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Scientific articles

Acercamiento descriptivo del tianguis y su actividad cultural y comercial en el pueblo mágico de Cuetzalan del Progreso

Descriptive Approach to the Tianguis and Its Cultural and Commercial Activity in the Magical Town of Cuetzalan del Progreso

Abordagem descritiva do mercado de pulgas e sua atividade cultural e comercial na mágica cidade de Cuetzalan del Progreso

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Resumen

Esta investigación parte de la identificación de los aspectos socioculturales, económicos e históricos del tianguis en el municipio de Cuetzalan del Progreso. El objetivo fue describir las características de la práctica comercial y cultural de los productores, vendedores y consumidores en el tianguis de Cuetzalan. Para ello, primero se efectuó una investigación documental por medio de la revisión de artículos científicos relacionados con los temas de tianguis y mercados, con apoyo de la plataforma digital de Bibliotecas BUAP, a través de los recursos económicos administrativos EBSCO, Scopus y Springer para fortalecer la teoría. Posteriormente, se desarrolló la investigación de campo como soporte para la investigación descriptiva a través de las técnicas de la observación y la encuesta.



Los resultados obtenidos y contrastados con la teoría arrojan evidencia a favor de la importancia actual que tiene el tianguis de Cuetzalan del Progreso con relación con la práctica comercial y cultural entre sus participantes. Se concluye, por tanto, que el tianguis de Cuetzalan es un pueblo mágico del estado de Puebla, lleno de cultura donde aún se conservan algunas prácticas prehispánicas por sus integrantes, por el tipo de productos que se venden y el trueque, entre otros factores que ubican a este municipio como único y reconocido nacional e internacionalmente.

Palabras clave: tianguis, mercado, Cuetzalan del Progreso.

Abstract

The present research was conducted within the cultural and commercial context of the traditional market ("tianguis") in the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso. The objective was to describe the characteristics of the commercial and cultural practices of producers, vendors, and consumers in the Cuetzalan market. Initially, documentary research was employed through a review of scientific articles related to marketplaces and markets, using the digital platform of BUAP Libraries and economic-administrative resources such as EBSCO, Scopus, and Springer to strengthen the theoretical framework. Subsequently, field research was conducted to support descriptive investigation, employing observation and survey techniques.

The results, when compared and contrasted with existing theories, provide evidence supporting the current importance of the Cuetzalan del Progreso market in relation to commercial and cultural practices among its participants. It is concluded that the Cuetzalan market is a "Magical Town" in the state of Puebla, rich in culture where some pre-Hispanic practices are still preserved by its members, manifested through the types of products traded and barter transactions, among other factors. These elements position this municipality as unique and nationally and internationally recognized.

Key Words: tianguis, market, Cuetzalan del Progreso.



Resumo

Esta pesquisa baseia-se na identificação dos aspectos socioculturais, econômicos e históricos da feira da ladra no município de Cuetzalan del Progreso. O objetivo foi descrever as características da prática comercial e cultural de produtores, vendedores e consumidores na feira de pulgas de Cuetzalan. Para isso, primeiramente foi realizada uma investigação documental através da revisão de artigos científicos relacionados aos temas de feiras e mercados de pulgas, com o apoio da plataforma digital Bibliotecas BUAP, através dos recursos econômicos administrativos EBSCO, Scopus e Springer para fortalecer o teoria. Posteriormente, desenvolveu-se a pesquisa de campo como apoio à pesquisa descritiva por meio de técnicas de observação e levantamento.

Os resultados obtidos e contrastados com a teoria fornecem evidências a favor da importância atual que a feira da ladra Cuetzalan del Progreso tem em relação à prática comercial e cultural entre os seus participantes. Conclui-se, portanto, que o mercado Cuetzalan é uma cidade mágica do estado de Puebla, repleta de cultura onde algumas práticas pré-hispânicas ainda são preservadas por seus associados, devido ao tipo de produtos vendidos e escambo, entre outros fatores que Colocam este município como único e reconhecido nacional e internacionalmente.

Palavras-chave: tianguis, mercado, Cuetzalan del Progreso.

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Introduction

The tianguis is a pre-Hispanic commercial practice whose etymology comes from the Nahuatl *tianquiztli*, a term associated with the concept of *market* (Delfín, 2010). This practice consisted of standing in a semi-fixed manner on certain days designated by the uses and customs of each population. The Pochtecas, a guild of elite merchants, offered their products and services through the practice of barter, which at that time involved the exchange of goods, for which they used cocoa seeds, blankets, and copper objects as currency (Heron, 2007).

History indicates that going to the flea market meant attending a place of meeting, socialization, festivity and joy among the inhabitants, families and relatives, where buying and selling were secondary reasons (Hernández, 2019). To this day, in some regions of Mexico a high percentage of pre-Hispanic market practices are maintained, since it is considered a social and cultural space, as well as a tourist attraction (Milenio, 2023).



Therefore, this study attempts to describe the main characteristics of the market and its commercial practices in the magical town of Cuetzalan del Progreso.

Tianguis

Pre-Hispanic commercialization in the early Preclassic period (2500 BC - 1200 BC) arose with the achievement of food self-sufficiency. The settlers discovered that they could survive thanks to the crops and planting of corn, pumpkin, chili, beans and other plant species, which served to create the first settlements and trade routes for the exchange of products, especially in the area known as Mesoamerica (Barden & Smith, 2004).

Regarding the stories of the first conquistadors who visited Mexico - according to the comments of the chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo - the Spanish, guided by Moctezuma, visited the great market square of Tlatelolco and were impressed when they learned of the magnitude and economic organization and social of the tianquiztli (Herrera, 2007).

The heritage of the tianguis is an amalgam of the mercantile traditions of the pre-Hispanic peoples of Mesoamerica (Martínez, 2015), including Aztec influences and the Middle Eastern bazaars introduced to America through Spain. These flea markets were characterized by being established in a semi-fixed manner on streets and roads designated by uses and customs.

During the colonial period, indigenous people continued to sell their goods in the open air, which led to the creation of more spaces of this type to market their products. Thus, in Mexico City, in the 16th century, five main flea markets emerged: Tlatelolco, México, by Juan Velázquez, San Hipólito and San Juan (Rubial, 2023).

The market was then a place dedicated to commercial activity, that is, a space for street vendors where a barter fair was held. These sites had an extensive infrastructure that included communication and transportation routes, in addition to following a series of values and traditions in carrying out the exchange, known as *barter* or *patlalli tlapatiolt* (Mexico City Council Minutes, 1889).

This area, described as a place for street vendors (Hirth, 2013), stood as the epicenter of social, economic and cultural life in pre-Hispanic Mexico (Anzures, 2009) and over time it evolved both in form and context. The flea markets had beautiful, large plazas, where each merchandise exhibited its style in its own aisles (Buelna, 1993).



The markets were located within the localities with a certain temporality and without remaining fixed, offering a variety of food, local foods and, in some cases, indigenous products (Monjarás -Ruiz and Carrasco, 1978). These included local fruits such as chili, beans, corn, pumpkin, tomato, avocado, guava, mamey, zapotes, sweet potato, xocote, chia, cocoa, tamales, legumes and fresh fruits. A wide variety of herbs and powders for medicinal purposes and other similar productions were also offered (Zuazo, 1859). In addition, birds of different types were sold, such as turkeys, quails, pigeons and ducks, as well as animals such as deer, dogs, hares, turtles, iguanas, snakes and insects such as ants and grasshoppers, along with lake and marine products, including a large variety of fish and crustaceans.

In another sector of the market, there were commonly used items such as mats, winches, pens, mecapales and comales. Meanwhile, in the markets of Mexico City, specifically the Plaza Mayor, Spanish products were offered such as olives, Almuñécar raisins, black figs, almonds, tuna, milk, bread and empanadas.

During the 16th century, due to the importance and magnitude of these spaces, which brought together a large number of people and presented a diversity of products, an organization method was implemented. The tianguis were set up in certain periods in the large plazas, and the merchants or pochtecas were organized in corridors divided by the specialty of the products they sold, which served for buyers to observe the stalls (Villegas, 2010). In Tenochtitlán, these places offered security to visitors by maintaining order and justice through a type of audience house that resolved conflicts or difficult situations. Reserved spaces, such as warehouses, were also allocated to store certain types of products (Rovira, 2014).

Of all the tianguis in ancient Mexico, the most prominent and extensive was the great market of Tlatelolco, located in what is now the center of Mexico City. In this place, production, variety and wealth formed a peculiar portrait, which contributed to the image of Aztec power. This was the flea market that Spanish adventurers saw for the first time and were impressed by its organization and magnitude, before the war broke out and, therefore, its destruction.

After the conquest of Tenochtitlán, Tlatelolco became the capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain, which did not benefit the old market. As a consequence, it was never resurrected, and in its place the temple and convent of Santiago was built, giving rise to what we now know as “The Plaza of the Three Cultures” (INAH, 2023).



However, it is important to note that the practice of flea markets has persisted as part of commerce in Mexico, with public spaces that articulate a more complex collective form of city, with planning and land use regulation rules imposed by the authorities (Seve *et al.*, 2020).

Market

With the fall of Tenochtitlan in August 1521 (Gutiérrez, 2021), Tlatelolco lost its commercial supremacy. After the conquest of the Spanish, the first market that was established in Mexico City was that of Juan Velázquez, named in honor of a prominent chief of the time (Ahuactzin, 2004). The place of that square is occupied today by the Palace of Fine Arts.

Once the Spanish layout was completed, with the essential indigenous labor, the market concept and practice took root in the heart of the city, that is, in the Plaza Mayor. Here the main communication routes necessary for the transport of goods began and ended and the square was guarded by the headquarters of the three powers of the time: religious, political and civil. This square became the most important commercial center of the Colony, where you could find everything from trinkets to luxurious imported goods, local agricultural and livestock products, as well as those from other regions.

During the colonial period in Mexico, the pre-Hispanic tradition of concentrating the exchange of goods and services in public squares merged with the European market tradition (Sánchez, 2016). These commercial practices, similar to those in Mexico and present in other countries, are known as *souk* or *market*, while in the United States it adopts the name *flea market* (specifically in the states of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California); *fair* in Argentina, *bazaar* in the Middle East and *shìchāng* in China.

With the conquest, the Spanish lordships (Pérez, 1997), who had territorial control, imposed new agricultural crops and monetized commercial practices, which limited the barter of indigenous products. Therefore, the exchange of goods was replaced by the use of coins, and barter was only authorized in the afternoons (Fabre & Ejea, 2015). To some extent, this transformation represented a commodified hybridization with a cultural background.

The transition from a pre-Hispanic economic system to a colonial one took place throughout the 16th century. Although attempts were made to establish new laws for better control of commercial activities and impose a monetary system, some customs survived in



public, economic, political and religious relations. The congregation of large numbers of people from various professions and, sometimes, from all social classes, promoted cultural exchanges.

Starting in 1580, with the creation of the *pósito* and the *alhóndiga* in New Spain (Fernández, 2012), at the end of the 16th century, whose function was to provide cereal, corn and wheat at a low price in times of scarcity and famine, it was opened the commercialization of basic grains. Furthermore, the clergy began to gain importance as food producers, and in the following two centuries they became very powerful.

In 1703, El Parián, a market located within the capital's main square, was inaugurated. By 1778, the beginning of Spanish commercial opening was marked and the exclusive fleet system between Cádiz and Veracruz ended, which opened trade for twelve other Hispanic cities (Government of Mexico, 2009). At the end of the viceregal period, commercial activity in the capital was centered on the Plaza Mayor and had El Parián, Los Portales de Mercaderes, Las Flores and the Provincial Council, in addition to the El Volador market, where the Supreme Court of Justicia, the Teatro de las Maravillas, the Baratillo, the Lagunilla, the Merced and Tepito.

Now, the concept of *market* refers to the social environment that facilitates the conditions for the purchase and sale of goods and services. In other words, it is a social space capable of self-regulation, which encompasses both consumers and producers who reach mutual agreements to carry out commercial transactions or operations, following the principles of supply and demand to establish prices. It is a scenario in which all participants become actors, spectators and critics (Federal Economic Competition Commission, August 25, 2023). This concept is one of the most important in the social sciences, since it is considered the foundation of the autonomy of economic theory.

Market concept, integral elements appear that identify it in terms of its practice. The companies that offer and sell goods and services stand out, made up of sellers; the product or service, which are satisfying and attractive to the market; The buyers, who need the product, have the money to buy and the willingness to do so; the space, which can be physical or virtual, where the exchange takes place; and the time in which said exchange takes place (Kotler and Armstrong, 2020).

On the other hand, there is the conceptualization that Mexican society has about the market, which is considered as a physical place to supply its main requirements through various merchandise. This space reflects the multiculturalism and richness that characterize



Mexico, as it is a place where tradition is preserved and reflected, in addition to stimulating the senses and providing a first-hand idea of the generosity with which the land provides us (Government of Mexico, 2022).

Markets are urban landmarks and reference marks of a city. In this regard, El Colegio Nacional (July 6, 2022) points out that markets remain a meeting place and a means to strengthen social ties, since they are transformed into a welcoming space where the flavors and aromas of food are experienced. , traditions and routines are cultivated, and other dimensions are preserved, such as the historical memory of the city.

These markets are characterized by their great abundance and diversity of colors, smells, flavors and meanings, which represents the synthesis of the culture and history of the region. Traditional markets in Mexico have various names, such as “public markets”, “municipal markets” or simply “markets”, which are regulated and organized to operate efficiently.

Until 2021, according to data from the Congress of Mexico City, there were 329 public markets that generated approximately 280,000 sources of employment. These are distributed in the 16 different municipalities of Mexico City, where the commercial traditions that emerged from pre-Hispanic peoples and that were adapted during the Postclassic period (viceroyalty) are reflected. In these markets, customs and traditions with more than five hundred years of history converge and coexist (Mexico City Congress, November 16, 2021).

Among the most prominent markets in Mexico City – which reflect it’s cultural, architectural and heritage identity – are the San Juan market, the Medellín market, the Coyoacán market, the Sonora market, the Central de Abastos market, the La Nueva Viga market, the Merced market and the Jamaica market, among others (ADN40, 2021).

It is important to highlight that the Central de Abastos market in Mexico City is currently considered the largest in the world, as it occupies an area of 327 hectares for its commercial activity. Other notable markets in the world include the Yiuw wholesale market in China, which has 5.5 million square meters and seven kilometers of open-air premises, as well as the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, which spans 64 streets.



Cuetzalan del Progreso

Tourism in Mexico stands as one of the most relevant economic pillars, after exports and oil. This activity contributed approximately 7.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the fourth quarter of 2022 and generated more than 4 million jobs, according to the most recent figures from the Ministry of Tourism (May 1, 2023).

Mexico, as a universe of diversity, reflects life in its entirety. Here you can recognize towns and environments from all over the world, whether in some remote corner of the national map or evidently, before the eyes of both inhabitants and visitors. This makes Mexico the main nation in the world in terms of the conjunction of natural and cultural mega diversity. In fact, it ranks fourth among the most megadiverse countries on the planet, considering the number of plant and animal species it houses in its territory (the first are Brazil, Colombia and Indonesia) (Iturriaga, 2022). Another significant aspect is its rich culture, which, together with its natural resources, positions Mexico in a privileged way in the tourism sector worldwide.

The development of cultural tourism has allowed an experience beyond the formal and aesthetic, traditionally linked to architecture, dance and artistic manifestations. This gives tourists the opportunity to not only observe, but also participate in the culture of other communities, which serves to understand it in depth. Over time, it has become clear that even trips initially oriented toward rest or entertainment include, to a greater or lesser extent, tourists' interactions with daily life, cultural heritage, and authentic expressions of the receiving local populations (Universidad Anahuác, 2016).

Likewise, Mexico holds the leadership on the American continent and ranks sixth globally in terms of the number of sites designated as World Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The heritage list is a legacy of monuments and sites of natural and cultural wealth that belongs to humanity; The inscribed places are symbols of the awareness of States and peoples about the meaning of these places, as well as the transmission of these assets to future generations. Specifically, Mexico has 35 places, of which six are natural assets, 27 cultural and two mixed (UNAM Global Revista, April 17, 2023). In addition to that, UNESCO also recognized the richness of Mexican gastronomy by granting it the status of Intangible Heritage of Humanity, by virtue of its extensive culinary variety (Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, December 18, 2021).

One of the most successful programs to promote, coordinate and encourage Cultural Heritage in Mexico is the so-called Magical Towns. This program arises as a tourism



initiative promoted by the Ministry of Tourism of Mexico (SECTUR), in collaboration with several government entities. This program designates as Magical Towns localities within the country that stand out for their efforts in preserving and safeguarding their valuable cultural heritage, a proposal that was established on October 5, 2001.

Currently, Mexico has 177 municipalities registered in the Magical Towns program, which exhibit the predominant qualities necessary to be tourist destinations that preserve traditions, customs and local culture (Sanguino, June 27, 2023).

On the other hand, the state of Puebla has 12 names of magical towns: Atlixco, Chignahuapan, Cholula, Huachinango, Cuetzalan, Pahuatlán, Tlatlahuitepec , Tetela de Ocampo, Zacatlán, Xicotepec, Huejotzingo and Teziutlán, which makes it one of the three states with the highest number of appointments, along with the state of Mexico and Jalisco (El Universal Puebla, July 3, 2023).

In this context of study, the present research will focus on the magical town of Cuetzalan, whose name is composed of elements of the Nahuatl language *Quetzalt* , which denotes something resplendent and beautiful, and *lan* , which translates as 'next or near' to the beautiful birds called quetzal.

Located at an altitude of 930 meters above sea level, this place has a semi-humid subtropical climate with rainfall throughout the year. Natural vegetation includes flowers such as calla lilies, azaleas, hydrangeas, gachupinas and orchids. Cuetzalan is a municipality located in the mountains, surrounded by foggy forests, coffee plantations, waterfalls, caves, grottoes and giant ferns (Cuetzalan Pueblo Mágico, 2023). Its foundation dates back to the arrival of the Totonacos in the year 200 BC. C., who were later subdued by the Mexica in 1475. Subsequently, the conquistadors took control of the town in 1522.

This municipality stands out for its amazing nature and cultural wealth, offering various natural tourist destinations, such as the Las Brisas waterfall, the Quetzalapan waterfall, the Ajalpan grottoes, the Yohualichan archaeological site, the Tzicatlacoyan viewpoint, the Chivostoc cave , the hill Yohualichan, the Zempoala River and the Tabacal Hill. These natural places are attractive for nature lovers and ecotourism enthusiasts. In 2002, Cuetzalan joined the Pueblos Mágicos program, becoming the first to obtain this category in the state of Puebla thanks to the initiative of the federal government (Secretaría de Turismo, March 11, 2022).



Methodology

In relation to the design of the methodology, a review and analysis of concepts, themes and authors linked to flea markets and markets was carried out. The digital platform of BUAP Libraries was used, using administrative economic resources such as EBSCO, Scopus and Springer to strengthen the theory. Subsequently, field research was carried out as support for the descriptive research using observation and interview techniques.

The interview script initially included general information about the interviewee, such as name, age, gender, place of origin, and type of products sold. Then the characteristics of the commercial and cultural practice of producers, sellers and consumers in the Cuetzalan flea market were described. Finally, answers were sought to questions such as the following: what day and time is the flea market set up? What is the clothing used to sell at the flea market? What dialects are used to sell at the flea market? How is the sales stand set up? Are the products originally from the region and what are they? Are there other products that are not from Mexico? Is haggling used to reach a sales agreement? And how is barter carried out in the Cuetzalan del Progreso flea market?

The information obtained through these techniques was contrasted with the results obtained from documentary research, which made it possible to describe the main descriptive cultural and commercial characteristics in the Cuetzalan flea market.

The research setting was the Pueblo Mágico of Cuetzalan, located in the municipality of Puebla, in the Sierra Norte of the state. The study sample consisted of thirty merchants or sellers, distributed as follows: twenty women and ten men, with ages ranging between seventeen and seventy years.

Techniques such as surveys and semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used during commercial activities at the flea market. These took place during one of the main festivities of the archaeological zone, dedicated to the celebration of *Yohualican* music and dance. *Kampa To Xolalmej Ilhuitij*, on Sunday, August 6, 2023.

Results

The information collected in the research contributed to the description of the characteristics of the flea market phenomenon and its commercial practice by the sellers and buyers of the Cuetzalan del Progreso flea market. The tradition of markets in the world is almost as old as the history of cultures. As Espinosa (2020) mentions, in Mexico, the practice of tianguis has existed since pre-Hispanic times and to date prevails as the main



form of popular commerce in the country. This tradition mixed with the trade forms and practices of the Spanish; however, its existence as a place of commercial exchange has continued to this day, reflecting the culture and remaining a place of social gathering.

In this research, a descriptive approach to the commercial activity of the Cuetzalan del Progreso flea market was carried out. This municipality is one of the 217 in the state of Puebla and is currently considered an outstanding tourist attraction, having the distinction of Pueblo Mágico. Likewise, it preserves the practice of the tianguis and its participants, such as the tiangueras, the marchantas and the pochtecas (merchants) with commercial exchange in the Nahuatl, Totonac and Spanish dialects.

According to, like other tianguis in Mexico, the Cuetzalan tianguis is located on Sundays along the main square and the atrium (El Financiero, 2013) of the parish of San Francisco de Asís, as well as its adjacent streets, which includes the Polygon of the Typical Monumental Zone of the City of Cuetzalan.

According to Callejas *et al.* (2015), the commercial practice of the flea market in Cuetzalan begins early on Sundays, accompanied by a magical fog. Pochtecas and marchants, coming mainly from surrounding places such as San Miguel Tzinacapan, Yohalinchan, Jonotla, Tuzamapan de Galeana, Tlatlauquitepec, Ayotoxco, Zoquiapan, Zacapoaxtla and Nauzontla, participate in this activity. These tianguis actors arrive dressed to the nines with typical attire, in accordance with the community's custom, to attend Sunday mass and participate in the tianguis activities. The women wear circular loom huipils dyed with natural pigments and colorful embroidery, nahuas, huaraches and headdresses. The men wear pants and blanket shirt, hat, huaraches and carry a bag or backpack; some wear jeans, plaid shirts, boots and caps.

The organization of the market begins at dawn, around 6 am, and closes at 6 pm, in accordance with the Municipal Markets and Markets Regulations (July 20, 2009). At the beginning of the activity, merchants carry packages or sacks containing the products they sell, and some use carts, wheelbarrows or devils, following the old tradition of the tlamemes. The placement of the stalls involves the use of blankets and plastic on the floor, wooden crates as a base with boards on top, plastic boats or buckets as supports for wicker baskets, and other more elaborate mechanisms, such as easels or metal donkeys with wooden planks on top. These stalls are covered on top with cloth or plastic blankets to protect them from the sun and rain.



The Municipal Tourism Development Program of Cuetzalan del Progreso (2018) highlights the diversity of products sold in the markets and flea markets in the region. Both men and women participate in the commercial practice of the flea market, offering a wide range of products. These include manufactured products such as huipils, shawls, blouses, earrings, handicrafts, nahuas, necklaces, native seed bracelets, tortilleros, wicker baskets, mats, toys such as slingshots and wooden figures.

In addition, harvested and cultivated products are offered, such as beans, cocoyole chiles, endemic flowers (orchids), gourds, quelites, nopales, bules, mushrooms, nuts, flowers, bananas, pears, apples, onions, potatoes, kidney tomatoes, pumpkins, melons, various seeds, avocados, medicinal plants and herbs, as well as remedies to cure ailments and different spices from the Sierra Norte of Puebla.

Among the artisanal products are honey, sweet bread, traditional sweets, vanilla, cinnamon, pepper, chiltepín and tobacco. Coffee stands out, one of the most sought-after products nationally and internationally, which is produced and marketed in varieties such as organic, ground and roasted. The offering at the flea market reflects the cultural and natural wealth of the region, which attracts both locals and visitors.

Commercial activity at the Cuetzalan flea market covers a variety of traditional and contemporary products. According to Alvarado *et al.* (2006), products derived from the region's traditional productive activities, such as agriculture, livestock and forestry, are marketed. In the stalls and stores of the market, you can find products such as pork and beef, as well as their derivatives, such as giblets, pork rinds, stuffed meat, carnitas and sausage. In addition, prepared foods are offered, such as juices, atoles, tamales, molotes, enchiladas, empanadas, tacos, tlayoyos and handmade tortillas for breakfast or lunch.

According to Zambrano (October 9, 2015), products related to field activities are also sold, such as machetes, shovels, pickaxes, saddlebags, hats, ponchos, ropes and ropes, rubber blankets and saddles. The interview with livestock farmers reveals that they are located in a specific area in front of the atrium of the temple of San Francisco de Asís and offer animals such as turkeys, roosters, chickens, pigs, sheep and goats.

However, during the field research, the existence of products that do not add value to the culture of the pre-Hispanic market practice was observed, and fortunately, they constitute a minority. These products are imported mainly from China, and some merchants bring them from the City of Puebla and Mexico City, such as backpacks, caps, masks,

plastic toys, plastic shoes and flip-flops, clothing, tennis shoes, belts, as well as electronic audio and telephony items and accessories.

It was also observed that, in the dynamics of commercial practice, participants discuss the price and haggling of products, reaching a verbal agreement and paying in cash. Generally, when the sale is satisfactory, the buyer receives an extra amount of the purchase, called *a pilón*, as a token of gratitude for having made the purchase. Some products, such as fruits, seeds, vegetables, flowers, beans, among others, are sold in units of measurement that are not very common in modern society, but in the market they are used in a practical way, such as buying in lots, due to the content of a small plastic bucket, for the contents of a can of sardines, by the quarter, by the dozen, by the bunch, by the quintal or by the sack.

After making their main sales and in the afternoon, when they have sold most of their products and have some left over, certain merchants come to barter goods. This barter, of pre-Hispanic origin, consists of the exchange of one product for another in substitution of payment in money. Coinciding with Almeida (2013), it is pointed out that barter is a practice that continues to appear with great intensity among members of the community and consists of exchanging products that were not sold for others that may be useful to them, according to the needs of the community participants. Finally, marketing at the flea market concludes at 6 pm, at which time the sellers must collect their merchandise, their work instruments (that is, their place or position), and clean or sweep the space they occupied.

Discussion

Without a doubt, today Mexico is a country full of a rich culture that has developed over the centuries, and its influence has spread around the world, especially to Spanish-speaking countries, as Pelayo points out (15 March 2023). The fact that many pre-Hispanic traditions are preserved is a reason for pride in their identity, since a link is created between the past and the present (Initial Education Program, 2019), which demonstrates a sense of belonging and identity of the people who they make up a community.

The commercial practice of the flea market, as they point out (Natividad, 2018), today helps connect rural and urban populations, as well as tourists, since it promotes the regional market and allows direct consumption at a fair price for producers and consumers, which strengthens the economy of the municipalities. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the importance that the Cuetzalan del Progreso flea market has today, which remains



standing and preserves many of the pre-Hispanic practices, such as barter, and endemic and local products of the region (Series of Chroniclers of the Mexican Renaissance, 2020). Finally, based on the information obtained through observation and descriptive research recorded in the Cuetzalan flea market, it is recommended to carry out future descriptive studies in other flea markets in Mexico.

Conclusion

The information obtained as a result of the documentary research and later the exploratory and field research, through observation and survey, yielded descriptive data that allowed us to have an approach to the flea market and its commercial activity in the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso. This research is considered an empirical contribution to the generation of knowledge about the commercial importance of flea markets and their customs. The results obtained allowed us to contrast the theory cited in the document and reach the following statements:

1. The Sunday market of Cuetzalan is solid proof of the social, cultural and commercial activity of the municipality. In addition, it maintains pre-Hispanic practices, where the actors and participants consider that they are not defeated by the conquest of the Spanish or by the effects of globalization, preserving their customs and culture.
2. This market has a unique character, since it is located in a strategic place for commerce in the Sierra Norte area of Puebla and the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso. It was named the first Magical Town in the state of Puebla in 2022, since it is the most representative municipality for its history and culture.
3. The customs of the Cuetzalan tianguis are maintained in its commercial practices by being held only one day a week, following the tradition of other tianguis in Mexico that are held outdoors on Sundays. In this tianguis, participants such as the tiangueras, the marchantas and the pochtecas persist, who maintain commercial exchange in the Nahuatl, Totonaco and Spanish dialects.
4. It is important to highlight that the original tradition is preserved, especially in the exclusive sale of traditional products manufactured, cultivated, produced and sold by Nahua natives. These participants, like their local clients, wear traditional attire that has been used since the pre-Columbian era. The Cuetzalan market thus becomes a place of meeting, coexistence and joy, where one of the oldest practices



of the market is preserved: bartering and commercial activity among the inhabitants of the community.

In conclusion, the Cuetzalan market is a unique and magical place. Walking through it implies perceiving an amalgam of aromas between coffee, cinnamon and flowers, accompanied by vibrant colors in the products and clothing of the vendors. Wrapped in a mist that evokes nostalgia, this flea market leaves a lasting impression on those who visit it, whether they are local, national, foreign tourists, university students or researchers. Each experience reinforces the assertion that the flea market continues to be a significant commercial and social practice in this community.

Future lines of research

Future lines of research summarize aspects that were potentially interesting and that could be developed in complementary works. These areas of study will provide new interpretations or solutions to aspects not addressed in the present study:

1. Investigate the preservation of the cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, of the market to highlight its importance within the culture of Mexico. This could include protecting flea market-specific traditions, customs, and business practices.
2. Determine the economic importance of the market in the community of Cuetzalan del Progreso, analyzing its contribution as a source of income for local inhabitants. This involves exploring how business activity affects the local economy and community sustainability.
3. Study highlights by comparing commercial practices between the flea market and the local market in the municipality. This could reveal significant differences or similarities in terms of products offered, exchange dynamics and community participation.
4. Explore the market from the perspective of tourism, since Cuetzalan del Progreso must be considered a magical town.

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