



**Artistic Approach to Identity and Heritage: Ethnographic Research
on the Blacks and Whites Carnival in Pasto, Colombia**

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Global Responsibility and Leadership

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"First, I say, welcome to Pasto, welcome to a creative city of art, artisanship, and folklore. Since you are a foreigner, you have to break, break all the schemes you have learned in your life about art and culture. Because here you will find the magic of color, you will live in a world of fantasy. You will enter into the multiverse of the carnival. You will see something that you have never seen in your life." - Gisela Checa, Director of Corpocarnaval ¹

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¡Viva Pasto, Carajo!

¹ Director of the Carnaval de Negros y Blancos corporation (Corpocarnaval), Interview, minute 27.30 , see original quote Appendix Translations Section Foreword

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of artistic expression in cultural preservation, examined by the “Carnaval de Negros y Blancos” (CNB), the Black and White Carnival, in San Juan de Pasto, Colombia. The CNB has been declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2009 and highlights the importance of art as a means to maintain and navigate the cultural identity and heritage formed by the mosaic of the Indigenous, African, and European influences of the region. I conducted cross-cultural ethnographic research, entailing fieldwork over the span of 10 days before and during the carnival season. I used qualitative methods, including fieldnotes, a field diary, photographic documentation, and seven semi-structured interviews. My results were that artistic expression, in the context of the CNB, serves through its mechanisms of Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification and Belonging & Pride to a deep and meaningful connection of the community with their cultural identity and heritage.

Keywords: artistic expression, cultural preservation, Carnaval de Negros y Blancos, Blacks and Whites Carnival, intangible cultural heritage

Introduction & Background

In an increasingly globalized world, communities often face the challenge of preserving their cultural identity against various threats. One tool that has been promising in cultural preservation is art, which has a long history of producing, maintaining, and preserving culture (Langer, 1966). The Blacks and Whites Carnival in Colombia offers a unique example of how artistic expression can function as a mechanism for communities to connect with and celebrate their cultural heritage. This carnival, a mosaic of Andean, Hispanic, and African traditions, not only highlights the region's rich cultural history but also offers insights into how art can help maintain a cultural identity in a pluralistic society.

The Blacks and Whites Carnival (Orig. *Carnaval de Negros y Blancos*, abbrev. CNB) is one of the biggest carnival celebrations of the Andean region in Colombia, whose origin can be traced back to the 16th century. The CNB is annually celebrated in San Juan de Pasto (Pasto) in the Nariño department in southwestern Colombia. The CNB was declared an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2009. Art is an integral part of the carnival, with parades, including floats, colorful costumes, traditional music, sculptures, and dance. These performances embrace, honour and remember the local culture and Andean identity. It is a time of collective catharsis where people of all backgrounds come together and play in the streets with chalk, foam sprays, and colors. The celebrations commence on December 28th and conclude on January 8th in Pasto, with a pre-and carnival season. The pre-carnival season is mainly seen as the period between Christmas and New Year's, marked by significant events such as the day of the *Arcoíris en el Asfalto* (rainbow on the asphalt), the *años viejos* parade (the new year's puppets parade) and New Years celebrations. Events throughout the city include parades, concerts, and parties during the pre-carnival season. The CNB officially begins on the 2nd of January with the *carnavalito*

(small carnival) for children. The 3rd of January is dedicated to Mother Earth with the *canto a la tierra* (song to the earth). It celebrates the ancestral Andean legacy through dance and musical performances by choreographic collectives. The 4th of January marks the arrival of the Spanish Castañeda family and celebrates rural and urban memories of the region through characters, stories, and events. The 5th of January is the *día de negros* (day of the Blacks), where people play on the streets and paint their faces in black cosmetics to celebrate joy and freedom. I will dive more into this tradition and its history when discussing the history of the carnival. The height of the carnival is reached on the 6th of January on the *día de blancos* (day of Whites), with a parade, the *desfile magno*, with colorful massive floats and people playing on the streets throughout the city. The carnival comes to an end with the day of the guinea pig on the 7th of January and the day of the trout on the 8th of January, both being essential staples and delicacies of the local cuisine. There are carnival celebrations throughout the Andean regions of South America. However, the Blacks and Whites carnival attracts thousands of tourists annually and has immense cultural relevance within the area because of its artistic displays. (Corpocarnaval, 2023) Therefore, it is an excellent example of how artistic expression can potentially be used as a tool to navigate cultural pluralism and preserve and celebrate one's cultural identity and heritage.

In this paper, I will explore, through the example of the Blacks and Whites Carnival, how artistic expression can serve as a mechanism for communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage. I therefore conducted cross-cultural ethnographic research with a mixed-methods approach, using semi-structured interviews, field notes, a field diary, participant observation, and documentation through sketches and pictures. There is extensive research available on the CNB; however, this is the first English cross-cultural ethnographic study with a focus on artistic expression and cultural heritage. I will first review existing literature on the

concept of artistic expression and its relation to culture and heritage, while using examples of practices and traditions from within the carnival. Afterwards, I will give an overview of the history of the carnival and the key moments that shaped it into its present form. In the next chapter, I will introduce the methodology used and elaborate on the process of conducting cross-cultural ethnographic research. Afterward, I will present my findings on the three main mechanisms of artistic expression that enable the local community to connect with their cultural identity and heritage. These are Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification; and Belonging & Pride. Lastly, I will discuss my findings and comment on their significance and limitations, referring back to how artistic expression can be used or implemented as a mechanism for communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage.

Research Question:

“How does artistic expression serve as a mechanism for communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage, as demonstrated by the Blacks and Whites Carnival in Colombia?”

Literature Review

Artistic Expression and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Artistic expression is a term that has been used in several fields of studies and encompasses the artistic rendering of the inner world of people. John Hospers discussed in his paper on “the concept of artistic expression” from 1954 how artistic expression has different

functions and qualities. It can be highly subjective since it is a manifestation of abstract ideas, feelings, and experiences and is open to interpretation. But it can also be a tool for communication and connection. It is challenging to define artistic expression since it is a broad term that can be applied to many types of art and forms of expression (Hospers, 1954). Therefore, I will define artistic expression as the process and result of creating by exploring and reflecting one's ideas, emotions, and environment through a medium that others can experience. This could entail dancing, playing an instrument, painting, writing, sewing, or sculpting. The CNB is rich in forms of artistic expression ranging from floats, costumes, dances, music, and other creative explorations, for example, painting the asphalt with colorful chalks on the day of the *Arcoíris en el Asfalto* (rainbow on the asphalt) that was introduced in 1996 (Fajardo & Fajardo, n.d.). The artistic expression that can be found within the carnival is, however, not coincidental; it is intertwined with the history of the carnival and is tied to folklore, local practices, and traditions (Tobar, 2014). This can for example, be seen by the use of the *Sol de los Pastos* (Sun of the Pastos). The *sol de los Pastos* is a mystical and ancestral symbol of the Pastos, the area's Indigenous people (Landázuri C. & Vásquez J., 2007). The sun, with its signature eight sunrays, is a symbol that can be integrated into costumes, murals, floats, and other art designs throughout the carnival. This shows that artistic expression and cultural heritage go hand in hand. The use of the *sol de los Pastos* in the CNB is an artistic choice and a form of expression because the artist chose to use it in their work. Nevertheless, it is also a symbol with deep cultural significance and is part of the local cultural heritage.

The understanding of heritage used to be limited to physical objects such as buildings and monuments, but in 2003, UNESCO broadened its definition of cultural heritage by including intangible cultural heritage (Lopez-Guzman & Santa-Cruz, 2016). Intangible heritage describes

practices, traditions, folklore and art that have been identified as culturally meaningful. The Blacks and Whites Carnival was declared an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2009. This recognition of intangible cultural heritage also means a paradigm shift where cultural heritage can no longer be reduced to dead, static relics of the past, but instead has to be seen as an active process of keeping our cultural heritage alive. To receive the declaration as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO can offer protection and prestige, but more exposure can also lead to the risk of losing authenticity (Lopez-Guzman & Santa-Cruz, 2016). Artistic expression can act as a mitigator for this risk, because of its inherent role in cultural preservation. Cultural values, symbols and folklore are preserved and communicated through art (Mangoensong & Yanuartuti, 2020). Artistic expression allows culture to become more accessible and tangible. Artists are important because, through their art, they decide what parts of their identity and heritage should be seen and how. They are representing themselves and others. They can preserve culture, but also show or even provoke changes in the local culture.

The CNB is being monitored and protected through the Special Safeguarding Plan (PES)² of the Blacks and Whites Carnival of Pasto aimed at preserving the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Special Safeguarding Plan is a social and administrative agreement, that details actions and guidelines, that can be utilized by local actors and management. The PES aims to protect the CNB from threats and risks that could distort the characteristics of the carnival. The fear is that the essence of the celebrations could be lost if the CNB transforms into a fair or spectacle devoid of the intangible cultural heritage that made the carnival significant in the first place (Ministerio de Cultura, n.d.). To gain a better understanding of the legacy and practices within the CNB it is essential to know about the roots and origins of its celebration and the historical development of the CNB throughout the decades.

² original name Plan Especial de Salvaguardia del Carnaval de Negros y Blancos, short PES

The Carnival: Its Traditions and History

The oldest tradition within the carnival can be found during the *día de los negros*, where people put black cosmetics on each other's faces. Throughout the carnival and especially on the *día de los blancos* people play by covering each other in foam and white chalk. This element of play and covering each other in black or white colored paint has its origins in the liberation fight of black slaves (Hidalgo 2021). During colonial rule, the trans-Atlantic slave trade took place between 1501 and 1867, during which nearly 13 million African people were abducted and trafficked to the Americas over the Atlantic Sea. Over 2 million African people lost their lives during the passage itself, while the remaining 10 million were forced into slavery (Equal Justice Initiative, 2023). In 1760, there was an uprising of enslaved black people in Remedios, a town in Antioquia, demanding a free day, an example that was quickly followed in the department of Nariño. Hidalgo (2021) described in their account of events how enslaved black people came together and demanded a labor-free day once a year; a request that was denied by the slave owners was brought forward to the Spanish crown. This led to uprisings that ended when the Spanish crown ultimately gave in and granted a free day. The enslaved black people went to the streets to celebrate, and they smeared black chalk on bystanders to mark them as their equals while shouting “ long live the Blacks”. This act of defiance was kept, and it became an annual tradition to paint people's faces black on the *día de los negros*. Hidalgo (2021) stresses that this event was not only significant for gaining a labor-free day, but it also allowed enslaved black people to organize themselves and form a group identity, which was an essential step for their liberation.

This can not be compared to the practice of “blackface” in Europe or the US, where historically white people painted their faces black to ridicule and mock Black people (Cole & Davis, 2013). The debates surrounding blackface and its legacies can not be applied to this context and tradition, since they have drastically different origins. In this case, painting the face black was an act of resistance and to mark each other as equals (Hidalgo, 2021). This tradition has persevered throughout the centuries and has been incorporated into the carnival, and is an essential part of the festivities. Hidalgo (2021) argues that the tradition persevered under Spanish rule because it also served as a reminder of the status quo and reinforced social norms by allowing one day a year where the rules could be broken and everyone could be equal. The day of the Whites can be traced back to an early morning on January 6, 1912, when López Zarama drunkenly covered his face with the beauty powder of a waitress and declared, “Long live the little Blacks and long live the little Whites”. This story marked the beginning of a new tradition of a day for Blacks and a day for Whites. Hidalgo stresses that this innocent and humorous event ultimately led to the appropriation and re-interpretation of a symbolic gesture that had originally been a political and rebellious act (Hidalgo 2021).

The carnival in its now-known form began in 1927 through a student movement that was inspired by the carnival in Cali. It introduced Spanish carnival traditions such as the use of theatrics, floats, and a carnival queen, while also celebrating the Blacks and Whites Day, which existed prior. It is where the mosaic of African, Indigenous, and Spanish influences cumulated. (Muñoz, 1991). The Andean identity is closely interlinked with agriculture and nature and plays an important role when it comes to the tradition and folklore of the CNB. Pastos had a rich agricultural base with the plantation of corn, and potatoes and artisan practices such as making ceramics (Landázuri C. y Vásquez J., 2007). The role of nature and ancestral traditions becomes

apparent in the celebration during the *canto a la tierra* on the third of January but is present throughout the CNB. In the history of the CNB there have been numerous additions and modifications to the carnival, but I will only highlight a few. Between 1920 and 1937 the CNB included the celebrations of the arrival of the Castaneda Family on the 4th of January, works of artisans, allegorical cars, called *Carrozas* (floats), the *día de blancos* (Whites day) on the 6th of January and the Pericles Carnival character that is welcoming the carnival visitors.

Throughout the next decades, there would be additions such as new categories like *murgas* (groups of musicians) or choreographed collectives, and new trends emerged such as mechanical movements, creation-fantasy, traditionalism and regional folklore. New events arose such as the *día de los años vijos* (the day of the New Year's puppets) known for its satirical take on current events and politics. While other events such as the water games on Fools Day were replaced by the *arcoíris en el asfalto*. In 2004 the Corpocarnaval was created which works as the leading institution for the CNB, new regulations for contests and accreditation were introduced and the Special Safeguard Plan to protect the CNB was constructed under a participative approach. In 2009, UNESCO recognized the CNB as a cultural heritage of humanity. During 2016 and 2020 new technological advancements allowed the Carroza to come alive. The figures on the floats can now move, blink, and interact with the audience. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to the CNB of 2021 being broadcast and held virtually. The following year, the CNB was held static, without moving parades, and had other safety measures included. In 2024 the CNB has returned to its original form (Centro Cultural Pandiaco, 2024).

Extensive research is available on the CNB. The research can be classified into four main categories: historical accounts of the carnival, artistic descriptions and interpretations of the carnival, socio-cultural analysis, and finally, data-driven quantitative research.

Methodology

Research Question

“How does artistic expression serve as a mechanism for communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage, as demonstrated by the Blacks and Whites Carnival in Colombia?”

Research Design

It is important to hear the perspectives of the artists participating in the carnival to gain a better understanding of the role of artistic expression in terms of connecting with one's culture and heritage. This research is qualitative, ethnographic, and cross-cultural. I combined different research methods: semi-structured interviews, fieldnotes, participant observations, a field diary, and visual documentation through sketches and photographs. The data was collected through *fieldwork* in Pasto, Colombia, during the 27th of December 2023, and the 7th of January 2024. I chose ethnographic and qualitative research methods because I am interested in a local community and their experiences. Ethnographic fieldwork aims to explore what is of significance to a community through scientific methods. Simpson & Coleman 2017 defined it as “the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution” (Simpson & Coleman 2017, found in Howell, 2018,). Ethnographic research entails mixed research methods and is often conducted over long periods of time (Howell, 2018).

I am interested in subjective and abstract experiences, which is why I chose qualitative methods for my research. The carnival is full of contradictions and artists are right at the center of these intersections. Their art shows what parts of their identities and heritage they value,

reproduce, or aim to change They have to navigate the complexity of the carnival such as racial (in-)equality, colonial and Indigenous heritage, religious plurality, traditions, modernity and representation. They can preserve culture, but also show or even provoke changes in the local culture.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork entails living and immersing yourself in the area and community you are working with, typically over longer periods, to better understand the local culture. The positionality of the researcher, including their views, lived experiences, and own values affect how they interpret their findings in the field. (Howell, 2018) Especially when conducting cross-cultural research, it is therefore important to reflect on your positionality. I conducted fieldwork in Pasto leading up to and during the carnival. I stayed with a friend and his family, who are from Pasto for ten days. During that time, they introduced me to the local cuisine, included me in all of their family activities, showed me the city, organized that I could participate in two of the parades of the carnival, answered all my questions, and were essential in my participant recruitment. They supported me throughout the process, and this research would not have been possible without their hospitality, kindness, and help. Throughout the fieldwork, I used several research methods. These were semi-structured interviews, field notes, participant observations, a field diary, and visual documentation through sketches and photographs. This process meant writing down field notes, conducting participant observations, and writing in my field diary. I tried taking notes throughout the day with a notepad and my phone, but this was often difficult. I also prioritised experiencing and enjoying the carnival and building rapport with the people around me, instead of sitting on the sidelines. I mostly focused on documenting the carnival through pictures, videos, sketches, and hastily written observations. I would then sit

down at night and in the morning to write down my observations, field notes, and reflections in my field diary. I also count the messages that I send to my friends and family as part of my field diary, because they include many of my feelings and impressions of the time.

Positionality and Ethical Considerations

It is important to address my positionality regarding this research. I am a white female European researcher from Germany conducting ethnographic research for the first time. This research is, therefore, cross-cultural and comes with certain challenges and potential pitfalls.

The carnival's traditions, customs, and personal experiences were formed and experienced in the Colombian context. Sensitive topics such as colonialism, racism, violence, displacement, narcotraffic, armed conflicts, and politics are generally present topics in Colombia. Depicting and analyzing these topics is not my research aim, but for understanding the meaning and significance of the carnival for the local community it is important to be aware and sensitive of how these experiences have shaped the culture and personal experiences. I want to be very clear: while I am careful and aware of the responsibility of conducting cross-cultural research, I am likely to have blind spots, and unconscious biases and my lack of experience in ethnographic research can also lead to inaccurate depictions. I have tried to mitigate this risk by reviewing the literature, working exploratively, consulting my supervisor, discussing my research steps with friends from Pasto, and centering my research around what participants themselves find important.

This research received the ethical approval of the University of Groningen. I took ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality under account. Participants were informed about the research verbally and in writing through an information and a consent sheet. Both documents were translated into Spanish and proofread by

a native speaker. The documents detailed the research aim, research methods, clarification of what participants consent to, information on how their data is collected, stored, and protected, details on the research scope, details on the dissemination of results, and contact information to contact me as the researcher. Participants were invited to modify the consent sheets to their wishes and were given options for their consent for example, if they would like to consent to being directly quoted, being audio recorded for transcription, and to what degree they would like to stay anonymous. I went with each participant over the consent form, explained their options, and clarified that they, at any point in time, can withdraw their consent and be removed from the research. Throughout this process, I had a native speaker present to help in case of any misunderstandings, who, when participants consented, stayed during the interview process to help with potential language barriers. The interviews were recorded for transcription purposes and no sensitive data was recorded or stored that was not relevant to the research. Transcriptions were anonymized and participants' private information (contact details, names etc) were stored separately from the gathered research data. Participants were updated on the research findings. Extra care went into checking in and confirming quotes and given data, by participants that preferred to not stay anonymous. Their feedback and corrections were incorporated in the findings and they were reminded that they can withdraw their consent at any time. The data was handled according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules of the University of Groningen. Any confidential data that was obtained will be disposed of until the 31th of July 2024 and is until then stored on an encrypted drive on ODF.io.

Participant Recruitment

I recruited my participants with the help of a gatekeeper, who has been actively involved in the carnival within one of the dance collectives for many years. They introduced me to or even

arranged interviews with participants who volunteered. My participant selection was anyone over the age of 18, who is actively involved in the carnival, is rooted within the region, and is using artistic expression such as dancing, playing an instrument, designing, etc.



Figure 1. Interview locations and carnival preparations, pictures taken by S.L. Schildberger, in Pasto 2024

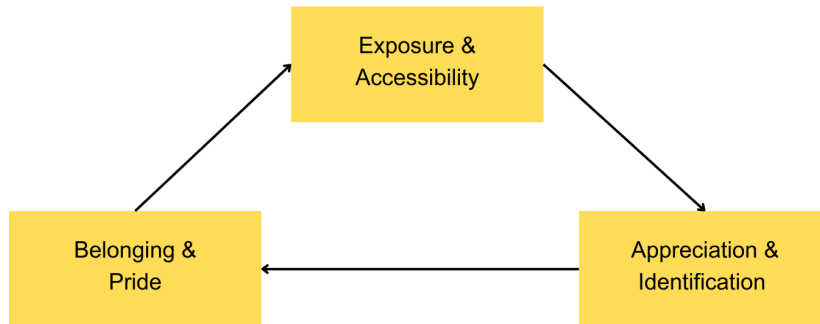
The interviews were conducted in “the field” to fit the schedules of participants who were in the middle of their carnival preparations. To accommodate participants, I visited them at home or at their workplace. This also meant that improvisation and creativity were sometimes required to improve the interview conditions. For example, one of the interviews was conducted in a car, since the participant was working in a parking lot in a big tent, where heavy, loud machinery was used. Other interviews were conducted outdoors under a rooftop in the middle of a rainstorm since this was the most quiet and private location available (see Figure 1.) This also allowed me to see where and how participants prepared for the carnival. I conducted seven semi-structured interviews, ranging from half an hour to an hour, with an interview guide specializing in the role of the participant within the carnival.

I interviewed 7 participants, in semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. The participants had different roles and backgrounds in the carnival. I interviewed Guisela Checa the director of the Carnaval Negros y Blancos corporation (director Corpocarnaval), Juan, a designer, his father Alvaro a seamster, Pablo a dancer, Gabriela a musician, Albert a float builder and Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo the director of the Physical Education Programme at the University CESMAG and the director of the choreographed collective Danzantes del Cerrillo (academic and director of Danzantes del Cerrillo). The participants are named and referred to in the way that they indicated in the informed consent form. I used audio recordings for the interviews for transcription purposes. The data collected is only stored until the end of the study and transcriptions were anonymized

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through a thematic analysis. I mostly used an inductive approach and searched for patterns and themes in my field notes, observations, interviews, field diary, and documentation through pictures and sketches. The process was exploratory and I first identified emerging themes, which I contrasted with my research question to narrow down which of them were relevant and significant to answer the question I was investigating. One of the themes was growing up with and within the carnival, which was significant because it hinted at the mechanisms at play that allow the cultural heritage of the carnival to be preserved and passed on to the next generation. I then reviewed the data to narrow down the role of artistic expression in this process and developed a conceptual framework (Figure 2). This entailed Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification; and Belonging & Pride as key mechanism of artistic expression. Lastly, I reviewed the data for the third and last time, and worked deductively using codes identified within my conceptual framework. This allowed to find further

subcategories and data relating to each of these mechanisms. I did not transcribe, all of my interviews, but instead wrote down extensive notes and important quotes of participants and relistened to audio recordings if necessary.



Mechanisms of Artistic Expression, in the Context of the Blacks and Whites Carnival

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework, Mechanisms of Artistic Expression, in the Context of the Blacks and Whites Carnival

Findings

I set out to answer the question, *“How does artistic expression serve as a mechanism for communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage, as demonstrated by the Blacks and Whites Carnival in Colombia?”* I have identified three mechanisms of artistic expression that enable the local community to connect with their cultural identity and heritage. These are Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification; and Belonging & Pride. I will first introduce my findings on how artistic expression enables people through **Exposure & Accessibility** to connect with their cultural identity and heritage by examining how, growing up with and in the carnival, the notion that anyone can be an artist and the skills necessary for artistic expression affect the connection that people form with their cultural identity and heritage. Afterward, I will present my findings on how **Appreciation & Identification** can foster a deeper connection with one's cultural identity and heritage as a mechanism of artistic expression. I will

therefore focus on the relationship between appreciation of and identification with the region & mother nature; everyday life and activities; and folklore and ancestral traditions. Finally, I will focus on how artistic expression within the context of the CNB creates feelings of **Belonging & Pride**, while also working as a medium to express these emotions.

Exposure & Accessibility

I had several findings, but one that stood out to me was that artistic expression is learned and encouraged throughout childhood. People grow up with but also in the carnival, it is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. Artistic skills are seen as accessible and open to the public and are not gate-kept only to the artists that had professional training. However, there is also an intricate balance between, on the one hand safeguarding the carnival as an intangible heritage and, on the other, allowing the people to partake in and shape the carnival. The CNB itself can not be seen as an isolated event, there are celebrations throughout the region in Andean towns located in the south of Nariño.³ The carnival celebrations are not limited to the carnival season itself, since there are performances throughout the year in weddings, clubs, birthday parties, and other events⁴. Growing up with the carnival is the norm, no matter which generation I asked, there would be stories about what the floats looked like 20 years ago or how they had practiced the flute or the drums in school to participate in the Carnavalito. This applied not only to the artists who were involved in the carnival but also to the people who crossed my path during the fieldwork, who had grown up in the region⁵. The CNB was also present in the

³ Interview Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo: “It is a very popular festival, that is to say that it is not only done in one city, it is done in all the Andean towns in the south of Nariño” (minute 45.40), original quote Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

⁴ Interview

⁵ Fieldnotes, participant observations

city design, there is a carnival square, local restaurants have decorations and pictures of the carnival on their walls, and there is a museum dedicated to the CNB (see Appendix, Figure 3.).

In the interviews that I conducted, 6 out of the 7 participants shared that their interest in the carnival began in either their childhood or teenage years and that they had been surrounded by art throughout their upbringing. Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo, academic and director of Danzantes del Cerrillo, explained that:

Well, I have an artistic background and tradition from my family from when I was a kid, since I was a child I watched my parents practice dance. My dad was a musician and then we were always with them, participating in different events and different activities.”

(Interview, minute 39.00⁶)

Artistic expression is therefore often how young children first come in contact with their culture and heritage. They visit the carnival or see their parents help with the carnival preparation, and in the following year want to participate themselves, which is how they learn how to dance the traditional dances, sew, or play a traditional musical instrument: The skills that they acquire are then the tool that bring them closer to the ancestral traditions and folklore of the region, but these skills themselves are cultural as well. For example, learning how to dance *Sonsoreño*, which is a type of *Bambuco*, a popular and traditional Andean type of dance.

In addition to mere exposure, artistic expression also becomes important in terms of inclusivity and accessibility. There is this common understanding that anyone can become an artist in the carnival, regardless of whether they have had previous experience, their social class, age, race, or even nationality. This for example, was clear in the words of Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo who said “I think this is the beauty of the carnival, you give this opportunity to people who do not necessarily have artistic training, but it allows them to learn and develop some skills”

⁶ Original quote, Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

(Interview, minute 19.58)⁷. Alternatively, Albert, who answered the question if anyone could become part of constructing the floats, with “Of course, that's the beauty of our carnival, we open the doors to everyone, foreigners can be part of the work team” (Interview, minute 37.16)⁸. There are social outreach programs by the CESMAG university and volunteers teach young children and teenagers how to dance or play an instrument. Some of the dancers and musicians improve their skills so far, that they move on to pursue professional training and careers in their newfound crafts.⁹

It is important to point out that while the carnival is generally accessible and open to anyone, the CNB is also regulated and includes competitions. There are different categories for floats, choreographed collectives, and murgas that you can apply for as an individual or as a team or collective. Guisela Checa, director of Corpocarnaval elaborates “For all the projects presented by the organizations participating in the carnival, usually the qualifying organizers present a small research project.”(interview, minute 24.00)¹⁰. The aim is to explain how and why the artistic creation is culturally relevant and should be performed or displayed in the parades of the CNB. These regulations do not apply to all of the events, for example during the años viejos parade, there is no carnival accreditation needed and people simply sign up. In the *años viejos* parades you can see self-made costumes, small-scale floats and you get handed flyers with written eulogies and testaments that comment on current events and politics through satire¹¹. Since anyone can participate in the años viejos parade it is interesting to see how people acquire the skills to artistically express themselves. Guisela Checa, director of Corpocarnaval explained:

⁷ Original quote; Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

⁸ Original quote; see Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

⁹ Source Interviews

¹⁰ Original quote; see Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

¹¹ Source Interview; Fieldnotes

The carnival is learned in the street, it is learned in the workshops of the people in the neighborhoods, in the workshops of the carnival masters at their homes.” (interview, minute 40.35¹²)

The exposure and accessibility that are necessary to acquire the skills for artistic expression, were significant to me. During this research, I have reflected on the disconnect I sometimes feel with my culture, which I documented in my field diary:

I never learned any of the traditional German dances, my family did not know them and the classes were too expensive. I also as a teenager believed they were only for old people but I got asked today if I could show any of them and I couldn't. I felt really embarrassed and out of touch with my own culture.” (entry field diary, 31.01.2023)

I like to dance so I am sure that if I had been exposed to or would have had access to dance lessons, this would have been a part of my culture that I would like to share with others. Artistic expression requires skills and by learning and practicing them, these skills become tools to access and explore your own cultural identity and cultural heritage. This can be seen in the CNB because next to the artistic expression that is being displayed, the traditional skills necessary to build floats, dance, sew, design or play an instrument are being acquired as means to create and perform.

To summarize, exposure and accessibility as mechanisms of artistic expression allow communities to connect to their cultural identity and heritage. The CNB achieves this connection by nurturing it from an early age, encouraging the development of artistic skills and the understanding that anyone can be an artist. This allows members of the community to access and connect with their cultural identity and heritage autonomously through art.

¹² Original quote see Appendix Translations, Section 1.1

Appreciation & Identification

An aspect I have not touched upon yet is that besides being exposed to and having access to artistic expression as a tool to connect with one's cultural identity and heritage, it also needs the desire to do so. The motivation to participate in the carnival often stems from seeing the carnival and being moved and inspired by the artistic expression that is being displayed¹³. Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo, academic and director of Danzantes del Cerrillo identified this as a mechanism on how the carnival is passed down through the generations, he said: “The children who are watching this, it gives them pleasure and joy to watch and next year will also want to participate, so this is a way of preserving our culture and identity” (Interview, minute 06.40)¹⁴ The CNB is highlighting and appreciating the local culture and its traditions, but it also represents people's lives, local practices and stories that the viewers can resonate with.

I found that appreciation and identification are created within the carnival in three ways. There is appreciation and identification with the region and the gifts of mother nature, with everyday life and activities, and with folklore and ancestral traditions. This is how artistic expression serves as a mechanism to connect with one's cultural identity and cultural heritage in CNB

Appreciation & Identification for and with the Region and Mother Nature

There is the sentiment, that the department of Nariño tends to be forgotten by the state.¹⁵ The CNB is therefore also a way of showcasing what the region has to offer, through celebrating and most importantly, appreciating the beauty of the region and local culture. The region and mother nature are prominently featured in the CNB, especially during the day of the *canto a la*

¹³ Interviews; Fieldnotes

¹⁴ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.1

¹⁵ Fieldnotes, Interview

tierra. I will later come back to (Findings, section Belonging & Pride) the relationship that people have with their region and nature and why the day of the *canto a la tierra* is dedicated to celebrating and expressing gratitude towards nature. Many artistic displays show the region's characteristics, such as native animals, typical crops and plants, and the natural landmarks (see Appendix, Figure 4) ¹⁶.

The animals that are being portrayed are not only common in the region, they also carry spiritual or cultural meaning. The condor and jaguar are often featured in folklore and local legends and roasted guinea pigs are part of the local cuisine (see Appendix, Figure 5)¹⁷ The floats often feature corn and other staples of Andean agriculture, that people are familiar with and which they associate with themselves or with their family in the countryside. The floats also feature natural landmarks that are important or even sacred to the local community, such as the region's volcanoes or the Cocha Lagoon ¹⁸.

Appreciation & Identification for and with Everyday Life and Activities

There is also an appreciation for the everyday life and activities of the people from Pasto and the region, by dedicating and including garments, accessories, common patterns, and typical sports or games in the carnival. This could, for example be seen in the performance of the Danzantes de Cerrillo, who had the theme of traditional games for this year. The costume itself was dedicated to the Andean people and represented with the playfully decorated hat of the children, in the middle with a white shirt of the workers, and at the bottom with the skirts of the women of the region (see Appendix, Figure 6)¹⁹. One of the traditional games that were included in the performance was *Chaza* (see Appendix, Figure 7). This is a beloved and Indigenous game

¹⁶ Source: fieldnotes, documentation (reviewing and analyzing picture taken during the carnival)

¹⁷ Source: fieldnotes, interviews

¹⁸ Source: fieldnotes, documentation (reviewing and analyzing picture taken during the carnival)

¹⁹ Interview

that is still played to this day. There are songs dedicated to the game (see Appendix, Figure 8) and it is a popular free-time activity. Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo states “The common people, the neighbors, the neighborhoods, during the weekends, when they want to rest from their work, they go to the courts to play *Chaza*” (interview, minute 22.18)²⁰. Gabriela, one of the musicians that I interviewed, pointed out that she liked this year's theme because it was focused on something that was close to her everyday life:

I like it very much because it is focused mostly on the Nariño region, many times the theme of the carnival focuses on our past, our Andean races or other cultures, while this year, well, Danzantes del Cerrillo focused on the tradition of Nariño, Nariño games (interview, minutes)²¹

Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo, academic and director of the Danzantes del Cerrillo explained that creating something that people can identify with and feel represented by was the aim of their investigation and performance stating “ Therefore we approached them and wanted to represent them in the carnival with this game” (interview, minutes 22.40- 22:46)

Appreciation & Identification of and with Folklore and Ancestral Traditions

When I asked what I should know about the CNB Luis Antonio Eraso Caicedo told me “more than a carnival, it is an Andean and Ancestral celebration” (Interview, minutes 44.42)²². The CNB is filled with symbols, folklore, and ancestral history that is derived from Indigenous peoples such as the Ingas, Pasto and Quillancingas²³. It would not fit the scope of this research to detail all the different symbols, stories and practise that are in some shape or form present in this

²⁰ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.3

²¹ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.3

²² Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.4

²³ Fieldnotes, interviews

carnival. The CNB is a mosaic of all the influences that have shaped the Andean identity and cultural heritage of the region.

Each year, there are different themes for the performances and displays, but there are re-occurring symbols, imagery and stories that form the heart or essence of the carnival such as to name a few the sun of the Pastos, the symbols of the Churo Cósmico, jaguars either in their full form or as headgear, or the imagery of mother nature (see Appendix, Figure 9)²⁴. Albert, the float builder explained that this is a conscious choice:

Sometimes they ask us why do you always do the same jaguar, the same Indians, it's our identity, and we don't depart from that line (...) our identity is what we demonstrate. (Interview, minutes 13.00)²⁵

But folklore, symbols and ancestral traditions are not only displayed, they are being brought to life. The figures on top of the floats are colorful, grand, and sometimes even move. There are people on top of the structures celebrating, while the audience is interacting with the floats and the performers involved.²⁶ The costumes are not only beautiful static creations that can be admired, they come alive through the movements that the dancers lend them. The rhythms that have been passed down through generations are being performed by musicians and dancers. Their interpretation and expressions make it easier to identify and connect with cultural heritage because they come alive and are charged with the energy that the artists give them²⁷ The

²⁴ Fieldnotes, documentation (reviewing and analyzing picture taken during the carnival)

²⁵ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.4

²⁶ Fieldnotes, participant observation

²⁷ Interview designer Albert and Alvaro, minute 19.50, original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.2.4
Interview question: Are the costumes representative of the local culture?

Juan: "Yes, because" Designer

Alvaro: "identification"

Juan: "Yes it identifies and also, every time one of these costumes appears on stage, comes out in a scene, the costume charges, it charges its own magic and radiates from the sun. In the parades and the costumes of the magic of the dancers, you see that the garments jump out and radiate."

Alvaro: "It's like an essence"

performers therefore become a visual embodiment of the cultural identity and heritage of the region.

In conclusion in the CNB artistic expression is utilized to express and create an appreciation for the region and mother nature; everyday life and activities; and folklore and ancestral traditions. Artistic expression brings life to the cultural heritage and creates identification with the CNB. This is achieved through representation and the embodiment of the cultural identity and heritage in the performances of the artists. This shows how appreciation and identification towards and with one's cultural identity and cultural heritage can be created, encouraged and maintained in the context of the CNB through the mechanisms of artistic expression.

Belonging & Pride

Artistic Expression Enables Families and the Community to Come Together

Artistic expression is a mechanism for connecting to and with your cultural identity and heritage, by fostering community and a sense of belonging. There are families that have been involved in the carnival throughout the generations, that collaborate and work together. The children help with the carnival preparation and later become active actors themselves in the CNB. This was something that was also pointed out by Guisela Checa, director Corpocarnaval who said:

The most beautiful thing is the world of the family, the family unit, this carnival lives because the family is united in the carnival, because these are nuclear families that are

created by the carnival, this carnival does not die because they will be passed from parents to children, from grandparents to grandchildren. (Interview, minute 30.30)²⁸

But besides strengthening the bonds within families and passing on local traditions and knowledge through art, artistic expression as a mechanism also has positive effects on the community itself. The artists spent months practicing together, designing, and collaborating on their vision for the carnival. This means that you have new friendships and support networks forming that people can rely on, which strengthens a sense of belonging and community, which Guisela Checa summarized:

Friendships are created for example in the choreographic collectives which do marvelous social work in the neighborhoods and in the population where they become more family than family. (Interview, minute 31.05)²⁹

But these networks and friendships that form are not only allowing people to connect with each other and show care, they also share a common goal. You have community members with different skill sets, professions, and experiences who are exchanging their ideas and views on what they consider important when it comes to their own cultural identity and cultural heritage³⁰. You can have a dance choreographer discussing their vision for the performance with a costume designer, to find common ground on how the garments can be representative but also durable enough to be danced in for hours. You can have young people play *Chaza* for the first time, so that they better understand why this sport was chosen within the theme of traditional games³¹. This means that artistic expression is not only a tool that artist use individually to feel closer to their own roots. In the CNB artistic expression is a mechanism that allows people to come

²⁸ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.3.1

²⁹ Original quote see Appendix Translations, Section 1.3.1

³⁰ Interviews, field notes, field diary

³¹ Interviews

together collectively to discuss, explore and connect with what they consider as culturally important aspects of their identity and heritage.

Artistic Expression is Used as a Tool to Express Gratitude and Pride

Throughout the carnival, there was a sense of love and pride for the carnival itself, the community, the traditions, and the region. All of the participants answered that they are proud to be *Pastuso* or *Andino* if they were from neighboring regions. Their cultural identity and cultural heritage were seen as special, unique, and as a gift. For example, the designer Juan declared “I am very, very proud to be from here, we pastusos say that we have an essence that is not found anywhere else in the world. Because the magic and mystique of life here is very different” (Interview, minute 18.40)³². This gratitude and pride for their region was not only limited to people or cultural practices but also nature. The region has ideal conditions for agriculture all year round since there are no seasons and the earth itself is rich in nutrients. Especially the *canto a la tierra*, on the 3rd of January is dedicated to expressing gratitude and appreciation for the land that people inhabit.³³ I found that artistic expression is not only a mechanism that allows for experiencing belonging and pride towards and with ones cultural identity and cultural heritage, there is also an active component. Artistic expression can also be used to express belonging and pride. The costumes, traditional dances and music and well-known imagery used in the floats do not accidentally evoke a sense of belonging or pride, they instead are well-thought-out mediums to express collective stories, experiences and references that are culturally relevant.³⁴ Pride in the culture, region, and cultural identity can be expressed through art itself and the work put into their creation. When I asked Albert, the floatbuilder if t he was proud to be Andean, his reply

³² Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.3.2

³³ Fieldnotes, Interviews, Field diary

³⁴ Interviews, Fieldnotes, Field diary

showed this existing connection between expressing pride and gratitude through artistic expression:

Yes of course, I thank God for sending me to this little point of planet earth and I carry it in my blood and everywhere I go I will never, never forget my land, which is this beautiful region, that's why I'm doing this homage on this float. (Interview, minute 20.45)³⁵

Artistic expression can enable people to express their gratitude and pride towards their culture and region by allowing them to dedicate their time, energy, and skills for creating something that is seen as joyful, magical, and inspiring.³⁶This is mostly done through volunteer work, which takes up months of preparation, weekly practices, and hour-long performances in the carnival itself³⁷. But even with artists and artisans whose livelihoods and careers are more intertwined with the carnival, the motivation lies within their passion for the carnival itself. Their cultural identity entails seeing themselves as part of or even having been made for, the carnival. This was something that was expressed by Albert when talking about his motivation to be an artist in the carnival:

It is my life, the carnival is my life and I am giving it my all for everything because I love the carnival, it is not for economic reasons or recognition, it is not for joy, it is not this. I was born for this, I was made for the carnival of the Blacks and Whites of Pasto, that's why I'm here. (Interview, minute 09.09)³⁸

It shows how much passion, belonging, and pride can be experienced within the carnival, which then can be returned, by dedicating and expressing these emotions in artistic ways that are

³⁵ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Section 1.3.2

³⁶ Fieldnotes, Interviews, Field diary

³⁷ Fieldnotes, Interviews

³⁸ Original quote, see Appendix Translations, Sections 1.3.2

connected to the cultural identity and heritage of the community. Artistic expression therefore enables families and the community to come together, form close networks and support systems, and evaluate which aspects of their cultural identity and heritage are important to them. Furthermore, artistic displays and performances become a mechanism for expressing pride and gratitude for the cultural identity and heritage.

Discussion

My findings were that there are three mechanisms of artistic expression Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification; and Belonging & Pride within the CNB that allow communities to connect with their cultural identity and heritage. To discuss these findings, I would like to come back to the definition of artistic expression, that I established earlier in the literature review. I defined artistic expression as the process and results of creating by exploring and reflecting one's ideas, emotions, and environments through a medium that others can experience.

Artistic expression therefore consists of two parts the process of creating and the result of creating. In the CNB it is easy to see and experience the results of artistic expression because the art is being displayed and performed in the parades and the streets. The art itself has been curated to create an appreciation for the region, mother nature, the everyday life, everyday activities, folklore and ancestral traditions. The viewer is therefore exposed to an artistic representation and interpretation of the cultural identity and heritage of the community, that is recognizable and representative of them. They can experience pride and belonging, since this is a collective experience that the viewers and artists are part of.

The other side of artistic expression is the process of creating, by exploring and reflecting one's ideas, emotions, and environment through a medium that others can experience. The art and performances within the CNB, do not appear out of thin air. They are the result of months of preparation, practicing, and collaboration. This strengthens the community and creates support networks, to which new artists are exposed to and have access to developing new skills. These skills are inherently cultural, but they also enable self-efficacy in connecting with the own cultural identity and heritage. Importantly the process of creating by exploring and reflecting on one's ideas, emotions, and environment is done collectively. The actors within the CNB collaborate and investigate which aspects of their culture they find important and meaningful to bring to life.

At its core, the CNB has therefore a collectivist and participatory approach towards how the community can connect with the cultural identity and heritage of the region.

Peña, Caicedo & Rosero (2022) argue that the cultural participation of citizens in the CNB has to be understood and seen as the exercise of their cultural rights. This aligns with the general sentiment that I have found that anyone can develop their skills, and become an artist in the carnival. The carnival is learned in the streets, and people have been exposed and encouraged to become active since their early childhood. There are however also limitations on the accessibility of the carnival. There are rules and regulations in place, such as the accreditation and selection procedures, which narrows down what is being performed and presented in CNB.

This can be related to the status of the Blacks and Whites Carnival as an intangible cultural heritage (ICT) of humanity (Lopez-Guzman & Santa-Cruz, 2016). The Special Safeguarding Plan to preserve ICT, was developed through a participatory approach that included local actors and stakeholders. The social and administrative agreement offers actions and guidelines to

prevent the CNB from transforming into a fair or shallow spectacle (Ministerio de Cultura, n.d.). The investigations and reasoning for how projects are culturally significant are measurements to protect the carnival. There is therefore an intricate balance between allowing people to exercise their cultural rights and safeguarding the CNB.

The mechanism of artistic expression that I have identified through the example of the CNB could, within further research, be compared and contrasted with the PES of the carnival. The CNB went through distinct phases, where events and elements were added, changed or discarded. This needs further investigation, but I believe that a possible explanation for the longevity of the CNB can be found by examining how artistic expression is being passed down as a practice.

Through the exposure and accessibility of the CNB young children are early on encouraged to develop artistic skills that support them to actively engage with their own cultural identity and heritage. They annually, see representations and interpretations of the cultural identity and heritage of the region portrayed and displayed in the CNB. The art within the carnival has been curated to inspire an appreciation and Identification with the region, mother nature, everyday life, everyday activities, folklore, and ancestral traditions. The CNB is associated with family, joy, and a time when the city comes together. There is a strong sense of belonging that also extends to visitors, where everyone is seen as equal, which is especially present when people are playing in the streets. All of this stimulates a pride in the local cultural identity and heritage and the wish to express gratitude and be part of the CNB. This then leads to a new generation of artists that want to take over and keep the practice of engaging with cultural identity and heritage through artistic expression alive. There can also be a point made that artistic expression is the cultural identity and heritage that is being passed down.

I therefore suspect that Exposure, Accessibility, Appreciation, Identification, Belonging, and Pride as mechanisms of artistic expression create a cycle where artistic expression becomes a practice that inspires people to express themselves and become actors in the CNB, which in return inspires others to follow in their footsteps. This is something that can be explored with further research, to see if and in which way cultural preservation can be facilitated through artistic expression and its mechanisms of Exposure, Accessibility, Appreciation, Identification, Belonging, and Pride. This could include case studies regarding artistic expression within other communities, to compare if there are similar mechanisms present.

Limitations

One limitation is my inexperience as an ethnographic researcher, who conducted fieldwork for the first time. My experience in the South American context is limited to an exchange semester at the Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia, and ten days of conducting fieldwork in Pasto, Nariño, Colombia. The limited word count restricted the literature that I was able to present and analyze within my literature review and is therefore another limitation to my research. There is substantial research available on the carnival, by researchers from the region with more academic experience who spend more time and resources on investigating the carnival. This research should therefore be seen as a bridge between different cultures, that gives an introduction and not a full and fairly nuanced picture. There is limited research available on the carnival in English, which means this research could potentially make the topic more accessible for non-Spanish speakers. Another limitation is that nuanced points and cultural references could have gotten lost in translation since this research was primarily conducted in Spanish, which is not my native language. Furthermore, the participant recruitment was done

through the help of a gatekeeper, the participants, might already share certain similarities or characteristics that I could be unaware of.

Lastly, Colombia itself has a very complex history, political landscape, and unique challenges. Throughout this research, I have been grappling with if and how to address colonialism. The history of the carnival and the city of Pasto is deeply interlinked and fused with traditions and customs from Spanish rule and can not be viewed as a separate entity. The effects of colonialism have been present ever since, where cultural hybridity and syncretism can be found throughout Latin America (Rodríguez-Vivaldi, 2016). To this day African descendants and Indigenous communities in Colombia are affected by structural injustices such as limited access to health care, sanitation, education, and land rights, while also living under a bigger threat of violence and displacement. This has been described by Wright, Rolston & Ní Aoláin as colonial debris (2023). How and in what way colonialism has impacted the CNB is a topic that is important to investigate but requires nuance, expertise, and most of all more experience in the South American context. This is a point for further investigation and a limitation of my research.

Conclusion

To summarize, there are three mechanisms of artistic expression within the CNB that I have identified. These are Exposure & Accessibility, Appreciation & Identification, and Belonging & Pride. These mechanisms enable artistic expression to become a practice that can be passed down through generations, which helps to preserve the local identity and heritage.

Exposure and Accessibility as mechanisms of artistic expression allow communities to connect to their cultural identity and heritage. The CNB achieves this connection by nurturing it

from an early age, encouraging the development of artistic skills and the understanding that anyone can be an artist. This allows members of the community to access and connect with their cultural identity and heritage autonomously through art.

Appreciation and Identification towards and with the cultural identity and heritage of a community can be created, encouraged, and maintained through the mechanisms of artistic expression. This can be seen in the CNB where artistic expression is utilized to express and create an appreciation for the region and mother nature; everyday life and activities; and folklore and ancestral traditions. Artistic expression brings life to the cultural heritage and creates identification with the CNB and the local culture itself. This is achieved through representation and the embodiment of the cultural identity and heritage in the performances of the artists. Lastly, artistic expression can create and demonstrate **Belonging and Pride** towards and within the cultural identity and heritage. In the context of the CNB artistic expression enables families and the community to come together, form close networks and support systems and evaluate which aspects of their cultural identity and heritage is important to them. Furthermore, artistic displays and performances become a mechanism for expressing pride and gratitude for the cultural identity and heritage itself.

Ultimately, artistic expression, in the context of the CNB serves through its mechanism of Exposure & Accessibility; Appreciation & Identification and Belonging & Pride to a deep and meaningful connection of the community with their cultural identity and heritage.

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Appendix

Figures



Figure 3: Map of the CNB routes, showing the carnival square and routes; picture of the first CNB in 1927, taken in a restaurant; CNB museum; picture taken in Pasto 2024 by S.L.Schildberger



Figure 4: display of a colorful jaguar, sculpture of a pan flute player with corn next to them, drawings of volcanoes of the region, pictures taken in Pasto 2023 by S.L. Schildberger



Figure 5: display of a condor; chalk drawing of a guinea pig with the Pastuso saying “chay las patas!” (Literal translation: freezing your paws, meaning it is very cold.)



Figure 6: Costume Danzantes del Cerrillo, showing the hat, complete outfit and skirt; picture taken in Pasto 2024 by S.L. Schildberger

Traditional games: Chaza

La chaza is played in a field 100 meters long and 10 meters wide, divided into two halves with 5 players per team. The game is similar to tennis, the aim is to let the ball bounce twice on the ground of the opposing side. The ball is made out of rubber and is called Bombo.

The movements from the games were integrated into the dances, and the racquets became part of the outfits and the performance. Part of the preparation for the performance was that all the performers went and played Chaza themselves. Next to the musicians and dancers, Chaza players also joined the performance.



Figure 7: Infobox on the game Chaza and how it was integrated in the carnival; picture of costume with Chaza rackets in the back



Song lyrics "La Chaza"
by Sol Barniz from 2006

Solo se la pasa en elegido!
Por el estadio por la plaza!
Su marido siempre se le escapa!
Se la pasa jugando chaza!

He only spends his time on the chosen!
By the stadium, by the square!
Her husband always escapes from her!
He spends his time playing Chaza!

Figure 8: Racket with the Danzantes del Cerrillo logo, picture taken in Pasto 2024 by S.L. Schildberger; song lyrics "La Chaza" by Sol Barniz 2006



Figure 9: Symbol Sun of the Pastos; display Mother Nature, who has the Sun of the Pasto as golden decorations in her headgear and the symbol of the Churo Cómico

Translations

Original Quotes from the interviews and their translation; used translation tool DeepL

Section	Quote original	Translation used
0	Foreword	
	<p>Minute of the interview in audio recording</p> <p>27.30 - 28.04 (Carnival director) “Primero que digo, bienvenida a Pasto, bienvenida a una ciudad creativa de arte, artesanía y arte popular. Como eres extranjera, tienes que romper, rompe todos los esquemas que has aprendido en tu vida sobre el arte y la cultura. Porque aquí vas a encontrar la magia de color, vas a vivir un mundo de fantasía. Entrás en un multiverso del carnaval. Vas a ver algo que nunca en tu vidas has visto”</p>	<p>27.30 - 28.04 (Carnival director) “First I say, welcome to Pasto, welcome to a creative city of art, artisanship and folklore. Since you are a foreigner , you have to break, break all the schemes you have learned in your life about art and culture. Because here you will find the magic of color, you will live in a world of fantasy. You will enter into the multiverse of the carnival. You will see something that you have never seen in your life”</p>
1	Results	
1.1	Exposure & Accessibility	
	<p>45.40- 45.54 (director collective) “Es una fiesta muy popular, es decir que no solamente la hacen en una ciudad, se hace en todos los pueblos andinos de acá del sur de Nariño”</p> <p>39.00 (director collective) “Bueno, yo tengo una formación y tradición artística desde mi familia desde que estaba chico, desde niño miraba a mis papás que practicaban la danza, mi papá era músico y entonces nosotros siempre estuvimos con ellos participando en diferentes eventos y diferentes actividades.”</p> <p>19.58-20.19 (director collective) “Yo creo que esto es como lo bonito del carnaval, le das esta oportunidad a personas que no necesariamente tienen la formación artística, pero que les permiten a ellos de alguna manera ir aprendiendo y desarrollando algunas habilidades”</p> <p>37.16- 37.26 (float builder) Can anyone</p>	<p>45.40- 45.54 (collective director) “It is a very popular festival, that is to say that it is not only done in one city, it is done in all the Andean towns in the south of Nariño”.</p> <p>39.00 “Well, I have an artistic background and tradition from my family from when I was a kid, since I was a child I watched my parents who practiced dance. My dad was a musician and then we were always with them participating in different events and different activities.”</p> <p>19.58-20.19 (collective director) “I think this is the beauty of the carnival, you give this opportunity to people who do not necessarily have artistic training, but it allows them to learn and develop some skills”.</p> <p>37.16- 37.26 (float builder) Can anyone</p>

	<p>become part of constructing the floats? "Claro, es lo bonito de nuestro carnaval que abrimos las puertas a todo mundo, los extranjeros pueden ser parte del equipo de trabajo"</p> <p>24.00-24.16 (Carnival director) "Todos los proyectos que presentan las organizaciones que participan en el carnaval, normalmente los curadores calificadoros presentan un pequeño proyecto de investigación"</p> <p>40.35 - 40.51 (Carnival director) El carnaval se aprende en la calle, se aprende en los talleres populares de los barrios, en los talleres de los maestros del carnaval en sus casas."</p>	<p>become part of constructing the floats? "Of course, that's the beauty of our carnival, we open the doors to everyone, foreigners can be part of the work team".</p> <p>24.00-24.16 (Carnival director) "For all the projects presented by the organizations participating in the carnival, usually the qualifying organizers present a small research project."</p> <p>40.35 - 40.51 (Carnival director) "The carnival is learned in the street, it is learned in the workshops of the people in the neighborhoods, in the workshops of the carnival masters at their homes."</p>
1.2.1	Appreciation & Identification	
	<p>00.06.40- 00.06.50 (director collective) "A los niños que están observando eso les da gusto y les da alegría mirar y al próximo año ya quieren también participar, entonces eso es una forma de preservar nuestra cultura e identidad"</p>	<p>00.06.40- 00.06.50 (collective director) "The children who are watching this, it gives them pleasure and joy to watch and next year will also want to participate, so this is a way of preserving our culture and identity".</p>
1.2.2	Appreciation & Identification with the Region and Mother Nature	
	No direct quotes used	
1.2.3	Appreciation & Identification for and with Everyday Life and Activities	
	<p>22.18- 22:28 (director collective) "La gente popular, los vecinos, los barrios, cuando los fines de semana quieren descansar de sus trabajos, se van a las canchas a jugar chaza"</p> <p>7.26- 7.50 (musician) "Me gusta muchísimo porque está enfocado más que todo en la región nariñense, muchas veces la temática del carnaval se enfoca en nuestros pasados, nuestras razas andinas o en otras culturas, mientras que este año, pues, danzantes de cerrillos enfocados en la tradición narinense, juegos narinense"</p>	<p>22.18- 22:28 (collective director) "The common people, the neighbors, the neighborhoods, during the weekends, when they want to rest from their work, they go to the courts to play 'chaza'".</p> <p>7.26- 7.50 (musician) "I like it very much because it is focused mostly on the Nariño region, many times the theme of the carnival focuses on our past, our Andean races or other cultures, while this year, well, danzantes de cerrillo focused on the tradition of Nariño, Nariño games".</p>

	22.40- 22:46 (director collective) “Entonces nosotros hicimos un acercamiento con ellos y quisimos representarlos en el carnaval con este juego “	22.40- 22:46 (director collective) “ Therefore we approached them and wanted to represent them in the carnival with this game”.
1.2.4	Appreciation & Identification with Folklore and Traditions	
	44:42 -44.48 (director collective) “Más que un carnaval es una fiesta andina y ancestral” 13.00 - 13.20 (float builder) “A veces nos preguntan por qué hacen siempre el mismo jaguar, los mismos indios, es nuestra identidad y nosotros no salimos de desde línea (...) nuestra identidad es lo que demostramos.” 19.50 - 20.27 “Si, porque” diseñador “identificar” sastre “Si identifica y la otra, cada vez que uno de estos vestuarios sale en una escena, sale un entorno, el vestuario carga, carga su propia magia y vibra por el sol, en los desfiles y es el vestuario de la magia de las danzantes, tu miras que los vestidos les saltan y vibran.“ “Es como una esencia” Sastre	44:42 -44.48 (collective director) “More than a carnival, it is an Andean and Ancestral celebration”. 13.00 - 13.20 (float builder) “Sometimes they ask us why do you always do the same jaguar, the same Indians, it's our identity and we don't depart from that line (...) our identity is what we demonstrate.” 19.50 - 20.27 “Yes, because” Designer “ identification” Seamster “Yes it identifies and also, every time one of these costumes appears on stage, comes out in a scene, the costume charges, it charges its own magic and radiates from the sun. In the parades and the costumes of the magic of the dancers, you see that the garments jump out and radiate.” “It's like an essence” Seamster
1.3	Belonging & Pride	
1.3.1	Connection with family and community	
	30.30-30.52 (Carnival director) “Lo más lindo es el mundo de la familia, la unidad familiar, este carnaval vive porque la familia está unida en el carnaval, porque estos son núcleos familiares que se crean por el carnaval, este carnaval no muere porque serán de padres a hijos, de abuelos a nietos.” 31.05 - 31.19 (Carnival director)“Se crean amistades como en los colectivos coreográficos que hacen un trabajo social maravilloso en los barrios y en la población donde se vuelven mas familia que la familia “	30.30-30.52 (Carnival director) “The most beautiful thing is the world of the family, the family unit, this carnival lives because the family is united in the carnival, because these are nuclear families that are created by the carnival, this carnival does not die because they will be passed from parents to children, from grandparents to grandchildren.” 31.05 - 31.19 (Carnival director) “Friendships are created for example in the choreographic collectives which do marvelous social work in the neighborhoods and in the population where they become more family than family”.

1.3.2	Pride & gratitude	
	<p>18.40 - 18.54 (designer) “Estoy muy, muy orgulloso de ser de aca, decimos nosotros pastusos que damos una esencia que en el mundo no hay. Porque la magica y mistica de la vida aqui es muy distinta”</p> <p>20.45 - 21.02 (float builder) Are you proud of being Andino? “Si claro, me da gracias a Dios por mandarme a este puntito del planeta Tierra y lo llevo en mi sangre y en todo lugar en que vaya nunca, nunca me voy a olvidar mi tierra, que es esta región tan hermosa, por esto estoy haciendo este homenaje en esta carroza”</p> <p>9.09 - 9.30 (Float builder) “Es mi vida, el carnaval es mi vida y yo estoy dando todo por todo porque amo el carnaval , no es por situaciones economicas o reconocimiento de pronto por alegría, no es esto. Yo nací por esto, estoy hecho por el carnaval de los negros y blancos de Pasto por esto estoy aqui “</p>	<p>18.40 - 18.54 (designer). “I am very, very proud to be from here, we pastusos say that we have an essence that is not found anywhere else in the world. Because the magic and mystique of life here is very different”.</p> <p>20.45 - 21.02 (float builder) Are you proud of being Andino? “Yes of course, I thank God for sending me to this little point of planet earth and I carry it in my blood and everywhere I go I will never, never forget my land, which is this beautiful region, that's why I'm doing this homage on this float.”</p> <p>9.09 - 9.30 (Float builder) “It is my life, the carnival is my life and I am giving it my all for everything because I love the carnival, it is not for economic reasons or recognition, it is not for joy, it is not this. I was born for this, I was made for the carnival of the blacks and whites of Pasto, that's why I'm here”.</p>