recognition of indigenous peoples, especially in the United Nations, where one of the important drivers of the social movement was the roundtable entitled "Economic Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean" in 2017 and especially the "United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples", Convention 169, published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2014. (UNITED NATIONS, 2014).

Research problem

In Mexico there is a great problem of not giving the credit that the artisan sector deserves. Undoubtedly, "middlemanism" is a necessary evil, but at the same time it is a challenge for the handicraft industry on a small scale; and at the same time, the artisan lacks market vision and there are some who, in addition to creating the handicrafts, market them directly; but unfortunately to do so, they have no choice but to sell their products on the streets, pavements, in a forum, or at a town or community fair; and the "crafts" as a representation and manifestation of the "cultural identity" of who created them, are unique pieces, but for sale to "intermediaries", they mass produce their products, and only that cultural expression remains for the artisans; and the final buyer, sees in these products the style, the ornamental aesthetics or practical use or satisfaction of daily needs, without appreciating the cultural traits of their creator; this phenomenon is not typical of Mexico (Bustos, 2017) and (Cerdas, 2010).

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In the same idea, it is convenient to know, grosso modo, the diverse ways of life of the Mexican population, in times of pandemic and economic globalisation; globalisation that focuses on the economy and finance, but in the background is a change of thinking towards the uniform determination of large commercial corporations that have invaded the world, but with it the national production has fallen substantially in all sectors; but in reality it is the "Intermediaries", to a large extent, who have been economically impacted; but as most of the craft industry relies on them, the artisans have been impacted in the sale of their products, as a final result. But it is necessary to have some elements of the products themselves for their commercialisation; the question arises: What do "handicrafts" need in order to be sold in large departmental chains? Therefore, this research focuses on analysing from a critical perspective the cultural identity and the commercialisation of the handicraft sector in Mexico, making an international comparison.

Literature review

The original (indigenous) peoples of Mexico

According to the "Sistema de Información Cultural" of the Government of the Republic, there are currently 71 indigenous peoples, distributed as follows:

State	Municipality/Locality	Name
Baja California	Ensenada	Ku'ahles
		Cochimíes
		Pa ipaís
		Kiliwas
Campeche	Campeche	Cucapás
		Kumiaís
		Texistepequeños
		Texistepequeños
Campeche	Campeche	Ixiles
		Q'eqchis'
Campeche	Champotón	K'iches
		Awakatekos
Coahuila	Coahuila	Kikapúes
Chiapas	Amatenango de la Frontera	Jakaltekos
		Kaqchikeles
		Mames
		k'anjob'ales-Q'anjob'ales
		Tojolabales
		Tekos
		Mochós
Chiapas	Mazapa de Madero	Tzeltales
		Lacandonces
Chiapas	Rayón	Zoques
		Chujes
Chiapas	La Trinitaria	Akatekos

Chihuahua	Guachochi	Tarahumaras
	Guadalupe y Calvo	Tepehuanos del norte
	Madera	Pimas
	Uruachi	Guarijío
Ciudad de México	Ciudad de México	Nahuas
Durango	valle de Canatlán	Tepehuanos del sur
Guanajuato	Guanajuato	Chichimecas
Guerrero	Ometepec	Amuzgos
	San Luis Acatlán	Tlapanecos
Hidalgo	Valle del Mezquital	Otomíes
Estado de México	Ixtlahuaca	Mazahuas
	Ocuilan	Tlahuicas
	Temascaltepec	Matlatzincas
Michoacán	islas del Lago de Pátzcuaro	P'urhépechas
Nayarit	Del Nayar	Coras
	La Yesca	Huicholes
Oaxaca	Huautla de Jiménez	Mazatecos
	Juchitán de Zaragoza	Zapotecos
	Oaxaca de Juárez	Mixtecos
	San Martín Itunyoso	Triquis
	San Mateo del Mar	Huaves
	Santa María Ixcatlán	Ixcatecos
	Santa María Nativitas	Chocholtecos
	Santa María Zacatepec	Tacuates
	Santiago Yaitepec	Chatinos
	Unión Hidalgo	Mixes
	San Juan Bautista Valle Nacional	Chinantecos
Puebla	Tehuacán	Popolocas
San Luis Potosí	Ebano	Huastecos
	Santa Catarina	Pames
Sonora	Alamos	Guarijíos
	Cajeme	Yaquis
	Hermosillo	Seris
	Huatabampo	Mayos
	General Plutarco Elías Calles	Pápagos
Tabasco	Jalpa de Méndez	Ayapanecos
Veracruz	Filomeno Mata	Totonacos
	Ixhuatlán de Madero	Tepehuas
	Oluta	Olutecos
	Sayula de Alemán	Popolucas
Veracruz	Sayula de Alemán	Sayultecos
		Texistepec
Yucatán	Macuspana	Chontales
	All the territory	Mayas

Table 1

Source: Own elaboration

The population of indigenous peoples is 23.2 million people nationwide, ((INEGI, 2022); and there are 68 native languages (REPÚBLICA, 2021). The original peoples, also called "indigenous peoples", have "uses and customs" that are specific to their way of life, their environment and their interpretation of the world, or "Cosmovision".

Culture

The concept of "culture" is defined from different points of view; the anthropological one, according to Podestá (2006), determines that Edward B. Taylor defines it as "...". Taylor defines it as "... that totality that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other aptitudes and habits that man acquires as a member of society"; it can be appreciated from the concept that the way of life of people as individuals or as a group is the central axis that makes "culture"; Each person who integrates a social group, is made to its rules, but also to its way of life where "art" is emphasised, but without pretending to separate it from the community as a whole; and it is where it can be deduced that "art" is undoubtedly the expression of all its knowledge, beliefs, morals and customs as a form of individual and social life.

From sociological thought, "culture", according to Murguía (2002), citing Emile Durkheim, is defined as "a set of social phenomena".

According to social psychology, "culture" is: a system of interrelationships between individual ontogenetic processes, social and historical processes of collective behaviour in a given period of time, and anthropological and historical processes that make cultural products possible, including artistic, everyday, scientific, technological and folkloric manifestations (Vera, 2009).

From the above definitions, it can be seen that the foundation that gives the character of "culture" is the thinking of a social conglomerate; its interpretation of life and the subjective understanding of its natural environment and its worldview of the encounter with its deities. It is also to rescue from the previous statements that they are assumed behaviours, which give them that sense for life and for keeping active naturally.

According to the declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which defines "culture" as: the set of distinctive spiritual, material and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It encompasses, in addition to arts and literature, ways of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, beliefs and traditions (Molano, 2007).

Therefore, "culture" is a harmonious whole, it is that which distinguishes a people from others, with its characteristic stamp of unique manifestations; assumed knowledge that is transmitted from generation to generation in that social group. Peoples are distinguished by their way of life which gives them "identity", and makes them unique in the social sphere where they belong and interact; such as "indigenous peoples".

"Culture" and Law in Mexico.

The philosophical vision that makes law possible is society. The behaviour of individuals as they interact with other members of the group. Therefore, the purpose of Law is the "social order"; that is, to maintain the individuals of a society in a structure through rules of behaviour and institutions of the State, for its study and solution in case of "conflicts" when necessary (Gonnet, 2018).

As it is not the object of study of the present work, the relationship between culture and Law, we will not delve into the subject; but it is worth noting that according to Ihering's definition of Law, which gives meaning to it, it is the so-called "spirit of Law" which in his work determines that it is the same as being the foundation of Law and interpreted as the "ideas, conceptions, tendencies of a people and of an era", in short it can be understood as Law being the product of the "thinking of a people". (Rodriguez, 1987).

Regarding the term "culture" it has been seen from three perspectives; the first as a derivation of the word "cultivation" which would be the cultivation of the land, and in metaphorical form it would be "the cultivation of the human being", by itself and in society, protected by the nature of the word that its base is "the cult", understood as "knowledge"; the second as "set of knowledge to develop a critical judgment" and the third as "set of ways of life and customs, knowledge and degree of artistic, scientific, industrial development, in an era and social group" (Hurtado, 2011, Hurtado, 2011). (Hurtado, 2011).

Cultural identity

Identity in the words of Molano (2007) as: Identity is only possible and can only be manifested on the basis of cultural heritage, which exists beforehand and its existence is independent of its recognition or valuation. It is society that, as an active agent, configures its cultural heritage by establishing and identifying those elements that it wishes to value and assume as its own, and those that naturally become the referent of identity (Molano, 2007).

According to what has been described, "cultural identity" is made up of two linguistic meanings, "heritage" and "culture".

It can be seen that "heritage" according to the concept of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language is: "set of goods and rights acquired by any title" (Spanish, 2021). (Spanish, 2021).

Thus, "cultural identity" can be integrated, on the one hand, of physical or natural heritage and on the other hand, intangible heritage; according to the analysis of (Cepeda, 2017) "natural heritage", (...), is constituted by physical, biological, geological and physiographic formations that make up the habitat of endangered species and that present an exceptional universal value and natural places with an exceptional universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty. Intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, together with the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith.

From an anthropological point of view, there are two visions of "cultural identity", the "essentialist current" and the "constructivist current"; the former assumes that cultural traits are transmitted through generations and that, at the same time, they shape "cultural identity"; the latter states that identity is something that is constructed, ignoring the first current, which can be understood as something that is inherited (Martínez, 2008).

These points of view have something in common; the determination that "cultural identity" exists, "cultural identity" is drawn from what is described, which is undoubtedly the "expression of the sensitive spirit of the beliefs of some people"; "that which is there, but which is not seen"; that immateriality subsumed and expressed in different forms, with words, with gestures, with bodily attitudes, as gestures, among others, and sometimes in materials, which give unique value to such expressions, because it represents both the material and immaterial cultural heritage of each person, group or society.

The "cultural identity" can only be imagined, but the person or human group that lives it, is the one that has the exclusivity to do so, because I repeat, they live it; it is among them; although, their beliefs are for some even fanciful, as a discriminatory trait, it reflects their ignorance in not understanding that "immaterial cultural heritage" of the people.

In this sense, we all have a "cultural identity", even the scientific and technological work; it is remembered with nostalgia, that phrase of our ancestors who said "the sun rises for everyone"; which made it known that, in a society, each person or group has their own space. For example, science and technology are currently gaining space among the people, and it cannot be denied that even in spaces where it was not known, today the use of technology, derived from modern science, has intrusion; but the cultural identity of indigenous peoples also has its own space, and also, although not with the same expansion as science and technology, it is gaining space not only in Mexico, but in Latin America; Each "cultural identity" has its own independent space, without falling into dramatism, in expressions such as "indigenous peoples are going to disappear because of science and technology, which is relegating them", is not entirely correct, because as part of the reflection, "cultural identity" is not lost, it is the spaces that move, and specifically, the cultural identity of indigenous peoples will never be lost. (Lechner, 2002), (Jullien, 2017).

In reality, each society processes, combines and rearticulates the elements that circulate at the global level in a specific way. This appropriation and "nationalisation" of global processes affects not only social ties and habits, but also familiar mental schemas.

In this sense, the "cultural identity", especially of the original peoples, will not lose its appreciation by many people, not only where they come from and are owners of their cultural heritage, but the recognition of their way of life (beliefs, traditions, values, morals, way of thinking) is gaining more and more space among the Mexican population; as mentioned, the original peoples of Mexico, such as the Afro-Mexican groups, with all their "culture", are already recognised.

Again, it is a significant step forward to give indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples a deserved place of social equality in a modern society with cutting-edge scientific and technological advances, as part of people's lives in general; nowadays, it is common to see people from indigenous groups using mobile phones, going to universities, using electronic technologies, etc., but this does not mean that "cultural identity" is being displaced.

According to Mansilla "is that the concept of identity "refers to a notion of ourselves, in function or in comparison with others who are not like us" (Mansilla, 2006), that is to say; it is what identifies us, gives us identity, makes us different from others, that which makes us original, or with our own identity, which only materialises when the individual is in society; therefore, it could be determined that "Identity" is the manifestation of what one is (Ranaboldo, 2007). And, when this "Identity" refers to the way of life and the "cosmovision" of the environment, natural or divine, the "Cultural Identity" is born; and, consequently, the "Cultural Identity".

The doctrine affirms that "Cultural Identity" is no longer a way of arriving at the pure concept of peoples, due to the migratory society from one people to another, from rural communities to big cities, from one country to another; migration that is produced by diverse socio-economic and political factors, which will not be dealt with in the present work (Vallespir, 1999).

As a consequence of the migration of people, the so-called "cultural diversity" has been produced, a concept that UNESCO has pronounced as "heritage of humanity" (Álvarez, 2013). There is no doubt that for anthropologists it is an extremely complex subject; however, Schmidhuber's proposal appears which determines the demonstration of a culture, starting from a "symbolic object", giving an approach to the definition of culture of Lévi - Strauss; that understands as the "culture, is formed from the symbolic meanings that the members of a community give to the objects", this meaning has great relevance for the present work, since the objects that bring subsumed the representations of diverse meanings, is the expression of a culture, a way of life, a way of seeing the world, to which we denominated "Craftsmanship". (Amaya, 2002)

Crafts

The productive activity is "creativity" (Gastón, 2011). Creativity" is one of the most controversial concepts, ranging from "genius" to the potential to create something, passing through "inventiveness", "production" and "discovery", according to various authors cited by: (Chacón, 2005); the points of view are exposed in parts; the first is from the approach of the person as attributes of herself; and the second from the result or expression of the person; without any doubt, "creativity" is inherent to the person, which is related to the ability to reflect and solve a problem, to the ability to produce an object or something recognised by others.

Therefore, "creativity" is a necessary element coming from the cognitive process, which allows, on the one hand, to "create an idea" and then, on the other hand, to express this creative capacity with verbal or material manifestations or expressions (Diez, 2009). It is necessary for the present work, that the "creativity" referred to is human creativity, without distinction of lifestyle, economy, schooling, and other factors that socially could make people different from their perception; that is to say, "creativity" does not have much or nothing to do with social issues, but it is the capacity of people to create; that according to ways of life, economic, cultural, spiritual systems, are accepted and even questioned by some and accepted by others; but they are not without reason to deny that people do not have this, which is characteristic of them.

Each person or social group determines the ideas, customs, traditions, religion, etc., that they will accept as a personal or social norm that allows them to express this "creativity", as in the case of "handicrafts", and therefore handicraft work is a social activity, influenced by economic relations, cultural relations and social, political and even religious reorganisation of the social group itself (Vega, 2019). It is the manifestation of their way of life and their beliefs (Vega, 2019).

This intrinsic part of the human being is today recognised as "intangible cultural heritage" as we have already discussed; and crafts, far from being a decorative or ornamental object, as we have tried to see, is the expression of a way of life of some people or groups of people, which are not related to the economy, science and technology, as has also been mentioned; This is because they only have their very special way of life, a style that gives them their "cultural identity", which makes them different from others in their way of life; as valuable and as important as any other.

Therefore, the term "crafts" has had several connotations over time among the states of Latin America; for example, in Brazil since 1988, in its Constitution, the "cultural heritage" has been recognised, both tangible and intangible, where "crafts" are found (Pérez, 2012); In Peru, in addition to being recognised by its Constitution, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism is also delegated the promotion of handicrafts in that country, and its legal regulations classify them into "Traditional Handicrafts" and "Innovative Handicrafts"; the former "are goods that have a utilitarian, ritual or aesthetic use and represent the customs and traditions of a given region. They constitute, therefore, a material expression of the culture of communities or ethnic groups". And the second as: "They are goods that have a functionality, generally of a decorative or utilitarian nature, which is highly influenced by market trends"; also in Peru there is a "National Register of Artisans" that gives recognition to the person as a craftsman or craftswoman; (Alcántara, 2018) in Colombia there is the "Cámara de Comercio de Pasto y el Laboratorio Empresarial de Artesanías", which is responsible for the international marketing of handicrafts, and the concept of handicrafts is based on the UNESCO definition,

"The special nature of handicraft products is based on their distinctive characteristics, which may be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, linked to culture, decorative, functional, traditional, symbolic and religiously and socially significant" (Ortiz, 2015).

In addition to the above, in Venezuela, the "Departamento Nacional de Planificación" (National Planning Department) has classified handicrafts since 2006 as follows: a) "indigenous crafts" which are the expression of these communities that are transmitted from generation to generation; b) "traditional crafts" those made by mestizo and black communities, with technique influenced by European migrations; c) "contemporary crafts" those that include technical and aesthetic elements of the social, economic and cultural context; d) "popular art" individualised productions in which creativity is materialised; e) "ethno-crafts" which are those inherited in the same way as "indigenous crafts"; f) "semi-industrialised crafts" their production is urban as a result of the practice of a trade or specialised schools. (Bustos, 2009).

Along the same lines, in Ecuador there is the "Centro interamericano de artesanías y arte popular CIDAP located in Cuenca - Ecuador", which is responsible for raising awareness of the world of crafts, and perceives crafts as the product that carries aspects inherent to a cultural identity (Mendieta, 2020).

Bolivia, for its part, determines that "crafts" is the object: "fundamentally manual production carried out with or without the aid of machinery, an activity that can be carried out individually or through associations and/or cooperatives as independent economic units"; (Alcántara, 2018).

In Argentina, according to its Secretariat of Culture, it gives them the following denomination: "those products "...produced with artistic intention and/or destined to fulfil a utilitarian function, in a predominantly manual form; whose design is representative of the cultural diversity of the Argentine Republic" (Pastor, 2006).

As for Mexico, nowadays, its control, promotion and registration is established to the Secretariat of Culture, in accordance with the attributions granted by the Organic Law of the Federal Public Administration; and the concept of "folk art" has been created to refer to "handicrafts" and recognises that they are: "the natural wealth used for the elaboration of handicrafts, that is to think of a variety of woods, fibres, skins, resins, etc., an enormous diversity of materials used in the elaboration of folk art", an enormous diversity of materials used in the manufacture of folk art" National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO, 2022).

There is no doubt that the common denominator of the concept of "handicrafts" is "cultural identity", which identifies each people, group or community or country, in its way of life, its way of thinking, its beliefs and traditions, which make it unique; That which is there and cannot be seen, but which is proper to the person, the group, the people, the community; and which is an aspect that must be studied in depth to understand its culture, its way of life; and let us be sure that once it has been analysed and lived, it will be given the value it has, which does not depend on others, which only comes from its own nature.

It is convenient to say that in Mexico, and mainly in the State of Oaxaca, they added the Coronavirus (Covid19) to their artistic creations, such as the masks they use in their rituals (Hernández, 2020).

Intermediaries are the people who go to homes, workshops or other places to buy figures at lower prices and resell them, or the artisans go to offer them to traders in markets (Rivera Cruz, 2008).

Starting from the fact that the "crafts" are the identity of a town, community, person or country, in many occasions this "Identity" is lost when people called "intermediaries", take advantage of the craftsmen and buy their merchandise at low cost, to sell them later obtaining important profits at the expense of the work of the craftsmen; the "intermediary", is only interested in the commerce, the sale, the profits.

That is to say, only the merchandise matters to him, without giving any value to the essence of the crafts that the cultural identity of who created it; the intermediary also takes advantage of the little or null chain of distribution of the craftsmen, in many occasions, by the rural geographical zone where they live, and to the craftsman to survive, he sells to the highest bidder his work and creations, designs and culture, at insignificant prices. (Jeannine Uwimabera, 2017).

But it is necessary to have some elements of the products themselves for their commercialisation; the question arises: What do "handicrafts" need to be sold in large departmental chains? The answer to this question can be given in a more extensive work, but roughly speaking, it is to comply with the minimum standards required by the chains; then, according to the above, it is only possible to comply with such requirements, to the "intermediaries", because it is reiterated, the artisans, are not interested in marketing their products on a large scale, because their primary idea is to capture in materials their "Cultural Identity" beyond whether they sell or not (Calvo, 2011, p. 19). The sale of products in general is carried out in three different ways, traditional, modern and electronic.

In Mexico from the modern channel, there are three large market chains that cover the whole country; called "self-service shop chains", with the format of "Bodega, supermarket, hypermarket and megastore (BSHM), which are Walmart, Soriana and to a lesser extent Chedraui". Walmart has a presence in 87% of the country's geographic areas, and in half of these, there is no competition for shops, through large investments, distribution chains, distribution centres (CEDIS), and the use of information and communication technology. Federal Economic Competition Commission ((COFECE), 2020).

Sales strategies, as explained above, apparently do not interest the artisan, because their purpose is not trade, but to express their ideas and ways of life of their community, village or person, so these strategies are left to the "middleman", who is the one who carries them out in some markets, once he has exploited the designs, craft creations that he did not elaborate.

In the opinion of various authors that have been reviewed, that science and technology, and now we add the importation of various articles that, by the way, there is a confusion between "handicrafts" and "crafts" as already mentioned; and it is thought that the imports of "handicrafts" harm the crafts, sending them more and more towards their extinction; but this is a false belief; crafts do not depend on the market, they depend on the "intermediary", not on the craftsman; he will never stop creating and designing them, as long as his intentions do not stop expressing his own "cultural identity", which will never disappear, as long as there are people with this way of thinking and living.

The export of handicrafts

International trade treaties in the five continents have been very useful for traders of different economic levels; without a doubt, it has benefited trade, defining it as: "legal acts that contain commercial speculation" according to the Mexican Commercial Law, (Calvo, 2011); that is, they are the so-called "traders", which are the physical or moral persons that carry out the so-called "acts of trade"; but, it is worth asking, is the artisan sector included as a trader? The answer is no; as we have been exploring, the so-called "traders" are the persons who have the purpose of being in commerce, that is to say, they are the persons who manufacture, produce, sell or acquire goods or services, but already before they do so, they already have the objective of commercial speculation.

In this sense, the handicraft sector, it is emphasised, does not aim to speculate in trade, but to express their ideas, beliefs and ways of life in some materials, such as stone, leather, fabric, wood, glass, among others. Therefore, international trade treaties exclude the handicraft sector, as it is considered a non-commercial sector (Hernández Ramírez, 2011).

It should be noted that in the craft trade sector, it is the "intermediaries" who can benefit from these international trade treaties, but it is not possible for the artisan, because international trade treaties also aim to make possible the "traffic of goods" in a globalised world, with standards defined by the countries involved in this traffic. International standards such as the international terms of trade (INCOTERMS), for the standardisation and logistics of the transport of goods; homologation of technical aspects, of materials, classifying them in different ways, by their use, by their workmanship, their destination, procedures and documents, etc., which makes the world of trade as uniform as possible, throughout the world; respecting the technical and environmental decisions that restrict the handling of both the import and export of these goods.

Therefore, the export of "handicrafts" has a different aspect to the so-called "merchandise", but it would undoubtedly help to combat the economic poverty in which the authors and creators of handicraft designs and products find themselves; it is necessary to include "handicrafts" as an exportable product, but by their creators who are the artisans and not only by the "intermediaries".

Countries exporting "handicrafts"

In this regard, it should be noted that some countries in Latin America and other continents have long had the regulatory conditions in place in their governments to support the export of handicrafts, but it is not clear whether or not the person who makes them is an artisan, with research focusing only on the exportable product without specifying whether the exporter is one or the other.

Such is the case of African countries, with their embroidery, furniture, textiles and vegetable dyes, exported to Germany, France and Switzerland; the case of Asia, such as Korea, with its cloth and cotton embroidery; of China, with its ancestral hand-weaving techniques in cotton, silk and hemp; in Malaysia with its vegetable dyes; in the Arab States, with its designs in silk or velvet dresses; in Europe, especially Spain, with its wooden furniture, jewellery, costume jewellery, textiles, ceramics and leather goods; in Portugal, with its embroidery, silk, silk and hemp; and in Spain, with its wooden furniture, jewellery, jewellery, textiles, ceramics and leather goods; in Portugal, with its embroidery, lace, basketry, cabinetwork, cork and gold and silver filigree; in Latin America, especially in Argentina, with its traditional weavings of hand-dyed and hand-spun sheep's wool tapestries; in Cuba, with its wood and leather sculptures; in Colombia, with its weavings and hammocks, palm mats, chinchorros, wicker products, wood, jewellery and leather; in Peru, with its alpaca products; in El Salvador, with its products made of clay, natural fibres, wood, seeds and fabrics; among other countries. (Hernández Ramírez, 2011).

Because of the above, it is very necessary for Mexico to open up to the export of its handicraft products, but in addition to what the "intermediaries" do, because in the end it is the sale of "handicrafts", but now, the export must be carried out by the owners of the "cultural identity", which are the artisans.

Conclusion

It is indispensable to make the distinction that the "crafts" are those that have incorporated the "cultural identity" of those hands that created them; "cultural identity" that is characterised by making known and manifesting their "culture" but also by identifying the customs, the environment in which they live, their beliefs, their rites, traditions, in a clear "cosmovision" of the environment in which they live on a daily basis.

Identifying the culture of people, towns, communities, in products, called "crafts", is not only an ornament, souvenirs, ornament; it is the way of life of people who express what they feel, live, and proudly express, because they also feel proud of their ancestors, cultivators of the same customs transmitted from generation to generation, no matter if others are interested in their products, they have already achieved their unique purpose, which is to express their ideas in materials.

Therefore, artisans do not depend on technology and its advances, on science and its demonstrations, on the social, political and economic acceptance or rejection of some; they are independent beings, free of thought and life; as long as there is an ancestral way of life, there will be culture and therefore, "crafts"; they do not depend on competitiveness, innovation, and industrial production, among other economic forms; artisans have their own way and it is reiterated, independently.

It is indisputable that the world has managed to nationalise the way in which foreign trade is conducted, this is a great commercial advance; and its achievements have allowed countries to expand their trade abroad and to obtain goods that they do not have or are scarce in their territories; It is undoubtedly an effective commercial strategy, despite the deterioration of the environment, where the trader has been able to survive; and it is now necessary to open the borders to exchange handicraft products such as those of Mexico, but from the perspective of carrying out international trade operations by artisans, the sole creators and owners of their "Cultural Identity"

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