



EDITORIAL

AFRICA IN US: A DRUM THAT RESONATES IN THE COSMOS

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How to quote this article in APA:

Parra-Valencia, L. (January-June, 2020). Africa in us: a drum that resonates in the cosmos [Editorial]. *Revista Colombiana de Ciencias Sociales*, 12(1), 22-28. <https://doi.org/10.21501/22161201.3847>

On the torrid shores of our seas and along the Magdalena and other rivers, Africans have been propitiously scattered... and you dance the cumbia or cumbiamba with unprecedented unwrapping and rayane frenzy in the delirium ... (...) go down to dance the cumbia so the inscribed froths of the Atrato, in the gardens that embroider Barranquilla, under the grape arbour of Cartagena, and in it never as it would deserve praised indescribable verge that lays between its branches and its fruits, tendrils and flowers, perfumes and harmonies to Mompós, the Valerosa. (Antonio José Restrepo, 1911 as cited in Delia Zapata Olivella, 1962, p. 188).

Cumbia, bullerengue, black son and currulao are part of Africa's living heritage in Colombia; traces of Africana, as Nina de Friedemann (1992) meant, which reaffirm an ancient and original presence, among us. Musicality has been essential for studies and thinking about identity, black culture and the status of Afro-descendant communities in "América" (Du Bois, 1999; Zapata Olivella, 1962; Zapata Olivella, 2000; García, 1994; Miller, 2009; Segato, 1995; Mukuna, 1978; Quintero, 2000). This notion that it minted the afrobrasilian Léila Gonzalez (1988) it is accounted for the Africanization of the Americas, which includes the territories of the north, center, south and island (Caribbean).

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In the context of the European colonial slave enterprise, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, millions of Afro-Saharans were captured, plucked from their ancestral territories and brought as black/os-slaves to América, violently. As if that were not enough, in addition, Africans and Afro-descendants were “expelled to the periphery of thought and considered incapable of philosophizing” (Freire Machado, 2014, p. 3). Colonial and capitalist logic, which dehumanized Africans into merchandise, denied them any intellectual capacity, stating that skin colour was in relation to the ability or absence of reasoning; and, that the black race was inferior to the white race, ignorant of intelligence, manufacturing, art and science.

Without knowing that the Greek philosophy owes to him very much the ancient, African Egypt (I will fry Machado, 2014). Théophile Obenga (since defender of the panafricanismo arranged to meet in Freire Machado, 2014), author of *Egypt, Greece and the School of Alexandria*, it demonstrated the influence of the African Egyptian thought in the Greek thinkers (Fell of Mileto, Plato Pythagoras, Democritus, Aristotle, others), many of these scientists they formed with the priests of Egypt, affirms the Brazilian philosopher. The idea of the origin of philosophy in Black Africa.

On the long journey from Africa, Afro-Saharans did not carry their instruments with them and also suffered in their own body and spirit the strong impositions of European coloniality. However, creatively they managed to rework their rhythms, timbres and tones (Garcia, 1994). The reconstruction of musical configurations in the libertarian spaces of the Amefrican diaspora meant for Africans the restoration, transformation and appropriation of their original cultural codes, in the context of enslavement, according to the author. Kazadi wa Mukuna (1978), an ethnomusicologist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, studies the musical elements of Bantu origin, heirs of Africa and the processes of mutation and persistence in the “New World”. “. In the case of popular music Brazil identifies the presence of cultural traces of the Congo, present in the samba, the caxixi de la Capoeira, in relation to “strong cultural unification”. Despite the slave system’s attempt to separate tribe members to avoid uprisings, waiting times shared after capture allowed them cultural, linguistic and musical exchanges to set up a “cultural stock” of what they had in culturally common speaking and crystallizing a collective memory, in terms of Maurice Halbwachs. According to Mukuna, within the Brazilian community units, “an evolution of its cultural values” was created in relation to life, death, faith, the arts (Mukuna, 1978; p. 61), including music. With this we identify once again, not only Africa’s presence in América, but also its resistance.

Emerging “Afrodiaspratric” cultural practices, on this side of the black Atlantic (Gilroy, 2001), are important as processes of resistance and reconstruction of identities of these vital cultures (Ferreira, 2011). For the author, making music introduces a “local fissure, of the global epistemological domain”; as movements and forms of social organization build corporalities, and ways of socialization, in relation to dissenting thoughts and epistemologies alternative to hegemonic rhetoric.

During colonization, the process of enslavement and abolition, the spaces where Africans and their descendants in América deployed their musical practices are considered libertarian, of refuge, of resistance against colonial imposition, such as maroon, religious and festive (García, 1994). The *cumbe*, the *palenque*, the *quilombo* or the *free peoples*, represents the place in the mount where the slaves who managed to escape slavery domination took refuge. As did Benkos Biohó, who led the iconic revolt of African slaves and slaves against Spanish domination in the New Kingdom of Granada, escaping Cartagena into the thick tropical dry forest and building the *palenque* of La Matuna, around 1603, as an alternative of freedom (Navarrete, 2001.) The descendant Maroons built in 1691, St. Basil of Palenque, as well as others in the Mounts of Mary, where musical practices took place, such as the use of the ritual drum present in the Afrodiaspratric funeral.

Religious expressions in América continue to be a scene of reappropriation of musical settings in the Amefrican diaspora, which reaffirms the connection of Afro-descendant peoples and their ancestors. “Without Batá drums this religion is not conceived. The Orishas do not work without drums” (García, 1994, p. 2), in the case of the Rule of Ocha or Cuban Santería of the Yoruba religion. Or in the funeral practice *Lumbalú de San Basilio de Palenque* (Bolívar-Colombia), whose name, in Thetu voice, comes from the same name of the main funerary drum, in charge of the rhythm of ritual chants and dance. “Batata [the community’s main drummer] also called it a *pechiche* (...) A drum known as *yamaró* is also used, just like those used on the Atlantic Coast” (Escalante, 1989, p. 12).

For Manuel Zapata Olivella (2000) the “talking drums”, in his words, have the function of invoking the gods and ancestors, convening the family and the dance of life. Dialogue with black ancestors taught them to resist and defeat Europeans. Ancestors dating back to the early civilizations of Egypt, Axum and Meroe, and to philosophers, mathematicians, doctors and priests who were turned into prisoners, as the Afro-Colombian reminds us. Invoking the ancestors refers us to religiosity, the one that in the peoples of the Amefrican diaspora resonates with drums, as a strategy of cultural resistance.

In the cases of Cuba and Colombia, as in the *Candomblé* and in the Drum Houses of Xango in Brazil, the Shango Cult in Trinidad and Tobago, and, the Voodoo of the Fon in Haiti, where the talking drum is present, we can get an idea about the relationship between music and Afrodiasphoric religiosity, because musical structures are reconstructed and appropriated in practice.

Also the festive space covers a wide “musical mosaic” that accounts for the Afro sub-Saharan presence in América, with varied instruments and genres, which helped the situation of forced exile and enslavement (García, 1994). In this scenario emerges a creative “Maroon transformation”, in the words of the author, which recreates dances and festive genres under western religious festivals. This appropriation and transformation unfurled a great musical diversity throughout the continent and the

caribbean island region, which continues to this day. As we identified him in San Basilio de Palenque with the Lumbalú, the bullerengue, the son of black, the puya or in San Cristobal (San Jacinto-Bolívar) with the songs of Zafra, musical expressions of the Maroon transformation in Montes de María.

In the context of enslavement “music played a fundamental role in toning the rebellious spirit against oppression” (García, 1994, p. 2). And so it remains for the Afro-descendant community of the Colombian Caribbean and Pacific; where different musical expressions, including singing and dance, allow to narrate the experiences of Afro-Colombian daily life. In relation to the bullerengue, Pérez Herrera (2014) states that it is a rite to life, melancholy, romantic, funeral and recreational ceremonies that cross the different environments of the inhabitants of the Caribbean territory.

At this point, I allow myself to evoke the voice of Etelvina Maldonado, renowned singer-songwriter of the Colombian Caribbean, with the song Carambantua, which alludes to the drummer as owner of the throat, dance, nature and territory. Giving rise to the reflection of the relationship between the beings of nature (animated and inanimate), the cosmos and human existence, which shape African philosophies, such as Bantu thought: societies linked to ancestry, territorial identity, the transmission of knowledge orally, and whose language is spoken by humans and drums (Cunha Junior, 2010). These are collective ways of philosophizing, which regulate daily life and solve the problems of life on earth, in relation to the balance of forces of existences, based on “nature as a deep respect for life” (Cunha Junior, 2010, p. 27). The language of drums, as a form of secondary orality that is transmitted from generation to generation, has greater reach and permanence over time than spoken language (Du Bois, 1999).

In relation to cumbia or cumbiamba, the musical rhythm that dances to an entire country, that identifies us and that made us known internationally, the Afro-Colombian Delia Zapata Olivella (1962) explains that

The only voice similar to cumbia, which hosts the Spanish Academy, is that of cumbé: A certain dance of blacks and tinned of this dance. And cumbes (without tilde), are called the blacks who live in Bata, in the Spanish mainland Guinea (p. 189).

Following the choreographer, this musical genre of the Caribbean coast, is composed of the African inspiration, the encounter with indigenous modalities and later entry of the “third in discord”, in his words, the “interference of colonial masters”; That is to say, that the cumbia forms what Zapata understands as an expression of the integration of “our triethnic ancestor (...) that form the synthesis of the Colombian nation” (Zapata Olivella, 1962, p. 190). Which explains from the choreography of the cumbia where the drums put the African accent, the bagpipes or flutes to the indigenous, and the singing and costume the Hispanic. And in relation to dancing, the woman the indigenous and the man afro.

The cumbia such as the bullerengue, the sound of black, the zafra and the puya of the Caribbean, or the currulao of the Colombian Pacific, account for the continuities (recreation) and transformations of African musicality, the Afrodiaspirc influence and the integration of Hispanic colonial elements, and the gestation of new sonorities in Améfrica.

For its part, the songs of zafra, the son of black and the dances sing's as the bullerengue, are part of the oral tradition in Colombia. Mythologies and literatures emerge in the orality of African societies (Cunha Junior, 2010). Ferreira (2011) identifies a wealth in the metaphors and narratives that involve Afrodiasporic musical practices and that were ignored by the coloniality of power/knowledge. The songs dedicated to the agricultural theme of the reality of communities, which accompany the days of planting and harvesting, give account of the important relationship of Afro-descendant communities with nature, to which they sing, as well as to the universe; which brings us closer to the idea of "music as a bridge of communication between man and the cosmos" (García, 1994, p. 2). In the study on the genesis of bullerengue, Pérez Herrera (2014) explains that it is initially activated in the labour and then in the ceremonial ritual.

Traditional Amefrican musicalities, part of the endangered world heritage (García, 1994), continue to tone the spirit, communicating with nature and invoking ancestry.

With each song, dance or beat of the drums cheerful, caller, drum, pechiche or Lumbalú we are not only rebuilding Afrodiaspirc musical configurations, but also, resisting the story of oppression of the voices of our ancestors, of that Africa present in us. Like a drum that shakes our being and resonates in the cosmos.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest with the institution or trade association of ever any kind.

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