

Original article



Strategic use of cultural identity for women's economic empowerment in territorial development

Aprovechamiento estratégico de la identidad cultural para el empoderamiento económico femenino en el desarrollo territorial

Aproveitamento estratégico da identidade cultural para o empoderamento econômico das mulheres no desenvolvimento territorial

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ABSTRACT

The management of territorial development in Cuba promotes the mainstreaming of the gender approach in the interest of increasing the participation of women and men in equal conditions and position as active subjects of development. In the municipalities, the strategic analysis of the cultural component and its driving role towards these ends is still limited. The research assumes cultural identity as a local endogenous resource and proposed to identify ways of taking advantage of cultural identity in the local productive system as a factor of participation and empowerment of women in

territorial development. Having established the theoretical and methodological bases of a two-stage procedure, qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques were combined, including content analysis, surveys, simple classification variance and percentage index. Seven ways of taking advantage of cultural identity in the local productive system with different levels of relevance were recognized. Analysis criteria are provided for decision making regarding a cultural resource that, articulated with the gender approach to development, favor the projection of scenarios of participation and autonomy of women as active subjects of development, in accordance with the country's policy to promote territorial development and its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Keywords: cultural identity; gender approach to development; strategic planning; local development.

RESUMEN

La gestión del desarrollo territorial en Cuba fomenta la transversalización del enfoque de género en interés de incrementar la participación de mujeres y hombres en igualdad de condición y posición como sujetos activos del desarrollo. En los municipios, aún es limitado el análisis estratégico del componente cultural y su papel motor hacia estos fines. La investigación asume la identidad cultural como un recurso endógeno local y se propuso identificar formas de aprovechamiento pertinentes de la identidad cultural en el sistema productivo local como factor de participación y empoderamiento de la mujer en el desarrollo territorial. Sentadas las bases teóricas metodológicas de un procedimiento de dos etapas, se combinaron métodos y técnicas de investigación cualitativa y cuantitativa, entre ellos, análisis de contenido, encuestas, varianza de clasificación simple e índice porcentual. Se reconocieron siete formas de aprovechamiento de la identidad cultural en el sistema productivo local con diversos niveles de pertinencia. Se aportan criterios de análisis para la toma de decisiones respecto a un recurso cultural que, articulados al enfoque de género en el desarrollo, propician la proyección de escenarios de participación y autonomía de las mujeres como sujeto activo del desarrollo, acorde con la política del país para impulsar el desarrollo territorial y sus compromisos con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la Agenda 2030.

Palabras clave: identidad cultural; enfoque de género en el desarrollo; planificación estratégica; desarrollo local.

RESUMO

A gestão do desenvolvimento territorial em Cuba promove a integração de gênero para aumentar a participação de mulheres e homens em igualdade de condições e posição como sujeitos ativos do desenvolvimento. Nos municípios, a análise estratégica do componente cultural e seu papel como força motriz para esses fins ainda é limitada. A pesquisa assume a identidade cultural como um recurso endógeno local e se propõe a identificar formas relevantes de explorar a identidade cultural no sistema produtivo local como um fator de participação e empoderamento das mulheres no desenvolvimento territorial. Tendo estabelecido as bases teóricas e metodológicas para um procedimento de duas etapas, foram combinados métodos e técnicas de pesquisa qualitativa e quantitativa, incluindo análise de conteúdo, pesquisas, variância de classificação simples e índice percentual. Foram reconhecidas sete formas de exploração da identidade cultural no sistema de produção local com níveis variados de relevância. São fornecidos critérios de análise para a tomada de decisão em relação a um recurso cultural que, articulado com a abordagem de gênero ao desenvolvimento, favorece a projeção de cenários de participação e autonomia das mulheres como sujeitos ativos do desenvolvimento, de acordo com a política do país para promover o desenvolvimento territorial e seus compromissos com os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável da Agenda 2030.

Palavras-chave: identidade cultural; abordagem de gênero ao desenvolvimento; planejamento estratégico; desenvolvimento local.

INTRODUCTION

Local development processes¹ constitute an opportunity to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Both conditions favor the necessary deployment and increase of women's political, social and economic capacities as active subjects of development (Mara Miranda & Fernandes Barroso, 2020; Padrón de la Rosa & Juliá Méndez, 2023), aimed at both their own well-being and that of those who live in their territorial environment

¹ The authors assume local development as an expression of territorial development, an aspect delimited in Decree No. 33/2021 For the strategic management of territorial development, published in the Cuban Gazette in the introduction of art. 3, p. 1296.

Achieving it has been established as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), number five of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The creation of formulas aimed at integrating the cultural component into strategic development planning (REDS, 2021) could contribute to this purpose -formulated from its multiple causes, consequences and collective and individual benefits.

The concept of culture, proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1982, encompassing that which is manifested in the diversity of features that distinguish a society or social group as a result of conscious human activity -the interactions between man and nature, common activity, the logical, conceptual and emotional perception of reality-, established a path for its subsequent analysis in two currently unavoidable ways: as an endogenous determinant and as a resource for development.

A copious list of actions and documents make up the tradition of a theoretical-methodological body that responds to the culture-development nexus (Polanco Noy, 2021). Others promote its articulation to the achievement of the SDGs (REDS, 2021), including proposals that have a cross-cutting impact on the problems, goals, solutions and strategies proposed in the Gender and Development Approach (GED), addressed here (Zebadúa and Pérez, 2002, cited in Massolo, 2006).

For decades, a variety of studies have illustrated the instrumental role of culture and the endogenous potential of its components in the dynamization of these processes, including cultural identity (Olazabal Arrabal et al., 2022; Scaramuzzi et al., 2023).

This article assumes cultural identity as a local endogenous resource, defined as a resource of development potential, shaped in common spaces of collective activity; it encloses a cultural repertoire with shared meaning and significance, diverse, specific and distinctive of a collectivity or social group; its strategic use in the territorial system can condition, from within, multiple capacities to achieve growth and structural change.

A sampling of economic development projects, led by women in Europe, Latin America and Cuba, based on elements of cultural identity (Borreguero, 2017; Caamaño Franco et al., 2020; Ciro & Martínez Puche, 2018; Padrón de la Rosa & Juliá Méndez, 2023), exposed a win-win relationship both for local economies and for the satisfaction of practical and strategic needs determined by women in the GED approach (Massolo, 2006), including economic autonomy, autonomy in decision-making, participation and equal leadership opportunities.

This relationship leads to suggest that: although symbolic representations, tradition or the cultural and historical construction of productive activities, practices and roles differentiated for women in their social enclave, crystallized in cultural values and skills that give rise to focal points of inequality and discrimination against them, in contrast, the strategic use of this vast cultural repertoire -by incorporation or adaptation in this own cultural system- could constitute a means of transforming scenarios and capacities that reduce and/or eliminate them.

By mainstreaming the SDG approach in the management of local development, this would be equivalent to promoting a new meaning to the socio-culturally constructed sense of tradition, projecting it no longer as a source of invisibility, disparity or disadvantage, but as a capacity, potential or factor to increase new spaces and ways for inclusion, social and personal growth of women in their economic and social environment.

However, the multi-causal existence of of theoretical-methodological and practical biases in the integral analysis of the cultural component in the framework of territorial strategic planning, the articulating axis of local development management (González Fontes et al., 2021), constitutes a recurrent problem, not only for Cuba (REDS, 2021; Rodríguez Basso et al., 2020).

In keeping with this reality, even with the political, normative and methodological openness to the subject, there are limitations in the capacity of local actors to project the integration of cultural resources -in particular, cultural identity- into Municipal Development Strategies (MDS), evident fact both in the municipal strategic diagnosis and in the formal components of the strategies and the notorious reduction or underutilization the endogenous capacities and potential of the resource (Olazabal Arrabal et al., 2022).

Such an issue, at the strategic level of a gender perspective in specific areas of local economic development (Ordóñez Gavilanes et al., 2022; Peralta et al., 2023; Espinosa et al., 2015, cited in Quintanilla Ibarra & Sifuentes Ocegueda, 2022), slows down -in disparity with men- women's access to local entrepreneurship, control of material resources and decision-making, postponing collective and individual rights and aspirations for well-being and development.

The study is aimed at to identify forms of relevant use of cultural identity in the local productive system (SPL in Spanish) as a factor of participation and empowerment of women territorial development.

The results obtained contribute fundamentally to strengthening the decision-making capacity of local governments in specific aspects such as the integration of the cultural component in municipal development strategies and the mainstreaming of the gender approach in local development projects, as reflected in the Cuban policy to promote local development and the current regulations on the strategic management of territorial development, as well as compliance with SDG 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was preceded by a theoretical foundation that used the dialectical-materialist method as a general method, in which the other theoretical research methods, such as analysis-synthesis, hypothetical-deductive and systemic-structural, are interrelated. This made it possible to define some theoretical-methodological bases of interest for the research:

1. The central role of territorial strategic planning in the mobilization of development potential resources.
2. The criteria that define the forms of exploitation of cultural identity as a local endogenous resource are represented by indicators that respond to the logic of the situational diagnosis of the municipal strategic analysis (analytical stage).
3. The identification of ways of using cultural identity as in the SPL is based on the assessment of the relevance of the criteria -represented in the indicators- and must be carried out on the basis of a participatory approach.

From there, a two-stage procedure was designed, aimed at: Condensing criteria from the specialized literature and filtering them based on the demands of the study; evaluating and recognizing their relevance.

The search for criteria indicators was linked to a central question: What forms of exploitation of cultural identity in the SPL can be integrated into a municipal strategic analysis to guide the mobilization of its potential for development?

Stage 1

Content analysis: the theme chosen as the unit of analysis was the use of cultural identity. Recognizing that its use in development strategies extends to institutional, environmental and SPL aspects, the thematic axis was reduced to the topic: forms of use in the SPL

Mixed focus group: It brought together professionals from disciplines related to the topic. It allowed to obtain richness, depth and quality in the analysis to filter the indicators identified based on parameters of relevance, concordance, congruence, representativeness and responsiveness, used by UNDP for planning, monitoring and evaluation of development results, appropriate to these purposes.

Stage 2

The participatory approach² estimated the knowledge of local actors³ with the criterion of linkage and/or direct intervention in the management of municipal development: local decision-makers at the government and dependencies level; advisors of development processes (university, cultural institutions, media); heads and members of local development projects. Elements in line with all Cuban municipalities.

The study chose a coastal municipality in the central-eastern part of the country with a high degree of urbanization, although about 80% of its settlements are rural in their typology and territorial distribution; it is not a provincial capital; it is rich in natural resources; diverse and contrasting in cultural identity elements; it has a diversified economic base (industrial, agricultural, livestock and tourism) and specialized production lines; human capital trained in local development planning, with experience in inter-institutional advice and support for the management of local development.

Its selection as a unit of analysis, based on the following criteria, was carried out intentionally: dual representativeness of the territorial structure in which traditional and modern productive dynamics interact in different territorial contexts; coexistence of multiple cultural expressions and identity elements as a propitious scenario for analyzing differentiated forms of appropriation and strategic

² The participatory approach directly or indirectly involves as many local stakeholders as possible. Its effectiveness lies, among other aspects, in determining who participates and in which processes they take part, how they do it, how to induce the collective capacity for analysis and knowledge in action.

³ Defined in Article 5, of Decree No. 33/2021 For the strategic management of territorial development, Official Gazette of Cuba.

use of cultural identity in economic and community projects; existence of professionals and local actors with experience in development projects that contribute to the validity and depth of the evaluation with a participatory approach; favorable conditions for introducing female empowerment strategies linked to cultural use; mixed characteristics (urban-rural, productive and cultural diversity), representative of other Cuban localities with similar conditions, which could favor the transfer of results.

Probability sampling: A multinomial probability distribution was used for a single-stage random design, knowing in advance the use of ordinal qualitative variables with a multivariate discrete distribution scale (5 categories). A 95 % reliability was defined. The preliminary sample size equality ratio ($n=n'$) was used, between the multinomial distribution probability (n) and the binomial distribution probability (n'), where

$$n' = \frac{\overset{1}{Z}^2_{1-\alpha/2} \overset{2}{p} \cdot \overset{3}{q} \overset{4}{N}}{\underset{5}{Ne}^2_{\max} + Z^2_{1-\alpha/2} p \cdot q}$$

(1) value of the standardized normal variable; (2) probability of success at larger sample size; (3) probability of failure; (4) finite population size; (5) maximum error. Finally, the result of n' is multiplied by the data set in the ratio between binomial and multinomial sample size for five categories $(1.73)^4$, where $\alpha = 0.050$.

Survey: it was designed with a closed question with a 5-level ordinal scale, from the lowest (1) to the highest (5) level of relevance.

Data inferential analysis: Simple rank analysis of variance or ANOVA was used to test the statistical validity of the results.

Relevance index of the cultural identity indicator (IPIC): Designed for this study based on consultation with specialists (Figure 1). Its objective was to perform an alternative quantitative analysis, which

⁴ Taken from Fernando Medina's Table of relationship between binomial and multinomial sample size (*Optimal sample size in multipurpose surveys s/p*, ECLAC).

would reduce deviations of an intuitive, subjective or cognitive nature typical of evaluations through sample-subjects, in support of a more reliable reading of the individual result of the criterion as a whole

$$IPIC = \frac{\bar{X} - M_e}{R} * 100$$

Figure 1. Relevance index of the Cultural Identity indicator

In the formula, the data of the arithmetic mean of the evaluated indicator (\bar{X}) was combined with the analysis of the measures of the variable's relevance position, set at the discretion of the researcher. In this case, the median of the path (M_e) = 3 and the data of the extent of relevance (R) = 2. The result is expressed in relative values. The evaluation, in terms of relevance, has an equivalent in the qualitative assessment shown in table 1.

Table 1. Quantitative-qualitative equivalence of relevance

Percentage achieved	Less than 0.00	0.00 a 19.99	20.00 a 39.99	40.00 a 59.99	60.00 a 79.99	80.00 a 100.00
Relevance	NP (Not relevant)	MB (Very low)	B (Low)	M (Medium)	A (High)	MA (Very high)

Source: Own elaboration based on consultation with specialist

The process of analysis and interpretation of the results was based on the comparison with the theoretical references located and the evidence and case studies included in the information analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stage 1

The content of 70 texts was analyzed, including articles in specialized journals, books, book chapters and, to a lesser extent, official documents (policies and strategies and municipal development plans) from -in descending order- Latin America, Europe and Cuba. With a time distribution of 20 years (5

years- 41.5 %, 10 years- 24.3 %, 15 years- 11.4 % and 20 years- 22.8 %). They related cultural identity as a local endogenous resource, with elements of heritage, local collective action, knowledge of local productive systems and local productive culture, from the approach of development potential.

Seven main forms of exploitation of cultural identity were recognized in the SPL, grouped in order of representativeness. They are: [1] Promoter of new products and services (NPS); [2] Incentivizer of innovations (IINV); [3] Promoter of competitive advantages (PVC); [4] Productive linkages of goods and services with cultural identity (EPIC); [5] Symbolic resource for the promotion of products and services of local origin (PPS); [6] Certifier of the quality of products and services based on cultural criteria (CPS); [7] Protector of brands of products and services with local cultural identity (PMPS).

The proposal of all the pre-selected indicators was accepted and argued through the defined parameters. In the report it was recognized that:

- They respond to the analytical stage of the situational diagnosis of potential resources, as a criterion for resource integration.
- They constitute references for the management of cultural identity as a local endogenous resource.
- They bring objectivity to the analysis of an intangible cultural resource, as useful criteria to understand and promote its projection within the EDM framework.
- They are aligned to the dynamic possibilities, strategic demands and territorial capacity building for the integration of a cultural component to mobilize potentials in the territories as a result of local development management.

By assuming cultural identity as an endogenous resource of development, the above aspects were interpreted as generalities of the indicators of resource utilization criteria in the SPL. This meant that: as integrable utilization, in the future, they could be linked to the demands of the GED approach in the strategic framework of the EDM, promoting the use of the resource -heritage, knowledge-, norms and values -trades and skills with shared cultural sense and meaning- as a development factor that responds to the gender perspective.

Stage 2

In the calculation of the sample ($n=n'$), to find (n'), the values of the ¹standardized normal variable (1.962); the ²probability of success at a larger sample size (0.735); the ³probability of failure

(0.265); the ⁴finite population size composed of the subjects who, from the set previously identified on the basis of the aforementioned sampling criterion, gave their consent to participate in the study (N=122); and the ⁵maximum degree of error (0.0081). The result of n' (52.5582), multiplied by the data set in the ratio between the binomial and multinomial sample size for five categories (1.73), yielded a statistically reliable choice of 91 subjects. The application of the survey finally extended its application to 102 local stakeholders

The simple rank analysis of variance confirmed the significance and reliability of the data obtained

The evaluation of the relevance of the resource use criteria through the IPIC is shown in table 2, prepared by the authors.

Table 2. Relevance of using cultural identity in the SPL

Criteria for use	NPS	IINV	PVC	EPIC	PPS	CPS	PMPS
Media	4	4,29	4,31	4,23	3,67	3,57	3,65
IPIC % IPIC	50	64,5	65,5	61.5	33,5	28,5	32,5
Qualitative assessment	Medium	High	High	High	Low	low	Low

Source: Own elaboration

In general, it was observed that the ratings are concentrated in the High, Medium and Low ranges, being null for the ranges Not relevant, Very low or Very high, reflecting an adequate mastery of the subject in relation to a lower degree of experience of it, which, in practice, influences the extreme weightings

The manifestation is in line with the generally disadvantageous analysis of cultural components as development resources in DEMs, with respect to financial, natural, human resources, etc., where they show greater management and presence. This is influenced by the complexity of culture itself (origin, qualities, diversity, manifestations, transmission mechanisms), historical trends in its

theoretical-conceptual treatment and even the human factor⁵, as a vector of knowledge and planning styles that influence wills and capacities with respect to its treatment.

It should be noted that cultural resources -whether patrimonial, artistic, or non-conventional such as idiosyncrasy, norms and values, but with a weight in the proactive, resilient or cooperative actions that distinguish and define local actors, their goals and development strategies- as part of the territorial development potential, can be evaluated through a set of characteristics defined in the literature, related to their use, which would allow to diagnose⁶ -along with other resources- their endogenous potentialities and, consequently, to be oriented and exploited in a coherent and respectful way their origins and carriers, towards the institutional, sociocultural, local productive or other subsystems, in which culture is a means (that contributes knowledge, practices, skills, sense and meaning, art) destined to increase the prosperity and welfare of the population.

On the other hand, the High and Low evaluations were mainly grouped into two groups of defined utilization criteria. In this research, Group 1 criteria were named, those evaluated highly relevant. These coincide with more tangible aspects, standardized and represented in the strategies for development management (innovation, competitiveness, productive linkages).

Group 2 brings together the criteria evaluated as having low relevance. These are visibly related to topics -image and marketing strategies for products and services, creation of brands and designations of origin- more specific, demanding in terms of management and/or diffuse due to their multidisciplinary nature (legal, symbolic, communicational), although of great impact on endogenous development. This idea, in the case of Cuba, may also be related to the low systematicity and projection of these issues and their practice at the local level.

⁵ Anthropologist Conrad Phillip Kottak, in his article Culture and Economic Development, warned of a phenomenon he called the *planner's culture*, in which the importance of cultural differences tends to be skipped or overridden during the planning process.

⁶ In the framework of strategic planning for territorial development, there are few studies of development potential that include cultural resources, taking advantage of these characteristics or indicators to measure them. Even more limited are those that have sought to recognize which, in view of the complexity, diversity and particularities of culture, would be the most relevant for doing so. This may be a factor that delays, with respect to other resources, the diagnosis and efficient use of cultural resources for development.

Specifically, the relevance of taking advantage of the components of cultural identity to promote competitive advantages [3], encourage innovation processes [2] and link products and services with cultural identity to goods and services sectors [4], was highlighted.

In the cases of [2] and [3], the results corresponded to the relationship proposed in the literature between the qualities of endogenous resources -especially those with a cultural base- with respect to the impossibility of their delocalization and their catalytic effect for the development of new industries (González González, 2019), support innovations based on cultural specificities, use the comparative advantages produced and create competitive advantages, integrating it with endogenous mechanisms aimed at diversifying the SPL, income, employment, attractiveness, creation of externalities, as key aspects in the management of development.

The strategies most closely connected to these ends pursue the valorization of the resource, transforming local knowledge and culture into marketable products and services, appreciated for their quality based on the differentiation of the production and consumption model, local knowledge and customs, an aspect widely recognized in the studies addressed. Its added value, according to the cases analyzed, lies in the power conferred by elements such as tradition, history or nature.

From its beginnings, described mainly in Europe between the late 1980s and early 1990s, this model of productive restructuring was supported by an orientation of the so-called differential consumption, which determined the specific way in which local products were integrated into global markets (Aguilar Criado, 2007), an aspect that maintains its essence today.

These have been recognized as endogenous development mechanisms, better adapted to the rural context and settlements little impacted by industrialization or globalization, but have also been adapted to other territorial scales that show historical, patrimonial and natural richness and diversity of identity components.

The case of criterion [4] was more frequent in the tourism and food industry sectors. According to the literature, this stems from a broader process such as local production chains (González Fontes et al., 2021), made up a set of diverse entities, whose organization makes it possible to carry out economic activities in an articulated and interdependent manner, based on competition and cooperation, in a specific market belonging to the same sector or complementary sectors.

Therefore, this mode of exploitation should not be seen as the isolated activity of identifying products or services with cultural identity to supply according to demand, but, as the aforementioned authors clarify, of managing the execution of the articulations made as a network, in a flexible and integrated manner, to avoid relational gaps and promote advantages such as the reduction of transportation costs, reduction of transaction costs or the formation of a specialized labor market, among others.

On the other hand, the criterion of taking advantage of cultural identity as a resource to promote the creation of new products and services [1] showed a medium relevance index.

Linked to their formation in spaces of collective activity, the studies consulted recognize that the knowledge and cultural practices of the identity repertoire are refunctionalized and adapted to new forms, giving rise to new products and services based on this traditional character. This makes it possible to diversify the value of handmade products, related to local culture, motivating and promoting their consumption in the territory (REDS, 2021), for the benefit of policies and programs aimed at health, food, construction materials, housing, recreation, employment generation and others.

When delving deeper into the subject, the weighting of this criterion could be associated, rather than underestimating the value of the resource for this purpose, to prioritizing the use of creativity that fosters cultural diversity as a source of local entrepreneurship over the creation of products and services with cultural specificities that -due to their immobility or irreplaceability- multiply through differentiation their offer in the global market from the territories, an idea frequently shared in the studies addressed in the Group 1 criteria.

This would explain the inclination towards the introduction of productive innovations in the economic base and improvements in competitiveness in the markets, through culturally based products and services that contain factors that are difficult to imitate. In the authors' opinion, both alternatives can coexist integrated into the municipal strategic analysis, always starting from the evaluation of the potential of the components of this cultural resource.

Finally, as a symbolic resource in the creation of strategies to promote products and services based on territorial identity [5], protect brands and designations of origin of products and services with local cultural identity [7] and certify the quality of products and services based on cultural criteria [6], the relevance of the criteria was low.

As mentioned above, these are much more specific and less explored resource use capacities, also in the EDMs contrasted in the case Cuba, although in general they are closely associated with the valorization strategies referred to in the analysis of Group 1.

Extending the topic, the literature raises the existence of typical products, in which the cultural relations man/nature/society personalize their origin and protect them as intellectual property - Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication, Designation of Origin, Controlled Designation of Origin, Guaranteed Traditional Specialties, Certified Collective Marks, Seals of Guarantee-, as legal instruments with different protocols, but with a referential function of identification and legitimization of these products in the market.

On these cultural bases, the quality, reputation and exclusivity of the product are related to natural and human factors, production, transformation and processing methods that are unique and distinctive, therefore, differential of a well-defined geographical area, which validate its origin, protecting the link between geographical origin, producer and consumer.

On the other hand, it is recognized that the logo or brand design of a typical product can be more effective -as a promotional strategy and identification factor- associated with culturally symbolic elements, representative of the locality or environment of origin.

As a socioeconomic strategy for local development, the literature shows that these variants provide direct and concrete benefits to the producer sector, allowing it to enter new and better markets, with better prices, the concentration of income in one sector and its distribution to others, while promoting the specialization of a sector or a territory.

This finding seems contradictory in relation to the evolutionary trend of territorial marketing described in the studies, towards intangible or immaterial factors connected to the content and meaning of places, which stimulate the value of the concept of the origin of culturally based products and services not only as external promotional attributes, but also as internal factors of local identification and economic dynamization, especially for those that may constitute exportable sources.

However, when delving deeper into the possible causes, the result was associated with three specific aspects that emerged from the literature consulted that could cause uncertainty in decision making:

- i. They exceed the demands focused on increasing or diversifying the local production of goods and services because they are more closely linked to product commercialization strategies and market positioning.
- ii. Typical products require an in-depth study of their differential components -symbolic, physical-geographic-, cognitive and practical -culturally based- to prove their distinction and exclusivity.
- iii. They require an articulated local projection to create mechanisms, conditions and capacities of a multidisciplinary nature -organizational, communicative, legislative, normative, political- very specific, even in correspondence with international norms.

This is a subject of analysis at the strategic level of municipal development, with a view to evaluating the economic advantages offered by these forms of exploitation of cultural identity in order to increase management capacity in this way, in accordance with the needs, possibilities and development goals defined in a territory.

The findings, both in their identification and evaluation, are considered the main contribution of this research, since they reveal analysis criteria to guide decision making regarding the use of a cultural component of a territory, as a way to integrate gender perspective in specific areas of local economic development, aimed at increasing women's autonomy and participation capabilities within the framework of development planning.

In this sense, they support the implementation of the country's policy and regulations to promote territorial development and its strategic management in specific aspects such as: the integration of the cultural component and the use of its endogenous potential; the creation -attached to this study- of economic-productive development projects, without discarding those of a sociocultural nature and the rest of the modalities⁷ that, oriented towards strategic priorities of the territories, take advantage of their cultural base and the mainstreaming of the gender approach in these projects (Figure 2).

In practice, they imply the possibility of relating spaces and cultural identity practices locally associated with women with forms of resource exploitation defined here, covering key areas-

⁷ In Cuba, Article 24 of Decree 33/2021 for the Strategic Management of Territorial Development recognizes the modalities of development projects: economic-productive, socio-cultural, environmental, institutional and research, development and innovation.

objectives of Local Economic Development with a gender approach, raised by Espinosa et al. (2015), cited in Quintanilla Ibarra & Sifuentes Ocegueda (2022) such as:

- To promote economic rights and highlight their role as beneficiaries and active participants in the development process of a society in order to promote economic inclusion and social economy.
- Articulate policies that promote an equalitarian and favorable local regulatory framework for the gender perspective as a role of the state in social economic development.
- Improve the positioning of women in the mobilization of the endogenous potential of the community, increasing their supply of goods and services and their access to financing and business development training as a strategy for the valorization of endogenous resources.
- Promote social innovation projects aimed at uniting women's groups with the objective of increasing their empowerment and participation in decision-making related to local development.

The proposals that derive from this could constitute a solution link to the problems (P), goals (M), solutions (S) and strategies (S) already defined by Zebadúa and Pérez (2002), cited in Massolo (2006) in the GED approach studies, as a factor that increases their results, in this case:

P- Unequal power relations, equitable development and women's participation.

M- The creation of efficient and inclusive public policies.

S- Increasing women's capacity for action and transforming unequal relations.

E- The design of targeted or integrated policies, but sensitive to the differences between men and women, as well as attention to practical and strategic needs determined by women



Figure 2. Integration of the contribution to the development management system with a gender perspective

Source: Own elaboration

The following connections between the use of cultural identity as a local endogenous resource and the SDG approach in the framework of strategic development planning emerged as the focus of the discussion.

According to its instrumental function, the culture of a territory carries attributes, functions and mechanisms inherent to its origin, conformation and nature that, innately and generally spontaneously, manifest a capacity for use intrinsic processes of adaptation, creativity, innovation, synergy and sustainability of the bearer groups in their environment. Directly or indirectly, their use leads to economic and social benefits and also as a vector that improves the effectiveness of development interventions (REDS, 2021).

This means that, like the rest of the development resources, cultural resources -such as cultural identity- have the capacity to be used to generate material, spiritual, social and scientific growth, and can therefore be integrated into the territorial planning system and their use can be planned in conjunction with the endogenous factors that trigger development described in the literature, forming part of development undertakings and projects that reinforce female inclusion, enjoying the various advantages of the resource.

However, in order to project the rational and integrated use of local cultural resources in the planning horizon, it would not be enough to know their usefulness, but to overcome conceptual gaps and specific knowledge about culture and incorporate issues related to their origin and qualities to a frame of reference with its own criteria that allow the analysis -relevant and integrable- of its manifestations, capacities and potentialities. In this case, above all, to resolve the identification/evaluation of cultural identity patterns associated with local productive scenarios, specialized activities and practices that feature or link the presence of women, initiating the chain of the strategic integration process.

On the other hand, as Massolo (2006) explains, local development is not gender neutral; this is a constitutive dimension of the process since its dynamics contain, among others, culturally determined needs and expectations, relations and power hierarchies between men and women.

Unlike the Women in Development approach, the GED approach incorporates the gender issue, pointing out the asymmetrical relations between men and women and their impact on development, power relations and the social organization of inequality (Mara Miranda & Fernandes Barroso, 2020; Massolo, 2006).

By integrating the term female empowerment and exposing its psychological, sociocultural, economic and political implications, this approach emphasizes the distinction between the categories of women's condition and position. On these circumstances, according to Massolo (2006), it is insisted that in municipal strategic thinking, development strategies and projects should be directed not only at transforming women's conditions -access to basic services, goods, excess workload or time availability- but also at changing their position in the process, i.e., the relations of subordination with respect to men.

In practice, this would be expressed in terms of: equality of location and social recognition with respect to men, inclusion in decision-making, possibility of access to and control of resources, training, among other examples mentioned by the aforementioned author, as factors of change in the structures of subordination and thus exposure to inequalities, disadvantages and risks.

In this sense, the alternatives for taking advantage of the cultural identity identified constitute ways to increase the projection of participation and development scenarios, aimed -in a strategic way- at empowering women, as a step in the transformation of both their conditions and their position with respect to men in the process.

To this end, as the analysis showed, there are demands, capacities and obstacles associated with their relevance, which may vary from one territory to another and which must be cleared up if they are to be used as ways and alternatives in the municipality to mainstream the gender approach as an expected result of territorial development management, integrating the cultural component into the strategic analysis.

In summary, the practice of local development from a gender approach has shown that -in a planned manner- the capacities to use cultures and cultural identities in the economic dimension of women's entrepreneurship are available (Ordóñez Gavilanes et al., 2022), in close relation to the political-administrative, socio-cultural and institutional, among others.

This has given way to a vision of gender strategy that can achieve "a comprehensive and multisectoral approach, combining different competencies, practices and interests and articulating the short and long term, the urban and the rural, the public and the private" (Ordóñez Gavilanes et al., 2022, p. 79).

In this way, agricultural workers from the districts of Vélez and Anarquía in Málaga and shellfish gatherers from the Community of Galicia, Spain; Nahua artisans in Cuetzalán and traditional cooks from San Pedro el Saucito, Mexico; Nasa indigenous weavers from the municipality of Santiago de Cali and dressmakers from Barranquilla, Colombia; potters from the municipality of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Salvador; artisans from the Community of Santa Rosa, Majibacoa municipality, Cuba, have positioned themselves in local enterprises, cooperatives and projects:

- They have provided them with physical autonomy, economic autonomy, decision-making autonomy, and cultural and identity autonomy (Ciro & Martínez Puche, 2018; Peralta et al., 2023).
- They have allowed them to generate benefits to their environment, in correspondence with their capabilities, potential, needs and interests, showing the importance of their functions and their degree of involvement with development (Caamaño Franco et al., 2020; Nieto Figueras, 2006; Padrón de la Rosa & Juliá Méndez, 2023).

This reinforces the general idea underlying this research: coherence and systematicity achieved in the articulation of the cultural component -particularly cultural identity- in strategic territorial development planning will contribute to diversify the scenarios and ways to increase women's capacities for autonomy and participation as active subjects of development.

In general terms, the study provided guidelines for integrating the use of culture as a factor that can increase women's capacity for autonomy and participation in development, in harmony with SDG 5, which calls for planned actions at the local level aimed at this purpose.

In particular, forms of strategic use of cultural identity were identified in the SPL as an endogenous, local resource directed towards two main target groups with levels of belonging, specific demands and their own economic advantages that contribute to consolidating the gender perspective in specific areas of local economic development:

- Group 1: Promote competitive advantages, encourage innovation and productive linkages of goods and services with cultural identity, also to promote the creation of new products and services.
- Group 2: Promotion of products and services of local origin, protecting brands of products and services with local cultural identity, certifying the quality of products and services based on cultural criteria.

The procedure used, which in its second stage can be extended to other municipalities, allowed a feasible assessment of the relevance of the criteria analyzed, while serving as a tool to survey the capacities installed in the local actors of a municipality and their vision for managing the use of the cultural component in territorial development.

It is suggested that the criteria provided on the use of culture and, in particular, cultural identity as a local resource and its potential relationship with the SDG approach be deepened and incorporated into municipal agendas for knowledge management and innovation for development, an action that would strengthen the capacity of local actors in the design of strategies, participation, decision making and results in development management.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

Authors' contribution

Maydelin Annerys Olazabal Arrabal was involved in the study design, literature review, research and field work, statistical analysis, preparation of the original draft and critical review.

Vilda Rodríguez Méndez worked on the review and critical editing of the article and the bibliographic review.

Ernesto Collado Cardoso participated in the statistical design, data processing and analysis.

Liz Marian Rio Olazabal worked on the systematization and bibliographic review, field work, and visualization of graphs and tables.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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