

Knit and Resist. Audiovisual ethnographies and textile narratives

Tejer y resistir. Etnografías audiovisuales y narrativas textiles

Mariana Xochiquétzal Rivera García¹
marianaxrg@gmail.com

Abstract

This article reflects on the development of an audiovisual methodology applied to a PHD research approaching cultural and social perspectives of knitting as an activity historically associated to the feminine, which is at the same time, a creative and political activity.

This research gathered some historical and cultural perspectives about textiles and analyzed the experiences of weavers who have taken the practice beyond the manual exercise in order to position it as a highly reflective process, which stimulates dialogue as well as individual and collective healing.

To weave is narrate, evoke the memory to restore dignity when the knitting about stories permeated of violence and pain are taken to a political and public domain. This is an act of resistance because allow women to sow their autonomy to trace paths to social transformation.

This article explores in a precise way, the process of filming five documentary videos as a creative approach to the various ethnographic questions that were raised throughout the research, and at the same time, as a way of interacting with the communities of weavers and negotiate my presence in the field.

The audiovisual work, in addition to an exhibition of textiles and workshops, were together the methodological route that allowed to build a bridge to connect weavers at different latitudes, mainly among amuzgas weavers in the State of Guerrero, Mexico and weavers of memory in Colombia. Both collectives were able to stablish a symbolic dialogue through their woven stories. Generating a powerful reflection as women, recognizing the value they deserved to their manual and artistic work related to memory. This process has given those women the possibility to transform positively their lives.

Keywords

Audiovisual ethnography, methodology, sensory anthropology, creativity, textile narratives, visual anthropology.

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¹ PhD in Anthropological Sciences. Metropolitan Autonomous University of Mexico City. Orcid: 0000-0002-2456-1414.

Resumen

Este artículo reflexiona sobre el desarrollo de una metodología audiovisual aplicada a una investigación doctoral en torno al tejido como una práctica históricamente asociada a lo femenino, y que es al mismo tiempo, una actividad creativa y política.

Dicha investigación reunió algunas perspectivas históricas y culturales en torno al tejido y analizó experiencias de tejedoras que han llevado la práctica más allá del ejercicio manual, hasta posicionarlo como un proceso altamente reflexivo, que estimula el diálogo y la sanación individual y colectiva. Tejer es narrar, evocar la memoria y devolver la dignidad al llevar a un terreno político y público las historias permeadas de violencia y dolor. Por otro lado, significa un acto de resistencia en tanto que permite a las mujeres sembrar su autonomía y trazar caminos a la transformación social.

En este artículo se explora de manera precisa, el proceso de realización de cinco videos documentales como un abordaje creativo a los diversos cuestionamientos etnográficos que se fueron suscitando a lo largo de la investigación, y al mismo tiempo, como forma de interacción con las comunidades de tejedoras y negociación de mi presencia en campo.

A partir del trabajo audiovisual, sumado a una exposición de tejidos y talleres, fue la ruta metodológica que permitió que la investigación tendiera un puente entre grupos de tejedoras, principalmente entre mujeres tejedoras amuzgas en el Estado de Guerrero en México y *tejedoras por la memoria* en Colombia, pudiendo entrar en diálogo a través de sus relatos tejidos, generando una reflexión potente como mujeres tejedoras y dando un lugar de valor y reconocimiento al trabajo manual que realizan cotidianamente y que ha transformado de manera positiva sus vidas.

Palabras clave

Etnografía audiovisual, metodología, antropología sensorial, creatividad, narrativas textiles, antropología visual.

Introduction

My approach to textiles and weaves, seen from their political and social dimensions, began in parallel to the process of becoming a weaver, admiring the work of other nearby weavers who had started in the office at my side.

Personally, knitting empowered me because it gave me confidence in myself, I was able to create and materialize what was in my imagination.

This first individual and then collective approach to the activity of knitting gave me the first insights that led me to further investigate social and cultural practices that were mediated by weaving. It was thus that I discovered that

it has a power to heal, to unite and to organize human groups, that this particular trade has meditative characteristics to be repetitive, introspective and that helps to clear the thoughts and to clarify ideas. Knitting took on a political and transformative dimension of my reality.

On a trip to Colombia in 2011, I was fortunate enough to meet my colleague Isabel González who at that time was organizing a meeting of memory weavers in the city of Medellín. At that time I did not understand the concept very clearly, but I knew that women from different regions of Colombia would gather, organized in groups called *costureros* (sewing room), alluding to the exercise of knitting and sowing. These collectives or sewing rooms have in common the fact that their members are women who have been direct ‘victims’ of the armed conflict in Colombia. They used knitting as a way of narrating the stories of violence that they had lived as survivors of the armed conflict: disappearances, murders and displacements. They found in the craft of weaving and embroidery a way of visually communicating the scenes that with words it was difficult or impossible to mention. That is, knitting as narrative allowed them to exercise their right to memory, but also their right to justice and reparation.

Knitting intertwines disciplines and articulates diverse knowledge, connects people, is the analogy of the social fabric. Weaving is giving ourselves to others, it is giving the time of creation to a loved one, but it is also a means of subsistence, resilience, resistance and empowerment. For these reasons, it is possible to affirm that knitting today has become a “revolutionary” act because it subverts the principles that identified it as a domestic act or as a hobby, mainly because it was an activity mainly performed by women.

When I returned to Mexico after this experience and after finishing my master’s degree in visual anthropology at FLACSO-Ecuador, I was motivated to trace similar experiences in my country where knitting and embroidery were involved as a collective strategy of enunciation and narration. As there were few experiences at that time, I started the task of beginning a process of socialization and invitation to weave to tell stories from a mainly female perspective.

I chose to implement the knitting experience for narrative and regenerative purposes of the social fabric in a weaving women’s cooperative in the Amuzga community of Xochistlahuaca or Suljaa ‘in the Amuzga language and that is located in the Costa Chica region in the State of Guerrero.

I chose this area because it is a region that stands out for its traditional textiles and because it houses women woven waist looms, whose textile tradition dates back to pre-Hispanic times. I was interested in entering a practice of indigenous origin that could contrast with the practice acquired by Colombian women in the midst of the war.

Some of the initial questions about the community scope in textile activity were formulated as follows: Does collective weaving generate networks of solidarity, processes of empowerment and autonomy? Does knitting in this way be considered a form of resistance? Can textiles be considered as texts? Is fabric a narrative? Is the waist loom and the fabric in general a way to house memory? How can audiovisual methodologies help to understand the textile phenomenon? This article will focus on answering this last question from the developed methodological experience.

Making a connection between the knitters for memory in Colombia, which weave as militancy, and the weavers in Mexico who weave, as well as a cultural legacy, as a form of resistance to face their social and economic circumstances, seemed to me a fundamental comparative exercise that allowed me to analyze several edges around the fabric as metaphor and materiality of memory. Both examples allowed me to speak of knitting in its political dimension - both in the private and the public - but also from the particularities of each weaver located in a particular social reality.

How to methodologically achieve a close and sensitive encounter with the weavers? How can we talk about the conflicts Amuzgas weavers face in their contexts? In addition to the ethnography I carried out during the fieldwork, I set out to design a series of workshops that would accompany an exhibition that traveled from Colombia to Mexico to socialize the woven works of one of the Colombian sowing rooms. The workshop for the Amuzgas weavers consisted in the elaboration of ragdolls, in order that each one of them could tell their personal history - as a self-presentation or autobiography - or the story of some relevant woman in her life.

The history of life is an indispensable instrument to reach the subjectivity and to find its relations with the objective world of the social. It is to give the individual his place in history (De Garay, 2013, p.26).

Another fundamental methodological part that accompanied the investigation and that is the objective to analyze in this article, is the use of

audiovisual means, which allowed me a deep approach with the women weavers and a complicity necessary for their representation in images.

Audiovisual media in anthropology awaken passions and mistrust. The widespread use of these techniques is still far behind in our discipline and many still consider them as inappropriate for theoretical exposition or simply as auxiliary tools, rather than as a new field of research and experimentation (Ardèvol, 1994, p. 13)

I set out to try that the images produced were always for the benefit of the organization. That my look that framed and portrayed them constantly were as far as possible thought to satisfy their demands, which at that time was the diffusion of their work.

“The camera is an instrument that creates realities, instead of simply a device to discover reality” (Grimshaw, 2008, cited in Vila et al., 2008). With this assertion I support the idea that audiovisual media can not only construct realities, but also the possibility of informing, transmitting and showing, it is a way to highlight and mitigate the power relations that inevitably arise during the fieldwork. On the other hand, the audiovisual media can more clearly include the participants in a communicative process “contributing to the creation of the research context” (Ardèvol, 2006, p 243).

Both the practical weaving workshops and the audiovisual media allowed me to approach horizontally with my collaborators in the field and I was able to extend the observer lens to a participative one that intervened in the shared reality.

The audiovisual warp: The fabric of images

Throughout the research, I carried out what I have decided to call audiovisual ethnographies. It is complex to categorize the type of audiovisual work that I did because each appealed to different processes of narrative construction and had different purposes. From a reflective documentary about my personal history as a weaver; a sensorial documentary based on the experimentation with the sounds of the loom, to more linear and descriptive narratives as happened with the process of the workshops and the exchange of knowledge with the exhibition.

Elisenda Ardèvol (1994) makes an interesting reflection regarding the category of ethnographic cinema, seen on the one hand as research-action-participation methodology (visual ethnography), and ethnographic cinema as documentary with anthropological orientation, the latter may or may not be recorded by an anthropologist. Within this distinction there could be ethical considerations that should be considered as is the way in which a theme is represented and the relationships established with the people and the images produced on them.

This perspective leads me to define my work in both aspects, in principle because the five audiovisual ethnographies that I realized were part of the research process and served methodologically to solve ethnographic concerns, but at the same time have a proper cinematographic language to make it understandable as an independent text to the written one.

To this discussion, the sociologist Mario Ortega adds:

As every visual anthropologist carries a cultural perspective on the group he is going to study, his subjectivity is always present in the research. The point is to know how to assume that subjectivity to show itself, trying to explain the fact without distortion or particular ideology. The researcher must go beyond his academic interests to identify the needs and demands of the group with which he works (2009, p.178).

This is fundamental because it refers to the need to demonstrate through audiovisual work the power relations that inevitably arise during the fieldwork, which implies assuming the subjectivity of our eyes and trying to combine this subjectivity with that of the participants, seeking to generate more horizontal relations where it stimulates on the one hand, the intercultural dialogue that is propitiated from the creation of an audiovisual work, and on the other, the knowledge is put to the service of the needs of the participating communities.

From these reflections, we define for this article audiovisual ethnography as the narrative framework that is established in the choice and structuring of images, sounds and texts to express intersubjectivity with respect to the story that is decided to tell. This choice must be justified by the relationship established between the director and the participants or collaborators in order to represent and communicate in a sensitive and emotive way the subject in question, while also serving to explore issues and anthropological research questions.

Next, the audiovisual ethnographies are presented in chronological order because gradually the narrative and the aesthetic were gaining more force as my experience using the camera and the trust with the weavers was increasing. For this reason, it will be fundamental to visualize each one of them to fully understand the narrative, textual and audiovisual substance that underpins each stage of the research.

To facilitate access to each video, I have created a QR code to easily reach each one. If you want to access each link faster, you just need to download a QR reader on your cell phone and scan the code from your screen so that it automatically takes you to the web page where you only have to play it. In case you do not have a “smart” phone, you can copy the link that appears as the second display option in your browser.

I have decided to call warp this audiovisual process a reflexive and ethnographic process that entails documentary work. The word audiovisual warp refers to the metaphor that surrounds the warp as the foundation on which it is woven, that is, the necessary platform on which emerges creativity. Without a good warp base, the fabric cannot be developed in a correct way, so it is essential that the base be firm from the beginning in the process of warping and warp assembly to achieve a beautiful and useful fabric.

Something similar happens with the weave of the images, the warp equals the affective bond with what is filmed, the plot is the story, and the threads are all possible variants in which the images can be combined to generate meaning.

Before talking about each audiovisual experience and its particular relationship with research, I must take as a starting point the definition that visual anthropologist Antonio Ziri3n makes to refer to cinema as an aesthetic and cognitive experience, as well as to establish the role of the camera within of anthropological research:

We consider that cinema is, primarily, a form of human experience, an aesthetic and cognitive phenomenon beyond a language, a technology, an artistic discipline or an industry. We can say that there is cinema when there is an interaction between a certain sequence of images and a subject willing to navigate through them. On the other hand, more than just images that move, the cinema is about images that move us, make us think and feel, and sometimes also drive us to act (Ziri3n, 2015, 53).

I identify with this definition because in my audiovisual experience I was able to discern between the epistemological, expressive and sensitive ability of visual and sound composition, as opposed to mere visual recording that only provides some kind of information but does not generate an individual or collective sense, nor moves. This is the challenge for visual anthropologists to confront in order to demonstrate that the narrative of stories in anthropological terms or from an ethnographic perspective is not fought with aesthetic forms and can adhere to a cinematographic language that allows transmitting experiences, feelings, emotions and points of view. These processes should show the proximity to the people, the complicity and the commitment to those who collaborate.

Cinema can be an important tool for social transformation, dissemination and reflection. It has the capacity to produce atmospheres that lead the spectators to feel aspects of a culture and to be enveloped sensibly with the stories or to identify and empathize with the characters.

The extension of the field of action of anthropology from experimentation with cinema, have tried to erase the boundaries between fiction and reality, between imagination and scientific knowledge. Positioning the anthropologist as a narrator and as a co-creator seems to me fundamental for the connection of the discipline with fundamental concepts such as experimentation, reflexivity, creativity, art, imagination and collective knowledge (Rappaport, 2007).

Each of the videos that I was able to carry out, I consider that they have a personal emotional load that speaks in general of the bets of the work of the weaver in areas that go beyond the economic, as is the transmission of knowledge, for which I focused on transmitting to the viewer the sonic, affective, narrative and healing dimension of the knitting. Throughout the field work, the camera has been a medium that has allowed me to portray the female weavers and build personal narratives about what they share with me in their work.

In ethnographic terms, we think of the camera not only as a recording tool, but as a device that allows creative access and knowledge of a certain reality, inciting intercultural dialogue and allowing subjects to express themselves, recognize themselves and generate shared knowledge.

I have tried to weave in my documentary work honest, transparent and horizontal relations, privileging the ethnographic and emotional reflexivity. Each of the experiences I'm going to tell was a way to establish trust, negotiate my presence in the field, collaborate with women weavers, spread

this theme and make them participants in the creation process, as well as view the material with them to approve previously the veracity of the constructed discourse.

Audiovisual ethnographies are an invitation to immerse themselves in the poetry found in the metaphors of the fabric and as a weaver and audiovisual filmmaker I sought to reflect on the basis of my understanding, feelings and individual and collective experiences that I had throughout the research.

Weaving to not forget (2012) 8 minutes



<https://vimeo.com/58517165>

With a sensitive and creative attitude towards the ethnographic process, I have guided my anthropological experience as the possibility of learning from others, but also as the possibility of learning about myself. The audiovisual creation has allowed me to establish bridges between creativity and the invisible (affections and emotions), with the production of anthropological knowledge on theoretical and methodological basis. In this sense, cinema combines in me the passion of knitting with threads, knitting with images, knitting with words, but above all knitting community.

When I started this research I knew that I would face the difficulties of intimidating in certain spaces and with certain women who do not share the same language, nor the same life story. The topics I was interested in addressing were not simple to name or share, I knew that the research demanded of the people involved a certain level of confidence and closeness to dare to create by my side. For this reason, I decided in the first instance, to do a personal and highly reflective audiovisual work, so I set out to tell

my story as a woman, as a visual anthropologist and as a weaver. I made a first video where I would be exposed to the other in an honest, simple where I would be talking about my work, my sensitivity and my way of seeing the world, coupled with this, the video also exposes the principles and objectives of my research, at the same time served as an invitation to encourage the women with whom I was prepared to undertake fieldwork to open up together in a horizontal and intimate dialogue.

Weaving to not forget is a photo-narrative. With the help of music, sounds and voice-over I achieved a composition that tells how I started knitting, under what context and situation of my life, my journey through this task, from the relationship with my grandmother to the creation of a collective weavers with my classmates, then I talk about the fabric in contexts of war and finally I throw an invitation to weave stories collectively.

The aim of this first video was to share in a clear and simple way the reason for my research, so it served as a cover letter to negotiate my presence in the field.

Writing on the loom (2013) 12 minutes



<https://vimeo.com/109621801>

Video and photography are supports that have as main characteristic, the ability to protect and somehow perpetuate the moment, the memory in the form of image.

Although this documentary is part of the experience of the waist-loom workshop that the weavers of the La Flor de Xochistlahuaca cooperative teach freely for girls in the community, it is also reflected how the transmission of

knowledge around knitting and you can see the type of information that is guarded in the technique of waist loom. Also understand the importance of learning this trade for Amuzgas women and the relevance that has within the identity framework that defines the culture of Amuzga.

This was the first audio-visual experience that I made for the weavers of Amuzgas in 2013. At the suggestion of the weaving teachers was entitled *Writing on the loom*, recreating the metaphor referring to the action of weaving as a synonym of writing.

I had the opportunity to record for three weeks and at their request, the teaching-learning process that is transmitted to girls between 5 and 8 years.

It was a unique and genuine opportunity to begin to enter the pedagogy of the waist loom, since I, who assumed myself at that moment as a child, learned along with them - though through the exercise of the documentary - the most elementary questions that constitute the knowledge of the loom. I could even learn a few words in ñomndaa and understand why it is so important for them to keep alive this tradition and the meanings that are woven on the warp of the loom.

It was also the opportunity to document Doña Florentina López de Jesús, founder of the cooperative. A few months after finishing the documentary, she died unexpectedly, which made this documentary the last record where she appears, and for the weavers, the memory of her protected image for posterity is of great value.

Sonorous looms (2014) 3:12 minutes



<https://vimeo.com/98899180>

Sonorous looms involved a creative and collaborative process that was born from personal experience in learning how to weave in waist loom. The learning experienced in my body, allowed me to understand the language that lives in the threads. This reflection gave rise to the theoretical discussion that has been developing in the framework of visual anthropology, which is the sensorial issue. To this end, I decided to explore the sound dimension that emerges from the process of weaving in the waist loom through an audiovisual exercise that became a methodology to dialogue with the weavers on “invisible” aspects that frame their trade: emotions, conceptions about the loom as a living being and the relationship with the feminine.

Sensorial anthropology studies the senses as elements that form, structure and signify the knowledge to be ordered and socially regulated. Among some of its exponents is David Howes and Sarah Pink. D. Howes argue that the anthropologist should not interpret cultures, but feel cultures. In his book *The Empire of the Senses. The Sensual Culture Reader* (2005), reflects on the revolutionary act that implies for anthropological discipline to relocate its theoretical priority - which was determined by language and symbols - to broaden its horizons to the sensorial plane, to the experience embodied in the body. On the other hand, Sarah Pink in *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (2009), comments that sensorial ethnography is the process in which the anthropologist wonders how the synesthesia (which means that the senses are interconnected and interrelated) integrates both in life of the people with whom it participates, just as the ethnographer uses his senses to carry out his work. He then poses the possibility of converting sensoriality into a methodological strategy that has a theoretical commitment to address issues such as memory and imagination. This methodology is concerned with the role of subjectivity and experience within ethnography, and this being especially subjective aspect, the sensorial has to face the creativity of the ethnographer to decipher forms of approach appealing to feel. There is no manual for the realization of sensorial ethnographies; they are processes that are built on the basis of the deciphering of codes and systems of sense and feeling.

Since it is complicated to theorize on the basis of subjectivity, it is necessary to carry out collaborative actions in conjunction with the societies with which one works, in order to find the ways to uncover how these cultural systems construct and signify the identity of each culture.

According to the contributions of this current, I decided that the audiovisual ethnography corresponding to this theoretical contribution,

could serve for the weavers could address my concerns regarding the symbolic conception of the loom. The video combines aesthetic, musical and poetic elements to visualize the complex process of knitting in a waist loom, and to transmit from the sound that follows from this process, a corporeal experience that is not taken into account by studies on textiles, what I call the sonority of the know-how in waist loom.

The idea of extracting the sounds involved in the textile process was born from two concrete experiences, one experienced by my body as I was learning to knit, and the other from a sound story. The first occurred while taking the waist loom workshop and as a result of spending hours observing the women and girls knitting. My attention was drawn to the rhythmic sounds that came from moving each instrument when weaving.

Interpreting and giving meaning to the sounds in the textile practice for this case, provided me with relevant information on the knowledge of this technique, its specificity and of course the symbolic conceptions linked to this task.

To show the above, I share the reflection of the weaver Fortunata Antonio that arose after having visualized collectively the audiovisual piece:

The loom is like music, you adjust it makes noise like music. Then the sticks have different sound, and when you hit the bone, it is another sound and since the stick has its sound, it is as if you were talking with him or making music. The loom is like family, you cannot abandon it, it's like a child, you have to watch out for it, do not mistreat it, care for it (Interview, June 2015).

On the other hand, the sound story that encouraged this video was the description of a 79-year-old weaver. She recounts how, when she was a little girl, she recalled that in the early hours of the morning, the sound of the women of the village from their homes was heard by hitting the cotton sticks to flatten it before being spun. This activity had to be performed very early, before the wind blew very hard and the cotton flew, that is why the voices of the sticks - like the sound of many drums - were synchronized in the mornings, making this sound an acoustic referent of the community.

To realize the sound construction was necessary to recognize the limitations that we, the anthropologists, sometimes have to carry out certain tasks of technical order, or we require complementary knowledge to reach our objectives. In order to consolidate this piece, I collaborated with Josué Vergara, a musician and sound designer with whom I shared this idea so that

he could collaborate by proposing a musical structure on which the various sounds of the loom would be annexed.

In order to construct the sound narrative, we start from the order of the textile process, that is to say, the steps that are carried out to make a garment. What does the warp, the flattening, the spinning and the weaving sound like? What skills and knowledge are required to carry out each of them? We record variety of sounds with different microphones in different positions and perspectives.

Subsequently, we were concerned about the musical issue of the community, so we look for traditional musicians, in this case, Mr. Feliciano Guadalupe, violin musician, allowed us to record different traditional sounds.

We integrate the piece with a poem called *I would like to be cotton*, written by Hector Onofre, a poet of the community. We asked a weaver to help us translate it into ñomndaa and she recorded it in both languages.

The rhythmic basis on which the sound design was constructed was the violin sound, over that rhythmic time the sounds were inserted, respecting the real order of the textile process: flattening, spinning, warping and weaving.

The purpose of this ethnographic experiment was to know what the perception of their own sounds in textile practice aroused in them, and I was surprised that, after reading the book *El artesano* by Richard Sennett, I found the following quotation expressing a perception similar to mine:

Repeating again and again an action is stimulating when it is organized looking ahead. The substance of the routine can change, metamorphose, improve, but emotional compensation lies in the personal experience of repeating. This experience is not strange, we all know it: it is the rhythm. Already present in the contractions of the human heart, the artisan has extended the rhythm to the hand and the eye (Sennett, 2009, p. 217)

That rhythm of which Sennett speaks and that I discovered in the weavers, allowed me to elaborate this audiovisual piece that at the same time served methodologically so that once they saw the result, they could make a reflection on their perception.

With this experimental ethnographic experience, what I tried to do was to alert the weavers to the not only visual wealth of the garments they make, but also to the rhythm that their bodies produce in an integrated way and that undoubtedly has repercussions on the way in which they learn this knowledge, the rhythm being a demonstration of the mastery of a complex

textile technique. Understanding textiles from their sensorial dimension has allowed me to approach the corporeal knowledge of the weavers, the world of the apparently invisible.

Re-knitting our workshop (2016) 3 minutes



<https://vimeo.com/158946012>

The La Flor de Xochistlahuaca cooperative has an alliance with two designers who, through the financing of a US foundation, began working together with the cooperative to improve the production line. This has been a successful collective work strategy of which the cooperative has been favored.

As one of the activities carried out by the designers with the cooperative, it was to ask the weavers what they thought their organization needed. Most of them agreed that it was necessary to reshape the workspace. To achieve this, they promoted the project of launching an Internet funding campaign. This is a strategy that has been very recurrent today by organizations and artists that have projects in development, but do not have the financing to carry it out, so there are Internet platforms specialized in this. The video presented during the campaign is fundamental for funding because it is where the project is synthesized and should encourage people to make their donations.

After four years of field work, the weavers asked me to make the video, which was financed by them, that is, they covered the expenses of transportation, food and lodging of production equipment.

This situation became interesting because it was a proof of the consolidated trust throughout the field work, which allowed reversing the classic research scheme, becoming a collaborative process and a kind of shared anthropology where new challenges, scenarios and challenges arise.

According to J. Rappaport (2007) and George Marcus (2001), collaborative ethnography is the process of integrating into the research of people who have local knowledge to create collective knowledge; in this way people are no longer conceived as information providers to become participants, co-authors and research collaborators. This approach is based on trying to mitigate the power relations that are established between the researchers-anthropologists and the subjects of study. More and more frequently this tendency is used in anthropology because of the importance of the community in active participation during the process of knowledge construction. And that almost at the end of this research could be put into practice with their important request to me, and that was put in scene during the shooting, deciding collaboratively the script and structure of the audiovisual.

During the recording of the video, I stayed as usual at the house of the weaver Divina de Jesus, Florentina's niece, the founder of the cooperative and who died in 2014. One of the recording days, Divina told me that she had had a very revealing and significant dream because she had dreamed of his Aunt Florentina. The content of the dream surprised me:

I dreamed that Yecenia (her daughter) was walking down the street with my Aunt Florentina, then I saw that they were entering an office and Florentina came out with a huge video camera in her hands, and told Yesi that camera would start a new project for the cooperative.

The dream according to the interpretation of Divina, symbolizes the approval of Florentina for the realization of the video and the remodeling of the space. The dream reflects the importance of the video and the camera as a tool for the transformation of its work space and the new course that the weavers would take in the textile scenario.

The thread of memory (2015) 20 minutes



<https://vimeo.com/151735928>

As part of the methodological proposal for this research, together with my Colombian colleague Isabel González, I promoted an exchange of textile works between the weavers of Colombia and some groups of weavers in Mexico. The bond with the Amuzgas weavers with whom I did field work strengthened in a special way. However, the exchange was extended with experiences of urban weavers such as the group *Bordando por la Paz y la Memoria: a victim a handkerchief in Mexico City*. On the other hand, there was an exchange with a group of weavers of Zinacantán in Chiapas, who make up the collective *Malacate Taller Experimental Textil*.

The experience consisted in putting together an exhibition titled “Knitting with the Memory Thread: stitches of dignity in the midst of war”, in which the work of the Costurero (Sowing room) Collective by the Sonsón de Memoria of Colombia, made up of women survivors of the armed conflict, who through their fabrics began to denounce the injustices and stories of violence.

For three months, from November 2014 to January 2015, the exhibition toured different spaces in Mexico with the idea of socializing the experience to other textile collectives, weavers and people in general. Along with the exhibition we gave workshops on Knitting and Memory, and organized an audiovisual show with this theme.

Along the way, my camera accompanied the process. The documentary manages to rescue those moments of greater sensitivity and empathy with the spectators and participants of the workshops. The main intention was to reciprocate in some way the effort of the Colombian weavers by sending us their woven pieces and sharing their stories. I wanted them to appreciate the impact and resonance of the exhibition for Mexican weavers and civil society in general who had the opportunity to attend the exhibition or participate in the workshops.

In 2016 I had the opportunity to visit Sonsón for the first time in Colombia and meet all the seamstresses. It was very emotional to be able to know their houses, their town and the house of culture where they now have the hall of memory, where they meet once a week to weave and develop their projects. They gave me the opportunity to project the documentary in a cinema hall of the cultural center and they could appreciate everything that happened in the tour of the exhibition with their works.

One of the weavers commented on seeing an image of Sonson's dolls next to Xochistlahaca's:

Very nice to see their dolls stirred with ours, it is like a union. All together as a family. I like these groups because you learn what others do and others learn what you know. It is a sharing and is entertaining. And those small moments are going fast because we sew, we chat, we drink something and it is a time that we give ourselves (Reflection of one of the members of the seamstress Weavers by the Memory of Sonsón after the projection. May 8, 2016. Antioquia).

At the end of the three-month tour of Mexico with the exhibition, we had already woven many ties and networks between people. The documentary, as a guiding thread, relates and documents the response of the people to the exhibition and describes the work of each of the groups we visited. It also reflects on the bridges that are woven between collective activity, creativity as an expressive means to heal and above all, the transformative potential of reality that spaces have to create, narrate and weave.

Conclusions

The use of the camera in the ethnographic work, either as a methodology or as a way of communicating the experience of the intercultural encounter,

has outlined new research questions and new and experimental knowledge paths, rethinking the subject of gaze, observation and the senses; has also meant new challenges for ethnography, methodology and the construction of shared knowledge.

I hope that after reading this article accompanied by the visualization of the videos, the reader will have a clear idea of the ethnographic and creative journey that was woven throughout the investigation. Also, let the content of documentaries reaffirm the premise that knitting is not only a pastime, nor a domestic activity, but a reflection of thought, a repetitive mantra that invites abstraction and the discovery of oneself.

One of the riches and virtues of this work - besides being, of course, close to great weavers and being able to dedicate time to collective weaving - was to be able to link, articulate and get in touch with various organizations and social actors that carry out their activities around knitting.

The collaborative strategy, the link between groups of weavers through the exhibition and the workshops, as well as the audiovisual realization, were methodology and object of study. The latter allowed me to approach from a personal and reflective perspective, my own experience as a weaver, to achieve the integration of knowledge of other textile experiences to which I was linked through research. It was also the opportunity to link subjectivities and at the same time respond to my ethnographic concerns from this creative complement that accompanies academic writing.

In this way, the relevance of the audiovisual realization is cemented in a very organic ethnographic process, where I was solving questions of different order: from not being able to speak the ñomndaa language, therefore, not being able to generate research questions that the weavers could understand; not knowing at first how to knit at the waist, not even understand how social relations were established between the participants of the cooperative.

The videos allowed me to integrate into each of these areas until I could understand them and articulate them in an audiovisual discourse. The collective display with the weavers of each video was the examination or proof that what they had shared had understood correctly.

The realization of the five videos was more than a refuge to not get lost in the histories of other weavers, it was also the opportunity to experiment, to exercise my gaze, to develop a style of my own to weave with images my journey in this ethnographic stage to finally culminate with a fabric

of images that was the result of an intercultural encounter where different subjectivities and needs converge.

The field of visual anthropology and applied visual anthropology allowed me, on the one hand, to bring to the practical field actions that lead to the transformation of everyday spaces, and on the other, negotiate my presence, present my research in front of the weavers, argue about the use of audiovisual resources and also methodological implementation, ranging from experimentation with workshops, audio-visual samples, exposure of Colombian fabrics in Mexico and the exchange of messages and creations among various groups in both countries. All this effort was based on the search for an ethnography that puts into dialogue the exchange of experiences, reflective, collaborative and creative processes in order to understand an activity, a manual craft that has been developed in more than one context.

The documentary process, sometimes more than ethnographic writing, shows very clearly how the relationship between the filmmaker and the people is woven, one can decipher the degree of involvement, the honesty of the structure and narrative form, the choice of tone in which it is narrated, as well as the images and testimonies, and how all these elements are combined according to the author's choice in complicity with the participating subjects to generate meaning and to transmit the ethnographic experience that arises from the intercultural encounter.

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