

Lifetime Learning in Artisanal Making

Sergio Jacinto Alejo López

Ernestina Becerra Becerra

Alexis Emmanuel Quezada Ornelas

Universidad de Guanajuato
Privada de Arteaga s/n, Zona Centro
Salvatierra, Gto., ZIP 38900
Mexico

Graciela M.L. Ruiz-Aguilar

Universidad de Guanajuato
Carretera Irapuato-Silao Km. 9, Col. El Copal
Irapuato, Gto., ZIP 36500
Mexico

Abstract

The present research analyzes the productive work, acquisition of knowledge, beliefs, feelings, and social reproduction in the making of artisanal bread in the rural community of San Miguel Emenguaro, located in southeast Guanajuato, Mexico. For the process of information analysis, we took the approach of phenomenology through a qualitative methodology of family memory and trade in the form of a semi-structured interview with a woman who owns an artisanal bread production unit. The results show that over the years in this family business, values such as human education have held sway, so their work has not been reduced to the sole purpose of earning profits, but rather aspects such as the origin of the family, the recognition of people, the life history of those who collaborate in the making of bread, respect for nature, and humility in learning have been important.

Keywords: Family business, nonformal education, food, local identity

Introduction

The southeast region of Guanajuato is adjacent to the state of Michoacán in the physiographic province of the Nonvolcanic Axis, within the sub-province called Sierras and Bajíos Michoacanos, forming part of the Sierra de los Agustinos (COPLADEM, 2004). It was first inhabited by hunters and fruit gatherers, who over time settled down more regularly in the sedentary life of Guanajuato with the development of the *Chupícuaro* culture (SEP, 1994), and was a border territory between civilizations that was fought over by the *Mexica* and Purépecha empires, during which the colony was the reason for the first royal assignments in favor of Spaniards and indigenous chiefs. In addition, this area was a provider of labor for the operation of the larger towns and for colonization (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, Consejo de Desarrollo Regional V Sur, 1999).

This area's agricultural cultural background, soil resources, and water, as well as the discoveries of mining deposits in Zacatecas in 1546 and in Guanajuato between 1552 and 1556, plus the expansion of Spanish properties, caused the indigenous-Spanish territorial conflict that led to the founding of intermediate villages and towns between the area's center and the Abajeño valleys, as a defense strategy and a guarantee of labor supply (Morin, 1979). These natural and human conditions drove the cultivation of wheat, and the establishment of mills in the area made this region an important and privileged agricultural center, extending between the mines and the nuclei of the center of the country (Florescano, 1993).

Additionally, at the end of the 18th century, there were important educational centers for subjects from the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing and basic arithmetic to studies of higher philosophy (Arreguín, 1993). The revolution for the Independence of Mexico was not a chance, fortuitous event, but it had to happen here because in the *Abajeño* lands and Guanajuato mountains, the social, economic, and cultural conditions necessitated such an event (Arreguín, 1993).

Industrial production and artisanal production in the region are distinguished by the production of sugar products, such as syrups, preserves, regional sweets; products from milk, such as cheese and yogurt; from meat, such as chorizos and ham; and from wheat, such as bread and from corn, such as tortillas.

They represent not only economic and productive activity of many families but also knowledge and forms of life that have been empirically reproduced over decades or centuries.

The word Eménguaro is of Purépecha origin and means "place of early corn". The inhabitants of Eménguaro come from the town of Urireo, who came to fish in this region of the Lerma River, whose waters were rich in carps, catfish, and charales (small fish). At the suggestion of a Franciscan missionary, they began to build their first huts with stones, juniper branches, and grass roofs (COPLADEM, 2004).

The learning of bread making in San Miguel Emenguaro is due, on the one hand, to the arrival of families from the town of Urireo, particularly families of Purépecha origin and skilled in the production of corn tortillas and wheat bread, especially in the neighborhood known as Coporo, and on the other hand, for reasons of evangelization, on top of the background of the ancient culture of Chupicuaro, who were excellent potters, continued to knead clay, and learned to knead wheat flour (Becerra, Alejo, Veloz, 2018). The present research analyzes the family education of rural women with indigenous backgrounds in a contemporary context of the new rurality characterized by emigration, urbanization, and the incorporation of new forms of family and productive life, the acquisition of knowledge, beliefs, feelings, and social reproduction in the making of artisanal bread in the rural community of San Miguel Emenguaro.

The family education of indigenous women

In the past, in many indigenous societies in Mexico, family education gave substantial value to the education of women. For this reason, they were subordinated to the authority of men within a sexual division of labor, and they learned from their mothers or other teachers. Their education generally consisted of household chores, spinning and weaving techniques, the care of siblings, and the foundations of worship. Zumárraga was a great promoter of Spanish female education since her arrival in Mexico in 1520. To her, women's education had two purposes. The first was practicing Christianity and sharing these religious values with their husbands. The other was to protect girls and rescue them from imprisonment through doctrine. One of the main challenges was having adequate and competent teachers, since not being professed nuns gave them reason to act more freely and ignore the warnings of the evangelizers. On the other hand, for indigenous girls, teaching was limited to religious instruction and waiting for honesty, as well as some manual work typically done by women. As in Spanish families, in indigenous families there was an unwillingness to deliver the daughters to the doctrinal houses, due to the lack of recollection of the teachers and the unwillingness of these houses (Kazuhiro, 1992).

Indigenous girls learned in their homes as a group with their mother, focused on the handling of objects; there was no separation from their context, they knew through their fingers soft textures such as dough and rough textures such as corn tortillas, and they cooked with beans, the cup of atole, the chile molcajete, etc. These girls, always asking about the teachings received from their mother in a back-and-forth communication, sitting playing on the floor by the stove, developed the need to find and confirm their role through imitation and imagination. This space was a true school of creativity, love, and intelligence, impossible to replace naturally and spontaneously with the instructions of the school or the church.

The indigenous woman over time became the depositary and guide of the spread of knowledge. From her home she served, if she was a sister, her brothers; if she was a wife, her husband; if she was a daughter, her father; and because she was a woman, her elders. We can say that there was no notable difference in service in terms of fulfilling a role for Spanish women, but in the case of indigenous women, it had to be very laborious and submissive.

Geronimo de Mendieta (1572) mentions the behavior and role of women attached to the space of their home, for reasons of the teachings of their parents where "you will take good care of the thread, the fabric, and the work, and you will be my dear and beloved, *and you will deserve to have what you need to eat and dress*" (p. 45, in López, 1985). The author notes that one had to be worthy of the insurance of her life and earn her place by working and caring for her parents in that spatial restriction of her house: "do not leave it easily or walk through the market or plaza, or the bathrooms, or where others wash themselves, or the roads" (1572, p. 46, in López, 1985).

Thus, enrolling in school was not easy during this time. A decisive moment in the lives of people is when they leave home to start learning some craft or to go off to school. One author wonders, "At what age did this separation occur? What were its consequences and how did school learning influence individual learning?" (Gonzalo, 1992, p. 360).

The meeting of these worlds was very complicated, not mostly because of the neglect of the teachers or the limitations of the doctrinal houses but rather because of material and economic interests, since the parents "clearly foresaw the dangerous effect that such an education would have on their own daughters. This could destroy all foundations of their economic life" (Kazuhiro, 1992, p. 464).

It is important to note that this “foresight” is observed with decreasing frequency in some indigenous families in the region, as in the community of San Miguel Emenguaro and the community of Urireo, where young women who do not wish to continue the family tradition in the making of bread and corn tortillas work for companies or go to college with the hopeful resignation of their parents. This change in their activities is also influenced by the emigration of men to the United States, but these men are not exempt from the responsibility of serving and caring financially for their families.

Wheat came to New Spain with the conquistadors, and its sowing began when “the young black and corpulent man took three wheat seeds from a sack of rice, sowed them in a plot in Tacubaya, and from one of them grew 47 ears of wheat, leaving the conquistador satisfied when he tasted the bread” (Savage 2002, p. 1). Later, according to the Cámara Nacional de la Industria Panificadora y Similares (National Chamber of the Baking Industries and Similar), the production and transformation of creole wheat into bread beginning Spanish families in 1524. At first, the ovens and kneaders were familial, but later, they became companies that produced for consumption by the general population. Apart from selling in bakeries and pulperías (an early form of the corner store), indigenous women oversaw selling bread in squares and markets (CANAIMPA. S/f).

The origin of bread making in Mexico is a melting pot of mixed feelings marked by indigenous pain before the ruthless Spanish power; it is a contradiction between the exquisiteness of its flavor and the bitterness of its humiliation: “It seems ironic that something so soft and sweet would contribute to suffering then, and even now, but it did; the indigenous people worked as slaves in the bakeries” (Savage, 2002, p. 1).

There were real slaves: Many workers in the bakeries were not free under the law, and the merchants took advantage of it. “It was common for the kneaders to include inmates who served a sentence for crimes that sometimes were not even real, but they represented free labor” (Savage, 2002). It is difficult to imagine the environment inside the bakeries. Many times, they would be true prisons without any guarantees. “The owners of the bakeries, mostly Spanish, also used to tie them with shackles to stop them from leaving their workplace, and they generally had shifts of 12 or 14 hours of continuous work” (Savage, 2002).

We can say that the foundations of the bakeries in New Spain bore the mark of Spanish domination in every corner, in every action, in heaven and on the earth; “as in the mills and in the lands where wheat was sown, which in the Colonization of the Americas were appropriated by the Spanish” (Savage, 2002). The learning of bread making by the indigenous people took time: “It was only consumed by Spaniards; later creoles and mestizos acceded to its delight” (Savage, 2002). It started from the homes where the Spanish women made it and the indigenous women were slaves. Another source of learning was in the convents where its making was taught. Men learned from the businesses where they worked or served their punishment, but it was not the same bread even to this day.

Just as in the indigenous communities, beautiful pieces were made from different clays and adorned with paintings, and just as tamales were made in different colors and flavors, so it was with the incorporation of bread in their lives. “It was not strange for the Indians to be able to replicate and improve with their creativity and experience the artistic making of the wheat doughs” (Barros and Buenrostro, 2007, p. 39). However, not all social classes ate the same quality of bread, says Savage. For example, “the *flowered* bread was what the rich ate, because it was more expensive and went through various refining processes, while the people ate a much more economical bread that was of lower quality, known as *pambazo*” (Savage, 2002, p. 2).

The art of breadmaking spread through the indigenous people thanks to the exchange of knowledge between groups and communities within economic and cultural activities. For example, breadmaking has been taught in San Miguel Emenguaro and its neighborhoods, including San Antonio, Las Canoas, La Palma, and La Virgen, since its very founding, when the indigenous people of a very populated community who were of Purépecha origin, called Urireo, and who lived 5 kilometers north of the Lerma River went to that river to fish, where they instructed the locals in the working of wheat and chickpea bread (COPLADEM, 2004). The vocation in the cultivation of wheat and its milling originated in the city of Salvatierra. The current chronicler of the city of Salvatierra Miguel Alejo explains that the coat of arms of the city shows “three bundles or bunches of wheat that represent the three wheat mills (for bread) that existed in the city: the mill of El Mayorazgo La Marquise, the mill of La Esperanza, and the mill of La Ciudad” (Alejo, 2010, p.1).

The process of culinary commingling was already underway, partly because the family education in indigenous households was a form of informal education creating the most genuine means for the acquisition, generation, and reproduction of the culture of a human group. This type of education, according to Coombs and Ahmed (1974), consists of a process that lasts a lifetime and in which people acquire and accumulate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ways of discernment through daily experiences and their relationship with their environment (In Trilla, 1996). In this context, the learning of breadmaking in indigenous families was without didactic sequences, organized from the family culture itself and with high human quality; it was done in a rustic way that imprinted the diverse and rich indigenous identity onto the learner, as also occurred in the learning of their mother tongue along with Spanish.

In the kitchen, over time, the making and eating of bread came to be incorporated in a natural way. Then the bakery workshops were created, and they did not remain stuck in the past. Some evolved. For example, centuries later, in 1880, there were 78 bakeries and pastry shops in Mexico City and an endless number of indigenous people who continued making their products in calabaceroovens, in the church, and in markets (CANAIMPA s/f).

However, in the late nineteenth century, there were complaints about the practices of the bakeries in Mexico City. According to the newspaper *El Popular* (July 4, 1897), "the Spaniards were accused of leading the 'poor Mexican bakers' to misery with ruinous competition" (Díaz, 2008, p.75). Additionally, in the newspaper *El Hijo del Ahuizote* (October 23, 1898), it was said that "the Spanish have monopolized bakeries (all), flour mills (all), and cake shops (all). They NEVER use Mexican names in their negotiations, factories, or farms. They suppress the indigenous name and invariably give it the name of a saint or that of a bullfighter or that of a *pelotari*" (Díaz, 2008, p.75).

Particularly in the south of the state of Guanajuato, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were shops and small factories serving a very specific market. Many years ago, in the municipalities of the southern region, there were soap, rebozo, cigar, brandy, and candle factories, as well as pottery stores, pulquerías, tanneries, "noodles", saddleries, silversmiths, and hat shops (González, 2000). Today, they have nearly or completely disappeared, and usually they were transformed. For example, the pawnshops became banks; the pantries, grocery stores; the apothecaries, pharmacies; the pulquerías, breweries; the butchers, delis, etc. Food products that were once important in the family diet and are now almost extinct, such as lump sugar, lard, grain salt, *piloncillo* (brown sugar), *pinole*, *chinguere* (cane brandy), molasses, etc. Now there are deep-rooted products such as bread in Acámbaro, peron, apple and guava sweets in Salvatierra, chorizo in Moroleón and Uriangato, and barbeque and pulque in Coroneo.

Food crafts and the role of indigenous women

To define the concept of handicrafts, it is necessary to apply a context of rural origin with specific ways of life, in which historical processes are involved in conflict that places indigenous peoples in conditions of inequality and subordination. In this sense, and under the view of the study of indigenous peoples, crafts are a producer and consumer activity that, more than a commodity located in the dynamics of the marketplace, transports different contents with an identity spirit of the group and the society to which it belongs, playing an important role in the daily life of artisans (Cardini, 2006).

The handicraft of an object is not separate from the artisan or from man as a user, since this object is shown as the creation by the mind of man as artisan (*Homo faber*). When the object is recognized by its function, man is represented in it as a user, and when it is identified in abstraction from its function and use, then he is dealing with objects of consumption, and thus he speaks to us of "human consumers and humans consumed by objects" (García and García 2015, p. 24).

Craft can be seen as a material product generated by man; in turn, man can be shown as an object of the same craft. Then, craftsmanship stops being a product and becomes a task of intelligence because it seeks to create. García and García speak from a perspective of *cultural activity as a biological profession*, mentioning that it is an "artisanal process of raising humans that involves, as in many other species, guardianship and care; however, to carry them out, we have a system of special skills, which predispose us to these communicative actions and humanitarian cooperation" (García and García, 2015, p. 15).

The conception of culture from a craft perspective is cruel because it is understood as an opposition to civilization, making its history invisible, excluding the symbolic production of economically and socially disadvantaged peoples who were subjected to capitalist models of exploitation. In the case of culture in artisanal production, "we must analyze the partial disintegration of indigenous cultures, their reworking when combined with modern and urban forms as a result of the unfavorable position of crafts within the capitalist technological expansion" (García, 1984, p.10).

The Western view of handicrafts cannot be taken as the only or universal dimension of handicrafts, nor is it applicable in all times and places. However, the hegemonic character of this Europeanizing culture in our country must be noted by considering it far from the true crafts, as it is the cause of multiple problems that "range from the omission and contempt of the activity in the political projection, to the undervaluation of artisanal creation, generally seen as an accessory production without social impact" (Benítez, 2017, p.8). This view addresses permanent crafts over time thanks to their lack of beauty and radically negative work to achieve beauty because of its usefulness and its instinctive limitation, according to Hegel, as "bees build their cells" (Hegel, 1993, p. 249).

Craft, according to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions held in Paris (2005), is considered a set of cultural goods and services that "are both economic and cultural in nature because they are bearers of identities, values and meanings, and therefore should not be treated as if they only had a commercial value" (UNESCO, 2005, p.1).

In this situation, a craft is not only a material object but also a cultural good, which means it is an input and a cultural process in action. That is, its concept is not a finished and invariable substance but a form beyond that which strictly individually and personally expresses the duration of that action.

Therefore, the conceptualization of craftsmanship from the perspective of indigenous peoples is only partially understood from the perspective of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18th century in England, which had a strong impact on agriculture and over time led to the merging of small workshops and their integration into other, larger ones, causing a concentration of industries characterized by the specialization of labor and the domination of the science industry. On the other hand, artisans are aging, and generational gaps arise that condition this work due to such factors as the lack of participation of young family members, due either to disinterest or to emigration. Currently, in Mexico, approximately 80% of craftsmen are 40 to 80 years old, another 15% are between 25 and 40 years old, and only 5% are aged 5 to 20 (Cisneros, 2013).

Food crafts are the result of creative and cultural work, contributed mainly by women, who from the kitchen space not only create food but also defend their meanings from their material and mystical contributions. Indigenous women make the mixing of culinary cultures and practices common by learning, sharing, and reproducing their culinary skills and knowledge. This type of craft consists of the transformation of agricultural raw materials for direct human consumption, distributed in formal and informal establishments, regardless of technological level, of the size of the company, and its link with the market. In the baking process, firewood was replaced by gas and manual kneading by the mechanical mixer; in the artisanal production of tortillas, the press was replaced by manual making, criollo corn by hybrid corn, etc.

The relationship of crafts with agriculture is a thing of the past: Just as the current rurality is no longer explained from an opposition to and distancing from urban life, food crafts are not linked to agriculture in a complementary way. At present, it is not possible to speak of food crafts as a consequence of agriculture, since unfortunately these crafts have been lagging for a long time and are identified with the decadent and marginalized rural environment due to, among other things, what Moctezuma refers to as “the agricultural crises, the search for income through migration, the greater educational and labor supply among young descendants of artisan families, and the greater openness of people to other lifestyles and consumption patterns” (Moctezuma, 2012, p. 136).

The development of the new rurality is formed by social, economic, and cultural patterns arising from globalization. These patterns are mainly characterized by the priority put on tertiary activities in the communities, migration from the countryside to nearby urban centers and to the United States, the proliferation of communication devices and virtual technologies, the impoverishment of primary activities, and the lack of government support. In this sense, processes of exclusion are accentuated in peasant organizations, particularly in those involving indigenous women, and “rural spaces cease to be discredited and excluded from public development strategies and have the opportunity to become ‘laboratories’ for the emergence of new patterns of inclusive growth” (Gaudín, 2019, p. 50).

It has been up to women to make the main efforts to rescue and preserve these crafts. In addition, the harmonious relationship that crafts have with the environment is due mostly to the role of women in transiting nature with a familiarity that the man cannot match in terms of factors such as its elaboration and transformation, respect for nature, work diversification, and horizontal integration. Women have been forced to work very hard to make room for themselves, especially in the rural environment, where they have an extraordinary capacity for sacrifice but do not have the same opportunity to choose between the different options of cultural heritage since there is an understood inequality in the context of food crafts, not as a conflict of diversity but as a conflict of hierarchy. In this sense, the bread made in the center of the domestic unit is made by the woman. When she handles her work tools and uses techniques and materials that respect the environment, she does so as part of a family and over a long time; her work is not governed by market whims.

Methodology

The methodology applied here is qualitative. It is based around phenomenology, recovering family memories (customs and important stages in life) and the memory of the trade (learning processes, transmission of the trade, meaning, and satisfaction), through a semi-structured interview conducted with a rural woman who makes artisanal bread in the community of San Miguel Emenguaro in Guanajuato. Phenomenology provides a view of things beyond sensitive perceptions, reaches knowledge of reality through the interpretation of the experiences lived by the subject in its context, and aims to obtain a broader knowledge of the meaning of our daily experiences to obtain insightful and stark descriptions of the way in which we experience the world, without classifying or summarizing it (Van Manem, 2003). In this sense, a methodology such as family memory refers to notions, that is, general ideas or elementary knowledge of a thing, event, or person, for example, customs, important stages in life, characters in a story, mutual relations, etc. Family memory is composed of “notions, notions of people and notions of facts, singular and historical in that sense, but which also have all the characteristics of common thoughts of a whole group, and even more” (Halbwachs, 2004, p.210).

The character in this study is Carmela (not her real name), a 43-year-old woman with indigenous roots who owns an artisanal bread business in the rural community of San Miguel Emenguaro. The family memory begins with a dialogue about her childhood and her ancestors. It then moves to the events that led to her dedication to her craft of breadmaking and concludes with the summary of her learning of the craft.

The memory of the trade is a derivation of family memory and refers to the processes of learning, transmission of the trade, meaning, and satisfaction achieved. Particularly important are the notions about the crucial and conjunctural events of learning and the production process. The artisanal activity is understood as a cultural incorporation of literacy (a fundamental human right) where there is empowerment through participation in a historical and group context. The artisan is considered a reflective whole (body subject), within a practice that constitutes the process as something significant, in addition to a context in which the ethical commitment to life is witnessed (García and García, 2015).

Results and discussion

Generally, women in rural areas learn to prepare food in the family from an early age. In poor families, they know how to load firewood and feed the hens and pigs. A girl's perceptions together are willing to "absorb" completely the affection and skills of her mother cooking beans with eggs and preparing chili, onions, and cilantro sauce to eat with her siblings, her parents, and often also with her grandparents. This girl does not give importance to the profession of making food to sell or to consume; it is a game, and that means joy, curiosity, and love. For the social education of youths, "they [joy, curiosity, and love] are as objective as natural phenomena" and the "positions adopted within the game are not entirely freely acquired" but are predetermined to a certain degree "by the specific social group" (López, 2012, p. 5).

Carmela's grandmother began to make chickpea bread in 1941 due to the economic needs of the family. They sold it only on Saturdays and Sundays. It was made in a stone oven that her husband built inside their house. This was the case for approximately 10 years, until the woman stopped doing it and left it to her daughter Ana. In 1951, Ana began to make it with the help of her daughters on Saturdays at home. In addition to making chickpea bread, they made milk bread for almost 50 years, until Ana became seriously ill and stopped making bread for a year. Then, one of her daughters decided, with the help of her sisters and nephews, to continue with the small bakery to pay for her mother's medications and her treatment, and they did this for 5 years until Ana passed away. The daughters continued the tradition, particularly Carmela, who attended to the breadmaking during the month of December due to the increase in sales to those arriving from the United States. Later, they made cream bread along with milk bread and chickpea bread.

Doña Carmela mentions talking about her ancestors and their role since childhood:

Before, my great-grandmother told me that she ground the wheat in the metate and they began to make their buns on the skillet, they did it to eat them and then my grandmother was taught with my mother Gracia and my father Cruz. My grandmother did sell. Among those who were taught was my uncle José from CONASUPO. He began to sell for a while then my mother María told my mother to start selling bread to help my father out of need, because there were 11 of us children of the family. My mom sold it since we were little girls, and after she got sick, I started selling it, and now I have been doing it for 17 years.

The trade in the production of handicrafts is born out of necessity, and from this originates imagination and creativity. In her story, the artisan speaks of the material object that is the production of wheat bread. Incorporating into her history her own beliefs, she emphasizes this need and the uncertainty of taking the risk of starting a business:

Well, it truly is not who taught it, or if they also started with the need and how they had the corn, the wheat, and everything. I think they started as well as I imagine that people started out of curiosity, to see what comes out.

The genealogical context and the composition of the family are mentioned. This artisan speaks of the problem that she faces of having to feed "many mouths". She learns more because of the state of illness of her mother and the economic need; on the other hand, when they are little, they learn through the need for knowledge through play. However, in both cases, this activity consists of learning about the same thing, since in their statements on the object, they are "different in form, dispersed in time, they constitute a set if they refer to one and the same object" (Foucault, 1969, p.27). The interpretation of the making of the craft goes through all the statements that qualify it, explain it, and tell it, and its correlations are not restricted to an invariable object, but rather the interpretation is modified in time and space, through which different objects are continually transformed.

In the case of the learning of the craft by children, other correlated things were also learned as objects, such as help and care in a framework of obedience to adults. For example, in Europe, in the workshops of the Industrial Revolution, learning was not very different:

“The child could observe the various processes and offer their help soon, first in the form of play and imitation, then almost as learning, in all classes of activities and social services” (Abbagnano and Visalberghi, 1992, p. 432). Indeed, as these authors point out, children learn many things in this way, such as the value of serving others, being ready to help and care, and enjoying obeying their parents. Carmela mentions:

Well, look, Uncle Manuel is already 100 years old, so I remember my great-grandfather because I was a little girl, I helped him cross the street and I even saw him as the Pope. He was a little old man with colored eyes, so pretty, and I helped him to cross the street when my mother told me: “There comes your grandfather, go grab his hand,” and then I would run to grab his hand or help him cross the street or whatever. He went with his cane, and I remember when I was a child, and then more than 140 years have passed.

In this fragment of the conversation where the artisan narrates so much, the apparent repetition of phrases about “crossing” or “passing the street” stands out, but it is not so; the artisan first stands outside the story as a spectator and as a producer and then includes herself, as actor and consumer, and she finally concludes by referring to the long time it has taken to move, to position herself in her role as an artisan, and to go through to her own history of learning, but not in a linear and immediate way. Her story is well imbued with the prevailing circumstance that is the mother’s disease, which will go on to engender the need to dedicate herself to making bread:

Well, when my mom got sick, since she was the only one who knew how to do it, I told the girls, out of necessity because my mom needed it, the doctor observed her every day, and it was 50 pesos to the doctor for just coming by to say that she was fine because I wanted it that way. I told the doctor, “It doesn’t matter, come see me daily”; “Ceci, I can come, I don’t know, Monday and Friday”; “No, I want you to come daily,” if you know what I mean.

The memory of the trade

In the story of Carmela, men do not appear, either as a brother or as a father, unless she is there to serve them. The same is true of her elders. She experiences a duality of serving to learn and learning to serve by caring for others. This will lead her to be the moral and material support of the home, in a loneliness very similar to abandonment by or separation from men:

I started when my mother was already sick, my mother did not speak again, she spent 5 years 8 months in bed, and she could not speak since she got sick, she did not speak anymore, so I alone, so it was what I helped her with, because I said to her, I weigh it and I put it and now how much water will I put in it and here, what is added, it was just asking and watching, and then I told them we’ll see if it will sell.

The contents of learning are identified within popular culture and are embodied in collective representations and customs that are transmitted from one generation to another, as is the case for conceptions about death and life. In the artisanal production of food, very deep learning is characterized by monetary limitations and the decision to survive, all shared first with the sisters (“girls”); the figure of the husband does not appear in these decisions about Carmela’s mother’s illness or the entrepreneurship of the business:

It was needed, and yes, they sent me, but it was not enough, and I told the girls, “Then I will start making bread to see if it comes out and see if they buy it. We will continue selling it, and if not, then we will stop, and today, well, there I still am. I did not start from scratch, I already had a little time that I had started with my mother, of “How do I placeit, I’ll wet it for you, what else will I add?” and so on. Well, as I say, I already had some experience, and when I did it alone. What I did not know was how to cook it, only two, three times I helped her cook it.

The craft analyzed from the perspective of the social process of its production that ranges from the supply of raw materials through the processes of transformation, distribution, and consumption, is linked to different problems, such as the lack of young labor and changes in the roles of some family members, high competitiveness in the increasingly demanding and voracious market of the food industry, in addition to the depletion of natural resources, peasant migration, tourism, etc. All these problems impact the processes of product production and the relationships of artisans with their craft. In this sense, the artisan is responsible for the process of production and sale, as well as maintaining a family identity in her product. She relies on her confidence in her ability and seeks the flavor, color, texture, weight, and size of the object produced:

I do not change the flavor because people tell me they taste the bread, so long without tasting this bread and they do not tell me it tastes different, if it suddenly fails there are times that it has to do with the flour because there is a flour that is not the cheapest, but it is a brand of flour that does not help the bread to rise, and there are some that I already have well known and almost always buy from those two brands.

Food crafts are made with rustic equipment and utensils, mostly conditioned by the artisan's own family, although a few instruments are used for quantity and quality control, such as scales, thermometers, watches, etc. Rather, this craft is distinguished by the hand of the artisan, who gives her products a characteristic of originality. In this sense, they do not separate the technical process from the product of the cultural process of life and the use of natural technologies.

Responding quickly and briefly, Doña Carmela mentions that this process consists of “weighing and putting the ingredients that each one takes, then kneading, then rolling, and we tell them to flatten, start flattening the bread, with the rolling pin to put it on boards and in sheets, and then cook, clean, and sell”. However, after she pauses, she asks herself: “Why do you clean up, you say?” and as if she herself responded, she anticipates possible doubts on our part recognizing that her explanation is lacking:

Because since it has flour, imagine that the *baldocita*, they are like that of the partitions, the *losetita*, I put the firewood to burn on top of the *baldocitas*, and once it is ember, I put it in everything so that everything is hot. I put plenty of firewood to reach the top so that it catches the sky and the ground, that is, so it covers both and heats it evenly, and then with the *jaras* the embers are moved to the side, and I put the gord it as in the sheets and then the bread, and then when I feel that the oven is less hot, I put it directly on the *baldocitas* with a wooden shovel, it fits 6 or 7 loaves, depending on how the bread is, I put 6 or 7 loaves, and I put them in and take them out. I put another 7 loaves, approximately 3 boards with bread fit in. My oven fits approximately 90 loaves, so I put the 90 loaves together and they are cooking, and with a hook I turn them around and take them out, and since those need a little flour under them, because if you put them in without flour they stick, and when it is time to grab them with the hook, they fall apart, that is, they have to have flour on the bottom of the boards so that they do not stick.

The terms “*losetitas*” and “*baldositas*” refer to pieces of clay inside the stone oven on which they place sheet trays holding raw bread for cooking. The term “*jaras*” refers to branches of a bush for moving aside the embers when the required heat is reached. While the making is done, when there are new workers, the teaching is done and supervised by reproducing knowledge and skills.

When they make the bread, I teach them. In fact, I must be there with them, I tell them these balls are not well done, make them like this, the fact that you grab a ball of dough and want to make it a ball, it is not just grabbing it and making it. Instead, you must press it to make it look right because if not, when you do it underneath the ball, it remains all stuck together, and then you get like where the dough comes together, and so it has to be even, and so I designate to each one what they have to do. Doña Paty arrives to gather firewood to put in the oven. Chelo arrives and cleans the leaves for the gorditas and the bread.

When artisans talk about conserving their crafts, there is again an intention to establish a correlation between the objects of the statements of the artisan, where she resorts to the remembrance of the family and its subjects as actors in the statement itself. It is not a question of establishing a limitation restricted to the immediate and tangible nature of the craft or its organizational structure, where they must be addressed as a process and as products in which social relations intervene and resonate (García, 1982). Carmela explains the preservation of crafts from the ways in which her ancestors did it: “The old women from before were very curious old women. They used jugs and they did not complicate themselves. They put another pot in the jugs, that is, they put the bread in the jugs. My mother Gracia made *gorditas* in the skillet.” Subsequently, the artisan is placed in the reality of the present and explains through a common thread what is one of the most valued characteristics in food crafts, that is, the respect for sustainability and the environment. They travel in a coming and going at an incredible speed thanks to the imagination and narrative capacity.

We do not add any preservatives to bread. In fact, I do not know if the yeast is what preserves it or if it is butter. I do not know, but the bread lasts for a long time. If the bread comes out hot and you put it in bags, it will get mold. This bread that I sell, we let it cool, it must get slightly hard, it cools down completely, and then it can be put in the bag. And when we put it in the bag, it softens, and many people say they put it in the freezer. My niece Rosalba says—I send her up to 60 loaves—and she says, “Oh, aunt, I put everything in my icebox,” and when she wants it, she just takes it out and heats it up, and it tastes the same.

The commercialization of food crafts in rural areas has a very limited scope, and its products are made only to satisfy the needs of individual or family self-consumption. Its distribution channels are precarious and indefinite, as well as very seasonal. For example, artisanal bread sells well in the rainy season and in the winter, but it also does so during the summer, so they keep a good part of their merchandise. Carmela comments:

When I have bread left, we soak it for the chickens and pigs if we get tired of eating bread. Right now, we have almost none left when it rains. I must make more bread, in times of rain, I sell a lot of bread, and they are already waiting for it to come out. Sometimes I am even seeing if I will have enough, and this batch is already out. I already know how much bread I must make according to the season so that I do not get stuck with any. This bread is sold to neighbors, people from right here, and people from outside. The people from outside buy it because it was recommended. It also went to the presidency, now there are policemen with this Chon. In the presidency, there was a girl working who was the daughter of a teacher who later ordered bread from me, and through recommendations, because one day she took a bread and then, “Bring me this bread, they recommend it.” When the children of Justo come, those from Querétaro say that their neighbors, friends, or relatives... “Yes, you are going to Emenguaro, bring me bread, bring me bread.” I have clients from Obrajuelo who go to the United States and come to buy bread.

They knew from people from here who recommended it to them. When it is December, I make bread almost all week because there are people who leave, then the day after New Year's Day since the 24th, there are people who, as soon as Christmas passes, start to leave, and there are people who ask me, "Are you going to make on Monday, are you going to make on Tuesday?"

There are no government mechanisms of financial assistance, support, organization, or training for this type of artisan, nor, as Benítez says, are there "clear and precise policies, guidelines and definitions, nor comprehensive development programs that cover anthropological or ethnographic aspects to the most pragmatic areas of production, distribution, and marketing of artisanal products" (Benítez, 2017, p.16). The artisans, in order to grow in their workshop or production unit, turn to their own friends and family for advice, but the lack of synchrony in family interests restricts such growth.

Well, if everything is good, you know that on one occasion a lady from Carmen told me, uh, Ceci, if you were to go sell this bread at Carmen, you would run out of bread because there are almost no people from La Palma, and when they go, they do sell very well. I know that, if there are opportunities to sell elsewhere, I know that in Obrajuelo, if I bring the bread, it gets sold, because from there I have many clients. That you think that one has, maybe for the time— "If your uncle Rigo would dedicate himself to the business with me, if he would be a support for your projects because things were fine because between the two," but he has a business, I have another, and like, well, we have not come to an agreement, because if we both had the same vision, the business arrangement would have been set. If I had his support, the business could be done. If he were a support that he told me, "If you know that we are going to dedicate a day to go to sell, perhaps something that does sell could be extended, and well, he is the support, I am a housewife, he is the father of a family, if you understand what I mean, that is, one cannot do it alone and that is that".

Conclusions

The Spanish Colonization of the Americas did not end with the defeat of the indigenous armed forces, but rather such conquest was the beginning of other battles, such as religious, educational, technological, economic, public, and private ones, including in the world of food. These battles were successive encounters and disagreements that consolidated a whole monopolistic baggage of Spanish handicrafts, which marginalized and excluded the different ways of production of the indigenous peoples, as well as subjecting them as slaves in their production workshops. These battles led to various forms of cultural diffusion, which, according to Novelo (2004), made it so that the indigenous form of production did not disappear but rather took refuge in domestic units of the subjected peoples and as apprentice labor, which generated a unique wealth of creations with other techniques and other esthetic and symbolic patterns, all with the help of time, submission, and discrimination.

To reflect on the family education of indigenous women in Mexico is to talk about inequality, both educational and gendered. In the first aspect, family education lacks the titles on which formal education is based, and its power is mostly in the culture and economy of society. Second, being a woman in rural areas leads to great disadvantages due to the authoritarian role of men, the heavy work in the fields, and the artisanal production of their products. The contents of the learning are based on a set of knowledge embedded in a history of material and cultural objects embedded in a social system.

The trade of the artisan baker takes care of everything that is done in the bakery. She is the owner, makes the bread, takes care of the raw material, makes the payments, and sells the bread. Unlike the way in which male bakers learn as helpers at an early age and with time and experience acquire the status of master baker, in the case of the female artisan and in a rural environment, this craft is learned as a way of life, a culture that is passed down through the family, and is attached to her condition as a woman. For example, in the making of bread in Mexico, there is a forced cultural syncretism, where the role of women, even against the tide, enriches, through their contributions and creativities, the production of bread as a food and as a culture that continues to be transformed today.

The relationship of education with crafts comes from the internal motives that the artisan seeks through his work. It is not only the instrumental part and material consumption, but it also aims to educate, that is, seeks to communicate to make people think. The craft has an important formative weight. This education coincides with the objective of learning while living and living while learning and is a substantive question of human subjectivity that aims for the reconstruction of culture, understood as the footprint *par excellence* of human endeavor and therefore distinct in its meaning to every society in the world. In this sense, an important goal to which a conception of craftsmanship-through-education should aspire should be the creation of culture through a reflection of man himself and his reality based on praxis, that is, to go creatively from thinking to action and from action to thinking.

Artisanal family businesses are threatened by different factors, such as socioeconomic and cultural influences from other places; emigration to the United States and the adoption of new forms of commercialization of food products by large markets; the lack of interest of young people in continuing with these activities; and high production costs, the lack of financial support and government training, etc.

Above all, what is at risk is a set of traditional knowledge in the making of these basic foods of the Mexican diet, as well as a whole system of identity values that are generated and propagated. This situation of economic devaluation has over time yielded the loss of knowledge, creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial nature not only of production processes but also of the sociocultural values of food.

References

- Abbagnano, N. y Visalberghi, A. (1992). *Historia de la pedagogía*. FCE: México.
- Alejo, M. (2010). Los secretos heráldicos del escudo de Salvatierra. En: <http://arcadiasalvaterrense.blogspot.com/2010/03/los-secretos-heraldicos-del-escudo-de.html>
- Arreguín, I. (1993): *Capítulos de la Historia Colonial Guanajuatense*. Guanajuato: Universidad de Guanajuato. 246, 265, 266
- Barros, C. Buenrostro. M. (2007). *Panadería mexicana. Formas con sabor*. Ciencia. 39-49.
- Becerra, E., Alejo, S.J., Veloz, R. A. (2018). Danza de las Pastoras y los Apaches: Identidad y tradición cultural en riesgo de desaparición. Ponencia. *Primer encuentro de Saberes de Pueblos Originarios*, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, 5-7 julio de 2018.
- Benítez, A. S. (2017). Artesanía latinoamericana como factor de desarrollo económico, social y cultural: A la luz de los nuevos conceptos de cultura y desarrollo. *Revista cultura y desarrollo*. UNESCO. En http://www.lacult.unesco.org/docc/CyD_6.pdf
- Cámara Nacional de la Industria Panificadora. (CANAIMPA). *Historia del pan*. En <http://www.canainpa.com.mx/varios/historia.asp>
- Cardini, L. A. (2006). Artesanías y pueblos originarios. Aproximaciones para su estudio en la ciudad de Rosario, Argentina. *Runa*, XXVI, 263-288.
- Cisneros, R. (2013). Las artesanías mexicanas en el contexto actual. En Sales Heredia, F. J. (Compilador). *Las artesanías en México. Situación actual y retos*. 31-36. Centro de Estudios Sociales y de Opinión Pública. Cámara de Diputados / LXII Legislatura. México.
- Coombs, P.H. & Ahmed, M. (1974) *Attacking Rural Poverty: How Non-Formal Education Can Help*, Baltimore, J. Hopkins University Press. Op. cit., Trilla, Jaume, (1996), *La educación fuera de la escuela. Ámbitos no formales y educación social*. Ariel, México, p. 19.
- COPLADEM. (2004). Plan de desarrollo comunitario de San Miguel Eménguar, municipio de Salvatierra, Gto. En: http://arcadiasalvaterrense.blogspot.com/2010/09/plan-de-desarrollo-comunitario-de-san_4492.html
- Díaz, R. (2008). Las panaderías en la Ciudad de México de Porfirio Díaz: los empresarios vasco-navarros y la movilización obrera. *Revista de Ciencia Sociales*. 29, 86-103
- Florescano, E. y otros. Tierras Nuevas, Expansión Territorial y ocupación del suelo de América. Siglos XVI-XIX. En Arreguín, I. (1993): *Capítulos de la Historia Colonial Guanajuatense*. Guanajuato: Universidad de Guanajuato. 75
- Foucault, M. (1969). *La arqueología del saber*. Editor digital: Turolero.
- García, C. (1982). *Culturas populares en el capitalismo*. La Habana: Ediciones Casa de las Américas.
- García, J. y García, F. J. (2015). Artesanía digital y modernidad educativa. *EKS*. 1.16, 1, 13-31.
- García, N. (1984). *Cultura y sociedad: Una introducción*. Cuadernos de información y divulgación para maestros bilingües. Primera edición 1981. Dirección General de Educación Indígena. SEP: México. En: <https://www.studocu.com/es-mx/document/universidad-de-guanajuato/literature/otros/garcia-canclini-cultura-y-sociedad-una-introduccion/5902563/view>
- Gaudin, Y. (2019). *Nuevas narrativas para una transformación rural en América Latina y el Caribe La nueva ruralidad: conceptos y medición*. CEPAL: Cd. De México.
- Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato (1999): *Programa para el Desarrollo de la Región Sur*. Guanajuato: Consejo para el Desarrollo de la región Sur.
- Gonzalbo, A., P. (1992). Hacia una historia de la vida privada en la Nueva España. En *Historia mexicana*, XLII, 2, 166, 353-378.
- González, P. (2000). *Geografía local del estado de Guanajuato*. Ediciones La Rana: México.
- Halbwachs, M. (2004). *La memoria colectiva*. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.
- Hegel, G.F.W. 1993. *Fenomenología del espíritu*. FCE., México.
- Kazuhiro, J.M. (1992). *La conquista educativa de los hijos de Asís* en La Educación en la Historia de México. El Colegio de México Pp. 15 -28.
- López, L. M. (2012). La memoria familiar. VIII Congreso Internacional: Literatura Memoria e Imaginación de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (por los derroteros de la oralidad y la escritura). Lima, Perú. En https://www.academia.edu/9848806/La_Memoria_Familiar
- Mendieta, J. (1572). Crianza y discursos didácticos a los hijos. En: López A. A. (1985). *La educación de los antiguos nahuas*. México: El Caballito.
- Moctezuma, Y. P. (2012). Familia patriarcal y trabajo artesano: Una forma organizativa laboral sustentada en el parentesco. *Revista de Estudios de Género. La ventana*, IV, 36, 134-177.

- Morín, C. (1979): Michoacán en la Nueva España del siglo XVIII. México; FCE. Tierra Firme. 21
- Novelo, V. (2004). La fuerza de trabajo artesanal en la industria mexicana. CIESAS, D.F. / Cencadar Simposio “La historia económica en la perspectiva arqueológico-industrial” Segundo Congreso Nacional de Historia Económica. La Historia Económica hoy, entre la Economía y la Historia. Ciudad Universitaria, D.F. en <http://www.economia.unam.mx/amhe/memoria/simposio01/Victoria%20NOVELO.pdf>
- Savage, M. (2002). En el olvido, el pan artesanal, a 500 años de su introducción a México. En La Jornada <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2002/02/26/08an2esp.php?origen=index.html>
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (1994). *Guanajuato, monografía estatal*, México.
- UNESCO. (2005). *Convención sobre la protección y la promoción de la diversidad de las expresiones culturales*. París. En <http://www.unesco.org/new/es/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/the-convention/convention-text>.
- Van Manem, M. (2003). *Investigación educativa y experiencia vivida. Ciencia humana para una pedagogía de la acción y la sensibilidad*. España: Idea Books.