

The utilitarian and artistic crafts of Ráquira Boyacá: an analysis between the commercial and the symbolic from tourism

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Abstract: This study conducts an analysis of the utilitarian and artistic handicraft work made from clay in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá, in order to understand the role of tourism in the changes in handicraft practices and their relationship with market dynamics. The methodological horizon was oriented from the qualitative approach and the ethnography of places was used as a method. The information was systematized and analyzed using the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. The findings indicate that artisans have been forced to generate changes and transformations in their traditional crafts, in order to keep up with contemporary trends, which are determined by tourism practices. It is concluded that tourist consumers are determining actors in the production, commercialisation and consumption of Ráquira's artisan work, inasmuch as, from their valuation system, symbols, images and representations, they reconfigure the artisan practices, forcing the artisan to resignify their occupation and, above all, the final artisan piece so that it is articulated to the economic dynamics of the region.

Keywords: Handicraft; heritage; tourism; commodification; culture.

La artesanía utilitaria y artística de Ráquira Boyacá: un análisis entre lo comercial y lo simbólico a partir del turismo

Resumen: Este estudio realiza un análisis del trabajo artesanal utilitario y artístico elaborado en arcilla en el municipio de Ráquira Boyacá, con el fin de comprender el papel del turismo en los cambios de las prácticas artesanales y su relación con las dinámicas del mercado. El horizonte metodológico se orientó desde el enfoque cualitativo y se utilizó como método la etnografía de lugares. La información fue sistematizada y analizada utilizando el software de análisis cualitativo ATLAS.ti. Los hallazgos indican que los artesanos se han visto obligados a generar cambios y transformaciones en sus oficios tradicionales, ante la urgencia de estar a la vanguardia de las tendencias contemporáneas, las cuales están determinadas por las prácticas turísticas. Se concluye que los consumidores turísticos son actores determinantes en la producción, comercialización y consumo del trabajo artesanal de Ráquira, en la medida en que, desde su sistema de valoración, símbolos, imágenes y representaciones, reconfiguran las prácticas artesanales, obligando al artesano a resignificar su oficio y, sobre todo, la pieza artesanal final para que se articule a las dinámicas económicas de la región.

Palabras clave: Artesanía; turismo; mercantilización; cultura.

1. Introduction

Handicrafts are a living asset of communities, since as tangible cultural heritage they are materialized in products, goods and objects; as intangible cultural heritage they define techniques, knowledge and know-how (Cuaton, 2019; Patiño et al., 2021). As integral cultural heritage they

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constitute identities, rites and traditions that remain in force to the extent that they are dynamic and evolving, based on their recreation, practice and symbolic recognition granted to them (Ferreira et al., 2019; Gireesh & Raman, 2022). Craft practices today are symbols of resistance to industrialization and technological development, contemporary dynamics that have cornered crafts as a residual activity that forces them to adapt and redefine themselves in a kind of cultural contortionism in order to keep their tradition in force (Buskell, 2022; Tapfuma et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021).

Rethinking handicrafts in today's consumerist society is a necessity in view of their cultural function from the worldview of artisans, who from a symbolic system codify their own knowledge and meanings that constitute the cultural identity of a territory (Kugapi et al., 2020; Zabulis et al., 2020). In the same way, it is necessary to rethink its economic function, since handicrafts as an object of consumption have a use value when integrated as merchandise in handicraft and tourist markets in different geographies. The commodification of culture is evident, since crafts as an object of transaction gives an exchange value to techniques, knowledge and know-how, which as intrinsic rituals are subject to transaction movements, particularly from tourism (Mayuzumi, 2022; Remoaldo et al., 2020). Finally, to rethink the symbolic function, which corresponds to the consumer, who legitimizes it to the extent that he/she gives it a meaning to link it to a common group, a lifestyle, certain social practices and status (Evans, 2019; Väänänen & Pöllänen, 2020).

Tourism as a contemporary social practice and mass phenomenon has acquired a significant cultural dimension that has a direct impact on the cultural dynamics of territories, particularly in those where handicrafts are the mobilizing agent of tourist flows (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Rodríguez & Ruiz, 2023). Craft tourism as a contemporary typology helps to understand entrepreneurial behavior, context, motivation, development, resources, diversity and craft classification (Guha et al., 2021; Mora & Nieto, 2023; Pret & Cogan, 2019). Likewise, there is an interest on the part of artisans in enhancing this type of tourism as a limited resource to make it sustainable (Arias & Cruz, 2019; Somnuxpong, 2020; Mora, 2022). Undoubtedly, handicrafts evoke the associated traditions reinforcing the patrimonial link assigned by the tourist and the identity assigned by the artisan (Deb et al., 2022; Koumara-Tsitsou & Karachalis, 2021; Mansilla et al., 2023).

In the context of ceramic handicraft practices in the municipality of Ráquira, a discussion is generated between the commercial and the symbolic, insofar as, tourism has a determining role in the structural changes that are manifested in handicrafts, which have been adapted and resignified according to the trends and tourist demand from three perspectives: a) production, b) marketing and c) consumption. In this sense, Monterrubio (2018) mentions that handicrafts materialize the travel experience, which as an object of consumption will fulfill their future function of evoking the travel experience; thus, their use value becomes an exchange value in the context of commodification and tourism patrimonialization (Mora et al., 2019; Mora & Nieto, 2023; Sánchez-Sánchez & Sánchez-Sánchez, 2022).

Craftsmanship in the municipality of Ráquira involves a dialectical relationship between economy and culture from which tensions and conflicts are constantly being negotiated. It is very possible that tourism, from its mercantile practices, reduces handicrafts to an object of consumption and in this way, attempts against its identity and cultural function (Nieto, 2020). Thus, an asymmetrical relationship is created to the detriment of cultural identity, since those who buy a handicraft seek to satisfy a symbolic need from a subjective perspective and their purchase will be determined by particular demands in aesthetic, functional and symbolic terms, which, in turn, conditions the market. Those who sell seek to satisfy an economic need by adapting their craft practices to the specific demands of the market. This asymmetry undermines the symbolic and cultural value of crafts by prioritizing its economic function, to change the model of craft production to a serial production model. In sum, as mentioned by (Saldaña-Ortega et al., 2018) this represents a conflict for the artisan, between the symbolic and economic values that constitute each craft, since the time allocated to craft production goes hand in hand with the cultural ritual involved in its creation (Sehnm et al., 2020; Wondirad et al., 2021).

Poorly planned tourism can significantly infer in cultural expropriation (Phong & Van Tien, 2021; Vallejo & Henao, 2019) insofar as, its practices and interests put the economic value of craftsmanship from a conception of cultural commodification, above the identity and social cohesion value (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020) mentions that to the extent that artisans must make changes and adaptations in their craft practices for commercial purposes, this is a first step in the cultural expropriation that reproduces the asymmetry between those who possess the techniques, knowledge and know-how associated with artisanal work and those who define the commercial dynamics of mass tourism practices (Couret, 2020; Li & Kovacs, 2021).

Thinking about the craftsmanship of the municipality of Ráquira will imply reflecting on the cultural value of craftsmanship and its function as a transmitter of cosmovisions, identity and traditions; as well as the economic value assigned to its commercialization as cultural merchandise. It will imply understanding the role of tourism in the changes and transformations of handicraft practices, in the "manufacture" of a cheap and affordable handicraft for the tourist masses, to the detriment of the elaboration of an aesthetic and symbolic handicraft for the cultural traveler. Craftsmanship as a manifestation of popular culture in Ráquira faces

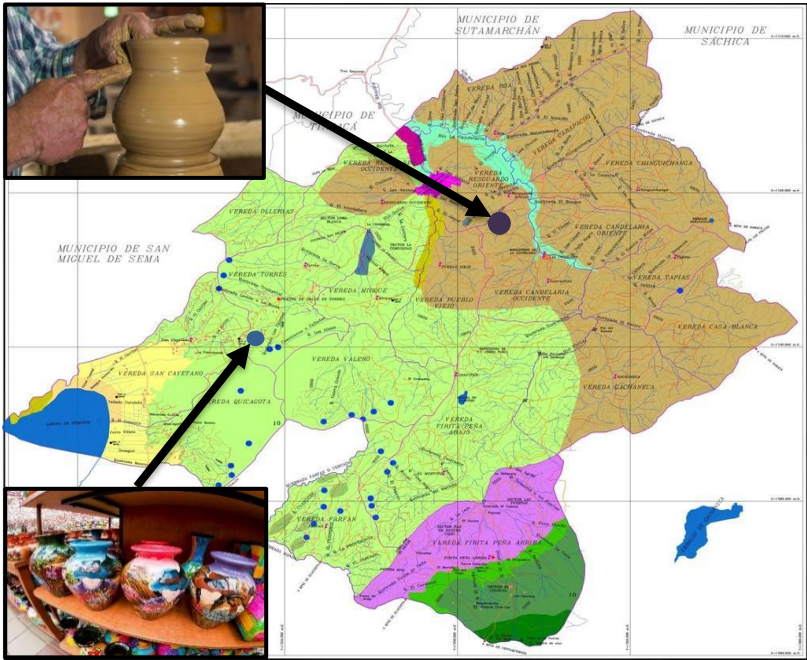
challenges such as: the introduction of foreign craftsmanship different from the clay molding characteristic of the municipality; commercialization of substitute craftsmanship products for tourists that go against the local craftsmanship identity; premolded manufacture of souvenirs promoted and commercialized as authentic local craftsmanship and substitution of craftsmanship for industrially manufactured products (Chirakranont & Sakdiyakorn, 2022; Wang et al., 2020).

In this sense, the objective of this work is to analyze the clay crafts that are made in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá to understand the role of tourism in the changes in craft practices based on the specific demands of the market. An analysis is sought between the symbolic value and the economic value of handicrafts as cultural merchandise. In this sense, the diverse perceptions and representations of artisans and tourists interacting in the cultural handicraft space of Ráquira are analyzed.

2. Methodology

The methodological structure of the work was oriented from the qualitative approach of Páramo (2008), since it was proposed to understand the craft practices, tourism and territorial dynamics as a set of complex relationships from which units of analysis were extracted that led to the socio-anthropological reflection on the craft transformations that have taken place in the municipality of Ráquira in the department of Boyacá (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Geographic location of the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá



Source: Territorial Planning Scheme. Municipal Planning of the municipality of Ráquira: elaboration and sale of clay handicrafts (2022).

The method used was the ethnography of places (Martínez et al., 2019) which allowed a participatory approach with the community, enabling three moments that were fundamental in this research and in relation to the object of study: a) what happened, b) what was done and c) why it was important; elements that allowed to establish a relationship between the place, the observed phenomenon and the social subjects.

The epistemological horizon was determined by hermeneutic phenomenology, allowing the reflection of tourism in relation to craft practices as a contemporary social phenomenon. Likewise, the grounded theory of Karimi-Maleh et al (2020) contributed to the elaboration of the theoretical structure, based on a documentary corpus defined by two categories of analysis: a) cultural and craft tourism and b) crafts as a manifestation of intangible cultural heritage.

The first phase involved the characterization of the utilitarian and decorative handicrafts marketed to tourists; this implied a participant observation exercise Chelladurai et al (2021) recording what was observed in a field diary, which required dialoguing, listening, observing and reflecting on the different actors and their role in the development of the research. The information was systematized on the basis of an ethnographic characterization matrix following the model proposed by Zilber (2020).

The second phase corresponded to the collection of primary information through the application of surveys. The sample used in the research was non-probabilistic by convenience (Fernández-Sánchez et al., 2020). The participants in the study were tourists who purchased handicrafts in the municipality of Ráquira. The sample consisted of N= 450 buyers, with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum of 70 years old.

The purpose of the third phase was to learn the opinions of the ceramic artisans regarding their imaginaries and representations in relation to tourism and artisan work. Two semi-structured ethnographic interviews were conducted, which were referenced as E1 and E2. The systematization of the interviews was carried out using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.Ti, allowing the visualization of relationships in the process of obtaining meanings, defining codes and variables that made analysis categories emerge, to find convergences that were captured in a graphic network. Likewise, the analysis process was supported by the grounded theory of the data from (Khoshnaw et al., 2020).

3. Results

The municipality of Ráquira in the department of Boyacá is one of the most important handicraft destinations in the country, its traditional handmade pottery and ceramic pieces are considered as rural art of origin and tradition of the Muisca indigenous culture. They are pieces that are distinguished by their naturalness in their elaboration, but that evidence a millenary tradition from their techniques, know-how and knowledge associated to their myths, beliefs and cosmogony that are materialized in their elaboration. As a handmade product, it has differentiating elements, therefore, functional and artistic utilitarian artifacts are distinguished, where priority is given to the aesthetics of the piece for decorative purposes. Based on these imaginaries and social constructs, the aim is to strengthen the territorial identity; thus, Ráquira's handicrafts should be analyzed from two dimensions, a cultural identity function and a mercantile economic function. Thus, an observation exercise of more than 50 hours was carried out to subsequently characterize the handicraft work (tables 1, 2 and 3) that is elaborated in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá.

It is worth mentioning that the fieldwork was carried out in three different moments that correspond to the three phases mentioned in the methodology. The first moment made it possible to become familiar with the territory through participant observation, in order to characterize the artisan work of the municipality through photography and the field diary; these activities were carried out on May 5, 6 and 7, 2023. The second moment involved carrying out surveys to tourists who visited the municipality on May 12, 13 and 14, 2023 and the third moment allowed the establishment of dialogues based on semi-structured interviews on May 19, 20 and 21, 2023.

Observation and dialogue with the artisans made it possible to identify the pottery tradition for utilitarian purposes, where the indigenous heritage of the Muisca communities is clearly identified. Their utilitarian craftsmanship is determined by the elaboration of representative pieces such as chorotes, múcuras, pots and vessels (Table 1). These pieces are made from local raw materials and traditional technologies transferred from one generation to the next. The utilitarian handicrafts made from clay are produced in small family workshops with little social division of labor, rudimentary machinery and human labor. Its production obeys to subsistence economies from family craft nuclei who develop craft activities as the only means of subsistence and their products are mostly marketed through intermediaries who distribute them throughout the country.

Ráquira's handicrafts are recognized as national cultural heritage and some of its utilitarian and artistic pieces have a denomination of origin as vernacular folk art, which makes them highly valued for the national and international tourism market. In the discourse of development and vindication of local culture, handicrafts are considered the most important asset in the cultural tourism offer.

The municipality of Ráquira represents an important supply of handicraft products of aesthetic and artistic value (Table 2) with an emotional abstraction oriented to the mainly local tourist market. The handcrafted pieces show a creative process determined by materials, images and sensations, which aims to attract the interest of tourists of medium and high status, who have a sense of appreciation for the handcrafted work so that they finally consume them. Each piece is a unique object in the context of popular art, as it shows manual dexterity, creativity, thought, identity and traditions based on their understanding of the world.

There is evidence of a transition from traditional utilitarian crafts that use only clay, as artistic crafts present innovations in new techniques such as glazing, the use of porcelain and kaolin, which have generated a kind of hybridization of the local craft (Table 2). Crafts stand out for their use of shapes, colors, images and sensations, which go beyond aesthetics and art to serve economic purposes as highly valued cultural merchandise for tourists. Crafts in Ráquira have been established as a tourist attraction, a commercial and cultural product that resignifies the imaginaries of the artisan and the symbolic value of craftsmanship; it mentions Tosselli (2019) that tourism brings about structural changes in the artisan collective and its social environment affecting production, marketing and sales, conditioning tourist demand.

Table 1: Characterization of Ráquira's utilitarian handicrafts

Utilitarian Handicrafts	
	
	
Origin: Ráquira	Process: manual
Technique: Pottery	Raw Material: Clay and Watercolor

The globalizing economic processes have managed to permeate the territories with exceptional cultural wealth, generating consequences that are evident and tangible in the handicraft cultural practices such as those of Ráquira. Artisans and handicrafts have been forced to generate changes and transformations in their traditional handicrafts in the urgency of being at the forefront of contemporary trends, which in a linear and accelerated manner are determined by economic and technological development and progress.

In Ráquira, industrial handicrafts are present, which are manufactured from molds and mechanized processes, whose products are oriented to serve the mass and homogeneous market in the context of a mass tourism destination such as the municipality of Ráquira. An important percentage of the artisan work found in Ráquira and aimed at the mass tourist market, is inspired by themes foreign to the culture and tradition of the region, as shown in Table 3, which offers pieces of superheroes, pieces used in the celebration of the Day of the Dead as a Mexican tradition, Halloween, Christmas and pre-molded decorative pieces and crafts in black clay whose origin is in the municipality of Guamo in the department of Tolima, hundreds of kilometers away, being a foreign handicraft; among countless other pieces that threaten the local artisan identity.

Table 2: Characterization of Ráquira's artistic handicrafts

Artistic Handicrafts	
	
	
Origin: Ráquira	Process: manual
Technique: Ceramics	Raw Material: Clay and Watercolor

Table 3: Characterization of the industrial handicrafts of Ráquira

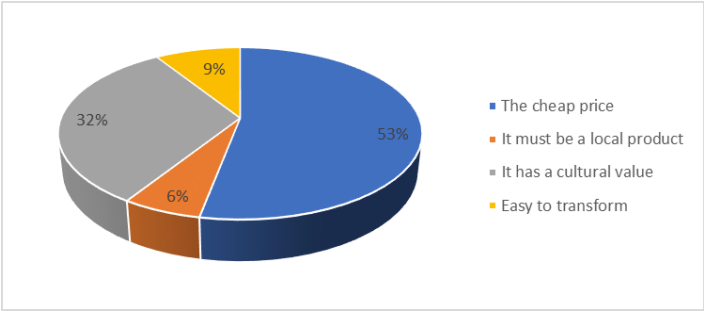
Industrial Handicrafts	
	
	
Origin: Ráquira and external	Process: molding/industrial
Technique: Pottery	Raw Material: Clay and Watercolor

All of the above implies a standardization in terms of culture, to achieve a high volume of production at very low selling prices, because as mentioned (Jiménez and Seño, 2019) the consumption of industrial craft pieces is a determining element that allows maintaining the structure of production, distribution and craft trade. The implementation of technologies such as lathes, molds and industrial machinery are a threat to the forms of handicraft production of ancestral connotation, they are a latent threat to the techniques, knowledge and traditions as a cultural legacy, because from the current global market and mass tourism, crafts as an object of consumption is determined by volume and price.

3.1 Crafts as cultural merchandise: symbols, perceptions and representations

The success of the municipality of Ráquira as a handicraft tourist destination has transformed it into a mass destination, which has generated a saturation of the handicraft market that has forced it to radically transform itself to adapt to the changing demands of a very competitive market (figure 2), which demands the cheapening of its products and innovation in the handicraft tradition to consolidate the souvenir market, changing its character of cultural manifestation to resignify itself as an object of consumption in the mercantilist context of mass cultural tourism.

Figure 2: What criteria do tourists prioritize when buying a handicraft piece in the municipality of Ráquira



Regarding the criteria that tourists prioritize when buying a handicraft in the municipality of Ráquira, it was found that 55% of those surveyed favor the purchase of handicrafts taking into account the economic price, which implies that they purchase standardized and pre-molded pieces in industrial processes. Thirty-two percent of those surveyed stated that their main purchasing criterion was that the handicraft should have a cultural value, which shows that there is a concern by an important sector of tourists to acquire traditional handicrafts to which they attach a symbolic value. For another 9% of informants, their main criterion is that the acquired handicraft be easy to transport, which shows that they are only interested in acquiring a travel souvenir and finally 6% have as a purchase criterion that the handicraft be a local and autochthonous product, showing that there is a valuation as a practice and cultural heritage.

It is evident that with respect to the purchase and consumption of handicrafts, the subjective values that are socially attributed to them are at stake Tosselli (2019) on the one hand, a use value that allows satisfying a need regarding the purpose for which they were created and the symbolic value, which may be associated with the habitus; understood as the ways of acting, thinking and feeling of individuals, which are directly associated with the social sector to which one belongs, which unquestionably conditions the taste and preference for one or another handicraft piece. Loza (2020) mentions that handcrafted objects can be elaborated with the same raw material, but with different details and finishes, conditioning the taste of the buyer, which in parallel modifies the production of such objects.

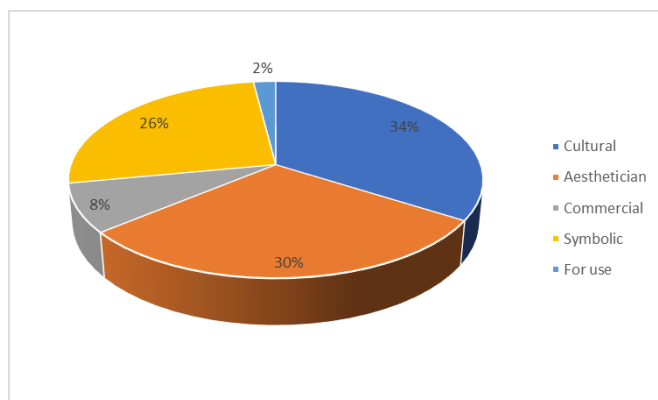
The artisan has the ability to transform with his hands the symbolic value demanded by a tourist into a handcrafted piece, in which feelings and representations of both the maker and the consumer are linked. Pierre (2020) mentions that the relationship between taste, symbolic consumption and identity is determined by the intrinsic valuation system in each individual, since he will have the faculty to judge the aesthetic values, to find a meaning and a use value, then from the purchase he will look for the reciprocal value, while he will pay and consume a handicraft piece to which he will give a meaning and will build a valuation system (figure 3). Then a third one is integrated, which is the context of the market, because in the case of Colombia, spaces and events have been created in which the material and symbolic values of the crafts converge, particularly the Feria de las Colonias and Expoartesanas, which

emerge as places to create cultural experiences from the crafts, in a sort of museographic spectacularization that aims to exoticize the artisans (Chaves, et al. 2014).

Regarding the value assigned by tourists to ceramic handicrafts in the municipality of Ráquira, 34% of those surveyed attributed a cultural value to the handicraft work. The 30% of the respondents stated that the handicraft work has a symbolic value associated with the purchased piece. Another 26% of the respondents report that handicraft work has a symbolic value based on their personal valuation system. An 8% of the informants mentioned that handicrafts only represent a commercial value as a travel souvenir and the remaining 2% stated that handicrafts have a use value.

From this perspective, it is important to consider that tourist consumers are determining actors in the production, commercialization and consumption of Ráquira's artisanal work, insofar as, from their valuation system, symbols, images and representations reconfigure artisanal practices forcing the artisan to resignify his profession and, above all, the final artisanal piece so that it attends to a social symbolism. This coincides with what Troncoso (2019) mentions in that, a dialectical process materializes regarding the economic and symbolic value of the artisanal object that is consumed and the construction of identity by the tourist. This coincides with what (Troncoso, 2019) mentions insofar as a process of economic and symbolic value of the handcrafted object that is consumed and the construction of identity by the tourist materializes.

Figure 3: Value assigned by tourists to ceramic handicrafts in the municipality of Ráquira



The artisans of Ráquira are under permanent pressure to produce in volume to meet the high demand of mass tourism, a strong competition that makes traditional craftsmanship a commodity, a simple piece, unfinished and without differential value. The pressure of tourist demand forces them to focus on mass production to sell at very low prices, affecting their family income. Handicraft production is involved in the logic of capitalism, changing its character of cultural manifestation to become an object of consumption and cultural merchandise. In this regard, it is mentioned in interview E1:

"[...] I tell you one thing, from a few years ago, as tourism has been consolidating here in Ráquira less traditional handicrafts are bought, I mean those that are well elaborated, painted with beautiful designs, those are little sold, because they are a little expensive for all the hours of work that it takes to elaborate them. Those that are sold are the small ones, the simple ones, the rustic ones and those that in most cases are made in molds, those are cheap because that is what the tourists are looking for, few tourists value good handicraft work [...]" (E1. Artisan and merchant of Ráquira, May 9, 2023).

Cultural tourism in its logic of consumption absorbs the modes of handicraft production, relegating artisans to a precarious job in a subsistence economy, since they must produce purely commercial pieces that contribute to the detriment of techniques, traditions and knowledge. Prat (2020) mentions that market saturation is one of the main impacts of tourism on the artisan heritage of Ráquira (Figure 4), in which artisans must necessarily adapt to the logic of the competitive market by making products cheaper and transforming artisan production to meet the trends and demands imposed by tourism. In any case, market dynamics blur the role of the ceramic artisan, as he/she must inflexibly resort to technical, productive and commercial innovations to keep the demand for his/her products in force.

Other cases in Colombia have shown the opposite, Baquero and González (2016) mention that in the design of the artisan tourist route from the associations in the municipalities of Sincelejo, Morroa, Sampúes and Coveñas, the artisan work was managed from a model of community-based social tourism planning, in which artisan work was defined as the axis of social development, therefore, the ingenuity and creativity of the artisans was enhanced in a concerted and participatory manner to incorporate new designs, forms and meanings to the artisan work; autonomous initiatives and, at the same time, alien to the mercantilist dynamics of tourism and the market, an inverted model of artisan management in which the artisans themselves were the architects of development.

Figura 3: Mass tourism in the municipality of Ráquira



From the tourism development model conceived in the municipality of Ráquira, a link between artisan practices and tourism development is evident. Its cultural heritage is conceived as a commercial potential, which through tourism and cultural heritage processes, is associated with the notion of local economic development; a utopian vision in which it is thought that the handicraft tradition enhanced through tourism will solve basic problems. From this logic, local handicraft products are condemned to become mass consumption goods, affecting their essence and breaking the links with cultural identity. It is observed that in Ráquira there is a fateful transition from artisans to merchants, then to workers, to finally abandon their professions and migrate to the cities, losing their cultural identity. However, the intrinsic identity of each artisan piece, determined by the shape, designs, colors, materials and meanings are altered as a result of global consumption devices, which denaturalizes the artisan object transforming it into a pseudo-artisan production that devalues the art and the original cultural tradition. In this regard, it is mentioned in interview E2:

"[...] About 12 to 15 years ago the crafts that we made here were more authentic and traded well, the tourists in those times that were rather few, did value more that craftsmanship, as if they had more knowledge and respect our work; But as the municipality of Ráquira became popular as a tourist destination, too many tourists began to arrive, they see everything with eagerness, they bargain too much, everything seems to them to be expensive, they are not interested in good handmade pieces, they look for and buy cheap pieces, pots, piggy banks, chivas, plates and since so many children come here, we have to make pieces of Disney, superheroes, fashion dolls as you can see and other pieces that look like original handmade, but are really made in molds and sold as handicrafts, it is necessary to do so because what they ask for is price and manual labor costs [...]" (E.2 Artisan and merchant of Ráquira, May 10, 2023).

Undoubtedly, tourism is a determining link in the cultural industry, since it structures a mutualistic relationship between culture and economy; its purpose is to mobilize cultural goods from a mass production for the circulating tourist masses in cultural scenarios such as those of Ráquira. For Cuaton (2019) the industrialization of culture and artisan work is proof of the dominance of technical rationality and contributes to the reproduction of inequalities that are materialized in the daily life of artisans, since their culture and identity are commodified as an object of exchange and not as a system of signs and symbols, in any case, a reflection of the structural inequality to which artisans and their cultural practices are subjected. Those who participate in the transaction of buying and selling

handicrafts establish social relations of production in asymmetrical conditions of power, which leads to question the discourse of cultural tourism where handicraft production is promoted based on the cosmovisions of native communities.

With regard to the management and enhancement of artisanal heritage, Benedetti (2014) mentions that culture is used as an object of transaction with the intention of promoting the development of capital and tourism, in the model of the so-called cultural industries, where culture as an asset of use is a crucial sphere for investment, as in the particular case of the handicraft production of the Chané indigenous community, which has been politicized and taken as a resource, from which the structures of political and economic power instrumentalize them according to their own interests and fundamentally in the maintenance of their hegemonic structures of domination. However, in the case of the department of Amazonas, the policies of intangible cultural heritage and tourism promoted the cultural revitalization of artisanal work through tourism, seeking to bring together the interests of artisans, but according to Chaves and Nova (2014) it was paradoxical that the safeguarding of the artisanal tradition was assumed by the tourism market, which in any case evidences the manifest interests of global policies of heritage and cultural management.

Finally, the value associated with the handicraft will depend in the first place on the person who makes it, since he/she will invest work, materials, time and senses. Whoever acquires it, attributes a value to it as merchandise, work of art, utilitarian piece, decorative piece or as bearer of senses; in this way, the value for the one and for the other, enters the field of representations, hence the difficulty to assign an economic value to it. In any case, for De Mello and Ciliane (2015), handicrafts end up being conceived as a symbolic representation of the tourist destination visited, since they make it possible to evoke memories, traditions and ways of life, which, from the perceptions and representations of the tourist buyer will allow to grant recognition and respect towards other cultural morphologies as important as their own; in short, the handicraft souvenir is the symbolic representation of the local cultural identity of the handicraft and tourist territory.

Thus, in the municipality of Ráquira a functional ethnocompetitiveness has been formed (Lugo et al., 2008) since tourism, from its commercial dynamics, has managed to build a territorial identity, from the recreation of the aesthetic characteristics of clay handicraft work, which, in parallel, is influenced by new extra-local elements that contribute to the dynamization of the territorial economy and local marketing networks. Crafts will exist to the extent that they are endowed with a symbolic value, that they are recreated and recognized as such, that they must be provided with statutes and instituted in a social context, since external actors also have an influence on the production of the value of crafts, resignifying and appropriating it in an unequal manner by the multiplicity of actors. Thus, the municipality of Ráquira is a disputed space that generates resistances, tensions and conflicts associated with its handicraft tradition and, in order to understand it, a deep study of its historical, social and cultural dimensions will be necessary, since handicraft is a dynamic process in permanent construction.

4. Conclusion y discussions

Addressing handicrafts in Colombia implies, on the one hand, discussing the tensions and conflicts arising from the commodification of handicrafts as an object of consumption in the context of mass tourism, leading to a deterritorialization and cultural expropriation by imposing values on them that in principle were not valued, prioritizing material consumption over cultural consumption. On the other hand, the symbolic value and creativity associated with the elaboration of handicrafts revalues worldviews and contributes to the construction of national identity, based on a system of values that contributes to the conservation, sustainability and dissemination of culture.

The handicraft tradition has consolidated the municipality of Ráquira as a cultural tourism destination of national importance; handicrafts as a tourism product mobilizes mass tourism around utilitarian and artistic handicrafts with aesthetic, cultural and symbolic values. Handicrafts in Ráquira as a consumer product generate important income for the territory, which is why artisans have decided to prioritize the economic value of handicrafts as souvenirs and objects of consumption over their identity, aesthetic and cultural value. The majority of artisan work privileges volume and price to the detriment of quality, meaning and the symbolic value it represents.

The significant impact that mass tourism has had on the craftsmanship of the municipality of Ráquira is recognized. The massive demands of cultural tourism generate significant transformations in traditional handicraft production, as well as alterations in the forms, designs and aesthetics in search of cheaper handicrafts to transform them into souvenirs for mass consumption. There is a latent threat to the traditional techniques, knowledge and know-how associated with pottery and ceramics, as

industrial production techniques are introduced for the mass production of pseudo-craft pieces to meet the trends and demands of mass tourism.

It will be the artisans who will take the initiative to resignify and revalue the handicraft tradition, since it constitutes their cultural and identity heritage, being these the mechanisms of protection against aggressive market dynamics in the current processes of cultural commodification. This re-signification can become a strategy that favors their economic, social and cultural development, based on a sustainable and solidary model that optimizes their most important endogenous resources. In this sense, it is necessary to open new lines of research that delve deeper into artisanal work and its social, territorial and cultural implications. Some of these lines should be oriented towards reflections on: identities, rites and traditions associated with craft work; resistances, tensions and conflicts associated with the commercial dynamics of crafts; the craft tradition in the consumer society and mass tourism and finally the symbolic function of crafts from the point of view of the tourist consumer.

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