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Revitalization of the artistic heritage of afro-mexican communities

THE PERSPECTIVE OF AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN

Abstract

This article problematizes the African identity in Mexico. Its objective is to give meaning to the historical legacies and the erasure of Afro-descendant women in the artistic heritage in the north of the country. As well as describing how and why Afro-Mexican women play a central role in the dissemination of Afro-Latin artistic expression: dances, manufacture of musical instruments, clothing and accessories used in celebration dances and carnivals. It starts from the concept of artistic heritage from cultural studies and the theories of black feminism and Chicano feminism as an epistemological lens to analyze interviews with Afro-descendant women in the State of Chihuahua. In recent years, Afro-Mexican women have achieved prominence in the political, cultural and artistic life of the country. There is a call to the rescue of music, popular dances and the acrobatic dance of African

roots that prevails in festivals and carnivals of the north and south of the country. Women play a central role in the preservation, recovery and cultural promotion of these dances, their singing and percussion's music that accompanies them. Also, their contribution is in the manufacture of musical instruments, costume making and accessories design for women and men in these celebrations. The family and the community are the main impulses of Afro-Mexican women's organizations in the struggle for self-determination of Afro-Mexican identity. Likewise, the political agenda of Afro-Mexican women has been recognized and included in the cultural policies of the local and state governments of the state of Oaxaca and the state of Guerrero. However, it is necessary to go through a phase of recognition in all the states of the country. Despite the constitutional recognition, discrimination, inequality, social injustice and violence against women of

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African descent persist. There is a need for the National Commission for the Development of Afro-Mexican Communities to promote policies in the same sense that they are promoted for indigenous. Finally, it concludes from the voices of Afro-descendant women their active role in the construction of Afro-Mexican identity in the State of Chihuahua, as well as the central role of Afro-Mexican women in music, dances and carnivals. The study of the meanings, values and speech assumed by Afro-Mexican women to explain each of the artistic elements of these manifestations allows us to go beyond the patrimonial register of each dance, song and music present in the Afro-descendant communities in Mexico.

Key words: Afro-Mexican women, African Culture Heritage, Patrimonial Register of African Music, Dances and Rituals in México.

Resumen

Este artículo problematiza la identidad africana en México. Su objetivo es dar sentido a los legados históricos y al borrado de las mujeres afrodescendientes en el patrimonio artístico en el norte del país. Además de describir cómo y por qué las mujeres afro-mexicanas desempeñan un papel central en la difusión de la expresión artística afrolatina: bailes, fabricación de instrumentos musicales, ropa y accesorios utilizados en festivales y carnavales. Se parte del concepto de patrimonio artístico desde los estudios culturales y las teorías del feminismo negro y el feminismo chicano como una lente epistemológica para analizar entrevistas con mujeres afrodescendientes en el estado de Chihuahua. En los últimos años, las mujeres afro-mexicanas han alcanzado prominencia en la vida política, cultural y artística del país. Hay un llamado al rescate de la música, los

bailes populares y el baile acrobático de raíces africanas que prevalece en los carnavales del norte y sur del país. Las mujeres juegan un papel central en la preservación, recuperación y promoción cultural de estos bailes, el canto y la música de percusión que los acompaña. Además, su contribución está en la fabricación de instrumentos musicales, confección de vestuario y diseño de accesorios para mujeres y hombres en estas celebraciones. La familia y la comunidad son los principales impulsos de las organizaciones de mujeres afro-mexicanas en la lucha por la autodeterminación de la identidad afro-mexicana. Asimismo, la agenda política de las mujeres afro-mexicanas ha sido reconocida e incluida en las políticas culturales de los gobiernos locales y estatales del estado de Oaxaca y del estado de Guerrero. Sin embargo, es necesario pasar por una fase de reconocimiento en todos los estados del país. A pesar del reconocimiento constitucional, persisten la discriminación, la desigualdad, la injusticia social y la violencia contra las mujeres afrodescendientes. Es necesario que la Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de las Comunidades Afro-mexicanas promueva políticas en el mismo sentido en que se promueven entre los indígenas. Finalmente, de las voces de las mujeres afrodescendientes se concluye su papel activo en la construcción de la identidad afro-mexicana en el estado de Chihuahua, así como el papel central de las mujeres afro-mexicanas en la música, los bailes y los carnavales. El estudio de los significados, valores y voces de las mujeres afro-mexicanas para explicar cada uno de los elementos artísticos de estas manifestaciones permite ir más allá del registro patrimonial de cada danza, canto y pieza musical presente en el patrimonio de las comunidades afrodescendientes en México.

Palabras clave: Mujeres afro-mexicanas, Patrimonio cultural africano, Registro patrimonial de música africana, Bailes y Rituales en México.

Introduction

Espinosa (2014) considers that multidisciplinary research is necessary to strengthen studies on the African presence in Mexico and, in turn, the design of public policies for the benefit of Afro-Mexican communities. It is necessary to demonstrate the connection between Africanism and Mexicanness that was neglected in Mexican history and sociology. What leads us to recognize that for centuries the aspiration and strategic acceptance of the Negro being *mestizo* –in some cases *afromestizo*– and speaking of Mexicanness have prevented the role of African women in the formation of the State from recovering historically –Nation and that the Afro-Mexican culture and its arts are spread as patrimony of the country–. Currently, the Afro-Mexican communities are rural that, also to suffering poverty, marginalization, discrimination and violence, have been forced to emigrate to other states in Mexico and even to the United States of America (USA).

Writing about the cultural influences that have shaped Afro-Mexican musical traditions implies recognizing the diversity of backgrounds –a multiethnic origin different from blacks in Africa– and the experiences of musical exchange –whether they had a previous transculturation in Africa, Europe, USA and even other Latin American colonies: Haiti, Cuba or Brazil– of African slaves who entered under a forced migration to the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Most of the studies have been historical, sociological and ethnographic. In

the first historical studies they emphasize the mentioned dances of blacks or references in prohibitive edicts promulgated by the Holy Inquisition in which they are mentioned mainly the musical instruments, but, not the musical structure, the text or the melodies. While the ethnographic studies have prioritized the identification of the African musical contribution in some of the musical cultures as far as organological aspects, modes of execution and specific types of musical rhythmic structures are concerned. Gabriel Saldívar was one of the main researchers who refer from a social critic to the absence of the third root in Mexican music. It highlights the African contribution in the so-called Son Jarocho and dance music where the Afro-Mexican woman has an important role. Also, it is necessary in the country to encourage creative studies from the praxis of the artist-researcher, in methodological proposals where it is possible to artistically experience Afro-Mexican music or dances (as cited in Ruiz 2015).

Sandoval (2015) mentions that Robert Stevenson observed that no Latin American nation be flaunt of like Mexico to be the direct heir of European Renaissance and Baroque music. In this regard, New Spain was fertile territory for the teaching of classical music because in the pre-Hispanic period the Aztecs considered music within the formative system of Calmécac. Thus, the Aztec Empire possessed a musical culture that facilitated the transition from the rituals that offered their deities to the formation of choirs and Catholic liturgy present in most of the missions of evangelization in today's Mexican territory –It highlights the participation of indigenous women in the making of costumes, plumes and pre-Hispanic musical instruments–. In this regard,



Fray Juan de Torquemada (1557-1624) mentions the proliferation of indigenous instrumentalists and singers to such an extent that a bishop towards the end of the 16th century tried to repress in 1615 the excessive production of musical instruments –chirimías, trumpets, flutes or violas– as well as the enormous number of natives who spent their time playing instruments, dancing and singing (quoted by Sandoval 2015).

In Mexico City, the figure of Manuel de Sumaya, who composed the Baroque opera *La parténope* in 1711, was one of the most important New Spain composers, organists and masters of the Cathedral of Mexico. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European classical music was present in the instruction that was carried out in cathedrals, convents, seminars, religious colleges and indigenous missions in some of the 15 Intendencias of New Spain: Mexico, Puebla, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Durango and Guadalajara. Also, the exchange of these novice musicians with great musicians from Italy, Portugal or Spain created an important repertoire of musical culture that allows recognizing as the Golden Age of the polyphonic vocal music of Renaissance style, which follows the laws of counterpoint and it governs by the modal system inherited from the Gregorian chant. As well as the transformations that instrumental music and profane vocal music would have towards the 19th century (Sandoval 2015).

In this sense, the Spaniards brought religious songs to New Spain, but these were appropriated and reinterpreted by both the natives and Afro-descendants in their popular dances, patron saint festivities and carnivals. The current scientific task is in the revitaliza-

tion of these artistic practices and their recognition as cultural heritage. Vargas (2016) mentions that since 1980, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) and the public instances of federal government –the *Secretaría de Cultura* (CULTURA) and the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP), mainly– in an attempt to recover the folkloric, popular and profane music of the country they create the First Festival of Indigenous Music with the aim of achieving a linguistic revitalization through the recovery of melodies and traditional musical expressions, and even, those linked with indigenous ritual practices, agricultural cycles, custom ceremonies and festivities.

At the beginning of 1990, the politics of musicalization of Mexican children began to be institutionalized with the opening of the first Bachelor programs in Music Education that conceived the use of music as a tool for transmitting ideas, attitudes, social criticism, ideologies, patterns Mathematics, feelings, expressions and linguistic innovations. To date, Mexican public universities with the exhaustive work of their researchers have recovered indigenous music in the state of Tabasco –for example: *Yokot'an* music, also called drummer music, which, although lacking in lyrics, is linked to the most important of the peoples speaking of the mayanas languages–. Highlights the dance *Baila viejo* known as *Ak'tuba noxib* in which *maracas*, drums and flutes are used; or the ritual *Levantamiento de la sombra* in which constant rhythms are used, elaborate masks and dances with rhythmic movements. Also, there is a pattern that organizes the presents that religious people deliver, *rezanderos* –medicasters–, drummers and dancers, in some cases, narrators. Both are an example of the

processes of cultural resistance and recovery of Mexican artistic heritage from the revitalization of indigenous languages through music and dance (as cited in Vargas 2016).

Alonso (2008) points out that in Mexico the recording of indigenous music began with the Norwegian Karl Lumholtz at the end of the 19th century, in the west and northwest of the country –including Sonora and Chihuahua–. Later, other researchers –mostly Germans, French and Americans– marked a new stage for the knowledge of the musical folklore of Mexico through field recordings by representing sound files on which some current studies are based. For example: Frances Theresa Densmore in 1932 made a phonographic record of the music cucapá and yaqui in Sonora. Also, Yaquis and Tarahumara are peoples of the North who are hermetic to society and this favors musical purity by preserving natural elements. The indigenous sones of Michoacán stand out due to their peculiarity. In the south of the country, these studies allowed the assembly and revitalization of *Son Huasteco* and *Huapango*. Also, in the Highlands of Chiapas inhabits one of the largest concentrations of indigenous population and this makes it possess the largest repertoire of the indigenous musical heritage of the country, highlight three aspects: 1. The music of wind and percussion; 2. String music; 3. The music of marimba.

There are the phonographic series of indigenous musical works sheltered by the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* created in 1948 and which is now known as the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (CDI). It should be noted that most of the Mexican folk music was also absorbed as other artistic manifestations by the colonial mestizaje, for which

it has European –or Spanish–, indigenous and African origin. Nor have the *Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes* given importance to Afro-Mexican music in cultural politics, as if they have done so with classical music and European or American dances. There is only one inclusion of folk music, such as: The *Son* and the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Alonso 2008).

Chart 1. Repertoire of Mexican indigenous music

Musical piece	Description
Macochi pitentzin	Lullaby in Nahuatl
Xochipitzahua	Typical song of Veracruz in Nahuatl
Mu'k'ulil	Tzotzil typical song of Chiapas
Mani guixhi	Zapotec song performed by César Lopez
Teneboli	Song performed in the Sierra Tarahumara
<i>Flor de Capomo</i>	Typical sound song sung in the Yaqui language

Source: Own elaboration based on the phonographic archive of the CDI (2018).

Given this, the Movimiento Nacional por la Diversidad Cultural de México (2016) is pronounced to recognize that cultural diversity as a central element of social policies will favor the economic, social and human development of any community, as it is the main source of creativity, innovation, originality and exchange. Therefore, it encourages society as a whole to recognize and protect the cultural expressions of Mexico, as well as to join actions that promote appreciation and respect for the cultural diversity that characterizes each person, communities or peoples that make up the country.

Likewise, the Declaration of Santo Domingo for the Commemoration of the V Centennial of the Africans in America and Caribbean



(Programa de Africanía), from March 1501 to March 2001, involves three intercontinental projects –Africa, Europe and America– of the Slave Route (Ruta del Esclavo): 1. Program of education and teaching that includes the Transatlantic intercultural education of the Slave Route that was carried out between 1998 and 1999 in the American Virgin Islands (city of St. Croix), in France (city of Nantes) and in Ghana (City of Accra); 2. Program on the promotion of living cultures and artistic or spiritual expressions; Program on the memory of slavery and the diaspora, which consisted of the strengthening of cultural tourism on the Ruta del Esclavo and the creation of museums on slavery after its decree in 1995 (Martínez 2012).

In this regard, Thamarana (2015) points out that the central idea in postcolonial literature assumes as a common theme the cultural domain and, its result, racism. The deconstruction of narrative implies recognizing that colonialism –of England and Spain in America– transforms indigenous histories and the very conception of miscegenation. In this sense, postcolonial theories not only start from the decline of England’s post-World War II policy –from the stagnation of Spain or from the growing imperialism of the United States in the twentieth century–, but from the studies carried out by Frantz Fanon in 1961 it was pointed out that colonization brought with it a rupture of the colonized with their systems of reference and, therefore, a looting of cultural schemes. These studies identify the emotional, moral and attitudinal effects of colonization –and racism– on colonized societies –and on people of African descent, there are more than 200 million people of African descent in America–. While the beliefs, values or identity

cultural practices of the African slave are attacked, crushed and emptied of meaning.

On this subject, Chennells (1999) considers that it is necessary to discuss human agency from an alienated, split or degraded subject when being crossed by three historical events: slavery, colonialism and the South African Apartheid. A subject that is not recognized by the other but cannot recognize himself either. As an epistemological reference, from the history of African thought the vision of Sir Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) who was president of the Republic of Liberia is recovered and his policy opposed the interests of annexation of the British and the conversion policy from the African aborigines to Christianity, since he pointed out that this was based on a discourse of the moral, mental and physical inferiority of the Negro. Among its education policies is an Africanized curriculum, one of resistance thinking about the culturalization that had already reached African-American people at the end of the 19th century. As well as the vision of Sir Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), the first president of the Republic of Ghana, who declared himself anti-imperialist and promoted the freedom and unity of all African peoples under a pan-African approach. The above invites us to reflect that postcolonialism are multiple narratives of colonialism that respond to the current problems of Afro-descendant communities from the conjunctural, the recognition of diversity and complex thought, that is, not only from a homogenized position of imperialism, miscegenation or the African diaspora as they began postcolonial studies in the twentieth century (as cited in Devés-Valdés 2008).

Lephakga (2016) considers that the colonial system cannot be detached from the spoils

of humanity in Africa, the historical institutionalization of poverty and inequalities between blacks and whites, as well as the historical emancipation of the means of production in some African kingdoms – that ended in the black slave traffic–. This led to the forced dependence of the African slave to the desire of his colonizers for their own survival. It is worth mentioning that capitalism –even in its democratic and neoliberal phase– is based on the ownership of assets to participate in the economy, since they are dispossessed, people of African descent in Latin America cannot participate and are still excluded from public space. That is, they are forced to face impoverishment, unemployment, organized crime and violence that have a systematic, institutional or structural character in these national contexts. The naturalization and normalization in the narratives of people of African descent leads to their continuing to be exploited, repressed, oppressed and humiliated in various ways. Critically, the author and his co-authors consider that in Mexico the result of colonialism, ethnic-racial segregation and racial discrimination have impacted on corruption, *agandalle* –freeloader– or *guataquería* –flatterer– as forms of postcolonial subsistence in Mexican society.

Devés-Valdés (2008) mentions that along with the transatlantic traffic of black slaves in the 16th century, there were also free Africans who traveled to the New World in highly elitist conditions, since they were leaders of the free tribes on the Atlantic coast of Africa and they supported the interests of the English, Portuguese, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Belgian conquerors. The black landowners developed in the African communities the economy of the plantations based on the slavery of blacks, also, despite the abolition

of Portuguese slavery in 1876, the practice of forced paid work continued until the independence struggles since 1950 and the colonies African mostly achieved their independence until 1975. It should be mentioned that after the Latin American Independence, free African-Americans influenced ideologically African intellectual communities of the nineteenth century: Edward Wilmot Blyden, born in 1832 and Kawame Nkrumah, was born in 1909, who they imposed themselves as imitators of western values, ideas, norms, customs, interests and practices. Ayandele (1971 as cited in Devés-Valdés 2008) describes African politicians as deserters of a unique cultural heritage, since African writers denounce that the African political class was inclined towards the vision of modernity and scientific-technical progress of the USA.

Isik (2017) mentions that in the USA the black feminist theory considers that race, class, ethnicity, gender and oppression cannot be separated in feminist and postcolonial studies. This link has been defined as intersectionality and means that from the ethnoracial approach there is a difference between the feminism of black, indigenous and white women. Ethnicity is determined by cultural factors –nationality, language and culture– and race by physical characteristics –skin color, facial features and hair type–. So, the oppression implies any unjust situation where systematically and for a long period of time one group denies to another their rights of citizenship, self-determination and access to public resources. Among the recent problems of black feminism in Latin America is the historical study of the lack of openness that black women –and their descendant women– that arrived in America by the transatlantic slave trade had about their sexu-



ality, gender identity and recognition in the historical events that gave rise to the Revolution and conformation of the State in Modern Mexico.

Torfs (2016) argues that black women have been oppressed narratives. However, from the black feminist theory it is recognized that they face a double oppression –sexism and racism– from outside and inside the Afro-descendant community. In other words, black women have no allies of black men or white people. Although most black men are not in positions that allow them to exercise institutionalized patriarchal power and control over the lives of black women as privileged white men could/ can do in society, they take advantage of being men as an element of dominance to exert a large amount of power of coercion, sexual abuse and physical aggression on black women in everyday life. During the plantation economy, black women was considered themselves property and, therefore, without any rights. This meant that the sexual rape of black slave women was often unpunished, and it's claimed that they were promiscuous, sorceresses and with a disposition towards the seduction of the white man, for which, in his case, the sexual abuse never was not convicted (as cited in Isik 2017).

The Chicano feminist approach is used, which emerged in the struggles for civil rights of women in the sixties and seventies. Chicana feminists saw that historically white women had discriminated against them and that they still tolerated the oppression of racism. They noted that it was important to revive the revolutionary spirit of the Chicana and be more than white Anglo. Being, studying and learning from the African, Spanish and indigenous

roots. Thus, the problem of Afro-descendant women in Mexico assumes an ideological, political and strategic thought that responds to social struggles for the self-determination of Afro-Mexican identity in light of the laws of constitutional recognition. To this is added the use of the families and communities' categories used by the Chicano academic Enriqueta Longeaux and Vázquez to make visible that the intersectionality of gender from the ethnoracial perspective within the movement from Mexican-American families (Cacheux 2003).

Likewise, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015), at the headquarters of the city of New York, created the "Recordemos la Esclavitud" program in 2007 to honor the memory on March 25 of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. As well as organize throughout the year activities to revalue the African culture and to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudices of gender and skin color, among them: video-conferences, round tables, film projections, artistic exhibitions and information sessions for civil associations. It recognizes the multitude of enslaved women who suffered discrimination, sexual exploitation or torture, as well as women who fought for freedom and advocated the abolition of the laws of slavery. It is estimated that in the early sixteenth century and for 400 years one third of the more than 15 million people from Africa who came to the continent were enslaved women.

Chart 2. The abolition of slavery by countries

Year	Country	Year	Country	Year	Country
1761	Portugal	1826	Bolivia	1854	Venezuela
1766	Spain	1829	Mexico	1854	Peru
1792	Denmark	1833	British Empire	1865	EUA
1794	France	1833	Canada	1869	Paraguay
1807	England	1842	Uruguay	1873	Puerto Rico
1823	Chile	1851	Colombia	1886	Cuba
1824	Guatemala	1853	Argentina	1888	Brazil

Source: Ordered by the authors based on UNESCO (2015).

Serruya, et al. (2016) indicate that although slavery was formally prohibited in the 19th century, there are still regimes of labor exploitation –the violation of human rights, the deprivation of liberty, physical coercion, the obligation to speak in a language other than the mother tongue, the requirement to change religion, forced labor, debt bondage, illegal forms of subcontracting, forced prostitution, forced marriage, child labor, models of labor exploitation for poor families, trafficking in women for organized crime or drug trafficking, etc.– that researchers refer to as modern or contemporary slavery. In Latin America, slavery takes various forms and affects more than 1, 200, 000 people regardless of age, sex, skin color or nationality.

As a reflection, Martínez (2012) mentions that the slave trade lasted approximately 355 years and, according to De la Ronciere, the number of those who came to America is calculated on the 20 million African slaves and around 300 thousand Africans per month during the slave trade –about a one thousand dailies–. Slavery occurred in the so-called plantation economy in the Caribbean, Brazil and USA. However, the African slave was always a component not only physical, but also cultural. In this regard, Roger Bastide called the

black Americas to the cultures created by the Africans and conserved by their descendants. Which are reflected, for example: in the forms and musical techniques of African origin present in popular musical cultures and essential to give meaning or rhythm to community, social and religious activities. Nina Rodríguez in Brazil and Fernando Ortiz in Cuba are the first to recognize the musical legacy of African culture in America. The issue is relevant in Mexico because, according to the Intercensal Survey of INEGI (2015), there are currently more than 1, 381,853 people who are recognized as Afro-descendants.

Methodology

This proposal assumes a methodological approach based on documentary research in which the African identity in Mexico is problematized. Del Rincón, Arnal, Latorre and Sans (1995) argue that document analysis is a retrospective and referential source of information about a specific situation, phenomenon or program.

According to the proposal of Massot, Dorio and Sabariego (2004), the documentary analysis strategy was developed in four stages: 1. The tracking of documents on Africanity and slav-



ery in Mexico; 2. The recovery of the inventory of artistic heritage of African origin in Mexico; 3. In-depth review of the content of the selected documents; 4. Crossed and comparative reading of the documents in question to give meaning to the historical legacies and the erasure of Afro-descendant women in the artistic heritage of the north of the country.

The research is based on the qualitative research method, and is supported by 10 interviews with Afro-descendant women in municipalities of the northwest region of the state of Chihuahua. The interview technique was based on a script of open questions with greater weight in the possibility of recording information in the form of conversations and short answers to the research problem. The unstructured interview is assumed to be frequent in gender studies. This interview allowed us to describe how and why Afro-Mexican women play a central role in the dissemination of Afro-Latin artistic expression: dances, manufacture of musical instruments, clothing and accessories used in celebration dances and carnivals.

The women who participated in the interviews were selected from an exploration carried out by the author and the coauthors in 2018 to describe the sociodemographic composition of the northwest region of the state of Chihuahua, in the municipalities of Ascensión, Nuevo Casas Grandes, Madera and Moris. It was established in these four municipalities the presence of a community of Afro-Chihuahuan people made up of 20 families that bring together 128 people (71 women and 57 men) who consider themselves as dark or dark, who despite accepting that their Skin color may have African descent, they do not know the African culture, the laws and the opportunities

that lie behind the institutional recognition of Afro-Mexican communities.

The condition of life of women in Afro-Mexican communities

Mexico is legally a multicultural country since 1990; however, the recognition of the rights of the Afro-Mexican population is reaffirmed in 2013 after the General Assembly of the United Nations declared the Decade of the Afro-descendant Population, which began in 2014 to conclude in 2024, under the slogan Recognition, justice and development. In Mexico, the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI) states that the municipality of Acapulco has the largest presence of Afro-Mexican communities in the state of Guerrero. Thus, the African culture in Mexico assumes the ship as a representative image, since it is an element that allows the arrival of Africans to the country to materialize. Also, the ship acts as a link between a territory outside of Mexico, a specific trajectory from African to enslaved subject, as well as a precedent in its participation in the formation of Latin American nations with an economic system of plantations (Mvengou 2016).

In studies on the new cultural patterns of the Afro-descendant population is focus on recognizing the difference and diversity of populations of African origin in Mexico. Also, an interest is assumed for the claim of the afrodescendants from the contemporary political, cultural and social aspects. These studies affirm that the Afro-descendant identity changes historically from the cultural perspective that is assumed, also, of the recognition policies implemented by the state governments to mark frontiers between the Afro-Mexican identity in front of the organized indigenous peoples

and the recognition of mestizo groups within each federal entity as described by Velázquez and Iturralde (2016).

Ciaramitaro and Reyes (2017) argue that studies on the presence of people of African descent in Mexico position the state of Veracruz on the international stage in comparison with people of African descent in the Caribbean—along with Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and other countries—. Recently, the significant presence of Afro-Mexicans in the north of the state of Coahuila and on the Costa Grande of the state of Guerrero is evident. The invisibility of the third origin can be explained because the formation of the (pre) national state eliminated the hierarchy of the caste system by means of the *ius sanguinis*—the right of blood— and in the *ius soli*—the right to land— of the offspring born in Mexico or of Mexican parents. The transition from the plantation economy to the national industry implied categories of integration, unity and belonging, the Afro-descendant ceased to be a passenger outsider to be an integrated Afro-mestizo citizen.

Only in this way, the Mexican State will be recognized as multi-ethnic by assuming the construction of a plural society that defends the different forms of coexistence, social justice and promotes cultural diversity. In Latin America, it is estimated that the Afro-descendant population represents 23 percent, that is, some 120 million people of African descent. In Brazil they represent 45 percent of the national population—about 76 million people according to the 2000 census—. While, in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Honduras do not exceed five percent. In Colombia they constitute 10.6 percent of the national population—equivalent

to 4,311, 757 people—. In Mexico there are around one million 400 thousand people who self-identified as Afro-descendants—705,000 are women—. In Mexico City 1.8 percent of the population is Afro-descendant—160, 353 people, of which 10 percent are not born in Mexico— (Rivera 2010).

Ribeiro (2008) consider that in Latin America the indigenous population reaches 40 million people distributed in different ethnic groups and cultures, with greater weight in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. The Afro-descendant population is approximately 150 million and is mainly concentrated in Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. Also, it considers that the Afro-descendant and indigenous population are the social groups that suffer most from economic, educational, cultural and gender inequalities, however, black and indigenous women are the poorest of the poor. This highlights a macro-structural sedimentation of racial discrimination, whose solution is a priority within the agenda of feminist movements and, especially, of Afro-descendant communities in Latin America. Thus, in gender studies, highlights the work of the Simone de Beauvoir A.C. Leadership Institute, which recognizes and promotes the professional development of Afro-Mexican women leaders since 2015 with the support of the seed fund for professional studies (as cited in Rivera 2010).

Fernández and Melesio (2016) mentioned that the processes of recognition of identities between people of African descent are unequal in the social and geographical space of the country. The lack of recognition leads to the segregation of the Afro-descendant population as resident mainly in eight states



of the country (Intercensal Survey of INEGI, 2015): State of Mexico (1.88%), Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave (3.28%), Guerrero (6.5%), Oaxaca (4.95%), Mexico City (1.8%), Nuevo León (1.49%), Jalisco (0.78%) and Baja California Sur (1.55%). Also, in some states, such as Coahuila de Zaragoza (0.09%) are the black *mascogos* who were slave slaves who escaped in 1829 from the USA to take refuge in the *Simanol* indigenous group in El Nacimiento, Coah. And in the state of Chihuahua (0.08%) the referred persons –with a racist charge– as *prietos* are located in some agricultural and mining localities of the Sierra Tarahumara or the northwest region of the entity, these communities have their origin in about one thousand enslaved Africans who arrived in the mines of Hidalgo del Parral and others in the Mexican ignimbrite belt of the Sierra Madre Occidental.

Also, Orozco (2007) mentions that the general history of Chihuahua in the eighteenth century often states that the entity was formed after the independence of the Spanish rule in 1810, considering as historical moment 1821 with the figure of Governor and his military command, prior to the ratification of the city in 1823. However, the resistance Indians, Apaches and Comanches in the seventeenth century delayed the founding of the capital Chihuahua and subsequent uprisings prevented until 1880 the founding of new settlements in the northwest region of Chihuahua.

Orozco (2007) mentions that under the argument of avoiding ethno-racial discrimination and also facilitating the whitening of the Villa de San Felipe El Real de Chihuahua, the Creole parish priests pointed to the *mulattos*, Indians and other racial mixtures as Span-

iards or *mestizos*. Thus, identifying a greater relative proportion of Spaniards or *mestizos* in the state of Chihuahua than in Mexico City. Despite the racial litigation, most of the defendants received a royal decree in which the phrase “*téngasele por blanco*” was established. It should be mentioned that, according to data from the Franciscan Archive kept in the Biblioteca Nacional, between 1813 and 1820 the Intendancy of Durango reached 187 390 inhabitants, 66 percent –124 003 inhabitants– resided in 23 towns that make up the current territory of Durango and The remaining 34% –63 387 inhabitants– are found in 19 villages of the Chihuahua territory.

The foregoing shows miscegenation of the population and the disappearance of the African root of the town of Chihuahua. By 2018, it is documented by the author and the co-author that in the northwest region of the state of Chihuahua –in the municipalities of Ascensión, Nuevo Casas Grandes, Madera and Morris–, there is a community of Afro-Chihuahua people made up of 20 families that together 128 people¹ –71 women and 57 men– who consider themselves to be dark or brown, who despite accepting that their skin color may

1 It should be noted that these 20 families are mainly engaged in temporary agriculture, mining, the sale of firewood and *ranchería*. During the informal conversation men do not recognize themselves as blacks, but, assume a *moreno* skin color or *prieto*, assume a Cowboy tradition in dressage and horse breeding. Women do not identify themselves as black either; they dedicate themselves to domestic tasks, the sale of groceries in the mines and field work. This corresponds to the economic activities of the state of Chihuahua; the entity has the third place in the mining production of the country. The mining companies of the municipalities of the northwest region of the state –Ascensión and Morris– and of the Sierra Tarahumara –Guadalupe and Calvo, Hidalgo del Parral, Matamoros and Cusihiuriachi– are among the corporations with the highest production of gold, silver, lead, zinc, caolon, dolomite, slate, copper and barite throughout the country. While the municipality of Madera founded in 1906 in the northwest region of the entity has been the main area of sawmills and, therefore, concentrates the largest forest exploitation (as cited in Clúster Minero de Chihuahua 2018).

have African descent, do not know the African culture, the laws and the opportunities behind the institutional recognition of Afro-Mexican communities. According to the INEGI (2017) in the state of Chihuahua there are around 2 738 people of African descent that correspond to 0.08 percent of the Afro-Mexican population in the country.

Some women interviewed said about the right to education that "(...) in the community we believe that anyone regardless of gender, age, skin color or schooling, has something to say or contribute, and should be able to study". In contrast, it is recognized that "(...) here live talented women, who are listened to and we try to pay attention to them, because finally the intelligence is not only of the girls –white-skinned women–, fortunately, the prietas women are also born with talent and when we do not have the possibility of studying more, of going to the universities, then, we must try to develop ourselves in the own community". Another woman added "(...) due to lack of studies –and poverty– there is not even thought of traveling to enter the university, besides, access is not provided without the high school certificate".

Regarding racism, an Afro-Mexican woman says "(...) to see beyond my skin color I could realize that I am full of history and culture, of my own struggles for political recognition, to exist and demand that our spiritual expressions and cultural ones are respected as part of the national history". Also, an Afro-Mexican woman said "(...) we are fighters for the rights to belong and be recognized in the country's history and culture. We come across feminism and we struggle from everything we now become aware of we met Dr. Angela Yes-

enia Olaya Requene in the south of the México with the creation of the Escuela Itinerante para la Formación Permanente de Mujeres Afromexicanas and under this pedagogical proposal we educate other Afro-Mexican women in various topics, such as: Human Rights, Gender Perspective, Identities, Interculturality, Ancestry, Territory, Voices and Life Paths".

A woman of African descent says that "(...) some state agencies support very poor families with money due to poverty, sometimes they have paid for the purchase of fabrics for making costumes and buying instruments for musicians and so we can do the traditional festivities, but most of the support goes to the indigenous families, where in their communities they always give money for their parties, there is money for the cultural houses-museums and they have shelters to support those who do not have a place to live". Another woman said "(...) obviously it feels nice to have our parties. From childhood are the men who play the melodies and are also the ones who dance the main Afromexican dances. The women are who support the making of masks and also the preparation of the food that serves to end the party. We can only dance in Artesa's Fandango, in this the women wear a typical lack and we arrange ourselves because there is always a bigger celebration, like: a wedding".

There is a concern of Afro-descendant women for the preservation of African culture, a woman points out that "(...) everything is running out, I do not know what is going to happen with our music and dances, there are no job opportunities here and many young people are leaving the community to go to the USA". In this sense, another woman of African descent added that "(...) sometimes they make



us fines to take away the money. The justification has been for selling our crafts informally, grabbing wood or stones from the desert with which we can work, hunting animals and even fishing in the rivers. Here it is very cold in winter and they do not let us get wood freely. We do not have the opportunity to work freely". She also pointed out that "(...) since I was little, I learned how to make maracas and drums with deer skin, and there are other women here in the community who work in the making of dresses, accessories and headdresses for traditional dances and festivals".

With reference to working conditions, another Afro-descendant woman pointed out "(...) there are difficulties in preserving our traditions, many have been lost, poverty forces us to look outside for work in whatever. Many people could not support themselves here, left their homes and migrated to the USA to work in the agriculture. Others have found work in sawmills, crops and mining here in Chihuahua, all that produce the people is sent to the USA, where the owners earn many dollars. These jobs do not give much money for our people and it takes a lot of time. That is why we neglect the family and traditions of our community".

In this sense, "(...) for us, working in agriculture and fishing is fun, but our communities have a crisis due to the water of the rivers. We believe that the Mexican government does not support us with providing us with land ownership or with the construction of wells or dams that allow us to be self-sufficient, if they supported us to cultivate and raise animals, we would have money to do our traditional festivities and not lose our roots" and "(...) I think that the Mexican women in this region of the state of Chihuahua do not consider ourselves

like Afro-Chihuahua women. Most of us assume ourselves as mestizas and have done little to preserve the African culture. Here in the region where we participate the most is in the church, some of us sing and support by preparing food during some traditional festivals".

In this regard, Mvengou (2016) mention that the exclusion of Afro-Mexican women and men in the narrative of Colonial History, Independence, Mexican Revolution and Contemporary Life is the result of an imaginary of a mestizo Mexican national subject, that is, of a cultural and biological miscegenation between Indians and Spaniards that does not consider the African. This exclusion of people of African descent in the stories about the formation of the Nation-State is due to a blindness and lack of interest at the political level to include them in the historical processes that the country went through. This since 2015 tries to be finished through the constitutional recognition of the Afro-descendant communities in the Republic and in some federal entities –Ciudad de México, Veracruz, Guerrero and Oaxaca–.

Navarro, Pedroza and Torres (2016) interviewed black people born in Mexico who, despite matching their skin color and curly hair, did not feel they belonged to a community. Nor were they aware of owning an ethnic identity of their own. In his interviews he highlighted Hilda's, who points out that "(...) we reneged on our origin due to ignorance; At school we do not teach about the African people that came to populate part of the continent, they only spoke about the Aztecs, Mayans, Mexicas, of great indigenous cultures. Blacks did not exist; they had not named us" (p 12), and, contempt for the Afro-descendant community

can be seen even in the phrase pronounced as a reaction to the immigration policies in the USA in 2005 by the former president of the Republic, Vicente Fox Quesada (2000-2006) "(...) Mexicans are doing jobs that not even blacks want to do". The foregoing evidences that when it comes to the recognition policies of Afro-descendants, one often thinks of the USA and the term African-American.

Rivera (2010) argues that the Afro-Mexican community is not only affected by racial discrimination, but that there is a complex network of intersections formed by discrimination based on gender stereotypes, place of origin, physical appearance or social class. So it is necessary to consider the ethnoracial perspective within the intersectionality of gender. Afro-descendant women face double discrimination in the work market. Compared to mestizo women, Afro-descendant women have higher unemployment rates; their salaries are significantly lower –even with the same level of education– and are overrepresented in the most precarious and informal forms of work.

Ma. Elisa Velázquez points out that the term *Afromexicano* refers to Mexican citizens who have ancestry of Africans and / or heirs of the cultural heritage of Africa. In Mexico, the most well-known Afro-descendant settlements are in the Costa Chica region between the State of Guerrero and the State of Oaxaca, in the Central-Gulf region of the State of Veracruz, the Tierra Caliente region of the State of Michoacán, the Altos region and the Isthmus Costa in the State of Chiapas and the State of Quintana Roo. From several interviews with Afromexican women and men, with women representatives of the Consultative Council of the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de

los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI) and singer Alejandra Robles, the current exponent of Afro-mexican music, who agree on the need to have an exaltation of the African cultural heritage, the fulfillment of their rights and, above all, the constitutional recognition of the Afromexican peoples in the groups ethnic groups that make up the country (as cited in García 2015).

To date, it is necessary to expand the public policies of recognition of the Afromexican community –dependencies, programs, affirmative action's, laws, etc.–. The civil associations that have assumed this task are in Oaxaca, Guerrero and Veracruz. They are in a stage of diffusion of the rights of the afrodescendant population, encounter with the afromexican women and the men for the incorporation of new demands –for example, the blackfilia and the blackphobia– and the integration of the different groups in a common front. Another important element that distinguishes the recognition of the Afromexican community with respect to national identity is the artistic expressiveness of popular culture, e.g., the *Fandango de Artesa* –it is a zapateado dance– that women and men do on a box that also can be accompanied by musical instruments: violin, charrasca and one or two voices. This Son is traditional to the Afromexican community in the Costa Chica in Cuajinicuilapa, Guerrero (Navarro, Pedroza and Torres 2016).

The anchors of the identity and cultural heritage of the Afro-Mexican communities

The history of African culture in America is a story that raised its voice and showed the daily lives of African slaves through music, songs, dances, painting and other manifestations that gave them a way to resist oppres-



sion. The Spanish painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618-1682) had a black slave named Juan, who possibly inspired him despite not being common or relevant to paint slaves, it is believed that little Juan could have appeared in the work painted in 1670 "Tres muchachos". Where appears a black boy with a pitcher on his shoulder who stops in front of two Spanish boys who are about to eat a cake, and it seems that one of them tries to hide it from the black boy (Vila de Prado 2017).

Since the recognition of colonial culinary art, Ciaramitaro and Reyes (2017) point out those African slave women worked in the kitchen of dishes representative of Spanish cuisine within the estates and houses of their masters. It was forbidden to follow a preparation different from traditional Spanish cuisine, because the white women of Spain believed that black slave women were immoral, immodest, dirty, witches or sorceresses. However, this did not affect the African women slaves having a unique and outstanding participation in the preparation of food within the kitchen of New Spain –the rice with beans in *congrí*, the bean stew, the fried foods, the pork loin, among others–. Among the contributions of African women to the typical food of the state of Chihuahua are the pumpkins with green chile and cheese, also, the beef broth with pumpkin and other vegetables.

It will be necessary to indicate that there is a transition from the identity founded on *mestizaje* to an identity based on cultural diversity, because the myth of the pre-Hispanic indigenous past cannot be the only reference of the Mexican identity –not Latino, Caribbean or Hispanic–, which later became an integrationist and nationalist conception synthe-

sized in the formula "(...) a nation, a culture". Slajov Zizek points out that each culture has a blind spot where it will not be able to capture or identify itself, and when society becomes aware of this point, it is possible to understand culture in the fullest way (as cited in Machuca 2008).

Wortman (2017) points out those cultural studies have influenced the growth of know-how about culture that in turn provoked what is now called cultural management. This is confined to the intervening State and social groups, communities and civil associations that are strengthened from the autonomous production of a cultural asset –such as music, theater, dance, circus, etc.–. The artist not only stands out for his talent or creativity in isolation but must learn together with others a series of skills to organize a project, find a space, promote it and generate an artistic event. In this sense, cultural policies in Latin America are often driven by the community of amateur artists or by artistic companies of any size –big or small–, which constitutes the symbolic dimension of public policies and their assumed strategy of inclusion social or democratization of the arts in social sectors that were historically displaced or were scarcely involved for various reasons until the end of the 20th century.

In this regard, each country in the world has a shared history and a broad and diverse cultural heritage that belongs to everyone and at the same time gives each one its own national identity. Therefore, the main task of cultural management is to preserve this heritage and diversity. Around the world, universities have acquired an important role in attracting, developing and retaining talent, as well as Developing Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI)

by contributing to the formation of publics needed to support local artists or groups. For example, in Argentina, the national program Puntos de Cultura has been one of the cultural policies implemented since 2011 that served to form a Red Nacional de Organizaciones Culturales that promoted social inclusion, local identity and regional development throughout the country with the support of the Argentine arts, among these: tango as a dance and unique musical style (Wortman 2017).

In the international context, the CCI are defined as cycles of three phrases: creation, production and distribution of products. The same ones that use intellectual capital –knowledge derived from scientific research–, the digital economy –the application of digital technologies in CCI– and creativity –an artistic component of creative social classes: designers, artists, writers, producers, etc.– as primary inputs. The meeting places of these ICC are the stage in concerts, competitions, festivals, workshops or educational programs in schools and universities. While they generate cultural value and project the identity of a nation and impact the economy through marketable products and the indirect costs of tourism. Among these are the musical, dance and circus industries. Since these are the best examples of inclusion and occupation for youth in Latin America. As well as the application of digital technologies during the three phases mentioned above. Cuba is known as the island of music and several of its artistic products have been contributions and unobjectionable part of the universal culture. It has its main strength in the creators, which is also expressed in the formation of youth in the movement of amateur artists, deploying new forms and ways of expression in all manifestations of art. Within the framework of this

fact it can be pointed out that, with a state allocation in the order of 4.2 percent of the current expenditure of the Cuban State, the island recovered the appointment of the Province of Matanzas as the Athens of Cuba that had been granted by the dynamics of artists dedicated to international entertainment around the 19th century (ONUDI 2017).

The Secretaría de Cultura del Gobierno de México (2016) has as its fundamental task the development of a broad strategy to promote, disseminate and bring closer cultural activities and the work of artists and creators to the population. This cultural action contributes in a perspective of intersecretarial work with cross-cutting actions to support the reconstitution of the social fabric through cultural animation, participation, the creative use of free time and the recovery of public spaces for coexistence. Among these actions, highlights are the project “Alas y Raíces” of the Coordinación Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural Infantil (CNDICI) in the 32 states, carrying out 29,554 cultural activities in 632 municipalities of the country, including: fairs, festivals, meetings and caravans; film, theater, music and dance performances; oral narrations, storytelling and readings aloud; and creative workshops corresponding to different artistic disciplines or cultural heritage; More than one million infants and adolescents participated. In the state of Chihuahua highlights the Feria Infantil y Juvenil de Arte y Ciencia by the Instituto Chihuahuense de la Cultura, which had the purpose of encouraging culture and the arts through the enjoyment of music, dance, circus, poetry, literature and cinema through free workshops.

In this regard, highlight the funding of the Support Program for Professional Artistic Performing Arts Groups with the call Mexico in



Scene, which aimed to promote the continuity of quality cultural projects, stimulate the artistic and administrative autonomy of professional performing arts groups and encourage the consolidation of their artistic profile and their own language. As well as developing technology platforms for access and dissemination of cultural heritage. The wide range of Mexico's sound heritage is disseminated by the Fonoteca Nacional, which currently recognizes them as the historical memory of the Nation-State and one of the main links with its culture and history. They are also a key tool in educational processes and for the construction of knowledge and cultural identities in each country. It offers consultation of sound and audiovisual patrimony of ephemeris, festivals, concerts, etc. There is also the Ibero-American Academic Program of master's degree in Sound and Audiovisual Heritage (Secretaría de Cultura 2016).

Pulido (2017) mentions that the Danzon was introduced by Cuban theater dancers since the end of the 19th century in the cities of Mérida, the state of Yucatán and in the Port of Veracruz, state of Veracruz. The exchange and the migration of Cuban musicians and dancers have been present in the conformation of the history of Danzon in Mexico. Along with the danzon, the Afro-Cuban genres also come: rumba, conga, mambo and chachachá. As antecedent of these Cuban musical proposals previously, in 1796, the Chuchumbé dance that succeeded in the Port of Veracruz arrived in boats from Havana, Cuba, but it was prohibited by the Court of the Holy Inquisition for being a lascivious, vulgar dance and immoral. In this regard, Figueroa (2017) points out that the African presence in Mexico left through the exchange between the black, in-

digenous and Spanish artists various elements of Mexican folk music, among them: the subdivision schemes, the African musical instruments –from the bongos or maracas up to the box of the Son of Artesa, the marimbol, the marimba or the boat–, the use of the question-answer, as well as the extensive use of syncopation and anacrusas.

There are also rhythmic and sensual rhythms. The son of Chuchumbé belongs to Son Jarcho of the State of Veracruz, popularized since the second half of the 18th century. In 1766 Fray Nicolás Montero of the Order of Mercy denounced this Son and dance to the Inquisition of Mexico for considering him dishonest and a bad example. The direct antecedent of Son del Chuchumbé is on the island of Cuba with sexual movements in which reference is made to the sexual act and the penis, as well as to the criticism of the values established by the Catholic Church. It maintains music and lyrics that denotes a sexual character and a criticism of the clergy's control over sexuality. The text stands out: On the corner stands a friar of La Merced with the raised habits teaching the chuchumbé (as cited in Figueroa 2017).

During the 19th century, the Caribbean influence in Mexico crystallized in the music and dance of Havana that was appropriated and developed by Mexican and even Puerto Rican composers. Among these, are: the violinist Felipe Villanueva in 1876. Also, the danzon was another musical style and dance that began in the city of Matanzas, Cuba, by the musician Miguel Faílde in 1879. The danzon is performed with the French brass band, which its sound in a section of strings that accompany a solo flute. The same happened with the danzónete, the chachachá –in this genre the Mexican group Batachá stood out in 1953– and the Cu-

ban mambo. Stand out in 1950 the Veracruz musician Guillermo Salamanca, who was author of the Rumbambo, Mambo number 5, the Bodeguero and Serenata guajira. One thinks that in this same year the yucateco musician José Jacinto Cuevas interpreted the first scores of the Cuban danzon still with a similarity to the Franco-Haitian-Cuban contradanza. During the first half of the twentieth century, the singer from Veracruz with Haitian descent María Antonia del Carmen Peregrino known as "Toña la Negra" played and popularized the tropical songs of the Mexican composer Agustín Lara and two songs with the Sonora Matancera in 1974. the Pregoneros del Recuerdo group excels the musician from Veracruz, Carlos Pitalúa, who is also a clarinetist, saxophonist and arranger of the orchestras "Nuevo Ritmo", "Manuel Acuña" and "Villa del Mar" (Figueroa 2017).

In the American context, the guitarist Miguel Santiago Arévalo, from the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco, and resident in Los Angeles, State of California in the United States, who composed in 1880 several sones, syrups and huapangos. The most famous is the dance known as "La súplica" (Figueroa 2017). In this same scenario a musical style called pachucos or zoot suits was developed that combined the swing with the mambo, the rumba and the danzon. This style is perhaps the one that had the greatest impact in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state, Mexico. His exponent was the actor, dancer and comedian Germán Genaro Cipriano Gómez Valdés Castillo better known as Tin-Tan, whose character pachuco –this word refers to the nahuatl pachocan which means place where he governs, and which is related to be the leader or owner of a brothel, cabaret, casino or from the neighborhood– he was one

of the most successful Mexican characters in the United States and Latin America.

All these elements make up what is now known as Afro-Mexican music and what is present in Mexico in the Afro-Hispanic musical heritage of the Antilles or the Caribbean islands –Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, among others–. Above all, by the exchange of music teachers, singers and musicians of African descent who worked continuously in the country Mexico City, the city of Cancun and the city of Veracruz have maintained a constant exchange with Afro-descendant's musicians and dancers from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Venezuela.

Añorve (2015) argues that Afro-Mexican music includes a specific repertoire of the artistic expression of the Costachican communities, among them: the coastal bolero, the cumbia, the corrido and the chilean. It excels the rhythm of the dance percussed with the feet in the dances, the verbal expressions that accompany and the exaltation of the values and emotions linked to the cattle –the bull, horse, cow, bison, donkey and the ox–, the satire on the sexuality or the characteristics of the exotic animals –tortoise, jaguars and leopards–, such as: aggressiveness, strength, ecstasy, color, sensuality, mysticism and even comedy expressed through music and dance. Also, in the country the African influence is directly on the traditional and indirectly and under a contemporary position in the blues or Mexican jazz. These genres that are characterized by a sense of touch from Africa to America can be found in some Mexican musicians in a nuanced way, never transcended due to the success of rock and roll, to the socioeconomic problems of governments in the sixties and seventies, as



well as the little diversification of cultural industries in the country.

Ruiz (2011) points out that the Fandango of Artesa according to Amado del Valle's chronicle entitled "Velorio Costeño" was still played in 1877 and the use of a percussed tray is mentioned to accompany the violin and the guitar on one occasion to watch over a deceased child. Also, the use of the wooden box, which is a zoomorphic platform that is given the name of Artesa having engraved on its ends the shape of the head and tail of a horse, bull or cow. And it is one of the most important fandangueras traditions in Mexico. This was often used at weddings and festivities for Santiago Apóstol, a saint on horseback linked to livestock in the middle of the 19th century. Among the original instruments are the violins –from the corduroy lauded rubbish–, the jarana –lute guitarist punctate / strummed like the guitar– and the drawer –diophone struck by two drummers with their hands and by a group of dancers who use their feet–. They have in their right hands a cylindrical stick –like a drumstick– to strike repetitive rhythms accompanied by percussions with their palm and fingers of the left hand, alternating in this way serious and acute sounds.

In the Fandango of Artesa the musician Efrén Mayren stands out, who preserved this tradition now recognizing that it is one of the African musical inheritances originating from the Colonial Period, the proximity with the sea makes the waves an important element. In the ceremonies a rectangular box of great dimension is constructed for the "Soles de Artesa o de Parota" trough ornamented by an animal figure carved in one of its ends and with a hole in one of its sides to burst fireworks. The woman,

the women or the woman-man couple dance freely and tap on the box while musicians beat rhythmically on the wooden box. These incessant percussions are made with drumsticks followed by a blow with the hands. As well as the zapateado of the dancer. It is accompanied by popular songs in stanzas about facts of daily life and other improvised according to the reason for the celebration to the sound of trough interpreted by men, while the participation of women is highlighted only in the dance. The music has a strophic structure since everything is sung and there are no instrumental pieces. Also, the song is composed of couplets in octosyllabic quatrains of consonant rhyme in the even verses (Pintado de Wit 1992; SIC 2018a).

It is worth mentioning that this type of dance is like the confederation of Senegambia that includes the territories of Senegal and the Gambia in West Africa –these territories were an important source of extraction of Africans by the European slave trade in the sixteenth century as documented by Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán for 1553 there were some 20,000 Senegalese Africans and this monopoly remained until 1580–. Other instruments used in the Costa Chica that are also used in Africa are the tambopated harp, the strumming of the jaranas and the percussion of the donkey or horse's jaw. As well as the harp kora of the mandinka –it is an instrument of 20 or 21 strings that is a mixture between weapon and African lute that uses calabash as a sounding board– and the harp esimbin –which is of great dimension with four to six strings that they are played by another musician creating diverse contrarritmos mexicanos which translate into variations of the melodies– that belong to the type of felupes and mandigas manufactured by African slaves during the colonial era (Ruiz 2011).

It also highlights the “Danza de la tortuga” in which an Afro-descendant wears a turtle costume and several black women dance around wearing a colorful dress and wearing masks (Galaviz 2017). On the other hand, highlights the “Baile de los hombres endiablados” or also known as “El juego de los diablos” performed by men in whom they use masks that symbolize demons made with long black ears, red horns, and beards with tails of donkeys and horses, as well as loose animal skin pants. This is the figure of the mother of the devils who carries a doll, with a fault and covers her head with a rebozo. In which stands out music with violin and donkey jaw called charrasca. This dance is part of the Costa Chica of the national holiday of the Day of the Dead held on November 01 and 02 of each year. This dance takes place with the maroons who revolted to slavery. The dance is standing percussing with the feet, at the time that they are inclining and until using the low space with falls, pirouettes or landslides. The devil is not conceived as bad or good, he is the one who takes care of cattle, he is conceived as an African who inhabits caves and mountains, and he owns cows, goats and poisonous animals. These demons recognize themselves as black and for them being black are of great virtue, they often sing: “(...) mañana me voy Zamora! ¿Zamora me iras a ver? No me despido de ti, porque me voy a enternecer. Ya se van los diablos caramba, ya se van pal’ huerto, diciendo que vivan caramba, toditas las muertes”; translated as, “(...) tomorrow I’m going Zamora! Zamora, will you see me? I do not say goodbye to you, because I’m going to be touched. The devils are already gone, dear; they are already going to the orchard, telling them to live in peace, all the deaths” (Pintado de Wit 1992).

The SIC (2018b) takes inventory of the musical styles of the coast, among these are: sones, chilenas –this string instrument and wind instruments originates from the Chilean sailors who arrived at the ports of Guerrero and Oaxaca in the 19th century, those who sang played and sang verses that could have a double meaning or sexual charge, or simply be dedicated to a love, for example: “(...) ¿Eres cubana? No soy cubana. ¿Eres jarocho? No soy jarocho. ¿Qué quiere ser mi mai? Soy mariposa”; translated as, “(...) Are you Cuban? I’m not Cuban. Are you jarocho? I’m not jarocho. What does my mai want to be? I am a butterfly”. And cumbias that are melodies sung to make the desired woman fall in love with a serenade and were also known as Colombianos or Habaneras. Thus, the musician Tiburcio Noyola from the Costa Chica participated in the Group Son de Artesa and is National Prize of Sciences and Arts 2001 in the category of Art and Popular Cultures. One of the most important groupings of the Costa Chica Region was Los Gallardo de Cruz Grande. The musical instruments played are: jarana, guitar, harp and tapeo box. The coastal jarana is very similar to a sixth guitar, only smaller and eight strings in four double orders, its manufacture takes place in the port of Acapulco. The harp that used to be played frequently is nowadays not easily built or found in Mexico. The harp he uses today is of Jarocho origin. The tapeo box is struck with the palm of the right hand and a small piece of wood in the left hand.

It should be noted that the integration –and, therefore, the miscegenation– of the African or Afro-descendant population into colonial society –Europeans, peninsular and Indians– fostered a process of transculturation. This does not correspond to the sum of the char-



acteristics of one or another culture, but as a framework of customs, language and other cultural products that are nourished by their own roots. The African-American culture has three characteristics, according to UNESCO (1997): 1. The preservation of religious beliefs with a great influence on personal identity, modes of conduct and daily practice; 2. Creole folklore based on the new reality that surrounds the life of the slave: the plantation, the suffering, the submission to the authority of the master, the abolition of slavery and the right to freedom; 3. The selection of forms of oral expression, as well as manifestations of music, dance and aesthetic values of blacks –for example: carnivals in Brazil, Cuba and Mexico– that were adopted in non-African societies to establish a kind of blackness.

Pintado de Wit (1992) mentions that in Mexico black slaves were dedicated to the taming of horses and livestock. It should be mentioned that *la morenía*, a term that also refers to the African population, brought with it its cultural practices that merged with music and dance in the Columbian fiestas. Between the characteristics of these celebrations or carnivals, they emphasize: the use of swords with its sound in fight to simulate the Conquest; the use of feathers and animal skins in the locker room, masks and tufts; the handling of string instruments –the violin–, of percussion –bongos, charrasca, maracas, etc.– and of wind –the flute or the trumpet–; the symbology of the catholic religion –the cross, the rebozo, etc.; Another expressive resource was the drawings painted or embroidered in the costumes that represented stories of tragedy or exaltation. Violin music is related to the declamation and staging of slavery, the miscegenation with Spaniards and Indians, as well as the festival

of the bull of cloth that refers to the black as a cowboy. The dance also makes representation of the hunt as the “Danza de los Tejones” in which he tries to put a bell to a tiger represented by a dancer who makes sounds while the black hunters dance with rattles and maracas. There are also Afro-descendants who now belong to the Mixteco groups of the Costa Chica region between the state of Guerrero and the state of Oaxaca. The above is a central element to understand the *afromestizaje* of the Afro-mexican communities.

Some *prietas* women belonging to the Afro-mexican families in the northwest region of the state of Chihuahua work as artists, dancers, singers, percussionists, designers, dressmaker and choirs in churches and temples. They consider it important to preserve both traditional African dances and their adaptations to other celebrations such as the Carnivals. One of them considers those small neighborhoods presentations are made that are not documented by the government.

Medina (2011) defines the carnival as a popular festival with a symbolic character that helps to signify time and demarcate the space between daily work and festive moments. Carnival is the celebration of joy, comedy and sarcasm against the supreme instances of truth and universal order; against the powerful and the established order; against the world of money and etiquette; against the productivity and profitability of capital. Also, the carnival is a collective practice of appropriation of public space. It is in essence a popular and universal event in which everyone can participate and get in contact freely and spontaneously. The carnival does not know the theater’s limelight or the closed spaces that separate the actor / actress from the spectator. Since it is a popu-

lar event with free access in which the spontaneous actions are enjoyed and valued among those who participate throughout the parade or event. It is even important that those who participate become dissociated from their personal identity in order to assume a new subjectivity of their other self, as well as their other body and other bodily actions that they can seldom freely assume.

The website *Arte y Historia de México* (2018) mention that the carnival derives from the Greco-Roman word *carnavale*, which means "adiós a la carne". Carnivals are one of the most symbolic traditions from medieval Europe, came to New Spain in the sixteenth century and are a space characterized by dance, music, games, masks and the comic representation of everyday life. In Mexico, carnivals are common from Lent –precisely one day before Ash Wednesday– and coincide with the agricultural cycle starting in March, which will end 40 days before Palm Sunday. It highlights the possibility that people have to change their personality through a disguise, poetry, singing and dances that satirize some facet of everyday life. Carnivals should be considered separately from the prehispanic rituals inherited by the Aztecs and other indigenous peoples. Since these are rituals that were practiced at the request of the Goddess of Fertility in dates close to the spring equinox. While the carnival represents a space of enjoyment, food and drink.

Jaques Galinier (as cited in *Art and History of Mexico* 2018) points out that it is when the lord of death arrives every year, for which reason, the devil is one of the characters that gives life to the carnivalesque spirit. There are differences between the carnivals, for example: in the Carnival of Pantepec, Puebla, the Otomi

settlers dress with the clothes of deceased relatives. While in Tlalchilco, Veracruz, the beliefs of the Tepehuas about life and death are linked to the symbols of fertility. In that sense, the characters recreate a wedding, and the dances refer to the new harvest. In the state of Chiapas, stands out the *Corte de Gallo* dance, this consists of slaughtering one of these birds after a horse ride. For the Mixtecas in Oaxaca, a duel between man and nature is symbolized, where for that purpose, men dress as devils, women and animals as the jaguar, so that, within the "Danza de los Tejones", the jaguar fights against a bull or cow. In the Carnival of Tlaxcala are traditional dances of European origin of the eighteenth century and consist of a dance of couples characterized by the crossing of lines. Nowadays the tourist carnivals like Veracruz or Sinaloa have lost all the original elements of the indigenous carnival and reduce it to a simple commercial parade -and a contest to be Beauty Queen, where even the King of Joy does not come to own the carnivalesque spirit. In Guerrero, in 2015 the first Queen of Afro-Mexican beauty was elected, namely: the young Brenda Corona Silva is crowned.

In this regard, Uresti (2017) mention that the Sinaloan carnival has its origin between 1769 and 1783 with the celebrations celebrated by Jesuit missions in the port of Guaymas, State of Sonora and the port of Mazatlan, State of Sinaloa. In these festivals, the African root is relevant because the carnival is at the base of the birth of Sonora and Sinaloa as independent states (1810-1836) and centralized (1836-1846). Guaymas is known as the pearl of the Cortes Sea, its first carnival is recorded in 1909 and the last carnival was held from February 8 to 13, 2018 under the slogan "Sueños de Fantasía". Also, there are records that date



around 1850 in which carnival parties were held in both Guaymas, Son., And Mazatlan, Sin. The latter has its antecedent in 1898 and was positioned as the Carnival King of Joy of Mazatlan –this carnival includes competitions between women and men who wish to be the queen and king of the carnival–.

It is said that carnivals have African roots due to the sound of the tambora that guides the folkloric dance and the popular representations of the rebelliousness and of the exotic animals –venados, cimarron sheep, wolves and lynx– of the locality (Uresti 2017). These two carnivals are part of the celebrations of the Creole population, prietos, mestizos and foreign families of Spanish, English, French and German origin who have settled in these cities. Finally, the carnival is an ambivalent space in which the social elite show its economic power over culture, however, other antagonistic social groups experience their resistance. Different research results have indicated that Mexican carnivals face the same ecclesiastical approval and function as European carnivals.

From the Marxist feminist theory of the class struggle of women and postcolonial studies with an ethnoracial focus, it is agreed in an antagonistic discourse that carnivals are a form of resistance to the hegemonic values inherited by colonial Catholicism and patriarchy. Despite these references, carnivals are judged as a modern festive event that does not achieve patrimonial recognition. The traditional indigenous and Afro-Mexican dances are still present within the religious permission to the popular festivals. In the state of Sonora, the dance of the Pharisees uses masks of animal skin-vein-and a dance rhythm similar to the Afro-mexican dances. Both have social meanings,

spirituality and similar expressive elements. When dancing and wearing their masks; the dancers are no longer themselves, but assume a new character to mock everything that dehumanizes people and prevents them from being proud of their community. Also, the religious or ritual ceremony to God to thank for life, nourish the soul or ask for his grace and happiness for future events. In these festivals the character assumed criticizes the behavior and values of society from an ideal identity that recognizes the humility, generosity and dedication of people who have less wealth.

Conclusion

According to the 10 interviews with Afro-Mexican women in four municipalities of the northwest region of the state of Chihuahua, it can be concluded that most of them are aware of the African culture and the importance of recognition in their Afro-Mexican identity and their role in the dissemination of cultural expressions of Afro-Mexican communities. Some of the women are wives of miners and they acknowledge having received talks on gender issues and non-discrimination in the State of Oaxaca and the State of Guerrero. They work with each other in a communitarian way, they celebrate with music and dance traditions. In addition, groups of women are organized for the purchase of fabrics and the manufacture of clothing. Some know how to make maracas and manufacture other percussion musical instruments. They emphasize the Fandango de Artesa and the Danza de los Diablos, many of them mentioned that these two dances have origin in the south of the country and in the north their importance has been reduced and they have even been modified including the materials and the own musical

cultures of who collaborate in the realization of parties or carnivals. They agree that the Chihuahua population is unaware of the African heritage, but they are the ones who have tried to keep them at their parties and even called a lot of attention in some parts of their journey through the State of Sonora and the State of Sinaloa where their practice worked. with the carnivals. They also point out that not living in cities and that their communities are close to the coast, rivers and water, as well as nature, allows them not to lose their traditions.

From the intersectionality of gender mediated by the ethnoracial perspective it is possible to understand that the recognition of Afro-Mexican communities in the state of Chihuahua requires understanding the Africanías through the elements adopted by Afro-descendant women residing in the northwest region of the state. Which redefine their customs and build new ways of experiencing the traditional Afromexican festivities. Specifically, the author and co-author acknowledge that miscegenation was a survival strategy implemented by the Afro-Mexican communities in the state of Chihuahua to guarantee unity, social cohesion and maintain a well-defined identity. These women recognize themselves as the prietas, the morenas and the black women who like music and dance Sierreña –local musical genre–. Also, it was possible to identify in the visits to the Afro-Chihuahua communities that some families make marital alliances within the community, where it is possible to find married women with their cousins and, even, sisters who share a husband.

The purpose of the unity of Afro-Mexican women is to prevent only very few women from being informed and empowered. The

Afromexican communities include more than a skin color, African features and curly hair; these have a great patrimonial wealth and are found throughout the country. They excel in several states, such as: Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz, Michoacán, Mexico City, State of Mexico, Colima, Campeche and Yucatán. In the eighteenth century, according to the censuses of the time there were more people of African origin than Spaniards. What makes it possible to mention that miscegenation is greater with Africans than with Spaniards. Despite being in the 21st century, racism, poverty, marginalization, social injustice and violence are conditions that affect the quality of life of Afro-Mexican communities.

The history of negritude in Mexico is pending. There are important debates about the identity conformation of the Afromexican communities, since in some contexts, such as the Costa Chica, there are approaches to the Afromixteca identity more than afromestiza. In Chihuahua, the women dancers, singers and interpreters of African descent who recognize themselves as prietas or mestizas' women do not recognize themselves as Afromexican. Also, in some large cities such as Mexico City, Juarez or Monterrey there are Afro-Mexican families with Brazilian or Cuban ancestry. However, in all these cases we must claim the black, the prietas, the morenas and the zamoras as an ethnic-cultural definition in the face of the historical denial of Africanity.

Among the main actions of public policies in the field of cultural heritage, include: The First Afromexican Museum of the State of Guerrero that has a collection of musical objects, clothing and accessories of African populations from where the black slaves



brought to the region originated of the Costa Chica. This museum has been promoted and financed by the Federal Deputy Teresa Mojica Morga, president of the Petra Morga Afro-Mexicans Foundation. Recently, the Vicente Guerrero Saldaña Museum of Afro-cultural Cultures opened its doors in Cuajinicuilapa, State of Guerrero. Likewise, Governor Gabino Cué issued the Decree that he established on October 19 as the Day of the Afro-Mexican Black People of Oaxaca within the framework of recognition of the rights and cultural roots of African women and men who for decades had been relegated. Also, in Huehuetan on the Costa Chica of Guerrero, the Afro-Mexican Community Museum was inaugurated with around 150 pieces of the daily life of the inhabitants that seek to reinforce the identity, belonging and past of African women and men in the region.

Other evidence found by the author is the construction of the Afro-Mexican pastoral plan of the Diocese of Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, was established on January 7, 2004 to serve four districts: Pochucla, Juquila, Janiltepec and Putla. There are 29 parishes and 6 foranies headed by Bishop Eduardo Carmona. Starting in 2010, the priests of the parishes and the Carmelite Missionaries of Saint Teresa who, under a social program, generate biblical reflection groups, liturgical celebrations, a missionary festival and a meeting of young people and adolescents from the Afro-Mexican communities of Costa Rica. These interventions have resulted, according to the voices of the missionaries themselves, in a first evangelization due to the lack of forms of liturgical expression of the Afro-Mexicans, since they refer to the lack of inclusion, tolerance and respect of the Afro-Mexican communities in the par-

ishes of the big cities and the capital. This has involved the transformation of racist practices and attitudes within the church. There are no missionaries or Afro-Mexican priests in the Costa Chica region and those who refer to a greater understanding of Afro-Mexican culture are the missionaries who have had the opportunity to be working in some African country.

In the scientific-academic field, from 05 to 07 September 2017, the First International Congress of Afro-Mexican Studies was held: Reflections, Debates and Challenges. Organized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) of the State of Oaxaca through the National Afro-Descendant and Cultural Diversity Research Program. Oaxaca stands out for possessing around one million 400 thousand Afro-Mexicans. The 20th Anniversary of the Seminar of Afro-Mexican Studies of INAH was celebrated in the same year.

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