

Research Article

Iruinkokoa: A case of folkloric innovation in an urban environment

Iruinkokoa: un caso de innovación folclórica en un entorno urbano

Kepa Otaegi^{1*} and Eduardo Apodaka Ostaiakoetxea^{2*}

¹ University of the Basque Country, Faculty of Labor Relations and Social Work, Leioa, 48940.

² University of the Basque Country, Faculty of Social and Communication Sciences, Leioa, 48940.

*Correspondence: kepa.otaegi@ehu.es, eduardo.apodaka@ehu.es

Abstract: The case considered here takes us on a journey through the Basque carnival, Iruinkokoa, a space where innovation in folklore opens opportunities for forming relationships and experiences, and where the Basque language becomes one of the main vehicles for these experiences. The carnival ritual becomes a dynamic artefact, capable of adapting to our constantly changing times from beneath its perennial guise and establishing common meeting points. In other words, dance, music, and theatre can be perceived as converging elements (interfaces) that favour interventions between different agents and prolong/expand themselves through the network towards other interactions (either through regulatory or official spheres, or through the opportunity encounters provide for creative drift). The concept of articulation makes it possible to consider the past as an extended network where culture and identity are constantly being constructed and reconstructed from the present.

Keywords: Innovation; folklore; networks; urban carnival; tradition; Pamplona; Iruinkokoa.

Resumen: El caso que nos ocupa es un viaje a través del carnaval vasco, Iruinkokoa, un espacio donde la innovación en el folklore abre oportunidades para establecer relaciones y experiencias, y donde el euskera se convierte en uno de los principales vehículos de estas experiencias. El ritual carnavalesco se convierte en un artefacto dinámico, capaz de adaptarse a nuestros tiempos en constante cambio desde su apariencia perenne y, de establecer puntos de encuentro comunes. En otras palabras, la danza, la música y el teatro pueden percibirse como elementos convergentes (interfaces) que favorecen las intervenciones entre distintos agentes y se prolongan/expanden a través de la red hacia otras interacciones (ya sea a través de ámbitos normativos u oficiales, o a través de la oportunidad que los encuentros brindan a la deriva creativa). El concepto de articulación permite considerar el pasado como una red ampliada en la que la cultura y la identidad se construyen y reconstruyen constantemente desde el presente.

Palabras clave: Innovación; folklore; redes; carnaval urbano; tradición; Pamplona; Iruinkokoa.

1. Introduction: Aintzina Pika¹

The contemporary individual in hypermodern times is defined by their consumption: fashion, luxury, ethical metamorphoses, etc. Consumption marks the individual's place in society and the personal satisfaction brought by the "new" leads to a context of continuous renewal. The past is to be forgotten; the obsolete only worth recovering when market models, with their operational criteria, deign to acquire and display it as a commodified cultural offering within a global consumption framework through museums, protected heritage, and commemorative celebrations, etc. In this way, the individual consumes any given option on offer in the wide catalogue of experiences, according to their whims.

In these conditions, where the individual and the ephemeral have become more important than the collective, we might ask ourselves what the point of folklore is, and what its function is today. In view of the above, it may have some value as a raw material for consumption, with potential for transformation into merchandise according to the interests of the governing rationale in each case (tourism, entertainment, etc.).

Yet, this need not be the only way. An analysis could be made of the types of convergence between the heterogeneous elements that create an "event," offering different individuals the opportunity for enjoyment in order to live, experience and identify themselves through common values. These would generate collusions from which to create, manage or inhabit a common heritage and open the door to innovation. Far from the stagnant vision of this type of manifestation in the form of frozen heritage, our focus is on the urban carnival in Pamplona called Iruinkokoa with the aim of witnessing folklore becoming a dynamic artefact, capable of adapting to times of constant change and establishing common meeting points.

Participant observation carried out during the preparation of the carnival and its subsequent celebration in 2022 helped establish relationships with the actors, the environment, and the events of everyday life in Pamplona. Interviews, recommended readings, rehearsal attendance, and keeping up to date with everything on social networks surrounding the pro Basque social movement community in Pamplona, among other sources, provided a wellspring of information. In a labyrinthine way, this has constructed a narrative, or lived experience, surrounding the subject of study, culminating in a composition of place.

2. "The rest will emerge from the same trunk we were born from"²

Folkloric manifestations like music, dance and theatre have long been practises destined for the enjoyment of the practising community. However, Martí i Pérez (1996) locates the emergence of an awareness of a traditional culture linked to the (disappearing) peasant world at the end of the 19th century. An awareness that instrumentalised folklore and turned it into the repository for a series of elements (raw materials) capable of preserving identities sustained by political projects (initially of a nationalist nature). These were manifestations (dance, music, theatre, etc.) which, under the concept of inherited heritage, contain a series of the values and norms (narratives) of today that identify a group. Having their own past legitimises the group and tradition is the vehicle that consolidates this identity: an identity that comes from long ago, and which cannot last unless cared for.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (2002), Anderson (2006) and Buckland (2001) among others, have highlighted the importance of the research into and invention of traditions and/or folklore, as well as the consequent transformation of the local into the national (the relationship between local

¹ *Aintzina Pika* is a dance in the *ihauziak* suite in which spectators are invited to join in the dance by forming a circle in the town square. The dance usually follows these steps: *aintzina pika* (front heel to back instep – four times), *ximple lauretan*, *zeina* (simple step – four times), *ezker-eskuin* (left-right), *ezker eta hiru* (left and take three), *eskuin* (right). It is a game; taking "the first step," offering an introduction, and inviting people to take part in the dance, the reading.

² These words, translation of the original sentence in Basque "*Gu sortu ginen enbor beretik, sortuko dira besteak*" form part of the poem entitled *Izarren hautsa*. Written by Xabier Lete (1974), it was released as a song on the 1976 album *Kantatzera noazu* by the same author.

time/space/actors is broken to allow the national dimension in). According to MacCanell (2017), such a separation breaks the solidarity of the groups in which they originally emerged and frees them from traditional ties into a modern world where attempts are made to discover or reconstruct cultural heritage or social identity. As a result, the actors are faced with a dilemma that provokes anxiety and/or tension, and that they have to resolve authenticity.

The dialectic of authenticity transcends and subsumes old divisions (humanity/society, normal/abnormal), radically reformulates them, and reduces them to dramatic rather than legal categories MacCanell (2017). In this sense, Hughes-Freeland (2006, pp. 55-56) argues that the rhetoric of unity and authenticity attributed to traditional activities (both local and national) has more to do with political strategies of legitimation than with facts. That is, affirming that traditions have long been in place favours the dominance of the dominant culture, as well as legitimising the construction of a coveted past.

The contribution made by feminist anthropology is instructive when it comes to dealing with the tensions derived from tradition, as well as the management of heritage and participation in festivals. Regarding women's participation in festivals in the Basque Country, Bullen, Díez Mintegi and Kerexeta (2012) establish a relationship between the rootedness and rigidity of the festival; the more deeply rooted the festival, the greater the impediment to equal participation; the more recent the festival, the more accessible to women's participation. As discussed above, the link to the past favours the dominance of the dominant culture since time endows tradition with a symbolic charge and calls for protectiveness and guarantees for its eternal survival.

The desire for fidelity to tradition is a positioning that appears watertight³, representing heritage through immutable archetypes. Tradition would thus be like a tree, that, once sectioned, could expose the radial lines in the heartwood, or the hierarchically subordinated concentric rings, each of which would represent the different generations of the community. In the words of Boris Groys (2022, p. 79), alluding to Foucault, it is a "place where time accumulates" or an "other space."

In a comparison between tools (or consumer goods) and works of art, Groys notes that while the former are resources which get exhausted, wiped out, or depleted through use, the latter are destined to last, since, instead of being used or consumed, they are meant to be contemplated (as well as cared for and protected). Groys' analogy between art and humanism, or the museum and the hospital (with their shared care and protection aims), is incisive: it gives the human being the capacity to be contemplated and consequently cared for and protected. Thus, "[h]uman beings traditionally want to be desired, admired, looked at – to feel themselves as especially precious works of art" (Groys, 2022, p. 79). It could, consequently, be affirmed that the dancers, the musicians, in short, the actors who occupy the streets and take part in folkloric manifestations, set themselves up as models to be observed and admired (cared for and protected).

3. After glaciation

In issue 38 of Dantzariak magazine, published 1987, an article entitled, "Acerca de la composición de danzas nuevas" under the mysterious signature of J.L. (from the Navarre Association of Basque Dancers - EDB as per the acronym in Basque), lays out the first approach to the creation of new dances:

"In this text we aim to broach a subject which is as interesting as it is controversial (the creation of new dances), and to promote a debate we consider extremely important. It is especially important at present because it is so contentious for traditional culture and validated forms of choreographic expression, despite the fact that the invention of dances

³ I say appears because following actor network theory (Latour, 2008), actors could be seen as able to prompt relational agents arranged around a network, thus, the network would also be taking part actively and reactively through mobile phones, video cameras, loudspeakers, food, and drinks. None of this would have a place in the tradition from the point of view of authenticity, and yet, they are welcome because they help to reinforce the ritual and thus reaffirm dominant values (who participates, how, and when, etc.).

has been taken up at different historical moments and was potentially accepted more naturally at any other time than it is today" (EDB, p. 8).

From the offset as well as throughout the text, the proposal for creation is conditioned by an adverse context. Concepts such as controversy, conflict and lessened natural acceptance denote their apprehension that the proposal would face a certain degree of opposition. In addition to this, in an article from the periodical *Txistulari* by Joxemiel Bidador, published in 1999 entitled "Las danzas de San Lorenzo de Pamplona," the mysterious initials J.L. (from EDB Navarra), were revealed to belong to Jesús Pomares and Mikel Larramendi (J. for Jesús and L. for Larramendi). It is conceivable that the authors wanted to remain anonymous to shield themselves from the derision of the upholders of tradition (which was understood to be under an inviolable protection mandate). This appears ever more likely based on the final note of the article "Baile de la Era" (2014/2015) by J. Pomares, where he proposes choreographic variations for the Dance of the Age that gives his article its title:

"After the glaciation, were the dogmatic groups of surviving dances to allow it, the Dance of the Age could thaw, shifting from time to time from jota, to waltz or boleras, thus returning to the old, natural normality. Some of us will already be in hell, safe from the xirula⁴ and accordion fanfares" (Pomares, p. 78).

In this adverse context, Pomares and Larramendi start from the premise that there is little or nothing left to invent in folk dances, and after an analysis of the most recent (20th century) dances, they point out that no new elements are to be seen, "they simply recast and organise known elements, structures and steps, until they compose, with varying degrees of success, a single whole to the taste of the person who devised the assembly" (p. 8-9). It follows that, rather than invention, it may make sense to talk of "re-creation" or "re-adaptation."

The authors shed doubt on the significance temporality actually has in the evaluation of how traditional dances are, since such a qualification is meaningless where the dances are understood to be in constant evolution (they are born, they grow, and some of them disappear). From this (perhaps more liquid)⁵ perspective, the dilemma of authenticity would find its limits in one moment in space/time. Thus, if authenticity as a concept is to be used properly, it must be used alongside the highest possible degree of precision (authentic to that time, that space, and that person). There would be no absolute authenticity, only relative contextualised authenticities. Instead of temporality being the main factor legitimising dances, their reception and usage would take priority. Their endurance over time would depend on how fitting and functional they are.

The challenge for newly created dances would thus be based on functionality and the ability to satisfy the needs of the group performing them. Pomares and Larramendi stress the importance of rigour and thoroughness in the work of combining "decorative elements" (music, instruments, costumes, and choreography) to ensure the best match and overall fit. Within these parameters of rigour and precision, creation could be understood to open up to alternatives where, instead of reinventing dance, the dance itself is experienced as situated on the edge, in the tension between tradition and innovation, between the acceptable and the unacceptable.

Drawing on the work of Latour (2001), newly created dances, far from fetishes (manifestations associated with a set of beliefs that have to be protected) could be considered factishes, where the exercise of experimentation gives rise to a re-reading in which the contribution of freely chosen creative resources would have a place. This would mean that the difference between that which is constructed/created and that which is received/inherited (the immanent and the transcendent) might go unnoticed.

We are talking about a space in which a constant debate is played out between cultural heritage (patrimonialisation) and the type of relationship we want to have with it. Here, Said's (2008) proposal regarding the relationship between "synchronic essentialism" and diachrony

⁴ The *Xirula* is a traditional wooden flute.

⁵ Z. Bauman (2004) sees change as extremely important – accordingly transience and the need to adapt to new contexts take on fundamental significance for understanding current times.

offers much insight. While “synchronic essentialism” acts as a firm anchor for total identification (or fixation of truth), setting it in motion through repetition (in order to reinforce the effect of fixation), leads to diachronic forms, which end up destabilising any attempt at fixation. This constant dialogue between the permanent and the transitory is driven by the search for alternatives that attempt to learn about and reflect on the past from the present in an active way⁶.

In view of this, it makes sense to consider Etxebeste’s (2018) proposal that articulation as a concept is much more fitting than patrimonialisation for the purposes of reflecting on the diachronic links between past and present. As Etxebeste himself indicates, articulation allows us to consider the past as an extended network where culture and identity are constantly being constructed and reconstructed from the present (2018, p. 61). The notion of network (Latour, 2008) makes it possible to consider connections between different fields that derive in events, experiences, or ties that generate and produce meanings. Folkloric manifestations (dance, music, and theatre in our case) may thus be perceived as powerful connecting axes (interfaces) that favour interventions between different agents and prolong/expand themselves towards other interactions (either from normative or official spheres, or from the opportunity that the encounter provides for creative drift).

For example, in the case of Iruinkokoa, we find the Ekialdeko sokadantza dance, which was initially just going to be called sokadantza⁷. It coincided in its creation with the viral meme 2021 ekialdearena da⁸ (2021 belongs to the east) promoted by the writer, violinist and translator⁹ Hedoi Etxarte. As part of the cultural explosion in the wake of the meme, the name of the dance was changed to Ekialdeko sokadantza. In this case, the past (represented in the most widespread social dance) merges with the present (social networks and meme culture) and the name of the dance acts as a connecting axis (interface) disturbing memory and time. Literature, poetry, internet, music, trap, humour, propaganda, all participate active and reactively in a process, arranged in a network, and must be taken into consideration as actors capable of inciting relational agencies.

This vision of the “actor network” (Latour, 2008), helps analyse the ties established between different actors, the relations of transformation and mediation between agents, as well as the testimonies derived from the constant construction/reconstruction that they project. Such constant negotiation makes it impossible to give substance to a specific definition. Instead, our focus will be on the analysis of the mediations, relations, controversies, modifications, and consequences that occur within the actor network.

To sum up, using this approach could enable the opening of new perspectives in an environment of constant change. Folkloric manifestations of dance, music, and theatre may enjoy freedom of action. Practices of enjoyment may emerge, at the same time as actions that generate values, practices, and relationships that affect and represent the community that practices them. The “actor network” perspective enables the construction of new folkloric manifestations based on this articulation, which in turn facilitates an approach to the past from the network, where culture and identity are constantly being constructed and reconstructed from the present. This starting point enables commitment to be made to the significance of what is built and allows the construction to be carried out well (with rigour); it makes it possible to attract the community, and to participate from assigned roles.

⁶ Comas d’Argemir (1998, p. 47) argues that what we understand to be traditional only acquires meaning in the present and that it is a product of that present.

⁷ In an entry in the *Auñamendi* encyclopaedia written by Sánchez Ekiza, the *sokadantza* (or rope dance) is defined as, “a generic name: the name given to the most widespread social dance in Vasconia throughout history. The name is quite appropriate, since the dancers, one by one or in pairs, form a line, chain, or rope throughout almost the entire dance” ().

⁸ The meme highlights the creative explosion in the Pamplona region (in relation to the rest of the Basque Country) in diverse fields including music, literature, theatre, and spaces for coming together in Basque and to promote Basque. See: <https://mobile.twitter.com/ekialdearena>

⁹ According to the Wikipedia page about him.

4. Iruinkokoa: The Basque carnival in Pamplona

Three main factors converged in the creation of the Iruinkokoa urban carnival: 1) the opportunity offered by a space to occupy in the calendar; 2) the work dynamic that took shape between different agents in the creation of the pastoral performance Joxemiel Bidador - Iruñeko Euskaldunak; and 3) the invitation to create a Libertimendu¹⁰ performance of their own in response to the proposal of bringing one from Bayonne¹¹ to Pamplona.

As for the opportunity of room in the calendar; according to Ramos (1998), the celebration of the carnival in Pamplona did not have its own identifiable space beyond its celebration by some groups of people in costume and a smattering of street acts:

“Following a process of uncertain recovery, carnival, after its prohibition and disappearance in the wake of the Civil War, is once again appearing on the festive scene in Pamplona. Two decades after recovery, groups in costumes can be found on the Saturday night of carnival and a few acts can be seen in the old town, although we can by no means speak of a full-flung carnival, and it is common for people to go to neighbouring towns where the carnival is experienced in all its intensity: Lanz, Tolosa, Lesaca, Tafalla, or the new carnival in Alsasua.” (Ramos, p. 446).

It is in this absence of a significant festival that the opportunity arose to create Iruinkokoa. Although throughout the year Pamplona enjoys an impressive festive calendar, the biggest being San Fermín (of the summer festivals), at the other end of the year (winter festivals), Pamplona lacked a big event. This void presented itself as an opportunity, a space where the Basque-speaking community and pro-Basque social movements could identify with and interact with each other.

As for the work dynamics that arose during the process of creating the pastoral performance Joxemiel Bidador - Iruñeko Euskaldunak, this tribute to the writer, researcher, teacher, and pro-Basque movement activist, Joxemiel Bidador, was held in 2015. It was organised by groups working to promote Basque language and culture (Euskaldunon Biltoki, Karrikiri, Duguna, and Zaldiko Maldiko)¹². The result of this joint effort was the recognition of Bidador’s work and the clear demonstration that there was a community living and interacting in Basque. The positive impression left on participants in relation to the work dynamics adopted through the creation process, showed them how important it was to take advantage of the relationships created and maintain them.

Lastly, we turn to the third favourable circumstance, the invitation to create their own libertimendu. This came after the literary festival organised by the periodical *Maiatz*, known as *Maiatzaldia*. As part of this festival, a libertimendu was held in Zizpa squatted social centre in Bayonne, which the Duguna and Karrikiri associations wanted to bring to Pamplona with the aim of strengthening cultural ties between the two cities. However, given how important local gossip and occurrences are in this type of celebration, they were encouraged to create their own.

Iruinkokoa then, can be understood to have been created to fill a void (the winter festival), adopting a ritual that was also carnival-like (libertimenduak) as its initial inspiration, and making use of the work dynamic between different cultural agents that arose through the pastoral tribute (Joxemiel Bidador - Iruñeko Euskaldunak).

We are talking about winter festivals bursting with ritual and symbolic content, in which components are often arranged in categories and processions (like the reds against the blacks in the Soule masquerades). Representations of forms of social organisation and the foundations of life in society are thus made evident through their dramatization (Fernández de Larrinoa, 1998). This is a function which would, to a great extent, be fulfilled by the libertimenduak.

¹⁰ In the discussion that follows there is a discussion of what these kinds of manifestation consist of.

¹¹ Bayonne is the capital of Labour and the main city of the northern Basque Country, twinned with Pamplona since 1960.

¹² There were also people from different areas and groups who came as individuals, rather than in representation of collectives (musicians, singers, and dancers from other dance groups in Pamplona).

Fallen into disuse in the 1980s, the writer, playwright, and dancer Antton Luku revived the practice. According to him, this celebration is situated at the changeover between the departing winter and the coming summer. However, the representatives of winter will not leave without first recounting and criticising the dark events that transpired in the town. This dialogue between old and new, between right and wrong, takes place through symbolic inversion; the bolantak versus the zirtzilak performers¹³.

With Basque as the central axis on which relationships are created and lived, the libertimenduak consists of a Kabalgada or procession through the town towards a landmark (like the town square), where the theatrical performance, or jokoa, will take place. First of all, the zirtzilak come out and perform an initial sketch for the audience. Once they have done so, they leave the stage to give the bertsolariak¹⁴ the chance to sing about what the zirtzilak have performed. After the improvised verses, it's time for the bolantak to take centre stage with their dance. This cycle of zirtzilak/bertsolariak/bolantak is repeated several (4 or 5) times. During the Zirtzilak theatrical representation, anecdotes from the preceding year are brought into the dialogues to amuse the audience, both from the town and from outside it¹⁵.

The new Pamplona carnival, Iruinkokoa, is built on the foundation of the libertimenduak, though it also incorporates a number of components from the paloteado¹⁶ festivals held in the south of Navarre (which, like the libertimenduak, have plenty of time for theatrical mockery and jokes), as well as the asalduak, or the stops that take place along the procession route where eating in company takes on a special significance (like the barrikada haustiak of the Soule masquerades) and the group known as fauna; a kind of mixed group within the black part of the carnival, made up of different characters or elements that are recognisably linked to carnival or to Pamplona (the doctor and the mad patients, the Chinese dragon with the face of Pamplona's famous fountain, etc.)¹⁷.

Figure 1. Illustration of the representation of the Kokozuriak in Plaza Santa Ana¹⁸.



Source: Zabala Zuazo, X. (2022).

¹³ The *libertimenduak* are very similar to the masquerades of Soule. Thus, the *bolantak* could be associated with the reds (propriety, mastery in the execution of the dance) while the *zirtzilak* could be associated with the blacks (impropriety, grotesque attitude, etc.).

¹⁴ *Bertsolaria*, is the name given to those who perform *bertsoak*, sung improvised verses which often satirize, or call attention to hypocrisy behind local figures and events, and in which communication with a diverse range of agents takes on special significance.

¹⁵ It is important to note that the participants relate to each other in Basque, both throughout the ritual and during the previous months of preparation.

¹⁶ Traditional folk theatre and dance from the same family as the Morris dance.

¹⁷ Although this last group does not play a major role, it can be seen to acquire greater significance as it fulfils the function of a "talent pool" where novices make their first contact with the carnival and its celebration.

¹⁸ All illustrations reproduced in the present article came from the 2022 carnival and were drawn by Xabier Zabala Zuazo.

This whole operation is carried out in accordance with two unwritten rules. First, relationships are built and carried out in Basque. Second, the roles of the younger and older participants are established in such a way that the former play the different carnival characters (*kokozuriak*, *kokobeltzak*, musicians or fauna) and the latter are in charge of things like logistics, bureaucracy, and know-how¹⁹. Through this relationship, experience is passed on from old to young and the young get to enjoy taking centre stage in the street.

However, although the structure of the festival is pre-defined, the choreography, music and other aspects that make up the carnival still have to be created and defined. After a period of training through talks, colloquiums, etc., four working teams get defined: the dance composition team, the music composition team, the theatrical composition team, and the costume team. It should be noted that while the first two work hand in hand, in a coordinated manner, the theatre team work in isolation (and to a certain extent in secret).

After months of hard work, in 2019, *Iruinkokoa* hit the streets of Pamplona for the first time (*Iruinkokoa*, 2019). An early lunch brings the festival organisers together, who meet in good time to finalise the preparations and put the final details in place. The *txupina* (firecracker) kicks off the celebration and parade, with the *kokozuriak* going first, followed by the band, and then the *kokobeltzak* and fauna²⁰. The scheduled parade progresses through the old part of the capital of Navarre, stopping at cultural associations, gastronomic societies, taverns, etc., all of which are related to the Basque language and the world of Basque culture²¹. At these visits, known as *asalduak*, the procession stops and the *bertsolariak* dedicate a series of *bertsoak* to the place. Afterwards the hosts, in turn, offer everyone food and drink. The visit ends with a song or *Ihauzi* everyone can sing along to. The transitions from stop to stop are accompanied by *paloteados* and the aforementioned disruptions instigated by the *kokobeltzak* and the fauna. As the morning goes by, more and more spectators join the procession until it reaches Plaza Santa Ana, where like in the *libertimenduak*, there is an alternation between the *kokobeltzak*'s theatrical performance, the *bertsolariak* commenting on the sketches performed, and the dances of the *kokozuriak*. In the 2022, performance, the themes dealt with focused on the most relevant events of the year:

- COVID - they represented the way of dealing with the virus from the hotel and catering industry, parodying the contradictions occurring day in day out.
- Underwater - (*Plaza hartzea korrikan*) - a parody was made of the floods and some political events from the town hall (the parking meter regulations in Txantrea, the schools for children in Basque, the equestrian exhibition, etc.).
- 21 Ekialdearena da (21 belongs to the East) - a parody of cultural trends and the artists that stood out (the *Matalaz* and *Laba* associations, the *bertsolaritza* final in Pamplona, etc.).
- Dictatorship (twitter), in which they dealt with the deaths in the Mediterranean of people fleeing the war in Syria and famines in African countries, the dispute between the GKS and *Ernai* associations, the Sahara, the coup d'état in Burma, etc.

Lastly, the whole procession moves into the centre of the square and invites the spectators to take part in the last dance. After this, and after drifting into huddles of friends, family, and neighbours, etc., swapping impressions, the participants gather around a table to eat and continue the festivities.

¹⁹ With the exception of the aforementioned areas, they will only have appeared in public as protagonists through the "sale" of the *Ziringolak*. A distinctive feature of this carnival which, in the form of a badge, is offered to the public in exchange for voluntary contributions. The proceeds are used to cover expenses.

²⁰ Although the formation was originally kept in the order indicated, over time the *Othamena* call has been introduced, which means the formation can be broken. The first notes warn the *kokobeltzak* and the fauna to take to the streets shouting and sowing chaos. The next call will be to return protagonism to the *kokozuriak* and restore the initial order.

²¹ The criterion for visiting these places may be either at the request of the groups, societies, taverns, etc., or thanks to initiative taken by the *Iruinkokoa* organisation. Once the places to visit have been defined, the smoothest possible route is planned.

Using Goffman's concept of "front and back regions" (1959), what is described above belongs to the front region, as a meeting place between actors and spectators, the dining room where the carnival officially takes place in the eyes of the community. The back region consists of where the cooking happens, the hidden part where public access is restricted, and the logistical creative part: the space in which the relationship between what has been inherited and what has been created may be situated. By way of example, a series of the most remarkable processes observed will be highlighted (although these are not the only ones).

These include the choice of band, the creation of the dance, and the kokobeltzak's attire. The band that forms part of Iruinkokoa is a brass band, a type of band that according to Wikipedia could be defined as: A brass band is a musical ensemble generally consisting entirely of brass instruments, most often with a percussion section. Ensembles that include brass and woodwind instruments can in certain traditions also be termed brass bands (particularly in the context of New Orleans and Japan-style brass bands), but may be more correctly termed military bands, concert bands, or "brass and reed" bands ("Brass band," 2021).

It seems obvious that a band of American origin would have no place from the point of view of synchronic essentialism. Such a band could be interpreted as something alien, however, we cannot forget that Pamplona has a long-standing culture of brass bands and an extensive popular repertoire for this type of band. Those places with brass and percussion ensembles share common heritage; military origins (military bands), transition to civilian bands (in the case of Pamplona, it makes sense to highlight the deep roots of La Pamplonesa brass band and Los Exploradores before them) and the leap to smaller formats as seen in the brass bands of India and New Orleans or the fanfares and charangas of the Basque Country. In addition to this connection, the carnival festival itself can be seen as another important link between Iruinkokoa and New Orleans. Fernández de Larrinoa, in his work in 1998, collected testimony that appears to predict this connection:

... One of my informants hinted towards a proposal to create and institutionalise Züberoko Egüna, Soule Day. Mardi Grass, according to him, was the ideal date for such an event, since Mardi Grass is the materialisation of the spirit of carnival; and Masquerade, carnival and Soule are synonymous. So far, however, his idea has not taken root. (Fernández de Larrinoa, 1998, p. 56).

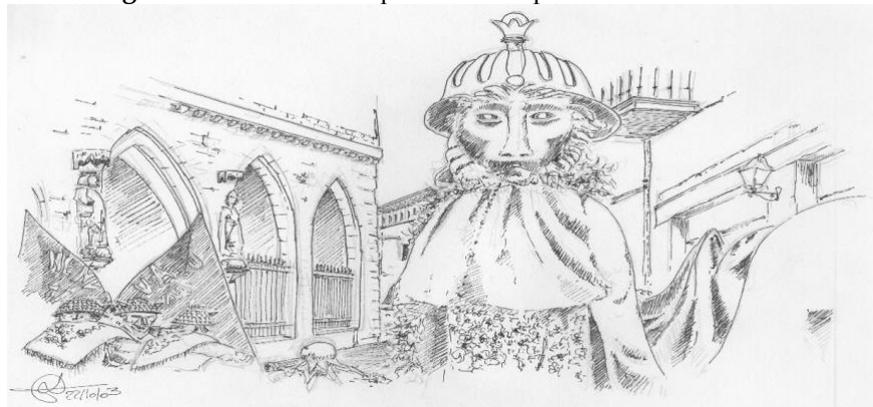
Although in this case the testimony speaks of the carnivals of Soule, the relationship between Iruinkokoa/libertimendua/masquerade of Soule is evident, so this analogy could be of use.

In addition to this correspondence between the style of the band and the music, it also makes sense to draw attention to the bands attire: a suit (dark jacket and trousers; navy blue or black) and a black and red cap. The detail of the cap is another interplay of links revealing military origins, given that it recalls the popular militias, which in turn evokes insurrection and Pamplona's links to the military insubordination movement, but also plays with the relationship between kokobeltzak and kokozuriak (or the reds from the Soule carnival perspective), alluding in this way to the neutral character of the band.

Figure 2. Illustration of the Kokozuriak.

Source: Zabala Zuazo, X. (2022).

Returning to Goffman's front region, the band is perceived as a charanga reminiscent of the orchestra in Mocho Armendáriz's film *Tasio*. This fits perfectly with the popular imaginary, and the identification of something as belonging.

Figure 3. Illustration of part of the representation of fauna.

Source: Zabala Zuazo, X. (2022).

Another aspect worth highlighting is the choreographic composition. This is made up from of an ensemble of steps and dances taken from different parts of the Basque country: from the *ihauziak* from the north, passing through the *soka-dantza* and ending with the *paloteados* from the south. The alternation of styles is combined with a mixture of steps (chosen and composed according to the requirements of each dance) that spatially interconnect not only the aforementioned geography, but also extend to the rest of the planet. Unnoticed by the spectator, the choreography of the *paloteado* includes steps from the Indian subcontinent. Through social networks (Facebook), a video was viewed in which striking similarities with the *paloteados* of Basque folklore in relation to the attire and the dress were spotted, and thus identified as belonging, making another choreographic resource available. As well as the choreography, the music used to perform the dance should also be highlighted; in the melody of the *paloteado*, an extract from the repertoire of the punk group *Tijuana in Blue* is recognisable. In the same vein, another example of interconnection can be found with the *jota* of the aforementioned *Ekialdeko*

sokadantza. For a jota to be identified and performed as such, a series of rhythms and structures must be used, however, once the basic rules have been fulfilled, there is plenty of room for creativity. In this case, the melody of the jota gets built out of parts of songs popular with young people, such as 31014 by Chill Mafia, Goizean Oskorri by Tatxers and Sortetxeari by Skabidean.

Lastly, we turn to the kokobeltzak's clothing and attitude. Both in the masquerades of Soule and in the libertimenduak, the blacks (the buhameak, the kauterak, or the zirzilak) are related to the wild/primitive world, to that which is not domesticated and which, at the very least, has to be monitored. However, this does not really resonate with Pamplona, an eminently urban environment. The wild aspect of nature is meaningless here, so the Kokobeltzak have to adapt. Thus, the attitude and clothing homes in on a different type of savagery, one that is more in keeping with the urban space and times. The dark colour is maintained, but the style is adapted to more urban archetypes. The model represented by the Shelby family (and its environment) from the Netflix series *Peaky Blinders* fits perfectly in such a place. The aesthetics of their shoes, boots, jackets, skirts, waistcoats, hats, etc., are adopted for the figure of the kokobeltzak. Social networks, streaming platforms, and audiovisual culture are infiltrated through these characters and some of the features of the Mardi Grass culture mentioned above slide in along with them, such as the black umbrellas. They all become part of the ritual.

:

Figure 4. Illustration of musicians.



Source: Zabala Zuazo, X. (2022).

5. Final reflection (some thoughts on Iruinkokoa)

Iruinkokoa is also known as the Kokoak of Iruña (Pamplona in Basque). According to the Auñamendi encyclopaedia, in Navarre, KoKoa is the name given to those who are not from the valley. Kokoa is a derogatory way of referring to foreigners, to that community that moves ambiguously between those who are, but are not (those who are inside, but not quite). Those who, far from forming part of the roots instrumentalized by the dominant community and culture (those in the centre), are situated in the peripheries or at the margins. Simmel (2012) defines this space as a way out of reality's linear monolithic discourse, into a dialogical perspective on civilisation. Linearity or the authority of tradition makes it impossible to reflect critically on the self. In other words, it avoids dialogue or delving deeper in search of meaning. The marginal, on the other hand, presents itself as an opportunity to create dialogue and establish new spaces, new values.

Iruinkokoa embraces this dialogic perspective by opening up spaces, delving in deeper and conferring meaning to the community. This Basque carnival in Pamplona seeks to create

dialogues between inherited traditions and the different realities it coexists with (it spreads across social networks, through video streaming platforms, reaching bazaars run by Chinese migrants) to culminate in the construction of a space where people can relate to each other and generate living practices. We are talking about a lived practice, a “slow experience” that enhances the beauty of it all. Far from being an inheritance, with the burden of responsibility for its endurance or extinction firmly on the shoulders of successors, it is about creating spaces for participation. One informant explained it perfectly. At home, she said, she had been handed the responsibility of being Basque and told it was up to her to pass the baton to the generations to come, to make the legacy endure. She said that this obligation felt like a burden, a responsibility that seemed titanic, a legacy she was not sure she wanted to take on. However, through Iruinkokoa, speaking Basque became something natural, an experience or exercise that gave meaning to the practice of Basque. Indeed, several people mentioned that Iruinkokoa gave them the opportunity to relate to each other in Basque, something that would not have happened in other circumstances. Thenceforth, the relationship between these people got established in Basque outside the space/time of the carnival. We could say that, in this carnival practice, folklore becomes an experience, an opportunity to leave the peripheries behind, a place where new values for solidarity can be created.

Araolaza (2022) says that the creation of new manifestations opens up the opportunity to overcome conflicts or tensions, however, the practice is limited to dance groups. In the case of Iruinkokoa, although in the first year the practice was mainly limited to the Duguna dance group, it was later opened to other groups, and is now open to anyone who wishes to participate. In this sense, the work of the dance groups could be seen to take a turn and open up to the work of mediation. Through an “assembly of folklore” or “engineering of folklore”, their contribution would focus on advising creation/innovation, so that, through accumulated knowledge (documentation, testimonies, etc.), they could articulate dance, music and/or theatre, to ensure what is created fulfils its objective: creating practices for the enjoyment of the community that practises them, at the same time as symbolic actions that represent the values of that community.

References

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso.
- Apodaka, E. (2015). *Identitatea eta anomalia*. Pamiela.
- Araolaza, O. (2020). *Genero-identitatea Euskal dantza tradizionalaren eraikuntzan*. UEU.
- Bidador, J. (1999). Las danzas de San Lorenzo de Pamplona. *Txistulari*, (180), 9-12.
- Bourdieu, P. (2003). Sociología de la percepción estética. In *Creencia artística y bienes simbólicos. Elementos para una sociología de la cultura* (pp. 65-84). Aurelia Rivera.
- Brass band. (28 nov 2021). In Wikipedia. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brass_band
- Buckland, T. J. (2001). In a word, we are unique: Ownership and control in an English dance custom. In G. Boyes (Ed.). *Step change: new views on traditional dance* (pp. 49-60). F. Boutle.
- Bullen, M., Díez Mintegi, C., & Kerexeta Erro, X. (2012). *Emakumeak Euskal Herriko festetan*. Auñamendi Entziklopedia. Eusko Ikaskuntza. <http://www.euskomedia.org/aunamendi/ee154096/143959>
- Comas d'Argemir, D. (1998). *Antropología económica*. Ariel.

Etxebeste Liras, O. (2018). Art(e/i)kulazioa: Iragan-orainaldiko narrativa aktiboen eraikuntz, praxi artistikoaren disziplinartekotasunetik abiatuta. *Ausart Journal for research in Art*, (6), 55-71. <https://ojs.ehu.es/index.php/ausart/article/view/19391>

Etxebeste Liras, O. (2022). *Baserri Hedatua*. Kutxa Fundazioa.

Ekialdearena da [@ekialdearena] (2021). Twitter. <https://mobile.twitter.com/ekialdearena>

Fernández de Larrinoa, K. (1998). De los límites y las transgresiones rituales. Fiestas de carnaval, danza tradicional e identidad social. En K. Fernández de Larrinoa (Ed.), *Fronteras y puentes culturales* (pp. 243-320). Pamiela.

Garmendia Larrañaga, J. (2022). *Kokoa*. Auñamendi Entziklopedia. Eusko Ikaskuntza. <https://aunamendi.eusko-ikaskuntza.eus/eu/koko/ar-151319/>

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday.

Groys, B. (2022). *The Philosophy of Care*. Verso.

Hedoi Etxarte. (21 marzo, 2022). In Wikipedia. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedoi_Etxarte

Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.). (2002). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.

Hughes-Freeland, F. (2006). Constructing a classical Tradition: Javanese Court Dance in Indonesia. In T. J. Buckland (Ed.), *Dancing from past to present: nation, culture, identities* (pp. 52-74). University of Wisconsin Press.

Iruinkokoa. (11 febrero, 2019). *Iruinkokoak hiri buruzagiko karririk hartuko ditu martxoaren 3an*. Dantzan.eus. <https://dantzan.eus/kidea/iruinkokoa/iruinkokoa-iruneko-inauteri-euskaldunak>

J.L. (de EDB de Navarra). (1987). Acerca de la composición de danzas nuevas. *Dantzariak*, (38), 9-12.

Latour, B. (2001). *La esperanza de Pandora. Ensayos sobre la realidad y los estudios de la ciencia*. Gedisa.

Latour, B. (2008). *Reensamblar lo social. Una introducción a la teoría actor-red*. Manantial.

Luku, A. (2014). *Libertitzeaz*. Pamiela.

MacCanell, D. (2017). *El turista. Una nueva teoría de la clase ociosa*. Melusina.

Maia Soria, J. (2017). *Berriak jaio ginen*. Lanku.

Martí i Perez, J. (1996). *El folklorismo: uso y abuso de la tradición*. Ronsel.

Pomares Esparza J. (2014-2015). Baile de la Era. *Boletín de la Cofradía de los danzantes de San Lorenzo/ San Lorentzoko Dantzanteen Kofradiaren Boletina*, (4-5), 52-78. <http://www.danzantesdesanlorenzo.com/documentos/Boletin%20Danzantes%20de%20San%20Lorenzo%2004-5.pdf>

Ramos, J. (1998). La danza en las fiestas y ceremoniales de Iruña través de la historia. Los Sanfermines de Pamplona en la superación de fronteras interiores. In K. Fernández de Larrinoa (Ed.), *Fronteras y puentes culturales* (pp. 439-551). Pamiela.

Said, E. (2008). *Orientalismo*. Debolsillo.

Sánchez Ekiza, K. (2000). Ideologías, identidades y religión en la danza tradicional vasca: el caso del aurreku. *Sukil: Cuadernos de cultura tradicional*, (3), 341-354.

Sánchez Ekiza, K. (2022). *Soka-dantza*. Auñamendi Entziklopedia. Eusko Ikaskuntza. <https://aunamendi.eusko-ikaskuntza.eus/es/soka-dantza/ar-110609/#>

Spinoza, B. (1969). *Ética*. Aguilar Argentina S.A. Ediciones.

Simmel, G. (2012). *El extranjero*. Sequitur.



© Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>