IDENTITY AND NETWORKS OF FIVE CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS
IN CALI AND BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

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Abstract:

This dissertation examines the identity of five cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia. The topic is linked to a literature review on the Cultural and Creative Industries movement globally, and to the arising interest on cultural enterprises in Colombia. The study has a qualitative approach, using narratives to analyse the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs selected. The results exemplify how the participants perceive entrepreneurship as a way of living, as a way to express their creativity. By doing so, they tend to move in creative spaces, networks and environments. This allows them to build Semi-permanent working groups (Blair and Daskalaki, 2002) and work with project-based teams linked by strong bonding and collaboration. The five interviewees also wish to be independent from the State, and opt to open new markets by developing creative and professional ventures. As they are local creators, they also wish to show local identity (Barbero, 2000) and compete in a global market. Finally, the results illustrate the five entrepreneurs are creating new, hybrid propositions in the creative and cultural industries, by mixing their taste and knowledge with the demands of the market.
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1. Aims and objectives

The purpose of this document is to analyse the identity of five cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia, and how they manage to network with other organisations, groups or the government in order to achieve their goals. It is result of the dissertation project undertaken by the author to obtain the MA in Management in the Creative Economy at Kingston University. The proposal was written during the months of January- April 2011, and the fieldwork and analysis of the results were developed during July- August 2011 in Bogotá and Cali, Colombia.

The main question to be answered is:

What is the identity of the cultural entrepreneur in Colombia?

Objectives:

1. To determine which are the cultural entrepreneurs’ Semi Permanent Working Groups and how do they define their identity.

2. To identify how the creation of their ventures construct the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia.

3. To establish how the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia is linked with diversity and hybridization in a globalized market.

2. Research Questions

1. Which are the cultural entrepreneurs’ Semi Permanent Working Groups and how do they define their identity?

2. How the creation of ventures construct the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia?
3. How the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia is linked with diversity and hybridization in a globalized market?

3. Background

The Cultural industries in Colombia are a new field of study. Since 1999 this industry has been object of economic research (UNESCO, CERLALC 2000; Ministerio de Cultura, Convenio Andrés Bello, 2003; British Council, 2002; WIPO, Dirección Nacional de Derecho de Autor, 2008; DANE, 2009)\(^1\). They have also been questioned because of their relevance to contribute to the creation of identity and multiculturalism (García-Canclini, 2001; Barbero, 2000). Recently, they have been selected as priority for governmental policies (Ministerio de Cultura, 2009; Ministerio de Cultura, Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo. Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2010).

However, there is a lack of research on the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia, as will be noticed in the literature review. After undertaking a literature review, the researcher used narratives in order to collect the stories of the participants, who were interviewed on the basis of recognition and success of their cultural businesses. The analysis of the interviews was based on a qualitative perspective, using a Bakhtinian approach of the dialogical discourses and emerging themes identified in the narratives of the entrepreneurs. The themes were organized into five categories, common to all participants: *Entrepreneurship as a life style; Do it Yourself Culture; Semi Permanent Working Groups; Local Identity and Artistic genres as providers of identity*. The reader can find a description of each category in the results (section 6).

This is the first qualitative study in Colombia to inquire about the identity and the networks that make its cultural entrepreneurs unique and different from those in developing countries. Therefore, another contribution of the research project, with the special mention that a qualitative research cannot be applied universally, is to establish a first approach to the characteristics of a cultural entrepreneur in a developing country, in the context of a global creative economy.

\(^1\) The reader can find a description of these studies in Appendix A.
4. Literature Review

In the following section, the reader will find a description of the relevant concepts related to cultural and creative entrepreneurship, since it is linked to the Creative industries phenomena and its study (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005], McRobbie, 2001, Howkins, 2001, Bilton, 2007, Hesmondalgh, 2007, Rowan, 2010). Firstly, the reader will find a description of the Creative industries as a policy-oriented concept, along with its main adversaries. In a second stage, an explanation of the transition to the creative economy notion and how it is related to the cultural and creative industries globally is developed. In a third moment, the concept of the cultural industries will be revised, as it is the option selected by the Colombian government to focus its policies on. Next, different perspectives about the cultural industries will be addressed, especially those from Latin American scholars who approach the cultural industries from a cultural studies perspective. After doing so, the reader will find a clearer definition of creative and cultural entrepreneur and identity, main concepts that were the axis of the research.

4.1 The rise of the Creative industries as a concept and as a policy

The Creative industries discourse appeared in the late 90’s, thanks to the aim of policy makers in the United Kingdom, who recognized the shift from uncompetitive manufacturing industries to media industries that where growing rapidly (Howkins, 2009). This development led to a well known definition of the Creative industries in 1998 as “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation of and exploitation of intellectual property” (Department of Culture, Media and Sports, 2001, p. 5).

The United Kingdom mapping methodology to measure the economic impact of the creative industries has also been implemented in several countries (BOP Consulting, 2010), such as Indonesia, Colombia², Estonia and South Africa, among others. In consequence, is inevitable to discuss the creative industries without quoting the advances in the subject undertaken by the United Kingdom. Not only its mapping document in 1998 determined programs nationally, but it “turned to be an important milestone internationally too”. (BOP Consulting,

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² The reader can find a description of the first mapping undertaken in Bogotá by the British Council in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the local government in Appendix A.
2010). This is an example of how policies have, in fact, consequences in the life of citizens and entire nations.

Despite the great trend that the DMSC creative industries definition generated, it has been criticized by scholars, for multiple reasons. First, it has been strongly questioned because it has a neoliberal approach tied to a free market (McRobbie, 2004, Bilton, 2007), is individualistic and has resulted in a self precarisation of artists and creatives (Lorey, 2006).

Bilton (2007) suggests the creative industries notion of creativity is individualistic and reinforces the mythology of the genius, so embedded in western culture (2007). In this mythology, “artists are exceptional individuals capable of extraordinary leaps of invention which transcend rational analysis” (Bilton, 2007, p. 14). However, Bilton suggests that this concept cannot be easily applied to non-western cultures, which often identify the artists as a mirror of society and tradition. In some cultures “the individual artist is submerged in a cultural tradition” (Bilton, 2007, p. 14).

This document assumes creativity as both an individual and collective process. Every creative expression is part of a cultural context; creativity emerges from ideas, concepts, and ideologies and is affected by discourses present in a particular society. As Ibbotson (2007) argues, “nothing comes from nothing” (Ibbotson, 2007, p. 5), there is always a previous idea that will be part of the new creation. In the same sense, creativity is recognised as such in a specific context (Bilton, 2007, Hartley, 2005, Maya Cherbo and Vogel, 2010). There is then a continuum (Maya Cherbo and Vogel, 2010) between individual capacities and the social context, groups and networks in which the individual is inserted. Therefore, studying the networks in which the cultural entrepreneurs are inserted is useful to understand its identity.

4.2 From the creative industries to the creative economy

Howkins (2001) was the first author to suggest the term Creative Economy to refer to those industries based on transactions of creative products, that is, “an economic good or service that results from creativity and has economic value” (Howkins, 2001, p. X). The author suggests creativity is present at all level of businesses and is not restricted to the arts and design. Therefore, the creative economy concept has a wider implication, since it refers to creative processes within businesses, including Research and Development, and innovation.
At the same time, Florida (2002) in the US was coming to the conclusion that creativity and a way of life linked to it was giving birth to a “creative class”, living in a Creative Economy.

The shift to the creative economy turned the attention to the relationship between creativity and innovation, and consequently, of how the link between both can contribute to the development of new products, markets and business models. The risk, according to Bilton (2007) is that this vision locates the creative economy as synonymous of the economy as a whole, since almost all businesses need creativity. For Bilton governments are using creativity as a new brand of economic development. The author is not optimistic about the outcomes revealed so far by the governments about how the creative economy contributes to economic development and generation of employment. As a consequence, Bilton (2007) and states that data is insufficient to declare that the creative economy is the economy of the future.

The official economic measurements in Colombia, for example, takes into account the cultural activities exclusively. The income generated from creativity in other industries is part of a different measurement, and it is not taken into account as a contributor of GDP within the cultural industries (DANE, no date). This is part of their criteria to measure all national accounts (DANE, no date), and it responds to a more rigorous methodology. In consequence, Colombia does not use the term Creative Economy in its governmental discourse.

4.3 The Cultural Industries, the Colombian path.

At a National level, the government of Colombia has adhered to the notion of cultural industries using UNCTAD’s protection of diversity in the Creative Economy Report (2008, 2010) and UNESCO’s definition (2000), and takes distance from the British definition. After different organisations developed reports based on the economic impact of the cultural sector in the Nations’ GDP\(^3\), the Ministry of Culture launched two public policies to promote the Cultural Industries in 2010. The Policy for cultural entrepreneurship and the Cultural Industries is an attempt to describe the main challenges for the sector, especially for the SME’s and the Non profit organisations. The policy has the aim to promote the development of these industries on the base that they are an opportunity to develop the economy of the country, as well as a mean to provide cultural identity and diversity within the Colombian

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\(^3\) The reader can find a summary of the studies in Appendix A
population. On the other hand, the CONPES 3659 National Policy for the promotion of the Cultural Industries in Colombia has involved the Ministry of Commerce, industry and Tourism, and the National Department of Planning. Is important to mention that CONPES (that stands for National Council of Economic and Social Policy in Spanish) is a governmental organism where strategic economic policy and public budget spending is decided. The CONPES 3659 is probably the most important document ever written to undertake clear governmental strategies to support the Cultural industries in Colombia.

The Colombian government defines the Cultural Industries as “Those productive sectors where the creation, production and marketing of goods and services based on intangible contents with a cultural nature conjugate, [and are] generally protected by Copy Rights” (CONPES 3659, 2010, p. 9). In both policies, the Creative Industries are part of the Cultural Industries. They include film, music, crafts, visual arts, heritage (including cultural tourism) and traditional practices (such as festivals), Publishing and Performing arts as part of the Cultural Industries; while architecture, advertising, design (including software, videogames, jewelry, graphics and industrial design) constitute the Creative Industries sector. Both policies accept many other definitions of these sectors exist, such as the creative economy, the sunrise industries or the content industries, but decide to follow “Cultural Industries” as the generic concept. Nevertheless, the author believes both cultural and creative industries, as stated in Colombian policy, are part of a wider Creative Economy, since both use creativity to generate value.

4.4 Other perspectives on the cultural industries

The term culture industries is commonly attributed to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (Bilton, 2007; Raunig, 2007; Hesmondhal, 2007). In their text The Culture Industries as mass deception published in 1944, they are critical about how culture became part of the capitalist system. As a consequence, the culture industries manipulate consumers and homogenise culture. According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1993), as the culture industry can deal with consumers’ needs, it ends up producing them, disciplining them and controlling them. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1993). For the authors, the culture industries reduce culture to mass-media; it becomes entertainment without promoting imagination or sublimation.

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4 Translation of the author
This critique has been revised and used by authors from a Cultural Studies perspective, such as Hesmondhalgh (2007), García Canclini (1999, 2001, 2001A), Yúdice (2002) and Barbero (1999) whose arguments will be explained in the following section.

Hesmondhalgh (2007), states that the cultural industries are involved in the creation and circulation of products that he calls texts. These texts are full of meaning, and therefore are determinant of the way we live life and interpret the world. For the author, the cultural industries explain how the texts are created and how they determine the way humans live in the contemporary world (Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

Based on this, the question that the author suggests is if the cultural industries serve the political and economic interests of those who own them and their partners. (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). The author criticises the creative industries model based on intellectual property, by stating that most of the time copy rights benefit large corporations and affect the benefits that both artists and consumers may gain from them. (Hesmondhalg, 2007).

Hesmondhalg (2007) argues one of the main characteristics of the Cultural Industries is that they are contested since they are in permanent struggle between instrumentalization and autonomy of expression. In this point the author explains how Adorno and Horkheimer were pioneers on the idea of the instrumentalization of culture, and he states that it is not possible to argue that culture has already lost its battle against capitalism. As the author suggests, when discussing Adorno and Horkheimer’s view, “abandoning extreme pessimism is not the same as complacently celebrating the cultural industries as they are”. (Hesmondhalg, 2007, p. 17).

Therefore, the contribution of Hesmondhalg (2007) to this research project is to critically think about the cultural industries in Colombia, not being completely pessimists about what they can offer to the development of the small and local organisations, but analysing how and if they promote identity and diversity.

More than criticising the cultural industries, García-Canclini (1999) suggests they are one of the main providers of identity Latin America as they have transcended the borders of each country. Therefore, it is important to think about how the identity is changing constantly,
through the cultural industries as content providers. The author (1999, 2001B, 2001C) refuses to leave this Latin American integration to the market. He asks for the participation of all sectors when defining a policy for the cultural industries, and claims for an active role of the state as a mediator between the market and the local cultural expressions. García-Canclini (2001B) states that the role of the state is to be an arbiter or guardian of the homogenization of diverse cultures by the market. For the author, “it is necessary to get beyond the binary option between the two and to create spaces where the multiple initiatives of civil society can emerge: social movements, artists’ groups, independent radio and television stations, unions, ethnic groups, and associations of consumers, radio listeners, and television viewers”. (García Canclini. 2001B, p. 102). According to the author, only this multiplication of actors can lead to include all identities.

Similar positions are assumed by Barbero (2000) regarding to the capacity of the cultural industries to create Latin American identity. Culture for Barbero (2000) is not only a resource for production, it also creates identities and, in that sense, the identity dimension should be recognised as an element of production, not as an obstacle. For the author, globalisation won’t finish with local identities; it gives them a new value. Hence, the relationship between construction of identity in Latin America and the cultural industries, especially in the young people, is not an external relation; it is a constitutive and creative relationship that must be studied to understand the processes of recreating what it means to be a Latin-American.

Regarding Latin America, García-Canclini (2001) used the concept of hybridization to study the multicultural processes that are held in the continent and as a way to understand how tradition, folklore, markets, globalization are mixed and overlapped. García-Canclini refers to Hybrid Cultures, which describe how Latin American cultures move constantly form a pre-modern, modern and postmodern transition (not specifically in this order) in the contemporary world. García-Canclini (2001) defines hybridization as those “sociocultural processes in which discrete structures or practices that existed in a separate way are combined to generate new structures, objects and practices”. (García-Canclini, 2001, p. 14). For the author, these previous discrete structures are product of a process of hybridization as well. Examples of hybridization are new music groups that combine traditional rhythms with electronic devices and instruments, some of which took part in this study.

5 Translation of the autor.
García-Canclini (2001) also situates the cultural industries as one of the principal promoters of this modern intercultural mixture. They are, therefore, a means to study how this hybridization takes place. By focusing on the hybridization process is possible to study how different movements get a voice (or not), what powers are struggling within the culture and how can we achieve interculturalism.

4.5 Diversity and the cultural industries in Colombia

Even though Colombian population is recognised to be Mestiza\textsuperscript{6} it wasn’t until 1991 when the Constitution stated Colombia is a pluriethnic and pluricultural country (República de Colombia, Constitución de 1991, preamble). This statement made it possible to include indigenous and afrocolombian people as heterogenous groups with specific cultures, territories, ethnicities and languages. (Ministerio de Cultura, 2011, no page). It was a step to start construction of a new Colombian citizenship, based on protecting the rights and allowing the participation of these communities in the State, which were ignored as such for many years. It also widened the spectrum of diversity and evidenced the richness of cultural identity in Colombia.

Birenbaum (2009) uses the term ethnodiversity to explain the “marginalised ethnic cultural value” (Birenbaum, 2009, p. 193)\textsuperscript{7}. Etnodiversity, according to the author, is a discourse used by international entities, the church, the NGO’s, the State, the scholars and even local musicians to refer to the significants and practices related to multiculturalism and pluriculturalism in marginalised communities, specifically in the Pacific Coast in Colombia, composed basically by Afro descendents, Mestizos and Indigenous people (Birenbaum, 2009). As a consequence an “ethno-boom” phenomena arises (Arocha, 2005, cited by Birenbaum, 2009), which links the cultural diversity of the new ethnicity with the market. According to Birenbaum (2009), “ethno-boom” reflects how ethnodiversity discourse has impacted the cultural industries of the country. Fashion, record labels, documentaries and advertising is now full of afrocolombian content.

\textsuperscript{6} Mestizo means of mixed blood, the combination of European, Africans and Indigenous people.

\textsuperscript{7} Translation of the autor.
Birenbaum (2009) reflects on the relationship between biodiversity and ethnodiversity in the context of the Pacific coast, when both nature and culture are starting to be exploited by copyrights. According to Birenbaum (2009) both practices respond to the new, post-fordism economy. In this sense, “biodiversity and ethnodiversity emerge at the moment of transformation of a place perceived as a savage “green hell” without any wealth, into a cultural and natural rich territory.” (Birenbaum, 2009, p. 194). This new perception is connected with a new sense of cultural nationality and identity based on diversity of ethnicities, their culture and nature in their territories (Birenbaum, 2009). As will be explained in the results, cultural entrepreneurs respond to this new approach to national identity.

Authors such as Throsby (2001) analyse culture from an economic point of view. According to the author, the particularity of culture is that it has a double value: an economic value and a cultural value (Throsby, 2001). For Throsby (2001), cultural and economic values are important because they both constitute cultural capital, “an asset which embodies, stores or provides cultural value in addition to whatever any economic value it may possess”. (Throsby, 2001, p. 46).

By stating that culture can be measured as a capital, Throsby (2001) sets some similarities with nature as a capital, and the problem of sustainability and diversity of both. Tangible cultural and natural capital are inherited from the past and invoke a sense for intergenerational sustainability so next generations can live and enjoy them (Throsby, 2001). In the same sense, diversity in nature, so important to sustain the shifts and variations of the environment, is relevant in culture because of the uniqueness of cultural goods. For Throsby (2001) cultural diversity is vital to preserve cultural systems, since the abundance of different ideas, traditions and beliefs can create new capital formation.

Culture seen as capital or, as Yúdice (2002) states it, as a resource, is the result of legitimating culture through a utilitarian perspective. For the author, culture as a resource is much more than a commodity: it is the axe of a new epistemic framework where ideology and the disciplinary society (using Foucault’s term) are absorbed within an economic logic. For the author, this is a consequence of the state’s reduction of investment in social issues (especially,

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8 Translation of the author.
but not exclusively, in the United States) and the need to use other means to support social programs.

However, Yúdice (2002) is not arguing that perceiving culture as a resource is a perversion and that it reduces meaning and identity to just political and economical issues. As Yúdice suggests (2002), “it would be cynical to classify as aberrant the politics of identity when the transformation of culture as a resource is an obvious feature of contemporary life⁹”. (Yudice, 2002, p. 41). The author suggests studying where the transformation arises and what does it means for our historical moment. For the author, selling and buying cultural goods as merchandise is more an experience located in the centre of capitalism, and this allows blending local producers and consumers desires with the policies, that can be merged easily with the merchandise. In the same way, Yúdice (2002) values the informal networks that, in the name of accumulation, create new networks and associations that can work through cooperation and solidarity.

In a similar way, Birenbaum (2009) argues that ethnodiversity exceeds the commercial sphere. It is also a political project oriented to create citizenship and transferring the states responsibilities to the locals (Birenbaum, 2009). However, he also perceives this trend as an opportunity to recognise and make visible this ethnicities and their contribution to the Colombian society. As Barbero suggested (2000) globalisation can lead to the revalorisation of local cultures, sources of identities that will be mediated between the demands of the market and the creative capacity of the creators.

4.6 Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurs

After revising a macro perspective of the cultural industry in Colombia and the world, this section will focus on the cultural entrepreneurs. It is important to mention that the notion of Cultural or Creative Entrepreneur is not defined in the Colombian policy. As the topic is recent, there are no scholars who have studied which are the characteristics of the cultural entrepreneur in the country. As the reader will notice, the definitions of the cultural entrepreneurs in the literature review are based on international authors.

⁹ Our translation
Leadbeater and Oakley (1999 [2005]) suggested the term cultural entrepreneur in 1999, referring to The Independents movement that began in the United Kingdom in 1980’s and that are seen as the pioneers of the creative industries in the arts sector (McRobbie, 2008, Hesmondhalg, 2007). With time, these independents became more important, mainly because of six reasons: their contribution to jobs and wealth creation; the consequently local economic growth; their new model of work; their new model of creative production, allowing creativity in other industries; they role on urban restoration and development, since they move to neighbourhoods that have suffered from economic depression; and their contribution to social cohesion (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005]).

This “independents” are used to work in a “free-lance” basis, in different projects at the same time. Authors such as Howkins (2001, 2009), Leadbeater and Oakley (1999 [2005]) and Florida (2001) perceive this as a positive trend, since it is part of new organisational and business models of the new economy. For these authors, a full time job in contemporary life does not allow many spaces for creativity. The independent condition permits creative people to be more flexible, autonomous, less hierarchical and collaborative (Howkins, 2009, Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005]). It also allows the creation of teams that must learn to trust each other easily (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005]).

In this scenario and from a critical perspective, McRobbie (2010) argues that the self-employed, multi-tasker employee has no real social networks, others than those that serve the purpose of the projects that are currently being held. This lack of real organisation, limits the possibility of reflexivity and of belongingness, and tends to increase the gap of the civilian rights already earned by women, ethnicities and trade unions. (McRobbie, 2010).

Authors such as Howkins (2001) and Leadbeater and Oakley (1999 [2005])) are aware of the risks being a creative entrepreneur or an independent implies. As Leadbeater and Oakley state, “Life as an Independent is not nirvana, nor even a recipe for making money. It can provide choice, autonomy and satisfaction but it also involves constant uncertainty, insecurity and change”. (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005], p. 302). The authors suggest there is a need to develop policies to avoid corporations to control the distribution of the cultural entrepreneur’s products, and create stronger institutions that “can support independent producers and stand between them and the global markets in which they compete”. (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005], p. 310). Once again, from a different
perspective but with a similar conclusion as García-Canclini (2001), creating policies to mediate between the producers and the global market is set as an important goal in the development of the cultural industries.

For Howkins (2001), the creative entrepreneur is an important engine of the creative industries, since their tendency is to break the established order and create value from their ideas (Howkins, 2001). Howkins (2001) suggests a distinction between the creative entrepreneurs and those workers of creative fields that work independently. For Howkins (2001), the creative entrepreneurs share five characteristics: vision, having a dream; focus, concentrating in one business idea and becoming expert in that; financial acumen, they manage their finance in their own terms but are aware of them; pride, even if they fail, they use their entrepreneurial ventures as “medals”; and urgency, they get obsessed with their ideas, implementing them as fast as they can. (Howkins, 2001, p. 130).

Different concepts have been used to define the “creative” people running a business from their talent. The culturepreneur, defined by Davies and Ford (1999), is a hybrid professional that sells cultural services and products, someone who can link the customer needs and expectations, with the sponsors and the artists.

The role of the culturepreneur, who can produce, distribute and commercialise at the same time, avoid hiring curators and arts, is related to the Do it Yourself Culture (DiY culture henceforth) explained by McKay (1998). According to the author, DiY Culture is “a youth-centered and directed cluster of interests and practices around green radicalism, direct action politics, new musical sounds and experiences [...] kind of 1990’s counterculture”. (McKay, 1998, p. 2). However, the term has evolved into the DiY citizens, a phase if modern identity formation where citizenship becomes a creative act (Hartley, 2005). DiY citizens “combine elements of private (personal) with public (political) identity, and these with consumer goods, services [...] using technologies of interactive mediations” (Hartley, 2005, p.111).

As Leadbeater and Oakley (1999 [2005]) suggested, cultural entrepreneurs usually “blur the demarcation line between consumption and production” (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005], p. 306). This means their creative process needs to borrow, mix and consume creativity from daily life, becoming prosumers (producer/consumer, as stated by Davies and Ford, 1999). These prosumers live a creative life, borrowing ideas from the environment and
also blurring “the demarcation between work and non work” (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 [2005], p. 306).

This prosumer trend also allows emerging businesses to reach small niches, what Anderson (2007) calls The Long Tail in marketing. By approaching multiple small niches, the entrepreneurs do not have to fight for big markets, already covered by the entertainment corporations, but small groups, communities and subcultures waiting to consume non-massive culture.

Rowan (2010) found the possibility to be creative is one of the main reasons for Spanish cultural entrepreneurs to start a venture. Tired of the repetitive jobs, the cultural entrepreneurs search for autonomy and sustainability. They often choose to create an enterprise to escape from the self-precarisation imposed by being a freelancer (Rowan, 2010). According to the author, the cultural entrepreneur has produced a powerful discourse which “helps to naturalise the passion, the devotion or sacrifice for the job, exchanged by the ideal of having a job that will lead to self realization, be creative and be happy”10. (Rowlan, 2010, p. 76).

For Rowlan (2010) these entrepreneurs also create their business on the idea that they will be free and can manage their time. Nevertheless, the majority of the people interviewed recognized they work more hours a week that they would work as an employee. The author concludes the sense of control over their time as owners of their companies compensates the excess of work (Rowlan, 2010).

Even though Rowlan (2010) assumes a critical position against entrepreneurship, analyzing it from the perspective of the neoliberal discourse, the author argues is ironic how the cultural entrepreneurs tend to reverse this logic. For him, cultural entrepreneurs change the economic profits for passion, creativity and self realization; they introduce cooperation relationships instead of competition; they even create their business as means of political participation, similar to a “subversion towards entrepreneurship”11. (Rowan, 2010, p. 168). However, he does not forget cultural entrepreneurs achieve this after exposing to a self exploitation, economic uncertainty and lots of sacrifice. For him, the contradiction is evident.

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10 Translation of the author.
11 Translation of the author.
Another characteristic of the cultural entrepreneurs is they tend to work in Semi-permanent working groups. Blair (2000) studied the networks of the film industry in order to understand the way they create jobs. She found that most of the workers in the film industry are freelancers, and are usually hired on the basis of “personal networks” and previous experience working together. Blair and Daskalaki (2002) use the term Semi Permanent Working Groups (SPWGs henceforth) to define this type of relationship between the workers in the creative industries. According to Daskalaki (2010) “SPWGs are informal temporary work groups that are embedded within a broader social network or networks. Predominantly, these groups have a rather stable ‘core’ and a more flexible periphery.” (Daskalaki, 2010, p. 1657). SPWGs embody the ‘memory’ of networks constructed through prior experiences of members as collaborators of a project team. This memory is crucial and determines the re-enactment potential of a tie (strong or weak) and the sustainability of a network. (Daskalaki, 2010, p. 1657).

According to Blair (2000) this type of relationship is part of the personal and informal contacts. Thus, trust and reliability are vital to secure future jobs in the same networks. In the same way, Daskalaki (2010) states that creative teams “tend to move towards more affective relationships and emotive connections as their collaborative activities are sustained across a period of time” (Daskalaki, 2010, p. 1655), what the author calls affective bonding. However, she argues that the affecting bonding does not guarantee future jobs, since the affective bonding can be positive or negative. (Daskalaki, 2010).

SPWGs are also important since they constantly “re-assemble with new members (weak ties of their open or close network), re-inventing their identity” (Dakalaki, 2010, p. 1657). According to the author, the identity of the network can be determined by “similar cultural tastes” and identification through “creative compatibility”, which determines who enters -or not- to the network. However, standing on the “difference” approach to identity, some people opt to join workers with different tastes in order to increase the levels of creativity in the team. (Dakalaki, 2010). Therefore, this study was also focused in how the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs is similar or different from these SPWGs and network’s identity.

4.7 What is identity?
As the main question of the research project is to analyse the identities of the cultural entrepreneurs, it is important to define what the author understands about the concept. Defining Identity is a complex task, due to many interpretations of the concept in the social sciences (Fearson, 1999) and to the common use of the term. It is often used as a “common sense” word, but its roots and multiple definitions are confusing. (Fearson, 1999).

According to De Benoist (2004) and Taylor (1989) identity as a concept to define individuals is a modern and western construct. For De Benoist (2004) “the question of identity appears, first, as a reaction to the dissolution of the social network and the disappearance of traditional points of reference brought about by modernity, and, second, in connection with the emergence of the notion of individual in the Western world”(De Benoist, 2004, p. 10). Before modernity, identity was linked to religion, tradition or monarchy. The dualism between the individual and those institutions did not exist, and therefore the question for identity was not a subject to think about or discuss. Nowadays, it is a personal statement and search that is linked with existence and has become an interesting scenario for research. Studying identity from the emergent “institutions”, even the ones created by the cultural entrepreneurs is a way of finding how the participants deal with the tension between personal and social life.

Fearon (1999) argues identity is a social construct, related with both personal and social dimensions. For the author, personal identity refers to those “attributes, beliefs, desires or principles of action that a person thinks distinguish her socially” (Fearon, 1999, p. 11) and for which the person feels pride of, tries to escape of, by changing its behaviour, or recognises as unchangeable. The social dimension of the concept is oriented to answer to the question “who are you?” For the author, each person will answer to the question according to the context and situation. In those terms, studying about identity of the cultural entrepreneurs takes into account the organisational context, in which the relationship between the personal identity and the social one is in constant dialogue.

From this dialogical perspective, identity is also related with power relations and with publicly accepting who we are, and who we are not (Anico and Peralta, 2008). “Being part of” requires a narrative in which we locate ourselves and are located in (Anico and Peralta, 2008). These narratives, which are seldom of our own making, are constituted through representation and performance, conveying not only who we are but also who we will come to
be. Therefore, people are choosing who they are and who are not constantly, not even being aware they are doing so. This is evident in the results of this research, since the participants are moving constantly away and close to groups, arts genres and networks in order to define “what they are” of “what they are not”.

However, as Feraon (1999) states, identity may also be related to social categories related to roles and types. Roles is related to “labels” or given by the activities a person undertakes (eg. mother, entrepreneur, artist, manager). Type identities is related to human affiliation (parties, nationalities, sexual identities or ethnicity). Even though the present study focused on the dialogical approach of identity in an organisational context, some of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia identify with some aspects of what is local/national/global, as will be shown on the results. In that sense, roles and types are part of the narratives of the identity of the cultural entrepreneur in Colombia and consequently, are worth of study.

5. Methodology

The identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia was studied through a qualitative research, using narratives to collect the stories of the participants. This qualitative approach is useful to develop a deep understanding of the selected topic, and to analyze the stories and individuals behind the economic statistics about the cultural entrepreneurs and the industry.

The epistemological approach of this dissertation is based on the social construction of reality, that is, it assumes that knowledge is constructed through language and social interaction. As Vanderstoep and Johnston (2008) state, a qualitative perspective assumes that you cannot analyze and understand an entity by analysis of its parts; rather, you must examine the larger context in which people and knowledge function” (p. 166).

The qualitative approach allows to conduct interviews and to capture the entrepreneur’s narrative. For Riesman (2008) “many types of texts can be viewed narratively, including spoken, written and visual materials”. (Riesman, 2008, p. 4). Just as interviewed participants tell stories, investigators construct stories from their data. (Riessman, 2008, p. 4). This is called by Riessman (2008) “stories about stories”, or “texts about texts”. In order to present the results, this research project has built its own story about the different stories narrated by the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia of how they construct their identity.
5.1 Procedure

The project started with a dissertation proposal, where the literature review, the methodology and the main questions of the research were addressed. After its approval, the researcher travelled to Colombia to undertake the fieldwork. The primary data was collected through semi structured interviews, to five cultural entrepreneurs in two cities of Colombia (Bogotá and Cali). The semi structured interviews were focused in the construction of *identity* as the main narrative theme, but also were oriented to identify the networks they belong to, and their roles as entrepreneurs in these networks. Since the study has a socio constructivist approach, identity, entrepreneurship and networking were analyzed as interactions.

To select the entrepreneurs, literature review was conducted. These successful cases were selected under parameters of: international and national recognition (awards/free press) and/or measured social impact.

To answer the research question, a Semi-Structured Questionnaire was designed by the researcher. The entrepreneurs also were informed about the characteristics of the research, and both interviewer and interviewee signed an informed consent before the interview\(^\text{12}\).

5.2 Analysis

The discourses were analysed by establishing the emergent narrative themes of the transcribed interviews. After transcribing each interview, a thematic analysis was undertaken by finding common themes in all the interviewees. The themes were highlighted with colours in the texts in order to identify and use the most relevant fragments. The most relevant fragments of each interview were translated to English in order to begin its analysis\(^\text{13}\). These common themes allowed the interviewer to establish five main categories of the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs. These five categories are: *Entrepreneurship as a life style; Semi Permanent Working Groups, Do it Yourself Culture; Local Identity and Artistic genres as providers of identity.*

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\(^{12}\) The reader can find the Questionnaire and the informed consent form in Appendix B.

\(^{13}\) These main fragments of each interview can be read in Appendix C.
Using a Bakhtinian approach, this research analysed the categories not only by looking for the representations of the entrepreneurs in their narratives, but also their interactional functions (McKenna, 2010). The interactional, dialogical approach from Bakhtin shows whenever the narrator is positioning itself against other identities. In that sense, “identity is formulated within a specific location, and that location may be dominated by the prevailing regime of truth that shapes how a particular person should “think” and “be” in that location at that time (McKeena, 2010, p. 8). The interactional approach was useful to establish the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia by detecting when they take distance and emphasise on their “differences” with other groups, people, ideologies, or discourses, as well as their similarities with their SPWGs and networks.

5.3 Participants: context and description

In this section the reader will find a description of the five cultural entrepreneurs who were part of the investigation, their organisation and the context in which it is inserted. Firstly, an overall description of Cali and Bogota is developed. Secondly, the reader will find a chart of each entrepreneur and when and where the interview was undertaken.

![Context Map of Colombia](National Geographic, 2011, no page)

Why Cali?
Cali is the third most important city in Colombia, after Bogotá and Medellín. It has a strong cultural movement, and is known as “the world capital of Salsa”. (Waxer, 2002). It is also famous for being the “City of Musical memory”, and undertakes each year the Feria de Cali and the Festival de Música del Pacífico Petronio Alvarez.

Cali is a multicultural and pluriethnic city. It is located in the South west of Colombia, near the Pacific Coast, characterised for having the larger afro population in the country, descendant from the slaves brought to America during the Spanish conquest. It also was settlement of Indigenous population before the conquest, and some descendants still remain in the region. As stated above, the afro population as a different culture and ethnicity was not recognized as such until the draft of the New Colombian Constitution in 1991. (Barbary, 2001).

Because of its location and urban development, Cali is the city of Colombia with the larger number of afrocolombians (26.4% of its population). The rest of the population is a mixture of Mestizos (descendants form the mix between Europeans and Indigenuous people), Mulatos (descendants from Afro and white or indigenous) “white” people and indigenous people. (Alcaldía de Santiago de Cali, 2008).

Cali was chosen by the Interamerican Development Bank as one of the first cities to develop a Cultural Industries Project in 2010. The researcher had access to Leydi Higidio, Entrepreneurship Coordinator of this project, who allowed her to reach the entrepreneurs and interview them in the Aristi Hotel, where the project is held. The researcher was interested in the enterprises of the project since they tend to be closer to the process of hybridization stated by García-Canclini (2001).

**Why Bogotá?**

Bogota is the capital of Colombia and is the most important urban political, economic and cultural centre of the country. Because of the dynamic economic conditions, it receives people from different regions of Colombia and hosts the 15% of the population of the country (Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación y Deporte, 2005).

Bogota is also the city of Colombia with more access to cultural programs, from ethnicities and cultures from the whole country. It is recognized for hosting the Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro, one of the most important theatre festival in Latin America. It also runs Rock al Parque, one of the main rock festivals in the continent, receiving 500,000 people each year (Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación y Deporte, 2005).
The researcher lives and has worked in Bogotá, allowing her to know the cultural industry of the city. Her role as Academic Coordinator at PRANA, allowed her to contact the entrepreneurs in Bogotá.

Mauricio Porras

Mauricio Porras is one of the leaders of Zalama Productions, an organisation based in Cali, Colombia. It is dedicated to record artists and rent their equipment for events. Zalama Crew is a urban music group created by some members of Zalama productions and some of their friends. They define themselves as Urban World Music Lovers.

Zalama Crew has won the Festival de Bandas Shock 2010 from shock Magazine, one of the most important publishers of the Music scene in Colombia. They also won the Bands Festival from Universidad Javeriana, Cali.

Date of the interview: 13 July 2011.
Place: Hotel Aristi, Cali.
Duration: 51 minutes.
Webpage: www.zalamaproducciones.com

Linderman Herrera

Linderman Herrera is the entrepreneur leading Artescénicas, a theatre company based on Cali Colombia. He is the creator of the Show comedy format, a new format that mixes Stand up comedy and Musical Theatre. Artescénicas has been working for 7 years, and have done more than 400 plays in Cali and the region.

Date of the interview: 13 July 2011.
Place: Hotel Aristi, Cali.
Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes.
Web page: www.show-comedy.com

Liliana Andrade
Liliana Andrade runs El Parlante Amarillo, a web based platform broadcasting youth culture, especially music, based in Bogotá. She is a well known producer in the TV industry in Colombia, and she won a contest for entrepreneurs by Colciencias in 2009 to start El Parlante Amarillo and in 2011 to continue the venture.

Liliana has an audiovisual production enterprise called Velouria, which supports in some cases the logistics of El Parlante Amarillo. She has achieved the India Catalina Award\textsuperscript{14} for innovation audiovisual format in 2010, and represented Colombia at the International Young Music Entrepreneurs Awards from the British Council in 2011.

Date of the interview: 7 July 2011.
Place: Velouria Office
Duration: 1 hour 21 mins
Web page: www.elparlanteamarillo.com

Melisa Paeres

Melisa Paeres is the owner of La Peluquería. In a literal sense, la peluquería means \textit{hairdressing saloon}. In Melisa’s sense, La Peluquería is an independent cultural centre, where people can expect to watch and exhibition, buy fashion and design, listen to music and, by the way, change its looks.

La Peluquería is a space located in La Candelaria, the first neighborhood of Bogotá; where the city was founded. It is popular for its colonial architecture and bohemian life. It is located downtown and is the place of many universities and hostels for international backpackers and tourists. It is also home of the historical centre of Bogotá and Colombia. La Peluquería was recently defined as one of the most interesting “hybrid venues” of the city (Backer, 2011).

Date of the interview: 18 July 2011.
Place: La Peluquería
Duration: 46:38 mins
Webpage: www.lapeluqueriabogota.com

\textsuperscript{14} The India Catalina is a National award for television programmes.
Mauricio Diaz

Mauricio is one of the two leaders of Sin Nombre Son, a band from Cali that fusions Pacific Music with afro caribbean rhythms as son, orishas and reggae, as well as with blues, rock and bossa nova (Sin Nombre Son, 2011, no page).

They won the second place in the Free Style Category in the Festival de Música del Pacífico Petronio Alvarez in 2002, and the first place in 2009. This is an afro pacific music festival hosted in Cali each year since 1996 (Birenbaum, 2009, p. 192).

Date of the interview: 13 July 2011.
Place: Hotel Aristi, Cali.
Duration: 46:11 mins.
Webpage: www.sinnombreson.com

6. Results

6.1 Entrepreneurship as a lifestyle

The participants of the research assume their life as an entrepreneur taking the entrepreneurial discourse seriously. An entrepreneur for them is someone who takes risks, fights against the traditional way of employment, makes sacrifices and works hard. They receive self-realisation and freedom as a reward of being independent, not having bosses or meeting schedules. For Liliana, working on leisure time is the right thing to do as an entrepreneur.

“For Julian and me is not that bad, because we have always fought as warriors like that. He [Julian’s brother] has always worked in an office and he enters at a specific hour and leaves at another one, and he does not work on weekends. It was so weird for him to attend meetings at eight on the evening, to end up [in a meeting] on Monday, Tuesday… that he must work on Saturday or on Sunday, that is not for everyone. We, the ones working on TV do not have that schedule scheme or something… but anyway it is very hard”.

Linderman, from Artescénicas, has a strong entrepreneurial discourse throughout all his narrative. He believes entrepreneurship is about risk:
“as you know, entrepreneurship is based on risk, and I took, literally, or better, figuratively a leap into the void. I let everything go and I jumped into the empty space to do theatre”.

Most of the interviewees quitted a job in their profession in order to be entrepreneurs. They all evidence inconformity with their careers and that is why they decided to focus them through their real passion, which turned to be their ventures. They take distance from those traditional jobs, looking for autonomy and flexibility to create; they are also less hierarchical and collaborative oriented. Melisa left publicity and now has La Peluquería, Mauricio Porras quitted a “fine job” in IT, Liliana changed being a producer for TV channels in the country to be the owner of her own internet music channel, and Linderman realised he would become stagnant as a theatre teacher. As an example, Mauricio Porras describes this career change since he felt something was dying inside of him:

“when I graduate [from University] well, I start working in a regular enterprise, you know, the traditional, to meet a schedule, to have a boss, [write] reports, I was like, ufff…. I lasted like two years and I was like…. “No! I do not want to know anything else about this, bro”. I called my friends and told them “dudes, let’s do something because I am dying!”

Nevertheless, this independence has always its consequences. As McRobbie (2010) and Rowan state, some of the interviewee are sick, tired and burned out, since they barely rest. Unfortunately, it is an example of self-precarization, so commented by Lorey (2006). Liliana narrates it clearly when she states:

“[I have] more white hair, I have more gastritis, I stopped exercising (laughs), but… I never have free time, I am always tired… basically I have learned a lot about everything, about the digital business, mmm, I have learned and assimilated these entrepreneurship concepts…”

However, being able to decide then to work is an advantage of entrepreneurship, even if they do not take the time to rest. As Rowan (2010) suggests, the sense of freedom, the feeling of choice is strong. As Melisa argues, whenever she feels tired of the busy environment she “drops off the train”:

“I am fine here, I love it, I love the train, and when I get tired of the train I drop off and I get lost, I travel, and that’s it. I don’t answer the mobile phone… but for me, I like to live my daily life like this”.
Despite this “never stopping” life, the participant entrepreneurs do not regret what they are doing. All of the interviewees feel passion about their ventures, even if they do not earn enough money. This is also one of the characteristics of the cultural entrepreneurs suggested by Rowan (2010), who found they are not necessarily moved by money in the first place. Liliana is an example of being able to do what she wants, using El Parlante Amarillo as a platform:

“I do not regret anything, I am happy, I am proud, I have learned a lot, and someone told me “of course, you are millionaires, not in money sense, but you are millionaires in another way”. I am happy because I have… I interviewed a guy in England called Don Letts, that I think is wow! Or we interviewed these girls called Guerrilla Girls that I love”.

Even most of the projects are not sustainable yet, the passion of the entrepreneurs for working on the creative sector is stronger than their desire to earn money. To the date of the interview, only Artescénicas and La Peluquería were sustainable businesses. The other ones have to manage what Mauricio Diaz describes as an “alternative economy”:

“I have a degree in Modern Languages, and one day I entered a new job, because I manage music and teaching in parallel, and that is an interesting thing for you: for so long the band has managed an alternative economy, all the time, in order to achieve that each member of the group earns a living”.

One of the rewards of being an entrepreneur is self-realisation. It is the personal satisfaction, a pride of developing your own venture also stated by Howkins (2001) which, according to Liliana cannot be compared to anything:

“So it gives you lots, lots of happiness and lots of satisfaction… and you also feel you are doing something for yourself too… because we could keep on doing fashion videos, and that stuff… that is interesting and we make our living out of it but… this gives you a feeling, a feeling here, I don’t know, to be at Rock al parque and that people tells you “hey! cool!” and that is nice, right? That [feeling] is not given by anything else”.

The entrepreneur is a leader: For Melisa and Linderman, entrepreneurship is also a big responsibility. They define themselves as business oriented, but also as leader with a commitment for the people who works for them. When asking Melisa about a vision of her in the future she answers:
“To try to be a better human being at any cost, because I feel I have a huge responsibility with life. Because having a project like this one is something very beautiful, but is something to look for, to take care of”.

On the other hand, Liliana and Mauricio Porras believe being and entrepreneur is about being humble, focused and kind people. Liliana takes distance from those people in media with high egos, and believe those behaviours are not adequate:

“for some reason, and maybe because of how overrated TV is, people think they are gods because they do novelas\textsuperscript{15} and manage a TV channel, or hire actors… I don’t know, they do not notice that they are not doing anything transcendent in their lives, they mistreat people… it is a very boring style the one TV world has… not everywhere but in many places it is”.

One of the characteristics these entrepreneurs have in common is their commitment for quality and professionalism in their products or services. All of the interviewees pursue high quality in order to reach a market and gain legitimacy. It becomes the key to be trusted in both the arts and the business sector. High quality makes them different from their competitors and gives them competitive advantage. It also positions their identity as being “professional entrepreneurs with a high quality”. Quality is also a key to express what they think with no shame of being rejected. Mauricio Porras describes this, when talking about the national music industry:

“[what Shock awards experience] taught us was, for example, to do stuff with quality. You could do a cumbiaton\textsuperscript{16}, I don’t know, whatever, but if it is high quality they analyse it. So you can do music that might sound, for example our music, a catchy music but the lyrics tend to be a bit tough, but not tough only because of questioning, but because they talk about real stuff. […] so we, for example, we went to Shock [awards] and we were singing a song that is not, to put it like that, is not sweet\textsuperscript{17} at all, and one would think that Shock is like that and no, you get me? They are open to quality”.

At the same time, Mauricio Diaz describes all the members of his band must be professionals playing their instrument, since they are all amateurs. Becoming professionals gives them legitimacy, especially in the Pacific Music Scene, and links them with important networks with whom they identify with, as will also be seen in the SPWG\textsuperscript{s} category:

\textsuperscript{15} Latin American telenovela is a soap opera in a different format.
\textsuperscript{16} a mix between cumbia and techno.
\textsuperscript{17} fresita, little strawberry, in slang.
“[when] the professionalization of the group reaches the Instituto Popular de Cultura\(^\text{18}\) in Cali, each of our musicians must professionalise there. That entrance of the members of the band to the Instituto Popular de Cultura created our first musicians’ network, I mean, the first network to know who is available, who is a good musician, who would like to join Sin Nombre Son, who fits the profile, that is implicit”.

The entrepreneurial discourse of the participants is also linked with the desire of the participants to be independent from the state, as shown in the next category, DiY culture.

6.2 DiY culture

A current theme in all the participants of the study was they all wish to do everything by themselves, and they believe they must achieve their audience by fighting alone in the market. This is a Colombian version of the Do it Yourself Culture (McKay, 1998, Hartley, 2005), also influenced by a perception of the State as corrupt. They position themselves as different from those artists who wait for the government’s subvention in order to implement their projects.

As Mauricio Porras, from Zalama Producciones explains, his team has always looked for “self-management” in order to avoid corruption from the State:

“I believe an important element in this story, is self-management, always self-management because [...] We do not want to continue [with the State’s contracts] because it has happened to us, like, look, do this performance but you must sign for 800 and there [the contact] says 1’500,000. That is not a secret. So for us to continue with that fucking circle, sorry for that expression, but, with such a noxious circle [...] we’d rather throw a little party and perform there and call our friends…”

Mauricio Diaz talks about “looking” for things on his own, since the State won’t help artists. This inefficiency of the State has turned Mauricio is linked to a delusional discourse of the State, unable to provide benefits for the artists:

“it is not enough to complain about things that do not happen. Ok, some things do not happen, ok, we do not have support from the government, ok, what are we going to do? The time of complaining, of saying: “damn! They don’t help me, I cannot find anything”, well you must look for it, dude! Look, look for it, because if not... It has happened to us, at one point we thought “oh, we won the Petronio, so they should call us”. I mean, we have been there, and no one is going to call you”.

\(^{18}\) A public institute to teach popular culture, especially about the south west region in Colombia.
Linderman also takes distance from those theatre groups who apply for the government’s subsidies. He believes it is better to position his company in the mind of the customers by himself.

“There are some actors dedicated to live from the State: “give me! Because I have a project and it costs this amount”. And if the state doesn’t give them money they won’t do the job to conquer their audience, no, because they live from subventions, from a project. […] we have not asked for help to the government, we have done everything by ourselves, we have won our audience working hard”.

Melisa Paeres confesses she had the same perception of the public funded projects from the State. She takes distance from those artists who expect for the State’s subvention in order to begin their projects. Nevertheless, as she has built her business working hard, she feels her project has the quality to work with public funding, perceiving the State as another partner for one of her projects:

“This year we won a Project here at La Candelaria, with the local government, through La Peluquería. I mean, we are starting to enter there… and it is beautiful because it changed my vision about the public sector, because I realized I had a wrong image… I mean, things can happen; they can support you, if they see it is interesting they can support you”.

The Do it Yourself culture, linked with their independence from the State, is also reflected on a desire of the entrepreneurs to build their own Alternative Spaces. By doing so, they allow people from the periphery to show their creations. This independence is linked with diversity, since culture developed by the entrepreneurs is not the “official” national identity promoted by the State. As Melisa narrates, La Peluquería was conceived as an independent cultural space from the beginning:

“[it has turned into ]a small, independent Ministry of Culture, small… people come here with their bands, fashion designers, people that… artists, graphic designers…Everyone wants to show what they are doing and La Peluquería is a platform for people to show the beautiful things they are doing”.

Alternative culture is also on Liliana Andrade’s preferences. What she publishes at El Parlante Amarillo are independent sounds that have to struggle to appear in mainstream media.
“We like independent sounds… yes, we like artists that develop a personal vision of their music, or of whatever, because an important thing is that el Parlante is not only music. But let’s say that the base of it is born on that musical spirit… that rocker spirit, I mean, the rocker spirit understood as… the attitude. Yes, kind of rebellious, kind of Do it Yourself, right?”

This DiY culture is the way Liliana also acts as a citizen (Hartley, 2005). Her business aims for the participation and collaboration of their customers, a prosumer dynamic that also promotes the project and enlarges the community:

“All my friends network is very valuable, because is people with a similar sensibility. […] well, those friends are another network very useful for me, also to make the project known and grow, they are the same consumers of the project”

DiY citizenship is linked, as stated on the Literature Review, with the culturepreneurs (Davies and Ford, 1999). As Mauricio Porras suggests, Zalama Productions follows a “no managers trend”. They avoid the managers and they rather do most of the production themselves, and hire a Booking agent after the product is ready, under a commission payment scheme:

“Today the things are not as they used to, you must know, that before there were like steps, you record, you get a manager, travel, and so on… now there is not an order for that, it could be that you play a lot, you do not have a manager”.

The DiY culture is also supported on the entrepreneur’s community. These are the networks and SPWGs, which will be explained in the next section.

6.3 Semi-Permanent Working Groups (SPWGs)

The SPWGs built by these entrepreneurs illustrates how they have real social networks, some constructed on strong bonds, while some tend to be weaker. This is different from what McRobbie (2010) argues, stating the creative entrepreneurs lack of real networks. On the contrary, the participants show their organisations are nodes of new networks that artists and consumers want to join. The ties are just constructed on different levels, some are affective, some are knowledge based and some are customer oriented, as Daskalaki (2010) suggested.

In all the cases, SPWGs were identified by the interviewees as “people alike”. All the entrepreneurs choose people similar to them to join the teams. In the five cases, they do not
select “different” people to increase the levels of creativity, as suggested by Daskalaki (2010). People are hired on a project-based scheme, as free lancers or collaborators. These collaborators tend to be always the same people; people who are friends with them and who share their same interests. Liliana Andrade, from El Parlante Amarillo describes this clearly when she states:

“In general, I kind of work with people I already know. I have been working for so long, I have worked in so many big projects, where I have contacted so many people, and there’s people I keep in my heart, there’s people with whom I get along perfectly, like Erica”.

Mauricio Porras perceives his “crew” as a family. They tend to work with the same 10 musicians for Zalama Crew, because they are “parcero” and they feel empathy for each other.

“Not with all of them, but with some of them we feel empathy, right? Our parcero there… it turns out they joined the jams, and suddenly we ended up making a band […] so we were wondering “how should we call the band?”, “well, where are we? We are in Zalama, so yes, we are Zalama”. So we named it Zalama Crew and crew from crew, from parche, from team, because we felt we were kind of a little family”.

Liliana’s business model is based on the collaboration-partnership scheme. At el Parlante Amarillo all collaborators bring their time, effort and knowledge to the project. As said before, she also uses their image to promote the organisation:

“And from there to the bottom there has been kind of collaborators-partners, basically we have had three presenters, who have been key of success, because of their image and what they project, that helps a lot to position El Parlante”.

Linderman Herrera, from Artescénicas, has a similar strategy. His main selection criteria are artistic knowledge and spark to do comedy. However, as artescénicas is sending messages about values, he considers is important their actors have a way of life consistent with those values. Since they become public figures, the image of the plays and the organisation is extended to the image of the actor.

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19 Parcero is a word from Colombian slang which means close friend, friend from the gang.
20 Parche in Colombian slang means gang.
“I need you to identify with the theatre labour… and for us is really important your social testimony… I mean… we see artescénicas as an enterprise, so I won’t hire a lazy person, someone messy or untimely. So for us it is vital that he doesn’t do psychoactive substances, vital, because if I perceive it [artescénicas] as an enterprise and I will go to perform to an institution, our image will be affected if they see him drunk, on pills, on drugs…. That is not good for me”.

Friend’s network and the lifestyle of the entrepreneurs were, in some cases, the origin of their ventures. Project such as Zalama Productions and La Peluquería started as self-organised parties for friends, and then it began to take the shape of a business. As Melisa describes it, she started cutting hair to friends who couldn’t afford to have a haircut in London.

“So I started doing haircuts, to everyone around me, I started to like it, I cut the hair of my brother who lived with me, to my girl friends, to everyone… to the people I worked with… so every Saturday my placed turned into a hairdresser saloon, I mean, people came to my house, and I cut the hair in my place, in my flat21. it was difficult for me to charge for that, I was embarrassed, because I was cutting hair like crazy [without knowing the technique], so people brought wine, chocolates, gifts…”

Their main support, besides friends, was family. In most of the cases family help economically to start the business, of even act as contractors, partners or allies with their knowledge or companies. For example, Mauricio Diaz pays his taxes through his wife’s enterprise, since Sin Nombre Son isn’t formalised as an organisation yet:

“We have an enterprise, it is a partner enterprise called insitu producciones, and that enterprise is as SAS and it taxes for us, because it has the infrastructure to do it. [...] Insitu producciones is my wife’s company. It is an enterprise which now has a new figure of “spectacle”, a figure made to work on logistics, so it fits us perfectly”.

The SPWGs are established through their social life, the word of mouth and the referee network. This case is a clear example of how in the creative and cultural industries the private and public life boundaries have blurred and almost vanished, as suggested by Leadbeater and Oakley (1999 [2005]) and McRobbie (2010). This is evident in all of the interviewees. For example, Melisa explains clearly why she “never stops working”:

“They come, they come… or if I’m in a party, I talk to someone and we start to generate ideas, is like… I never stop working, never, ever, ever… I never stop working. I have a mixture between life and work. I swear, I can be

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21 originally in English
at a party, near the chimney, drunk, and someone starts talking to me about what he does, and I new ideas start to emerge, with my friends, with the people around me…”

This obsession with work is not linked with lack of reflexivity as McRobbie (2010) states. It is linked to the cultural entrepreneurs’ passion for creativity. Melisa sees opportunities and ideas everywhere, but she is aware she is doing so. This is also related to the creative entrepreneurs’ “urgency” to develop their ideas as soon as they emerge, as suggested by Howkins (2001).

For Liliana, the “friendly to everyone” style is a strategy related to networking. As Liliana feels identified with her artistic formats or genres (see section 5.5), her networking is also related with her market niche, who tend to be people alike.

“Whenever I meet someone, I see that person as a possible ally for something, I don’t know, just maybe as someone who will watch it [El Parlante Amarillo] and will give me some views [on the internet traffic] …just business speaking…or maybe it turns out that this guy is the manager of something, or could be a potential advertiser, or could be friends with some… I mean, I believe the people around you, or people you meet or something, maybe that connection is helpful for something, and you have to use it always. So I am the friendliest person in the world, not in Machiavellian terms but I do believe in that….”

The friend’s network is also the main advertising strategy. Friends start a word of mouth that allows the entrepreneurs to hire people when they need them, or position their business in their niches. In order to attract new clients, Melisa states that word of mouth is even more powerful than media.

“The Word of mouth is the most important of all… the most powerful… it is slower, because it is like a little bomb, right? … we have been on almost all the TV media and many newspapers have done reports about us… and that is naïve stuff, that is for people to know us, but finally people comes here because someone recommended us, because there is a strong word of mouth, there is a huge gossip about us…”

The awards and support official entities, such as Colciencias, who get them the money to start the business, PRANA, the creative industries incubator, or the Universities were important to have access to some other networks and to gain legitimacy. According to Liliana, this support was vital to make the project real:
“So we went through the process of having this clear [the project], we met PRANA; we took the [business plan] course de deliver there to become an incubatee, I did, and then I applied to Colciencias. We won the start up capital, and everything started to run, to become real…”

The role of universities and of a creative industries incubator as PRANA, is important to link the entrepreneurs with people in the creative and cultural sector. The people they have access to is “cool or clever people” with whom they relate to. Universities also help the entrepreneurs to start or participate in new projects, or to select the people they need to work with, who share their artistic approach or their manners. This is Lindeman’s, Mauricio Porras’, Mauricio Diaz and and Melisa’s case:

“And from that moment on, La Peluquería has had a close relationship with La Universidad de Los Andes, in an independent way, right? It is not inter institutional, is with the people from Universidad de Los Andes. But that people has a special thing as well, so there [are] always projects from Business Administration, projects from… students have done things here, parties… I have had the opportunity to have access to arts conferences, and many things at Los Andes. So that is a key network, clever people, fine people, well-placed people”.

6.4 Local identity

The interviewees show a connection with trends and new markets all over the world. Some of them, like Liliana, Mauricio Diaz and Melisa, show an evident influence of their international experiences (in London and France) and they connect it to their creation. However, “To show local identity to the world” is one of the goals of most of the participants, especially in Cali. As Barbero (2000) argued, the relationship between construction of identity in Latin America and its cultural industries, especially in the young people is a constitutive and creative relationship. Cultural Entrepreneurs interviewed in Cali believe local identity has been left behind for many years, privileging culture from cities like Bogotá and Medellín, or music from the Caribbean. For example, Pacific music is recognized by Mauricio Porras as part of the “new Colombian music”, defined as the fusion music which mixes traditional ryhms with electronic instruments and devices. He also recognizes Zalama as similar to those groups of the Atlantic Coast who are mixing traditional cumbia with urban beats, hip hop, reggae and rap:
“Our goal is that one, to travel, to maybe, like our sibling groups maybe older than us, to say it like that, like Bomba Estereo and Systema Solar\textsuperscript{22}, that are, let’s say, similar but not the same, because we have a different style, and each one has a different style, but it is like the new movement of the new Colombian music right?”

Nevertheless, he takes distance from cumbia because his wish is to position pacific music as important at a national and international level.

“from Cali, Colombia, to the world, and we also captured that in our music, so we want to reach other places; I know that in other places people know the cumbia, cumbia is the national anthem, but let’s say the currulao\textsuperscript{23}, the currulao can be an anthem, but it isn’t, because there is the cumbia, which is like the mother, but there could also be a father, the currulao, for example”.

The idea of showing Caleñan identity in Bogotá and Medellín is linked also with competitiveness of their products. Linderman’s narrative shows admiration for theatre in both cities, and considers Cali is a province. His aim is to “conquer” other regions of the country, as the main cities have done in Cali, as a proof he can impact them as well.

“So we have studied models from other groups in Colombia, and we want to mix them. The comedy done by El Aguila Descalza\textsuperscript{24} is too local, is native… we want to give ours the identity of Cali, because there isn’t, and we want to give ours the solidity and reliability of a company like Teatro Nacional from Bogotá [...] we want to impact them as thy impact us in Cali. We are impacted when something from the capital arrives… because we are a province in a way… “

In Bogotá local is perceived more about the neighborhood or localidad (locality). For example, La Peluquería is located in an old house in La Candelaria. This bohemian sector has given an identity to the organisation. She believes the people who attend la Candelaria and therefore la Peluquería is special people: tourists, artists and extraordinary people.

“I don’t know if it [being in La Candelaria has helped] for more people to come, but more special people… now, with the project I was telling you, I am discovering La Candelaria, and La Candelaria is wonderful, I mean, the people who comes here, the people who lives here, that brings a very powerful energy”.

Multiculturalism: diversity of cultures, ethnicities and rythms

\textsuperscript{22} Both groups tend to mix cumbia and rythms from the carribean (Atlantic Coast). They are now famous in Europe.

\textsuperscript{23} The currulao is a rhythm from the pacific coast of Colombia.

\textsuperscript{24} From Medellín.
Local identity is linked to diversity in the case of Mauricio Porras and Mauricio Diaz. Their music is a product of hybridization (García-Canclini, 2001) and they are aware of it. By missing Pacific rhythms with Rock (the case of Sin Nombre Son) or with Hip Hop (as in Zalama Crew), they recognize the diversity hosted in Cali. Their narratives also are part of the Ethnodiversity discourse suggested by Birenbaum (2009). Music allows these two entrepreneurs to create tolerance about diversity. Mauricio Diaz, for example, positions himself and the band as the only “Mestizo, white” band of the Petronio Alvarez. Because of that, they had to use their music as a means to break the prejudice of an afro audience, always identified with afro musicians:

“The first time that we stood in the Petronio Alvarez it was so genuine we decided to do it. In 2002, when they started shouting “get them down! Whities, mestizos, pale, yellow!”, we began to play our first song and when the first notes sounded, and the first lyrics, there was a total silence. And the second song was an overflow of happiness, madness and dancing, and the third song, in 2002, was total madness. So we said “we broke the barrier, we broke the barrier of prejudice”.

For Mauricio Porras, multiculturalism enriches the creative process. He states Zalama crew is made of people from different social classes and ethnicities, and that allows them to break Ghettos in Cali. Mauricio positions himself as someone who recognizes and promotes diversity within his group:

“[Zalama] is multicultural in every sense. I mean, there are people from every social class, middle, lower class, middle-high class. So that is nice because it is a moment […] many of them live in the district, some other live in the hillside, some other live in downtown, so it is cool because many things interact, so we learn a lot, to respect people without being from your same social class, because there is discrimination both in a high class or in a lower class, I mean, “I only hang around with the people of my ghetto, or I only hang out with my friends that are posh”, but in that moment no, we were from many places, it didn’t mattered if you came riding a donkey, walking, by car… you understand? That is so cool”.

In another way, Liliana’s discourse is also about diversity, since El Parlante Amarillo aims to publish sounds out of the mainstream. Her market is about small niches, or, what Anderson (2007) named The Long Tail phenomena. By doing so, Liliana allows the inclusion of many subcultures in her webpage, and is therefore a vehicle for diversity. In the same way Melisa and Mauricio Porras state, they all form an “independent” space with the purpose to show urban cultures which are not the “official” version of national or local identity. This is a way in which hybrid cultures get a voice, in the terms of García-Canclini (2001), but this time is
through the market and the inclusion of segmented, specific urban customers. The following category illustrates how the preferences of these entrepreneurs and the ones of their customers struggle with the market in order to “get a personal voice”. This tension has allowed them to build their own arts genres.

6.5 Artistic format or genre defines identity

When talking about their arts genre or format, the cultural entrepreneurs make a clear distinction about what they do versus what they do not do. For example, Mauricio Porras defines himself as someone who mixes different music genres, especially Hip Hop but not reggaeton. The ideology behind these genres is the key to what he pursues as an artist and what he rejects. However, he is aware of the demands of the market and accepts to hire a DJ to play reggeaton in the events. That distinction allows him to have two business lines: Zalama Crew, his artistic side, which defines exactly what he “is”; and Zalama Production, his business side, which reconcile his taste for music with the market:

“As Zalama Crew we really are not open to do, for example, a reggaeton, or to do... let’s say the market is demanding some stuff but we will always go to what we feel, that is like that always, you know? [...] we at Zalama Crew do whatever we want, in a sense that we express our artist expression, our personality, our self. But we at Zalama Productions, yes, what I am saying, if we are hired for a party where we have to play reggaeton we do it, we look up for a DJ and we pay him”.

On the other hand, Mauricio Diaz considers Sin Nombre Son has gained recognition enough to do what they feel. Their music proposal is not open to do “commercial” music, since they already have an identity that won’t change because of the desire of the market. This is an example of how the cultural industries can be contested, in Hesmondaghl terms (2007), since they do struggle between instrumentalisation and autonomy of expression:

“But we are talking about 5 years ago, that is the evolution I’m talking about. Nowadays we don’t talk about the commercial and the cultural proposal, we talk about... if you wish to hire Sin Nombre Son, you must pay this amount... but if there’s still someone who wants us to play the bolero from Andres Cepeda, the ones we played at the Pizza Restaurant, well, we won’t do it”.

25 Hip Hop tend to be more revolutionary, using lyrics to express social realities.
26 Reggaeton is a urban latin music genre, which generally uses sex explicit lyrics.
27 Bolero is a slow latin rhythm from Cuba.
28 Andrés Cepeda is a Colombian Singer who plays boleros and pop balads.
In the same sense, all of the other interviewees agree they are doing something different than the traditional art format in their subsector. Leiderman Herrera perceives his “Show Comedy” format as new in Colombian theatre. He argues the name is what is new, but later he describes it as something different to anything else. As his format is not explored as this in the Colombia, it can be stated his show comedy is innovative in its context.

“Show comedy is not something new, we are not discovering anything, this exists long time ago. We don’t know if someone has called it that way or not, but not in Colombia. In Colombia there’s only theatre, comedy, café concert, mmm vaudeville, stand up comedy…. But let’s say no one has inquired show comedy as we have, or someone who has called it like that”.

These new artistic formats are an example of how these entrepreneurs are finding new forms of expression. Leiderman created the “Show Comedy”, Mauricio Diaz mixes Pacific Music with Rock and Son, Mauricio Porras fusions Hip Hop with pacific rythms, and Liliana Andade created the first internet music channel in Colombia. Melisa Paeres, for example, created the motilof\textsuperscript{29} format, a “de-contextualised haircut”, one which affects the people by including them in her creative process. Although she does not locate herself as an artist, she is documenting the process of creation with the people’s image and she does manages cultural projects, all of which can be defined as contemporary art.

“The Motilof format [is] developed to affect realities, kind of using La Peluqueria as means to de-contextualise. It is an experience I love to live, because each Motilof is very different. I have done haircuts in the beach, in the rainforest, in the streets, in a party, in front of a church, in a mountain… I have done haircuts in many places. And that is a thing I love to live, and I know it is affecting people, how? I don’t know, but something is interfering, that is why I say art can get between…. Although I am not saying what I’m doing is art, I think it is more philosophical… the thing is everything that doesn’t fit anywhere ends up fitted as Art”.

By creating these new art genres or formats, the interviewees believe they are changing traditional ways of doing art in their sectors. The “change” discourse is present in all the interviews. For example, Linderman believes he was breaking with traditional theatre in Cali. By mixing the creative process with the demands of the market, he discovered his style and allowed to do something different:

\textsuperscript{29} Motilof comes from the word Motilada, a Colombian word for hair dressing.
“Our colleagues told us “what you do is not theatre”. They were angry, because most of the theatre artists in Cali say “let’s do classical theatre, let’s do academic theatre, let’s do deep theatre”. So they started to classify us as commercial theatre, as shallow theatre, as banal theatre… so our colleagues were annoyed because of the kind of theatre we did, but our audience didn’t saw it that way. So we realised we were serving the audience our colleagues were neglecting, because the audience who attended [their shows], without diminishing the job of our colleagues, wanted to have fun and ended up bored, tired, stressed, and they didn’t wanted to come back to the theatre”.

Moreover, Mauricio Diaz recognizes his music was the only band from the Pacific Music with only four members and in that sense they are innovative. Even now, they are nine, but they use different instruments, which helped them to develop their unique style. Their mestizo influence is also a component of a different proposal:

“In 2009, when we won the first place, in the same festival, in the same category, the free style, which is supposed to be a new trend, more urban, is from people who have experimented with the rhythms, we received many critiques, many critiques from the orthodoxs. There are many of them who do not like it, they say “oh! What are those guys doing!”, but there are some other who say “how nice! How nice what you have are nowadays, in 2009, without a Marimba, which is the main characteristic of all this30”.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The results shown above are a clear example of how the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia is linked to hybridization (García-Canclini, 2001). On one hand, they wish to show local identity and recognize themselves, their enterprises and their products as Colombian, Caleños and Bogotanos. Similar to what Barbero suggests (2000), despite globalization, local identity is not dead; the tension between global and local markets seems to nurture the entrepreneur’s creativity. They are capable of creating new styles, new arts formats and new music genres.

On the other hand, the cultural entrepreneurs accept the rules of the market. They feel they are capable of being competitive, innovative and of opening new markets. However, cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia do not respond entirely to a neoliberal discourse on entrepreneurship, as Rowan (2010) stated. By fusioning genres, concepts and ideas, the cultural entrepreneurs in are breaking the established order and create value from their ideas,

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30 The Marimba is the main instrument of the Pacific Music. It is made of wood and some resonators.
as Howkins (2001) states. Nevertheless, their main motive to be entrepreneurs is having freedom to be creative, not earning money. Albeit they know their business need to be sustainable, they do not pursue wealth in the most neoliberal sense of the word. Self realization, learning, networking, access to interesting people and ideas, innovation and recognition of their artistic proposal seem to be more important than money.

The results also illustrate an orientation of the participants to the DiY culture and citizenship (McKay (1999) and Hartley, (2007). This allows them to build SPWGs groups (Blair and Daskalaki, 2002) and work with project-based teams linked by strong bonding and similar tastes. They wish to work by themselves and with their networks, searching for opportunities without public funding, since they perceive it as corrupt and inefficient. However, the awards from contests of the government are a way to open new opportunities and gain legitimacy.

In that sense, the first recommendation from this study, at a governmental level, would be to promote and support more cultural ventures with startup funding, networking and access to bigger markets. The creation of spaces where these small and medium organisations can access global markets, potential customers and international collaborators will bring new business opportunities and increase creativity. The five participants of the study have demonstrated they are ready to manage international markets by themselves.

It would also be interesting to replicate similar studies in different regions of Colombia to verify if there are shifts in the identity of the cultural entrepreneurs according the region. As this study is qualitative, it has no aim to generalise the results to other Colombian cultural entrepreneurs. Similar qualitative studies should be undertaken in order to contribute to create public policies, projects and programs that fit the real needs of the cultural entrepreneurs of each region, and therefore build a strong, competitive and stable cultural industry in the country.

**Word Count: 14994.**
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Appendix A

Studies of the Economic Impact of the Cultural Industries in Colombia

The Cultural industries in Colombia have gained more recognition during the last decade. Relevant studies such as *Impacto económico de las industrias culturales en Colombia*³¹, by the Convenio Andrés Bello during 1999 and 2001, the *Mapeo económico de las industrias creativas en la ciudad de Bogotá D.C y Soacha*³² by the British Council (2002) and the creation of a Satellite Account on Culture in 2003 were the base to start thinking about the Cultural industries in Colombia and their impact on economic development. The British Council mapping was the first one made in Latina America, and therefore, Colombia is an example of their creative economy unit in the continent.

In 2009, the Satellite Account on Culture, from the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas DANE³³ launched a comparative study of the economic growth of the cultural activities between 2000 and 2007. This study included activities such as “Publishing, Radio, Television and Cable, Advertising, Photography, Research and Cultural Development Services, Leisure and Cultural Services (Production and Exhibition of Film, Radio and Television, Theatre, Art Services, Private cultural organisations, among others), Museums, Arts Education and Government services that provide goods and cultural services” (DANE, 2009, p. 2). The study showed that the cultural activities represented the 1.78% of the National GDP in 2007.

On the other hand and developing a different methodology, the World Intellectual Property Organisation WIPO and the Dirección Nacional de Derechos de Autor³⁴ published a study called “Economical Contribution of the Copyright industries and related rights in Colombia” in 2008. This study measured the impact of the industry in exports and imports, added value and employment generation in the period between 2005 and 2006. The results of this research showed that the Copyright industries represented the 3.3% of the GDP.

³¹Economic impact of the cultural industries in Colombia.
³²Economic Mapping of the Creative Industries in Bogota and Soacha,
³³The DANE is the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia.
³⁴The National Copyright Directorate is the entity in charge of designing and implementing the national policies related to copyright in Colombia. It is part of the Ministry of Interior and Justice.
The cases and the previous studies show the increasing interest in the Creative and Cultural Industries in the country. The Ministry of Culture created the Cultural Entrepreneurship program in the in 2008. In the same line, the Competitive Committee for the development of the cultural industries was created as part of the governmental strategy to build policies for the industry in 2009. As a result, two policies where launched, as it is explained in the document.

Appendix B

Semi structured interview questionnaire

1. Please tell me about the origins of the organisation. Who created it and why?

2. Now please tell me about how the team works. Which members are permanent and which are freelance?

3. Do you hire the same freelancers over time? How do you select the freelancers?

4. Please describe the networks you are in as an entrepreneur. Why do you select these networks over others?

5. Which are the advantages and disadvantages of each network?

6. In your opinion, which of these networks has been most determinant to the consolidation and growth of the organisation and why?

7. Which networks have you dismissed, or consciously rejected and why?

8. How do you think the way you define yourself has changed after you performed your role in the organisation?
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

"Identity and networks of the cultural entrepreneurs in Colombia"

Dear Entrepreneur:

You have been invited to participate in a research about the characteristics of Colombian cultural entrepreneurs, their networks and how these support / transform their identity. This research is performed by Angela Maria Reyes, candidate for master's degree in Management of Creative Economy at Kingston University, UK.

The research will contribute to knowledge about the country's cultural industries from the perspective of the entrepreneurs. Its aim is strictly academic and intends to complement other quantitative studies that have marked milestones in the development of policies and programs to promote cultural and creative industries in the country. You were selected to participate in this research because of the history and recognition of your organisation, at a national and international level.

This study will involve three successful entrepreneurs in Bogota and three in Cali.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to answer orally to an interview that consists of 9 questions geared towards the history of the organization, how you have organized its networks, who participates in the organization and how you describe your role as entrepreneur. This study will take about 1 hour (maximum an hour and a half), of your time, in order to complete the interview. Interviews will be tape recorded and then analyzed qualitatively.

Privacy

Any information or data that may identify the participant will be handled confidentially. Raw data for this research will be analyzed by the researcher and shared only with the two supervisors of the research project, professors from Kingston University. If requested, the identity of the entrepreneur will be kept anonymous. In this case, the researcher will use a pseudonym for the name of the entrepreneur as well as for the organization to which he/she is part of.

The results of the study will be published in the final document of the Master's dissertation, and some fragments of the interviews will be translated into English. A copy of the final document, including transcripts of interviews in the appendixes, will be evaluated by the Department of the Creative Economy MA at Kingston University and will be kept in the library of the institution.

To contribute to the study of cultural industries in Colombia, the results of the research, and excerpts of it may be used in academic articles, public and private documents, databases and academic journals.

The Directives and professors of the MA in Creative Economy at Kingston University, as well as agencies responsible for ensuring the integrity of the research may ask the researcher for the data obtained in this study, including this document.
Rights
If you have read this document and have decided to participate in the study, please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you are entitled to abstain from participation or withdraw at any time. You also have the right not to answer a particular question. You are also entitled to receive a copy of this document.

If you have questions or need more information about this research, please contact Angela Maria Reyes at: angelamariareyes@gmail.com or K1035088@kingston.ac.uk.

Signing this document means that you have decided to participate in the study, after reading and discussing the information presented in this consent form and received a copy of this document.

Many thanks for your help!

_________________________________   ___________________ ______________
Name of the participant   Signature   Date

I have discussed the content of this consent form with the participant signing above.

_________________________________   ___________________ ______________
Angela Maria Reyes   Signature   Date   Researcher
Appendix C

Translation of important fragments of the interviews

Translation Liliana Andrade, El Parlante Amarillo

“Well, look, “This is the consequence of a life process, I say. Long ago, I worked making a TV program called Mucha Musica (Much Music) in CityTV, and I was very happy specially because of helping young people to broadcast their projects, people with the will to do stuff, people that are doing stuff and that is not valuated”.

“I like music very much, I am a super fan, I love going and making interviews, and know people that I think is...I mean, I strongly believe that musicians are like... I don’t know... like contemporary poets with whom a person can identify with, I think music joins, so I like listening to the discourse of people who is making music”

“After I left City [TV] I did lots of things on TV, bigger projects, projects in which I managed huge budgets, lots of money. I lived many experiences there, but to tell you I was full, mmm, in the sense of nurturing the soul, well, I never had the sensation I had making Mucha Musica”

“I studied, I worked and I did low budget productions, middle size budget productions and productions with a big budget... over the time I acquired... I created my own producer, I have my stuff, I have my camera, I have my PC for editing”.

“And that moment in my life arrives when I said “how boring to keep working always for the traditional media, let’s say, as an employee, basically”. And even though I have my production company, that is already the beginning of my own entrepreneurship venture, but in a way I was not taking my production company seriously, I had it as a plan B. I had an important client with whom I produced fashion stuff, but it wasn’t my priority”

“[In a moment] many wishes come together. On one hand, the will to continue working on what filled my soul, because I helped people, and on the other hand because I learned to see things about life, and I met people that I thought was interesting because of their approach to life through music”.

“[At that time] the TV channels were still just RCN and Caracol, and there was City [TV], kind of a new channel [...] without diminishing the importance of the media, because people believe too much in them, I mean, people gives it more value than it really have; but using that condition of the media... besides you were nothing if you didn’t appeared on TV, and appear in Caracol and RCN is impossible”.

“I was in huge, millionaire projects, I mean, I was executive producer for la Isla de los Famosos (reality similar to Survivor) or for, mmm, Big Brother for three countries. It was nice to learn to make TV like that, but after doing that, and after living in a world with a lot of people a bit complicated... because for some reason, and maybe because of how overrated TV is, people think they are gods because they do soap operas (novelas) and manage a TV channel, or hire actors... I don’t know, they do not notice that they are not doing anything transcendent in their lives, they are mean to people... it is a very boring style the one the TV world has... not everywhere but in many places it is”.

“I managed and I clearly know the TV business, and I move there, and I kind of manage it, with a small-medium size production company, without the goal to compete with Caracol, or Televideo, nor those big companies that already have their things. I am good at that part in TV, and I feel that here on the internet we are achieving a, a high value in knowledge, in learning, that I do not know if... that I hope tomorrow will be valued, I mean, valued and quantified somehow”.

“I was already tired of that, I do not want to be [working] on that, I want to do whatever I want, life is too short and I want to be happy, basically”.

“And everything got together, I know how the business works, I have contacts in the music [industry], I know what I like, I know how to do it, I have the equipments and thank god technology is also favourable for me...Now I don’t have to queue to show the project to anyone and tell him “hey, can I get a space on your
channel...So with Julian, who is my life partner, we talked a bit about the idea, and we thought it was nice, we thought it was kind of innovative. In the US there’s, let’s say, there are some internet channels that do this kind of contents, there’s a channel called Current TV, there’s another one called Rocket Boom, well. And also a generalist space as YouTube, it kind of shows you what you can do... so... so all that ideas, all that circumstances, the situation of that specific moment, when we say “ok, let’s do a project where we can promote music, let’s do that nice stuff we used to do at Mucha Musica”.

[we said] “let’s do a project where we can promote music... let’s do that beautiful thing we used to do at Mucha Musica... we already know who to talk to, where to move, we have the equipments, we can lead a group of friends with whom we share the same spirit”.

“So we went through the process of having this clear [the project], we met PRANA; we took the [business plan] course de deliver there to become an incubatee, I did, and then I applied to Colciencias. We won the start up capital, and everything started to run, to become real...”

“And honestly it was design in every sense, in terms of... let’s say I knew exactly... you see El Parlante Amarillo and I see El Parlante Amarillo and I say “what I am watching is what I wanted”.

“[I wanted it] to look high quality, but it doesn’t has to be a huge project where I need to rent a helicopter and fire explosions, special effects, no. It had to be high quality but... something with a high impact but not expensive”.

The team

“It is a small team where each one brings what there are good at, also according to their circumstances and availability of time. I wanted to join people I knew in the team, and people I knew... for example Maria Cecilia was my candidate to do this project from the beginning...”

“I thought about her when I wrote that, and Maria of course gave a lot of her into it... she gave her section a great personality, which nowadays is called El Cerebro (the brain), and I told her: “it is perfect”. What I need from Maria is her to come, present El Cerebro and maybe help to sort out some things like “we have to go and talk, we have to go and say hello, we have to...”, she is like the face of the project, but I do not start, I don’t want her to, or I haven’t asked her “hey, I want you to write the script, I want you to research, I want you to edit”, no, she doesn’t has the time for that, she doesn’t know how to do it, I mean, her strength is to present”.

“So really the team was made up, in the start up phase, because that has changed... let’s say the heads are Julian and me”.

“Let’s say I manage the general production of the project and I specialize on production, and Julian specializes on the concept, in the music criteria, because he knows a lot about the subject... he is specialized in the port production image, the editing part, and the part related to the web page programming... he has learnt about that, Julian is a genius, I don’t know (laughs), he gets along with computers”.

“And from there to the bottom there has been kind of collaborators-partners, basically we have had three presenters, who have been key of success, because of their image and what they project, that helps a lot to position El Parlante. So there’s Maria Cecilia, there’s Simona Sanchez, and there’s Matías Calvo. And anyway Matias comes and goes because he lives half of his life in Buenos Aires and half of his life in Colombia, in Bogotá, he comes and goes”.

“What I also expect from Matias is for him to come and present and to sablish connections, because they are kind of referents of youth music... everybody is sending info about stuff to Simona, to Maria and to Matias, and well, they send it to us... mmm... we have had two turnover support in production... at the beginning my sister was there”.

[Erika was] a friend, yes, she was my intern at Mucha Musica many years ago, and we have continued working, well, I’ll put you in context later because for example they are not in... well, they are but they are not... there’s also a girl called Liz Franco, she helps editing and she generally helps us editing a note once a week, before she helped in two...”
“And that is the team, basically. At the beginning we had the money from Colciencias and we had the basic advise from a lawyer on the copy right subject, we had someone who helped us to set up some stuff on marketing, but I also have an specialization on marketing, so I also know a bit about that…”

“And I have some alliances outside, there’s an important alliance, it is very important but is very complicated, which is the sales alliance. I have some people that commercializes, I have worked with 8 sales persons in history… they belong to enterprises specialized on media sales, but that is complicated, very complicated because it is only by commission, and sales on the internet are very cheap”

“There is sometimes a camera guy that works for me at the production company, and he gives me a special price when it is only for El Parlante….”.

“I told them, it is not for you to help by for granted or something, I want you to be partners of the project, and they are”.

“The partner’s figure. I designed a scheme where I calculated things like, well, el Parlante costs this amount of meny each month, 100 pesos, right? From that 100 pesos, I valuated, I mean, I valuated the work of everyone, the investment, the expenditure, everything we have to pay. Form that 100 pesos I know me, Liliana, brings 60, Julian brings 30 and each of you brings 5, right? Obviously I have valued it on a real based price, I do not value Marias price as her celebrity price, no, I use the price of El Parlante hiring an internet presenter, fair, where she comes once or twice a month. It was kind of a valuation where everyone was happy. The day we generate money, everyone is partner on this percentage, which is more or less balanced”.

“Profits, because we are all partners… and I thought “it would be nice to call this guys, to all these young people, right? In general terms they have never thought the y could be partners of an enterprise”.

“ I just said to them “well, I want you to bring your work, and your motivation and spirit, and that I wish you to put this project on your shoulders and help to promote it from what they are doing, right?” If Maria gives an interview anywhere she talks about El Parlante, or Simona as well, you know what I mean? So it is about what they can give”.

“It is people that have to provide work to me, but as well as they do not have money to bring as partners… like investors of the project… they also sometimes do not have money for their current life”.

“There was Julian’s brother who was the person in charge of marketing, and the idea was that he helped us to move a lot of things. But the guy simply didn’t have time, he didn’t have the time and it was too weird for him”.

“For Julian and me is not that bad, because we have always fought like that. He [Julian’s brother] has always worked in an office and he enters at a specific hour and leaves at another one, and he does not work on weekends. It was so weird for him to attend meetings at eight on the evening, to end up [in a meeting] on Monday, Tuesday… that he must work on Saturday or on Sunday… that is not for everyone. We, the ones working on TV do not have that schedule scheme or something… but anyway it is very hard”.

“we’re almost in charge of everything. Maybe sometimes Julian records and I… Julian plays as the camera guy, and I always play as the reporter, also because, because is what I like most… and writing, almost everything I have, almost everything is writing, managing social networks, I am in charge of that…”.

“It is the persistent struggle of how to combine having a job and then having another job, right? That is the hardest part of all, because sometimes the work that gives you money wins over the work that doesn’t, and in that context people change”.

“People helping me have been declining, which only means that Julian and I have to do more and more and more and more work, that has been the hardest test of all”.

“I can demand people who I pay to…. Maria is now recording a telenovela (latonamerican soapopera), and she records Monday to Saturdays from seven in the morning to eight in the evening, so it is almost impossible to see each other. Right? So what? Should I ask Maria “quit your telenovela and stay with El Parlante Amarillo, where I can’t pay you while the other pays you who knows how much money”, well, no. so when this begin to happen,
the team starts to change, my sister leaves, the other guy leaves… When I had money to pay Liz, Liz helped us more, and now is more or less when she can, although she still is committed, and she said “ok, let’s leave it one note a week”.

“For example at Rock al Parque a lot of people appear saying “how can we help you?” I say to them “help me!” and they come and help, and they wear the t-shirt, we go, we set up [the stand], we split… like we have a working plan: “ok, you are in team A, in team B, you are in charge of this”, and everyone assumes responsibilities. I told them this year I’m poorer than past years, this year I was poor, so when lunch came, they all come to lunch, so “sorry, I can’t buy you lunch”, you know? But everyone understands the mechanism and how is the deal, and they do it with love, this year at Rock al Parque it was wonderful to see that”.

“There are lots of things that I say… I give back… I give back that, I teach, I explain, I explain you how to edit, I explain you how to do this other thing, whenever you go out to make an interview, this is the interview technique: “look, this is the question’s strategy”… so let’s say that… well, there are roles, a very nice time emerged, people do it in order to learn, to learn and also because they like it… I mean, there are many weirdos like us (laughs)”.

“there is people that I don’t know well. I have a correspondent in Belgium, and one in Barcelona, and the guys record and edit notes and send them to me, in exchange of nothing, in exchange of appearing on El Parlante and that I get them some press credentials to go to festivals. Because they are all the same fans as me, so, so a community emerges, where mutual help rules, so everyone understands how the business works. I tell everyone, from the beginning “look, if you want to enter El Parlante to truly help me, truly, you can, but I tell you, I don’t have a peso”.

“What I’m telling you, “these two guys, I don’t know them really, one used to work at City [TV] and we became friends on Facebook. He lives in Belgium and told me “hey, I love it!”… I even sent him a cube from El Parlante with someone who was travelling. So he sometimes does his notes. The one from Barcelona as well… for some reasons he ended there, he went to school with Julian but he didn’t know Julian was part of this, or anything, but he worked with another friend who is a journalist and he write to me “hey! I’m in Barcelona, I like what you guys are doing”.

“now he has… I have a presenter, that I do not even know who she is, a friend of his, but she is wonderful […] she appeared in a report for Primavera Sound […] and she is great, pretty, Spanish, beautiful… so of course people see this and says “El Parlante Amarillo is presenting on Spain!””.

“[the international reporters], they have never been told to be partners”.

“the enterprise hasn’t grown that much for me to notice who are real partners, those who have been there, no matter what, making one or two reports, recording, going back and forth, presenting despite the circumstances”.

Simona was not at the beginning. Simona entered later…mmm… and Simona, no one is more responsible and well behaved than Simona. She works hard and with so much love, with affection, so Simona is partner”

“It is verbal [the agreement], we talked about some charts with percentages, that stuff, but we haven’t signed anything…. but now that we are talking about this, I will do it, I will do it now, because with everything that is going on, we are starting to generate some income…”

“Velouria was born in 2003, and we are in 2011, it is eight years old, and to live exclusively from it, I have lived form Velouria the last four years, Julián and me”

“There is sometimes a camera guy that works for me at the production company, and he gives me a special price when it is only for El Parlante…..”

“There is no one hired… well, Mariana has a contract, she has a short time contract, we work some months a year and that’s it”.

“Someday El Parlante will pay the debts to [Velouria]. I keep my records, we have very clear accounts, about what money it has lent, when…. The money Velouria has lent to El Parlante, it will pay it back someday…. 
Basically El Parlante is a project managed by Velouria, because I have signed contracts, agreements, and I do it through Velouria, or on my own behalf, Liliana. For Colciencias I used my name, I used velouria… I used different strategies…”

A: how do you recruit people?

“In general, I kind of work with people I already know. I have been working for so long, I have worked in so many big projects, where I have contacted so many people, and there are people I keep in my heart, there are people with whom I get along perfectly, like Erica”.

“When I’m looking for someone I don’t know, for example I was looking for an assistant, I write to my young friends, the ones I used to hire for small jobs, because here I do not generate high profile jobs or objectives, no, mine are fieldworks, and many of the ones I hired as fieldwork producer, the one who I hired as cameraman, many of them are nowadays Director of Photography”.

“When I don’t know someone [to do the job] I write to some of the people in certain jobs, I tell them “recommend me some one”, and they generally send me someone. I am open to receive mails, CV’s, and I get millions, I get a lot. But generally I go for referred and I interview them. My main criterion is that that person must be kind (laughs)… that is my number one criteria. Because I have worked with very clever people but not very nice people… and someday I thought, thinking it was very professional of me, “this is the best cameraman in the world, let’s hire him, since I won’t be with him all day, and I need him to do well done shots. I know what I need and I don’t care if he is a nice person or not”. I used to think that, now I don’t. I prefer someone less good at camera…”

“However I believe I have a good eye, because is not only the kindest person in the world, I have found very talented people and very specific in each thing… so, so that guarantees you stuff… the cameraman I work with is precious and he is a very good cameraman. Liz and Julian are awesome at editing and my friends…”

“If you have a good selection process of hosts, of the information you provide, of the way you work, of how you make your people to treat other people… I mean if Mariana goes out and meets any metalhead mop guy, she treats him good. And people think “the people from El Parlante Amarillo are so nice”, so that generates something…. It is the whole thing, to project an image… so that is why I select both talented and kind people”.

“My entire friends network is very valuable, because is people with a similar sensibility. Almost all you friends, not all of them, most of them are the same way as you that is why they are your friends. Sometimes you have a friend different from you, but most of the people you like to hang out is because you agree with them in your vision of life, the movies you like, the music you listen… well, those friends are another network very useful for me, also to make the project known and grow, they are the same consumers of the project”

“[whenever] I need someone to help me at some part… I go and say “Hey, I need to talk to you because I want you to help me”. I establish contact like that. However life is very funny because there’s always someone who knows someone who knows that someone and introduces you”.

**PRANA, the creative industries incubator**

“I know I ask Juan Carlos35, “Juan Carlos, I need someone who can help me with this”… Juan Carlos knows someone and introduces me and helps me, I have no doubt, and I am thankful for that. He helped me with Camilo Fidel, who came here to give a talk on everything about enterprises, or… well for example, one way or another I really met Paula Silva (from the British Council) because of PRANA, and Paula met El Parlante because of that, and after a cocktail at Juan Carlos’ and bam! You see? Its alike an award36 for other stuff… so it works, but sometimes I don’t know if it is a network or a contact.. is like a network that leads to a contact, but is not like I see the spider web clearly”.

35 Juan Carlos Gaitán is the Executive Director of PRANA, a Creative Industries incubator. It is based on the British Council model, which is partner of PRANA. Liliana incubated El Parlante Amarillo in PRANA and won the Colciencias contest by presenting it as an incubatee from PRANA.

36 Liliana won the International young music entrepreneur award from the British Council this year, and represented Colombia in London.
“Sometimes my life goes by doing things I like, but I shouldn’t because I should be working for, I don’t know, the commercial stuff, doing more stuff. I do everything I can, in the time seven days a week gives me… and there’s always something missing”.

Being an entrepreneur

“That is our life, that’s it, I mean, we must understand who we are, and understand the circumstances, because sometimes I want to have it all, and I know I cannot have it all, because I have to go step by step, knowing which are my life circumstances”.

“I want to be happy, and [if] I have a small, medium or large business, whatever, I want to be surrounded by good people; people in a good mood; I think everything can be solved with a positive energy and a good mood… I mean, problems arise anyway, and it is better to solve them the best way, not with fights and tare, and those horrible things I have lived already”.

“Whenever I meet someone, I see that person as a possible ally for something, I don’t know, just maybe as someone who will watch it [El Parlante Amarillo] and will give me some views [on the internet traffic] …just business speaking… or maybe it turns out that this guy is the manager of something, or could be a potential advertiser, or could be friends with some… I mean, I believe the people around you, or people you meet or something, maybe that connection is helpful for something, and you have to use it always. So I am the most friendly person in the world, not in Machiavellian terms but I do believe in that….”

“So I am selling what I do everywhere all the time… so I look like a parrot. I’m always dressed in yellow, talking about yellow everywhere, you know what I mean? And I have to, that is my job, so I’m looking who for someone to connect to all the time, but thinking it is a network, everyone form PRANA, I don’t know… sometimes I believe networks are the key, very important, mostly when there are some record labels and artists interested in promotion, spread… so we become friends easily”

 “[I have] more white hair, I have more gastritis, I quit exercising (laughs), but… I never have free time, I am always tired… basically I have learned a lot about everything, about the digital business, mmm, I have learned and assimilated these entrepreneurship concepts…”

“So sustain yourself alone the first three years, without losing your courage, without losing your mind, I don’t know, if you do not have a surname, or a father with an interesting inheritance, well, not”.

“I would understand my elf and I would say, “ok, I won’t do Parlante anymore, because I am killing myself”… what I told you before, about the gray hair, about getting fat, because I can’t tell you I haven’t been sicker than ever, I never rest, really”.

“I am exhausted but I am happy […] I am happy because what we are doing is actually very hard, I mean, I am proud of what I am doing, and we are in the business, and I feel, for what I have seen and what I have learned, the trip to London, the trip to the US, that I have done some things that actually are not… that what we are doing here is relatively new… and this is new in other places, we are actually pioneers”.

“I feel that many of the objectives, many of the essential objectives, the ones that provide structure to your life and determine the type of person you are, what we wanted to achieve with El Parlante,…we are doing it perfectly, so at the end we are happy”

“I believe we do not have the expectancy to be hyper super millionaire, I would be happy to have a dedicated team, well paid, very happy and that maybe we could pull some other derivate things that we see can be done. I mean, I am talking about many more years of work”.

“I do not regret anything, I am happy, I am proud, I have learned a lot, and someone told me “of course, you are millionaires, not in money sense, but you are millionaires in another way”. I am happy because I have… I interviewed a guy in England called Don Letts, that I think is wow! Or we interviewed this girls called Guerrilla Girls, that I love”.

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“So it gives you lots, lots of happiness and lots of satisfaction. and you also feel you are doing something for yourself too… because we could keep on doing fashion videos, and that stuff… that is interesting and we make our living out of it but… this gives you a feeling, a feeling here, I don’t know, to be at Rock al parque and that people tells you “hey” cool!!” and that is nice, right? That [sensation] is not given by anything else”.

**Music industry**

“Let’s say I was in a network, long ago, that has to be with people in the music scene, right? Because people do not change their work easily…. Since I did Mucha Musica, I mean, the people at the record labels are still the same, all of them. Sometimes one form Universal switched to EMI, the one from EMI switched to Warner, which now is called K Music…. But in general all of them are still the same, and even though I do not work too close with record labels, all of them are my friends, because at Mucha Musica we did important things. At Mucha Musica we did important things that had never been done before here”.

“So at Mucha Musica we did some interviews, great ones, I was at the studio with Charly García when he recorded an album with Nito Mestre, you get what I mean? And that was cool because it created a credibility in which I still stand on”.

“I always say, oh, no, do not invite me to a press release; I do not attend press releases. I’d rather get an interview with the artist, if not, I do not want it, thanks. It sounds cocky but is the truth. Why would I like a horrible press release, ugly, were a lot of horrible journalists attend to ask stupid questions? Right? No, I want my interview, and it is the truth, is not because I’m cocky, but it is a matter of reality, there a lots of nice artists willing to give you an interview”.

“I do not struggle for what everyone wants… but the record labels for example, it is a basic network, the record labels know what am I good at, and they look for me. They tell me “we wont give you this” and “no, don’t you have this?”, we do not have to argue, they do not call me for a press release. If someone calls me for a press release is because that person doesn’t know me”.

“There are hundreds of characters at the record labels, hundreds, that interest me. I almost know all the bands, sometimes I get confused with who is form which band, but I know all of them, all of them know us and that helps”.

“But when people knows what el Parlante Amarillo is, who we are and what we do, somehow… kind of “there’s Simona, there’s María”, there are some faces that people connect with key points”.

**Access**

“Is like having access to so interesting people, and also see, well, I get satisfied watching how people give you feedback, in the networks, on the internet and all of that. People… people values that stuff you do, I don’t know, it is incredible to say “We went to Paris for holidays, we went to Pompidu, to the Modern Arts Museum and we saw a poster of this arts collective Guerrilla Girls”, and I was like “how nice!”’. It was like a feminist stuff that I looked afterwards on the internet, we wrote to them, they wrote back, they gave us an interview on Skype and we got the interview... and then we get an email “we are some people undertaking a feminist film festival at Lituania, and we would love to show the interview from El Parlante Amarillo to Guerrilla Girls”, In Lituania! And one says “in Lituania!... of course, do it, go ahead, and quote the credits”.

“I used to tell to the ones at CityTV “buy that channel!” , that channel was not Canal 13 at the time, it was called TeleAndina, something like that. I told them “guys, I designed a Music Channel, buy me that channel and I’ll do one Music Channel for me, haha”, like a joke. How could a crazy woman like me say that to the president of the channel. And I told Juan Lozano “buy me that channel and I will do a very good music channel for young people”, and obviously not, they didn’t. Well, that channel became Canal 13 and you see Canal 13 and it still does not have the quality of what we did at Mucha Musica”.

“in these business where we have to position, I don’t know, a brand, a product, get released, create a credibility, blablabla... you do not generate income the first year or two. Someone told me, because this topic is drilling my head, “look all your work, and .... How long have you guys been working?”, “almost two years”, and he said
“well, in the internet people start to get a little bit of money after year 3 […] so sustain yourself alone without losing motivation or reason”.

“not long ago an advertising agency called us, called PreciseManagement, and they are launching a positioning campaign for Bogotá, in Colombia. So they told us they selected the best, or the most influential digital media on the internet to help them… and I went and of course, everyone was so little, I noticed they didn’t even had a business card, or anything […] so I told them, “look, independently of what they are offering, from Precise Management, this is a huge mess”. I told many of them I knew “why not, it would be nice if we talk, that we meet, and that we help each other”… because, for example, I think if one has a sales agent, that one can sell not one website, but ten of the ones gathered here, so it is easier to sell, right? Like the sales person from Casa Editorial [El Tiempo], who sells not only El Tiempo (main newspaper in the country) but other products”.

“Money is definitively essential. I had the money from Colciencias, and “what I used this money for?” To expand it the more I could for a year. To give a little bit, it was not fuel but fuel smell for everyone. I spent the money on the design of the webpage, and the remaining was used to give everyone a mini salary”.

“Now Colciencias is delivering some workshops and people has to go and present [their project] and well..They have to present videos in order to win the money… I believe this is more responsible, because before it was irresponsible, they gave the money just like that, there was no one to follow up the projects in terms of real support, there was only the deal of legalizing the money, but they didn’t go to see what was happening with the projects”.

“There was a girl [from Colciencias] who came because I asked her “I want you to come, I want you to see what we are doing, I want you to see what we’ve done with the money, I want you to see the video we made at Cartagena (when they won the India Catalina award), we thanked Colciencias, I want you to see all that”. She came and saw that and she was very surprised, I told her all the process and she said to me “no, you need more support”.

“And she told me “to be honest, from all the projects I’ve visited, there’s a high percentage of them dead, a high, very high percentage”. And what a waste to let 100 million pesos die, to waste that money for a year, and [the entrepreneur] saying “oh, it was not real, I was playing about making cookies”… they should give it to the people that is still there, working”.

“If I was Colciencias, if I was someone, I should give money to each project to start, but not for a year. I would give it money for three [years]. Obviously phase one is enough for some stuff, phase two is for other stuff, because start up is difficult, but sustainability is even more difficult”.

“I mean, it was nothing, but if I gave Maria 200,000 pesos, which is nothing, for Maria to buy candies, it was different to give her 200,000 than not giving her money at all”.

“Those things give you satisfaction, and those awards are cool too, because they take you outside, they tell you, they take you to live another experience, that is super cool. They invited us to the Toronto Film festival, last year, and we went…”

Access for young musicians

“if you are not Juanes or Shakira, it is difficult to have access. And when we gave all these people the space, even if they played nice, horrible, or in the middle, but we gave them value as a cultural expression… really the musical scene got stronger with that program, and it made many people happy, so it gave me many satisfactions”.

“I have a friend on the site, she told me “please, make a report about Lucas Arnau, please please plase” and I told her “look, what we do at El Parlante is not that […] but Lucas Arnau, he does not fit… if you have other small artists, I mean, Lucas Arnau is ok, he has the press release he wants at Caracol, RCN… why would he appear at El Parlante? He doesn’t need it. But if you have a small artist that no one is paying attention to… I’m interested in that kind of people”.
“No, unless, well, everything is a negotiation, you give me something and help me, and I help you with other things...”.

“Lucas Arnau is not our goal. We like independent sounds... yes, we like artists that develop a personal vision of their music, or of whatever, because an important thing is that el Parlante is not only music. But let’s say that the base of it is born on that musical spirit... that rocker spirit, I mean, the rocker spirit understood as... the attitude. Yes, kind of rebellious, kind of I do it yourself, right?”.

most of the people we [show] is people we think has merit and has done the effort, and who does not has the screen you can get here... I mean, I had Shakira’s exclusive [video] and we didn’t post it... maybe we would have got more traffic, but no, I’m lying, for sure we wouldn’t because we have built a community who likes what we do”.

“And I have an interview with Juanes, and I have an interview with Carlos Vives, but I didn’t interview them about their records, or their hits, or their last video. Juanes gives advice to independent artists. Carlos Vives talks about our Rock ancestors and about how rock was important in his life to create his music proposal”.

“I generally try to look up for inspiring testimonies, so people can see that Vicentico didn’t had it easy, that Eli Guerra didn’t had it easy, not even Juanes”

“It is not about the music style. It is a matter of giving the opportunity to those who have not that possibility. That is it”.

“Sometimes I say as a joke “El Parlante is a poor but honest channel” (from the saying pobre pero honrado), in a sense it does not look poor because we do things very well, you get what I mean? (laughs). It is true, it looks high quality, and people think there is a human team behind, right? People tell me “these people are flying!” (from volando, slang, similar to growing fast), and people thinks of it as MTV, something big like that, when it really is small”.

“So I said, “well, I need to generate traffic, I need to be seen, who can make me be seen a lot?” so I looked up and MSN is the portal, Microsoft is the tough one, the biggest monster, the devil, Bill Gates, but ok. “who do I know there to help me do something?”, and actually, I knew someone who introduced me. I showed them the project, they loved it and we have an alliance”.

“because MSN is the portal with more traffic in Colombia, well, in Latinamerica... MSN is strong in every country [...] and RCN [has a similar alliance and] pays for that, and I have basically the same but I don’t pay, they thank me because I post content there”

“RocketBoom is so nice, but we are talking about the US, the first world, where people invests more money... but they don’t produce so many videos as us, and I am talking about a very wealthy newyorker gringos, that have their business running, and they do not do as many videos as we do. I mean, they make a living out of that and they have sold licences and they are my role model, but, well, they move in another universe. So I am proud because we are pioneers, we are learnig a lot of stuff”.

Mauricio Diaz, sin nombre Son

“Sin nombre son was born officially in 2002, it is born as a personal desire which turned into a desire of collective desire, from two people in particular. One is Julian García and me, Mauricio Diaz”.

“Julian García and me, Mauricio Diaz. We were part of a youth Muppet and theatre group from here, and there was empathy in the music and artistic [taste] when we were in the first years of college. It is from there where our need to express with music emerges, like a connection in the music taste, a total empathy besides our music taste that evolved with time”.

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“It was called grupo de teatro y títeres la Tarimba 37 and we did the music and at the same time the acting part was very integral, so we sang, we made oral tradition from the Pacific, lots of narrative, and from there we started thinking to make “Sin nombre son”.

“I travel to France and I also finish my French Language studies, and when I return we meet, and I have composed some stuff already and I improved a bit my musical skills because I had the opportunity to sing in a salsa orchestra from some Frenchs, a crazy thing”.

“We share the same music taste and that love for the traditional [music] from the Pacific, we were number one fans from the Petronio Alvarez, of what was brewing there. You know that when people is Young they are more attached to their roots, and more when they have been raised to love their roots. His music history [from Julian García] was very similar to mine, so we found an escape in the Petronio Alvarez, a total connection. There the boning gets stronger and we said “we will participate in this event someday”.

“When I arrived, we find two other musicians, he quits the group he was in, and we work more or less for half a year. We participate that year in the Petronio Alvarez with my compositions and we achieved a second place”.

“So with four members it starts to be a novel proposal, because we were all mestizos, half White, when the festival was totally afro… the tradition, and also because it was novel to be only four, what can two guitars and a bombo and a guazá do? Well, people liked it”.

“It has been a process of growth for all of us, even in the number of members. Today we are nine, from the four that started. We have always managed a hierarchical structure regarding to the direction. When you are in a music band you have a director, you have some people who definitely have the vision of where to go…

“And even though there is a collective creation going on in the project, it has always been Julián García and Mauricio Diaz the ones who have the vision to lead the group into a certain path, or where to go, or which contract to choose”.

“I mean, I have always been the one in charge of promotion, I mean, Mauricio Diaz is the one in charge of the image. Whe you don’t have an arts assessor, when you don’t have a promoter, well… this was ten years ago…”.

“Today we have a manager who works with the group, she just joined us, because in the group history we have had two or three managers, who have not been hired on a service contract but on the base of the affections and the desire to work and generate their own income by selling the group, a freelancer, let’s say”.

“But nowadays we want that figure to change, I mean, the person who is now working with us is clear, her management must have a time limit for things to happen, and we can thing of her to join as the legal representative…”.

“We have no legal formalisation. We have decided to dilate that conformation until, at least, we have more elements [to judge]... we are concerned about the tax fluctuation. The taxes, wait it take to formalise today, is not that easy as saying “oh, we are a charity, we are a foundation “, we don’t want to create it lightly. If it is a foundation, it is not a foundation just for the papers, it needs an organisation. At this moment the most convenient figure to formalise would be a SAS 38 but we are not getting the income to create a SAS at this moment. So we would need another figure to formalise, like a corporación 39 or a foundation, but that is not convenient for the group because what the group wants is to live from that resources, not necessarily invest those resources”.

“We have an enterprise, it is a partner enterprise called insitu producciones, and that enterprise is as SAS and it taxes for us, because it has the infrastructure to do it.”

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37 Muppet and theatre group Tarimba
38 SAS stands for Sociedad por Acciones Simplificada (simple share society). A legal figure based on shares, which can be made from one person and ongoing.
39 A corporation is a charity composed of a group of people with a similar goal. Corporation henceforth.
“When we understood the legal figures of corporation or foundation, “watch out!”, because there is a social responsibility that we don’t want, we don’t want to be demagogue, how are you impacting society? Are you investing what you are earning in your corporation? It is non profit”, so we didn’t wanted to be demagogues and say we are non profit when we know we need to get profits from our activities”.

“Insitu producciones is my wife’s company. It is an enterprise which now has a new figure of “spectacle”, a figure made to work on logistics, so it fits us perfectly”.

“I think at this moment [the manager] is part of the team and we want to consider her part of the team, not up or down. We want her as part of the team because even though we are at the top, we have two other colleagues down the line. When there are nine members [in the group], you can count on with some more than the others, those who have a little more vision, so you start to rely on them a little more”.

“I believe a manager is complicated right now... let’s say she is a collaborator for promotion of production, for the media, a PR, more than a manager, I think a manager has another connotation”.

“Well, in fact that is a good question, because one of them continue working with us, but the other one doesn’t. The other one left the group during the professionalization process. A musician decided to stay in another aspect, and he didn’t fit the expectations we had. Casually that figure has been replaced the most, our first guitar. Today we have had two first guitars, and we have a third person on the first guitar. That new first guitar has been with us for two years, three years, and it has been fine”.

“I’m worried because am not talking in a business sense, I will talk to you a lot from the affection”.

“I have a degree in Modern Languages, and one day I entered a new job, because I manage music and teaching in parallel, and that is an interesting thing for you: for so long the band has managed an alternative economy, all the time, in order to achieve that each member of the group earns a living”.

“The people and the instruments had come to us in the right moment. We started four, we wanted a bass player, and yes, but not for now.... and then he arrived magically”.

“So I arrived a new enterprise and I met a kid who was a very nice person, and he once said “I play, I am a bass player” and it turns out he was a huge bass player hidden under his glasses and desk”.

“So he went through a process of coming out of the desk and study music, and perceive himself as a musician”.

“Nowadays, compositions have turned to urban [music], to our rock, and to my possibilities to create as a composer, because I am the composer of the band. Recently, I was the exclusive composer. Now, other members of the band are showing their compositions”.

“the professionalization of the group reaches the Instituto Popular de Cultura in Cali, each of our musicians must professionalise there”.

“That entrance of the members of the band to the Instituto Popular de Cultura created our first musicians’ network. I mean, the first network to know who is available, who is a good musician, who would like to join Sin Nombre Son... who fits the profile, that is implicit. That is why I tel you, they arrive, they arrive because there are some friends, a filial and academic connection, so that is how the musicians arrive”.

“The profile is people in love with folklore, to put it that way... of people who understand that Sin Nombre Son is not a regular enterprise. It doesn’t rehearses for a performance, it is a process of collective creation in which you have to invest a lot of time, desire, mind and talent, and that won’t be paid immediately”.

“In the orchestra phenomena they call you, they give you some papers, some notes for you to read and you play according to your experience. That is not Sin Nombre Son’s profile. We have a creative profile, a profile where you engage, where you rehearse and no one is paying you for rehearsing, you don’t have a salary, but you must give everything you have. That is complex, but true”.


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“People always needs networks in order to move. The benefit, in my case, is that I have moved everywhere in the educational sector. I have a degree from Universidad del Valle, but I worked a long time at Universidad Autónoma de Occidente. Those networks, I mean, “the band of the teachers”, or the group of the kids, so “yes, we must support them”, so we got support from the Autónoma, they sponsored us to do our first video with the people from media production at the Autónoma, and with the students, who were fans of the band. They were the ones who said “let’s talk to the autónoma and propose them [to do the video]”. Other superiors there also said “how come we are not supporting our teachers who are making music”.

“I used to work at the Colombo Americano, I mean, I know people from the Colombo Americano and the Alianza Francesa, and that is how I always have been in the Cultural sector... I have always been interested in joining it, in knowing who the cultural managers are, the spaces. First of all which spaces, what a musician looks for is spaces to play”.

“Well, it turns out that there are not many spaces in Cali to present a proposal that was novel for its time.... the one of fusioning Pacific Music and rock, with Orishas, or with reggae, or with Son or Bolero. So where do this proposal fitted and who was available to listen to this kind of proposal? [...] well, this band make me feel proud, and many people will refute what I am saying, but Sin Nombre Son was the first band who took Pacific [music] to a Pizza restaurant”.

“Nowadays, there is a famous pizza restaurant who hosts bands, and we were the first ones to do that and why? Because we where “whities”, mestizos. There was no love for Pacific Music at that time as there is now. Let’s say we made this interest to awake”.

“The first network Sin Nombre Son had was governmental, to put it that way, and how? Through a charity, a Foundation, a Foundation called Tierra Posible, with its Plazas y Parques programme... Sin Nombre Son played in all the parks and squares in the city of Cali”.

“I cannot tell you how we got to that foundation, they saw us playing somewhere, in the Petronio, and they contacted us. [...] Because of the prestige we achieved. They contacted us and it has happened many times. It is like that: “we wanted to contact you”, because we are registered in a database as winners of the festivals, and as we were in many festivals, we’ve been invited to a couple of things, so, we were visible”.

“In order to be visible you have to win something first, you must have an official recognition, so after working with the charities, and with the Secretaría de Cultura, a permanent network, we reach the Family Compensation Funds, which are private”.

“I have started to develop cultural projects, besides Sin Nombre Son, as a cultural entrepreneur. As a cultural entrepreneur I want to develop my own project as a composer, as... I have had the opportunity to direct some other stuff as an integral Arts Director”.

“The family compensation funds, which are private entities, they look to, they also want to promote the Arts, they have some budget for the Arts, so who are they calling? Well, we had to present our proposal, to the family compensations funds, we became providers of Coomeva and Comfandi. But they also have their own needs, so we were forced to change our proposal in order to work, so our proposal was blurred at the beginning, so from the music proposal we had to include some other stuff and adapt... they won’t adapt to us because what they need is a party for the employees, and “if you want to be here, you must change it”. So Sin Nombre Son had the proposal, it diversified; we had a commercial and a cultural proposal”.

“But we are talking about 5 years ago, that is the evolution I’m talking about. Nowadays we don’t talk about the commercial and the cultural proposal, we talk about... if you wish to hire Sin Nombre Son, you must pay this amount... but if there’s still someone who wants us to play the bolero from Andres Cepeda, the ones we played at the Pizza Restaurant, well, we won’t do it”.

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40 Cajas de Compensación Familiar is a private entity designed to provide social benefits to the employees who are part of it. The monthly payment is deducted from the salary of each employee.
41 Bolero is a slow latin rythm from Cuba.
42 Andrés Cepeda is a Colombian Singer who plays boleros and pop balads.
“On our last concert at Coomeva, we did play some covers that can capture people and that are close to our proposal... that allow us, or allowed us sell our music proposal, it was easier, it was more accepted, there was more receptivity. [...] But nowadays we don’t want to do that, we don’t do it, unless is strictly necessary”.

“When Industrias Culturales [project] started, we were very motivated, but we lost that, because of the management it has at that time was not very effective... last year... so we were frustrated because they didn’t called us, because we did everything to be there, but we never where, we didn’t got how the management was, why they never called us, we had a reputation, right?”

“I believe this Industrias Culturales [project] is a first big approach to what should be done with a real creative industries network, so culture can emerge, in order to see a real progress, in order to preserve the talent, so all of us won’t say “we must work in three different jobs and dedicate three quarter parts of our time to music”, when there is so much talent”.

“we want to be part of this network, a network that is more articulated than other ones. Eventhough we have some critiques, it shouldn’t be so isolated, there should be something more macro from the government, I mean, we still are the “poor”.

“But nowadays is not like “come here, sponsor me!”. For me its clear, if these networks do not make visible what is happening, it can be very complicated. You can be very clear on what is your objective as an enterprise. You can say “yes, Sin nombre son has a brochure, the best one it could make, the prettiest one”, some people admired it, it has very good pictures, it has a very nice webpage, right? And we say: something is going on here, because it will be 10 years old now, it has a website, it has a brochure, it has an EPK, it has videos on you tube, it is on MySpace, on twitter, it has been to many business fairs, one in Cartagena and one in Bogotá, and I am ashamed to tell you, we haven’t been outside Colombia”.

“and I ask myself “what is going on? Why a proposal from here, but very international”, because we’ve made an effort to give it an international sound, and we know about the quality, because people have told us”... what happens is there is something very complex, because Sin Nombre Son is not a group that shows management”.

A. what do you mean?

“I will explain you. For so long, culture in Cali, and that is a big critique, is about showing the poor neighbourhoods, the suburban that has overcome it and now it is a project to show everywhere because “I helped it” right? Because they haven’t found the way to justify that this Mister (talking about him) arrives in a car and he performs pacific music, so “I cannot show him as someone who I took out of the suburbs and I sent him to France”, you know what I mean?”

“Cali is still in that, it is about “we [the public employees] are showing results with those who really need it, Sin Nombre Son doesn’t need it, because you are a professor, you are in X, you have won this, you do not need to be invited”... We know many bands that have been invited because they have done a lot of work, a lot, but somehow they have received the help in a more direct way. But for me is not a secret, they have complained, they have identified themselves as a minority to gain those aids”.

“We have not joined the political [networks]. We have been in some events and we have tried to keep our position, we are not supporting any politician per se. However, we know we must do Public Relations, and that PR are managed in a way.... yes, when the new government arrives, and we know the mayor has a group of people, and we know from the mayor, or the secretary of culture 43 depends the invitation to El Petronio Alvarez, well, we go and lobby without engaging our image or music in order to say “we are supporting this candidate” or something like that, we do not do that as musicians”.

“Well it has been a process. The first time that we stood in the Petronio Alvarez it was so genuine we decided to do it. In 2002, when they started to shout “get them down! Whities, mestizos, pale, yellow!”, we began to play our first song and when the first notes sound, and the first lyrics, a total silence. And the second song was an overflow of happiness, madness and dancing, and the third son, in 2002, was total madness. So we said “we broke the barrier, we broke the barrier of prejudice”.

43 The head of the department of culture of the city.
“In 2009, when we won the first place, in the same festival, in the same category, the free style, which is supposed to be a new trend, more urban, is from people who has experimented with rhythm. We received many critiques, many critiques from the orthodoxies, there are many of them who do not like it, they say “oh! What are those guys doing!”, but there are some other who say “how nice! How nice what you have are nowadays, in 2009, without a Marimba, which is the main characteristic of all this.”

“There is so much prevention the first time, it would be a lie if I don’t tell you, but when people has no other choice than enjoy, that is when Sin Nombre Son has done what it had to. When people let their arms fall, the fists fall, the prevention falls. Nowadays many people know us, and nowaday we can allow ourselves to do more crazy stuff, and we will win this Petronio Alvarez 2011, because they invited us again, fortunately, after we lobbied, and we will allow ourselves to break [the rules] a bit more, without losing the essence. Because we do not like to lose our essence”.

“I am in a personal process of growth, understanding how you start to belong, how the networks work, so you understand how the rules of the game work, there are some rules of the game... you must be judicious, let’s say you must not lose what makes you a musician, which is the folklore, I mean, that essence of a musician, that God! sometimes there isn’t: strictness”.

“I could never be a statesman, you know what I mean? I am humanist. So for me to sit down and check the invoice, so “how much are you retaining for taxes?”, and have a good eye, because this goes there and if you are a service provider is different... let’s see if I remember... yes, like an independent worker, if you are showing the RUT45, if you don’t have to show it... “.

“it is a learning process that we must do, so nowadays you know your enterprise a lot, it is a process of starting to look at yourself. I tell you, we have been working for 9 years, almost 10, and at this moment we have a vision, a mission, we are more organised”.

“In my particular case I feel more aware of my environment, I feel more aware of... it is not enough to complain about things that do not happen. Ok, some things do not happen, ok, we do not have support from the government, ok, what are we going to do? Here it comes. The time of complaining, of saying “damn! they don’t help me, I cannot find anything”, well you must look for it, dude! Look, look for it, because if not... It has happened to us, at one point we thought “oh, we won the Petronio, so they should call us”. I mean, we have been there, and no one is going to call you”.

“ If you do not move no one is going to call you, if you do not link to, if you do not search, if you do not talk, if you don’t know who is working in the cultural sector, who is promoting the artists, which places, why, how, what is outside, well, nothing is going to happen, nothing will happen to your creative enterprise”.

“Last time the new member of the band, the trombone player went to the [annual party] with his dad and mom, he is one of the youngest ones, he is 20 years old. He went with his parents and his brothers to the party, we were surprised and we said: “of course, welcome!” but of course, this enterprise has touched families, and this kid is grateful to have the opportunity to play at Sin Nombre Son, he sees it as an enterprise. And you start thinking, why not, on social security, on the wellbeing of the employees of the enterprise, to have some... let’s say this new trombone player should’t leave us for another band because we can provide wellbeing, right?”

“We are all mestizos, there is no one who is afro, no; I am the most afro one (laughs), just kidding, no... we are all mestizos and our mothers are mulatas, to put it that way...”.

Mauricio Porras, Zalama Producciones

“Zalama productions is an idea born from three people, mine, Mauricio porras, Rafael Carreño and Paulo Alvarado. We have been friends long time ago, and we have always liked culture, focused to production...”.

44 The Marimba is the main instrument of the Pacific Music. It is made of Wood and some resonators.
45 RUT stands for Registro Unico Tributario, which means Unique Tax Registre, a registre top ay taxes as an independent worker in Colombia.
“We went to school together and we saw each other again in the university and we started gathering to play and to make a little band…. And we decided “look, why don’t we throw a party for ourselves and our friends… so we rented the equipment and we started with the underground parties for our own friends…”

“Our hobby, we were DJ’s, we are DJ’s, some electronic DJ’s, the other one in Dove and more experimental and me, I am more into urban, rap and raggamoving, and all of that”.

“when I graduate [from University] well, I start working in a regular enterprise, you know, the traditional, to meet a schedule, to have a boss, [do] reports, I was like, ufff…. I lasted like two years and I was like…. “No! I do not want to know anything else about this, bro”. I called my friends and told them “dudes, let’s do something because I am dying!”

“And although they paid me well, not well, but, well, normal, what I deserved to earn, but, dude! I can’t find the point of life! I told my own friends “guys, let’s do something but in a serious way”; and because we were a bit too old to be doing a hobby just for doing it, so ok, let’s build something”

“Zalama is a word, a term, with an African descent, at the north, kind of near Egypt, but nowadays is used in all Africa. It means like a greeting, normally there they greet Zalama Lecum and they answer malecum salam and it means something like bless you… bless you and they answer bless you back… so we kind of reinterpreted it and it also has a brotherhood connotation, it so something very fraternal, something like bless you… so it is a very spiritual greeting […] and it sound nice, so we named it Zalama Producciones”.

“We are three at Zalama Production, the three from the beginning, right? But us, as time went by, we really involved these ten people on a temporary basis, because they really are employees… no, they are collaborators, because Zalama Crew is a product from Zalama Productions, right?. Because Zalama Productions records them, does the videos, uploads them on the internet, promotes them, so, that is why…”

“So these three people are in charge of engaging the idea (la vuelta, in slang), but nowadays we have a very nice team. It turns out there we have a lawyer, a graphic desingner… maybe these are like the two more active people there, although beside the musicians, right? There are also some that are studying, some other are empirical, but there we also have people who are doing administrative jobs, for the group […] so they also enter to be temporary workers in projects, like for example the designer: “we need to throw a party and we need a flyer and the poster and that, so the designer does that, right?”

“Friend’s networks first, the main network is from friends and family, to put it that way. Because I believe normally … what you are saying, the networks… the networks are built while you are walking, I mean, the friend of a friend has a guy (man, in the original) that does animation… so, ok, bro, come to Zalama tomorrow to show me your work, so the guy (man, in the original, from the slang) says “look, I have done this”; “oh, it is good! So let’s work together”; it is like that really…. Is not like suddenly we have to search for someone…..”

“the coolest network that I have seen is the one of worth of mouth, I mean, the one of friends, that one is amazing. It happens like, for example you tell your friend: “look, we have Zalama, whenever you need them you can go”, so they [arrive and] say: “look, a house full of graffiti, a house of young people, how nice!”, and that people tells this guy, and this other guy, and suddenly, I have listened some comments from people that I don’t even….I believe that network is important, I do not know how to call it, the street’s network, the friends’ network…”

“I believe an important element in this story, is the self-management, always self-management because, well… I don’t know, we were all very touched because we knew more or less how the State works, and the State is corrupt because it is like so big, and it has many sides where things might bleed… ”

“We do not want to continue [with the State’s contracts] because it has happened to us, like, look, do this performance but you must sign for 800 and there [the contact] says 1’500,000, that is not a secret, so for us to continue with that fucking circle, sorry for that expression, but, with such a noxious circle […] we’d rather throw a little party and perform there and call our friends…”
“we had the idea [of making] a big festival, we felt maybe we had the capacity to do something a little bigger, and we went there and there were many obstacles, there were many “which party are you in?, which is your political friend (political leverage?)? So, for us that was, that is horrible! You know what I mean?.”

“Today the things are not as they used to, you must know, that before there were like steps, you record, you get a manager, travel, and so on… now there is not an order for that, it could be that you play a lot, you do not have a manager, for example Cedric (a producer who is teaching him in the Project) was telling me the other day that the managers are tired of being managers, so for example is better to have a booking, booking agent, or an agent that manages shows with a percentage, so you are not attached…”

“we do this because we like it, that’s it, because it was the only way we could perform as DJ’s because no one knew us”

“we designed covers, demos, for the alternative genres of the city, always, always that was like our bet, because here in Cali Salsa has always been strong and that is undeniable, and is within us, but us, as part of that new generation of Cali’s music, to put it like that, we felt we hadn’t had a real scenario, no support, you know, alternative has been always like “there”, in little parches (slang word similar to gang), small groups”

“So we wanted to create that space [to alternative small groups] but a pro (from professional) space, because there have existed rap studios or…, similar genres, but they are always spaces like very poor… to put it like that… like too unorganized and that, and we wanted to put order in that”

“We now are more objective, right? More objective… always humble, I mean, the more things one does, the more humble one is… I believe that, but that is related to personality, because I know people that have done many things but maybe they are not that humble […] you see [musicians] like “what is going on? It’s me, turn up the volume or I won’t perform”…. There is a huge difference there, huge. So I think [being humble] is the most important thing”.

“now I believe the best part is like… like alighting a lot, because we artists use to be like a bit frilled, right? Frilled, I mean, like “how good (qué chimba, in slang)… ahhh… what a trip (que solle, in slang)”. But [the idea is] to take that and alight it […] I mean, to be a bit more concise on we should negotiate”

“Our family supported us, I mean “look, these guys (manes, from men in slang) like that”, but you know family is always like “ah! But weren’t you studying?””. “yes, but this is what we like, understand us… and we want to do it organized”

“Because family is always like “ah! That is a bunch of drunks; they do not do anything like…. well organized”. And we [said] “no, we will do it in an organized way”.

“We were very independent, really our support was from small enterprises and from our family, that can be a network too right?”

About the creation of Zalama Crew (the band from Zalama Productions)

“We used to gather almost always after we finished our work in the enterprise, around 5 or 6, and we said, well, let’s jam, so we sat in the rehearsal room and maybe a beer, or maybe something else, and we started playing, cool, how nice, and always too much in the air, very jam (in English in the original), but nice things started to arise and like “oh! How nice that! Let’s record it”.

“we never said “let’s rehearse”, on the contrary, people started to join us at that hour and people knew that at that hour we jammed”

“Not with all of them, but with some of them we feel empathy, right? Our friends (parceros, in a slang word) there… it turns out they joined the jams (originally in English), and suddenly we ended up making a band […] so we were wondering “how should we call the band?””, “well, were are we? we are in Zalama, so yes, we are Zalama”. So we named it Zalama Crew and crew from crew, from parche (crew in slang), from team, because we felt we were kind of a little family”.

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“the thing is these people [some customers] do not like salsa, they are from the [Atlantic ] coast, and they like vallenato, so…. Or they do not like beat salsa, they like light salsa; so we have to thing in all those variables”.

and we got there , to the party, to play chucuchucu (dancing latin music including merengue, salsa and vallenato) or reggaeton and we “grrr!”, but we have to, you know what I mean? ”

“but that has taught me a lot, in fact it opens your mind… “hey dude, we’ve got to have music form that people”; or what we realised no, we have to hire a DJ, a DJ who knows about that [kind of music], so that is cool because we also start to generate some employment, like for example, “look, we need some reggaeton”, we do not know about that, and we do not like it, but they are paying us, so “dude, let’s hire this guy, the guy mixes well… so we went there, we plugged it and we let the man do his job and bye… ”

Other music genres:

As Zalama Crew we really are not opened to do, for example, a reggaeton, or to do… let’s say the market is demanding some stuff but we will always go to what we feel, that is like that always, you know? Because that is our side…. […] we at Zalama Crew do whatever we want, in a sense that we express our artist expression, our personality, and our self. But we at Zalama Productions, yes, what I am saying, if we are hired for a party where we have to play reggaeton we do it, we look up for a DJ and we ‘pay him’.

“Because there [at Zalama Producciones] what we are doing is an enterprise, Zalama Crew is our artistic side”.

“For example nowadays the cumbia is trendy, but we won’t do a cumbia because is trendy. Maybe if a friend comes and we are rehearsing and he plays a cumbia, and we can arrange something, how nice […] but not because it’s fashionable”.

“when we had the studio many reggaeton performers went to us and we did not recorded them, it can be discriminatory, even some people asked us why we were like that. We told them that was kind of the rules of the enterprise (laughs)… […] many people can be offended and what a shame, but we never accepted it, we never recorded a reggaeton group. Never”.

A: would you record a reggaeton now?

Mauricio: (long pause) no, I don’t think we would… (laughs)

”It’s like our style, I don’t know… but we have grown in that, I mean, before we had to meet to discuss it, but now we are “how much, what is it, ok, let’s do it”…. You understand? […] we are[ mixing a bit more the heart with the industry”.

“Our goal is that one, to travel, to maybe, like our sibling groups (similar groups) maybe older than us, to say it like that, like Bomba Estereo and Systema Solar, that are, let’s say, similar but not the same, because we have a different style, and each one has a different style, but it is like the new movement of the new Colombian music right?”

“to be able to show our culture and our thing, because we highlight Cali’s culture a lot, most of all, but not because we are regionalists, but in the sense that, for example the costeños (from the Atlantic coast) have their thing, cumbia is theirs right? Well the paisas (from Medellin) they kind of mix everything, but we want Cali to be strong…..”

“from Cali, Colombia, to the world, and we also captured that in our music, so we want to reach other places; I know that in other places people know the cumbia, cumbia is the national anthem, but let’s say the currulao (pacific rithm), the currulao can be an anthem, but it isn’t, because there is the cumbia, which is like the mother, but there could also be a father, the currulao, for example”.

“but we are more open right? we started with Hip hop but we are, let’s say, we are not that closed, we are more fusion, to put it like that…. because of our composition. Let’s say if we all were rappers, or rockers, you know? we will all be only that…”


But as we are multicultural, so… “how cool to see an electronic band, a rock band”… it is nice, it is culture, is music, it is good”.

Hip hop network

“For example the Hip Hop [network] here is cool, and I think it happens everywhere, it also happens in Bogotá, because I know people from the same network, it is all like the same network. it turns out that they are a bit radical, right? I guess the same happens with rock, I guess it happens with the folklore [network], because I also have may folkloric friends that “no! if it is not this way, no!”.

“We are more like “if it sounds good, it is good” right? Obviously with essence, we do not like to lose our essence, but for example it happens to us that, Hip hop bands, let’s say that play an instrument, or maybe make a fusion with other world’s rhythms, there are none. So people always tend to see something different like “is that rap?, no, that is not rap… oh, that sounds like real rap”.

“at the beginning people sais like “what the hell, this guys are not real rap, no… but then they kind of listened and “look, yes! that is a catchy rhythm”, they started moving but they looked like they didn’t wanted to move… the wanted to do like this (hip hop moving, laughs)... so a different thing was moving inside them, so that was so funny”.

“Many people said “these guys are making some other stuff”. But for us, at the end it was so cool because it generated a word of mouth, so people were like “how come? So what they are doing is reggaeton?”, and we said “no” and they said “no, it’s not reggaeton! it’s something else, listen! […] the lyrics are cool (ásperas, which means cool in slang but the original word means rough)”.

Multiculturalism

“it is a multicultural group, and also multi…. to put it like this, it is multicultural in every sense. I mean, there is people from every social class, middle, lower class, middle-high class.. so that is nice because it is a moment… for example if someone.. many of them live in the district, some other live in the hillside, some other live in downtown, so it is cool because many things interact, so we learn a lot, to respect people without being from your same social class, because there is discrimination both in a high class or in a lower class, I mean, I only hang around with the people of my ghetto, or I only hang out with my friends that are posh, but in that moment no, we where from many places, it didn’t mattered if you came riding a donkey, walking, by car… you understand? That is so cool”.

“since we are a city with a huge pacific, black, indian and mestizo influence, so dude, there are many things here dude, there are many things, there is a nice easy manner (desaparpajo bacano), so we like to express that, we want Zalama to maybe be an important band from Cali, Colombia, to the world”

Awards and networks

“we applied for a contest organised by Shock Magazine, they made a contest called Bands Festival […] well, Shock Magazine is like the only music magazine in Colombia and is kind of the most important one right? ”

“[…] so we were chosen between 400 bands, they chose 30, including us, and we “how cool bro! How come?” for us that was huge… and we had to go to Bogotá to the eliminatory”.

“So we won there and no! That was for us like… you should have seen that, when we won it was like wooooow!! Madness in Bogotá, mother fucker! it seemed like America (local football team) or the Colombian Selection (national football team) have won”.

“the Shock network has helped us a lot, I mean that Network in Bogotá is the one that distributes [information] all over Colombia. It is very important, because it is like, like the best reference in music, in the industry itself, so to be there was…. it introduced us to people there, the people that we met! The fact of playing in a bar where you can meet the manager and ask him “look, how can I play here?”
“and really from the Hip Hop scene in Cali, someone who has won a Shock award, only, if I am not wrong, only Asilo 38 […] so for us… and from Cali, where the scene was dead, it was very important, and in the Hip Hop scene they started to perceive it as important, like “oh! those dudes won that?, cool!”, and they started to perceive it like “no, it is not only… there is something there, so people started to calm down”.

“when suddenly “look, there is a business fair in la Javeriana (university) […] yes, and enterprises form yung people can apply” so we said “let’s go with Zalama”. so we went…”

“it turns out we won [the Javeriana contest] and that gave us the opportunity to be in a performance with Bahía, that is a very important pacific music band, right? They are famous […] and it was our first performance, full sound, full lights, so cool, people didn’t knew us, people like us a lot, but that was our first official performance and that motivated us a lot, “look, they can do it, it sounds good”. And we started a process; we started to perform at bars”.

“This network we created with the Javeriana, we kind of created a network there because we won, so sometimes they count with us, send us information….. ”

“[what Shock awards experience] taught us was, for example, to do stuff with quality. You could do a cumbiaton (a mix between cumbia and techno), I don’t know, whatever, but if it is high quality they analyse it. So you can do music that might sound, for example our music, a catchy music but the lyrics tend to be a bit tough, but not tough only because of questioning, but because they talk about real stuff. […] so we, for example, we went to [the] Shock [awards] and we were singing a song that is not, to put it like that, is not sweet (fresita, little strawberry, in slang) at all, and one would think that Shock is like that and no, you get me? They are open to quality”.

“those circles, those networks, are like a… they show you one must have professionalism, yes, we were like the band, nice (bacano in slang), well established, how nice (que chimba, in slang) the jam (originally in English).… but no, we now have to be like a little bit more serious, organize ourselves with a brochure, and we must have a video, an EP, and well… oh! It kind of teaches you a bit more about the industry. It is a great advantage of how to be more pro, from the other [bands]”

**Translation Linderman Herrera, Artescénicas**

“The decision of making artescenicas was mine. My wife, who at that time was my girlfriend, joined me, but I started with and entrepreneurship idea”

“I have a degree in drama, so I was theatre teacher and I felt I was exhausted with being a teacher… or with teaching… with teaching, if I can tell you… it was something beautiful. I was sitting in a table with some teachers, the literature teacher, the philosophy teacher, the social science teacher, and I was the theatre teacher. We were talking about our future, to put it like that, about “I want to do this next year”, or “I want to travel next holidays, but I haven’t enough money, because being a teacher is not easy”.

“It’s hard to be a theatre teacher, and listening to them cheered me not to be a teacher anymore, but to look up for my destiny with my art, with my stuff, with my will to develop my own idea and not stay there”

“I saw in them stagnancy of 20 years… so when I see them, old teachers, because they are not young, they’re old, talking that way, I thought “how long have they been desiring the same stuff and they couldn’t get it?” It was so strong that one of them was saying “next year I want to buy my laptop”. So I said “this means they are stuck” and I did a quick view of teaching in Colombia, and of them, complaining, and I said to myself “I do not want to keep doing this”. And that was a decisive factor for me not to continue being a teacher”.

“as you know, entrepreneurship is based on risk, and I took, literally, or better, figuratively a leap into the void. I let everything go and I jumped into the empty space to do theatre”.

“So artescenicas emerged as an enterprise which combined recreation with theatre. Because I have had experience in recreation before, and I understood recreation was important for the human being”.
“So I started with a portfolio of 5 written plays with the aim to offer them, and the first one someone asked for I would design it and stage it”.

“I went to a customer who could be interested, who was also looking for something similar, and what I was offering was theatre on demand, institutional theatre with institutional themes, so I understood and knew there was niche there, in the institutional theatre theme”.

“What is institutional theatre? [When] an entity requires to talk to their employees about something, but it doesn’t want to do a conference, because it knows they get bored, do not listen, fall asleep or do not get the message… they have been doing this type of meetings, where the employees refuse to go, so they discovered theatre, and that is real, sorry for being redundant, but that is real, I’m not the only one doing it, some colleagues in Cali are also doing it because they saw it was a very good business idea”.

“The entities where telling me “we need to deliver the message of saving, of work safety, of GMP or good [manufacturing] practices, about positive behaviours but through theatre”. So I offered that, with theatre, and they told me “I’m interested, I’m interested, I’m interested”. And we designed little theatre sketches oriented to train the workforce of the institution that hired us. When they saw the results, the institutions were captivated and asking us [for more], because they did their internal analysis and the employees said “it was good, I had fun”.

“Between 2004 and 2007 we focused on this type of job, institutional theatre and, in that time, in my search, in our walk, I had other meetings similar to the one I had with the teachers.

“[some people advised me to] get out of the institutional [theatre], of the enterprises, because I was working closed doors with the enterprises, but really, no one knew me, only the institutions, so my audience was very small”.

“So my audience was very small, my market segment was very small…mmm… so at that moment I said “let’s do a market research, a very basic one, we won’t hire it because we can’t afford it, but we can do a test… so let’s ask, let’s find out if we are ok or not”. So we tested, like asking the audience we already had and our institutional clients, and about the theatre movement in the city”.

“We realised the comedy people was consuming in Cali was from outside. The comedy consumed in Cali came from Medellín and Bogotá. Also the comedy consumed in Cali was about cuentachistes (joke storytellers), let’s say we have cuentachistes as a reference, and the cuentachistes came to Cali because it was a good place. And Cali responded to that offer... so with that study we realised Cali hadn’t a group, a group dedicated to comedy. It hadn’t, it was null, completely null”.

“We said, “there’s a niche here, a commercial niche, but we can also call it an artistic niche. There was a huge gap, and the audience was asking for it, the audience was demanding, and that demands were not filled”.

“we went to see all the groups from the IPC del Valle (theatre school) and we realised they were actually making academic theatre, political theatre, classical theatre and no…. no one was making comedy”.

“and the audience was asking for it, demanding it, and that demand was just being supplied by the foreign comedy”.

“In 2007 we launched three plays […] and it was a total success, we sold out… with the support of the audience who wanted something local, something with identity. Even though the texts were not ours […] we were giving it a caleñian identity, and identity the audience was intuitively expecting, and that was reflected on [the play]”.

“To date, we have ten spectacles. Why is it important to have ten spectacles? Well, its not about accumulating, we have spectacles for each market segment, so we have spectacles for adults, we have spectacles for youth and we have spectacles for children... we also have spectacles for the family. So, we have to offer one spectacle for each segment or many of them”.

“when we premiered in 2007, we keep on looking and we found out many of our shows were not either Stand up comedy, or pure theatre. Our colleagues told us “what you do is not theatre. They were angry, because most of
the theatre artists in Cali say “let’s do classical theatre, let’s do academic theatre, let’s do deep theatre”. So they started to classify us as commercial theatre, as shallow theatre, as banal theatre… so our colleagues were annoyed because of the kind of theatre we did, but our audience didn’t saw it that way. So we realised we were serving the audience our colleagues were neglecting, because the audience who attended [their shows], without diminishing the job of our colleagues, wanted to have fun and ended up bored, tired, stressed, and they didn’t wanted to come back to the theatre”.

“when they criticised us, we started to analyse ourselves to determine why [our show] was not a stand up comedy, nor a play”.

“We are not oriented to fill a niche because we just felt like it… if we were just commercial, we could fill our pockets by making people laugh saying vulgar words, and it’s easier, but no, that is not our job”.

“The audience who came had a different perception of us. They said “how nice, because I’m having fun, how nice because I carry my stress from work, but I come here to relax, to have fun, to laugh”. So we realised we were not just achieving an artistic and commercial goal, we were also doing a social work”.

“So we realised we were not making Stand up comedy or theatre, but it gathered both. it took elements from Stand Up comedy and it took elements from theatre, so we called it Show. This is a show but it is not any show, it is a comedy show, so we called it “Show Comedy”.

“we are determined to make the audience laugh without employing vulgarity, without using vulgar words. We dedicate more time on making the text, trying that the personification of the actor is good enough to make people laugh without employing easy humour. We do not want to make easy humour. So we make a better effort, we ban ourselves the use of vulgarity, we do not like it. If someone does that, it is a terrible mistake”.

“One of our philosophy and principles is: “do not make people laugh employing vulgar words, strive a little bit more, that is better, the audience thanks that, make the audience think. Because if you say an easy text, the audience will get everything processed. Let the audience think, let it think and develop the idea in its head in order to laugh”.

“People now is linking artesencica with show comedy…. [our goal is] for people to understand we are the same thing, in order to position the theatre format we are developing”

“and maybe [some other theatre companies] have worked it [the show comedy], but they maybe aren’t aware of it. So now we are developing it, positioning it, we only have worked in el Valle del Cauca, we are near to launch it in Bogotá and Medellín, for it to get a national presence, less local”.

“[show comedy] cannon is not the same as theatre, the theatre cannon is characterized by having some characters, a conflict, a beginning, middle and end, a story.. Some of our spectacles, not all of them because some of them are theatre, didn’t have that cannon […] didn’t had that canon of characters or of conflict. There is a use of a thematic similar to Stand up [comedy], the stand up takes a theme and develops and argument about it, and funny texts with whom people identifies with. But it turns out who makes the stand up [comedy] is usually a comedian, a storyteller, or a cuentachistes (jokes storyteller), and we are neither of those. We are actors. So if we said “we’ll develop a stand up” we can’t hide our job as actors, we can’t stop the fact of wanting to represent. So a comedian does not represent, a comedian narrates […] sometimes he interprets but when he enters the scene, the situation, he interprets the characters he’s narrating, but then he comes out of it, the distance effect”.

“In a stand up, [there’s] one artist, or maybe two, with a microphone, a bottle of water and a chair. He does not has a staging, he does not has a lighting plan, he doesn’t have a relationship with other actors on stage, unless there’s two of them, because there are two, like EL Aguila Descalza, they are two, Julian Arango and Antonio Sanint, they are two, but usually there only one”.

“But ours was not stand up, because it had a lighting plan, it has a colour dynamism, wardrobe, many artists on scene, but managing a theme, or multiple themes inside a big theme, choreography, songs… so that takes it from the stand up, but it doesn’t fit in the theatre cannon. So it is a point in the middle that gathers elements from both and that makes it a show”.
“When you go and see it, you’ll see a show, you’ll see a dynamic thematic, where even the audience takes part, because we in fact take the audience out of scene and we improvise with them. We won’t have characters in conflict with a middle, and an ending, no. but you’ll see a choreography, you’ll see a song, you’ll see movement, you won’t see a monotonous show”.

“So we discovered we like making people laugh, we liked it and we have the profile for that, also because our audience, the caleñian audience…. It is a jovial audience, a cheerful audience, an audience who likes to party… similar to a costeño (people from the Caribbean coast in Colombia) right? It has a latin flavour, it is an audience who loves to have fun”.

“Show comedy is not something new, we are not discovering anything, this exists long time ago. We don’t know if someone has called it that way or not, but not in Colombia. In Colombia there’s only theatre, comedy, café concert, mmm vaudeville, stand up comedy…. But let’s say there is no one who has inquired show comedy as we have, or someone who has called it like that”.

“[People] at el Teatro Municipal (biggest theatre in Cali) were closed to comedy proposals. They just showed opera, ballet and classical theatre, they were biased and frightened to open a different market, to show another type of spectacles like comedy, so we told them pleas, give us a chance”.

A theatre company from Cali

“No one is prophet in its land, and let’s say our advantage is we are not in the capital. When we’ll arrive to the capital it’s going to be cool because we come from outside, we want to impact them as thy impact us in Cali. We are impacted when something form the capital arrives… because we are a province in a way… “

“We have been to Bogotá, we have done some research there, we have been to theatre in Bogotá, with the aim to know more about the industry. But we haven’t presented there jet, or in Medellín, the big cities”.

“We want to have the same impact, stepping strong as when they arrive here stepping strong. We don’t want to arrive a small group; we always want to think big”.

“The Teatro Nacional has done it, it is kindo f the strongest point of reference in Colombia, it has survived and they created the foundation for the Iberoamerican (Iberoamerican Theatre Festival), and it is strong. it is the strongest thing in terms of theatre in Colombia. Then comes El Aguila descalza from Medellín, they are a model as well. But their model is “there’s two of us [on scene], the rest are administrative”. But they achieved a theatre, they managed to have an audience, they have a captive audience not only in Medellín but in the whole country”.

“So we have studied models from other groups in Colombia, and we want to mix them. The comedy done by El Aguila Descalza is too local, is native… we want to give ours the identity of Cali, because there isn’t, and we want to give ours the solidity and reliability of a company like Teatro Nacional from Bogotá”.

“It was very difficult for people to believe in us, in our own land? It is complicated. Sadly here in Cali we do not have that… that… that support for the people from our own land, form our compatriot, from, how can I say that from my fellow countryman… like in Medellín. In Medellín they are ahead of us, they help each other, here that doesn’t happen, here were just starting to create that culture, the one of “caleño helps caleño”. Before, it was caleño let’s caleño die, caleños eats caleño, dog eats dog”.

“My goal is not to perform in a small, unknown theatre.

“Pricipe de paz (one of artesécnicas plays) is the story of nativity but in a Colombian way. We make it in a funny way, so Joseph is an entrepreneur; he is paisa (way the people from other regions of Colombia call the people from Medellín. Paisas have a entrepreneurial reputation). Mary is a gold-digger, interested woman… that image of Mary can be offensive, people can get angry, but we do it in another way… she likes the Feria de Cali, she likes to travel, she likes to get gifts…”

“The finance capacity Teatro Nacional has, in the head of the deceased Fanny Mickey, is very different from an artist that is just starting. It is an established enterprise, it is running and it can pay copyrights. The artist may
have a good business idea and is maybe a genius, he may own a potential theatre enterprise, [but] they are killing it from the beginning... for us, that 10% tax is unfair, absolutely unfair”.

“So in Cali, Palmira, Buga, Tulua, Zarzal... ok, now we come out of el Valle, “where shall we go now? Let’s go to el Eje Cafetero, Ibagüé, Antioquia... he haven’t been to Medellín but we are close, we are at Oriente Antioqueño, we are approaching Medellín... we want to go south, more to the south west, like Pasto... and start to widen the scope, we want to rule on el Valle, that is clear”.

“in commercial terms we have also had very interesting and striking results. We track our audience, we record our economic income, we have a record of all the plays we have done, only here, because since 2007 we wanted to work only here, to get strong here, and later we’ll go outside, when we feel prepared we’ll go outside, so everyone sees we’ll arrive making a good impression”.

“Our marketing job is parallel to the image of the show, to the design of the flyer, of the poster, it goes hand in hand with the web page, with following the track of our audience, for our database [...] we have done a good job with the social networks, fans, groups, followers, all that stuff, advertising exchange with some entities, because we need resources. When you ask me “who opens you the doors to?”, well, the same audience does, because you never know who is watching you, and it turns out the one who saw you was X business man, owner of X company and he wants an exclusive show”.

“because of or our image, we wanted to break the title of “a group who performs in a small theatre”. We wanted to perform in a big space which gave us an image of a theatre company, because only companies perform at big theatres. Because only recognised artists, with quality and good products perform at a big theatre, not anyone does. And there’s the risk it goes well or not. And if you are willing to fill a theatre with 1000 people, is because you have faith in your product”.

“You have to use the tools you have available to convince them, thank god we have been organised, we have what you are seeing [big book with all the leaflet’s and articles], we say “look at our press reports, look our repertoire, look at the flyers”.

“there are some abuses from Sayco and Acympro46. So they put you, the small artists working with the guts, in the same status as the big entertainment businessman. They shouldn’t because they charge you the same... what concessions should we get from that collecting societies of Copyrights, they shouldn’t treat us the same because they’ll kill art.

“At the beginning, as I told you, there was recreation through theatre. Before we attended little parties, birthdays and fists communions using recreation, and we had theatre as a second choice. Nowadays we do not attend little parties but we work at big parties, with a show in between... in a 15th years old party celebration for example (similar to a sweet sixteen party). We are trying to compete with the entertainment offer in Cali, I mean. We are trying to compete with the parties, with the [Latin music] orchestras”.

“[I have learned] to do marketing, to sell. Well, so you grow, to do all this stuff makes you grow, trains you”.

“Let’s say i have grown a lot in the management area. This subject about the Cultural industries was unknown for me, and now with this project [The Cultural Industries Project] everything is clearer. It makes us think bigger, it leads us to think we were ok, when we were thinking about making a living from theatre as a business... and to think it could enter in the GDP numbers, even in the GDP of the country. If we justify it when we say “look, we are providing [to the GDP], our revenues have increased from 50 million to 120 million a year. That is something... that is not despicable. And we don’t have a theatre, how would it be having our own theatre?”

“We have a business plan, so we can develop a project to build a theatre, in order to turn those 120 into 440 [millions] a year. That is money, that is providing, that is generation income, that is achieving big goals”.

“[we have] done the job, we have done the job of filling that entertainment gap in Cali, that offer and demand... that empty space there was, because really, there was no one”.

46 collecting societies of Copyrights in Colombia.
The team

“Full time [workers], me and my wife…. We are the leaders of the team. I am the director and my wife is in charge of the production, but we have twelve people working with us. All of them are actors, hired in the modality of agreement of service, because we cannot hire them on a regular basis because of the legal and taxation stuff… but we are looking forward to it, so we can offer better labour conditions to all the team… so we can develop more things, so they can all have all the minimum labour conditions, so they can, at least, keep working in theatre”.

“We have an actor profile. First of all, an artistic [profile], the actor must be a comedy actor… a drama actor is not useful to us, because he doesn’t has that spark. Because a comedy actor must have that spark that awakes the comedy in the audience”.

“we do kind of a talent scout job… we go, we watch them and if someone has one of the characteristics we look for, we invite him”

“So, he must be professional, must have a degree [in theatre] or, if not, must be close to get it. if he’s a student, is not good for me, no… I need him to be close to graduation. With that he proves me he really will do theatre for the rest of his life, because if you are just finishing your second year, that doesn’t prove me you will do theatre for the rest of your life…”.

“I need you to identify with the theatre labour… and for us is really important your social testimony… I mean… we see artescénicas as an enterprise, so I won’t hire a lazy person, someone messy or untimely. So for us it is vital that he doesn’t do psychoactive substances, vital, because if I perceive it [artescénicas] as an enterprise and I will go to perform to an institution, our image will be affected if they see him drunk, on pills, on drugs…. That is not good for me”.

“So that is vital about the profile, they can’t consume psychoactive substances, and even if they like it, if they like alcohol or smoking, they can’t do it, as they cant in any other company”.

“at least, that they don’t consume psychoactive substances… but if they like alcohol or smoking, because they may like it, that would be too rigid from us, they must be very careful with their image, with the customers, and with the audience because we become public figures”.

“and if I am sending a message, but then the audience sees you in the streets hitting your wife, and then at stage you are talking about women’s rights, or then they see you drunk, or on drugs, they see you high, that affects the image, so we are very careful when we are selecting the people”.

“[We want] to be seen well dressed, educated, well mannered, well presented, standing all right… that is vital. Unfortunately, because we are so demanding we choose only people from Univalle in Cali, we choose actors from Universidad del Valle”.

“Univalle follows the Stanislavski school, and that school is Russian. So let’s say Stanislavski gathers some actors conditions, base of the actors training at Universidad del Valle, with whom we all relate to. Yes, we’ve seen Grotowski, we have seen Porfirio Barba, and we even have seen Enrique Buenaventura. Some might have done street theatre, maybe some of them have approached circus, but the spinal cord, is the Stanislavsky school from Univalle that connects us in the way we act”.

“In the scene I look how the audience reacts with that actor, or actress. And If I like it, I also check how they act outside, if they are kind to people. Which is their evidence or image outside. That is what we are looking for. So we invite them, but it is sporadic, because the idea is whoever enters will develop multiple tasks, so we wont need many actors”.

“[everyone has lasted] at least three years. There is someone new, who just entered, because one of the actresses left to make films, to do other stuff, so she just [entered]. The newest one has been working with us for two months, but the rest have been working with us for so long, with the aim to stay, so they can find the safety they are looking for”.

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“we ask them which are the long term projects, that is important for us in order to be accepted in the team. Because if they say “I want to go to London next year, or I want to live in the US”, well, they will leave me in a year and we will lose all the work we have done so far”.

“Yes, we are friend, so we make strong bonds, we are company to each other in other areas, we are really a family, we are friends. So we are there when someone gets married, just recently someone gave birth to a baby, we’re there, in the birthdays, we are in good and bad times, that’s the idea”.

**Social work**

“our goal, more than making people laugh is making them think, our aim is not making them laugh for fun, our aim is for our audience to have fun but leaving a message. Why? Because our context, our social context, our culture in Colombia is about drug dealing, there’s a mafia culture, there’s a vulgar culture, there’s a violent culture, there’s an abuse culture… we want to go for the rescue of the values”.

“each show has a specific message […] a message towards women, about a wise use of the sexuality and its consequences… each spectacle has a north, it is designed specifically for that, to send that message depending on the audience”.

“So, enough about divorce, let’s rescue matrimony, let’s rescue the values. So our work is determined by that, to accomplish a social work, with the idea to mix comedy with reflection. From the artistic job to the social [sphere], in order to fix the social tissue, so the audience attends and sya “I want to bring my wife, I want to bring my family”; because they will have fun in a safe environment”.

“we want to leave a reflective message [on the audience minds], we want to leave the message open so people leaves the play discussing, talking, for or against it, but talking… it is not the idea that they leave and say “I laughed” and five minutes later they forget what they saw”.

“our context is so full of action movies, of drug dealing, the news [are]…. like hopeless, there’s a death message surrounding us, a un-developing message, the message of “the one who cheats more, is the clever one and the one who survives”, the law of the “clever and the dumb one”47

“but we whistle o offer the rescue of values. Before, we were doing the opposite, long ago, maybe hundreds of years ago, we were doing the opposite: “let’s free ourselves form morality, let’s get rid of religion, let’s get rid of what the government or the king tells us, let’s loose the gown!”…. but now the gown is so loose people is tired of that too”.

“We are Christians, that’s where our intention of sending a message comes from”.

“We base our message on the word of God, but we are not biased, we do not pretend to evangelize through theatre, that is other project… what we are doing is entertainment, but if can’t evangelize, at least we’ll send a positive message, a beautiful message, a good message, a message that gives you something, so people don’t say “no! They are preaching! Let’s leave because I am not a believer!” No. We have a completely different segment, that is the Christian audience, ok, that is another segment and we can develop plays only for them, because they won’t attend these ones”.

“Yes, yes, we have a Christian audience, because we Christians do not have where to go. If I’m Christian I won’t watch porn, I won’t watch vulgarity, I won’t go to see naked women, so where can I take my family? I just have football left, and the problem with TV and film is everywhere, and if I go to theatre, all the theatre is criticizing god, but if“I attend your [plays] is nice because I feel identified and I don’t feel attacked”.

“Some people label us like that [Christians] and they label us pejoratively: “oh! The Christians!” . Some others say “we don’t know who they are, and where they come from, but is nice and is a safe environment. At least we wish to “gather” around these subjects, those differences that spilt us and radicalize us, we leave it aside and we gather everyone in a safe environment where the child and the elder can come”.

47 “el vivo y el bobo” is a Colombian expression and a song which means the clever one lives form the work of the dumb one, utilising him and exploiting him.
“Catholicism is strong in West, so it [their Christianity] doesn’t bothers, you’ll have to be a Taoist in order to say “I don’t understand this, it bothers me, I don’t like it”, but we are in the West”.

“We feel we reach the heart of the people, their sensibility, even if it’s not their values…. And we like that, people say “what a beautiful play, I cried, it took me to my childhood”; some others say “it reminded me of my husband. I will go home to hug him and kiss him and I love him” […] is very beautiful when I feel I have achieved that, and it’s not only a matter of filling our pockets [with money] by making people laugh”.

**Unique business model for a theatre company in Colombia**

“I think our business model will lead us to become a organized company generating jobs, generating…. That is what we are aiming for, to become a company that goes well, to do legal and tax issues right, to give decent conditions to the actors, because there is no company, I don’t know if there one in Bogota, but at least in Cali there is not any company that can offer decent working conditions to an actor, no”.

“so the actor has to become a waiter, become a messenger, the actor has to work as a part time teacher… so they are part time here and part time there… so if I step on the actor’s shoes, I would say “how nice to be working as an actor and be paid monthly, with a fixed contract, paying my social benefits, my pension, my health insurance, it would be great, I would have to think of anything else but to create. So I create and they pay me for that”. […] Meanwhile, now, if you are rehearsing you are wasting time, you only get paid when you act in the play”.

“so we are going that way, to build something strong, solid, well built so it can be a model… we want to be a model for other people, so they see it can be done, and we will make it, we want to show it can be done, we want to carry this model”.

“we all do everything, we serve the audience… let’s say is the model we are now implementing: “today I act. Tomorrow I won’t, and my team supports me, helps me” […] in order to have that strength and group cohesion we all need. When there is no cohesion groups die, they disappear. We have worked on that, group cohesion, so everyone feels part of it, not a foreigner”.

“we want to highlight the actor’s dignity, because generally the theatre man, to say it pejoratively, the theatre man is poor, pothead, wasted…. We want to rescue the image of the actor, to rescue the dignity of the theatre actor, not of the theatre man, as they call it”.

“we want to be a model so people understands theatre can be seen as a Enterprise. If you don’t see it that way, you will die, you will get tired and you won’t be able to do what you want to do in life, theatre”.

“There are some actors dedicated to live from the State: “give me! Because I have a project and it costs this amount”. And if the state doesn’t gives them money they won’t do the job to conquer their audience, no, because they live from subventions, from a project. […] we have not asked for help to the government, we have done everything by ourselves, we have won our audience working hard”.

“[we haven’t asked for projects with the government] Because they ask for many papers, and also because there’s already commitments, matrimonies, and even if you have a good project, they will give it [the money] to the matrimony that is giving them money behind the desk, it is giving a percentage [to the state’s officer], and we are not like that, we earn what we earn because it’s the real price, and don’t ask me for money because I won’t give it to you, I won’t give you a percentage because my work is worth that value”.

“But it is also a right, we have the right [to participate of state’s awards] because there’s budget for us… but we run away because there is so many people fighting for that money, they are leaving the market free for us, so we go for the market they [other theatre companies] don’t want, and “yes, go and kill yourselves for the State’s money!””. That is what we really do”.

“there are no networks in Cali, there are just starting to emerge […] yes, in Cali there is no network. We are leading a network of networks from here [Industrias culturales project], because we have seen there has been failure networks we have participated in that”.

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“[Those networks] were called Econtrémonos and Vaya andando, and those two failed because they got embroiled on aesthetic discussions, and we shouldn’t talk about that because we will end up fighting”.

“If we do not talk about our philosophies, if we stop talking about our taste and we are more objective, leaving subjectivities aside, we’ll notice taxes concern us all, and we are all affected by taxes when we perform”.

“I wasn’t aware I quit, because relationships are very important to us, and we get along with the ones in the right and the left [wings] here in Cali, and we like it, because we like making friends, we like to convoque, to concile.… We were absent when Vaya andando split, for some unknown reason we weren’t there, so we were not labeled as the good ones or the bad ones”.

“it may be a mistake, walking alone [not in networks], but it is also because we want to work inside, and lay the foundations [of our organisation]. If we are not firm inside we won’t make it”.

“So we can be so strong and firm that we can attack other fronts, tours, festivals, circulation networks, associations…”

“[to be in] a network requires time, it needs of a representative who comes and replicate what is happening outside. To participate in calls from the Ministry [of culture], of the local government, of the mixed fund… we have not participated there yet, because that demands time”.

“Our idea of a [theatre] network is that we should talk about the main points that unite us, that interest us, let’s talk about the things that involve all of us [high taxation to theater companies]… but please, let’s avoid talking about our group philosophy, let’s avoid talking about things that will evoke a fight, that will lead us to atomization and splitting, as has happened before”.

**Translation Melisa Paeres, La Peluquería**

“I was living in London, and I am a publicist form la Tadeo [university]

and I decided, I was living there and I was disenchanted about publicity... that means I didn’t wanted to work in publicity anymore, in an agency, I became angry with publicity... at the same time I was doing haircuts to some friends, not because I like it, but because it was too expensive to get a haircut there [in London]. A friend of mine had some scissors, one of those cheap ones, the black ones… and she asked me to please cut her hair. So I started doing haircuts, to everyone around me, I started to like it, I cut the hair of my brother who lived with me, to my girl friends, to everyone… to the people I worked with… so every Saturday my placed turned into a hairdresser saloon, I mean, people came to my house, and I cut the hair in my place, in my flat (originally in English). It was difficult for me to charge for that, I was embarrassed, because I was cutting hair like crazy [without knowing the technique], so people brought wine, chocolates, gifts… I was very angry with publicity and “what the fuck, I don’t want to go back to Colombia!”

A. And why where you angry with publicity?

“My head was dealing with many things… I was questioning many things, many topics, like commerce, like the system, too much... I mean, I thought [publicity] was too stupid, too naive.... I was thinking its goal is absurd... so many brilliant minds, creative people, selling.... and I’m not like that”.

“And one day I though “I should start a hairdressing saloon” and a friend of mine was there, and she told me “do it!”... and that night I couldn’t sleep at all… it was kind of an illumination, after another one…. And that night I couldn’t sleep, whenever I started to sleep another idea came to my mind, I woke up and wrote it, and then another idea, I mean, the ideas were related with this, with La Peluquería. It was like “so it should have this, and it must be like that”...and every detail came from my imagination. That is why I’m telling you it is a product from my imagination. Many people says “so you brought that concept from London” and no! There is not a hairdressing saloon like this one in London; there are many cool things but... I think everything is like that, finally, right?... when a concept is built on the truth, it is not just a concept… it is not about bringing a concept from London”.

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48 Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, is a university in Bogotá.
“so I started to write everything, everything, everything as I imagined it, what could happen in that space, how would it be like, to cut the hair there, how the things would be, how would I feel in that place… and also I started to organize everything in my mind”.

“I was telling the idea to my dad on the phone, and he didn’t understand, because I had to tell him it was a cultural hairdressing saloon, and he was like “what is that! How come? Melisa, are you telling me you are quitting publicity to become a hairdresser?” and I told him “yes sir, you are right, that’s it”.

“From that moment I decided to go back to Colombia, because though it was a project I could do in Colombia… so when I discovered La Peluquería in my life, La Peluquería, I mean, this project in my life, I could close that chapter in London, that was it with London, London had to make me think about this [La Peluquería] ”.

A. What were you doing in London?

“I started studying English, then I studied Art and Business. I studied like… I studied many things at City University, I took some modules of Art and Business, a long one… and the other one was Contemporary Art Theory and Management”.

“I have always done Art, Art has always been in my life, in me…. I discovered it when I was at the university [Tadeo University], but very strong… and obviously there [in London] the art pill exploded in my head, I mean, more than just pretty or ugly stuff, it is the contemporary philosophy, Art… yes, for me, the most important thinkers nowadays are doing Art, people who has clarity and astonishing illumination”.

“I did La Peluquería as a project for the Arts and Business module at City University. I studied with many artists, people that… I mean, people there talks about that topic, about Art and Business, how to make the thing… but talking about that from the Arts [perspective], not a finance guy messing with your business and telling you how to manage it. It is more about the thought… so I started to develop the project there”.

“I started looking alternative places, because from the beginning it was clear I wanted it to be a cultural centre, a place where beautiful things can happen”.

“So I started to arrange everything, I travelled through Europe, also with the aim to see, it was not about copying, it was about watching, feeling things, and I ended up to many impressive places, impressive, I mean, Barcelona, for example… well, I saw many things, many… so I was in the writing process, writing, writing, writing and sensing, sensing, sensing and that’s it. And in London I started to move my contacts, because I knew I was coming back [to Colombia] ”.

“And my contacts were my friends, because they move you and cheer you up from the beginning, the only customers are your friends [at the start], that is important because they are the ones that push you up, cheer you up, at least they listen your silliness, so the first friend I told the idea when I got mad about it was Mari…”

“Mari was already in Bogotá and I told her “Mari!” and Mari said “let’s do it dude! I love it, it is beautiful!”. I mean, she got crazy about it and we started a partnership… so we worked a lot together. Mari was [studying] at Universidad de Los Andes and she started to… we sent each other interesting stuff, and we check all that”.

“Mari was studying Arts. So then I came back [to Colombia]… and we were looking for a place…I only had the scissors, and my dad bought me the first chair, we bought it to an old barber in Sogamoso, who was tired and he didn’t wanted to work anymore, and we bought it. So the chair was a hit… and with the chair we built the hairdressing saloon, that is the only thing needed, a chair, a pair of scissors and that’s it… so we started working… with the motilof, the motilof is our format, it is a haircut in another context, I mean, is like a de-contextualising haircut”.

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“Because we were fundraising money, so we organised the Motilofs, a party, because as I told you, friends are the ones who are always there and they bring their other friends, and they bought drinks, and that helped us. The motilada \textsuperscript{49} was free for everyone, it was for me to train and get better at it”.

“A also decided to be self-taught, not to study hairdressing, so there is some people who has guided me, and I have been very curious researcher, and… in the technique and all that, but doing it my way… and with them [the hairdressers at La Peluquería, with them is the same. Here the condition to be a hairdresser is not to have studied in any hairdressing academy”.

“I have already studied everything I had to. I mean, I don’t want any more knowledge in that way… I want knowledge as something one discovers, by connecting it with other knowledge. What happens with excess of knowledge? Sometimes it blinds you. I have noticed that also because the hairdressing sector is underdeveloped”.

“yes, it is a very underdeveloped sector, especially in this country. They teach people through telling them what not to do. So people are full of no, no, no… “This should be done like this, not like that”. So if you don’t have that barrier, a thing that is a technique, and creative, it can be deepened and you can discover what happens in hairdressing is very important”.

“that affects you, even if you are very confident with what you are doing and someone comes and tells you “that is wrong”, it creates a short-circuit […] so I’d rather go for total freedom. Sometimes I find techniques that help me, but I only take form it what I need, and we all do that, sometimes we attend seminars, they invite us, we attend courses we win with the products we sell here, they invite us, but there you realize a hairdresser who is trained that way is doomed to blindness”.

“This is more daring. It is a bit crazier but we take the time to study what we are doing, and every time we approach a step to perfection”.

A. Like an attempt to keep creativity unbiased?

“Exactly, too keep it pure, pure, because an excess of knowledge… you have the power to discover that, right? To discover the world with your own eyes. Not everything has to be read in a book, not everything has to be taught, when you go outside to the streets and bam! “go ahead, go! Jump into the pool to see if you know how to swim.” That is the real moment. So that is what I think. And I like to keep it that way”.

“having Mari studying at La Universidad de Los Andes was very important, because that opened, opened a very interesting path for La Peluquería, right? I have a lot of respect to La Universidad de Los Andes, I admire it, and thanks to that network, through Mari, I understood how important it was, because thanks to that the professors approach La Peluquería for many reasons…”

“And from that moment on, La Peluquería has had a close relationship with La Universidad de Los Andes, in an independent way, right? It is not inter institutional, is with the people form Universidad de Los Andes. But that people has a special thing as well, so there [are] always projects from Business Administration, projects from… students have done things here, parties… I have had the opportunity to have access to arts conferences, and many things at Los Andes. So that is a key network, clever people, fine people, well-placed people”.

“PRANA was also important, PRANA was important because… when we approached Juan Carlos to tell him the Project, Juan Carlos had a small office, but i remember a lot Juan Carlos transmitted us so much enthusiasm, we went out of Juan Carlos office and we shouted out of happiness. He was like “wonderful! I will help you!”. And he did, because when they robbed us here, robbers came in here and robbed us, Juan Carlos lend us 2 million pesos, and we already paid him. And that was so important also because it was a vow of trust. It was of… trust, right? He was someone older with a vision, Juan Carlos has vision, he can see when things are important”.

“We met a lot of people through Juan Carlos, because Juan Carlos, in Juan Carlos’ parties at his house there’s always cool people, I love the parties at Juan Carlos’ house”.

\textsuperscript{49} Motilada is a Colombian word for hair dressing. Motilofs is Melisa’s action of cutting hair in unusual places.
“well, my friends, some friends from Sogamoso, where am from, they were the main gang, they were the word of mouth… my family, family is very important, a very important network because family believes in you”.

“My dad bought this house, because he had the Money at that moment… sometimes in life everything meets and bang! It happens…. And he decided to invest that money in this, so it was beautiful, because when someone puts so much trust on you, you can’t let that person down”.

“my brothers helped me a lot, from the beginning they were standing at the door at events… my mom, all that support in things like giving you presents, Kind of thinking about me through the Project, support it, help it economically, because look at the house! So that was a… a total push that gave us responsibility as well, because he gave me the house but I had to fix it”.

“Whenever I need someone, for any reason, maybe because it grows [the business] or a girl leaves, because this is a group in constant movement, I mean, this group will change many times in its life”.

“They can last; almost all of them now have been working for a year and a half. And all who have left is because they finish a cycle, because they will travel or will do something else. Whenever I need someone, for any reason… some girls, mmm, well I start to create a word of mouth, and also through the [virtual] social networks, and the girls appear. Yes, they send their CV and I call the ones who seem more interesting. It is like when you think something is interesting, and that’s it. A girl seems interesting to me for something”.

“It is about intuition, absolutely. Well, not 100%, because i also look at the knowledge she has… I run a technical test. I don’t care if they cut the hair, if they are beginners, it doesn’t matter. But they have been brave enough to cut hair to people at the streets, or their friends, or something like that. So I also look at the level of their technique […] the interview is a chat here, having a beer, and there you start to grasp some things about the person, and to see if she has something interesting to give to La Pelu 50, right? As a person, above all”.

“I prefer them to be professionals, because that gives them discipline, I measure discipline. Girls that have been warriors in life, I mean, that they have been able to make different stuff in life, being a waitress, working… or she travelled… that is a big indicator for me… she also must have a good taste, I mean, I look how is she dressed, I think that says a lot about her, totally, for her to have a good personal taste, I mean, that you can tell is hers… I don’t know, that I like her, that she is happy… for her to be a happy girl, to have the capacity to laugh, that is very easy to measure”.

A: and only girls?

Melisa: Just girls.

A: why?

“Because, well, many people think that…. People from outside says “you are feminists, you are lesbians”, whatever…. All the time. But the truth is we like to work like that, when Mari and I started, well, it is more fun [to work] among girls. I mean, men are always welcomed here, we have many boy friends, they never leave, but this is our house, so between women, when women get together to work many special things emerge, because women have special powers. So we have a good time, it is not like we talk behind the men’s back (laughs), even more, we barely talk about men… but it is very special, and it has been like that… and it will stay like that”.

“I mean, we can do projects [with men], we can do things together, but [for men] to be here, no”.

“Mari was a great partner, I mean, she was someone who… she told me at the end “I was your faithful dog”, in a beautiful way, you know what I mean? Because there was a moment where she couldn’t identify herself with La Peluquería, and that created a bit of conflict between us, because I needed everything like this [quick], and sometimes I felt she didn’t put all the effort I needed”.

50 La pelu is the abbreviation to La Peluquería.
“But it is because Mari has another personality. Mari is a more introvert person, Im like PUFF! And she is like puff! (Same sound but lowering the volume). So sometimes [there was] so many people [here], so many things, she told me “I want silence, I want…maybe that’s the reason I studied arts, because I like to be inside me”… and Mari is that. This place is crazy all the time, is about talking, meeting [people], party, one thing, another, it has a [fast] rhythm, it is a train, it is a hard train”.

“And Mari loved La Peluquería with all her heart, I mean; it will always be her daughter too, always. But yes, what is inside you win…. That is why you must know which your places are, because you know where you are fine. I am fine here, I love it, I love the train, and when I get tired of the train I drop off and I get lost, I travel, and that’s it. I don’t answer the mobile phone… but for me, I like to live my daily life like this, and Mari, well, she discovered she was something else, and it ended there”.

“There are the hairdressers and the host outside. She is the one who welcomes everybody and solves all the problems out there”.

“She is like La Peluquería’s housekeeper, yes, she is the mom… there are also the hairdressers…. Well we have two hostess, one in the morning and the other one in the afternoon, and here at the office is Paola and me. Paola is my assistant and I work here, I am the Hair Director that is my position (laughs). I am Hair Director of this place, and I make contacts, I picture things, I welcome people, I create projects with people, and I manage the administrative part”.

“In order to be a hostess, she has to be a honest person, mainly, someone who inspires you honesty, someone who is honest and does not thinks in something else… all of them have to be good girls, and you notice when someone is good, and when someone has to grow a little bit more to be good. They are all good, they are girls who wouldn’t hurt anyone on purpose, they are girls who don’t envy, they are free girls, free spirits”.

“They are from 21 to 30 years old”.

“I like Young people, they are always Young girls, I don’t know why… […] I believe Young people have a positive energy… to live”.

“They come, they come… or if I’m in a party, I talk to someone and we start to generate ideas, is like… I never stop working, never, ever, ever… I never stop working. I have a mixture between life and work. I swear, I can be at a party, near the chimney, drunk, and someone starts talking to me about what he does, and I new ideas start to emerge, with my friends, with the people around me”.

“[this has turned into ] a small, independent Ministry of Culture, small… people come here with their bands, fashion designers, people that… artists, graphic designers…Everyone wants to show what they are doing and La Peluquería is a platform for people to show the beautiful things they are doing”.

“So through and event, or an exhibition, or a project… whatever, the idea is to launch it. And in that sense I love… I am a manager, I like this to happen, to actually happen, and not to be stuck in imagination mmm so it is like “ok, first step, who should we call? come on, when? let’s set a date for it”… like that”.

“The Word of mouth is the most important of all… the most powerful… it is slower, because it is like a little bomb, right? … we have been on almost all the TV media and many newspapers have done reports about us… and that is naïve stuff, that is for people to know us, but finally people comes here because someone recommended us, because there is a strong word of mouth, there is a huge gossip about us”.

“It is a huge gossip, which I find curious “las peluqueras asesinas”51, they say here there are no… everything is true, there are no mirrors here, here the hairdresser decides [what to do to your hair]… but whoever dares to come, that one is special as well, and it is anyone… not only artists, any type of person can come, any age, any […] I always think the people who gets their hair done here is special, very. Yes. That is why I feel the need to work perfectly, for those people”.

51 The killer hairdressers.
“What happens here makes a lot of noise. For example someone who attended a party, or someone who participated in a project now sells its stuff here, there are many ways to approach La Pelu”.

“When you become specialist in finding the things you like, the ones you don’t like also appear. And sometimes is not about something negative, sometimes something does not interest me or is not the time”.

“There’s a network of cultural independent spaces, like El Eje […] and the truth is I haven’t feel connection with them. I don’t know why. To say “let’s do a project, thets get together, we are all independent spaces…” no. Its like… I don’t feel like it, I don’t want to belong there, I don’t find it attractive, I don’t feel curious”.

“the guys from el Eje are very, very.. they are political, critical about things, right? So you enter that place and you feel the politic stuff, you feel like this revolutionary discourse, like self-positioning with an abused minority. I don’t feel identified with that, and I don’t want it as my discourse, you know what I mean? I mean, they do it, and they do it from the heart, that is cool, but I… I take distance, so they invite me to attend their stuff and I don’t attend their stuff….”

“The State… look, that is a good example of a no, but a not for now [network]. The State… at the beginning I felt I had nothing to do with the State. I mean… cero identification with the State, with the projects, with the public [funded] projects… at some point it was an angry discourse, like saying “oh! I won’t wait for the State to come and help me in order to do things”, because many people is like that in the cultural sector… they wait for the State to give them… kind of “no! My idea was frustrated because… [The state didn’t support it]” and how come! No! You can develop your ideas without needing someone to give you things…. That is what i think. […] i think that sector is full of people kissing other’s peoples ass… so I kept my distance”.

“This year we won a Project here at La Candelaria, with the local government, through La Peluquería. I mean, we are starting to enter there… and it is beautiful because it changed my vision about the public sector, because I realized I had a wrong image… I mean, things can happen; they can support you, if they see it is interesting they can support you”.

“I see the Ministry of Culture is being left behind in many things, because sometimes they do not see any further, they stay there with the dance, the afro, I don’t know… I mean, culture is… something big, I call it the human patrimony52, and from now. We stay preserving the past, which is important, but now there are thing happening as well, important ones, important people is emerging… but they have wait for time to pass to realize that”.

“I have met incredible people here, and I also have see how through cultural projects normal lives can be affected… you can interfere on the real world of the people who need it, not only artists or cult people, but everyone. Besides the artists, there are wonderful characters out there, who are also part of that human patrimony, because they make everything alive, and they make Colombia what it is, and La Candelaria53, two lungs there”.

“I don’t know if it [being in La Candelaria has helped] for more people to come, but more special people… now, with the project I was telling you, I am discovering La Candelaria, and La Candelaria is wonderful, I mean, the people who comes here, the people who lives here, that brings a very powerful energy”.

“Most of [the people] are form Bogotá, but there are always people coming to Bogotá… for example, we have many tourists here, artist-tourists, that are travelling… […] but yes, for now [our] job is very local, very local, Bogotá, I am much focused on that”.

“That is another thing, The Motilof format [is] developed to affect realities, kind of using La Peluquería as means to de-contextualise. It is an experience I love to live, because each Motilof is very different. I have done haircuts in the beach, in the rainforest, in the streets, in a party, in front of a church, in a mountain… I have done

52 As in heritage. However, I use the word patrimony to describe what she tries to explain: the present heritage, not the heritage from the past. Patrimony in Spanish is patrimonio, which can be used either for asset in business and for heritage in a cultural sense.
53 La Candelaria was the first neighborhood in Bogotá, where it was founded. It is popular for its colonial architecture and bohemian life. It is located downtown and is the place of many universities and hostels for international backpackers and tourists.
haircuts in many places. And that is a thing I love to live, and I know it is affecting people, how? I don’t know, but something is interfering, that is why I say art can get between…. Although I am not saying what I’m doing is art, I think it is more philosophical… the thing is everything that doesn’t fit ends up fitted as Art”.

“For example I decided to go to the Festival de Cine de Barichara\textsuperscript{54}. I went there because it called my attention, and I did haircuts. People call it performance, but that is nothing, it is not a performance, not a happening, nothing… is a woman cutting hair in another place”.

“I try to be a better human being at any cost, because I feel I have a huge responsibility with life. Because having a project like this one is something very beautiful, but is something to look for, to take care of”.

“I have to be a better human being, I have to, I don’t have any other path… it has made me reach abysms in my personality, I do not have any other path than to be the better human being possible. Because I realized I have a mission in this world, through this project… the project may disappear, I understood what I have to do…”.

“Maybe my job is to bring good things to people, opportunities, and ways of seeing themselves, different…. You can only reach that when you have evolved inside of you, I mean, that can’t be done by anyone… And I realized that, you must be very strong inside, you have to be very true and know yourself…”

“Before I thought I should have another one [peluquería], but I think this project is growing in another direction, like form the roots… not upside, like “uh! Now they have five peluquerías, one in Miami!” no. It’s like having the freedom to do everything you want to do, the ideas, any mad idea… to have the capacity and the means to make it real”

“Where I want to get, I don’t know, I must have a structure, must have a platform, must be organised, must be true, must be disciplined, must relax, and must learn to live. That’s it”.

\textsuperscript{54} Barichara’s Film festival. Barichara is a town with colonial architecture in Santander, Colombia.