



Unpicking a Feeling: Interrogating the role of heritage in indigenous collective identity formation on the Caribbean island of Bonaire

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except where specifically indicated in the text, together with a statement of length, saying that the dissertation does not exceed the word limit stipulated by the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Human, Social and Political Sciences.

Abstract

This research attempts to understand how identity and heritage interface with each other in the colonial context of Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean. By exploring common understandings of how identity and heritage interact, this work applies theories of *Indianness*, a felt identity based on the adaptation of indigenous populations to a dominant society. Through the critical analysis of interview data in the context of a heritage survey and a historical analysis, this paper finds that heritage and identity production and maintenance are intimately related to colonialism on Bonaire. While many participants designated heritage based on a feeling of *Indianness*, there was an opposing group of interviewees who instead contested indigenous heritage and searched for historical and scientific legitimization for their heritage and identities. The research concludes that bottom-up understandings of heritage and identity formation are necessary to effectively manage heritage in colonial contexts.

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Main Text

1. Introduction

Identities and Heritage are two intimately related phenomena we cannot help but all be involved with. They are undeniably closely linked, yet with the wide variety of social contexts and the youth of heritage studies, it is unclear how the two intersect (**Fig.1**). This study aims to focus on this fundamental relationship by exploring collective identity and heritage use on a personal level on the Caribbean island of Bonaire. Based on interviews, a historical review, and a survey of heritage on the island, this investigation seeks to better understand how collective identification occurs on an individual scale, and what role heritage plays in this process. By applying different models of collective identity formation, I arrive at the conclusion that theories of *Indianness*, or simply ‘feeling,’ best explain the heritage context on Bonaire. The interviews reveal that heritage is valued based on a ‘feeling’ or Indianness on the one hand and the search for a historically accurate authenticity on the other. An understanding of this dichotomy needs to be considered and employed when managing heritage in similar colonial contexts.

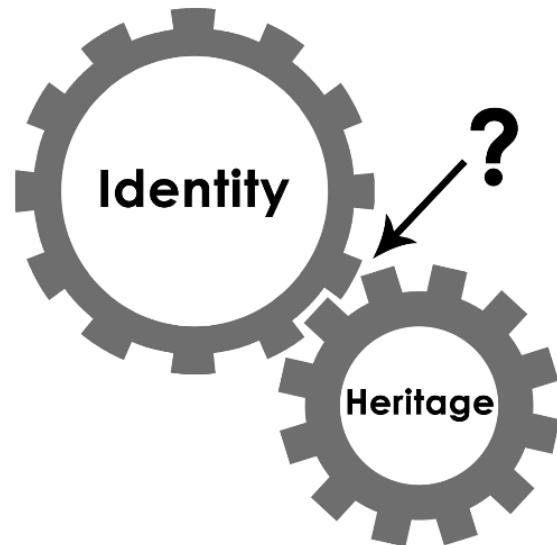


Fig.1: A simplified graphic to visualize the question driving this dissertation: How does heritage interface with identity?

This dissertation opens with a theoretical framework and summary of the setting of this study, a state of the art of similar studies and a historical overview for this investigation. The methods and

data are then presented, followed by the analysis, and closing with conclusions including recommendations for future research.

1.1 Definitions

Three important terms that are fundamental to this research and utilized throughout the present dissertation are *heritage*, *collective identity*, and *indigenous*.

This work considers heritage under Smith's (2006) definition where it is relational and arises from a cultural process where the past provides resources that are valued by living social actors. Based on this, heritage here refers to intentional or unintentional selection, meaning attribution, and use of aspects of the past. It is important to also note that heritage can be further subdivided into intangible, tangible, and natural and cultural. For the purposes of this paper, all these forms of heritage are considered together as elements of the past that can be valued and are important for identity formation.

There are many levels of identity formation (**Fig.2**), and in this research they are organized in ascending order according to how many people interact within each level: individual, group, collective identity, etc. When the heritage of two or more individuals overlaps, it can become a group's heritage; e.g. a family heirloom whose importance is shared and appreciated by the group. When the heritage begins to connect a number of individuals beyond a group that can be managed by daily face-to-face interactions, likely beyond the Dunbar number of 150 (Dunbar 2011), it becomes an imagined community and a collective identity (Anderson 1983). In a collective identity, the individual heritage becomes collective heritage and even a kind of imagined heritage as many in the group might have no access to it: for example, an important landmark in a town

where many have emigrated from. It is important to highlight here that national identity is not collective identity, it is a *form of* collective identity.

The term indigenous is contested due to being context-dependent and reaffirming the power relations inherent in the colonization (Ferris et al. 2014; Lane 2011; Weaver 2001). In the past years, however, the term is being reclaimed as a useful concept (Das 2001; Jansen & Pérez Jiménez 2018). In this work it refers to peoples who have a historical continuity with pre-contact and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories and maintain distinctness (Cobo 1987). The term indigenous is therefore used to refer to the immediately pre-colonial inhabitants of Bonaire and their descendants, the colonially known Caquetío, despite them not being the first human inhabitants of the island. Indian and *Indianness* are used contextually to refer to native indigenous peoples of the Americas rather than people from the Indian subcontinent.

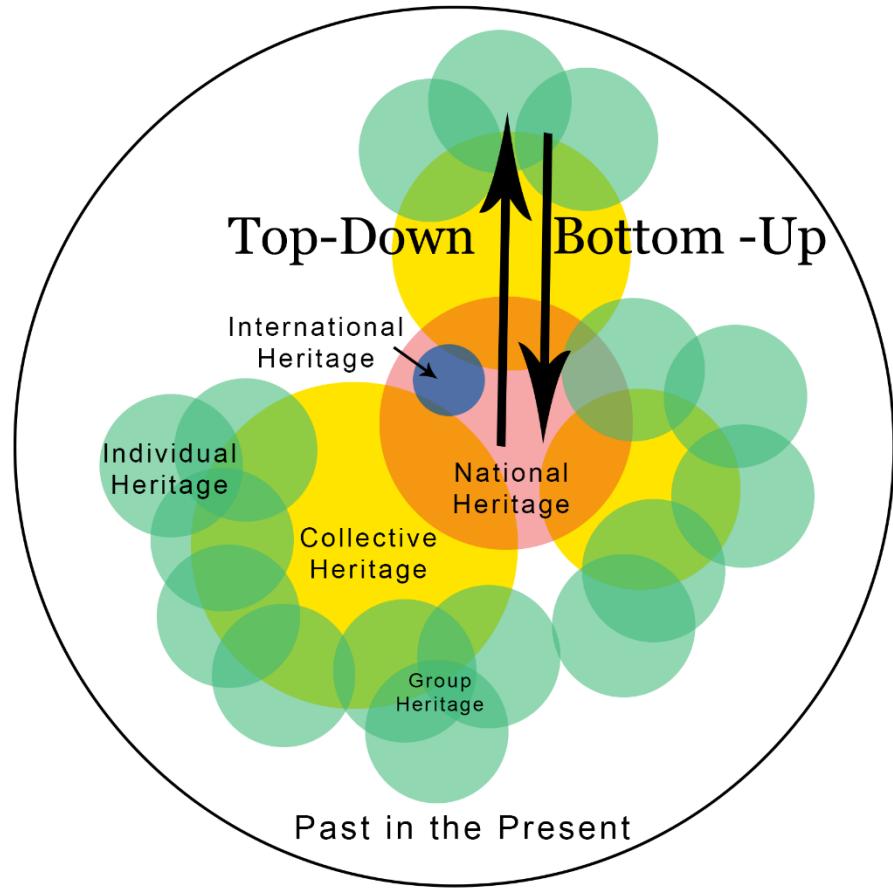


Fig.2: Visualizing the relationships between the aspects of the past in the present that are selected as heritage by different actors. The top-down and bottom-up forces are also displayed.

1.2 Broad Theoretical Framework

A central notion to this research is that there is a strong relationship between heritage and identity. At the widest scales of identity, this relationship is visible during war (Sørensen & Viejo-Rose 2015; Viejo-Rose 2011; Viejo-Rose 2017; Walasek *et al.* 2016). Further examples arise from the wealth of heritage work done on national identities and heritage, particularly in museums (Appadurai & Breckenridge 1999; Coombes 1997; Crane 2000; Dudley *et al.* 2011; Evans & Boswell 1999; Fladmark 2015; Galaty 2018; Hogan 2008; Kaplan 1994; Rogoff & Sherman 2004; Uzzell & Ballantyne 1998).

However, overwhelmingly, these topics deal with the top-down manipulation of heritage by institutions at a societal level. This is what Smith (2006) broadly terms as the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) – the hegemonic definitions of what is valuable for the collective. Works that are concerned with this level of heritage creation and management often focus on contemporary Western topics, like the nation and the museum. These studies reaffirm the link between identity and heritage but rarely explore how they interface with each other outside of the museum and the nation. Therefore, it is difficult to apply the theoretical frameworks of these studies to smaller intra- and extra-national collectives. Also, the results of these works struggle to inform about identity formation in the deeper past, particularly those permeated by non-Western ontologies.

As Peckham (2003, 1) explains, heritage is either, “—tourism and sites of historical interest preserved for the nation,” or “—a set of shared values and collective memories; inherited customs and a ‘sense of accumulated communal experience.’” This research focuses on the latter, the bottom-up organic creation and maintenance of heritage, accepting that heritage as determined by individuals is the most elemental manifestation of heritage. When an individual engages with

heritage, he/she constructs a sense of identity, one that flows the opposite direction from the AHD which aims to impose heritage on the individual. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 2. By focusing on unstructured interviews and exploring indigenous collective identity in the Caribbean, this study contributes a new bottom-up approach to heritage creation and maintenance that informs a sense of collective identity. I also aim to elucidate some of the complexity that arises when we consider the individual as the core creator and user of heritage. This is with the goal of overturning the current focus on the conservation of buildings and sites, replacing it with a focus on people's attachments and their multifarious forms of identity management and creation.

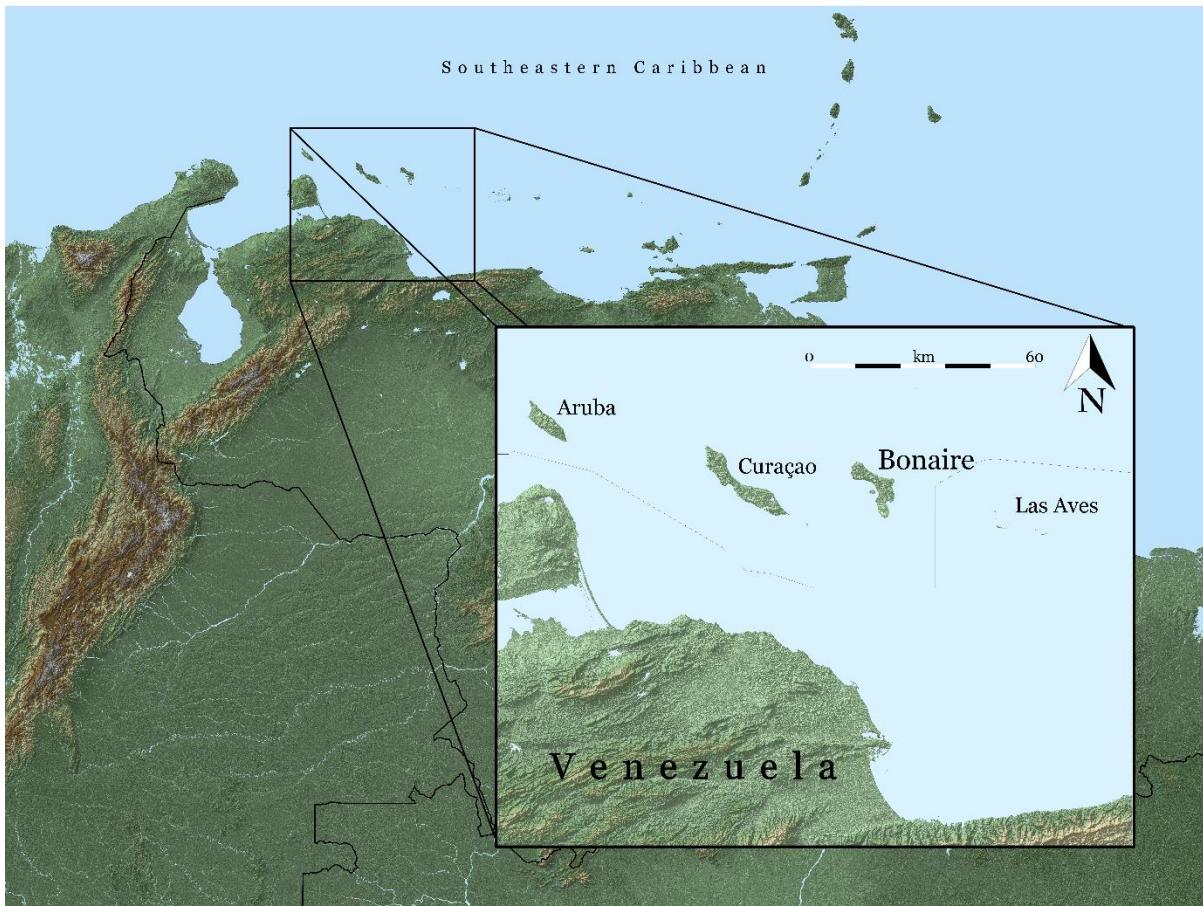


Fig.3: Map of The Southeastern Caribbean with the ABC islands and Bonaire highlighted.

(JAXA 2018)

1.3 Setting

The Caribbean region is a vibrant patchwork of identities and influences. The European arrival in 1492, which introduced new peoples, cultures, economies and power structures, likely had the greatest impact on forming the current Caribbean. This complicated history fuels intricate identity formation processes at every level of identification. Broadly in line with Jansen and Pérez Jiménez (2018, 27) who state that “Colonialism... continues to have an impact on daily life,” I contend that identity politics best exemplifies the continuous impact of colonialism. By placing this study in the Caribbean, I aim to underscore colonialism’s socio-political and historical impacts as identity-transforming phenomena on the regional level.

This research focuses on Bonaire, an island in the Southeastern Caribbean, 90 kilometers off the coast of Venezuela with a total land area of 260 square kilometers. Bonaire is part of the Dutch Caribbean which consist of two groups of islands, the ABC islands and the Leeward islands. Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire, are referred to together as the ABC islands and are all located between 30 and 90 km from Venezuela’s north-western coast (**Fig.3**).

Bonaire went from being inhabited by pre-colonial bearers of the Dabajuroid culture, known to the incoming Spanish as the Caquetío Indians, to being colonized by three European empires, ending with present Dutch colonization. This influence can be seen in Papiamentu, the language spoken on Bonaire, which is a mix of Dutch, Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Arawak (Velupillai 2015). Today, Bonaire is an island that experiences political tension, particularly because it has opted to become a special municipality of the Netherlands alongside Saba and St. Eustatius since the 10th

of October 2010 ('10/10/10'). Meanwhile on 10/10/10 Curaçao, Aruba, and St. Martin chose independence within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Bonaire has a population of around 20,000 people, with a significant demographic increase in the last 20 years due to immigration. Among this population there are three significant groups, the Dutch (and more recently American or non-Dutch European) immigrants, the Afro-Bonaireans descended from the enslaved, and the indigenous peoples descended from the pre-colonial inhabitants (Haviser 1991). Due to these limited demographic variables, this small and relatively isolated population is a prime case study. The small-scale community and island boundedness allow precise investigation on the phenomena in question. In addition, because the Bonairean indigenous community has not been studied significantly in the last 30 years, this project seeks to update the state of indigenous identity on Bonaire.

This research investigates how indigenous identity relates to heritage and is managed in this context. This case study explores heritage in a colonial and post-colonial Caribbean context, something more often done in literature and history (Hogan 2000; Wang & Law 2017; William 2009). It also provides data on what it means to identify as indigenous in the Caribbean, contributing to understanding of how it *feels* to be (post)colonial. Thus, this case study adds another perspective on colonial and post-colonial identities to several previous assessments throughout the Americas and beyond (Bosma *et al.* 2012; Byrne 1996; Lucas 2004; O'Hara & Fisher 2009; Singh & Schmidt 2000; Canny & Pagden 1989; Castillo & Strecker 2018).

The results of this research aim to be useful to cultural management institutions and efforts, both on Bonaire and in other parts of the Caribbean. This project also intends to open doors for future work on the island, particularly in renewing indigenous heritage in museums and public heritage with a stronger emphasis on heritage users.

2. The State of the Art: Collective Identity and Heritage

To open, this section discusses the different theoretical models that break apart the relationship between heritage and identity formation. It aims to give an overview of current theories, offers criticism, and refocuses *Indianness* as a model for understanding identity formation in the Caribbean.

Throughout, the term *ethnic identity* is used contextually because it has long been the concept of choice for similar studies. However, ethnic identity is a problematic term for a variety of reasons (Brubaker 2002; Carter & Fenton 2010; Premdas 2011). Commonly used definitions of ethnicity, like Barth's (1998), argue for ethnic identity as an ascriptive difference of origins and background maintained by marked difference in cultural behavior. Such definitions conjure notions of over-objectivized differences that I consider ineffectual when discussing ephemeral and situational identities. Moreover, these firm distinctions lead ethnicity to be often used as an academic euphemism for race or culture (Cornell & Hartmann 1998; Hall 1992; Oostindie 2005b; Wimmer 2008).

Ethnic identities are a form of collective identity, so for my own research, I opt to use the umbrella-term collective-identity which I consider to be more flexible. Ethnicity was considered in the analysis as a potential identifying factor that can be used to identify with a collective, a concept akin to Shibusawa and Kwan's view (1965) that ethnic identities are human collectivities based on the belief of common origin, real or imagined.

2.1 How are heritage and identity formation connected?

In early models of ethnic identity formation, Barth (1998) proposes an approach where people utilize a variety of traits as signs of distinctiveness. Distinctiveness is a core idea for identity

formation: through evaluating their differences from others, the members secured continual membership in their collective identity. A common understanding of identity is this differentiation from an *other*. Bunescu (2016, 11) finds that the transnational identity of the Roma is continuously negotiated through “interaction with the contextual *other*.” From this, various definitions of ethnicity focus on the perception of cultural differentiation, often based on common descent (Jones 1997). Descent, in terms of biology, cannot be translated into heritage, unless it materializes into an intangible or tangible expression.

Heritage is manipulated by people to express distinctiveness. Barth (1998, 14) identifies the differentiations as “—feature of dress, language, house form, or general style of life.” Other traits that emphasize difference and/or belonging are cultural practices, phenotypical similarities and myths of common historical origin (Wimmer 2008). This model shows the reliance of identity on aspects that commonly fall into heritage as it is managed today. On an individual scale, having access to these traits is essential in re-asserting membership to the collective identity.

Barth (1998) also defines inclusive and exclusive boundaries in collective/ethnic identities which can either allow or deny the ability of an individual to join a group. Gosden (2004) identifies colonialism as power spread across boundaries of cultural identity, and classifies material culture as a source of that power, commodifying labor and resources. In this view, heritage is a means of transmitting power, and legitimizing or denying identity. Heritage is therefore selected based on its ability to negotiate difference and power.

Considering other models, Breakwell (1992) suggests that identity is composed of four dimensions, (1) continuity raising links with the past, (2) distinctiveness and uniqueness from others, (3) self-esteem building based on shared qualities and pride, and (4) self-efficacy which claims that the present members of the group have the same skills as past members of the group (Sørensen 2017). This theory, like Barth's, relies on both tangible and intangible heritage as aspects of the past, but is a more practical model that considers different reasons for identifying. Each of Breakwell's aspects build bridges between the past and the present, providing distinctiveness, and legitimizing collective identity.

It is important to keep in mind that collective identity is constructed, it is not a pre-existing category. It needs confirmation and requires performance to be maintained (Goffman 1990). Heritage, tangible (material culture) and intangible (practice, memory, language, etc.), are key tools in this process. As such, we can understand heritage discourse as a powerful legitimizer for identities, particularly when it expresses difference among collectives.

Jones (2004) explores the power of material culture in legitimizing an identity. She analyzes the Hilton Cadboll Stone, finding that the slab was a crucial aspect of identity formation for the small Scottish town. The stone not only acted as a medium for the reproduction and negotiation of relationships in the community, but also helped form the symbolic construction of the community. Anchored in its place, it provided a sense of connection with the past and acted as a reference point to produce community identities. These kinds of artefacts, called ethnic idioms or artefacts of emblematic style, are deliberately used as symbols of ethnic unity (Franklin 2003; Wiessner 1983). These ideas suggest that tangible heritage is shared and employed as a signifier of a collective identity.

However, in archaeology, the translation of past material identities into historically-recorded identities has been problematic for understanding the experiences of local peoples through the centuries of colonialism, and “—has often been caught up in the contemporary process of translating those archaeologically defined identities into a heritage of relevance for contemporary descendant communities” (Ferris et al. 2014, 4). Present populations create contemporary heritage regardless of whether the professionals agree with those creations (McGuire 2008). However, manipulation of this construction of heritage by specialists has infamously led to cases such as Gustaf Kossina, whose work was used by important Nazi figures to provide scientific support for their ideology (Arnold 1990).

In this dissertation, intangible heritage acts as a firmer source of continuity than material culture. Collective memory (Halbwachs 2013) – a term describing memories shared by more than one person – or “our memories,” are aspects of continuity that are shared orally. It is the nature of the collective that shapes this collective memory, and in turn creates identity as the collective gains awareness of its past (Russell 2006). It is important to highlight that this memory is not an abstract historical delineation of events as per Nora’s (1989) ‘history.’ It is instead a reconstruction of past lived experiences more akin to Nora’s (1989) ‘real memory.’ Assmann (1995) raises the notion of cultural memory, an evolutionary mechanism that guarantees the maintenance of culture throughout generations. This theory contends that cultural memory contains fixed points of memory, events from the past whose memory is maintained through texts, rites, monuments, and other forms of what I would term heritage (Assmann 1995, 130). Cultural memory in this way creates an awareness of unity and difference. For Halbwachs (2013), these memories rely on the dynamics of different groups in society, and while everyone has a perspective on the past, it is this collective that reconstructs the past.

Intangible heritage is a common expression of identity beyond collective memory. Kurien (1994) in her study of Kerala in India, identified that the essence of ethnicity was formed from a combination of interactions among many variables such as religion, income, occupation, education, and family structure. According to Weaver (2001), those who share an ethnic identity also broadly share the same conceptual map and way of interpreting language. None of these aspects above can be isolated, even though usually one factor such as language, religion, or race is seen as the core for ethnic formation (Kurien 1994). Often, intangible practices employ material culture as a means of maintaining identity (Hoskins 1998). These objects would otherwise be powerless in terms of identity creation or maintenance. Therefore, ethnic formation is not based on single characteristics but arises out of the combination of elements that fuel assumptions of unity and distinctiveness.

Considering these models of identity formation, **Fig.4** depicts a simplified model of how a collective identity is maintained. Intangible heritage draws from the pool of the past in the present in a process of heritage creation, valuing aspects of practice, land, memory, myth, language, history, etc. After all, the past is created in the present (Hodder 1999; Shanks & Tilley 2016; Voss 2010). These valued aspects are expressed by the intangible heritage, often employing material culture in the process, and therefore leaning towards material culture. Such a process of heritage creation and maintenance, both tangible and intangible, supports an individual's claim to distinctness and therefore collective identity.

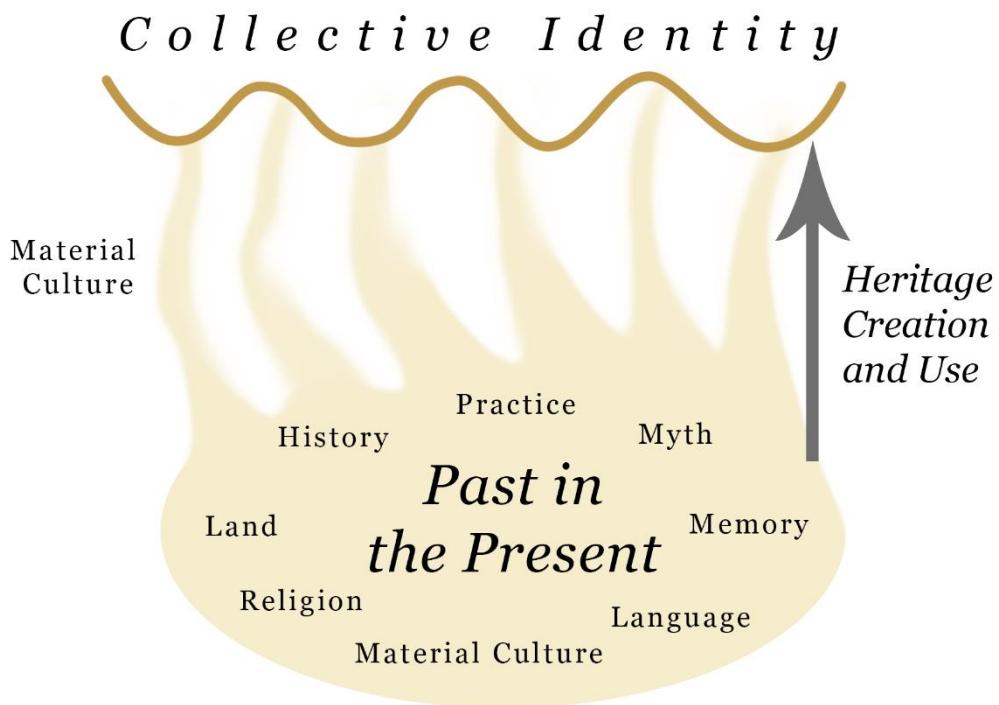


Fig.4: Visualization of the different elements that support the creation and maintenance of a collective identity.

Importantly, identities do not only depend on the individual, but also on outside influences. In the past, theories of identity formation processes have split into either *primordialist* views, meaning that identity consists of ineffable personal attachments to unchanging elements such as language or territory, or *instrumental* views, meaning that identity is dynamic and situational and serves a political purpose of differentiation (Jones 1997). However, as Voss (2012, 27) points out, neither of these models can account for the “—persistence of ethnic distinctions in certain historical moments and their rapid transformation in others.” To unite these, a social constructivist theory of identity creations should be employed that posits identity as a result of both external and internal choices and influences (Siu-woo 2003).

This distinction is important because it can also be implemented by an individual. For example, the Roma contextually employ aspects of their identity for instrumental purposes vis-a-vis the other (Bunescu 2016). In other contexts, identifying aspects were used as primordialist identity aspects that were emotive. This concept implies that the identification processes of individuals rely both on their self-identification and their closest context, as well as the larger social system they inhabit. Similarly, Weaver (2008) finds that social actors choose ethnic distinction that can support claims to prestige and power. This understanding is intimately related to the two main forces of heritage production and management: hegemonic heritage (AHD) production and manipulation is in tune with the instrumentalists effecting top-down heritage management; whereas, a grass-roots individual production of heritage likely relies on ideas of personal attachments to perceivable unchanging elements. Identities may begin as primordial feelings, but they are then thrust into economic and political competitions.

It is important to distinguish that identity is a process that is set to social and historical changes which have real tangible and intangible effects on identity formation (Ferris *et al.* 2014). The presented theories struggle to tackle colonial identity processes, especially in places where cultural continuity has been compromised but identity remains. Furthermore, these concepts deal with westernized notions of the self and of belonging. For example, traditional models of identity deal with *individuals*, who bring their own characteristics to social encounters, while some identities may actually consist of *dividuals*, who create these characteristics through the encounters between people and things (Gosden 2004).

I consider the theories above as rigid and a-historical. In particular, overarching models for ethnic/collective identity formation fail to grasp indigenous collective identities (St-Denis & Walsh 2016). As Rata *et al.* (2014) claim, western psychological theory scarcely addresses how indigenous individuals and collectives promote cultural connectedness and secure identity development.

2.2 Indigenous Identities and Indianness

Considering this lack of flexibility, a different approach to collective identity is necessary. This is where theories of *Indianness* are particularly useful. *Indianness* refers to the adjustment and border maintenance of indigenous peoples to the dominant society (Peroff 1997). In practice, it is a sense of belonging arising from the interactions between members, resources, organizations, land, and other “parts” of an indigenous community (Peroff 1997, 488). The term stands out because of its specific focus on the indigenous experience; the proponents of *Indianness* claim that it cannot be captured in the restrictive terminology and methodologies available to academic research (Deloria 1991). *Indianness* is internal and deeply personal, and it is concerned with how the indigenous think about themselves and feel. Therefore, Peroff (1997, 487) claims that “—studying Indianness is like trying to study the innermost mysteries of the human mind itself.”

To layer this into a theoretical framework, Kobylinski (2003) identifies three aspects of continuity in a socio-cultural systems, (1) settlement or population continuity, (2) cultural or stylistic continuity and, (3) ethnic or consciousness continuity. In this model, the use of heritage is separate from ethnic consciousness or continuity. Without cultural or stylistic continuity, but with a continuing settlement continuity and ethnic consciousness, what remains is a sense of belonging.

As Castile (1981, 171) claims “—Indeed, if one equates Indian identity with the preservation of a genetic purity, a unique language, or cultural lifestyle traceable to undisturbed precontract cultures, the answer to the question: ‘What is so Indian about the Indian?’ is ‘Not much.’” Colonialism has created a rift in identity making processes, transforming what is meaningful, and changing meaning in new frameworks of quotidian life (Waterton & Watson 2017) for many indigenous peoples, separating them from many aspects that conform identity which were considered fundamental in the models above. This has been described as ‘deracination’ by Walsh (1992), or the removal of roots, separating the present populations from a past that is unsettling.

Taking this into account, while Weaver (2001, 35) claims that indigenous identity is connected to a sense of “—peoplehood inseparably linked to sacred traditions, traditional homelands, and a shared history as indigenous people,” members of this identity do not always have access to these aspects. Yet, as Gillman (2010, 25) explains, “It is not important that present communities practice past practices for that to be their heritage.” In stark contrast to the conceptions of heritage above, continuity, and intangible heritage are not key aspects of identification. Therefore, *Indianness* can be expressed as someone simply declaring themselves as indigenous on a census or an exam (Chavers 1996; Nagel 1997). Similarly, simply a feeling of affinity to a place can be implicated in creating meaning and generating heritage and identity (Waterton & Watson 2017).

An important detail distinguishes this theory of identity from the ones discussed previously. Peroff (1997) points out that that *Indianness*, while affecting the tangible world, does not materially exist. This suggests that many forms of heritage and especially tangible heritage exist in a different form or are less important than in traditional models of identity formation. Instead, intangible heritage

gains a greater relevance. However, we cannot forget that much intangible heritage relies on tangible objects to express itself. Do these objects only act as placeholders, or do they actively form a part of identity formation? This is a question that remains to be answered.

In **Fig.5**, *Indianness* is applied to the model displayed previously. Here the heritage creation and use that was expressed through intangible and tangible heritage is visibly affected by colonialism. The access that the collective identity had to the resources of the past is cut, and the collective identity is left reaching for a largely inaccessible past. This collective identity is termed *Indianness*. This model of colonial indigenous identity is this research's hypothesis. As the backbone for my interpretation, it is applied throughout the analysis of collected data.

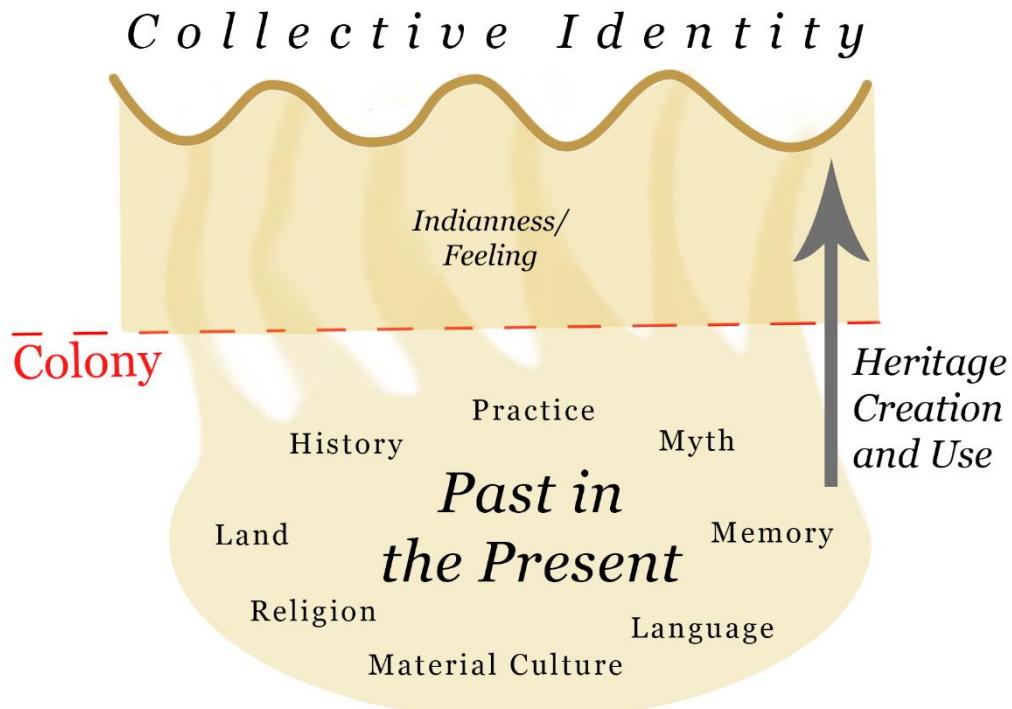


Fig.5: Depicting the relationship between heritage and collective identity in a colonial context.

2.3 Similar Investigations in the Caribbean

In the Caribbean, ethnicity has been the focus of extensive investigations (Oostindie 2005), which often determine what aspects differentiate groups. Numerous studies have been undertaken, however, many in terms of top-down identity formation at a national level (Allen 2015; 2010; 2014; Clarke 2005; Oostindie 2005a). Some have been structured ethnic surveys (Dijs 2011; Knight 2005), while others have been museum studies (Price & Price 2005), or historical reviews (Maingot 2005). A few studies have also focused on the Papiamentu language (Bouscholte 1978; van Buurt 2015; van Buurt & Joubert 1997; Velupillai 2015). On Aruba, mitochondrial DNA analysis found that the Arubans were closely related to coastal Caquetío indigenous peoples (Toro-Labrador *et al.* 2003).

In the Caribbean at large, heritage and ethnic identity research has been prolific (Andrews 2010; Robertson 2016; Yates 2011). In terms of non-indigenous collective identities, works discussing the legacies of transatlantic slavery (Farnsworth *et al.* 2001; Klein & Vinson III 2007; Kummels *et al.* 2014; Ojo & Hunt 2012) ignore the case of Bonaire. Bonaire has been treated as a small and insignificant backwater in the panorama of more “attractive” and “appealing” Caribbean island cases. Large edited volumes on the Dutch Caribbean, which include Bonaire (Hofman & Haviser 2015) and others about the African Caribbean (Haviser 1999), focus heavily on archaeological heritage and neglect discussions of present-day community engagement. Jackson (1995) is the only other regional application of the term *Indianness*, which she applied to the case of Vaupés, Colombia.

Bonaire has not been a large target of heritage studies (Haviser 1995) although it has been host to a community archaeology program (Haviser 2003). Antoin and the organization Fundashon

Historiko Kultural Bonaireano (FuHiKuBo) have collected oral histories and folklore (Antoin 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 1999c; Antoin & Haviser 2003; Antoin & Luckhardt 2012; Janga 1989; Juliana 1976; 1977; 1978; St. Jago 1995). These works have been published in booklets, in a dedicated online repository, and through documentaries, yet they have not been critically approached. Other works on indigeneity have intersected with mythology (Booi 1997; Nooijen 1979; 1985). The study performed by Van Beek (2013) explores the formation of the Rincón community and its modern day creolization and change, but with a focus on architecture and community building.

In 1990, Haviser undertook pioneering work by conducting island-wide questionnaires and interviews to survey Bonaireans' perception of modern Amerindian ethnicity on the island. These were conducted throughout different *brios* (neighborhoods) on the island. At the time the population on the island was significantly smaller at 10,610 persons. The goal of his research was to gather information relating to their perceptions of what Amerindian culture was. The survey questioned continuity of residence, perceived ethnic origin, the ethnic representation within general Bonairean society, and personal characteristics of Amerindian origin.

This survey gives a good sense of the identity of Bonaireans in 1990, however, 28 years later, this study requires updating. Firstly, the questionnaire offered closed questions (such as: "What foods on Bonaire do you believe exhibit Amerindian influences?") that predetermined a set of answers, which may have redirected the actual answers or feelings of the interviewees. Similarly, in terms of physical appearance, Haviser asked for interviewees to check-off a list of pre-selected features, ignoring more specific manifestations of identity. Finally, while the research was thorough, the

goal of identifying real versus imagined identities on the islands undermines the realities that people may feel, even if they are not historically ‘accurate.’

Finally, I must underscore that this work is a continuation of a larger project on post-colonial collective identities that began on the nearby island of Margarita, Venezuela (Antczak 2016). There, I worked with the Guaiquerí indigenous group who had a similar colonial trajectory to the Caquetío of Bonaire. Attempting to together understand the relationship between collective identity and material culture, I conducted interviews with the Guaiquerí to build a better regional understanding of the challenges that post-colonial Caribbean identities face through these separate collective identity case studies. Research on Bonaire will help inform this larger picture.

3. Method



Fig.6: A map of Bonaire highlighting areas of importance (CNES 2018).

This research is multi-method, being based on, historical data, participant observation and interviews. Interview and participant observation data was collected during two field-visits, the first from the 5–17th of April 2018, and the second from the 23rd of June to the 17th of July 2018.

During the first leg of my research I aimed to familiarize myself with the heritage discourse on the island by visiting and interviewing as many heritage institutions as possible. Overall, the result of the first visit was also a greater understanding of what kind of research could be useful on the

island, thus the focus on indigenous identity. The second leg of the research consisted of interviews and further participant observation.

3.1 Historical Data

Extensive research was conducted on the history of Bonaire, with a focus on the pre-colonial inhabitants and their colonial descendants. This was done to aid in the analysis of the interview data, as well as to enrich the understanding of heritage sites on the island. Most of the historical data recovered is summarized in **Part 5**. **Annex 1** contains historical and archaeological evidence detailing what the documentarily-known Caquetío were like.

3.2 Heritage on the Island

The first component of the research were museum and heritage institution visits, and heritage experiences. Data was collected through participant observation, experiencing the exhibitions, unstructured informal interviews with people working in the institutions, and attending heritage events. **Table 1** details the sites that were visited for this research, and **Fig.6** gives information about locations across the island.

The reason for visiting museums is that museums hold object-centered displays intended to provoke different emotions and feelings (Shelton 2015, 187). Museum exhibitions as well as heritage sites and events link people to their past and “—prompt the re-learning of forgotten knowledge and skills, provide opportunities to piece together fragmented historical narratives, and are material evidence of cultural identity and historical struggles,” (Peers and Brown 2015, 6).

During these visits I photographed the exhibitions and took notes on my impressions. I also took notes of the interviews I conducted, asking about the goals of the institutions, their role in terms

of heritage on the island, and visitor numbers. I also employed ‘hot interpretation’ which consisted of noting the affective powers of the exhibitions and events I attended (Uzzell 1989).

Considering that heritage is not only tangible, all efforts were made to take part in local heritage events and traditional celebrations. During the stay, three events were attended: The San Pedro celebration, the Luna Yen cultural night, and a Maskarada traditional dance presentation. These were treated as participant observation, taking photographs and notes during the events.

Table 1: Describes the heritage and heritage related institutions that were visited and interviewed during the fieldwork.

Heritage Institution	Role	Location	Origin	Interview	Language
FuHiKuBo	Archive and Heritage Promotion	Kralendijk	Bonaire	Yes	Spanish
SKAL (Museo Boneiru)	Governmental Heritage Management/Museum	Kralendijk	Bonaire	Yes	Spanish
Mangazine di Rei	Heritage Promotion/Museum	Rincón	Bonaire	Yes	Spanish
Terramar Museum	Museum	Kralendijk	Netherlands	Yes	English
Washington Slaagbaai National Park Visitor Center	Museum	Washington National Park	Bonaire	Yes	Spanish
Bonaire Museum of Natural History	Museum	Kralendijk	Netherlands	Yes	English
Museo Chich'i Tan	Museum	Rincón	Bonaire	Yes	Spanish
Cargill Salt Works	Funding Body	South of the Island	USA	Yes	English
Indian Inscriptions Slave Huts	Heritage Site	Onima	-	No	-
	Heritage Site	South of the Island	-	No	-

3.2 Interviews

The second component of this research was a series of interviews conducted on Bonaire with people who self-identified as indigenous, or who were working with the heritage on the island. In terms of finding interviewees, the challenge was that while, many members of the community ascribe to an indigenous heritage and identity, there is no organized indigenous group, and those that harbor indigenous identity do not visibly stand out from the rest of Bonaireans.

Therefore, to recruit interviewees, I began by meeting Bonaireans in the Netherlands and gathering a sense of the islands heritage structure. Then, from these acquaintances I received a series of contacts which introduced me to the heritage sector on the island. Upon my first trip to the island, I visited all the heritage institutions on the island, conducting unrecorded and unstructured interviews to find out about the heritage of the island. The fact that I was legitimized by these institutions meant that it was easier to snowball my way into interviews with locals. Through these acquaintances I expanded my contacts for the second trip. During the second trip, while meeting the interviewees, I requested their help to use their network to find additional contacts, asking them for people who they knew identified as indigenous as the only criterion. Contacting new interviewees was made mostly over the phone.

Similar research (Andrews 2010; González 2015b; Haviser 1991; Robertson 2016) has employed identity surveys that were structured or semi-structured. Due to the personal nature of identity formation and from previous experience exploring these themes, I needed to build a natural and comfortable rapport, something that could not be done with pre-formulated questions (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). These unstructured interviews aimed to promote a fluid discussion that could be directed towards broad themes, and the lack of formulated questions was to avoid enclosing the participants in a certain way of thinking. I relied on a set of themes I had prepared ahead of time

to broadly steer the discussion if necessary. This was meant to encourage freedom of the speaker, while keeping the interview focused on the topic (Bryman 1988). The themes that I aimed to cover with the unstructured interviews were broadly:

- 1) Collective Identity
 - a. *Indigenity*
- 2) Identifying Aspects
 - a. *Land*
 - b. *Material Culture*
 - c. *Tradition/Practices*
 - d. *Language*
 - e. *Religion*
 - f. *Oral Memory*
 - g. *History of Indigenous*
 - h. *Museums*
- 3) Social Implications
 - a. *Organization*
 - b. *Events*
 - c. *Tourism*

The interviews were meant to reveal what aspects of heritage and cultural continuity were actively employed as identifying aspects. These were then analyzed in the context of the historical and heritage context determined on the island. It was also important for this research to conduct group interviews, to compare the information gathered to personal interviews. The goal of this was to observe how the collective nature of this identity reflects when various people were discussing and contesting claims to identity in front of each other. The opportunity for these arose organically.

While the goal was to record all my interviews during the second visit, I took care to gain voiced consent from my interviewees on the topic, and to be sensitive about the use of the recorder. It turned out that likely due to the topic, a proportion (6/23) of the interviews were not recorded, either because the situation was not right, or because the interviewee explicitly did not allow it. It was my consideration that an official consent form would concern interviewees unnecessarily as to the severity of the interview and could have led the participants to stiffening up and being more

reluctant to answer personal questions. Instead, each interviewee was made aware of the following points: (1) participation is voluntary and the participant is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, (2) the interview will be recorded, if so allowed, and parts of it will be transcribed by the researcher himself, (3) names and any other personal information will be removed before publication and participant privacy will be protected by the researcher, and (4) copies of the interview can be requested from the researcher. A summary of the individual interviewees is found in **Table 2** and the group interviews in **Table 3**.

Table 2: Describes all the personal unstructured interviews conducted during this research.

#	Code	Age Range	Occupation	Location	Gender	Language	Recorded	Duration
1	RIM1	50-70	Cultural Promoter	Rincón	M	English/Spanish	Yes	1hr07min
2	KRM1	50-70	Politician	Kralendijk	M	Spanish/English	Yes	1hr18min
3	NSM1	50-70	Local Historian	Nord Saliña	M	Spanish	Yes	1hr17min
4	KRM2	50-70	Historian	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	Yes	1hr47min
5	KRF1	30-50	Heritage Management	Kralendijk	F	Spanish/English	No	-
6	KRM3	50-70	Heritage Promoter	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	Yes	46min
7	TCM1	30-50	Government	Tera Cora	M	Spanish	Yes	57min
8	NSM2	50-70	Handy-Work	Nord Saliña	M	Spanish	Yes	36min
9	KRM4	50-70	Heritage Management	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	Yes	1hr03min
10	RIM2	50-70	Heritage Management	Rincón	M	Spanish/English	No	-
11	KRM5	50-70	Tourism	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	Yes	2hr06min
12	RIF1	30-50	Government	Rincón	F	Spanish	No	-
13	HAM1	50-70	Politics	Hato	M	Spanish	No	-
14	KRM7	30-50	Heritage Management	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	No	-
15	RIF2	70+	Cultural Promoter	Rincón	F	Spanish	Yes	57min
16	KRM5	30-50	Politician	Kralendijk	M	Spanish	Yes	39min

Table 3: Describes the group interviews conducted throughout the research.

#	Location	Amount Interviewed	Language	Recorded	Duration	Codes	Occupations	Age Range	Gender
1	Rincón	3	Spanish/ Papiamentu	No	-	RIM2	Heritage Management	50-70	M
						RIF3	Retired	70+	F
						RIM3	Government	20-30	M
2	Rincón	3	Papiamentu	Yes	54 mins	RIF5	Retired	70+	F
						RIF6	Retired, Healer	70+	F
						RIF7	Retired	70+	F
3	Nord Saliña	3	Spanish	Yes	1hr22 min	NSF1	Office Job	30-50	F
						NSF2	Artist	30-50	F
						NSF3	Retired		F

3.3 Limitations

In terms of the personal and group interviews, perhaps the most important limitation is the breadth of data collected; the amount of people reached was 23. This, however, was balanced by using the network of connections to access people who had a greater knowledge of the heritage on the island, particularly government workers, heritage managers, and people invested in the culture and tourism industry. The limitation of this is that a large part of the voices that conform the data of this project are prepared to answer these questions and while they may speak for a large part of the Bonairean population in their positions, they cannot replace the voice of individual Bonaireans when discussing topics such as heritage and identity.

Broadly the research has attempted to be as inclusive as possible but had an overrepresentation of men in the interviews. There were also no interviewees younger than 30, and most were in high profile jobs on the island, meaning that different levels of education and knowledge were not aptly represented (refer to **Tables 2 and 3**).

Another important limitation is language, especially due to the cultural politics involved with different languages. The local language, Papiamentu, is the most spoken language by locals, and

there is certainly an exclusionary politics associated to the use of the language around foreign tourists and inhabitants. Dutch and English were overwhelmingly associated with the colonizer, and I was warned before conducting interviews that these languages would restrict the honesty and openness of the interviewees. However, when speaking Spanish, this problem appeared to be overcome to a large extent as I noticed that there was a different relationship to this language as it was more associated with neighboring South America which was perceived as sharing a regional identity of sorts. Most of the interviews I conducted were therefore in Spanish, in which all the speakers were highly proficient. I also conducted one group interview in Papiamentu that was translated on the spot by a local.

With regards to the translations of interviews, these were done by the author to the best of his abilities, which undoubtedly will have resulted in some inaccurate or incomplete translations.

4. Islas Gigantes, Inútiles, Olvidadas

This section provides the background necessary to understand the current heritage discourse and identity formation processes on the island. It provides an overview of the history of the Caquetío indigenous peoples of Bonaire highlighting moments when colonial encounters would have affected their identifying processes. Important sites are delineated in **Fig.7.**

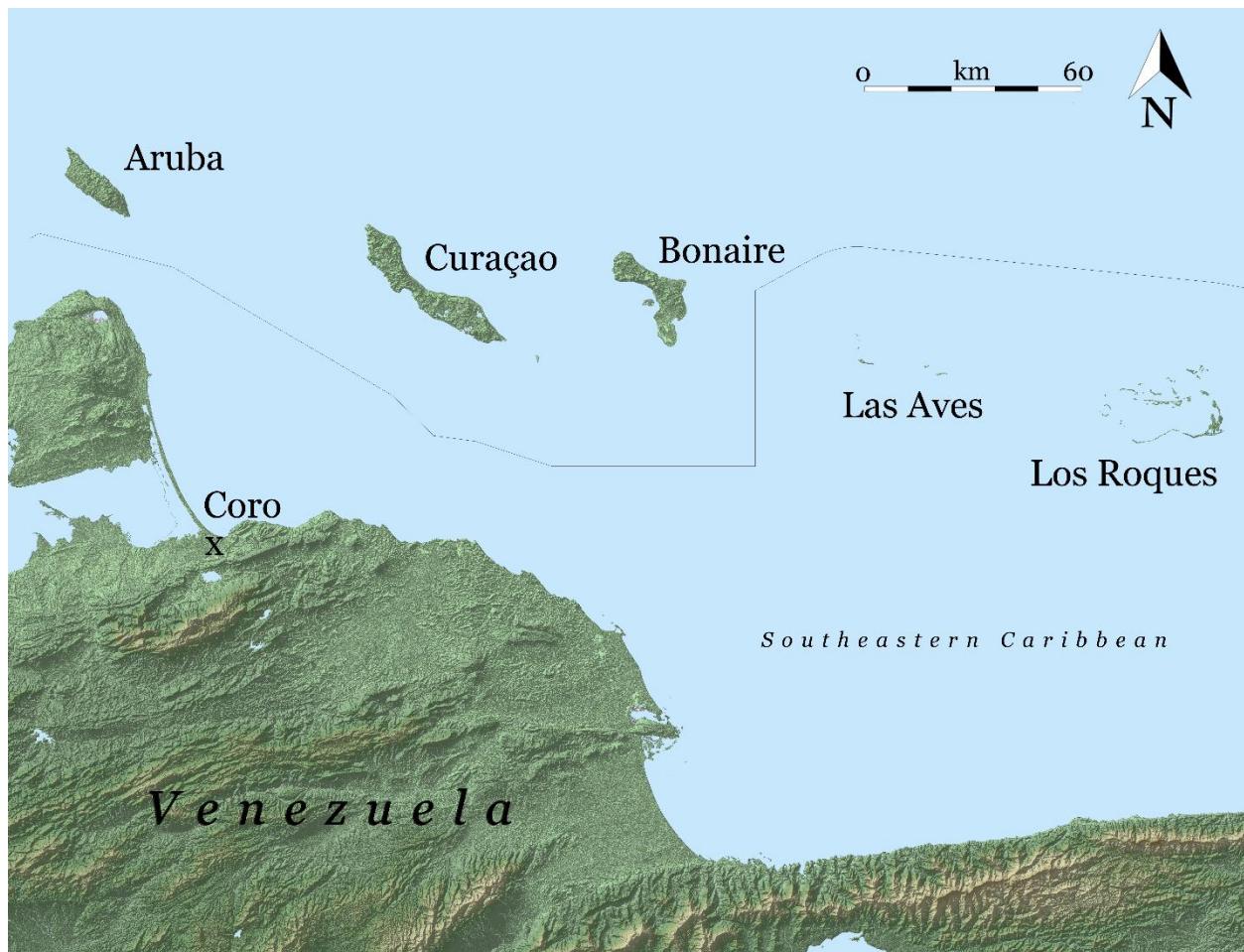


Fig.7: Map displaying the geographical area around Bonaire (JAXA 2018).

4.1 Pre-Colonial Background

The earliest inhabitants of Bonaire, referred to archaeologically as the Archaic Age peoples, arrived in 3600 BP, one millennium after the earliest crossing from the mainland coast onto the ABC islands in 4500 BP (Haviser 2018, Antczak *et al.* 2018a). At around 1500 BP, these Archaic Age hunter-gatherers slowly integrated with the incoming migrants of Ceramic Age peoples, bearers of the Dabajuroid culture, who introduced agriculture (Haviser 1987; Van Heekeren 1963). When this occurred is unclear, and it is possible that – similarly to other islands off of the Venezuelan coast – these early inhabitants remained distinct on Bonaire much longer than they did on the mainland, with the earliest pottery on Bonaire dating to AD 470 (Antczak *et al.* 2018b, 131; Du Ry 1960, 94; Haviser 1991, 60).

The bearers of the Ceramic Age Dabajuroid culture who were Arawak language speakers, migrated from the middle-Orinoco River to the Caribbean coast between 2000 and 1500 BP (Dixon & Aikhenvald 1999; Haviser 1991, 49). Radiocarbon dates suggest the migrants settled on Bonaire first, despite it being the ABC island farthest from the mainland (Brenneker 1947; Haviser 2018). Around 1300 BP, the adjacent coast was populated by another major movement of indigenous peoples (later to be known as the Caquetío) who began trading and strongly influencing the populations on the ABC islands (Haviser 1991; Dalhuisen 1997). We also know of late precolonial interactions between the ancestors of the Caquetío, the producers of the Dabajuroid pottery, and the Valenciod culture bearers, to the east (Antczak & Antczak 2006). Until the arrival of Europeans, the Caquetío lived within this sphere of interaction between the coast of today's Falcón State in Venezuela and the ABC islands.

4.2 Colonial History: The Spanish

Bonaire was first encountered by the Spanish during Alonso de Ojeda's voyage which sailed from the Spanish port of Cádiz on the 16th of May 1499, manned by cartographer Juan de la Cosa and navigator Amerigo Vespucci. Between July and September 1499, Alonso de Ojeda's expedition encountered the Caquetío who lived on the ABC islands (Goslinga 1979, 4). Even though Bonaire was initially called the *Isla de Palo Brasil*. According to Vespucci (2010, 26), the native inhabitants of Bonaire were fierce in appearance and manner but were friendly upon approach.

After Vespucci, the Caquetío were next visited by Cristobal Guerra in 1499, and again in 1501 when alongside another 60 Spaniards he rounded up several Caquetío and carried them off on his ship, selling them later in Spain as slaves (Euwens 1933; Goslinga 1979, 13). Guerra was imprisoned after the sale, and the enslaved Caquetío were eventually freed by a Spanish priest and brought back to the island (Hartog 1975, 11). In 1504, Juan de la Cosa returned to Bonaire and collected substantial amounts of brazilwood. Despite these expeditions for wood continuing, the Spanish interest in gold meant that in 1513, Diego Colón (Columbus' son), the viceroy of the Spanish Empire in the New World, labeled the ABC islands as *islas inútiles* (useless islands) because no gold was to be found there.

It is likely that it was after this decree that the *indieros*, or Indian hunters and slavers, began operating on the *islas inútiles* (Goslinga 1979, 14). With this permission, Diego de Salazar travelled to Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba with the purpose of enslaving enough indigenous peoples to relieve the labor shortages on Hispaniola (Goslinga 1979, 14). This led to the largest demographic change of the period when between 1512 and 1515 around 2000 Caquetío, constituting almost all the inhabitants of Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire, were deported to Hispaniola where they were put to work in the copper mines (Goslinga 1979, 6; Hartog 1975, 11).

The raiding of the coasts led the indigenous populations to retreat farther into the island (Haviser 2018, 50). It is difficult to ascertain how many indigenous peoples remained and how many fled.

Throughout this period, the ABC islands, together with the adjacent mainland coast, were at the mercy of *indiero* incursions, with Caquetío *caciques* (chieftains), and their families – including the daughter and family of Manaure (an important supreme *cacique* known after his Catholic baptism as Don Martín) – being enslaved and shipped to Hispaniola (Castellanos 1874). For 10 years following 1515, Bonaire, Aruba, and Curaçao were practically uninhabited.

The next important event to shake the ABC islands occurred in 1511, when Juan Martín de Ampués (also called Martínez Ampíes) obtained a *real cédula* appointing him as *factor*, putting him in charge of the economic activity of Hispaniola. Ampués became wealthy, owning ample land, real estate, and even a few natives from the ABC islands (Felice Cardot 1982; Goslinga 1979). Among these were the *cacique Hureherebo* known by his Catholic name as Fernán García, his wife Doña Juana, and his sister Doña Mencía (Castellanos 1874). In 1518, Licenciado Figuero was tasked with figuring out who among the ABC island natives was a friendly *guaitiao*, and who was a violent *Carib*, determining that the islands were inhabited only by *guaitiaos* (González 2015, 92). Official recognition of the Caquetío as ‘peaceful Arawak’ and not ‘violent Caribs’, allowed Ampués to submit the petition to the *Audiencia de Santo Domingo* to send about 200 of the Caquetío from Hispaniola back to the ABC islands in a repopulation effort (Goslinga 1979).

This petition came on a wave of religious complaints against the abuses suffered by the indigenous peoples in the New World and was likely the start of an ambitious plan by Juan de Ampués to begin claiming his authority over the entire western coast of Venezuela. In 1525, Ampués was designated as the protector of the ABC islands, meaning that those landing on the island without his permission (including the constantly threatening *indieros*) faced the death penalty (Oviedo y

Baños 1987). The indigenous peoples surviving and who were brought from Hispaniola on the island were given to him in an *encomienda*, and he was to bring two priests with him, enslaving all those who refused to accept the Catholic Christian faith (Goslinga 1979). He founded a colony incorporating the three ABC islands to promote the timber trade, bring crop seeds and livestock, and repopulate the islands with indigenous peoples; he also planned to enslave a group of indigenous peoples who were the ‘enemies’ of the Caquetío (Hartog 1975, 11). In 1527 the first town on Bonaire, Rincón, was founded in a fertile valley in the center of the island, far from raiding ships (Goslinga 1979).

The way in which Ampués achieved this goal was by organizing an expedition to the nearby mainland to formulate a treaty with the *cacique* Manaure, whose daughter he had previously returned from Hispaniola, along with other indigenous slaves. After landing and founding the city of Coro in 1527, Ampués’ treaty proved successful as he promised Manaure protection from *indieros* in return for his indigenous prisoners of war (Castellanos 1874, 180).

4.3 Colonial History: A German Shakeup

In 1528, Spanish King Charles V was deeply in debt with the German banks of Ehinger (or Alfinger) of Konstanz, and Welser of Augsburg due to financing his election campaign. In order to repay this debt, Charles V was pressured by the Welsers, to grant them a piece of land from the Orinoco River all the way to the Gulf of Maracaibo (Arciniegas 1941). By the end of 1528, Charles V had signed the grant, giving the rights of the land to the Welsers. Meanwhile, Ampués ruled over the ABC islands until his death in 1533, with the *Audiencia de Santo Domingo* subsequently taking over the islands. It was during this time that Hartog (1975, 11) believes the repopulation of the island occurred, as the Caquetío were leaving the continent due to the brutal administration carried out by the German banking houses.

The agreement with the Welsers had a clause that allowed them to subjugate rebellious native peoples in order to obtain slaves (Tyre 2013, 6). This in effect was an open field for the colonists who could draw arbitrary lines between the indigenous groups who were rebellious and not. These judgments were usually based on religious acceptance but could also be based on convenience, as often indigenous groups encountered during expeditions were attacked and subjugated rather than given a chance for peaceful interaction (Federman 1968; Martin 1988; Tyce 2013). The Welsers inherited an alliance with the peaceable Caquetío, but otherwise continued drawing subjective lines between the Caquetío, considered Arawakan-speakers, and the other ‘Carib’ groups (Caribs considered to be violent and cannibalistic), who could be conquered (Acosta Saignes 1946; Jiménez 1986; Whitehead 2011).

In fact, many of the subjugated groups, like the mainland Jirajara, were also Arawakan-speakers, and therefore, it is likely that non-Caquetío Arawakan-speakers had the most reason to flee the region at the time, potentially to the ABC islands. At the same time, the Caquetío as Catholic Christians, experienced Spanish protection and collaborated with the Welsers. This can be evidenced by Ehinger putting measures in place to stop *indieros* from enslaving the Caquetío on his coast (Tyce 2013, 11). At the time, Coro was proclaimed the seat of the Diocese of Venezuela, and Obispo Rodrigo de Bastidas was sent to the region (Federman 1968). With the position of *Protector de Indios* (Protector of Indians) he used a *real provisión* (royal provision) from 1539 proving that the Caquetío were a free people under the King, and furthering their peaceful treatment by the Spanish (Tyce 2013).

Towards the 1550s and the end of the Welser’s reign, Italian traveler and sailor Galeotto Cey (1995, 56) noted that there were very few indigenous peoples inhabiting the region. Particularly Coro, a city that had been previously full of indigenous peoples, was now only inhabited by

Catholic Christians who lived miserably, bringing livestock from the ABC islands, and being served at home by indigenous servants. As Cey (1995, 77) ventured further inland, he noticed that the areas were deserted as the passing German expeditions had taken the young indigenous and left the old; returning expeditions would send them to the neighboring islands to be sold as slaves. It is possible that in this way, the Caquetío from the mainland were trafficked through the islands to further places. By the end of the Welser rule, relations with the Caquetío had deteriorated and they offered certain resistance, though apparently less violent than other indigenous groups (González 2015, 140). The Welser rule fell apart abruptly in 1546, and the influx of indigenous refugees from the continent to the ABC islands lessened; the island and coastal indigenous populations drifted apart.

While the ABC island hadn't been a part of the German concession, after the 1540s, they had returned to being managed by the *Audiencia de Santo Domingo* following Ampués' death and his successor's departure. Soon after, the Spanish Crown prohibited settlement on the ABC islands without permission, what led to the islands falling into disregard as *islas olvidadas* (forgotten islands). By this time, Bonaire and Aruba were managed by administrators under the direct authority of the Governor of Curaçao, to whom the indigenous *caciques* on the islands also responded (Goslinga 1979, 17).

According to Goslinga (1979, 18), during this period the indigenous people of the ABC islands continued to live as their pre-colonial ancestors did until there was a marked increase in English, French, Dutch, and pirate incursions into the area in the early 17th century. Around the 1620s, as the Dutch visited the islands more frequently, the Spanish on Curaçao collected the indigenous peoples and moved them into two villages located farther in the interior of the island (Goslinga,

1979, 18). A similar situation likely happened on Bonaire leading to the native populations moving further inland likely around Rincón and Antriol (Euwens 1933).

4.5 Colonial History: The Dutch

The Dutch visited the ABC islands sporadically in the early 1620s, and when they arrived on the ABC islands in search of salt in 1634, they noted that everyone on the islands had been baptized, despite the islands being ecclesiastically in relative disregard (Goslinga 1979). The same year forcefully taking over the town of St. Ann on Curaçao, the Dutch negotiated a takeover with the Spanish under the agreement to allow the Spanish to leave for the mainland unharmed, with the condition that they take all but 20 families of indigenous with them (the Catholic indigenous peoples whom they didn't trust) (Goslinga 1979, 104). Bonaire and Aruba were added to this Dutch dominion two years later, in 1636. According to Goslinga (1979, 24), when the Dutch settled the islands they deported all the natives except for 75 indigenous whom they needed as laborers.

Curaçao became a center for the transatlantic slave trade, and Bonaire became a provider of salt and timber for the Dutch West India Company until 1792 (Goslinga 1979). African slaves were brought to Bonaire by the Dutch in the late 1630s because the Indigenous were found to not be suitable for salt exploitation (Hartog 1975; van Meeteren 1949). By about 1700, the ABC islands had 4000 slaves, most from Congo and Angola. When emancipation came in 1863, 6600 slaves were freed in the Dutch Antilles (Van Heekeren 1960, 108). Throughout this time the indigenous peoples maintained a separate identity. There is evidence of this, for example, when in the 18th century, Father P.M. Schabel wrote a catechism in the Caquetío language which has since been lost (Van Heekeren 1960, 108). The indigenous kept a stable population as they were tasked with managing livestock and providing food for the European settlers (Haviser 2018, 50). Under the Dutch colonization, the indigenous were forced to work hard and gear their agricultural work

towards European needs, and their traditional organization of work, gender division of labour, politics, and economy were dismantled throughout this period of transculturation (González 2015, 159). It is noteworthy that during the struggle for Venezuelan independence from Spain in the early 1800s, the historically-allied Caquetío coastal groups supported the Spanish in Coro (Reyes 2010).

During the 19th century there were important changes in the Caquetío way of life on Bonaire and the majority of the surviving population isolated themselves in Rincón and Nord Saliña (Haviser 2018, 50; van Meeteren 1949). According to Goslinga (1979, 108), at this time those who remained were absorbed into black and white populations; until in 1795, only five full-blooded indigenous people remained on Curaçao and by the 19th century, none remained. On Aruba and Bonaire, the indigenous maintained their identities a century longer, presumably losing them in the twentieth century because of miscegenation. Linguistically, Caquetío was lost, being classified as a “ghost language” (Taylor 1977). Goslinga (1979, 7) concludes that “—there are no full-blooded Indians on any of the islands” even though he considers that some of the old families are probably justified in claiming an indigenous heritage and some traits are still visible. Similarly, van Heekeren considers that “There are no longer any true Indians left on Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire” (Van Heekeren 1960, 103). Nonetheless, Haviser (1991) argues that a strong cultural identification with pre-colonial heritage remains on Bonaire up to the present.

5. Interviews: Data and Analysis

Aspects of continuity in heritage that can inform the relationship between identity and heritage were identified throughout the interviews. These are analyzed below and discussed alongside relevant information from the visits to heritage institutions and sites on Bonaire (further developed in **Annex 2**), as well as in the context of historical data. The section opens with an overview of *Indianness* and the notion of authenticity that arose from the interviews that is meant to color the discussion for the rest of the section.

Table 4: Shows the different identifying aspects that were mentioned in the interviews and noting if they were contested in other interviews.

Intangible		
Aspect	Interview	Contested
Feeling (Indian Blood)	KRM1, KRM2, RIM1, KRM4, NSM2, NSM1, TCM1, KRF1, RIF1, KRM7, RIF2	
Calm people	KRM2, KRM4, TCM1	
Altruism, helping others, social cohesion	KRM8, NSF1, NSF2, NSF3	
High Alcohol Consumption	NSM1	
Children from outside of marriage treated like their own	KRM8, RFI5, TCM1, KRF1, RIF2	
Language	KRM3, KRM2, KRM8, RIM1, KRM7	
Not being Materialistic	KRM2	
Appearance (Phenotype)	KRM1, KRM2, KRM8, RIF5, RFI6, RFI7, NSF1, NSF2, NSF3, KRM4, NSM2, NSM1, KRF1, RIM2, KRM7	KRM3
Navigation	KRM8, NSF3, KRM4, TCM1, KRF1, KRM7	KRM3
Closeness to Nature	KRM2, RIM1, NSM2, RIF1	NSF2, NSF3
Maskarada	RIM1, TCM1, NSM2, KRM7	NSM1
Curandería - Healers	KRM3, KRM2, RIF5, RFI6, RFI7, RIM1, RIF1	
Matriarchy	RFI6, RIM1, TCM1	RFI5, KRM3
Music	KRM4, TCM1, KRM7	KRM3, NSM1,
Tangible		
Aspect	Interview	Contested
Artistic Expression	KRM2	
Indigenous Petroglyphs	TCM1, RIF1	
Food (Funchi)	NSM1	
Tobacco – Pipes	KRM3	
Objects in Museums	NSF2, TCM1, RIF1	NSM1
Architecture	NSM1	

5.1 *Indianness and ‘Feeling’*

Undoubtedly a ‘feeling’ akin to what has been described as *Indianness*, arose out of the interviews.

KRM2 said “I know that we have something in common, that something individual but also common that we can denominate identity, [...] but how can we define that?” To some extent this

feeling was recognized by Haviser when he claimed that “—it is the essence of perception that has given Bonaireans a sense of self-identity, and a confidence that, regardless of actual physical or cultural traits, Amerindian cultural continuity exists on the islands” (Haviser 1991, 83).

For three of the interviewees ‘Indian blood’ was something that moved them to action. KRM1 claimed that his “Indian blood came up” and made him rise to fight for Bonaire, leaving his life as a successful banker behind him. TCM1 felt indigenous since his youth when he noticed that he was more daring than those around him. He mentions that to feel indigenous he drinks iguana blood when he kills them for food, claiming that it was “—because I’m Indian.” Perhaps most elaborately, KRM4 claimed, “—sometimes I need smoke, I have a feeling, something inside. All these events, San Juan, San Pedro, Maskarada, all that when I see it, I feel inside something that is alive, that gets fed, I can’t take it out to show, ehh, this, this, but I feel it inside, a feeling, and this I think still, the start of everything, is the root of the... heritage, something like that.”

KRM2 expressed that “People don’t think about identity, they use the words because they have heard that identity, identity or character, something characteristic, but they mix character with identity.” One consenting voice was NSM1, who despite having an indigenous descended mother said he didn’t feel the identity, claiming that his father was Dutch and gave him a Dutch last name. Speaking of others in Nord Saliña however he claimed that “There is an aspect that you can feel, but that you cannot prove strongly, that the people say we are like Indians, free, brave, they want to fight, and with a lot of pride.” KRM8 explained the feeling as “We do not know it cognitively, but like emotionally we do have an idea of what is the culture.” He went on to describe things that built up the feeling, that he belonged to people of the ocean, people who are calm, humble sailors.

Replacing an ethnic void can involve adopting new traditions (Nagel 1995), and this was certainly felt by TCM1. He attributed importance to his support of the Nord Saliña sports team, claiming

that his feeling arose when dancing to and singing the songs of the Atlanta Braves (**Fig.8**), a US American sports team that formerly had a stereotyped Native American on its logo and as a mascot. The literature asserts that only through a pan-Indian or supratribal identity was an “Indian” consciousness able to survive at all (Cornell 1990; Nagel 1997). The use of generally indigenous heritage, as we will see with the Ceramic Head, shows that this ‘feeling’ breaks borders between indigenous groups when attributing value to certain aspects.

Pan-Indian identity may be partly a motor that fuels this local identity and leads to a reattribution and search for heritage. Similar thinking can be applied to traditions like the Maskarada, a dance from Nord Saliña which had a contested origin in the interviews, some claiming it was indigenous (TCM1) and others that it was brought from Venezuela and Portugal (NSM1). The attachment of this disconnected feeling to other traditions – that were adapted variously – found preference in geographically-neighboring or contemporary heritage as identifying aspects.

The term “Indian” reinforces the image of indigenous people as linked to a romantic past. On Bonaire, the prevalent word used to describe the indigenous is ‘Indjan’ translated directly as Indian, and the resulting romanticized identity is visible. Likely in response to this, Haviser (1991) himself titled his research on the Bonairean identity *Against Romanticized Indigenous Identities*.



Fig.8: Former logo of the Atlanta Braves that helped an interviewee feel indigenous.

Peroff (1997) identifies an internal spark as something that sustains a living Indian community. It is this spark that traces continuity within the resources available to be valued as heritage. The heritage that resulted from this ‘feeling’ was disconnected from a deep-time continuity and attached itself to romanticized notions of indigeneity. It was not interrogated and arose organically out of social interactions. It is this phenomenon that placed meaning and value on 20th-century objects like the clothes irons in exhibitions and in households throughout the island.

5.2 Authenticity in Indigenous Identity

In stark opposition to ‘feeling’ or *Indianness* were notions of authenticity and a desire to interrogate the past. Such uncertainty and the search for and scrutiny of authenticity have been identified as a form of structural violence against indigenous people (Maddison 2013). It is also related to Nora’s (1989) concepts of the objective history that interrogates the *real memory* of collectives. This phenomenon led the older interviewees in Group Interview 2 to claim “—because we are older we don’t remember much of history, but the young ones can help more.” Another older interviewee (NSF3) felt shy and claimed she “—didn’t know anything,” despite her daughters insisting she was indigenous. This presents a counterpoint to other cases where the elderly are sought after as guardians of memory and heritage (Carr 2015).

Authenticity is not fixed, and there are certainly very different conception of what is authentic in the interviews (Silverman *et al.* 2016; Smith 2004). The desire to interrogate the past mainly arose when discussing the legitimacy of identifying with specific heritage. As **Table 4** shows, many claims were often contested, even among group interviews, and showed that while ‘feeling’ was enough for some, it was not a legitimizing force for their identity. This sense of identity implicitly recognizes a discontinuity in heritage use and making and employs western scientific notions of historical accuracy as a process that gives meaning and legitimizes identifying aspects and heritage. The heritage that resulted from those interviewees who espoused this sense of the past was, for example, a concerted effort to use resources obtained directly from the natural world to make instruments and clothing and, in parallel, the use of indigenous methods and scientific recording of weather patterns to be able to tell when storms were coming (RIM1).

Building on this there was explicit criticism on the overreliance on oral history. KRM2, for example, noted that a compiler of oral history was “—missing analysis, because he can talk and register all the histories, but he also has to put them in relation and come out of a question. What is he investigating or registering? Why is it registered? … What value do these registrations have?” KRM1 explained that “—the people you talk to, they found this artefact there, they find artefact there, but the artefact was there because of something, for them history is what they found and recorded, history is not that, its why it was there, what happened, what happened at the time.”

Upon further digging, what arose is that interviewees associated identity with a scientific truth about what had occurred, searching for a historically — and scientifically — sanctioned version of identity. While this could have been expected from the historians, the fact that it arose in other interviews (RIM1) is important and underlines how notions of heritage in this place have been affected by a rationalist and historical perspective legitimizing their claim to identity. RIM1

claimed that the same compiler “—has lots of information, but [...] before you give this information to the people of the island you must do some investigation for looking that what the people tell is accurate.” He continued, “Large people can tell large history, but if you don’t have investigation of this, some people can say things not good [...] We have large information’s and large artefacts, but we need make investigation before giving this to the school.”

Weaver (2001) suggests that highly socially-closed and culturally-marked ethnic groups will produce high degrees of identification among their members and thus stabilize a boundary through path dependency effects. On Bonaire this is not visible, though it is possible that those that have most access to the past – either through inheritance or through access to historical information – do attempt to create this boundary, thus creating the sense of a need for authenticity among those who have most access to the indigenous past.

According to Lawson (2014, 2), “To claim that a certain practice, or set of practices, is ‘culturally authentic’ is very often to award that practice a certain moral status and special legitimacy.” Such notions can quickly be tied to a kind of indigenous “fundamentalism” that can then be deployed strategically by conservative groups within communities to deny indigenous status to anyone considered “deviant,” (Hill 2014). While this, sometimes termed the *Real Indian Trope* (Pack 2012), is not seen to such an extent in the interviews, it is a possibility for the future and requires careful management by local heritage institutions.

What this different position on identity shows is that *Indianness* is not a condition that all indigenous colonial subjects experience – there are also those who are indigenous but who desire to legitimize their identity through scrutinizing heritage authenticity. It is this aspect that differentiates identity in this context from what Bhabha (1994) refers to as a kind of liminal

identification without differentiation between firm identities identified by. For example, NSM1, was an indigenous descendant through his mother family, but denied having the feeling.

5.3 Nord Saliña: An Indigenous Enclave

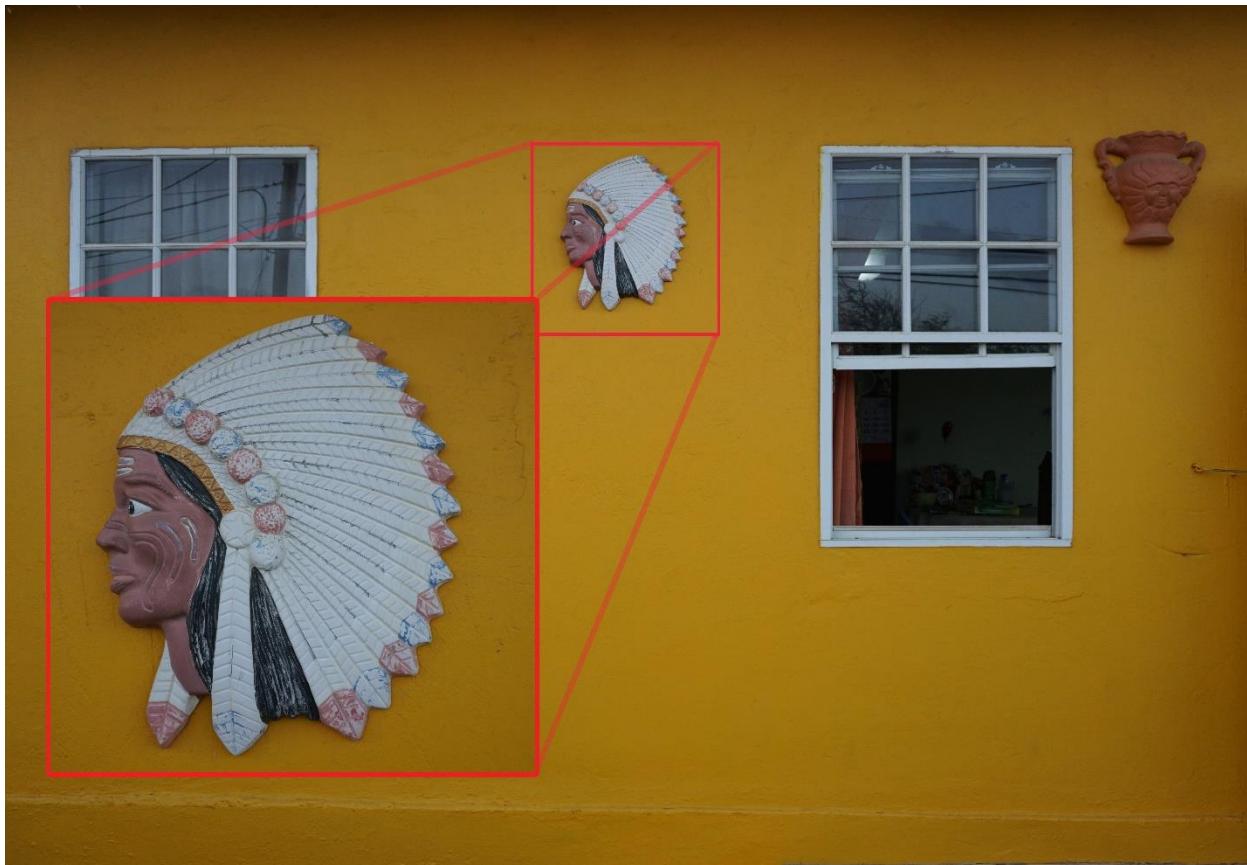


Fig.9: ‘Ceramic Head’ that is symbolic of the people of Nord Saliña.

Delving into each aspect of identity recognized by the interviewees is beyond the scope of this study, however, by exploring the case of Nord Saliña, we can approach an understanding of island-wide processes of identification and heritage creation applying the two ways of identity formation discussed above. Nort’i Saliña, Nord Saliña, or Kunuku Bieu (**Fig.6**) is the *bario* (neighborhood) on the island that is most relevant to discussing the relationship between heritage and identity on the island. Nord Saliña was consistently named as the location of greatest indigenous presence on the island, particularly as a last bastion of indigenous traits.

The history of the location, however, is unclear and conflicted among accounts, particularly relating to how the indigenous arrived at this place. KRM3 claims that the Dutch military lived here and married with indigenous who came to Nord Saliña. NSM1 objects to this by claiming that the indigenous were there first, and the Europeans arrived. KRM2 opines that there were no indigenous people in Nord Saliña, instead they came from Antriol. Others claim that Mexicans came to Nord Saliña (RIF5) and that Native American chiefs were brought to Nord Saliña in exile from the Dutch North American colonies (NSM1), which is supported by some sources (Menkman 1942). The lack of an agreement on the origin of the indigenous in this area suggests that there has been a discontinuity that interrupted the collective memory and attests to the conflict between the search for authenticity and ‘feeling.’

What all interviews coincide on, however, is that the people of Nord Saliña mixed exclusively with Europeans rather than African descendants. The interviewees claimed that that indigenous traits remained visible for longer (up until today) as opposed to other parts of the island, like Rincón, where RIM1, KRM3, and NSM1 claim that there were just as many indigenous. As will be discussed later, this has had a great impact on the identity of the *bario*.

What sets Nord Saliña apart from the rest of the island are the streets which are all named after indigenous tribes from the Americas (Azteca, Maya, Carib, Arawak, etc.) and the ceramic heads of a Native American plains Indian decorating many of the houses (**Fig.9**). This head is a vital aspect of the *bario*’s identity and is mentioned as an aspect of indigenous identity on the island. During Group interview 3 in Nord Saliña, it arose that the Ceramic Head symbolized a “—village of the indigenous.” NSM2, when asked if the indigenous feeling would ever disappear, said “—well people won’t be able to [...] It is only the look, but the feeling won’t change. All the streets have names and they have the heads.”

Despite the importance of this symbol for the community, opinions on the Ceramic Head were mixed during the interviews. For KRM3, the Ceramic Head is a “—farce, you know, because the families are called, Everts, Muller, Nicolaas, they are European, but Europeans who were married with people more or less Indian.” Similarly, KRM8 claims that the indigenous head perpetuates an “erroneous thought,” because in Rincón there are also visible indigenous traits, but no one speaks of Rincón as indigenous.

Among the interviewees there was no consensus as to the origin of these Ceramic Heads, some claiming it was Mexican (RIM1), some Caquetío (TCM1). KRM4 told me that for the celebration of Day of Bonaire at some point in the 1980s “—they were looking for a symbol for the *barrio*, so they created an image of an Indian, a very important thing is that the icon has many feathers, and this region is not known for feathers. It is pretty, and I like it, but the reality is that the Indians from here used one or two, not many.” NSM1 opined that “—it was because someone from Rincón had the idea to put it on the wall, he chose this without distinguishing it as an Indian from North America.” It is important to point out that despite not representing a true indigenous ancestor, this symbol serves to represent the indigenous feeling of the inhabitants of Nord Saliña, though it may be scrutinized by some.

5.4 Appearance: A Key Aspect

Appearance was the most consistently mentioned identifying aspect on the island. Appearance was even the only distinguishing aspect for NSM2 who claimed that “— everything was the same in my family apart from [our] appearance.” RIF5 was singled out of Group interview 2 immediately for looking indigenous, and she claimed she felt indigenous. The difference focused on the hair which was described as long, straight and black, usually split into two braids that were tied (RIF6). For KRM1 an indigenous person has a certain type of “—eyes, black long hair, nose.”

Indigenous identity in Nord Saliña heavily relies on this phenotype, or an indigenous appearance, something Wimmer (2008) defines as ethnosomatic identity. Phenotype and cultural performance are also identified as important authenticity markers in the USA (Robertson 2013). One theory that may explain this focus on identity, is that those who look the part do not have to look further, whereas people who do not have an indigenous appearance need to find their own connection, even if it is recognizing the look of family members (NSF2).

As mentioned above, the interviews highlighted how the inhabitants of Nord Saliña mixed with only Europeans. The reasons for this varied. KRM8 said that the people of Nord Saliña didn't mix with African descendants because they “—didn't have property, while the Indians did have it.” NSM1 offers that “—the local people did not want to identify with the black people who were captives, that is why surely they identified with the Indians.” NSF1 expressed that in Nord Saliña “They were more beautiful, they didn't want that the race made itself, for example, thicker hair, it had to stay pretty and straight, in this way... they were very proud of their appearance, yes, yes. They didn't like dark men, the dark people.”

This suggests that the inhabitants of Nord Saliña chose to differentiate themselves from the other inhabitants of the island, and indigenous traits were associated with better social standing. In other neighboring regions affected by colonialism such as in Venezuela, “Indian” is a denigrating term. Yet, I garnered no such evidence from the interviews. Instead the term filled people with pride, and was associated with a fury, “My expression of ethnic, cultural, and tribal pride stands in juxtaposition with experiencing the social shame of being racialized as Indian” (Robertson 2013, 5).

NSF3 claims that “—There used to be very difficult to mix with other *barrios*,” which meant that phenotype remained among the *barrios*, and Nord Saliña preserved its indigenous traits. Today, Nord Saliña still prides itself in this, as NSM2 told me that he was called upon to hand a Ceramic Head to a Dutch minister because of his indigenous looks. NSM2 also showed me a newspaper cutout picturing him claiming that the last of the Caquetío lived in his *barrio* (**Fig.10**). .



Fig.10: Newspaper article claiming that the last of the Caquetío live in Nord Saliña.

This sense imprinted itself on the material world *via* objects that displayed this phenotype. In Group interview 3, I was handed a picture of one of the interviewees which she felt expressed her indigeneity (**Fig.12**). She claimed that “—everyone wants to touch it (my hair) to see if its real because there are not many people like that.” I was also given a book – on its cover was the face of a relative of another informant who the interviewees claimed looked indigenous (**Fig.11**).



Fig.12: A picture shown to us as an example of Indigenous hair.

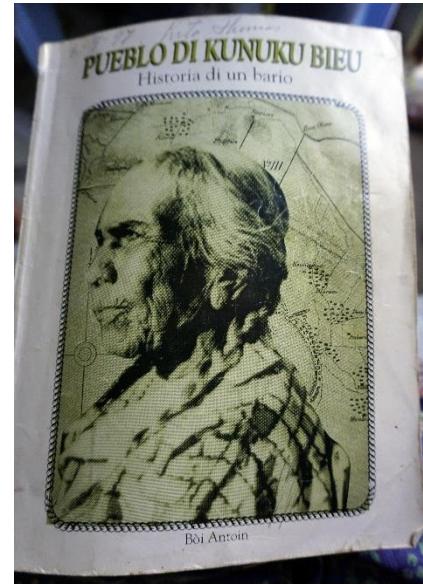


Fig.11: Book that figured importantly as an aspect of identity.

KRM2 claims “—that’s why there are appearance traits in Nord Saliña, because they mixed with Europeans.” I consider that it is very likely that the way in which the indigenous phenotype remained (or, rather, is perceived to have remained by its inhabitants) in Nord Saliña was the main motor behind the identity that set Nord Saliña apart as an indigenous enclave, despite there being similarly indigenous inhabitants on other parts of the island. As NSM1 claims “—in Rincón there were also Indians.” Bringing these conclusions to the Ceramic Head, I consider that due to the maintenance of indigenous traits on this part of the island, related to how the Africans were treated at the time, indigenous identity remained attached to the visible physical attributes. The recognition of these traits led to the naming of the streets, and eventually to the creation of the tradition of the Ceramic Head, which today, as physical traits are rarer, is in turn generating an indigenous sense of belonging.

The Ceramic Head is an outstanding example of the contested heritage that arises from those who harbor the “feeling” and those who search for authenticity. It represents a pan-Indian, yet Caquetío, identity that arose out of feeling. It also continues generating a sense of belonging to a community that has lost much of its connection beyond the last century but remains a stereotypical image that promotes romanticized notions of indigeneity. In this way, the Ceramic Head is a heirloom that objectifies a collective ancestral past on Bonaire, without itself having come from or having access to that past (Lillios 1999).

5.5 Other Identifying aspects

Glancing at **Table 4**, in this community there is a much greater focus on intangible heritage, with only four tangible heritage aspects identified, and these only mentioned by a few interviewees. While delving into each aspect is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to highlight that the contestation of these elements mostly came down to a difference between ‘feeling’ and an interrogation of identifying aspect.

From the interviews I understood that material culture is much less important than in other cases of identity formation (Jones 2004). NSM3 when asked about indigenous heritage in the form of ‘old things’ claimed “—old things, I had them, but I threw them away.” Upon further questioning, I found out she was referring to a clothes iron, like the ones displayed in various museums across the island (**Appendix 2**).

The display of irons as important heritage items is interesting, as they are some of the few objects that can survive the harsh environments of the island for considerable time; these objects, nonetheless, are no older than the late 19th century. RIF1, when first asked to meet for an interview, instead gave me a calendar with black and white photos to study as an aspect of heritage (**Fig.13**). These examples show that material culture heritage in quotidian life likely does not stretch farther

than 200 years, and certainly not into pre-colonial times. RIM1 was the only interviewee whose identity was expressed through the creation of material culture, as he made necklaces and instruments out of shells and other natural products.



Fig.13: A calendar that was given to me as an aspect of indigenous heritage.

Despite this apparent lack of heritage, there are indigenous objects in the museums on the island (refer to **Appendix 2**). Haviser (1991) claims that there is a continuity in the museums, and people look to the museums for heritage. I found a very different feeling on the island. Of all the interviews conducted, only two interviewees readily identified the museum as an important place for identity formation or maintenance. Group 3 particularly found a connection with the display at Washington National Park and this was because they were pictured in the poster labelled the Prehistory of the Island. NSM1, a local historian claimed that “—locals rarely use the museums, sometimes they make a great discovery by finding them.”

A way to explain this lack of importance in material culture is accessibility to heritage on the island. My own visits to heritage institutions and sites around the island showed that there was a

focus on African heritage, and very little information on indigenous objects that were present (Annex 1). This was confirmed by the interviews According to KRM3, “—the African is more visible, in the museums also, in the music.” Some museums have a paid entrance (Terramar Museum), while others display indigenous objects but do not label or provide information alongside them (Museum Boneiru, Washington Park). RIM1 claimed that at SKAL (Education and Culture Service) “—you see large artefacts from the Indians, but you do not see any information.”

Another explanation is that heritage is often mediated through colonial objects. KRM3, a heritage expert on the island said “—It’s the only thing I can think of, a pipe is typical of the Indians.” In an exhibition at Terramar Museum (**Appendix 2**), tobacco was mentioned as a plant important for the indigenous, but the exhibit showed Dutch colonial pipes. HAM1 brought up how the Slave Huts (**Appendix 2**) were meant to represent the slave history of the island, but were a monument of European construction, designated as a memorial by the colonizer. Such examples suggest that despite being available, some heritage may simply be undesirable to use.

Despite these hurdles, for TCM1, visiting the museum brought the ‘feeling’ out in him. He claimed that “I do associate myself with the objects from Washington park, when I go there I look and see my past, I relate it in an instant, it gives me goosebumps, as I speak I get goosebumps.”

6. Discussion: Continuity and Colonialism

To contextualize the ways of identifying and the use and creation of heritage on Bonaire, it is important to consider the historical trajectory that has led to the two different forms of indigenous identity formation identified above. As the historical overview indicated, the Caquetío were subject to enslavement and forced labor during early Spanish colonization. As the Dutch arrived they were put to work for their new colonizers, continuing the transformation of their lifeways. As discussed previously, many identities may begin as primordial feelings, but become instrumental when thrust into economic and political competitions. This is in fact what happened to the Caquetío who were thrust into an economic system by the Dutch colonizers, quickly losing these primordial attachments. Thus, it can be clearly understood how this context produces a ‘feeling’ akin to what Peroff (1997, 47) describes as “—a sense of a past that has been somehow lost in long and eventful years of transformation.”

Miki (2018) notes how in the Brazilian nation building process the indigenous were vanished from Brazilian society, leading to a notion that they had disappeared during colonization. A similar phenomenon occurred on Bonaire as interviewees offered different notions of what happened to the indigenous throughout the colonial process. Some claimed that they were all taken away, all the indigenous had been removed from Bonaire and taken to Hispaniola (KRM3); or, as KRM1 simply claimed, the “—Indigenous are gone.”

Building on this is the fact that *Caquetio* was a term created by the Spanish who were not capable of distinguishing peoples by their own self-identification during early colonization. The situation could be similar to what occurred in the 5th and 6th century in Central Europe, when the Slavs as a distinct ethos only emerges just as their name first appeared (Kobylinski 2003). This meant that Caquetío could have been an umbrella term referring to peaceful indigenous peoples, particularly

when many different groups had reason to escape (during the dominion of the Welsers and the onslaught of the *indieros*) and enjoy the better treatment that the Caquetío received as *guaitiaos*.

According to Gosden (2004, 25), colonialism caused the dissolution of values, leading to new ways of doing things in a material and social sense, meaning that colonialism fundamentally changed heritage, and thus the ways of identifying. The disconnect between pre-colonial and colonial indigenous communities that resulted from the colonial process was expressed amply in the interviews. KRM1 explained “You get lost, because somebody has to talk for an Indian who is not there, as nobody can trace it back, so then he can’t talk.” He further explained, “—if you go to Mexico you see Indians everywhere, so they say yes that is very Indian, but here you get mix-up and then you want tell me that we don’t have nothing [...] the damage of colonialism has been done, we need to move on.” It is possible therefore that the lack of heritage legitimizing indigenous identity resulting from centuries of colonialism disarmed interviewees and made them feel as inadequate representatives of the identity that they themselves ‘felt.’ In response, some attached the sense of belonging to romanticized or pan-Indian heritage, while others searched for legitimization not in their own feelings, but in ‘authentic’ scientific evidence.

The discontinuity in heritage and identity processes finds further evidence in the expressed desire for heritage that has access to the pool of resources of the past. KRM2 claimed “We ask, what is the difference and why are we different, it’s not just the color or the hair, or the language, but we are now in a phase of redefining and looking and trying to investigate who we are.” He continued saying “—our identity is something very important, because if we can define which is our identity, we can progress much more, we can give more importance to our existence.”

Looking towards the future, KRM2 considered that it was not too late to redefine identity for the generation, but that it was elders who had to give indication to the young. Similarly, KRM1 said

“So then, we start building our identity, because then we have the right to start looking forward, working with our kids, building the future.” RIM1 opined that “—there should be a museum where there would be all about Indians (implying that it doesn’t exist) presenting things like the *flambeu* (wood of the cactus) and they could even dress because you have people who look Indian in Nord Saliña.” NSM1 claimed that he is trying to connect with the Guajiro, an Arawak-speaking indigenous group on the adjacent Venezuelan coast, saying that he wanted them to “—demonstrate them their culture.”

The interviews also indicated that a more recent loss of identity and heritage was also to blame for the decrease in indigenous identity. One of the reasons identified for a cultural discontinuity was the influx of new people to the island (KRF1). KRM8 suggested that there had been pillars in Bonairean society which dictated that people were not allowed to mix beyond their *brios*, religious group, and political affiliation. According to KRM2, it was in the 1970s that there was a change “—and a destruction of classes as part of a worldwide process of emancipation.” At this time, the Salt Company, tourism, and a large influx of immigrants arrived at the island, harkening an island-wide, rather than *brio*-oriented identity.

For KRM1 heritage was still a colonial contest, he said “We are being just pushed away from our heritage from our past, from our history.” For him, Bonairean identity began 1st of July 1863, the day that slavery was abolished on Bonaire. “That day we were no longer an object, we became human [...] able to decide our heritage.” Gellner (2008) contends that during the industrial convergence of populations upon cities, the need for common culture and language appeared, pressing for the creation of common pasts and culture. It is likely Bonaire experienced such a pressure after 1863, as Bonaire has searched for the creation of a new identity that entailed all its free populace. While this suggests that there is a segment of this community that chooses to not

identify with the indigenous, this relationship between the indigenous identity and the drive for post-colonial sovereignty and a Bonairean identity requires further study. This discontinuity, arising from both long-term and more recent colonial influences has created a rift in identity processes on Bonaire.

6.1 A Model for Indigenous Heritage on Bonaire

Applying the results from above, I consider it important to distinguish two ways of selecting and using indigenous heritage in Bonaire. The interviews did reveal that broadly, the pre-colonial, and early colonial past remains inaccessible. However, as discussed in the second model (**Fig.5**) heritage processes still reach back in time in an attempt to reconnect with a past.

The idea of *reconnection* is expressive of a different and changing relationship of people with places over time rather than a linear ‘reaching back’ to a historically mediated time (Wimmer 2008). The new model presented in (**Fig.14**) therefore attempts to display that the present recruits heritage from more recent times to re-connect with a past, that in turn affects the present, as in the case of the Ceramic Heads. This process occurs in two different groups, those who feel a general *Indianness*, which values heritage such as dances and the Atlanta Braves anthem, and those that scrutinize the available heritage, looking to historical and scientific sources for the valuation of a certain heritage.

Rather than considering the identity on Bonaire as the result of ethnogenesis (Voss 2012), or hybridity (Bhabha 1994), it is a historical process that severed forms of heritage creation and use, with identity reaching back to re-establish the connection. Despite this, I invite further incursions into understanding how *Indianness* combines with the concept of hybridity.

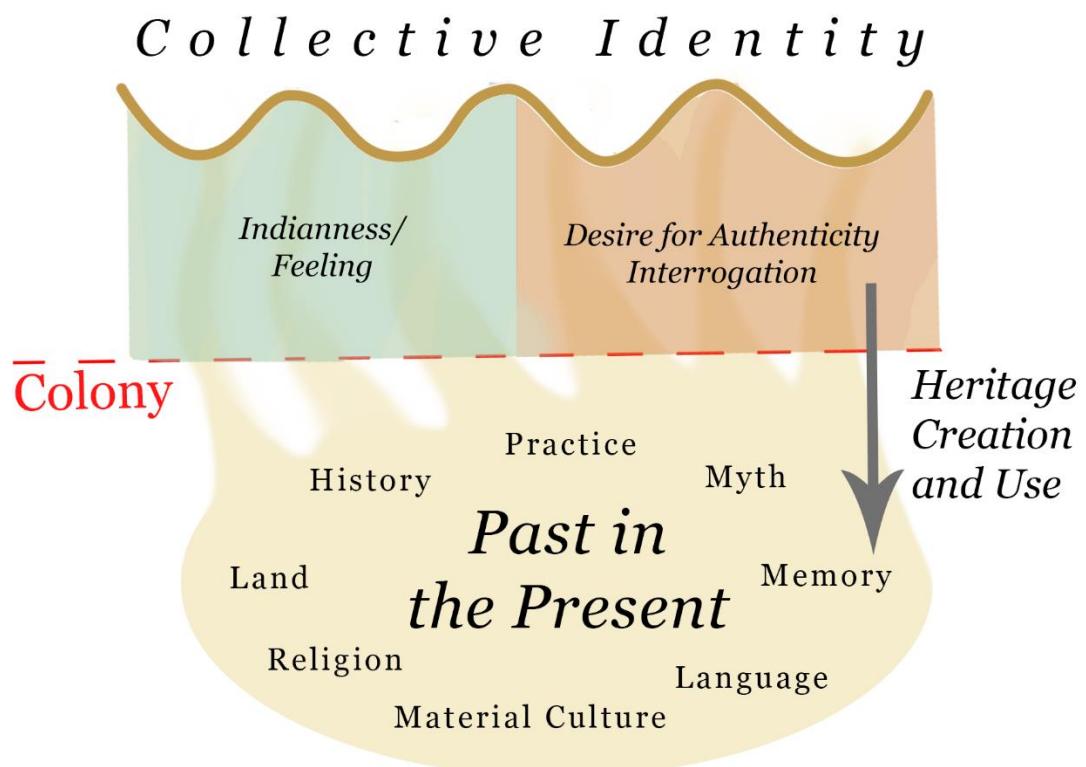


Fig.14: A model applying the results of the interviews to the model of Indianess.

7. Conclusions: Looking Ahead

7.1 Recommendations and Future Work

Alfred & Corntassel (2005, 612) propose that the pathway to decolonization and indigenization starts “—with people transcending colonialism on an individual basis – a strength that soon reverberates outward from the self to family, clan, community and into all of the broader relationships that form an Indigenous existence.” Such a process can begin with the sharpening of heritage management to the specificities of identity formation and use on the island.

While this work aims to be useful to heritage management on the island, it needs to be made accessible to these institutions, and therefore I will return to the island and produce a booklet informing about the results of the research in a divulgat way. Building on this, at the request of my interviewees, I plan to deliver a booklet with a historical overview of the pre-colonial and colonial past of the indigenous.

7.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, indigenous identity and heritage on Bonaire evidences a colonial legacy of discontinuity. While this research was limited by the number of interviewees reached, the inclusivity of its participants, and the amount of identity aspects discussed, it found two different ways in which indigenous identity and heritage were creating and maintaining each other. Heritage on the island helps sustain indigenous identity by drawing on recent objects and available indigenous aspects which are selected through either a process of *Indianness*, or a search for authenticity. The impact of this on current identity is made visible in the way heritage is selected and used, particularly in the case of the Ceramic Head. I have found the term *Indianness* to not fully describe the indigenous identity on the island as some interviewees shunned this ‘feeling’ in

favor of interrogating the heritage that is available and the resulting identity processes. Furthermore, I would suggest a more inclusive phrasing of the term because, like ‘feeling,’ the phenomenon does not need to relate to tangible or intangible heritage but is an identity that arises from what remains of those links to the past. Such an identity, while most visible in areas still affected by colonialism, could also be present in other situations involving war, exile, migration, and natural disasters.

I consider that taking into account the results of this research, it is important to redirect efforts for heritage conservation and protection from broad UNESCO definitions of heritage that focus on tangible and intangible heritage conservation, to working small scale understandings of context-and history-dependent bottom-up forms of identifying and heritage creation. Heritage management needs to be aware of individual identity and heritage formation and maintenance that is entwined with histories of oppression and often ignores the personal disconnected links that yearn to be re-connected to a past.

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Appendix 1: Data on the Characteristics of the Caquetío

Because the Caquetío were treated amicably by the Spanish and labeled as *guaitiaos*, we have more ethnohistoric information about them than any other neighboring indigenous group of the region, such as the Jirajara or the Quiriquire. However, because the label ‘Caquetío’ is a colonial invention, it is also unclear what the pre-colonial distinctions and labels between these groups would have been. Similarly, it is unclear how the ‘Caquetío’ shrank or grew in number as the label became a synonym of ‘ally’ when they were labeled *guaitiaos*. A key aspect of this research is critically compiling the historical and archaeological information available on the lifestyles and lifeways of the Caquetío (as mostly gathered by Europeans), and juxtaposing this with the results of my own interviews. Below, I have collected both historical and archaeological data in order to answer the question: who were the Caquetío on Bonaire? This serves as a source of data for comparison with contemporary identifying aspects among Bonaireans who identify as indigenous.

The insular Caquetío had strong political and sociocultural bonds with the Caquetío from the mainland coast of today’s north-western Venezuela. For Heekeren (1963, 18), the closeness of the three ABC islands in geographic terms suggests that navigation between occurred often and the social relationship was very close. The insular Caquetío maintained this social closeness because they were bartering regularly with their coastal counterparts for fruits, vegetables, and land game in exchange for maritime goods (Haviser 1991; Castellanos 1962; Cey 1995; Ballesteros en Arellano Moreno 1964; Federmann 1988; Martín 1988; Naveros y Vázquez de Acuña 1988; Oviedo y Valdés 1986; Juicios de Residencia... los Welser 1977). There is also some data suggesting that they traded in pearls, cacao, cotton, and shell nacre as a form of money (Strauss 1992). The barter was conducted in dugout *piraguas* (or canoes, *cayucos*, or *jangandas*)

and ensured a steady flow of cultural influence, information, and social interaction alongside the goods (Goslinga 1979, 2). The Caquetío from the ABC islands were also seasonally visited the archipelagoes of Las Aves de Sotavento and Barlovento to the east (today part of Venezuela) and would go to camp there for fishery, mollusk (largely *Lobatus gigas*) gathering, and marine birds hunting (Antczak & Antczak 2015).

Mainland and insular Caquetío were also united by the same Arawakan language (Acosta Saignes 1946; Goslinga 1979, 6; Hartog 1975; Hervás y Panduro 1787, 1800; Jahn 1973; Arcaya 1977; Oliver 1987). According to Goeje (1935), they spoke an Achagua dialect, belonging to a larger language group denominated the Arawak-Maipure family, a mixture of mainland and island languages (for closer linguistic considerations see also Oliver 1989). There is historical evidence supporting these assertions. In 1705, the already-mentioned Father Michael J.A. Schabel, a catholic priest, noticed on Curaçao the ease the island and coastal Caquetío had when conversing (Goslinga 1979, 6). This language is extinct today, however, a list of Caquetío words that remain in use has been compiled (van Buurt 2015).

The best descriptions of the physical appearance and body adornments of the Caquetío come from the continental coast. According to Cey (1995, 107), they had perforated ears with holes so wide that a finger could fit in them; they also pierced the cartilage between their nostrils. When going to a feast or to war, they painted themselves and their boats in red ochre and black. They also bathed frequently and wore pieces of cloth or gourds to cover their genitals. Federman (1968) described the Caquetío of the Coro area as pleasant looking, tall people, living in wooden houses on piles and trading with each other and other tribes. According to Goslinga (1979), it was the women who wove textiles, particularly the *tapara* that covered the genitals. Cey (1995, 106) claims that the Caquetío wore their hair very long, and that they made two *trenzas* (braids),

tying them with string all the way to the end, then rolling them around the head. When the Caquetío wanted to make their hair darker they would add herbs to it. Cey (1995, 108) also claims that it was this hair that was very important to them, with no bigger embarrassment than having it cut or shaved.

Archaeological evidence from Bonaire and Aruba suggests that the ancestors of the Caquetío lived a sedentary life, exploiting the maritime environment in which women gathered shellfish and men were devoted to fishing and fowling (Haviser 1989; Versteeg & Rostain 1997; Van Heekeren 1960). While no animal husbandry was known on Bonaire pre-colonially, we do have evidence of the importance of turtles, fishes, mollusks, birds, and iguanas for subsistence and trade (for more detail see Haviser 1991, 25–23). Ethnohistorical indications and early-colonial maps from the ABC islands suggest that similarly to the mainland coast, the insular Caquetío were cultivating maize, manioc, and sweet potatoes (Haviser 1991, 16). They relied on maize and bitter cassava, some cultivated on the islands and some likely obtained through trade with the coastal relatives. According to De Lima Urdaneta (2009, 2), the Caquetío on the coast practiced an advanced agriculture and were fully sedentary peoples by the time of the arrival of the Spanish. For Goslinga (1979), these supplies allowed a population of about 2000 to inhabit the islands, the same number carried off in 1515. The Caquetío who lived on the ABC islands brewed a drink from agave, following the ancestral tradition of this plant's use (Goslinga 1979).

In terms of specific preparation of food, on the mainland coast, the Caquetío made *arepas* (flat maize cakes) and counted not months or years but moons (Cey 1995, 103). Oviedo y Valdés (1986) claims that the Caquetío planted tobacco, which they smoked as cigars and used to predict the future. They created vinegar or wine by roasting, grinding, cooking, chewing, and cooking

again corn, leaving it to ferment for three days. This liquid was called *carato* (González 2015, 152).

Van Heekeren (1963) finds that Caquetío housing consisted of pile houses, with no ceremonial structures. Features of post holes in archaeological excavations suggest similar pile houses across the other ABC islands (Oliver 1989, 1007; Versteeg & Rostain 1997). Goslinga (1979) considers that the insular Caquetío lived in numerous small communities consisting of rectangular huts with thatched saddle-roofs, and were organized under the *cacique* (chieftain), who daily divided the workload and harvest among the community. According to Hartog (1975,11), the Caquetío on Bonaire lived in caves on the northern coasts of the island, around Boca Onima, close to the *Marca di Indjan* (Indian Rock Paintings), in close proximity to freshwater sources. The Caquetío used natural reservoirs of freshwater but also dug wells around the island, to reach the groundwater, as well as to accumulate it. Oliver (1997) presents data related to the precolonial settlements and house structures from mainland western Venezuela which appear to be very similar to the data from the ABC islands. Archaeology confirms rather large settlements of late precolonial and early colonial Caquetío near Coro (Zavala Reyes *et al.* 2018)

Direct references to Caquetío material culture are scarce (Cei 1995, 103). They manufactured pottery, including plates and bowls for cooking and ritual purposes. Pottery production was a woman's task. They also used the salt pans to extract salt from sea water. They used hammocks to sleep as well as to transport persons; there is information that the cacique was carried around in a hammock (Federman 1968, 223). They also bartered and used gold more than other groups on the coast (Martín 1988, 273).

With regards to social organization, sources inform us that alongside the *cacique*, the hierarchy included the *boratio* who was a priest/medical doctor. Using local plants such as tobacco and

agave, the *boratio* also predicted weather, answered questions, and healed ailments. Cey (1995) calls the *boratio* counterparts on the mainland coast *piaches*, who lived ascetic live – not working the land, abstaining from sex and war, and not eating fish, meat, or sour foods. According to Oviedo y Valdés (1986), the socio-political organization of the Caquetío centered on a supreme leader over all other *caciques* (leaders) who was denominated the *diao*. The local insular *caciques* and *boratios* were all subject to the cacique of Paraguaná, the Venezuelan peninsula just south of Aruba (Goslinga 1979, 6). However, due to the distance of the islands from the mainland it is unclear how much jurisdiction this leader had over the ABC islands, if any at all.

No recognizable elements of warfare were found on the ABC islands (Van Heekeren 1963, 14–15). However, on the mainland coast, there are many descriptions of Caquetío war attire. There is a mention in Vespucci's (2010) accounts of Curaçao that the insular Caquetío were armed. Bows for un-poisoned arrows and heavy wooden clubs called *macanas* were used on the mainland coast (Cey 1995, 102). Hutten (1968, 368) claims that mainland Caquetío wore deer skins instead of shields. These undoubtedly could have made it to the islands through trade. When going to war, Cey (1995, 102) claims that the coastal Caquetío would put on a helmet/skull cap four fingers wide, covered in the furs of small animals, with long red or black feathers in them. When a Caquetío killed another person, he would be brought back to the village during a new moon, isolated for two lunar cycles in a small hut, and then brought back into the village with a big festivity.

With respect to the ideational realm, according to Goslinga (1979), the Caquetío were animists, worshipping their ancestors, the sun, moon, and animals. According to Oviedo y Baños (1987), the central figure of their spiritual pantheon, *Hurakame* (from whence the word hurricane is

derived), played a dominant role in the Caquetío life, being honored at important events and being consulted on important matters. Cey (1995, 103) considers that the coastal Caquetío danced in circles, one singing and the others responding, or all danced embraced in a line, performing so-called *areitos*.

Archaeologically we have evidence that the Insular Caquetío lived in villages of about 150 people, at locations with good soil for planting. They had camps around the island to exploit resources.

Van Heekeren (1963) mentions that human bones that were archaeologically recovered on Bonaire suggest either cannibalism or sacrifice. Ethnohistoric references to the possible cannibalism among the Caquetío are contradictory. Oviedo y Valdés (1986) gives information on the Caquetío of the mainland coast, describing a practice of endo-cannibalism. Meanwhile Cey (1995, 61), notes that all the groups on the continent, except the Caquetío, were cannibals. According to Goslinga (1979), the predominant burial practice of the Caquetío was in a squatting position in an urn. However, narrow necked urns suggest alternative forms, such as secondary burials with only parts of the body being buried, suggesting the removal and/or movement of bones.

Appendix 2: Heritage Sites and Institutions on the Island

A2.1 SKAL and the Museo Boneiru

SKAL (Sekshon Kultura, Arte i Literatura, Education and Culture Service) is the government organization that manages heritage and funds from the Dutch Governments. It also contains a museum dedicated to the island's history and contemporary heritage. The exhibition is free for all visitors.

Objects displayed were of Dabajroid style, however, were not labelled (Fig.16). It is likely very difficult to identify with the objects presented here and the interview with the management showed that there was a desire to obtain more information about this exhibition, in fact, the management complained that they didn't know what to speak about in this section of the exhibition. My own reactions to this exhibition were that it was flat, unemotional, and failed to connect with a living past.

In the exhibition, the heritage that was presented was mostly African descended. In this part of the exhibition a large part was dedicated to household items, especially those that are made of metal and do not waste away in the harsh environments of the island. Lanterns, irons, sewing machines, the oldest from the 19th century lined the walls (Fig.17).

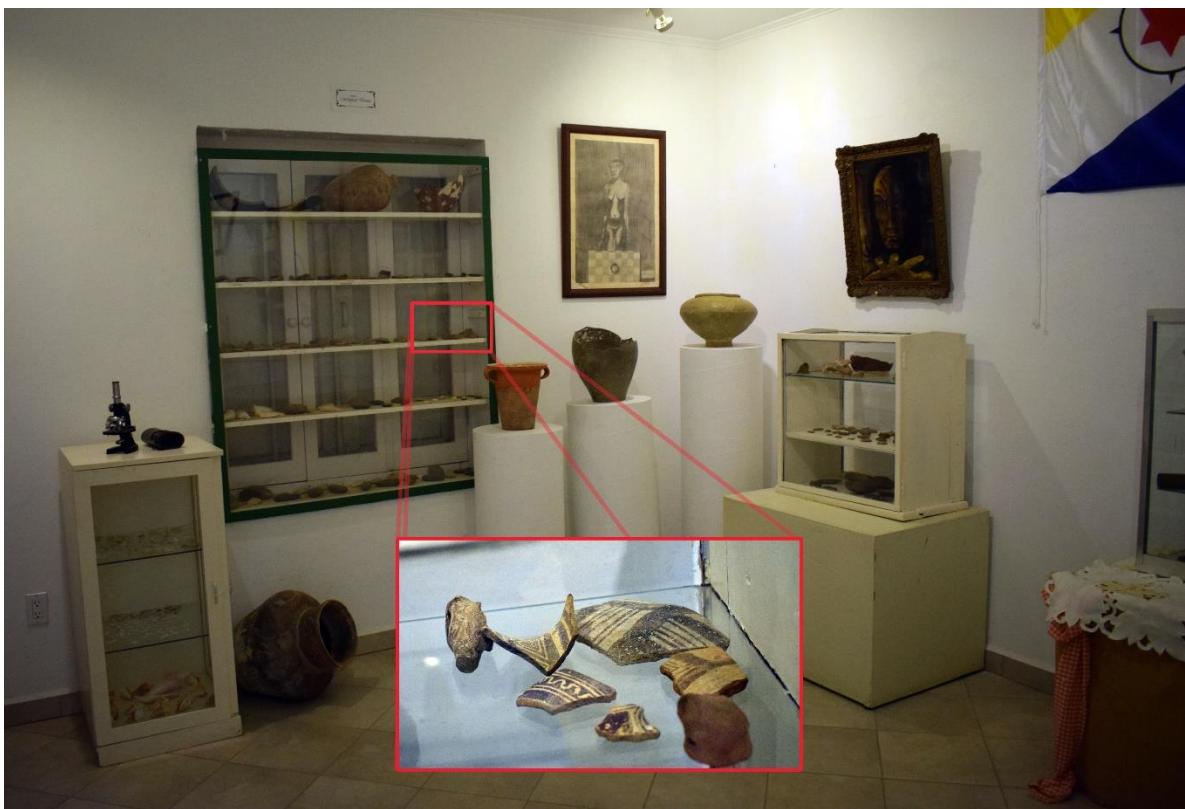


Figure 16: The SKAL indigenous exhibition without labels.



Figure 15: Irons and other durable objects displayed at SKAL.

A2.2 Washington Slaagbaai National Park Visitor Center

This visitor center is located at the entrance to the Washington National Park, a popular tourist destination. The entrance is free, and it contains natural and cultural exhibitions pertaining to the entire island. This is one of three exhibitions that contain pre-colonial indigenous objects. These pre-colonial objects are labeled “Arawak” (**Fig.19**), a move that likely contributes to the confusion between Arawak and Caquetío later referenced by interviewees. Objects are organized by age, finishing with meal irons, a recurring theme throughout the island (Figure 10). This is the only exhibition on the island that contained a continuity towards the present. In a description of the finds, labelled ‘Prehistoric people of Bonaire,’ (**Fig.18**). This description could serve to create a greater sense of discontinuity as prehistory, especially in a European education system as on Bonaire, suggests a much older past. There is a small picture that shows the “Actual residents of Nord Saliña, Descendants of Caquetío Indians’ as well as an Amazonian tribe to depict how the Caquetío looked. It also claims that: “By the beginning of the 20th Century, it is doubtful there were any pure-blooded Caquetío left on Bonaire, yet there continues to be a very strong identity with Amerindian ethnicity.”

With regards to the rest of the display, there is great focus on educating about the methodology of Archaeology. Archaeological pre-colonial finds are display as depersonalized objects lying by the pit, and in my interpretation, fail to connect with a visitor, (**Fig.19**).

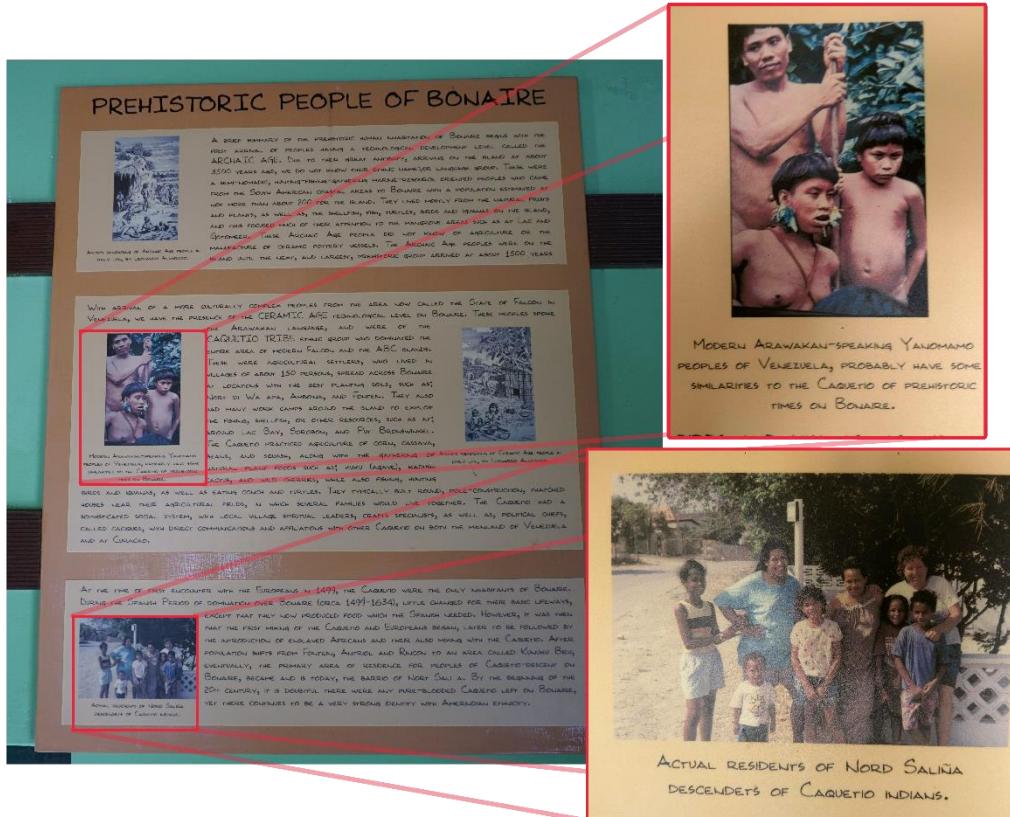


Fig.17: Board detailing the prehistory of the people on Bonaire, showing a continuity with modern populations.



Fig.18: The labelling of objects as Arawak in the exhibit, irons, and an archaeological diorama.

A2.3 Terramar Museum

Terramar Museum is a newer museum (founded in 2016) and a paid museum that focuses mostly on attracting tourists from cruise ships. Its focus is undoubtedly the indigenous history of Bonaire, but also the colonial times and the slave trade. Within its exhibitions it mostly presents objects from around the Caribbean (with a large emphasis on the Taino) at the cost of presenting information on the local pre-colonial past (**Fig.20**). Figure 12 shows an example of the display of many objects from the Caribbean, with Bonaire being only one of many. According to my interview, this is in line with the focus on tourists from the cruises, but in practice it appears to promote a possible Pan-Indian identity (Nagel 1995) with no meaningful distinction being made among the different groups presented (**Fig.19**). Another important aspect to notice is that the museum discusses indigenous legacies, such as tobacco, but presents colonial objects under this exhibit, in this case colonial pipes (**Fig.21**). This kind of remembering the past, but through colonial objects rather than indigenous objects, is what an interviewee brought up as a problem also with the Slave huts. This museum does not mention a continuity of indigenous presence on the island, but does personalize the past to some extent, with a large illustration of the Onima petroglyphs (**Fig.22**).

RITUAL

Through the writings of early Spanish chroniclers, such as Friar Ramon Pané, a lot is known about Amerindian ritual life in the fifteenth century AD. These stories pertain mostly to the Taíno of the Greater Antilles, who had an elaborate ritual and ceremonial culture.

Amerindian ritual life revolved around the concept of animism - the belief that animals, plants, and objects possess a spiritual essence. This belief, which is still practiced by people in the South American tropical lowlands, was probably widespread throughout the Caribbean long before the Spanish arrived. For the Taíno, the ancestral spirits were called cemí, sometimes objectified as triangularly carved stones and wooden seats called duhos.

Amerindians on many islands made frequent use of hallucinogenic substances to contact the spiritual world. Although the Taíno had access to manioc and maize beer, they used other, more powerful substances such as cohoba and tobacco in these rituals. Cohoba is a mixture of plant seeds and burned ashes, which were inhaled through the nose, whereas tobacco was either smoked or chewed. Their effect was enhanced by cleansing the body through fasting and vomiting, utilizing ritual

paraphernalia such as vomiting spatulas. The hallucinogens altered the user's state of mind, enabling him to enter the spiritual world and communicate with cemí.

Shamans were particularly equipped to enter the spiritual world and communicate with cemí. Their primary role was to heal sick people. Sickness and death were seen as resulting from actions of spirits sent by other shamans and people. Through the use of hallucinogenic substances, shamans could identify the spirits causing sickness or death, remove them, and identify the assailants that sent them. Whereas positive outcomes of this intervention could increase the shaman's status, a negative intervention could lead to severe punishment and even expulsion from the community. Shamans were liminal figures in society, neither belonging to the living nor the spiritual world.

Fig.20: Displays focusing on other indigenous groups, suggesting that there isn't information or similar richness on Bonaire.



Fig.19: A display suggesting pan-Caribbean indigenous identities.



Fig.22: A depiction of the Caquetío painting the Onima petroglyphs.



Fig.21: A display of indigenous tobacco traditions with the material culture being colonial pipes.



Fig.23: Pre-colonial ceramic sherds that were unlabeled at the museum.

A2.4 Bonaire Museum of Natural History

This museum is a recent as well, only opening its doors in 2017. Inside you can find natural and cultural objects relating to the island's past. The indigenous are represented in two glass cases (**Fig.23**) filled with pre-colonial sherds and stone and shell tools. These are all labelled as belonging to the Caquetío, with a short paragraph on the Caquetío. Much of the rest of the display is dedicated to the history of Slaves, with metal rakes from the salt pans, and historical documents relating to the emancipation of 1863.

A2.5 Mangazine di Rei

Mangazine di Rei is a museum and a foundation dedicated to promoting and preserving heritage on the island (**Fig.25**). Because of its proximity to Rincón and its location at a storehouse that the slaves had to visit for supplies, it focuses greatly on the heritage of African slaves. Much focus is put on quotidian aspects of heritage, the kitchen (**Fig.24**), religion, architecture, etc. The emphasis is on European and African legacies in the heritage of the area. For example, while house styles like *Kas di Kabes*, *Kas di Kaha*, and *Kas di Porchi* are all included, indigenous ways of making houses do not play a role, and the religion exhibition includes catholic objects as well as African masks and religious statues.

A2.6 Museo Chich'i Tan

This museum was a small house located in Rincón. It is meant to show the traditional lifestyles of the island. It presented many colonial objects, as well as African heritage in the form of traditions, with no mention of the indigenous. It did however present, like two other museums, metallic objects, such as irons, pans, and tools as important signifiers of the past (**Fig.26**).



Fig.25: Maskarada costume next to an African centered exhibition.



Fig.24: Mangazine di Rei focuses heavily on the transmission of intangible heritage to the young generation.



Fig.26: Metal tools from the 20th century displayed in the heritage house in Rincon.

A2.7 Other Heritage Sites

The most iconic heritage sites on the island, that appear on tourist fliers and have almost become a symbol for the island are the 19th century Slave Huts (**Fig.27**). These were mentioned by an interviewee as being the past remembered on the Colony's term, rather than the colonized's terms.

The “Indian Inscriptions” at Onima were also visited. The site is mentioned in the interviews as an important place for the indigenous, and clearly has a role in the imaginary past of the island. It is rather removed from any inhabited place, and thus has an aspect of a liminal space that likely make the experience special for visitors, as mentioned by (TCM1).

At each of these sites there are plaques that contain mythological stories and interpretations alongside some historical information (**Fig.28**). The author behind these is Frans Booij, a storyteller and artist whose Landmarks Bonaire project places these plaques. The plaques encountered during the research did not contain historically accurate information, and probably influenced the interpretations of certain interviewees, as well as pushed a romanticized interpretation of the indigenous past.



Fig.27: The Slave Huts are the most popular heritage site on the island.



Fig.28: Two of the plaques that contain artwork and mythologized history of the heritage sites.

A2.8 Heritage Events/Experiences

Three heritage events were attended. Luna Yen is a monthly cultural meeting that takes place when the moon is full in a pre-planned location. This is run by a foundation that receives support from SKAL. The event consisted of the reciting of poems and stories, although these came from any sources, and were not necessarily geared towards the heritage of the island, according to personal communications, there certainly have been recitals dealing with these topics.

I also attended the San Pedro Celebration which consisted of bands around Rincón visiting the houses of different people who had a name related to Pedro. This celebration, together with others like Bari, Maskarada, and Simadan all were important during the interviews.

Finally, through a personal invitation by one of the interviewees I attended a presentation of a Maskarada, which was a great source of conflict among my interviewees who claimed opposingly that it either was or was not indigenous in origin. The experience did not contribute to discovering the origin, though that was outside the scope of the research.