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*Artículos Científicos*

## **El trabajo de mujeres artesanas en el México rural y el enfoque de las economías comunitarias**

*The labour of women artisans in rural Mexico and the community  
Economies approach*

*O trabalho das mulheres artesãs na zona rural do México e a abordagem  
das economias comunitárias*

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### **Resumen**

El presente artículo analiza desde el enfoque marxista no esencialista de las economías comunitarias las prácticas de género de mujeres rurales y artesanas organizadas para generar sustento en dos latitudes de México: Guerrero e Hidalgo. Se privilegia la perspectiva etnográfica en la recolección y análisis de la información. Para examinar el aporte del trabajo de las mujeres en los hogares, los colectivos y la comunidad, el género se considera un proceso relacional y performativo. Al explorar las contribuciones de las investigaciones sobre el trabajo de mujeres rurales y la política pública de fomento a su labor, se distingue el papel de actores y las estrategias implementadas. Entre los hallazgos se destacan las contribuciones



del trabajo remunerado y no remunerado de las mujeres en el sustento doméstico y comunitario. Se subraya, asimismo, el papel de la organización colectiva para propiciar espacios que valoricen el trabajo de las mujeres rurales a partir de prácticas culturales y ambientales situadas intersectadas por el género. También se destacan las restricciones que enfrentan en su trabajo: la excesiva carga, el limitado acceso a medios de producción, su desvalorización en el mercado y en los hogares y las restricciones estructurales vinculadas al mercado. Finalmente, se destaca la utilidad del enfoque y se sugieren recomendaciones para la política pública dirigida a la promoción del trabajo de las mujeres rurales artesanas.

**Palabras clave:** artesanías, mujeres rurales, políticas públicas, trabajo.

### **Abstract**

This article analyzes from the non-essentialist Marxist approach of community economies the gender practices of rural women and artisans organized to generate livelihoods in two latitudes of Mexico: Guerrero and Hidalgo. Ethnographic perspective is privileged on data collection and its analysis. To examine the contribution of women's work to households, groups and the community, gender is considered a relational and performative process. When exploring the contributions of research on the work of rural women and the public policy to promote their work, the role of actors and the strategies implemented are distinguished. Among the findings, the contributions of paid and unpaid work of women in the household and community support stand out. It is also emphasized the role of collective organization to promote spaces that value the work of rural women based on cultural and environmental practices intersected by gender. The restrictions they face in their work are also highlighted: excessive workload, limited access to means of production, their devaluation in the market and in households, and structural restrictions linked to the market. Finally, recommendations are suggested for public policy aimed at promoting the work of rural artisan women.

**Keywords:** handicrafts, rural women, public policies, labour.



## Resumo

Este artigo analisa, a partir da abordagem marxista não essencialista das economias comunitárias, as práticas de gênero de mulheres rurais e artesãs organizadas para gerar meios de vida em duas latitudes do México: Guerrero e Hidalgo. A perspectiva etnográfica é privilegiada na coleta e análise de informações. Para examinar a contribuição do trabalho feminino para as famílias, grupos e comunidade, o gênero é considerado um processo relacional e performativo. Ao explorar as contribuições da pesquisa sobre o trabalho das mulheres rurais e as políticas públicas de promoção do seu trabalho, distinguem-se os papéis dos atores e as estratégias implementadas. Dentre os achados, destacam-se as contribuições do trabalho remunerado e não remunerado das mulheres no domicílio e o apoio à comunidade. Da mesma forma, destaca-se o papel da organização coletiva na promoção de espaços que valorizem o trabalho das mulheres rurais a partir de práticas culturais e ambientais interseccionadas por gênero. Destacam-se também as restrições que enfrentam no seu trabalho: carga de trabalho excessiva, acesso limitado aos meios de produção, sua desvalorização no mercado e nas famílias e restrições estruturais vinculadas ao mercado. Por fim, destaca-se a utilidade do enfoque e são sugeridas recomendações de políticas públicas voltadas para a promoção do trabalho das mulheres artesãs rurais.

**Palavras-chave:** artesanato, mulheres rurais, políticas públicas, trabalho.

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## Introduction

In rural areas, the labor dynamics of women responded to the crisis in the peasant economy and to the structural reforms of 1980 (Arizpe and Botey, 2014). To provide livelihoods, households diversified strategies: male emigration, female labor, and the maquila were among the first alternatives (Wilson, 1993). The restructuring of the industrial and agricultural markets demanded the work of rural women in export crops, industrial parks and in the maquila at home (González, 1994). The reorganization of work was not limited to the domestic context. In the last 30 years, the participation of rural women in paid activities is active, heterogeneous and characterized by multiple activities (Center for Studies for



Sustainable Rural Development and Food Sovereignty [Cedrssa], 2016). Rural women are employed in the service sector, day labor, work on the plot, embroider and sell handicrafts.

In tune with the reality of rural women, studies on their work in Mexico and Latin America have been fruitful: contributions from demography, sociology, economics and anthropology, among other fields, are observed. Theories analyze gender dynamics in paid and unpaid work (Rendón, 2008); dynamics embedded in a set of hierarchical power relations that enable the control of men over women. Patriarchy as a theoretical notion illuminates the set of political, economic and social agreements from which gender inequalities emerge with ideological and material repercussions (Lopata, 1993). The Marxist critique with the notions of productive and reproductive work explores the relationship between social reproduction, capital accumulation and patriarchy (Mies, 2012). The subordination of women, manifested in the sexual division of labor, defines unpaid and reproductive tasks, performed in isolation and without the collaboration of family members. These social agreements accentuate the asymmetries between men and women in three areas: the home, paid work spaces and community areas.

Although Marxism analyzes inequality, the study of autonomous or independent work is not central to the dynamics of capitalism. Mies (2012), in her study of a Marxist perspective on Narsapur embroiderers, analyzes the relationship between the work of rural artisan women in the domestic space in contexts of poverty with the accumulation of capital, international trade and patriarchy. The lace embroidery made by Hindu women in periods when reproductive work was not so demanding, bought regionally by networks of intermediaries whose earnings depended on the degree of need for the embroiderer and marketed in England and Holland by transnational exporters, this practice, we said, expresses a form of exploitation for women located in the most unprotected link of the chain in the domestic and productive-remunerated sphere: the autonomous work of the embroiderers.

Self-employment manifests itself in various forms of economic organization. For example, that of small family businesses, peasant work or informal jobs, all associated with the subsistence of households and with various class processes in which surplus labor is appropriated and distributed in a diverse economy (Gibson, Law and McKay, 2001). The focus on capital accumulation and production places the economic contribution of rural women as marginal and subordinate to capital. Mies (2012) identifies this situation and recommends generating collective processes in which women defend the price of their



products and the interests of their union. Hence the relevance of the community. The literature on the work of rural women invites the study of complexity, since it analyzes the role of the domestic space for the production of livelihood, the development of gender identities associated with individual and collective work and accounts for the structural changes in the work environment (Pérez and Mummert, 1998). Jobs are interdependent in three arenas: the home, the community, and the market (González, 1994; Soto, 2019).

The work of rural women is characterized by multiple activity and intra- and extra-domestic articulation (Buendía, Alberti, Vázquez, Pacheco and García, 2008; Moctezuma, 1998). Unlike the approach focused on capital accumulation, the lens of community economies starts from recognizing economic diversity and identifies various processes of appropriation and distribution of the surplus with which they generate forms of economic organization occupied by welfare at different scales (Gibson et al., 2001). In these forms of organization, agency plays a central role in transforming oppressive gender relations (Sato, 2014).

The objective of this article is to analyze the practices of rural women artisans in light of the guidelines of community economies. This anti-essentialist Marxist reading of the economy proposes to explore consumption, the encounters fostered in the search for well-being, the mechanisms of appropriation and distribution of the surplus, the construction of commons and finance (Gibson, Cameron and Healy, 2013). The hypothesis suggests that changes in gender relations are a performative process. Through the repetition of individual and collective acts concerned with livelihood in their respective contexts, they reconfigure gender identities (Butler, 1988). Gender as a process involves reflective and non-reflective practices in "realizing gender" (Martin, 2006). In the former, norms that stabilize gender agreements are reproduced, but it is also possible to become aware of the inequities that they bring with them and act to transform them. The relationship between vulnerability, resistance, and agency illustrates these changes (Butler, 2018). The methodology is presented below, followed by the results and conclusions.



## Materials and method

The practices of two groups of artisans and peasants in Acatlán, Chilapa de Álvarez, in the state of Guerrero (south of the country), and in San Andrés Daboxtha Cardonal, in the state of Hidalgo (center of the country), are explored. In Acatlán, Nahua women make garments on a backstrap loom and hand embroidery. And in San Andrés Daboxtha, Hñahñus women make handicrafts with maguey or ixtle fiber, they weave textiles, personal ornaments and sponges for personal hygiene.

The ethnographic method was fundamental in the development of this work, since it allowed the collection of data and its analysis as part of the same process. Ethnography starts from the assumption that all the facts build the stability of its social world and, at the same time, make it describable, observable, subject to report (López, 2011). In the experience of women artisans, ixtle textiles and embroidery reflect a situated cultural practice intersected by gender relations. In addition, ethnography is a methodological tool in which face-to-face encounter with the subjects that lead the processes is privileged. Thanks to this, it is possible to identify permanence, changes, resistance and transformations. Closeness favors the development of sensitivity, empathy and understanding of the efforts of women, which in many cases are not made visible. In the analytical and theoretical realm, the ethnographic perspective illuminates the interaction between empirical variables situated, in which field work is fundamental and valuable in research. The analysis involves the conceptual, reconstructive, questioning description of multiple interconnections that reflect and reproduce gender orders, involving the emotions of women, their expectations and mistrust and the relationship with the process of development of the collectives.

In tune with the ethnographic approach, information was collected from in-depth interviews with the artisans. The questions focused on the job description, access to means of production, problems related to organization and sales, public supports, and the effects of the activity on households and the community environment. Participant observation techniques are used, since the two researchers have collaborated with the organizations as production and trade consultants. In addition, it was possible to penetrate the experience of the others, since the authors spent as much time as possible with the women of the groups studied, collaborating with them, analyzing their own reactions, intentions and motives. The research period in the field runs from 2002 to 2019. The interview was applied between 2016



to 2018 to all artisans (10 members in San Andrés Daboxtha and 10 in Acatlán). The results of the interviews and participant observation are ordered and analyzed based on the guidelines proposed by the theoretical framework of community economies. Results of a socioeconomic survey applied during 2014 in the group of artisans from Hidalgo are also included, to analyze the contribution of cooperatives to household spending.

## Results and Discussion

In the Mexican countryside, while public policies promoted agro-export activities, small peasant production was associated with a welfare-style social policy in the last 30 years (Robles, 2013). For rural women, social policy focused on the reproductive role financed with conditional transfer programs such as Prospera. The State delegated to women the responsibility of monitoring the diet and health of their relatives (Molyneux, 2006). The anti-poverty perspective of women's work focuses resources for development, it does not capture the gender dynamics of those who participate in them (Moser, 1989). From the productive sphere, the experiences of income-generating productive projects have been a recurrent and intermittent strategy of the State to incorporate women into paid work from an autonomous perspective (Angulo, 2000; Mummert and Ramírez, 1998). Despite the efforts of women to generate livelihoods and provide care for their families, precariousness and poverty characterize their living conditions. According to the report "General situation of rural and indigenous women in Mexico for the year 2015", carried out by Vásquez and Vargas (2017), 51.1% of indigenous women did not have access to education, while poverty reached 77.6 % of the indigenous population in 2016. In this context, the practices of the artisans, the effects of their work from the welfare perspective are analyzed and some clues are proposed to support their efforts from public policy.

Next, the work of the Nahua artisans from Acatlán and Hñähñus from San Andrés Daboxtha is analyzed. One of the main economic activities in the Nahua community of Acatlán is the elaboration of garments on a waist loom and hand embroidery of huipiles, shawls, blouses and tablecloths (Díaz, 2003). The community is recognized for the elaboration of the skirt and blouse ensemble known as the Acateca suit. The clothing is also worn by women from the neighboring town of Zitlala. More than 500 artisans and artisans are dedicated to this activity (estimated by artisans in 2015), so the variety in the design is



increasingly complex, they even incorporate touches of modernity to preserve the clothing, without losing its essence and tradition. Artisans and artisans make cotton, gauze or satin blouses, with silk threads or candle thread. The work is divided into three areas: the elaboration of the waist loom fabrics for the acateca skirt and the yarn dyeing; those who draw and design, and those who embroider. They are mostly women; some men combine this activity with other tasks such as agriculture, migration, commerce or wage labor.

Access to means of production and livelihood is anchored to the traditional division of labor that emerges from a patriarchal culture: women work in the domestic sphere, the means of production and livelihood are assigned to male providers (Lopata, 1993). For this reason, most of the artisans in Acatlán do not have machinery and supplies to make textiles; the elaboration is manual. The women, in addition to being artisans, work at home and on the family plot: they plant corn, beans, coriander, sweet potatoes and flowers, mainly. As among the Narsapur embroiderers (Mies, 2012), the craft's work schedule is complementary to other activities and flexible. They start at five in the morning and embroider until 10 a.m. m., they suspend to prepare breakfast and go to the field, they return home at approximately noon to continue embroidering, they suspend again at three in the afternoon to cook and do housework. Starting at 10:00 p.m. m., return to embroidery and sleep between 12:00 a. m. and 1:00 a. m. (Díaz, 2018, participant observation). In the distribution of schedules, artisans combine unpaid and paid domestic work: the production of handicrafts. Although these gender practices reproduce the perception that women's work may not have sufficient quality, since it is carried out in marginal times between multiple tasks, sometimes their effort is even devalued; however, it also represents an opportunity to obtain additional resources from the sale of handicrafts. Women's efforts increase with the quality of the garment's finishes, for example, when using a more pressed or silk thread and with smaller drawings, the effort for the eyes is greater, especially at night. Although these garments are priced higher in the market, their sale is rare in the region.

The teaching of the work of embroidery on silk and on the backstrap loom in Acatlán is transmitted between generations. For young men you learn through observation. In the situation of women, teaching represents a gender practice transmitted from a very young age by mothers or grandmothers, who perfect their technique and dexterity throughout their lives. The Acatlán embroiderers present products with different quality, some make very delicate garments, others work more easily and piecemeal. The levels of production, the quality of





the materials, the elaboration of handicrafts and the socioeconomic characteristics of the embroiderers are diverse and correspond to the needs of their homes, availability of time and access to means such as threads and cloth. There are women who make a few clothes a month and store them for specific events, when sales increase. Other artisans embroider a greater quantity of garments and sell them in the Sunday market in Chilapa and in the municipalities of Tixtla, Chilpancingo, Acapulco, where the sale is direct. They also give their work to resellers, since they obtain relatively secure resources although at the expense of the real price of their products.

In addition to the independent work of the artisans, subcontracting dynamics have been generated in some sewing workshops, these pay the embroiderers to give a handmade finish. Although these garments are sold at higher prices, the remuneration for artisans is low, since they are paid for piecework. Outsourcing practices make women's working conditions even more precarious, intersected by inequitable gender relations linked to access to means of production, knowledge and intensification of workloads. Women artisans face the permanent risk of losses in the price of garments, lack of payment or partial remuneration for their work. In the last 10 years there has been a revaluation of artisan work, many young people wear embroidered garments from their locality on a daily basis, considered "modern". The sale to the interior of Acatlán is significant, since the garments are used as part of the dancers' clothing. In this context, the Akatl women's group arises.

Despite the context of exploitation of artisan work anchored to a set of patriarchal relations and, therefore, inequitable power relations between genders (Lopata, 1993), the production of handicrafts represents a possibility to generate additional income for women. Akatl-Bordados de Acatlán is a cooperative effort to produce handicrafts. In 2014, 10 artisan women constituted it. With the collaboration of a civil organization, they manage to obtain industrial machines for the manufacture of clothing, as well as initial capital for the purchase of basic inputs such as threads and fabrics (Akatl-Bordados de Acatlán, 2016, in-depth interview). As of 2014, the collective remains organized. They have diversified the production of clothing and improved the design of their products. However, they face structural restrictions, such as the limited market, since the low price of the product does not allow the members to invest more time in the finishes and the quality remains partially on the decline despite collective efforts (2016, interviews with frequent buyer customers, most resellers). The artisans sell their products within the community and externally, since they



participate in exhibitions and fairs. Outings to sell involve higher expenses in the face of insecure income, for example, municipalities charge approximately US \$ 200 to display handicrafts. For marketing, the artisans sell to intermediaries at low prices; these intermediaries are the ones who take the profits. The income is infrequent, however, it is enough to replace the inputs (threads, looms, canvases) and the rest is used for the consumption of food for the home. In addition, they allocate a part of their income to community festivals. Families assume some stewardship or collaborate with that of another member of the extended family. Although the party is not a mandatory activity, the majority of the population assumes the commitment out of faith and to contribute to community cohesion.

A reading not focused on capital accumulation allows us to analyze the relevance of collective organization (Sato, 2014). For the artisans of Akatl, the cooperative has made it possible to buy wholesale supplies and distribute the transfer costs among the members. They have also managed to standardize the quality of their products to improve sales prices. Since they are an organized group, they consider them to attend fairs or exhibitions where it is possible to find a less inequitable price for their work. In parallel, the organization has made it possible to access external resources and public support. Fundamental elements to analyze gender as a process, since, although artisans are subject to a traditional division of labor and inequitable power schemes within their homes and outside of them, access to resources, organizational tools and capital enables other economic and social relations. This does not mean that these elements are sufficient. In addition to material restrictions, women face ideological conditioning that limits their personal development. However, work in cooperatives contributes to tensing these traditional views that devalue the work of rural women: one way to create resistance (Butler, 2018) against such employers is to invest and enhance the work that rural women do.

In the domestic sphere, the elaboration of handicrafts is an alternative to complete the expenditure not without difficulties: high costs in inputs, markets that do not remunerate work, low quality of products, standardize costs and associate. There have been several attempts to promote the collective organization of artisans, so far without much success, since it continues to be an individual and family activity except for the embroidery cooperative that continues to work collectively.



Changes in gender relations are linked to the contribution to domestic spending of artisan women. When observing this contribution, the husbands support the activity, for example, when they have orders for many pieces, collaborate by embroidering or accompany the women to the places of sale. The work of the embroiderers and that of other women who work outside the home contributes to denaturing the exclusivity of domestic work based on the sexual division of traditional work and modifying gender identities, expanding the possibilities of being a woman in rural areas, tensing patriarchal visions of the role of women. The work of artisans, as observed in the case of the Narsapur embroiderers (Mies, 2012), integrates intra- and extra-domestic work that is unpaid, or has very limited remuneration. Inside the home they embroider and outside the home they manage the purchase of supplies and marketing, in addition to public support. In both spaces, the collaboration of husbands and male relatives is observed incipiently.

On the other hand, in the Mezquital textiles are made with hard fibers that come from the lechuguilla and the maguey fiber, as well as wool and cotton fabrics, considered soft. The manufacture of maguey fiber textiles is carried out among the Otomí population of the semi-desert region. In the Alto Mezquital, the fiber handicrafts of maguey-duras (ixtle in hñahñu) and lechuguilla (xithe in hñahñu) have been a livelihood strategy of the Otomí people since the colonial period. Maguey fiber ayates are traditional garments worn by men and women. They have a ritual meaning since they were offered to the Lady of the Conception in the Cardonal (Medina and Quezada, 1975). The production of ixtle and lechuguilla textiles is a gender practice anchored in the culture of Hñahñus women and men who participate in their production with specific tasks, although the knowledge of the complete practice is known exclusively by some older women. The processing incorporates: the drying of the stalk or fermentation, the carving, washing, drying and spinning of the fiber. In addition, the artisans require peasant knowledge to identify the maguey with the most suitable stem for processing. (Milpa Maguey Tierno de la Mujer, entrevista a profundidad, 2016).

For the production of fiber, the ripe maguey is selected and the leaves are cut. There are two processes to defibrate it: the crude consists of allowing the leaves to dry in the sun or in which they roast and ferment the leaves for two days. Once the stalk is dried or fermented, it is placed on a stone and beaten with a wooden mallet to crush and pulp it until the fiber remains. The result is immersed in blood (medicinal plant of the arid region), in soap and water or in nixtamal water, they are placed in the sun and the fine strands are



combed once dry (Medina and Quezada, 1975). Previously, ixtle was used to make ayates, canvases that are still used in the traditional clothing of the hñähñus. The finest are wedding gifts and denote the embroiderer's prestige; although less fine yachts are also woven for domestic and cargo use. More recently (2019), ayates tend to be replaced by bags of artificial fibers, however, the maguey fiber is used to embroider personal ornaments such as earrings, bracelets, bags, tablecloths or cleaning supplies, such as sponges of different sizes; the ayates are used in ceremonies or for gifts. The handicrafts can be sold in natural color or dyed the fiber with natural paints of flowers and some fruits.

The group of women Milpa Maguey Tierno de la Mujer SSS was formed in the late 1990s to process nectar from mead. The cooperative is made up of 20 women and a hñähñus man. In addition to processing the mead nectar, 10 members spin and embroider ixtle handicrafts: sponges, earrings, tablecloths and earrings. However, only three members dominate the entire process, from pulping the stalk to washing, drying, combing and spinning the fiber. The processing of the ixtle takes at least two weeks to become fiber; If you want to paint the fiber, the process can take at least three more days. Most of the embroiderers intervene in the last phase: the embroidery and design of the crafts. The length of time depends on the size and complexity of the embroidery, as well as the skill of the artisan. The embroiderer members buy the ixtle per kilo already spun in the community.

The design, embroidery and finishing is carried out by each member from the domestic space, although in the organizational meetings of the cooperative they also exchange embroidery practices, ideas and new designs. The sale of the crafts is individual. When there are customers in the cooperative, they are also exhibited and sold. Like the embroiderers of Acatlán, the artisans of the Milpa Maguey use the times they consider inactive to embroider, including nights. The price of handicrafts is very varied, its determination is based on the time of work invested. For example, a ceremonial type ayate used at weddings can reach a price of between 2000 to 4000 Mexican pesos (200 to 400 dollars), this work involves months of work. However, the handicrafts sold by the members range between 40 and 200 Mexican pesos. The making of handicrafts is a widespread economic activity among young and adult women. The crafts accompany the women to the market, to the cooperative workshop, to the primary school when they collect their children. In any meeting, embroidery is exchanged or a piece is sold. During 2014, income from maguey fiber handicrafts contributed 2% of the household income of cooperative members (socioeconomic survey applied during 2014). The



surplus from the work of artisans is used to increase the availability and consumption of food in households.

The weaving and embroidery of ixtle is a complementary activity in the income of women. The husbands collaborate with the work: they pulp the stalks, since it is physically heavy work and the juice from the stalk generates a skin rash. Unlike the artisans in Acatlán, the collaboration of the spouses is limited to the domestic sphere; Men do not embroider, design or sell any ixtle crafts, this process is exclusive to women. In general, the work of artisan women is well regarded among the male members of the family, since the wife carries out additional work with which she earns an income without neglecting housework. However, the overexertion of women is not rewarded by the limited price at which they sell their products. This value is associated with the idea that women's work is of lower quality, thus reproducing traditional notions of gender. Although women's income favors consumption, they are not enough to accumulate and reinvest in this activity.

The work of the two groups of artisans is characteristic of the autonomous work proposed by Mies (2012): exploitation and limited possibilities of accumulation stand out. By observing the categories proposed by community economies (Gibson et al., 2013), it is possible to identify the set of variables that intervene in artisanal work intersected by gender. Among the embroiderers of Acatlán, as among the embroiderers of the Milpa Maguey, knowledge of embroidery is transmitted considering gender differences: mothers teach their daughters but men learn by observing. In particular, in the Milpa Maguey Tierno de la Mujer SSS knowledge is not limited to embroidery, they also integrate peasant knowledge about the types of maguey most suitable for fiber. These practices are differentiated by gender, since the spinning, embroidery, design and marketing is carried out exclusively by women. The transmission of these practices intersected by gender is part of the expansion and dissemination of the situated peasant knowledge of women and the care of local plants is promoted.

On the other hand, the lens of community economies highlights the role that craft work plays in supporting the home and the reproduction of community cultural practices, both roles observed in the two contexts analyzed. Using the approach of community economies in the analysis of the autonomous work of indigenous artisan women seeks to highlight their contribution to sustenance from the consumption and reproduction of community cultural life, as well as to identify the role of external actors in the search for welfare, beyond the



logic centered on the duality of exploitation-accumulation. One of the limits of the proposed theory refers to the strategies to counteract the self-exploitation implicit in the autonomous work of artisans.

## Conclusions

Rural women's work occurs in a dual economy: they work as producers of goods and services and take on tasks of social reproduction in the domestic sphere and in the family plot. The elaboration of handicrafts in the two groups is an activity where domestic, individual and collective spaces alternate, with effects on local community economies associated with consumption, distribution of surpluses and encounters. In the domestic sphere they spin and embroider in the times they consider free. In collective spaces, they foster dynamics to improve quality, innovate designs, generate new associative knowledge to manage collective purchases and sales, and prepare proposals for public financing and with civil organizations. For the elaboration of handicrafts, women consider situated cultural and environmental knowledge. The practices for spinning, loom, design and embroidery are taught, reproduced and expanded in the encounters between partners; in them, in the encounters, they share "stitches", threads or recommendations to make better crafts.

By using the approach of community economies, the activity of the embroiderers has an impact on the domestic economy, income is integrated into domestic spending and increases the availability of food consumption, education and shelter for family members; although the possibilities of distribution of the surplus do not contribute to accumulation in the sector, since the sales income is hardly sufficient to replace the cost of the raw material. Despite the efforts of women, the value of handicrafts faces structural restrictions: limited local market, intermediation in Guerrero is associated with subcontracting and piecework, with worse wages for women, in addition to high marketing costs implying participation in fairs with insecure income. However, for women it seems an alternative since they associate it with times in which they do not carry out reproductive activities, at the cost of their rest and enjoyment time.

On the other hand, the continuous effort of artisans on some occasions finds correspondence between male relatives, who, when observing the contribution to household spending, collaborate in activities typical of handicraft or take on domestic chores to unload



the tasks of the artisans, which that accounts for the transformations in gender relations. Sharing these tasks to alleviate excess work and denaturalize the domestic work of women contributes to the alteration of gender relations in households. Contradictorily, these changes originate in a context of intensification of women's work. The importance of incorporating other actors in activities for the social reproduction of households cannot be overstated.

Public policies related to the handicraft sector must identify the relationship between domestic, individual and collective spaces, as well as the participation of civil organizations in the training, financing and commercialization of handicrafts made by women. In the domestic family space, public policies should adapt schemes to care or mitigate the excess of work of rural women, since they work in housework, day labor, handicrafts and in the plots. While in the collective space it is possible to promote the association of groups of artisans based on training schemes, techniques to improve and standardize quality and increase points of sale that pay fairer prices for women's work and generate more trust among companions.



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| <b>Rol de Contribución</b>                           | <b>Autor (es)</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Conceptualización</b>                             | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (principal) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (apoyo) |
| <b>Metodología</b>                                   | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (apoyo) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (Principal) |
| <b>Software</b>                                      | NO APLICA   |
| <b>Validación</b>                                    | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (principal) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (apoyo) |
| <b>Análisis Formal</b>                               | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |
| <b>Investigación</b>                                 | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |
| <b>Recursos</b>                                      | NO APLICA   |
| <b>Curación de datos</b>                             | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (Principal) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (apoyo) |
| <b>Escritura - Preparación del borrador original</b> | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (Principal) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (apoyo) |
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| <b>Visualización</b>                                 | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |
| <b>Supervisión</b>                                   | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |
| <b>Administración de Proyectos</b>                   | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |
| <b>Adquisición de fondos</b>                         | Soto Alarcón Jozelin María (igual) y Diaz Vázquez Rosalba (igual)     |

