Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online, 2021; Vol 20 (Issue 6): pp. 5214-5231
http://ilkogretim-online.org
doi: 10.17051/ilkonline.2021.06.506

Making Local Global - Efforts Of Artisans

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Abstract

All industries throughout the globe engage in some kind of craft manufacturing. This article sets the stage for research into the industries that produce and retail handmade goods. Crafts are an integral part of the global political economy, serving as a method of economic and cultural expression, a form of resistance against dominance and oppression, and a vehicle for people and communities to adjust to new modes of production. Crafts are a way to keep (or construct) traditions alive and sell them to customers who give them new significance. In the face of de-industrialization, new occupational strategies based on pre-industrial forms may be gleaned from an examination of the craft production mode. The Arts and Crafts Movement popularised the aesthetic and therapeutic value of handiwork throughout Europe and the United States. Selling handmade goods has become more important to economies and cultures throughout the globe.

Keywords: craft, manufacturing, economy, dominance, traditional, Art and Craft Movement

Introduction

Products made by artisans are used in every industry today. People in pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial society all make crafts to fill a range of needs. People and communities with limited access to the monetary economy may survive and gain agency via the sale of handmade goods. While doing so, the craft activity both reinforces and alters gender roles within homes and communities. This issue's papers explore the nuanced nature of craft production through discussions of topics like the "invention" of tradition

and the marketing of that tradition to domestic and international markets, the role of crafts in preserving cultural heritage and conveying modern messages of resistance and oppression, and the significance of craft work on an individual level. The shifting nature of "tradition" and its connection to economic demands, creative endeavours, and the meaning of "labour" are all brought into question.

The most common labels for craft production, such "material culture" or "folk art," tend to focus on technical and aesthetic concerns while ignoring or downplaying the activity's usually contentious and opposing nature in different settings. In contrast to the broader meaning of "craft" as a specialised skill or profession, we use the word "craft" in a narrow sense, referring to items typically seen on a continuum from the utilitarian to the aesthetic. However, this is not a firm divide. The dynamics of power and resistance are a fundamental topic in modern social science and should be explored by occupational scientists. In this article, we present a theoretical framework for crafts as a cultural form that is often created as a means of challenging or rejecting dominance. We are interested in both the product and the process of creating it, or craft as a vocation as well as a product, in contrast to phrases like "material culture," which place more emphasis on the thing and its meaning in terms of use and symbolism.

Many historians, like James Scott5 and 6, are increasingly focusing on forms of daily action as resistance as we near the conclusion of a century of failed or hijacked progressive revolutions.

Bringing attention to the patterns of daily activities may help the emerging field of occupational research provide light on how people resist being dominated7, 8, 9. Philosopher Stephen Toulmin has made a significant contribution to such a programme by locating people's jobs (their paid or unpaid work) within the framework of national and international political and economic structures. Dickie in this issue describes the craft labour of suburban American women, and Gilbert in the same issue discusses the pottery output of Quichua women, both of which are responding to global economic factors. Both are responses to the pressures of the market to maintain cultural traditions while providing for individual and family necessities. This issue's

piece by Frank focuses on her ethnographic research on the role of craft in the battles of Palestinians and Israelis for control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. She argues that the terms "culture," "tradition," and "occupation" all need political and economic research in order to be properly defined.

Situating Crafts in the Global Economy: The contemporary global economic system may be traced back to the sixteenth century, when advances in transportation and subsequent discovery established a system in which industrialised areas manufactured goods for markets in less developed peripheries11. Wallerstein, who first proposed the idea of a global economy, today claims that this epoch is coming to an end, that we have been in a transition from a capitalist global economy to a new historical system that has not yet arisen, and that this new system is now here. People may feel more at liberty to experiment with new economic methods during this period of change. Occupational scientists may make important contributions to practise theory13, 14 by studying the activities of particular actors in the present day. Ortner13 warns, however, that privileging human agency might obscure the importance of history and cultural background. She argues that actions may have unintended consequences. Understanding one's own behaviour within the context of culture and history, as both result and cause, is the most fruitful approach.

According to Harvey, "a increasing convergence between 'third world' and sophisticated capitalist labour systems" is on the horizon as the United States economy deindustrializes. As an economic activity, craft production is taking place during this period of transition in both rural peasant and urban industrialised households, where it is classified as "petty commodity production" and is generally referred to as part of the "informal economy"; however, a large amount of handmade items are made as well on a piecework basis, and these may or may not be part of the official economy in developing countries. According to Cancian16, "little capital expenditure and little or no paid labour" best describes the manufacturing of small commodities. In order to make ends meet, peasant families often use a number of different economic tactics. This kind of behaviour is commonplace in cities, according to research on the underground economy in developed countries. The majority of people in industrialised nations assume that working is the only way to make ends

meet, yet this is not the case for many people. The informal sector is seldom included in studies of employment and unemployment, despite its importance in terms of both revenue generation and other economic value-adding activities (such as housekeeping, caregiving, and home repair).

It's tricky to use the word "informal" since it might be interpreted to mean just certain kinds of economic activity. In particular, it is often used to refer to anything that is not capitalist in nature, including illegal behaviour, tax dodging, and so on. According to Halperin18, it is more helpful to see the underground economy as the "anti-economy," or any economic activity that operates outside of the dominant economy of the period. She believes that the informal economy may be defined in this way because it is flexible enough to account for changes in economic systems (for example, the informal sector might become the dominant economy). Similar to Haperin's argument, Castells and Portes19 argue that the informal economy can only be understood in conjunction with the formal one.

Work in the informal sector has been the subject of comparatively few academic investigations, maybe due to the nebulousness of the word itself or to the challenges of identifying and studying this kind of employment. Ferman and colleagues22 explored the "irregular economy" in Detroit, while SassenKoob20 and Fernadez-Kelly & Garcia21 have reported similar activities in New York and Los Angeles. The potential for exploitation exists in many of the "new" types of labour that are being advocated in post-industrial regions, including independent contracting and working from home.. She believes that this perspective broadens our understanding of work beyond its monetary value to include how it is conducted in groups and communities and how it relates to people's sense of self.

It's reasonable to assume that most families that engage in craft manufacturing do so as part of a ''multiple livelihood'' approach. Producing handmade goods may be a family's primary source of income (when paired with subsistence farming, for instance) or a supplementary source of income (when supplemented by entitlement funds or paid job). It might help you "make ends meet," as the saying goes, or it can go towards saving for the future or treating yourself. Because of the flexible nature of craft manufacturing, it may easily be

done from home, outside of normal business hours, and even overlap with other family responsibilities. The Arts and Crafts Movement in the decades prior to and following 1900 provides a historical foundation for the market necessary for this sort of work to thrive in industrialised nations.

The Conceptual Framework of the Arts and Crafts Movement : You can't have one without the other; good mind can only be achieved via labour, and pleasant work can only come from healthy thought. If we were all skilled artisans in some field, we could eliminate the stigma associated with physical labour. Mr. John Ruskin.

Although best known today for his colourful textile and wall designs and the "Morris Chair," William Morris moved well beyond John Ruskin's criticism of industrial capitalism to connect the Arts and Crafts Movement with English Socialist issues. Between 1880 until the start of World War I, groups founded on the ideas of Morris and Ruskin flourished throughout England and the Continent. However, businesses that adopted the ideology of the movement often failed within a short period of time. Boris elucidates the conundrum of art production, which is to "compete in an economic system antagonistic to unalienated labour" while yet upholding "the artisan ideal" (p. 139). Small-scale producers were not only obligated to compete in the capitalist system, but also needed it to access consumer markets.

As Lears has shown, however, the political edge that the English Arts and Crafts Movement possessed was lost in its transatlantic translation. Socialist criticism of industrialism and its impact on the working class was largely ignored in the United States, with the party's message instead focusing on middle-class rejuvenation and therapeutic self-help to combat the debilitating effects of city life. Amateurs, "well-to-do ladies, male connoisseurs, and architects" made up the bulk of the membership in the societies that sprung up around the turn of the century in places like Boston, Detroit, and Chicago. Hull House served as the meeting place for Chicago's Arts & Crafts Movement in 1897. Jane Addams, in line with the ethos of the movement, established a labour museum at the Hull House to showcase the handicrafts that predated modern industry among the neighborhood's immigrant population. Addams was worried that the ideals and character of immigrant children were

deteriorating. She realised that kids might connect with their culture via arts and crafts. The museum of labour expanded into a venue for teaching various trades and selling the goods produced there. Addams, following in the footsteps of the Arts and Crafts Movement, believed that the creative process might help those who were stuck in a rut from doing dehumanising factory jobs every day.

Technology Replace Human Craftsmanship : Despite its emphasis on the aesthetics of crafts, the Arts and Crafts Movement in America seldom reached workers despite its condemnation of the alienation of labour caused by industrialization. The focus changed from "art workers or craft labourers to the customer and the amateur producer"25.

Although English thinkers like John Ruskin and William Morris warned against the dangers of mechanisation, their views were never shared by their American counterparts. Woodworking and other craft periodicals still show ambivalence about technology and the role of the machine in both craftsmanship and technology. This quote's significance rests heavily on the worldview of the reader. What God would have done with the other three days before resting on the seventh would be a good question to address in the field of occupational science.

Despite the fact that the Arts and Crafts Movement died out after World War I, there have been many crafts renaissances in the United States ever since. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the United States government actively encouraged the production of handicrafts as a means of stimulating the economy and bolstering national pride. There is no mistaking the philosophical roots of these revivals in the Arts & Crafts movement.

Beginning in 1967, the Smithsonian Institute has hosted an annual "Festival of American Folklife" on the National Mall, highlighting regional and cultural traditions from around the United States via the display and presentation of folk arts and crafts. The development of "country" decoration, with its focus on folk art and craft to buy and to make, coincided with the celebration of the American Centennial in 1976. While her husband was Vice President, Joan Mondale, a potter, made arts and crafts her focus. The Clinton administration has lately begun collecting modern American crafts and has commissioned

American artisans to create ornaments for the annual Christmas tree. Politicians and government officials who act in this way affirm the worth of handicraft traditions in the eyes of the American people.

Crafts as Therapy: Crafts and other activities have likely always been employed for their therapeutic value. Occupational therapy can trace its origins back to the Arts and Crafts Movement in multiple ways: first, through the work of occupational therapy pioneer Eleanor Clarke Slagle, who held her first classes in the Hull House studio; second, through the influence of the movement's guiding philosophy on the work of occupational therapy pioneers like doctor Herbert James Hall and architect George Edward Barton. Because of the allure and capacity to raise attention in various mediums, Hall created a concept of using arts and crafts as a form of labour therapy for people with nervous issues. In order to help people who were paying for their disability assistance, he also recommended the use of craft workshops to assess and retrain handicapped persons for possible employment or other forms of gainful activity.

After suffering from physical ailment, Barton, who had previously studied under William Morris in England, realised the therapeutic benefits of creative activity. 1000 hours of "training in occupation," which included design, textiles, basketry, woodworking, metalwork, bookbinding and leatherwork, material arts, minor crafts, and other media, were required for occupational therapists according to the first set of Minimum Standards of Training published by The American Occupational Therapy Association in 1930.30. After initially being associated with the Arts and Crafts ideal due to a shared belief in the therapeutic potential of creative work, occupational therapists gradually began to place more of an emphasis on the media's unique physical or emotional components.

Historians of occupational therapy in the United States say that the collapse of public interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement left the field with a collection of outdated treatment media and techniques. Levine explains that in the early stages of the profession's evolution, the employment of arts and crafts increased prominence; nonetheless, the profession ultimately paid a price for exploiting a therapeutic practise associated with a lay health movement. It's

true that occupational therapy remained stuck in outdated treatment methods that harkened back to a bygone period. (p. 253)

The public's renewed interest in making and consuming handmade goods corresponded with a drop in arts and crafts media training for occupational therapists in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Non-occupational therapists, such as Joan Erikson, who established the Activities Department at Austin Riggs Hospital35,36, continued to use arts and crafts in their work with challenged individuals. Programmes like the one at Riggs used professional artists and craftspeople as instructors, with an emphasis on the work itself and the acquisition of skills rather than the establishment of individualised "therapeutic" objectives.

This exploitation of a craft without consideration for the craft's integrity was an abomination in Erikson's eyes. Because "...activities addressed as therapy lose their innate therapeutic powers," (p. 59) she did away with the prescriptive use of activities that had come to dominate occupational therapy practise. The Riggs activities programme is based on the belief that engaging in the arts, crafts, skill, drama, intellectual endeavours in classes and study groups, and participation in a nursery-school or greenhouse programme are all worthwhile pursuits that can have positive effects on an individual's development. The fact that they encourage constructive change, provide a framework for everyday life, foster competence, and boost one's sense of dignity and identity makes them extremely "therapeutic" for everyone (p. 59).

Simon J. Bronner's 37 research of four elderly men in Southern Indiana provides evidence of the continued prevalence of the therapeutic value of actively pursuing a trade for its own sake. In their golden years, two guys revisited a boyhood hobby of theirs: carving chains and other things with movable components from a single block of wood.

Craft Consumption as an Occupation: Shopping is seldom discussed in the literature of occupational therapy or occupational science outside of the context of autonomy and personal care. Shopping is a significant and vital activity in its own right, and consumer research has much more to say about it. Craft supply shopping is distinct from "regular" retail excursions because of the unique circumstances under which it often takes place. Vacations,

weekend excursions, and one-off events are ideal times and locations to visit "off-the-beaten-path" stores and galleries specialising in handicrafts.

Shopping of all kinds is a common aspect of every trip, and the "souvenir" bought to remember a spot can very well be a local artisan. Therefore, the significance of the craft is associated with both the trip and the act of buying. Similarly, when someone buys a handmade item from an artist during a festival or a local market, they "connect" with the maker while sharing in the thrill of the occasion, and the object acquires new significance as a result.

The acquired artefact has value apart from the act of purchasing it. In the context of a gift or an individual's collection, it speaks volumes about the individual and their home. Belk39 argues that all three philosophers—Sartre, Marx, and Fromm—acknowledge that possessions assist establish and preserve a sense of self-definition, despite their divergent ideas that life consists of having, doing, or being. Douglas and Isherwood40, in contrast to Belk's psychodynamic concept of ownership, regard material items in cultural terms, as a means of conveying meaning. Having a collection of items shows the world the importance you have on the things you've chosen to buy. "The very arena in which culture is battled over and licked into shape" is consumption, or the use of material goods.

Products serve as a medium of communication, allowing consumers to better understand their surroundings and make educated choices on the use of available social and material resources. As a result, individuals choose possessions that express their identities and the messages they want to convey to the world.

Douglas and Isherwood argue that the crafts one chooses to offer as presents or display in their homes should have some kind of meaning behind them. Grant McCracken's4l study of culture and consumerism gives a helpful viewpoint for figuring out what that message may be, while also recognising that understanding individual decisions requires a look at the individual level. McCracken says that material objects have "evocative force" and suggests that they might be utilised to connect people with "displaced meanings." To bridge "the gap between the'real' and the 'ideal' in social life," civilizations use meaning displacement. Ideals may be relocated in space and time, as in the

yearning for a "country" where people still live by "fundamental principles," or across cultures, as in the romanticization of a bygone era in which craftsmanship was the norm and individuals worked in a non-alienated condition. McCracken argues that putting values in a different time and place makes them safer from the destructive effects of the present. Of course, someone who really lives in the "country" or a historian of labour in pre-industrial times knows full well how difficult such conditions actually were; nonetheless, the mythological picture helps individuals to keep their ideas alive in a different time and place. Access to displaced meanings is made possible by goods without (usually) reversing the displacement.

When looking at crafts through the lens of the misplaced meanings theory, we may break them down into three distinct types of meaning.

Esoteric Meaning Attached of Crafts: One is the ideal reflected in the style of "country" crafts popular in the United States; this is the family that welcomes strangers and serves them freshly baked pies and glasses of milk. Contrast this romanticised notion of a bygone era with the reality of modern living, when families seldom eat together, both parents work outside the house, and pies are picked out of the frozen area of the store. The items with this significance are simulacra, which are copies or representations of things that never really were.

Another ideal is that of the self-employed artisan's "non-alienated" job, the conviction that one may "live to work" while remaining insulated from the rigours of the market (an outlook reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts Movement). While the handmade item likely depicts the owner's lifestyle, it may not be representative of the artisan's actual experience.

A third ideal depicts a period and place unspoiled by modernity, where artisans create their wares in accordance with time-honored techniques and patterns passed down through the centuries. The philosophers of the Arts and Crafts Movement espoused similar ideas, which may be found throughout industrial history.

Crafts, as Gilbert describes the intricacies of craft development in third world civilizations in this issue, or as Dickie's research illustrates with the extended

working hours of the crafters, serve a function for their owners that is completely different from that of their producers.

In another piece of work, McCracken examines the notion of "homeyness," or the way that North Americans establish a cherished domestic space. Crafts include many of the tangible and metaphorical qualities of the cosy home: they are intimate, whimsical, made from natural materials, seasonal (such as Christmas decorations), and down-to-earth. Miniature and diverse, homely things range in size. They pique the interest of onlookers and "welcome" them to the setting. They help the housewife remember significant moments and people throughout her life. McCracken thinks that traditional values are the antidote to modernism. Although there are other factors at play besides the selection and arrangement of furnishings, the increasing popularity of crafts in today's homes is consistent with this view.

Marketing Culture: Economic Competition, Autonomy, and Sustainability : The difficulties of launching a craft production-based economic development initiative in a "Fourth World" village in Ecuador are described by Gilbert (this issue). (Those living on territory that is technically part of a First-, Second-, or Third-World country are collectively referred to as "Aboriginal or Native Peoples of the Fourth World"44).

Building roads that connect artisans to markets is a common factor in economic development plans that prioritise the creation of tourist attractions. This trend might be caused by things like agricultural failures, people moving away to find better paying jobs in the city, or a growing dependence on cash revenue as the town opens up to the outside world. There were 31 arpillerista workshops when Agosin wrote, and they were concentrated in Santiago's poorest areas. She said that although "the money gained is very substantial for unemployed women," (p. 13) "the feeling of dignity that comes from working is possibly of greater value."

The number of artisans has dropped by as much as a third in the previous 30 years. As raw resources are supplied to large-scale manufacturers and exporters and markets are redirected to standardised, inexpensive, factory-produced commodities, their earnings and level of life have plummeted. Many skilled workers have either taken low-paying jobs in the service industry,

joined the ranks of the massive "informal" or "unorganised" economy, or given up looking for work altogether. Prostitution, child desertion, and even suicide have become tragic realities for many. (pp. 1,3)

PADSA (Programme for Artisan Development of South Asia) was established in 1992 with support from the United Nations "to promote volunteer leadership, training, and sharing roles for skilled artisans from South Asia (Bhutan, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka)" (p. 3). PADSA was successful in recruiting volunteers from many walks of life to advocate for the artisan "cause" as "UN experts."

Artesian Producer Group Action: In many parts of the globe, several types of companies that sell handmade goods may coexist in the same neighbourhood. A precapitalist economic activity in which the peasant or artisan owns the means of production, exercises substantial autonomy in the course of their job, and sells the finished product directly to customers or merchants may be undertaken. A cooperative is a kind of organisation for production in which the participants share ownership of the means of production and collaborate on issues of product design, distribution, and pricing.

An person may split their time between working for a cooperative and on their own, and artisans can create work on a piecework or contract basis for a customer who retains ownership of the equipment and provides materials. The elements that determine the structure of production are very multifaceted, and shifts occur for many reasons. For instance, Ehlers45 notes that once investigators discovered embezzlements, several weavers quit a Guatemalan weaving cooperative. After their second cooperative failed due to the same issue, they established a third enterprise. As a result, there was a wide range of producing firms because of corruption.

The problem of "marketing tradition" or "selling one's culture" is intricate. According to Gilbert, the traditional patterns of Pastaza's ceramics are not for sale but rather designated for household and ritual objects. whether, for instance, the money generated from selling work can be used towards the acquisition of substitute items, then one would wonder whether the old designs will continue to be produced. Kuna women in San Blas, Panamà, make

molas, which are reverse appliqued and embroidered textiles with intricate designs. These molas are used as the bodices of traditional Kuna apparel, although the ladies sometimes dismantle the clothes to sell the needlework to tourists and locals alike. They waste most of their mola production48. Modern, simplified appliqué patterns may reflect both contemporary experiences (such as aeroplanes) and issues not locally encountered, and the designs vary from more conventional, layered depictions of birds and animals to both. On one of the islands, you could buy T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Hard Rock Cafe San Blas."

Innovating Traditional Crafts: Some "traditional" crafts may really be rather new developments. Only over the last 20 years or so, when a vein of soapstone was discovered in a riverbed in the area, have the stone carvers of Membrillo, Panama begun to work in their medium. Despite the fact that no one in their cooperative has ever seen an elephant, it is a favourite topic for their carvings. A question arises: why elephants? Good luck charms are a popular purchase among Asian visitors at the El Valle de Antn market and artisanal shops52. However, the marketing of ethnicity is undeniable in the case of indigenous crafts. In his account of the commercialization of Amatenango del Valle, Chiapas, Mexico, Nash46 writes:

As they sell their wares, the women... are slowly but surely starting to sell their culture, despite strong resistance. Tourists buy paintings and ceramics but, according to common belief among Amatenagueros, they also steal a little bit of the creative souls of the artisans who made them. However, artisans may claim autonomy and independence by deciding which cultural elements to include into their products. Craft manufacturers, according to Stephen47's argument, have given ethnic groups new dimensions.

Craft purchasers, including tourists, have come to demand handcrafted, traditional items, so craftsmen must work hard to maintain the integrity of their products. The nature of tradition, what counts as "handmade," and what can rightfully be called "ethnic" are all extremely murky questions. Detroit artisans have a problem with "buy-sell" customers at craft fairs who purchase mass-produced merchandise from China and resell it as handcrafted. (In reality, much of this kind of labour is "handmade" in sweatshops and on a

piecemeal basis throughout South and East Asia.) A political and potentially arbitrary definition of what is "real" may be necessary when disputes over markets arise out of questions of authenticity, whether of ethnic culture or of the means of production. Courts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as described by EvansPritchard53, ruled that the Museum of New Mexico may exclude non-Indians from selling their wares at the Portal. She claims that the key problem in this case was "implicitly the issue of authenticity," or more specifically, "the question of which components must be blended in which combination to demonstrate the validity of Indian jewellery." Being Indian (or a member of an official Indian tribe) is utilised as a criterion here, despite the fact that professionals cannot differentiate between jewellery that was produced by hand and jewellery that was manufactured by machine. Just as the very meaning of culture and tradition is up for debate, so too is the question of authenticity, further complicating the process of making and selling handicrafts.

Conclusion

Production and promotion of handmade goods are commonplace from the developing to the developed worlds, making them prime research subjects in the field of occupational science. Jobs in the craft industry provide for individuals and communities, are symbolically dense, and provide those who have been silenced a platform to speak up. Those making the transition from a subsistence to a cash economy typically rely on them for the means for financial and cultural survival.

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