

Poty Women: organizational practices of the artisans of the Poty Velho Cooperative

Mulheres do Poty: práticas organizativas das artesãs da Cooperativa do Poty Velho

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Abstract

A community of practice is formed by a group of people with common goals, who together seek to improve in a given practice, aiming at professional differentiation. We selected as object of study women inserted in a low-income community who left a situation of co-adjuvancy for the protagonism, through handicrafts. Thus, the objective of this study is to understand how the organizational practices in the artisanal activity made possible the protagonism of the Poty Velho Women in Teresina-Piauí. The methodology adopted was qualitative research, with semi-structured interviews, carried out with three artisans, with the purpose of analyzing their organizational practices. Content analysis was used for data appreciation. The results demonstrate the evolution and recognition of artisans, taking into account the historical, material and human processes. It was concluded that the artisanal activity carried out by the women of Poty effectively constitutes a community of practice.

Keywords: communities of practice, organizational practices, women artisans.

Resumo

Uma comunidade de prática é formada por um grupo de pessoas com objetivos em comum, que juntas buscam se aperfeiçoar em determinada prática, visando à diferenciação profissional. Seleccionaram-se como objeto de estudo mulheres inseridas numa comunidade de baixa renda que saíram de uma situação de coadjuvância para o protagonismo, por meio do artesanato. Assim, o objetivo desse estudo é compreender como as práticas organizativas na atividade artesanal possibilitaram o protagonismo das Mulheres do Poty Velho em Teresina-Piauí. A metodologia adotada foi a pesquisa qualitativa, com entrevistas semiestruturadas, realizadas com três artesãs, tendo como propósito analisar suas práticas organizativas. Utilizou-se a análise de conteúdo para apreciação dos dados. Os resultados demonstram a evolução e reconhecimento das artesãs, levando em consideração os contextos históricos, materiais e humanos. Concluiu-se que a atividade artesanal realizada pelas mulheres do Poty se constitui efetivamente como uma comunidade de prática.

Palavras-chave: comunidades de práticas, práticas organizativas, mulheres artesãs.

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1 Introduction

Organizations are processual social phenomena constituted by human practices not separated from the materials necessary for the development of organizational practices. Thus, the research approach based on practices in organizational studies considers, in particular, the understanding of subjectivity integrated with materiality in the organizations in which people live (Oliveira, 2016). According to Schatzki (2005), the operations that make up the organizational activities comprise how and with whom people interact, working together, events and the materiality mobilized for social actions.

Therefore, it is emphasized that people need each other. They need to interact with each other, as it has always been that way, since the dawn of humanity. The formation of groups to achieve common goals is a need for both people and organizations, as these are formed by workers who, through socialization, exchange experiences and expand their knowledge, enriching organizational knowledge.

The formation of groups is part of building a community of practice, in which individuals help each other to become competent professionals in an organization, developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that make them more prepared for the challenges of the market, because together, through relationships, make better decisions. For pioneers in research on communities of practice, Lave and Wenger (1998), learning and interaction are present in all environments in which there is a relationship between people, especially in organizations, where there is constant exchange of learning.

In the context of communities of practice, the present article selected the women of Poty as the object of study, as it is understood that studying women from an environment, to which, for a long time, they were supporting men's work (fishing and brick production), being seen mainly as housemaids, and through a struggle established by themselves, they changed their own reality, going from a situation of co-adjuvance to a situation of protagonists of their own work is interesting to awaken the eyes of other women and to contribute to the development of other communities of women's practices.

Thus, it was established as objective to understand how the organizational practices in the artisanal activity made possible the protagonism of the Women of Poty Velho in Teresina-Piauí. To describe the artisans' organizational practices, the three categories mentioned by Gherardo (2000) and Sole and Edmondson (2002) were considered: historical processes, material processes and human processes. These categories were intended to collect and analyze certain situations experienced by women artisans who contributed to the development of certain practices. The study of the history of each artisan, the material instruments used in her activities and the socialization of work were essential variables to answer the proposed objective. Schatzki (2003) argues that practices are 'said' and 'done', that is, 'ways of saying and doing'. Practices, however, produce social contexts, such as workplaces linked to material arrangements and socio-historically situated (Schatzki, 2006).

The article is divided as follows: this brief introduction, highlighting the objective of the article, followed by the theoretical framework that addresses the themes 'Community of practice' and 'Female craft activity and the labor market', then comes the methodology adopted in the study, proceeding with the presentation and analysis of the results and, finally, the final considerations of the research.



2 Referencial Teórico

2.1 Comunidades de práticas

Communities of Practice (COPs) emerged as a form of analysis to understand the development of knowledge, work and the way organizations are constituted (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998). They portray the mastery of a learning developed by a group of people who, together, build a certain practice (Sousa-Silva, 2009). Thus, they come to master knowledge that is experienced through a common activity and that is experienced among the group, building meanings that are shared among them (Vieira, 2006).

In COP, individuals seek, in a company, to help each other to become competent in a given enterprise (Wenger, 2008). Individuals come to have the same goal and assume a mutual commitment to each other, with the desire to solve problems, develop skills and build relationships together (Sole & Edmondson, 2002).

For Souza-Silva (2009) three elements should be highlighted for a broad understanding of COPs: the domain of knowledge, practice and the community. Knowledge, therefore, is built over time, through informal practices that are negotiated and interacted within a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The existing social relationships within a COP make knowledge acquired naturally. Polanyi (1958) mentions that knowledge has two closely independent and complementary approaches, namely: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge refers to the specific knowledge of a particular person. It is your individual way of seeing the world, your beliefs and values. This knowledge is internationalized and shared collectively through social relationships and through training and practical experiences (Wieringa, et al., 2018). On the other hand, explicit knowledge is easy to share among the people who make up an organization, since it is expressed in formal language, through documents, manuals, rules, signs and multimedia, resulting in formal education and understanding of the facts (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Thus, explicit knowledge is easily communicated, as it is presented in an organized, systematized and categorized way. Table 1 cites some definitions of knowledge.

Table 1 - Definitions of knowledge

Definitions of knowledge	Autor(s)
It is information that modifies something or someone, capable of acting differently and more effectively.	Drucker (1993)
It is the intangible asset of a company, that is, it is the intellectual capital of the organization that generates competitive advantage.	Stewart (1998)
It is a blend of gained experience, values, contextual information and experienced insight that delivers innovation.	Davenport and Prusak (1999)
It is information that aims to meet the needs of individuals and organizations so that both have a better quality of life.	Castells (1999)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The concepts mentioned in Table 1 are in line with each other, as they all define knowledge as something that enables the individual or organization to change with a view to improvement (quality of life, competitive advantage, innovation, more effective action).

Regarding the notion of practice (organizational practice), this is a fundamental unit for the existence of a COP. The concept of practice indicates 'doing', "both in historical terms and in social contexts that give structure and meaning to what is being done" (Wenger, 1998, p. 47). The historical, social and structural contexts where actions take place must be recognized (Sole



& Edmondson, 2002), as it is through these contexts that individuals learn and acquire knowledge and skills.

The organizational practice, however, involves language, tools, functions, procedures, rules, incorporated capabilities, shared worldviews, in short, it involves explicit and implicit elements (Sole & Edmondson, 2002). The objects, however, bring in their essence a set of consolidated and socially shared practices in the community of practice (Swan et al., 2007).

Thus, organizational practice presents itself as a cohesive activity socially standardized in terms of understanding and knowledge, where knowing is not separate from doing (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2001). It is through practice that one knows and learns in organizations, generating knowledge that is applied at work.

According to Swan et al. (2007), the practice merges both the individual and collective dimensions of practitioners as well as the technological and human elements as it describes and explains the ways in which it is done, the bodies of knowledge and the situations that develop in a given work scenario. Table 2 presents some definitions of practice.

Table 2 - Definitions of practice

Definitions of practice	Authors
It's the way to make sense and discover the world.	Pickering (1990)
It is the bridge between work and innovation	Brown and Duguid (1991)
It is the articulation between historical, material and human processes through knowledge at work and in the organization.	Gherardi (2000)
It is the recognition of the social, historical and structural contexts in which action takes place.	Sole and Edmondson (2002)
Fusion of individual and collective dimensions of practitioners as well as human and technological resources, which explain the way of doing, the knowledge and the context in which the work is developed.	Swan, Bresnen, Newell and Robertson (2007)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The definitions presented in Table 2 demonstrate aspects such as discovering the world, innovation at work and in the organization, and personal relationships. However, the context in which the practice takes place must be considered.

The community represents the relationships between individuals. They interact by sharing practices learned on a daily basis. Latour (1999) cites the relationship between humans and non-humans who transform organizations by generating new knowledge.

The COPs, therefore, start from the idea that it is only possible to develop and master knowledge if there is a direct experience of a common activity (Souza-Silva, 2009). In this way, people need to interact with each other, exchanging experiences around a particular practice to build shared meanings between them (Vieira, 2006). Table 3 presents some definitions of community of practice.

Table 3 - Definitions of community of practice

Definitions of community of practice	Authors
It is the understanding of learning, working and developing identity in organizations.	Brown and Duguid (1991)
It is the inclusion of shared social background and physical resources that underpin and shape mutual engagement in action; it is the quest for an enterprise by individuals to become competent in an enterprise through shared help.	Wenger (1998)
It is the collective involvement of people performing different tasks.	Robey, Khoo and Powers (2000)



It is the intensification of learning and the dissemination of knowledge among members.	Deb (2018)
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Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The definitions in Table 3 express especially the interaction between individuals through the sharing of practices that add more collective and organizational knowledge. It is noteworthy, according to Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) that COPs can form in any physical or virtual place. In this way, the authors list premises that constitute a COP:

- the existence of a group of people with the same goals;
- continuous interaction with the improvement of social relationships;
- adding value through learning and accumulating knowledge is one of the reasons that lead to interaction between people;
- there is mutual help in solving problems;
- people are able and can create documents and tools for knowledge and community organization;
- involvement in the COP generates personal satisfaction;
- develop a common sense of identity.

The name COP can be given to work teams, productive arrangements, relationship networks, among other groups that seek to relate to similar purposes in favor of learning.

2.2 Female craft activity and the labor market

Historically, female work had its place in the family environment and was seen as unpaid work, relegated to a position of inferiority when compared to male performance, notably if observed in the lower social strata, which until the end of the first half of the year. 20th century still made the female workforce undervalued as a potential generator of wealth in many societies around the globe (Giddens, 2012)

As Giddens (2012) guides, citing the contribution of Oakley (2018), regarding the discussion about domestic work, this devaluation resulted, above all, from the emergence of the separation between home and workplace, which consequently made female work invisible. within the family, characterizing it as part of the natural space for women to act, and therefore distinct from real work (Giddens, 2012), which takes place outside the home and is performed by men.

However, despite the changes that have taken place in the view of the importance of women's work in modern societies, some aspects have proved to be resistant, and can be analyzed in terms of socioeconomic conditions, in addition to the indelible issue of gender as an underlying aspect of female participation in work. world of work, showing how ingrained is the view that the “proper place” for women and their workforce is still the home (Oakley, 2018).

It is observed that the reconciliation between family and work is still a major obstacle to the insertion of women in the labor market. Gomes, Santana and Silva (2006) emphasize that it is necessary to know how to reconcile time, energy and attention so that there is a balance between work and family. Cramer et al. (2012) also highlight the lack of emotional support, as women suffer conflicts between the labor market and the home, which becomes more complex when there are small children. In this context, women feed a feeling of guilt, charged by themselves or by the family, due to dedicating time to business to the detriment of the family.

Although women feel guilty for 'abandoning' the home, especially in the traditional role of mothers and educators, on the other hand they feel the need for paid work, which provides



them with freedom from male dependence and an increase in self-esteem, which they cannot domestic work (Bueno, 1999).

In this sense, for women who are part of the lower social strata, the home is the only possible scenario. For Barros and Mourão (2018), for a long time women were excluded from participating in public life, and their main role was the scope of domestic tasks, reinforcing the current and hegemonic notion that any other possibilities were considered not only contrary to the vocation socially constructed for domestic tasks, as a reserve of female labor, and that the opposite would put them in a situation of social degradation.

From this perspective, according to Picchio (2018), there are four characteristics of the female labor market that are surprisingly constant, namely: the absence of paid work for a large number of women; the load of domestic work performed by women in a salaried situation; the segregation of female work, and the substantial number of women in poverty.

This position reaffirms female occupational segregation in terms of the local situation, where male dominance was until then due to the very nature of the activity that takes place "outside the home", and even in the face of the need to incorporate the work of female labor, the latter remained in a situation of unskilled and subordinate work to the male labor command (Giddens, 2012).

On the other hand, craft activity is seen as that developed by the person whose craft is to manufacture material goods in an artisanal way, that is, without repetition of products to market them. Each production becomes an art (Lemos, 2011), within a framework of participation of family nuclei, mostly located in the poorest regions, whose work expresses the effort of survival mediated by the use of available raw material (Lemos, 2011), as with the pottery production now in focus.

Therefore, according to Barbosa and D'Ávila (2014), the artisan woman has, in the essence of the performance of her work, to deal on a daily basis with the affirmation of occupying a naturalized role as sexed and unequal, accumulating domestic activities, "from the house", "women's chores" and subalternity in relation to male protagonism.

Thus, in view of the aforementioned combination of essential factors for understanding the object under study - artisanal production as the last resource for the survival of pottery families and the massive participation of female labor as an adjunct to male labor hegemony - when analyzing In the context of origin of the organization of women artisans in the Poty Velho neighborhood, the influence of the triple context was recognized: the historical, material and human where the activity took place.

3 Methodological procedures

In order to achieve the proposed objective, an exploratory-descriptive, qualitative study was carried out, aligned with the techniques of non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The methodological procedures adopted for the research are outlined in a schematic and synthetic way in Figure 1, which will be described below.

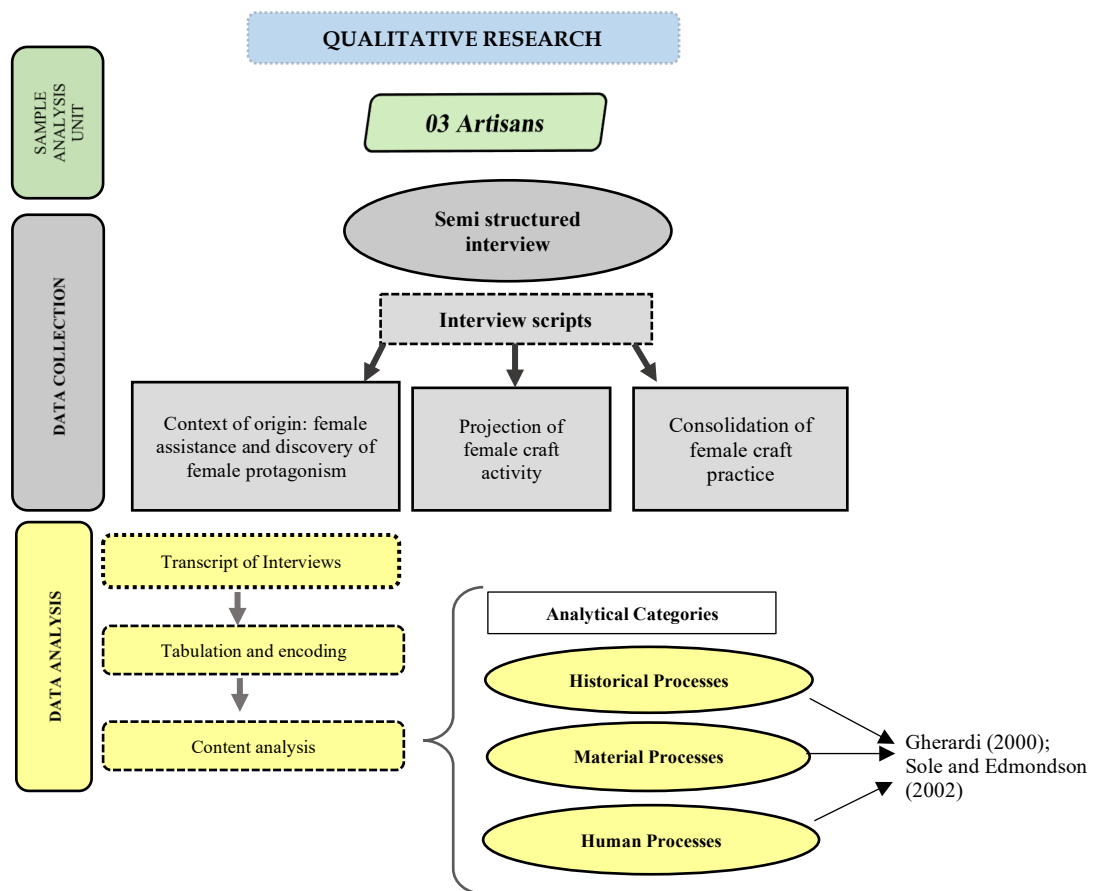
The context of the research comprises the oldest neighborhood in the city of Teresina, Poty Velho, located in the North Zone of the capital, located at the confluence between the Poti and Parnaíba Rivers. From the expansion of the territorial limits of the city, this area started to be inhabited by the low-income population who dedicated themselves to commercial and subsistence activities, with emphasis on the activity of capturing clay for the production of bricks and tiles.

In this way, the vocation of the neighborhood was defined, which currently houses the Ceramic Pole of Teresina and the Cooperativa de Artesanato do Poty Velho – COOPERART, chosen as the locus of the present research.



In order to understand the phenomenon under analysis and considering the perception of the artisans, a manager (president) of the cooperative and two artisans (cooperators) were selected to be interviewed individually. The choice of participants was intentionally defined, characterizing the sample as non-probabilistic, for convenience (Merriam, 1998). Initially, the day and time of the interview with the president of the Cooperative was scheduled and, later, the interview was carried out with two more cooperative artisans who were at COOPERART at the time of another visit. The choice of president was essential to rescue the emergence of the cooperative, since the president was also the initiator of the movement. The choice of the other two artisans took into account their availability at the time of the second visit to the cooperative.

Figure 1 - Methodological procedures of the qualitative approach



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022)

For data collection, the techniques of non-participant observation and individual interview were adopted. It was decided to carry out semi-structured interviews with three artisans associated with COOPERART. The interview script was grouped into three blocks: the first corresponding to the context of origin (female assistance and discovery of female protagonism); the second refers to the projection of female artisanal activity and the third relates to the consolidation of female artisanal practice. For each block, questions focused on historical,

material and human processes were formulated, based on the theoretical assumptions of Gerardi and Nicolini (2000) and Sole and Edmonson (2002).

Data collection took place in two stages: first, an on-site interview was carried out on January 16, 2019 with the president of COOPEART. The other two interviews were conducted on November 15, 2021. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. However, the long time interval between the first and the other interviews is justified for the following reasons: 1) the first interview was planned and scheduled in advance. After carrying out this interview, it was transcribed and the information collected in the field and in the observed materials was analyzed. This activity (transcription and analysis) lasted about 6 months. However, in the second half of each year, artisans have increased production, with a focus on Christmas and Carnival festivities. In this way, the interviews were left to proceed with the interviews after the carnival of 2020, a period in which the lockdown began throughout Brazil as an alternative for public health security due to the pandemic crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19).

In view of the pandemic context, in which product and service companies were closed for more than 1 year, it was decided to continue the interviews only when the majority of the Teresina population was contemplated with two emergency doses of the coronavirus vaccine. It was observed that the period of time between the interviews would not harm the research results, since the president and cooperative members of COOPERAT remained the same.

For data treatment, content analysis was used, which requires the definition of categories, which were defined based on theoretical support. Franco (2008) explains that these categories can be created *a priori* when they are pre-established as a function of the search for a specific response from the researcher or can be defined *a posteriori*, emerging from the discourse and content of the responses, requiring constant return to the material collected. and to theory. Thus, considering the theoretical contribution of Gerardi and Nicolini (2000) and Sole and Edmonson (2002), the following analytical categories were defined *a priori*: **historical, material and human processes.**

The development of content analysis took place in three phases, the first being pre-analysis, where the transcription of the interviews was carried out, the analysis categories were defined based on the theoretical contribution and the creation of a base file for the information was carried out. In the second phase, corresponding to the exploration of the material, the reading of the interviews was carried out, as well as the selection of excerpts from the interviews according to the pre-established categories. The third phase related to the treatment of the results involves the inferences and interpretations of the speeches. At this stage, tables and figures were used to help understand the results obtained. Given the above, the next section analyzes the results obtained in the study.

4 Analysis of results

The community of practice considered in the research is COOPERART, which analyzed the practice of three artisans of the cooperative, being called A1PC (artisan and president of the cooperative), A2C and A3C (artisans and cooperative members). Next, the results identified in the three analyzed categories will be presented: historical processes, material processes and human processes, considering the phases of female cooperation and awakening of the role, projection of artisanal activity and consolidation of artisanal practice.



4.1 Historical processes

The history of the women of Poty is initially referred to the arduous work of double shifts (household chores and help with male fishing and pottery work), passing through the discovery that they are capable of producing their own items and creating a cooperative.

4.1.1. Historical processes in female cooperation

The residents of the Poty Velho neighborhood, as they live at the confluence of the Poty and Parnaíba rivers, initially had fishing as their main subsistence and commercial activity. However, due to the expansion of civil construction, there was an increase in the demand for pottery artifacts (tiles and bricks) which led to the migration of female labor from the supporting fishing activity to the pottery service, but with unhealthy working conditions (Silva & Scabello, 2013).

I worked 22 years of my life at the Pottery, carrying from fifteen to seventeen rolls of bricks on my head, in full hot sun, from seven to eleven o'clock and from three to seven o'clock [...] we helped the fathers or husbands [. ..] It was very heavy work and we earned very little. Housewives had no income (A1PC). I had to work to help raise the rest of the brothers, as I was a minor, I went to the pottery (A2C). I started in pottery since I was little [...] we used to go to not stay alone at home [...] almost all of us here, artisans, have already been through the pottery (A3C)

As noted in the artisans' statements, they had an exhausting job of helping with fishing and carrying bricks and tiles and, if they were housewives, they were not paid for such work. Oakley (2018) highlights the resistance to female work in socioeconomic conditions (especially low-income), in which, in these communities, there is still a predominance of gender separation, considering that the proper place for women is the home. Although the artisans helped with fishing and pottery activities, they were not recognized as workers.

With the modernization of materials used in civil construction, the activities of potteries became obsolete, causing an economic and financial crisis in the community. At the same time, a person from the state of Maranhão was introduced into the community, considered the founder of utilitarian craft activity (pots, plant vases and filters), absorbing a large part of the idle male labor and in crisis due to the unemployment generated by pottery obsolescence (Silva & Scabello, 2013).

In the meantime, women were included in this new activity, maintaining the natural division of labor, that is, men made the pieces and women did the adornment part, considered the lower part.

We shyly started to help the fathers or husbands with the painting of the products [...] In 2003, the women of Poty started to participate in fairs throughout Brazil, through the projects of the partner institutions. In these fairs, we saw that the greatest demand for handicrafts was female, unlike here, which was a job for men (A1PC).

It can be seen that the initial craft activity in the community was typically male. And, again, women were just supporting men's craft work. The participation of artisans in the fairs offered by Sebrae was the main support for them to awaken as 'artisans'.

4.1.2 Historical processes in the awakening of female protagonism

The women's participation in fairs offered by institutions such as Sebrae and the Wall Ferraz Foundation, in other locations in the country, made them realize that they were also capable of performing handicraft activities.

In these fairs, we saw that the greatest demand for handicrafts was female, unlike here, which was a job for men [...]. These women started talking and felt the need to create a handcrafted product in which they had a stake [...]. We looked for Sebrae, which offered a course on modeling and assembling ceramic jewelry to twenty-seven women from Pottery (A1PC). I really like chasing what I want and I became an artisan in clay art (A2C). We started by making the clay balls and with that we started assembling the jewelry (A1C).

Through contact with other organizational cultures in fairs and craft events, women realized that the logic of their organizational practices of the activity was inverted, with women as protagonists in production in other cultures. Thus, they began to interact with each other and went in search of training, according to the speech of A1PC.

Recognizing their lack of technical skills (handicraft manufacturing), they sought help in training with support agencies. Once trained, they gained enough autonomy to start their own production, featuring a new perspective on handicrafts (jewelry). It is then observed the emergence of a community of practice, as such a community is the intensification of learning and the dissemination of knowledge among the members (DEB, 2018).

One can observe the discomfort and at the same time the desire of the artisans to be seen. Which made them wake up to women's craft activity. According to Bueno (1999), women feel the desire to be freed from male dependence, which is only possible when they acquire paid work, increasing their self-esteem.

Although women started to manufacture different handicrafts, in the commercialization of what was produced, the hegemony of male activity remained subordinated.

The Association supported the artisans with the sale of jewelry (A1PC).

The commercialization of female production was ancillary to the commercialization of male utilitarian artifacts.

4.1.3 Historical processes in the projection of female craft activity

With the market acceptance of women's handicraft products (jewelry), the need for a formal organization (cooperative) arose, moving from a condition of peripheral practice to the creation of a dual structure of artisanal production: an activity originally constituted by masculine utilitarian craftsmanship and another of decorative craft activity, initiated by women. Afterwards, the women presented another aspect: women's fashion items and religious items (jewelry and clay rosaries) reinforcing the female role.

The production of jewelry was disorganized. Each one in their own homes, but after the "Moda Mais Artesanato" project we felt the need to organize ourselves as a group [...] on September 8, 2006 we opened COOPERART with 30 women (A1PC). As we wanted to be the difference, it had to be just a woman [...] we wanted something that represented our struggle, our independence, we decided to form the women's cooperative (A2C). This idea came up with A1PC and meetings were held and this idea that we had was accepted (A3C).

With the creation of COOPERART, knowledge began to be shared in a more organized way. According to Wenger (1998), when people come together for the same goal, with the inclusion of shared social history and physical resources that sustain and direct the engagement between people and act to create an enterprise, through shared help, it can be said that this is a community of practice.

In AIPC's speech, she reveals that before the cooperative, production was disorganized, where each artisan produced in her home, with no interaction between them, which was made possible with the creation of the cooperative. A2C's speech shows the desire to develop a differentiated practice, highlighting the independence of women in this historical context. A3C reports interaction through meetings.

4. 1. 4 Historical processes and the consolidation of artisanal practice

As part of the formalization under the cooperative mode, the artisans had contact with a recently graduated architect interested in the innovation of production, suggesting the creation of stylized dolls. Initially, the architect presented a proposal for dolls based on the artisans' life history, which was modified by them, attributing their own personalities and characteristics, revealing the artisans' identity. Five dolls were created, shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Stylized dolls - Women of Poty



Source: authors (2022).

The first doll created was the Religious Woman, as they believe that Nossa Senhora do Amparo appeared on the banks of the Poty River; the second doll created was the Fisherman's Woman, due to the fishing tradition that still exists today. When a man goes fishing, he takes his wife or daughter with him to help clean the fish or row; the third doll was the Pottery Woman, as it was at the Pottery that they had their 'first' work; the fourth doll was the Ceramist Woman, which represents the creation of the Cooperative and participation in ceramics; the fifth and last doll developed in this collection is that of Continhas, which represents all of them, through work with jewelry.

In the AIPC report, it is possible to highlight the consolidation of female craft activity:

With this collection we participated in 2007 in the “Casa Piauí Design. “Mulheres do Piauí” caught the attention of the press and we won first place. The artisan became visible. The project represented our history, our cultural identity. In 2008 we created the Cambo collection, which told the story of the fish from Poti Velho, we again won

first place in the “Casa Piauí Design” competition. In 2009, 2012 and 2015 we won the Sebrae Quality Seal, valid for 3 years.

The highlighted speech demonstrates an achievement for the women of Poty, who left a condition of male dependence to conquer their own financial, professional and motivational independence.

4.2 Material Processes

The material processes that involve the professional trajectory of the women of Poty were modified from the beginning of the utilitarian craft activity to the current decorative craft activity.

4. 2. 1. Material processes in female assistance

The genesis of the craft activity of the Women of Poty refers to the initial phase of female assistance, where the material processes were quite rustic and the role of women was to help men during the artisanal production of bricks and tiles for the construction industry. This can be seen in the following reports.

We worked in brickworks carrying bricks or helping our fathers and husbands with fishing and household chores (A1PC). We were just to carry it to the pottery, into the whitewash (A2C).

Women, in addition to being responsible for domestic work, also helped men in fishing by cleaning and preparing the fish. Due to the expansion of civil construction, there was an increase in the demand for pottery artifacts (bricks and tiles), leading to the migration of female labor from fishing to the pottery service.

The work was arduous and precarious, being carried out in an unhealthy way. The women carried bricks on their heads, usually in the hot sun, in the morning and afternoon. This reality corroborates the understanding of Giddens (2012), for whom female work in the family environment was seen as unpaid work.

With the new requirements of the civil construction market, requiring innovation in materials, the activities of potteries were replaced, as they no longer generated income in the community. During this period, with a new resident in the community, from Maranhão, a new activity began, utilitarian crafts (pots, plant vases and filters). He trained villagers who found themselves idle due to the obsolescence of pottery.

With this new activity, women were also included, but as adjuncts to male work. In the pottery, they carried clay, tiles and bricks, with the craft activity, the women were only responsible for the adornment.

4. 2. 2 Material processes in the awakening of female protagonism

According to the reports of interviewees A1PC and A2C, while working on the adornment of utilitarian handicrafts, the artisans felt the need to produce a handicraft with which they identified and that portrayed their identity.

We started to help the parents or husbands with the painting of the products and we felt the need to create a handcrafted product in which we were involved (A1PC). We wanted something that represented our struggle and independence, we organized ourselves through a jewelry group (A2C). We started by making clay balls and we started assembling the jewelry (A3C).

The participation in fairs and commercialization events of utilitarian crafts in other cities made the women of Poty understand that the craft activity was not just a male activity.

In the discourses of A2C and A3C, it is clear that the artisans acquired the domain of learning together, built the practice and formed a community of practice, evidence that is in line with the assumptions of Sousa-Silva (2009) and Vieira (2006), which claim that by mastering knowledge experienced in a community activity experienced among the group, meanings are constructed that are shared among the practitioners.

4.2.3 Material processes in the projection of female craft activity

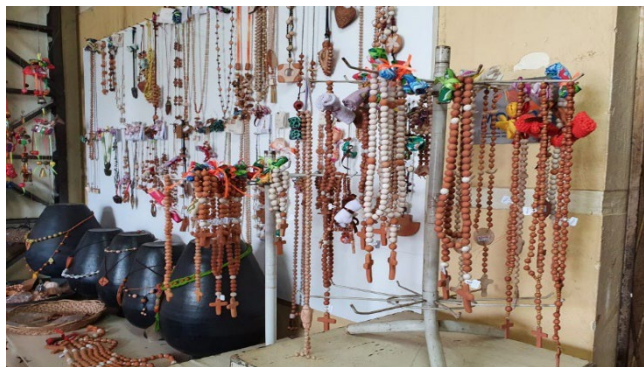
The Women of Poty, knowing that they were capable of producing something new, began to see the possibility of implementing handicrafts from a female perspective. Initially, this production focused on decorative pieces, such as pots and jugs, animals, wall and garden decorations, among others.

Subsequently, decorative craftsmanship gave rise to a new product, characterized as women's and religious fashion items. For this, they sought to organize and train themselves in order to produce costume jewelry. For A1PC, the partnership with Sebrae was fundamental in this achievement.

Sebrae offered a course on modeling and assembling ceramic jewelry to 27 women from Pottery. We started to manufacture ceramic pebbles for the stylist from Piauí, José Feitosa, who would work on his collection, jeans embroidered with ceramics (A1PC).

Figure 3 shows the products made from clay balls transformed into women's fashion and religious items to be sold to the general public.

Figure 3 - Women's fashion items and religious items



Source: Authors (2022).

According to artisan A2C, clay is the main raw material used for the production of decorative handicrafts and is associated with various tools that enable the modeling of both utilitarian and decorative pieces.

Our main material is clay. A pipe or wooden spatula, barbecue and toothpick, brush, bushing, digger, these are our tools. A gallon for hand washing. We have a production room here and a group of women who produce utilitarian pieces, but decorative pieces are made at home (A2C).

The artisan A2C highlights that the material processes of manufacturing the utilitarian handicrafts have been carried out in her own production room, while the decorative handicrafts

are carried out in a domestic environment. For Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) COPs can form in any physical or virtual place. Thus, as a community of practice, the artisans were able to define in which spaces the practices would be carried out, at home or in the cooperative.

4.2.4 Material processes in the consolidation of female craft practice

The consolidation of female craft practice was motivated by the architect Indira Matos who, interested in production innovation, suggested the creation of stylized dolls and enabled the development of sculpture craft, as reported by artisans A1PC and A2C.

In 2007, the architect Indira Matos came to us to work voluntarily [...] and spoke with each woman to hear her life story. Afterwards, she returned with five drawings of dolls that represented the Women of Poti: the Religious Woman, the Fisherman's Woman, the Pottery Woman, the Ceramist Woman and the Continhas Woman (A1PC). We had a sculpture and lathe course with Professor Ronaldo, and we developed these pieces. The sculptures are made by us and the utilitarian part, which are glasses, cups, plates and trays, is this part of slip (A2C).

According to A1PC, the architect's proposal was based on the life history of the artisans, being modified by them by giving them personalities and their own characteristics, revealing the identity of the Poty Women. For Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), the development of a common sense of identity is among one of the premises that configure a COP. In this way, the creation of stylized dolls emerges as a result of the consolidation of the cooperative's organizational practice, generating a sense of belonging to a community of artisan practice, in this case, the Poty Women.

Therefore, the evolution of the material processes that took place between the phases of cooperation, awakening, projection and consolidation of the artisans was fundamental for the effectiveness of their organizational practices, helping the protagonism and emancipation of the Women of Poty.

4.3 Human Processes

The practice of an activity is related to the individual and collective dimensions of the people who carry out such practices, as well as to the material and technological tools. It is through the description and explanation of the way in which such activities are carried out that the practice merges (SWAN ET. AL, 2007).

Poty's women describe human processes through the interaction between the cooperative's members, who together are now creators and entrepreneurs of their own productions. Figure 4 shows one of the moments in which women are exercising the artisan activity, through the production of stylized dolls.



Figure 4 - Interaction between the artisans to make the stylized dolls



Source: Archives of artisan A1PC (2022).

Considering the same report by the artisans A1PC and A3C in the previous processes, here it is also necessary to analyze them, however, with a bias towards human processes.

We worked in brickworks carrying bricks, or helping our fathers and husbands with fishing [...] (A1PC). [...] almost all of us here, who are artisans, have already been through the pottery (A3C).

A1PC's speech portrays that group work existed, but it was composed only by the family itself (father, mother and children). In that period there was no craft practice in the analyzed community. A3C makes it clear in its speech that, before engaging in handicraft activity, all the women carried out work in the pottery, reinforcing that since the beginning of the neighborhood's foundation, the residents worked in groups in extra-domestic activities.

Although it was a difficult moment in the lives of the analyzed women, it is worth emphasizing that the activities they underwent before handicrafts were what contributed to becoming what they are today, as reported by the A3C:

We have already started to know a little about the potteries [...]. And that was very useful for now [...] there was all that preparation that I had in the potteries, so when the opportunity came for the handicraft [...] cooperative, it already served a lot for people who had worked in the pottery. It was a reference.

The report demonstrates that the preparation that the women had during the time they helped their husbands or fathers in the pottery was important for the activity they began to perform later.

4.3.2 Human processes in the awakening of female protagonism

The training institutions that emerged during this period to help improve utilitarian handicrafts were essential for women to draw a new reality for themselves, as they began to represent the Associação dos Artesão Ceramistas do Poty Velho in events offered by such institutions, leading to the perception, through interaction with other women, that they were capable of producing their own handicrafts.

The women of Poty began to participate in fairs [...] and we saw that the greatest demand for handicrafts was female [...]. These women started talking and felt the need to create a handcrafted product (A1PC). We started to crawl with fairs, events and we are here (A2C).

Participation in fairs made women interact with each other and make plans for their future, corroborating Lave and Wenger (1998) who mention that where there is interaction between people, there is learning. And this learning can be seen in the human and professional development of the Poty women as they create a typically feminine practice.

4.3.3 Human processes in the projection of female craft activity

With plans for a craft made only by women, the artisans held meetings until they created COOPERART.

So this idea came up with A1PC and meetings were held and this idea that we had was accepted, this plan, thank God it worked and has been working (A3C).

With the creation of COOPERART, teamwork intensified.

In teamwork, we have 12 women in the production group, we take an order [...] and whoever wants to participate [...] comes to produce. We have a notebook, and it's per hour worked (A2C). We have the group and we have the A2C that is in front of the production room, so every time, when we are going to produce a piece, or enamel, in the group, we put it there [...] (A3C).

Based on the assumptions of Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), COOPERART can be considered a COP, as it was formed by a group of women with the same goals (creation of a feminine practice); continuous interaction with the improvement of social relations, as the artisans participate in training and other events, in addition to meetings where they reinforce and improve activities; seek to solve problems together; they have statutes, internal regulations, time sheet, records of financial inflows and outflows, among other documents for the organization of knowledge and the community; they are personally satisfied to be artisans and are developing a common sense of identity.

4.3.4 Human processes in the consolidation of artisanal practice

The current artisanal practice is in a phase of consolidation as the women of Poty began to be recognized by society within their own state (Piauí) and in other Brazilian states. This social recognition has shown how much they feel fulfilled and satisfied.

I feel fulfilled, because the daughter of a single mother, potter, black, without education, I get to where I am, every day I thank God for that [...] I am here as a business woman and used by God (A2C). It was something that came to change the lives of us artisans and was widely accepted here by the public [...]. Every day that passes I feel more fulfilled [...] And thank God, today I have this profession and today I don't see myself without the cooperative, without the ceramic pole because it is part of my history, of my life. I love being an artisan (A3C).

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) reinforce that involvement in a COP should generate personal satisfaction. This satisfaction is perceived in the speeches of artisans A2C and A3C, who are full of emotion and fulfillment for being part of the women's cooperative.



This demonstrates how much socialization between them has changed their lives, giving them a new opportunity.

5 Final Considerations

This article sought to understand the organizational practices experienced by the women of Poty that made it possible to change their condition of co-adjuvancy to a status of protagonism. In order to achieve the proposed objective, the historical, material and human processes were analyzed in each of the four phases of the professional trajectory of these women, namely: female support and awakening of the role, projection of artisanal activity and consolidation of artisanal practice. It started from the premise that the formation of a community of practice was fundamental to enable the professional improvement and quality of life so desired by the artisans.

The analysis of historical processes made it possible to understand that the women of Poty faced hard work in the potteries that was improved with the crafts of utilities, but they continued to be supporting the male universe. As they were included in fairs for the commercialization of utilitarian handicrafts, they perceived other organizational forms and awakened to the realization of female artisan activity. From there, they grew professionally with the production of decorative handicrafts, fashion and religious items, starting to create their own cooperative, which they were able to project themselves socially and achieved the desired financial independence and autonomy.

The examination of the material processes helped in the understanding that the women of Poty initially engaged in unhealthy activities such as loading bricks in the hot sun and, later, the adornment of utilitarian pieces, a fact that left them with no expectation of professional fulfillment, since were underused. From there, they began to organize themselves to change this reality. In a community way, they started the production and commercialization of decoration, fashion and religious artifacts that provided them with professional fulfillment and public recognition. The production started to be carried out in healthy environments based on the training received and the work became more elaborate with the use of tools and machines.

The appreciation of human processes allowed us to understand that the artisans who, initially had little social interaction and were restricted to the domestic and family environment, started to interact with each other in the production groups, among the members of the cooperative and, today, they are creators and entrepreneurs of their own productions. This integration also happened with other people who joined the production process, such as teachers, trainers and through exchanges with other women in the participation in fairs and events. Meetings and teamwork became part of the routine of the women of Poty, who, along the way, acquired public recognition for their art and profession.

In view of the above, it was possible to recognize the influence of historical, material and human processes on the artisanal activity of the women of Poty. Therefore, it is understood that such processes, identified in the practices carried out by women in the community, enabled the subsequent formation of a community of practice and, consequently, their professional ascension.

In this way, the identification of the practices adopted by the women of Poty made it possible to conclude that the artisanal activity carried out by them effectively constitutes a community of practice that came to enable learning, work and the development of identity in organizations, as stated by Brown and Duguid (1991).

Therefore, considering Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), COOPERART can be configured as a COP, as it is constituted by a group of women with the same objectives; continuous interaction with the improvement of social relationships; they seek to solve



problems together and, above all, demonstrate personal satisfaction in being artisans and developing a common sense of identity and belonging.

As a theoretical contribution of the article, the expansion of knowledge about artisanal organizational practices associated with the female labor market stands out. As a practical contribution, it emphasizes that the study evidenced the initial position of female assistance and the subsequent situation of protagonism conquered by the women of Poty, from the constitution of a community of female artisanal practice.

As a limitation of the research, it is highlighted the fact that part of the research was carried out during the covid-19 pandemic, making observational access to certain practices difficult. Complementing the study, it was considered that although the sample is representative, as it is a cooperative where all artisans perform the same practice, it is believed that conducting interviews with all cooperative members would bring more support to studies on organizational practices. . As an indication for future studies, it is suggested to carry out a research involving artisans to identify their perception in relation to the trajectory of women's emancipation.

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