

**Sounds of collective memories: A decolonial counter-representation  
of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

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## **Declaration of authorship**

I, María Gabriela López Yáñez, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Date: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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*To God(dess).*

## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I address questions of racialised representations of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota in order to build towards the notion and practice of a decolonial counter-representation of such events. The counter-representation that I propose aims to shift the representations of Marimba and Bomba from the current focus on stereotypical and fixed characteristics such as a naturalized happiness and hyper-sexuality, which are reliant on the visual, to an emphasis on the sonic dimension. Through sounds, a questioning of the colonial matrix of power that sustains visual representations and the privileging of key, but usually silenced, collective memories is proposed. The methodology suggested for counter-representational purposes is based on archival research and on a relationship of listening, which refers to a long-term process of mutually understanding the needs and knowledges of both the researcher and the communities. This relationship of listening was developed with a selected group of mature Marimberos and Bomberos from the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories of north Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira Valley. Marimba and Bomba originated in these territories during the Atlantic slavery period (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). Drawing on concepts of collective memories, representation and coloniality, I seek to critically include racialised perceptions of Afro-Ecuadorians and their relation to the Ecuadorian colonial matrix of power. I also prioritize key Marimberos and Bomberos' collective memories such as their relationship to mythical characters as well as the official censorships of Marimba and the embodied knowledges that have been passed on intergenerationally in Bomba. By developing a counter-representation, I aim to contribute with crucial methodological, theoretical



and practical strategies to widen and deepen a much needed and timely understanding of Marimba and Bomba, which signals the possibility of working towards the moves beyond fixed stereotypes rooted in coloniality and thus, of decolonising public performances.

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## **Introduction. The Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota: Key historical and methodological considerations**

*The collective memories repeat:  
We will join the pieces of our memories  
and of our broken bodies  
to heal our damaged souls  
and to be again what for a long time and because of the wish of others  
we could not be,  
we have the duty to put together the pieces of our origins  
and to build with it a **new body** [emphasis added]  
(García Salazar in García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 245)*

The current research offers an interdisciplinary approach that borrows concepts from ethnochoreology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, cultural studies and history to investigate a decolonial option for the public representations of the music and dance-based events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. Afro-descendants' communities in Ecuador created each of these two music and dance-based events during the period of Atlantic slavery. Building upon historical evidence that unfolds throughout this thesis, it is suggested here that from slavery and beyond, relevant communities have conceived Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota not just as instruments and music and dance genres but also as intimate, joyful and communal practices of temporal liberation from the oppressive systems of the slavery and post-slavery periods. Shortly after the creation of this community-based category of performances, Marimba and Bomba began to be also performed in front of an audience, which has historically been composed of

travellers, slavers and ‘patrones’ (plantation or mine owners).<sup>1</sup> This last category of performance has had as their main aim to entertain the aforementioned audience.

Importantly, previous academic research related to Marimba (Palacios Mateos, 2017; Ritter, 2010, 2011; Wellington, 2012; Whitten & Fuentes, 1966) and Bomba (Lara, 2011; Lara & Ruggiero, 2016; Ruggiero, 2010) have not taken into account these two categories but have treated all of these performances as a whole. In this thesis, the distinction between the community-oriented performances of Marimba and Bomba, here named as ‘cimarrón-participatory’, the entertainment-oriented performances, here named as ‘public or presentational performances’, and the differentiated meanings to which each of these categories are usually related is crucial. I argue that, whereas cimarrón-participatory performances are mainly related to meanings transferred intergenerationally as collective memories, public performances are mainly related to racialised meanings.

Central to this research is the questioning of how specific meanings, particularly how those transmitted through embodied and spoken collective memories beyond sound and movements systems or racialised meanings, have shaped the performances of Marimba and Bomba. Building upon this questioning, I wish to suggest that cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba are based on, but not limited to, the collective memories directly related to the performance of a musical genre, dance and instrument, which are those ones through which one can

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<sup>1</sup> Although Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota have a particular history and also a particular way of being performed, which differs from other types music and dance-based events also named as Marimba or Bomba in other locations around the globe, the terms Marimba and Bomba are used through this research to refer specifically to Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.



learn how to play or dance marimba or bomba.<sup>2</sup> For instance, since its origin, cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota have comprised not just the collective memories of the musical genre, dance and drum but other spoken or embodied collective memories also related to processes of resistance that affect and are affected by the performance of these three integral elements.<sup>3</sup> Currently, the most widespread performances, that is, public performances, have historically excluded the embodied and spoken collective memories related to some Afro-Ecuadorians' process of resistance, other than those that are directly related to the performance with the music and movement system. Instead, the specific focus on Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system has occasioned, from the colonial period to the present day, most public performances being based on a fixed and racialised understanding of these performances. Thus, Marimba and Bomba's performers, in other words, Marimberos and Bomberos, are portrayed as a group of naturally 'happy' and 'hyper-sexual' people who mechanically perform the music and dance of marimba and bomba. Importantly, the lack of engagement of most public performances with embodied and spoken collective memories of resistance and re-existence, other than those directly related to their sound and movement system, does not mean that those performances are not related at all to modes of resistance or re-existence. Moreover, the sole fact that Marimba and Bomba are still being performed in any of this thesis' proposed categories, is an act of resistance and

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis, whereas Marimba (with capital M) and Bomba (with capital B) refer to an Afro-Esmeraldeño and Afro-Choteño music and dance-based performance or event, marimba (with lower case m) and bomba (with lower case b) refer to the instrument, music genre or dance that are a central part of the events or performances of Marimba and Bomba.

<sup>3</sup> In regards to the drum named bomba, the drum itself is not always essential. What has been historically essential is the percussive rhythm that can be performed with the drum of bomba, any other drum or any other surface that can produce sound.

re-existence by itself.

In this thesis, I specifically problematise, theoretically, through a written thesis, and practically, through three research-based sonic compositions, two direct consequences of the transmission of each of the meanings mentioned above. First, I question the effects of the massive dissemination of racialised meanings through public performances, and second, I examine the weakening of the intergenerational transmission of Marimba and Bomba's spoken or embodied collective memories related to processes of resistance that go beyond its sound and movement system, which are often overlooked and excluded. Especially relevant for this research, the fixed and racialised meanings that public performances keep reproducing, reinforce notions of colonial difference, which refers to the historical location of Afro-Ecuadorians in the lowest position of Ecuadorian society with supposedly inferior moral and cultural characteristics. The perpetuation of such colonial difference through public performances takes place because, although these performances do not depict how all Afro-Ecuadorian men and women behave, they have the effect of convincing people that this is how Afro-Ecuadorians are, want to be or should be. Instead, the embodied and spoken collective memories of resistance that go beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system, and which could potentially nurture within the audience a deep understanding of Afro-Ecuadorians' contributions, have been silenced. These collective memories include some of the experiences that Afro-Ecuadorians have gone through in order to keep performing and that have shaped Marimba and Bomba, along with some strategic abilities and knowledges that they have developed throughout history.

By going against the grain of the widespread perspectives portrayed in public performances, in this thesis, a decolonial option is proposed. This decolonial option has been named a counter-representation of public or presentational performances. The counter-representation proposed here works as a crucial and much-needed means for offering audiences the choice to question racialised meanings rooted in the prevailing colonial structure. Critically, this counter-representation also includes silenced collective memories that go beyond those memories directly related to Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system (See fig. 1). To this overall end, I have conducted fieldwork intermittently for over ten years. The counter-representation proposed here is based on the results of this long-term field research.

The current Introduction begins with a contextual exploration piecing together the narrative of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories where Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota originated and developed, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Although Marimba and Bomba differ regarding their geographic origin within Ecuadorian territory, the structure of their dances, instruments and music and some of their collective memories, both share strong similarities. As I show, these similarities stem from the fact that the two Afrodescendant populations within which Marimba and Bomba originated, first arrived in Ecuador as part of the enforced diasporic process of the Atlantic slave trade. With this knowledge in mind, I explore the known details from the first arrivals of Afro-descendants to Esmeraldas (Afro-Esmeraldeños) and Chota-Mira Valley (Afro-Choteños) to their current situation. Afterwards, to clarify the methodology I have followed in this thesis, I begin with my positionality as a mestizo person developing research on Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based

performances. I then develop the notion of a ‘relationship of listening’ as the key methodological approach I have used in this research. Subsequently, I explain in detail my fieldwork and archival research phases. Finally, I describe the process of recording, selecting, editing and finally creating the three research-based sonic compositions as crucial steps for the development of this thesis.

### **The shared origin of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota: Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories and the Atlantic slave trade**

Ecuador is a country with approximately sixteen million inhabitants. It is located in the northwest part of South America (fig. 2). In the 2010 Ecuadorian census, the majority of the population self-identified as ‘mestizo’ people <sup>4</sup> (71.9%), followed by ‘montubio’ people <sup>5</sup> (7.4%), Afro-Ecuadorians (7.2%), Indigenous-Ecuadorians (7%) and white people (6.1%; INEC, 2010a). The percentage of Afro-Ecuadorians (7.2%), includes the number of Ecuadorian citizens who self-identified either as Afro-Ecuadorians or as Afro-descendants, mulato or black people. In the current research, the three denominations, Afro-descendant, Afro-Ecuadorian and black people, which are the most used terms, will be utilised interchangeably. In regard to the accuracy of the percentage of Ecuadorian citizens who self-identified as

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<sup>4</sup> In theory, the term ‘mestizo’ refers to a person with a mixed indigenous and Spanish heritage. However, within the Ecuadorian context, not all citizens who self-identified as mestizo people in the census are necessarily ‘mixed’. Usually, citizens see a social advantage in self-identifying as mestizo people and do it based on having a European last name, direct ancestry and physical features like skin colour or even gestures that distance them from their indigenous ancestry while locating them closer to a ‘whiter’ (in other words, European or mestizo) ancestry (Kingman Garcés, 2022). Although the denomination ‘mestizo’ is used in other Latin American countries and beyond, in this thesis, it is used specifically to refer to mestizo-Ecuadorians.

<sup>5</sup> Montubio refers to the mestizo people from the countryside of coastal Ecuador that recognizes themselves as distinct from the rest of mestizo people because of their geographic location and culture.

Afro-Ecuadorian or the other related options (7.2%), authors like the Colombian artist and scholar Adolfo Alban Achinte (2013), have stated that the fact that historically Afro-Ecuadorians have been forced to deny their “non-white” origin makes this percentage a “statistical death” through which Afro-Ecuadorians have been “numerically whitened” (p. 227). Thus, it has been suggested that the percentage of Afro-Ecuadorian citizens could be much higher.

The total number of languages in Ecuador is twenty-five. The country’s official language is Spanish, although from the 2008 Constitution the Indigenous-Ecuadorian languages of Kichwa and Shuar are also included as official languages of intercultural relation (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente del Ecuador, 2008, p. 9). Mainly, it is Indigenous-Ecuadorian populations of each area who speak the other languages. The vast majority of the mestizo, montubio and Afro-Ecuadorian population speak exclusively Spanish. As for Afro-Ecuadorians’ poverty rate in Ecuador, while it has been reduced for most of the population in the last ten years, they have remained one of the poorest groups since the colonial period (Fundación Azúcar, 2017, p. 11). Crucial for the aims of this research, in the last decades, the Ecuadorian government, as a member of the United Nations, has adopted the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001) and the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015). Also, the last Ecuadorian Constitution (2008) is the first one that granted ancestral knowledge its status of knowledge and contemplated that knowledge is not singular but multiple. Thus, the last Ecuadorian Constitution introduced the concept of ‘knowledges’ in plural as an attempt to officially acknowledge a diversity of ways of knowing (Art. 57, Art. 384-388). In spite of these progressive transformations, the government has not been able to

institutionalise policies towards improving Afro-Ecuadorians' living conditions, which have not changed significantly (Fundación Azúcar, 2017, p. 57).

Most Afro-Ecuadorians' ancestors arrived in Ecuador for the first time as enslaved people during the period of Atlantic slavery (16th-19th century). Although they first crossed the Atlantic Ocean, they continued part of their voyage by land and through the Pacific Ocean, leaving the Atlantic Ocean behind. This Atlantic-land-Pacific voyage makes them part of what the North American ethnomusicologist Heidi Carolyn Feldman (2005) has named the "black Pacific". Based on Gilroy's (1993, p. 15) "black Atlantic", Feldman coined the term "black Pacific" to highlight the "newly imagined diasporic community on the periphery of the black Atlantic" (Feldman, 2005, p. 206). The validity of Feldman's concept within this research lies in the fact that she suggests the black Pacific as an extension of the black Atlantic, including not just a dual and ambiguous identification with Africa and the West (as the colonisers) but also a series of equally ambiguous trans-pacific relations with other groups of Afro-descendants (such as Afro-Colombians from the Pacific coast) and local ones with creole and indigenous cultures. The inclusion of trans-pacific and local influences in the origin and development of musical and dancing identities is crucial for Afro-Ecuadorians.

As part of the black Pacific, Ecuador was a minor destination of African and Afrodescendant enslaved people. Taken together, Colombia, Panama and Ecuador constituted just over 2% of the total Atlantic slave trade (Curtin, 1969, p. 89). Although Ecuador appears to have imported 2% of the total number of enslaved Africans, yet it emerged in 1950 as having 7% of the Afro-American population

(Curtin, 1969, p. 93). This dramatic increase, from 2% to 7%, was perhaps because of the continuous flow of enslaved and runaway enslaved Afro-descendants that had migrated from the neighbouring country of Colombia to the Ecuadorian region of Esmeraldas in the 18th and 19th centuries. These migrations populated Esmeraldas with a high percentage of Afrodescendant inhabitants (Rueda Novoa, 2015, p. 12).

From the sixteenth century, enslaved and freed Africans and Afro-descendants populated principally two areas in Ecuador: the Chota-Mira river basin and the northern part of Esmeraldas province.<sup>6</sup> Currently, there are concentrations of Afro-Ecuadorians not just in Chota-Mira and north Esmeraldas but also in the main cities of Ecuador. Despite the presence of Afro-Ecuadorians all over the national territory, this research includes specifically the two areas that have been historically occupied by Afro-Ecuadorians and are thus the ones considered as Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories. The Afro-Ecuadorian scholar, activist and storyteller Juan García Salazar (2017) defines an Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory as a specific geographic area that is under the cultural influence as well as the social and political control of one or more Afro-Ecuadorian communities or neighbourhoods that share a history in common (p. 49).<sup>7</sup> The Afro-descendants from the northern region of Esmeraldas are referred to as Afro-Esmeraldeños, and the Afro-descendants from the region of Chota-Mira Valley are referred to as Afro-Choteños. Both ancestral

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<sup>6</sup> The denomination 'Chota-Mira river basin' responds to a generalised concern among Afro-Choteño activists who recommend not using the most common denomination to refer to this Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral settlement, which is 'Chota Valley', but to include the Afro-Choteño 38 communities. Chota Valley refers exclusively to the communities that are closer to the highway. In this research, I will also use the shortenings 'Chota-Mira' or 'Chota-Mira Valley'.

<sup>7</sup> This definition and the rest of quotations and definitions throughout this thesis that are taken from sources written in Spanish are my translation.

territories are located in the northern part of Ecuador in Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Carchi provinces (fig. 3).

In the case of Esmeraldas province, Afro-Esmeraldeños have been historically located in the northern part of the province, and thus, the whole northern part of Esmeraldas, specifically the cantons of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro, are considered part of this Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory. Therefore, although the province of Esmeraldas comprises just around 25% of the total Afro-Ecuadorian population ( fig. 3; INEC, 2010a), 68% of the population of the cantons of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro self-identify as Afro-Ecuadorians (Lapierre Robles & Macías Marín, 2018, p. 28). A group of Afro-Ecuadorian activists has baptised this area as ‘La Gran Comarca del Norte de la Provincia de Esmeraldas’ (literally, The Big County of North Esmeraldas).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, this Comarca sometimes includes the Colombian territory where, similarly to Ecuador, a good number of Afrodescendant population arrived during Atlantic slavery and live there up until now. In that case, it is referred to as ‘La Gran Comarca Territorial de Comunidades Negras’ (literally, the Big County of Black Communities; P. de la Torre, 2011, pp. 91–98).

Importantly, Afro-Ecuadorians are not evenly distributed throughout La Gran Comarca. As has been stated by the Afro-American anthropologist Jean Muteba Rahier (1998, pp. 422–433) and the North-American Ecuadorianist historian Michael Handelsman (2001, p. 21), Afro-Ecuadorians have historically been displaced to

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<sup>8</sup> An exact English translation for ‘Comarca’ could not be found. It refers specifically to a region where people have a shared history.



peripheral places or regions of Ecuador. Thus, Afro-Esmeraldeños, although located throughout La Gran Comarca, have been forced to ‘acimarronarse’<sup>9</sup> mainly in Afro-Esmeraldeño communities in rural areas and also in peripheral neighbourhoods in urban areas. Similarly, the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of Chota-Mira Valley comprises a rural and isolated area that includes 38 Afro-Choteño communities. It is located on the boundary of the provinces of Imbabura and Carchi (fig. 4). Afro-Choteños comprise 4.1% of the total Afro-Ecuadorian population. The two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories have historically been part of what Wade (2000) has named as a “cultural topography”, to refer to sites of tension that do not seem to fit within a national project of territorial and cultural integration (p. 20). For this reason, the inhabitants of these territories, who are mainly black people, are looked down upon by most mestizo people as living in places of violence, laziness, backwardness, and unconquered nature (Rahier, 1998, p. 423, 2011, p. 68).

### **The Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of Chota-Mira**

With regard to the arrival of Afro-descendants to the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of Chota-Mira Valley, from the beginning of the 17th century, the Jesuits, a Roman Catholic order of priests, first introduced African enslaved people in massive numbers to the area.<sup>10</sup> Most enslaved people were brought from

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<sup>9</sup> The term ‘acimarronarse’ was utilised during my conversations with the Marimbero Cimarrón Juan Montaña Escobar (personal communication 2018) and the Bombera Cimarrona Luzmila Bolaños (personal communication 2012). Both of them explained that it was a term that referred to the historical tendency of black people to gather and live in a specific location in order to support each other and avoid racism.

<sup>10</sup> According to Coronel Feijoo, previous owners of the lands of Chota-Mira Valley had already introduced African enslaved people. However, Jesuits were the ones who began to introduce enslaved people in large numbers.

Cartagena City (Colombia) as a labour force for the cultivation of cane. Cane acted as a substitute for cotton, which until that period had been widely sown in Chota-Mira (Coronel Feijoo, 1991, p. 58). Before the arrival of enslaved people, mainly two groups of Indigenous-Ecuadorian people, the Carangues (Imbabura province) and the Pastos (Carchi province) inhabited Chota-Mira Valley (Zaluaga Ramirez & Romero Vergara, 2007, pp. 30–31). However, by the time enslaved people arrived, these Indigenous-Ecuadorian people had run away or had been decimated or moved to other locations. This was due to the invasion of the indigenous group named the ‘Incas’ and especially to the later exploitative work in the ‘mitas’, which was the name of the labour system for indigenous people that was enforced by the Spanish Crown in the region (Coronel Feijoo, 1991, pp. 76–80). The Jesuits, from their arrival at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, until their expulsion in 1767, owned most of the enslaved people in Chota-Mira Valley. As corroborated by some of the Jesuits’ Annual Letters I studied in the ‘Archivo de Indias’ (Seville, Spain) and also mentioned by de Borja Medina (2005, p. 83), much of the income obtained from the Jesuits’ ‘haciendas’ (landed estates) in Chota-Mira, which was mainly sustained through enslaved people’s labour, was used to maintain the Jesuits’ schools for mestizo children located in what is now the capital city of Quito.<sup>11</sup>

Although during Atlantic slavery there already existed free black people in Ecuador, black people as a category were officially freed in 1852 after a long process of manumission and intense struggles.<sup>12</sup> After the official freedom of black people in Ecuador, just some of them became financially independent. Most of them

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<sup>11</sup> I revised the folder named: Antica Compagnia/Assitentia Hispaniae/n. r. et quit.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed explanation of the active role of afro-Ecuadorians in the abolition of slavery from 1770 to 1820 see Chaves (2010) and from 1822 to 1852, see Townsend (2007).

maintained a dependency relationship with their former slavers (Stutzam, 1974, p. 87). Afro-Ecuadorians' dependency was sustained because, unlike their former slavers, Afro-Ecuadorians did not receive any compensation or reparation, but were left with the choice of either becoming servants under a system named 'concertaje' or 'Huasipungo' or joining the army (Sánchez, 2011, p. 56).<sup>13</sup> Most of them became servants. According to previous research (Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959; de la Torre Espinosa, 2002; Hassaurek, 1967/1868; Lara, 2011; López-Yáñez, 2013; Pabón, 2007; Ruggiero, 2010), Afro-Choteños' living conditions did not improve much during the Huasipungo. Through a system of indebtedness, which was a strategy of former slavers to continue benefitting from the Afro-Choteños' free labour, they were forced to keep working in conditions similar to those they had known under slavery, including intense physical and psychological violence.<sup>14</sup> Zambrano (2010, p. 26) has referred to this on-going exploitation that originated during the Atlantic slavery period, and that continued during the Huasipungo period as 'Relaciones precarias en las haciendas' (precarious relationships in the landed estates).

Based on the testimonies of a number of Afro-Choteños, the Huasipungo (1853 to 1964) has even been named as an unofficial period of slavery in Ecuador (López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 11). It was only in 1964, that through a system called 'Reforma Agraria' (Agrarian Reform) most haciendas became communities and many Afro-Choteños were given a piece of land and stopped depending on the owners of the haciendas. However, since not all Afro-Choteños obtained land, and

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<sup>13</sup> 'Concertaje' or 'Huasipungo' was an indebtedness system that arose after the official abolition of slavery in Ecuador, through which some Afro-Choteños were forced to stay in the same haciendas where they used to be enslaved as servants until they pay all the debts they had to their patrones. For a detailed analysis of the system of concertaje or Huasipungo in Ecuador, see Williams (2003).

because even the ones who got a piece of land did not receive any support to make it productive, a significant number of Afro-Choteños began to migrate to the cities. This migration was facilitated by the construction of the highway near some Afro-Choteño communities, between 1971 and 1975. Other significant changes that the inhabitants of Chota-Mira Valley faced were the generation of the first ‘pluridocente’ schools (with one teacher per class) in the area (the mid-1970s) and especially, the arrival of electricity (between 1975 and 1984). From the Afro-Choteños’ arrival to the present, and because of the historical social and geographical isolation of Chota-Mira Valley, almost all of its inhabitants have been Afro-descendants.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of north Esmeraldas**

The arrival of Afro-descendants to the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of north Esmeraldas is marked by the first Afro-descendants who reached the Ecuadorian coast through a number of shipwrecks, the most famous one being that which happened in 1553 (Cabello Balboa, 1945/1583, pp. 18–19). The group of enslaved people that reached Ecuador mainly through this last shipwreck, led by the African Alonso de Illescas, adapted so successfully to the area that, through creative responses such as the intermixture with the Indigenous-Ecuadorian group named the ‘Niguas’, they organised themselves into what has been referred to as a “Black People’s State” (Rueda Novoa, 2015, p. 149; Zaluaga Ramirez & Romero Vergara,

<sup>14</sup> For more detailed information regarding the living conditions of Afro-Choteños during the Huasipungo or concertaje, see De La Torre Espinosa (2002, p. 85).

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed analysis of the impact of the arrival of the highway, schools and electricity to some communities of Chota-Mira Valley see Pabón (2007, pp. 77–84).

2007, p. 40). The North American historian John Leddy Phelan (1995/1967) even baptized this way of organisation as the “Zambo Republic” (p. 32), ‘Zambo’ being the term for an African-indigenous interethnic network. Most scholars have widely used the denomination of Zambo Republic or State. However, the Afro-Esmeraldeño writer, militant and politician Juan Montaña Escobar rejects this denomination, emphasizing its colonial origin. Montaña Escobar states that the black people’s fight for independence cannot be related to the colonial notion of ‘republic’ or ‘state’ or the colonial racial classification of ‘Zambo’ (personal communication, 2018). Instead, Montaña Escobar uses the denomination of ‘Black People’s Comarca’ (2018a, para. 6). The Comarca that black people from Esmeraldas created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century constituted the first ‘palenque’ or African political organisation in the Pacific coast of South America (Sylva Charvet, 2010, p. 32).<sup>16</sup> In spite of over seventy expeditions organised by Ecuadorian political powers to control this population, the members of this Black People’s Comarca managed to defend their own territory, living in almost total isolation and rejecting Spanish intervention and even strategically negotiating their rights with them for more than half a century (Beatty-Medina, 2012, pp. 95–113).

The popularity of the Black People’s Comarca in Esmeraldas as an essential site of free Afro-descendants extended so that it became usual for enslaved people from the mining towns of southwestern Colombia such as Barbacoas and Tumaco, from other wrecked slave ships and from other regions of Ecuador to run away to northern Esmeraldas, which eventually became a land of free black people. The leaders of this Black People’s Comarca were conscious from the beginning of the

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed analysis of the history of cimarrones in Esmeraldas, see León Castro (2017).

fact that their location was vital because of its natural resources. They were also aware of the need to build roads that would allow commercial exchange between the main cities of Ecuador and other interprovincial shipping ports such as Lima or Panama. Thus, they strategically and consistently negotiated their recognition as free black people with the necessary guarantees to maintain the autonomous society they had generated (fig. 5; Rueda Novoa, 2015, pp. 13–39). This Black People’s Comarca remained strong until around 1625 when it began to weaken due to a disarticulation of their leadership (Rueda Novoa, 2015, p. 129). However, the fact that Afro-Esmeraldeños developed an autonomous project from the beginning, oriented towards their survival and the generation of a free society, would create a habitual attitude of creativity and resistance that would be evident even in the following centuries (Rueda Novoa, 2015, pp. 150–153).

Until this point, the members of the Black People’s Comarca were not enslaved. However, from 1738, a second historical phase began for the Afro-Esmeraldeños. In that year, mining areas were established and with that, the first enslaved Afro-descendant people were introduced. Nevertheless, enslaved people from the area were still strongly influenced by the Black People’s Comarca and thus fought for their freedom from the beginning (Rueda Novoa, 2015, pp. 150–153). The local historian Estupiñán Tello (1996) argues that, despite the disappearance of the Black People’s Comarca and the region’s official incorporation into the ‘Real Audiencia de Quito’ in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (during the colonial period) and later into the Ecuadorian state (the Republican period), Afro-Esmeraldeños maintained their cultural and political independence for more than three centuries.

As a consequence, Afro-Esmeraldeños were active in various political struggles that would allow them to fight for their rights as a group of people independent from the elite white and mestizo people. For instance, a very important Liberal rebellion known as ‘Guerra de Concha’ (Concha’s War) took place in Esmeraldas from 1912 to 1916. In spite of numerous texts that are part of the official history such as Chavez Gonzalez (1971), that describes the Guerra de Concha mainly as a battle heroically led by the mestizo liberal Carlos Concha, other authors (Montaño, 2014; Moreno, 1939), highlight that most soldiers that fought in that war were Afro-Esmeraldeños. Far from being driven by nationalistic sentiments or by the charisma of General Concha as stated in some historical testimonies (Pérez Estupiñán, 1996, p. 298), as has been stated by Montaño Escobar (2014), the Afro-Esmeraldeño historian and artist Xavier Vera Kooke (personal communication, 2017), and García Salazar (2012, 13:30), those Afro-Esmeraldeños saw their participation in this war as an opportunity to fight for improving their living conditions in a country where the government never fulfilled the basic needs of the black population of Esmeraldas.<sup>17</sup> This cultural and political independence that was especially evident during Guerra de Concha was also possible because of the Esmeraldas province’s geographic isolation from the rest of the Ecuadorian territory.

Afro-Esmeraldeños’ participation in Guerra de Concha also had severe consequences for the future of all Afro-Esmeraldeños. As stated by Vera Kooke (personal communication, 2018) and the Marimbero Cimarrón ‘Don’ Remberto Escobar Quiñónez (Escobar Quiñónez, Valencia, & Grupo La Caonita, 1997, p. 27),

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<sup>17</sup> Importantly, despite the vital partnership of Afro-Esmeraldeños with local political powers, mestizo leaders of Guerra de Concha did not give enough importance to the Afro-Esmeraldeños’ demands. On the contrary, they fought for their own interests (Walsh, 2010, p. 109).

most mestizo people did not like Afro-Esmeraldeños.<sup>18</sup> Although the rejection of black people by mestizo people dates from the time of slavery, the rejection of elite mestizo people specifically in relation to Afro-Esmeraldeños is strengthened by the memory of the high number of elite mestizo people who died in the Guerra de Concha. As Vera Kooke stated in our conversation, “they have never forgiven us for that” (personal communication, 2018).

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Esmeraldas province, especially port towns such as Esmeraldas and San Lorenzo, began to be under the hegemony of mestizo people, who moved there attracted by their ports and the mineral wealth of the area. In this way, they incorporated Esmeraldas province into the national economy and established much stronger relations between the area and the capital city. The construction of the highway from Santo Domingo to Quinindé (1948), the railroad that linked the highland city of Ibarra to the port of San Lorenzo (1958), the highway that joined Esmeraldas to the main cities of Ecuador (1967) and the laying of the trans-Ecuador oil pipeline, which ended in Esmeraldas, occasioned a new era in the history of the province and in the life of the Afro-Esmeraldeños (Ritter, 1999b, p. 145).

Importantly, although the mestizo people were at the top of the economic structure, the middle class of Afro-Esmeraldeños began to be strengthened, thus slightly modifying the historical reality of poverty and low social status of the Afro-Esmeraldeño in previous decades (Whitten, 1965, p. 202). Also, new venues such as

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<sup>18</sup> The term ‘Don’ for male and ‘Doña’ for female, is used throughout this thesis before the name of the older participants as a sign of respect.



coffee shops, cafés and bars aimed at tourists and newcomers began to be built in the main cities of Esmeraldas province such as Esmeraldas and San Lorenzo city. As will be explained below, these newly created settings would enable specific transformations in the performances of Marimba Esmeraldeña. At the same time, from the 1990s, mining activity got stronger, and with it, environmental pollution and violence turned north Esmeraldas into one of the most dangerous areas in Ecuador (Lapierre Robles & Macías Marín, 2018, p. 206).

Even though Afro-Esmeraldeños have been politically, socially, economically and symbolically separated from the rest of the Ecuadorian population, more recently, Afro-Esmeraldeños have begun to be included in the official political and cultural arena of Ecuador. In 1996, for the first time, an Afro-Esmeraldeña woman, Monica Chalá, was elected as ‘Miss Ecuador’, the most important beauty pageant in the country. Also, in 2000, for the first time in the history of Ecuador, an Afro-Ecuadorian named Ernesto Estupiñán Quintero was elected the mayor of Esmeraldas (AfroEstilo, 2014). However, these two events were widely criticised. According to Rahier, on the one hand, many mestizo people overtly expressed their rejection of Afro-Ecuadorians as beauty queens or mayors. On the other hand, many Afro-Esmeraldeños felt that neither Monica Chalá nor Ernesto Estupiñán Quintero worked to represent the pressing needs of the black population. Thus it has been said that their high profile presence in the public sphere did not really threaten the values of the national (meaning mestizo) society. This is unlike the perceived threat posed by those Afro-Ecuadorians who have been part of various political activists’ discourses such as the first Afro-Ecuadorian congressman and presidential candidate Jaime Ricaurte Hurtado, which was much more aligned with Afro-Esmeraldeños’ needs

and beliefs (Rahier, 1998, p. 428).<sup>19</sup>

In regards to Afro-Ecuadorians' education, despite most of them having a limited access to good quality education, an ethno-education programme, led by Afro-Ecuadorians such as the Afro-Esmeraldeño García Salazar and the Afro-Choteño anthropologist, historian and educator Iván Pabón, has been successfully implemented since 2008. This project has managed to develop educational textbooks entitled 'Cartillas de Etnoeducación Afroecuatoriana' (Textbook of Afro-Ecuadorian Ethno-Education - fig. 6; García Salazar & Balda, 2012). The textbooks aim to teach school and high school students, from the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, the history and social reality of Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira that has been excluded from other mainstream school textbooks. Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota are briefly mentioned in some of these textbooks. However, the lack of access to information with regards to the social and historical context of these local music and dance-based events has led to their inclusion being limited to a few lines. Despite the reduced information presented about Marimba and Bomba, the project of Afro-Ecuadorian ethno-education constitutes a unique achievement of Afro-Ecuadorians in the history of Ecuador.

The population from each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories generated the two music and dance-based events that are the main focus of this work; 'Marimba Esmeraldeña' in north Esmeraldas and 'Bomba del Chota' in Chota-

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<sup>19</sup> Jaime Ricaurte Hurtado (1937-1999) was murdered along with his nephew and his bodyguard in front of the National Parliament. It is thought that a few renowned political figures were involved in this incident, which certainly had racist overtones.

Mira Valley.<sup>20</sup> In order to develop this thesis, I propose a specific methodology based on the acknowledgement of my positionality as a mestizo person building a ‘relationship of listening’ with a group of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimberos and Bomberos.

### **On being a mestizo Ecuadorian building a ‘relationship of listening’ with some Afro-Ecuadorian Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones: methodological reflections**

As part of the development of this thesis, it has been crucial to reflect upon my positionality as a mestizo person working with a group of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. Thus, I consider it essential to state the relationship I have built with them. A vital element in the process of developing the theoretical and practical component of this thesis has been the willingness of both the participating Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and myself to develop a relationship of listening and learning from each other. Although the development of this relationship has been shaped by my privileges, it has also constituted a channel to work as ethically as possible beyond the geographic barriers of my being based outside of Ecuador and other limitations that most academic researchers encounter. Through this relationship of listening, archival compilation and fieldwork research also constituted essential steps for the development of this work.

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<sup>20</sup> It is worth clarifying that Marimba exists in part of the Ecuadorian and Colombian territory, in most of the region that both countries share, and that is called the bioregion of Chocó or La Gran Comarca Territorial de Comunidades Negras. However, this research focuses on Marimba just within Ecuadorian territory, which has been named as Marimba Esmeraldeña.

## **Researcher positionality**

In order to be coherent with the aims of this research, I consider it is relevant to first take into account my subjectivity as a mestizo person doing a PhD about Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events. I was able to pursue this PhD research because of a fully funded scholarship from the Ecuadorian government. In order to obtain this scholarship, I had to go through many exams that tested, among other things, my mathematical and cultural knowledge. I also had to go through an English proficiency test. Although there are no official statistics about the number of black Ecuadorians who have obtained the same scholarship, unpublished research done by another Ecuadorian PhD student shows that it is less than one per cent (Chavez, Henry, 2018, personal communication). This imbalance is not surprising since the best schools, high schools and colleges of Ecuador are located in the main cities, especially in the areas where the majority of the population is middle or high-class mestizo people. On the other hand, most Afro-Ecuadorians have limited access to a good quality education (See fig. 7). Also, although most Afro-Ecuadorians are literate (90.3%) and have even attended school (91.6%), just a minority has access to high-school (49.5%), college (6.8%) or postgraduate studies (0.3%).<sup>21</sup> Thus, I want to acknowledge that one of the reasons why I am writing about Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events is precisely because I am not Afro-Ecuadorian.

Despite the privileges I have had, I am influenced by the strong statements recently written by Sisters of Resistance, Left of Brown and Rodriguez (2018) and

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<sup>21</sup> This compared to the percentage of mestizo people who are literate (93.9%), have attended school (92.3%), high-school (58.5%), college (16.7%) and post-graduate studies (1.2%; INEC, 2010b).

that have already been mentioned by other authors (hooks, 1992; Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987, p. 10; Walsh, 2001, p. 72; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) that work as a constant reminder of the importance of acknowledging that “for centuries people of colour have been denied their role in producing and shaping intellectual ideas and knowledge, even about themselves” (Sisters of resistance et al., 2018, p. 6). I am conscious of the fact that in an ‘ideal world’, an Afro-Ecuadorian would also be doing this thesis. Moreover, in an ideal world, there would be no need for anyone to render audible hidden or ‘disappeared’ histories about Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, because in an ideal world, the genocide of the Americas, whose principal engine was Atlantic slavery that consequently caused the violent transformation of many of the African diasporic knowledges, would have never happened. It is also worth taking into account, however, that, to my knowledge, I am the first Ecuadorian to be undertaking a PhD into Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events.

Therefore, although the silencing of the social and historical context of Marimba and Bomba affects me, I am confident that what I have experienced as a ‘whiter’ woman in Latin America and Asia, a brown-skinned woman or woman of colour in Europe and an international student in a global city like London<sup>22</sup>, cannot be compared to the experiences of black Ecuadorians. Thus, it is not my intention to ‘speak for’ Afro-Ecuadorians or suggest that I can totally understand how it feels for example when, as black Ecuadorian friends have shared with me, a mestizo person

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<sup>22</sup> For a thorough analysis of the situation of international students in the UK see Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo (2009).

does not want to sit next to them on the bus, when nobody wants to rent them a flat or when their musicians and dancers are reduced to a bunch of happy and sensual people. However, as has been stated by the Afro-Ecuadorian activist group 'Fundación Azúcar' (2017, p. 7), it is essential not to elude the responsibility that not just the Ecuadorian state but all Ecuadorians have in repairing the damage of our country's past of Atlantic slavery for Afro-Ecuadorians and to contribute to questioning its acute consequences. Therefore, I consider myself an ally of the Afro-Ecuadorian Cimarrones' cause. Through this research, I aim to contribute to destabilising the power structures that have turned Marimba and Bomba into a 'spectacle' (Hall, 1997a) to be enjoyed without any historical or social awareness. Specifically, I would like to contribute through the de-centralisation of colonial approaches in public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.

### **Listening as a methodology**

I consider it important to take into account that, as most mestizo people, I grew up with a colonial view of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events. Since I was only exposed to public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, I grew up thinking that these music and dance-based events were just about some steps and sounds performed by a group of people who were always smiling and having fun. This perspective has continuously been contested and reshaped over the course of the last ten years of dancing, playing music, eating, praying, talking and exchanging knowledges and ideas with various Afro-Ecuadorian activists, academics and performers. Throughout this process, I have tried to move from a posture of "studying about" to "thinking with" (Walsh in Walsh & Mignolo,

2018, p. 28). Although I am aware that this PhD research is still part of a diversity of research projects that talk about black people's culture and knowledge mainly in front of foreign academic audiences, the posture of "thinking with" has allowed me not just to obtain data for my research but also to discuss important questions with some Marimberos and Bomberos already mentioned by L. T. Smith (2012, p. 10), such as, whose interest does this research serve? Who will benefit from it? And, how will the results be disseminated? Throughout this research, I have done my best to take into account these questions with as much integrity as possible.

At the beginning of this research, inspired by the work of the Brazilian ethnomusicologist and militant Samuel Araújo (2008, 2009; 2013) and of other Latin American decolonial approaches (Leyva, Burguete, & Speed, Shannon, 2008), I attempted to begin a process of 'thinking with' by proposing participatory methodologies. However, I soon realised that the fact that I had to be based in the UK the majority of the time would not allow me to adopt such methodologies. Furthermore, and most importantly, I did not want to take the decisions about the specificities of the practical outcome of this research by myself. Instead, I have done my best to build on what the Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1987, 2015, 2018) has named as a "relación de escucha" (relationship of listening) understood as a "collective exercise of disalienation" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987, p. 10, 2015, p. 286). With a collective exercise of disalienation, Rivera Cusicanqui refers to a long-term, sensitive, creative, honest and open recognition and acknowledgement of the perspectives, needs and objectives of both the researcher and the communities as the basis for producing specific research. This exercise of

listening was developed years before beginning this thesis and also afterwards, even while I moved abroad, far away from Afro-Ecuadorian communities.

Thus, these ten years of getting to know some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have been based on a collective attempt of learning from the needs and goals of both the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones that I have met and myself. On the one hand, this *relación de escucha* has been built based on allowing myself to be affected by the voices, feelings, knowledges and perspectives of some of the expert Afro-Ecuadorian Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones in order to develop this research, which involves them in the process, from its structure to its outcomes.<sup>23</sup> This includes the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones who are still alive and to whom I can listen while also sharing my ideas, the ones that passed away a long time ago but that left testimonies I could engage with, and the ones who passed away while I was developing this thesis but who left in me memories of powerful encounters and who sometimes visit me in my dreams. The openness produced by the attempt to engage as much as possible with this *relación de escucha* has resulted in an active process of confronting the racialised stereotypes related to black people as a continuum that I am part of, and allowing my relationship with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones to dismantle, question and transform those stereotypes. On the other hand, I have continuously shared my research's outcomes and my ideas while trying to negotiate with the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I have worked how they want to be represented. I have also

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<sup>23</sup> With 'knowledge', I specifically refer to Rivera Cusicanqui's (2018) notion of knowledge as "thinking while walking, ritualistic thinking or the thought embedded in a song or a dance. These knowledges have to do with the many memories that are also part but are not limited to, the linguistic terrain" (p. 121).



attempted to acknowledge as much as possible what Rivera Cusicanqui (2018, p. 8) has named as the “authorial effect of listening” to refer to the relevance of the participation of, in this case, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, in the development of this thesis.<sup>24</sup>

The clearest example of a *relación de escucha* and thus, of an exchange of knowledge, is when I worked for a few intensive days with the Afro-Esmeraldeño poet and Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonsales.<sup>25</sup> The opportunity I had of sharing with him what I had learned about the hidden history of Afro-Ecuadorians and his sharing with me his memories about his mother dancing cimarrón-participatory Marimba or his father being the ‘glosador’ (lead male singer) gave birth to the story-poem that is part of one of this thesis’ sonic compositions (Chapter Four). Importantly, Gonsales was very interested in the purposes and potential usages of this research for Marimberos and Bomberos.

It is also relevant to mention that the knowledges I obtained from Marimberos and Bomberos go beyond the collective memories included in this research but also comprise other knowledges related to, for instance, physical and spiritual healing. These other knowledges have profoundly enriched my personal and spiritual life. For instance, around ten years ago, a Bombero Cimarrón, who happened to be also one of his village’s ‘sobador’ (traditional masseur), healed me

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<sup>24</sup> It is important to mention however that although I recognise the effect of listening to some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, as L. T. Simpson (2011, p. 134) and Araújo (2009) have already mentioned, the question of official co-authorship is something that has not been solved by the PhD structure, of which the only official author is myself.

<sup>25</sup> The detailed biography of Jalisco and of each of the main experts with whom I talked or whose testimonies I used can be found in the Appendix C.

from a very painful ankle sprain through massaging it for a few minutes each hour for one day and one night. Meanwhile, he was sharing with me fascinating tales of his childhood. He said those tales would not just distract me from the pain but would also heal my soul. Also, a Marimbera Cimarrona, who is the spiritual healer of one of the communities I visited, prayed for me, cleaned me from negative vibrations with herbs and ‘puntas’ (local alcohol that has been distilled in a non-industrial distillery) and taught me how to protect myself from the strong negative energies that permeate the land where much blood has been shed and much pain has been inflicted. She was specifically referring to particular sites in the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories where enslaved people were punished and even killed.

Essentially, researching Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events has necessarily raised important ethical questions about the uneven distribution of the results of academic or artistic projects related to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. In this respect, throughout these ten years of working with Afro-Ecuadorian communities, the knowledge that some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have provided me with has been reciprocated within the modality locally known as ‘trueque’ (barter). By this I mean that although the time and wisdom they generously shared with me, and the fact that they allowed me to record the material that is the basis of my PhD research is undoubtedly invaluable, it needed to be at least partially compensated. Thus, as has already been suggested by Wade (2010a, pp. 155–156), these trueques have focused mainly on the generation of spaces to feed back archival and academic information related to Afro-Ecuadorians that remains inaccessible for most of them (especially the ones who live in the villages)

as a way to reciprocate the knowledge they have shared with me.

The most relevant examples of these trueques are the various African and Afro-descendants' film festivals that were organised in different Afro-Ecuadorian communities (for instance, Chalguyacu and Chota in Chota-Mira and Telembí in Esmeraldas) where spaces were opened up for the discussion of black people's representation in films, or of the CDs and documentaries produced by my group and I (Grupo Itinerante de Artes Guandul).<sup>26</sup> The main aim of this was the preservation of the collective memories of some Afro-Ecuadorians while also handing on to them all financial gains obtained through the sale and promotion of this product. Another innovative example of the mechanism of trueque that, although is not related to the circulation of knowledge, is related to contributing to Afro-Ecuadorian communities' needs was developed in the community of Telembí (Esmeraldas), where a good part of the last phase of my fieldwork research was held. In this community, a series of workshops based on dialogues with the community leaders were developed. The sociologists María Paz Saavedra and José Gómez volunteered to coordinate one of these workshops that had the aim of supporting the 'Animeros' (carers of the 'ánimas' or souls of villagers who have passed away) and 'Cantaoras' (traditional female singers) through generating a contract-type document for visitors. The idea of generating this document was brought about based on a conversation I had with the president of the Animeros who shared with me the discomfort they feel sometimes when foreigners went to their village 'as if it was their house' and did not even ask permission before taking out their cameras or asking questions. This contract-type

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<sup>26</sup> The 'Grupo Itinerante de Artes Guandul' (Acuerdo Ministerial N 057-2011) was founded by Diana Ormaza and myself in 2008 with the aim of generating spaces for the creative research and spread of traditional Ecuadorian music and dances.

document was produced for them to be able to negotiate a fair trueque with the researchers and to be informed about the purpose and outcomes of each visit. We also discussed their right not to answer questions and not to be photographed if they did not want to or if a visitor infringed the rules of the community.

Importantly, although the examples mentioned above are by no means a solution for what might still be considered a deep problematic structure of academic research, they constitute valid initiatives amidst a system where most of the time a balanced distribution of knowledge and resources is not even considered. It is hoped that these initiatives cover, at least in part, the demands that García Salazar stated in one of his last interviews in relation to the usage of some Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories in academic work; "the 'encargo' [mandate/charge] of the ancestors has to be worthy of the person for it to be transferred... we need a person whose academic studies does not prevent him/her from realising the importance of oral tradition for our communities... that his/her academic words will not downplay the simple words of an elder... we need a person who does not just want to know, but who also is willing to show respect..." (García Salazar, 2017, 16:30).

### **Compilation of information from the archives**

In the first phase of this research, books and documentaries that could contain any information related to Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota were compiled from libraries, archives, web pages and through colleagues. I visited three archives to see if I could find any information related to Marimba Esmeraldeña and

Bomba del Chota. The archives I visited were the ones located at the Jesuits' General Curia (the Vatican, Italy), the General Archive of the Indies (Seville, Spain) and the 'Fondo Documental Afroecuatoriano' or 'Fondo Afro' of the 'Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar' (Quito, Ecuador). In the first two archives, I looked for relevant information related to Bomba del Chota, since these archives hold information about the Jesuits, who owned some of the highest number of enslaved people in Chota-Mira. The third archive holds information about the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories.

I visited the archives located at the Vatican and Seville in 2016. I worked for seven days on each of them, around six hours per day, and focused on reading through the 'Annual Letters' of Jesuits in Ecuador, that date from their arrival (16<sup>th</sup> century) until their expulsion (18<sup>th</sup> century) and that were not accessible online.<sup>27</sup> I specifically chose the Annual Letters that included relevant keywords for this research such as 'hacienda', 'negro' (black), 'esclavo' (slave) and 'Pimampiro' (one of the most important haciendas in Chota-Mira). Although I was sure of the fact that enslaved people's music and dance-based events were not going to be mentioned extensively, I was hoping to find at least brief mentions that could clarify the perception of enslavers towards Bomba. However, the information I could find was minimal. Nevertheless, the opportunity of engaging with original archival material and realising that the few times where Afro-Ecuadorians were mentioned, they were part of the list of the property of the estates or the mines, made me understand more

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<sup>27</sup> The Annual Letters were reports that Jesuits and the rest of the Roman-Catholic religious order from different locations around the world had to send to the Father General in Rome. These included miracles, unsolved problems or adverse circumstances Jesuits faced. Name of the revised folder: Antica Compagnia/Assitentia Hispaniae/n. r. et quit.

deeply the 'zone of not-being' where they were located during the Atlantic slavery period. Also, having the opportunity of engaging with original material related to enslaved people's testimonies of deeply inhuman and violent treatments (in the case of the Archives of the Indies) made me reaffirm the urgency of research related to the Atlantic slavery period and its consequences.

A final relevant experience related to my visit to these archives and that certainly affected my understanding of Atlantic slavery is a compulsory interview I had with one of the members of the Jesuits' General Curia in order to be allowed to enter their library. I was informed that the interview had the purpose of explaining to them why I needed to access historical information related to the Jesuits. However, the interview quickly turned into a meeting to convince me that the Jesuits' participation in Atlantic slavery should not be portrayed in research projects as violent since they were not as violent as other groups and also because they participated in slavery just because everyone was doing it at the time. I took long breaths during the whole meeting and decided to keep my opinions to myself in order to be able to access the library. However, this helped me realise the importance of serious investigations of the role of the Jesuits and other groups in the enslavement of millions of Afro-descendants in Latin America and beyond. Also, it helped me understand better the possible reasons why Jesuits still do not open their archives located in Quito, Ecuador, to the general public or even to researchers.

In 2017, I visited the third of the archives mentioned above, the 'Fondo Afro'. This archive contains around five hundred audio-recorded interviews of Afro-Ecuadorians from all over Ecuador. From 1980 to 2015, around one hundred people,

led by García Salazar, travelled to a variety of Afro-Ecuadorian villages to interview villagers. These audio-recorded interviews include individual and group testimonies related to slavery, storytelling, healing practices, music, poetry performances, dancing, and so on. Since slavery was officially abolished in Ecuador in 1852, these recordings represent the most tangible evidence of the experiences and memories of the direct ancestors of enslaved people in Ecuador.<sup>28</sup> I listened and transcribed all the testimonies, which, according to the search engine's keywords, contained in its written description the terms 'Bomba' or 'Marimba'. I transcribed 70 testimonies in total in one month, working around six hours per day. Unfortunately, I was not authorised to obtain a copy of the audio recordings from the Fondo Afro, so I could only transcribe them and could not use them in this thesis' practical component. However, the information obtained from the material of the Fondo Afro served to strengthen the testimonies gathered during my fieldwork.

Some important collective memories were obtained through other sources. For instance, the Ecuadorian ethnomusicologist Pablo Guerrero, who is in charge of the 'Archivo Equinoccial de Música Ecuatoriana' (Quito, Ecuador), generously provided me a copy of a part of the oldest recorded interviews included in the compositions of this research, the one held by Lindberg Valencia in the 1990s with the most famous Marimbero Cimarrón, Remberto Escobar Quiñónez.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the oldest recorded performance of the most famous Bombero Cimarrón is the one from David Lara, known as 'el Rey David'. This performance was recovered from a

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<sup>28</sup> For a detailed explanation of the information included in these archives see Cevallos and García Salazar (2011).

<sup>29</sup> Based on this audio-recorded interview, the book 'Memoria Viva: Costumbres y Tradiciones de Esmeraldas' (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997) was written.

video recording done by the scholars Jean Rahier and Ataulfo Tobar (1988).<sup>30</sup> Both Remberto Escobar Quiñónez and David Lara could be considered as the most acknowledged ‘voices’ of collective memories of Marimba and Bomba.

Similarly, the song ‘Yo soy: Caminando hacia adentro’ (I am: walking towards my inner self), which is included in the sonic composition of Chapter Three, was written and sung by the young Afro-Choteño activist and academic Diego Palacios Ocles, who provided me with various recorded versions of his song. Likely, some of the undated recordings of the voices of the Marimberos Cimarrones ‘Papá Roncón’, Rosa Huila and ‘Don Naza’ were donated by one of the members of the ‘Radio Antena Libre’ in Esmeraldas city. Also, a good amount of the material that is related to racism in Ecuador was a donation from the Ecuadorian documentarist David Lasso’s personal archives. I also visited the ‘Universidad Técnica del Norte’ (Ibarra, Ecuador), where I obtained a digital copy of old songs of bomba that were part of a Bomba Festival organized by this university in the 1990s. Some of these songs were included in this thesis’ sonic compositions. Finally, the only sounds that are not related to Marimberos and Bomberos are the sounds of human breathing, sea and chains used in the first ten seconds of the sonic-composition about the diablo and some of the drums used throughout the same composition (Chapter Four). The sounds of breathing were recorded during a movement workshop entitled N’Gomku, which was about Afro-Brazilian funeral rites of passage. The workshop was led by the Afro-Brazilian artist and academic Ana Beatriz Almeida, and was held at

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<sup>30</sup> For the first six years of having a copy of this documentary, I did not know that the old man that appears in this film performing Bomba was the famous ‘Rey David’. Just recently, I showed the documentary to an Afro-Choteño friend, and he recognised him from when he was a child. ‘Rey David’ was famous among children since he used to tell them stories about the duende and the diablo.



Goldsmiths College (London, UK) in 2018. The sounds of the sea and the chains used in the same fragment were taken from the BBC online sound archive, which is freely accessible to the public. Finally, some of the drum sounds were obtained by audio-recording the musician Mac Dende at Goldsmiths College in 2019.

## **Fieldwork research**

Although the gathered archival information has been essential for this research, the vast majority of the testimonies have been obtained during the last ten years of meeting a wide range of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. This long and fulfilling decade has been filled with all sorts of experiences. In the first years, the artistic group I am part of focused on developing projects with the Afro-Ecuadorian communities of Chota-Mira.<sup>31</sup> In this phase, I was not aware I was going to pursue an academic career, so all of our efforts were aimed at writing about Bomba del Chota in order to find sources of funding to support Bomberos and register the music and dance-based events of Chota-Mira. We also began to visit some Marimberos in north Esmeraldas. Amidst all the tiredness, emotional challenges and excessive physical and intellectual effort those years implied for all of the members of the group, that phase was undoubtedly the most rewarding one. Our countless encounters with Bomberos and Marimberos and the opportunity to learn from their extreme generosity and wisdom while dancing, praying, cooking, talking and laughing, has certainly been a life changing experience that goes beyond

<sup>31</sup> Here I am referring to the ‘Grupo Itinerante de Artes Guandul’ (Acuerdo Ministerial N 057-2011).

what words can express. Some crucial moments of the encounters of those first years were not recorded or systematized at all but were kept in my memory. Although many of these experiences go beyond the results presented here, they deeply influenced this thesis.

In the final phase of this thesis research, which was held in the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories from October 2017 to March 2018, I audio-recorded a series of conversations.<sup>32</sup> These conversations were held with some Afro-Ecuadorian activists and academics that have in common a connection with collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba. I also recorded my conversations with the most renowned Marimberos and Bomberos ‘mayores’ (older people) aged from 53 to 91 years old<sup>33</sup>, from a variety of communities, towns and cities. Although I am conscious of the importance and validity of the ‘voices’ of younger generations, my decision to focus on Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones mayores is due to the fact that they are most likely one of the last generations that were part of, or witnessed, cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba during the cimarrón-participatory period (See Chapter Two). To be precise, I talked with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones from the communities of Chota, Juncal, Salinas, Carpuela, Palo Amarillo, Chalguayacu, Santa Ana, Concepción, Mascarilla, Estación Carchi, San Juan de Lachas, Pusir and Tumbatú in Chota-Mira Valley and the communities of Telembí and Playa de Oro in the northern

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<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that I audio-recorded each conversation just after each person with whom I was talking read, filled and signed the ethical consent form approved by my Department. The form included a summary of my research, along with a detailed explanation of how the recording was going to be used.

<sup>33</sup> The youngest Marimbero Cimarrón that is included in this research and who is referred to as ‘mayor’ is 53, while the oldest is 91. When asked why were they considered mayores, they suggested that this term could perhaps be related to the fact that all of them already had grandchildren.

part of the province of Esmeraldas. I also talked with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones from the cities of Ibarra (Imbabura province) and Esmeraldas, San Lorenzo, Quinindé and Borbón (Esmeraldas province; fig. 8).

The majority of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones that I visited live in the city or community where they were born or where they have lived most of their lives, and thus, that was the place where they inherited the collective memories they shared with me. Most of the conversations were held individually, sometimes at the home of the Marimbero or Bombero, and other times in a public space. The vast majority of these Marimberos and Bomberos already knew me and some of them had been my good friends and mentors for years. Usually, I would also ask them to sing and play instruments of marimba and bomba when possible.

Following Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), the information gathered in the first years shares many similarities with an “unstructured interview” understood as “a method to elicit people’s social reality... where neither the question nor the answer category is predetermined” (p. 1). The last phase of this research could also be framed under “semi-structured interviews” as “based on both close-ended and open-ended questions while having the flexibility to add questions based on the context” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 1). Nevertheless, and as I have already mentioned, the methods utilised in this thesis have not been limited to ‘interviewing’ Marimberos and Bomberos but to a much more complex and rich experience that is much closer to Rivera Cusicanqui’s notion of a *relación de escucha*.

One exception of a recording that was not about a conversation or the

performance of the music and dance of Marimba and Bomba but of a poetic creation is the narration by the Marimbero cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales. Since Gonzales is also well known for his oratorical style, I initially asked him to recite poems by other Afro-Esmeraldeños that have written about Marimba to include these recordings in my sonic compositions. However, after a few long conversations in which I shared with him the archival information I had gathered, and he shared with me his memories about cimarrón-participatory Marimba, Gonzales told me that he preferred to write a short story for my work. I audio-recorded Gonzales' newly created narration, and it became an essential part of the sonic composition about the multiple censorships of Marimba (Chapter Four).

Other than recording conversations and music, in December 2017 I participated in and audio-recorded a communal celebration of Marimba held in the village of Telembí and a Marimba public and in February of the next year I attended a large festival held in the city of Esmeraldas ('Festival Internacional de Marimba Esmeraldeña'). In this last one, I also participated as part of the jury that had to choose the best three performances of the night. Although there were some international guests, most of the performances were by Marimba Esmeraldeña. I also participated in a communal celebration that included a performance of various groups of Bomba in the community of Tumbatú (the annual feast of the village's patron saint, January 2018). Although I had gone to numerous festivals and celebrations of Marimba and Bomba throughout these years, these three events I attended in the last phase of this research were crucial not just for clarifying my ideas in regards to the current status of Marimba and Bomba, but also to allow their sounds and the festive and powerful atmosphere to permeate all of my thesis.

Both the conversations and the music were recorded with the built-in microphone of the high sound quality digital voice recorder Zoom H6 for the ambient sound and with two unidirectional microphones connected to the H6, one Rodeo NTG2 and one Rodeo NTG3, for the voices and music. The usage of this cutting-edge technology for fieldwork audio recording ensured the high quality of the material so that it could be used in the sonic compositions and also for it to be preserved for future uses.

Finally, it is essential to consider that the collective memories gathered in this work represent just a small portion of all of the experiences from a highly diverse and heterogeneous human group (Afro-Ecuadorians) that has in common a history of violence and resistance. As aforementioned, this research includes specifically those collective memories that are, or used to be, transmitted orally. For that reason, many of the surviving collective memories related to, for instance, the performance of Marimba and Bomba dance or the music that are or were almost exclusively embodied and transmitted through dancing or playing an instrument are not included. The limitations of this research to those collective memories that can be transmitted orally became clear during my fieldwork. Most of the expert Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I dialogued expressed how difficult it was to transmit some embodied knowledges through words. For instance, in some questions such as “how was it danced?” “How were the bodies moving or behaving?”, expert Marimberos and Bomberos answered that they could clearly recall some images of the dancers and musicians in their minds but that it was difficult to verbalize what they remembered or even to show me with their bodies since they would need more

people who also knew how it used to be danced or played.

Following the gathering of collective memories, all of the material, which comprised several hundred hours of audio-recordings and twenty field diaries, was catalogued, stored in a computer database and analysed, but just a small amount was utilised in this thesis. I included in this thesis the material related to the specific themes I decided to develop through the dialogues I had with Marimberos and Bomberos during my fieldwork. Importantly, I only included in this research those collective memories that Marimberos and Bomberos with whom I talked felt comfortable sharing. Moreover, the choice to include in this thesis exclusively what we all agreed to include became one of the most essential ethical practices developed in this thesis. For instance, sometimes, Marimberos or Bomberos Cimarrones decided not to share specific collective memories. Other times, even when they did share specific collective memories with me, I decided not to include specific testimonies in this work because of the request of a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón for specific collective memories, which they had shared with me as a profound act of trust, not to be shared with a wider audience.

Importantly, this thesis has a theoretical and a practical component. Its practical component, namely, each of the three research-based sonic compositions, is not meant to be listened to independently from this thesis' written component. As has already been mentioned, the testimonies that are the basis of these compositions are part of the local history of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories. The non-universal character of each composition is precisely why the compositions are brought from a decolonial perspective and must be listened to after reading up to

Chapter Three (for the first composition) and Chapter Four (for the second and third composition) in order to be fully understood.

As for the written component, it is important to mention that I translated from Spanish to English many of the primary and secondary sources included in the theoretical part of this work. Exceptionally, some crucial concepts were kept in the Spanish language. Following the decolonial approach of a good number of authors analysed in Trnka (2016), the Spanish terms have been located between single inverted commas just the first time these are mentioned. Besides the explanation of each Spanish concept, an English translation is provided in parenthesis immediately after the first time the Spanish term is used or in a footnote if the translation is too long. This specific management of the Spanish language in the current research aims to contribute to the normalisation of multilingual research without affecting the clarity of the text. Additionally, in the glossary, located in the Appendix A of this thesis, the most important utilised terms are defined. As for the translations included in the research-based sonic compositions, these are presented with English subtitles in italics as a symbolic way to invert the power dynamics inherent in formatting and to highlight the fact that within these research-based sonic compositions, the foreign language is English. Finally, it is worth clarifying that as part of this thesis' focus on other ways of understanding Marimba and Bomba, through, for instance, sonic experiences, the visual material that is included is minimal and consists exclusively of that which has a specific historical or pedagogical value.

## **Creation of the research-based sonic compositions**

As for the process of development of the research-based sonic compositions that are part of this work, it has been informed by experiential, archival and scholarly research in order to portray a portion of Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories but also to criticise and highlight the racialised colonial difference that has silenced them. The editing of each composition was done in the software 'Ableton Live' which is a professional digital audio workstation (See fig. 9). Also, the audios that were recovered from cassettes and Betamax and thus were low quality were cleaned up and restored in the software 'Izotope'. The research-based sonic compositions were developed over an average of three months each, working full time.

During the creative process of the compositions, both the semantic and affective characteristics of the audio-recorded material were taken into account with the explicit goal being not to aimlessly entertain the audience but to generate a space for the audience to confront their perceptions related to Marimba and Bomba and to have access to testimonies and archival material that are inaccessible for most people. In many portions of the research-based sonic compositions, the semantic discourse is dominant, meaning that the narrative content of the voices is emphasised - for instance, specific narrations and testimonies of the historical and social contexts of Marimba and Bomba. In specific portions, the affective discourse prevails - for instance, laughter, sighs, yells, musicalities, and other non-semantic sounds; and in some others, both characteristics are equally important. Following Lane (2006), the



techniques used in each sound or group of sounds change depending on the aim of each composition and the quality and content of the available audio-material. Since all compositions are a mixture of historical reconstruction and creative approach, the techniques that were used are diverse.

On the one hand, when the need for producing dissolution of semantic meanings appears, specific effects were used. For instance, the effect of deconstructing the sounds of words can strengthen affective sensations related to the sounds produced. On the other hand, if accumulating words' meaning was required, this was achieved through sonic association, to reinforce the semantic meaning of a word by the addition of a related sound. The reinforcement of different voices rhythmically repeating either the same sound or word was achieved using techniques of massing voices or montage. Finally, some of the recorded testimonies are presented as the original version, without any editing other than the cleaning-up of the audio if it was not too clear. Using some of the previously mentioned techniques, semantic discourses are dominant as a way to explain portions of the reality Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have experienced at different periods in history.

One of the aims of these research-based sonic compositions was to go far beyond the semantic meaning of the words and to use other sounds to reinforce some spoken collective memories. For instance, it is clear that a sense of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' creativity and re-existence has been almost inexistent in public events of Marimba and Bomba. However, as it is shown throughout this thesis, cimarrón-participatory events are full of diversity and even highlight

individual creativity. Specific compositional techniques helped to portray the uniformity of the message of public events and the diversity of cimarrón-participatory ones. In other parts of the research-based sonic compositions, the aim is to provoke the listeners' memories by confronting discourses that portray colonial difference related to Afro-Ecuadorians with the resistance and re-existence that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones demonstrate in cimarrón-participatory events. The overlapping of these two 'voices' was done to generate a necessary crash/clash between the familiar sounds - daily racism and hyper-sexualised fusions- and the newly added ones - collective memories of resistance and re-existence<sup>34</sup> beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system. In some other parts of the research-based sonic compositions, moments of silence represent portions of the collective memories of Marimba and Bomba that we do not know about, that we know about but were not included in this work or that have been continuously erased.

Following the methodology explained above, in this thesis, the substantial implications of Afro-Ecuadorians' long history of dehumanisation, which began with the specific circumstances of their arrival on each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, are taken into account. Specifically, those consequences that have directly affected the representations of the music and dance-based events of Marimba and Bomba from colonialism to the present day are succinctly developed. To further problematise these implications, in Chapter One, I relate the origin and development of Marimba and Bomba to the notion of coloniality. The notion of

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<sup>34</sup> As it is explained in detail in Chapter One, the term re-existence refers to propositional actions (and not just oppositional as it is suggested in relation to the term resistance) that confront the consequences of coloniality.

coloniality has been useful for understanding the performances of Marimba and Bomba within the colonial matrix of power that began from the European invasion of America in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and prevails to the present day. As part of coloniality, the understanding of a racialised colonial difference becomes of importance. A racialised colonial difference refers to a narrative that originated during the colonisation of the Americas and that classifies different groups of people based on the social construct of race. Within this classification, black people have been historically located in the lowest category. Explicitly in regard to Marimba and Bomba, it is stated here that most of their public performances constitute racialised representations that are part of colonial difference.

Based on an analysis of the lasting consequences of the colonial matrix of power in the performances of Marimba and Bomba, I propose a decolonial option that offers a fundamental solution. I have done so by proposing a critical means of delinking from racialised characteristics associated with stereotypical notions of blackness and relinking with some of the Marimberos and Bomberos' collective memories that go beyond Marimba and Bomba's sound and movement system. In order to develop this decolonial option, categorising the different performances of Marimba and Bomba has been essential.

Based on the relationship between Marimberos and Bomberos and their particular choice for expressing their collective memories that goes beyond sounds and movements systems, I have categorised their performances as 'cimarrón-participatory' and 'public or presentational'. Accordingly, I refer to those involved in a cimarrón-participatory event of Marimba and Bomba as 'Marimberos Cimarrones'

or ‘Bomberos Cimarrones’. I also refer to the periods when each or both of these categories of performances are most prevalent as ‘cimarrón-participatory period’, ‘presentational period’ and ‘threshold period’. In Chapter Two, I argue in detail the relevance for the development of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota being framed in each of these periods.

The emphasis on both the differentiation and prevalence of cimarrón-participatory and presentational or public performances and their distinctive meanings is crucial for two reasons. Firstly, it is key to questioning the racialised meanings of most presentational performances. Secondly, it is an essential element in incorporating the dynamic meanings of collective memories as a way of contributing to the broader dissemination of Marimba and Bomba beyond racialised performances. I have named this questioning and incorporation as a ‘counter-representation’. In order to contribute to a decolonial counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba and following what has been proposed by Mignolo (in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014; in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018), I have divided this decolonial research into two levels, the level of the ‘enunciation’ and the ‘enunciated’. Each of these two levels is developed in Chapters Three and Four respectively.

Whereas in the level of the enunciation I question a universalised notion of beauty or ‘aesthetics’ (with capital T), in the level of the enunciated I critically analyse some of the Marimberos and Bomberos’ collective memories. Specifically, I problematise the relationship between the racialised colonial difference and the portrayal of Marimba and Bomba as ‘happy’ and ‘hyper-sexual’ performances

(level of ‘the enunciation’). I also highlight key Marimberos’ experiences concerning the constant attempts to ban Marimba Esmeraldeña, the embodied memories related to Bomba, and some Marimberos’ and Bomberos’ ability to transform the Judeo-Christian notion of the ‘diablo’ (devil) from an evil and invincible being, to a playful being with whom it is always possible to negotiate and whom it is possible even to defeat (level of ‘the enunciated’).

As is shown throughout this thesis, the aforementioned collective memories represent a local notion of beauty or ‘aestheSis’ (with capital S). Through exposing the aestheSis of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba, a process of healing can be developed. Also and importantly, these two levels are related to each other through the creative and dialogic notion of ‘ch’ixi’, that is the differentiated interrelation between these two levels without binding them together in order to expose the colonial relations of power they are embedded in (Rivera Cusicanqui & El-Colectivo, 2010, p. 154; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 105). Ch’ixi is therefore used as decolonial research method to delink from the Ecuadorian colonial matrix of power (the ‘enunciation’) in order to relink with local/indigenous accounts of history (the ‘enunciated’).

Furthermore, based on this thorough research and following a group of decolonial authors cited throughout this thesis, who state that a decolonial project must engage practically through, for instance, activism or performing arts, three sonic compositions have been developed as part of the proposed counter-representation. It should be emphasized, however, that the sonic component of this thesis is not a decolonial counter-representation by itself since it is still dependent on

the written component for it to be entirely understandable by a wider audience. Nevertheless, the sonic component of this thesis could potentially become part of a decolonial counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba in the future. Finally, in the conclusions I provide general reflections connecting all the chapters, I summarize the critical points of the thesis and reflect on possible future lines of research related to these themes and the approach I have developed across this work.

Through its written and sonic component, this thesis constitutes an innovative way to generate García Salazar's proposal of a 'new body' mentioned in the epigraph of this Introduction. The key purposes of this 'new body' are to open up decolonial perspectives and related debates concerning the public representations of Marimba and Bomba and to re-activate the flux of collective memories of resistance beyond their sound and movement system that, as is shown throughout this thesis, has been violently interrupted.

## **Chapter One. Towards the development of a decolonial research project: Counter-representing Marimba and Bomba**

In this chapter, I develop in detail the proposal of framing this thesis within the notion of coloniality/decoloniality in order to sonically contribute to a counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba. For this purpose, I first develop the notion of coloniality and through it, of a racialised colonial difference in relation to Marimba and Bomba. I then develop the notion of decoloniality and its link with cimarronaje or maroonage, collective memories and communicative competence. Based on the notion of coloniality/decoloniality, I then propose cimarrón-participatory, public performances and counter-representations as three categories of representation of Marimba and Bomba. I finally relate the proposed counter-representation to a potential healing, while suggesting for it to be divided into two relatable although independent (ch'ixi) levels, that of 'the enunciation' and of 'the enunciated'.

Importantly, many of the notions utilised in this research, which are that of coloniality/decoloniality and through it of a racialised colonial difference, cimarronaje, collective memories and the ch'ixi division of a decolonial project, have emerged from lived experiences in South America, specifically in the Andes, from a group of Latinamericanist thinkers such as Anibal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Catherine Walsh, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Peter Wade, Eduardo Restrepo, Nina de Friedemann, Adolfo Albán-Achinte and Juan García Salazar, among others.<sup>35</sup> My decision to focus on this limited set of authors, with a particular geographic and

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<sup>35</sup> In this research, the term 'Latinamericanist' is used to refer to a scholar whose research focuses on Latin America independently of his/her origin.

epistemic approach, was not taken lightly. I chose these authors not just because they resonate with my intellectual positioning but also as part of an attempt to have a more “conscious and critical [meaning non-superficial] engagement” (Mott & Cochayne, 2017) in regards to the context these authors come from. Mott and Cochayne talk about a critical engagement in terms of being aware of the Anglophone character of academia (p. 961), and of the tendency to mainly cite established academics or macro-studies (p. 962). As I will further explain throughout this and the following paragraphs, applying a conscious and critical engagement to my framework entailed including Hispanophone and under-cited authors who focus on a specific location, namely Latin America as a whole, Ecuador or other Latin American countries related to the framework of this thesis such as Colombia.

For instance, the chosen intellectual approaches share a historical and geographical context with those from where the Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota emerged, which was crucial for my research to examine. This is because this framework of knowledges critically engages with the history of Spanish colonialism in Latin America, rather than talking about colonialism or racism in general. These historical conditions to which the utilised theories speak has allowed me, on the one hand, to understand the particularities of Marimba and Bomba since the 15<sup>th</sup> century; and also, on the other hand, to engage with other similar geopolitical approaches<sup>36</sup> and especially, to contribute to the expansion of knowledge from and about this area. Previous authors (Haraway, 2004, 1988;

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<sup>36</sup> As has been stated by Mignolo (2011b, p. xiii, 2011a, para. 6) and Grosfoguel (2011, p. 107), the geopolitical origins of the decolonial option are not necessarily related to where the people who developed it were born or reside but to the origin of the narratives and methodologies hidden by colonialism that they want to unveil.



Mignolo, 2002; Walsh, 2002) have emphasized the importance of taking into account the contexts of utilised knowledges from a limited location or episteme in order to enrich knowledge of a specific subject. Thus, following Haraway (2004; 1988), instead of attempting to cover all the approaches to the notions of race or the consequences of colonialism (for instance, critical race theory, black diaspora studies or post-colonialism), this thesis' main contribution is done through a "deep engagement to partial, locatable and critical perspectives in order to diversify knowledge through unexpected openings and webs of connections" (Haraway, 1988, p. 583-584; 2004, p.94).

Importantly, in this thesis there is also an attempt to diversify knowledge through taking into account the approach of local authors and performers who mainly publish their work in Spanish. This attempt is especially important since 80-85% of publications in social science in the last decade have been written in English (O'Neil, 2018, p. 146). Although the predominance of English language in academic publication clearly has an instrumental purpose, namely facilitating communication between academics from all over the world, it also has specific consequences, the most clear being the exclusion of knowledges that are produced in other languages such as Spanish, and through it, the "loss of intellectual diversity" (O'Neil, 2018, p. 162). Thus, besides engaging with the thoughts of well-established academics such as Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh and Wade, I have purposefully prioritised local knowledges at different levels. For instance, I have engaged with the thoughts of authors that, although widely recognised amongst Hispanophone academics, are not widely known in Anglophone academia. These authors include Rivera Cusicanqui, de Friedemann and Restrepo, and also local underrepresented authors such as Albán

Achinte and García Salazar.

Crucially, although I have extensively based my work on authors that come mainly from literary theory and who, therefore, privilege the written text, an important contribution of my work is the practical-sonic perspective, which is framed within what the above-cited authors developed mainly in theory. As is explained in detail throughout this chapter, the authors I use propose questioning stereotypes and generating innovative paths of representation that are more in accordance with dynamic historical contexts and knowledge systems. Moreover, although most of the authors cited in this thesis are mainly theorists, all of them agree on the need for not just theoretical deconstructions but also practical options. Therefore, although interesting, an approach to sound studies was not considered essential, particularly within the limits of a doctoral thesis. Overall, I have constructed my theoretical approach by prioritising the conceptual tools that allowed me to a) examine the specific Latin American colonial context of the case studies and how Marimba and Bomba respond to such context; b) develop strategies to question in theory and practice the consequences of colonialism for the two music and dance-based events I examine and c) analyse the relation between Marimberos and Bomberos and collective memories.

### **Coloniality and Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

Among the wide range of approaches that challenge, criticise and unmask colonial narratives related to the understanding of the self and the other, this research is framed within the notion of coloniality/decoloniality in general, and a racialised

colonial difference in particular. The idea of coloniality/decoloniality and a racialised colonial difference is utilised here as a group of analytic and practical options to propose potential mechanisms to destabilise racialised public representations of Marimba and Bomba and focus instead on elements of the process of resistance of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones through their collective memories beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system.

### **Coloniality: definition**

Coloniality derives from the concept introduced by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1992) who referred to it as 'colonialidad de poder'. Later, the Argentinean semiotician Walter Mignolo (2000) translated Quijano's concept into the English language as the 'colonial matrix of power' (p. 17). As has been stated by the Mexican Latinoamericanist Verónica López-Nájera (2018), the notion of a 'colonial matrix of power' as a convergent and heterogeneous body of thought has existed in Latin American social sciences since Latin American countries began to gain their independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 44-52). Nevertheless, it was Quijano and afterwards Mignolo, Grosfoguel, Walsh and other Latin Americanist intellectuals who structured and spread this concept. Throughout the 1990s, Quijano (1992, 2000b) used the term colonialidad de poder to identify and describe the articulation of power that has taken place since the arrival of modernity. Mignolo, Quijano and other decolonial thinkers relate the notion of modernity not just to what is continuously named, celebrated and related to progress, salvation, development and growth but also some European countries' different strategies of control, domination and exploitation over the rest of the world. Essential for this research,

within the notion of coloniality, the origin of Western European modernity is placed in relation to the origin of the distinction between “civilized” and “primitive” human groups. According to Mignolo (2011c, p. xiv), the origin of this distinction can be located in the conquest of America in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the Atlantic slave trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The control, domination and exploitation of human and material resources that began with the arrival of modernity continue as a living legacy in contemporary societies. Importantly, whereas cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota originated during Atlantic slavery and kept developing as a strategic response to this continuous context of exploitation, presentational Marimba and Bomba developed as part of it.

Even though the consequences of colonial domination are usually silenced, and are named as problems to be solved (Mignolo, 2009a, p. 39, 2011c, p. xviii), they are a constitutive part of modernity. Thus, Mignolo (2009a, 2009b) has famously argued that as part of the ‘rhetoric of modernity’, its darkest side, coloniality, has historically been hidden. In order to validate the constructed reality of modernity as a celebratory promise without taking into account coloniality, the protagonists of modernity have aimed at persuading the uninfluential world that what they say is the only and universal truth. They have also suggested that what is stated by others (for instance, Marimberos and Bomberos) is not valid and even “pre-modern” and thus, should be forgotten (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 140). However, these ‘others’ knowledges are not pre-modern but rather have been included in the same modernity project but in a lower hierarchy.

Parallel to Quijano's and Mignolo's development of coloniality, other authors such as Rivera Cusicanqui have proposed similar concepts such as the 'horizonte colonial de larga duración' (colonial horizon of long duration/the long colonial horizon) which she considers as a new form of colonization or a recolonisation (2012a, pp. 99–100). With recolonisation, the author refers to the hierarchical structure of domination that persisted even when the period of colonialism ended. Rivera Cusicanqui refers to these new forms of colonisation as "internal colonialism". Following her mentor, the author González Casanova (1965, p. 33), Rivera Cusicanqui argues that this phenomenon constitutes a reproduction or renewal of colonial conditions by, for instance, local elites of a nation-state (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010b, pp. 13–14). The renewal of this phenomenon is precisely the case of Marimba and Bomba. As is explained in detail in Chapter Three, Marimberos and Bomberos have historically been characterised as people that are 'naturally happy' and 'hyper-sexual' and who mechanically play instruments and dance. I suggest that these characteristics, either with a complimentary or pejorative overtone, are located in the lowest position within the colonial hierarchical structure of domination.

Interestingly, the notion of coloniality has also been deconstructed at other levels, such as the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of being. The coloniality of knowledge refers to the establishment of Eurocentric approaches as the only valid ways of knowing. It is precisely the coloniality of knowledge that has generated public performances that focus on Afro-Ecuadorians' racialised characteristics, and through these, represent the colonial belief that, apparently, black people lack the intellectual capacity needed to produce valid knowledge (Vera

Santos, 2016, p. 43; Walsh, 2007, pp. 104–105). At the same time, public performances deny collective memories other than Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system but still related to an Afro-Ecuadorian's historical process of violence and resistance. The coloniality of being, on the other hand, has been mentioned by authors such as the Martinican psychoanalyst and social philosopher Frantz Fanon (1986) and Rivera Cusicanqui (2015), and widely studied by the Puerto Rican philosopher Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007). In that respect, similar to Fanon's (1986) claims of black people's sense of "internalization of inferiority" (p. 13) as a consequence of them being "duped" ( pp. 29, 31) by a colonial system, Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 83) and Maldonado Torres (2007, p. 257) also include the notion of a colonialism that is internalised in each colonised subject. In the context of this research, it is stated that some members of the new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos could be part of a 'coloniality of being' occasioned by the violent interruption of the intergenerational transmission of an important number of collective memories other than the ones directly related to how to play the music of, or dance, marimba and bomba or to the transmission solely of specific racialised characteristics.

### **Racialised colonial difference**

An important concept within the notion of coloniality is that of colonial difference since it is through the exclusionary categories of colonial difference that specific forms of humanness have been disavowed. In this research, 'race' is developed as an analytical category located at the centre of colonial difference so that the focus is on a racialised colonial difference. Although the notion of race appears to have existed before the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in this research it is traced from the

conquest of America as it is linked with the European history of thinking about difference in Latin America. By focusing on a racialised colonial difference, and thus, by locating race as the basis of the hierarchical framework that began during colonialism, this thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of the racialised perceptions of public representations of Marimba and Bomba, not as individual-led but as part of the colonial matrix of power that has sustained these public representations throughout history. Thus, in this thesis, a ‘racialised colonial difference’ is related to the existence of the concept of ‘ structural racism’ from the colonial period to the present day.

Colonial difference is a concept that refers to the location of distinctive groups such as Afro-descendants into a category of lesser humans in relation to the prototype of human throughout coloniality (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 153–158). As argued by Mignolo (2009a);

Colonial difference operates by converting differences into values and establishing a hierarchy of human beings ontologically and epistemically. Ontologically, it is assumed that there are inferior human beings. Epistemically, it is assumed that inferior human beings are rationally and aesthetically deficient (p. 46).

Colonial difference is thus a modern concept articulated as part of coloniality, meaning that the categories created through colonial difference appeared because of colonisation, constituting “non-existing entities outside the discourse of modernity and development that prevails to the present day” (Mignolo, 2011c, p. 164). Specifically in Ecuador, as affirmed by Rahier (1998), colonial difference has historically located Afro-Ecuadorians “as a noise in the ideological system of

nationality” (p. 422). Within colonial difference, ‘race’ is considered as the central organising principle that has been used as a tool for colonial domination (Quijano, 2000a, p. 39).

‘Race’, when located as a central signifier of colonial difference, is a system of classification that locates some groups of people over others hierarchically. Thus, race is not natural but is part of a “historical-racial schema” within which a group of people (for instance, white or whiter people) constructs and maintains a fixed narrative of the inferiority of another group of people (for instance, black people) through “a thousand details, anecdotes and stories” (Fanon, 1986, pp. 109–111). According to the British Latinoamericanist anthropologist Peter Wade (2016; 2000, 2002, 2010a, 2010b), an analytical strategy to distinguish the presence of the notion of race in different social contexts throughout coloniality, irrespective of the usage of the term ‘race’, is made possible if it includes both ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ characteristics (2016, 41:06; 2000, p. 14). Moreover, Wade affirms that the whole apparatus of race (racial categorisation, racial concepts and racism) has always been an ever-changing hybrid construction between nature and culture.

Importantly, the distinction between that which is cultural and that which is natural is not fixed. Both of them are ‘artefacts’ that have been culturally produced within specific historical contexts (Wade, 2002, p. 272). Since what are considered natural and cultural differences are artefacts, there is a permanent tension between the mutability and durability of each of these qualities. Within this nature-culture duality, the ‘natural’ differences of racialised people such as blood or heritage are used as an indicator of cultural differences such as behaviour, ideology, moral



qualities and even intellectual capacities, which are then naturalised, and believed to be transmissible across generations through sexual reproduction (CEIICH-UNAM, 2016, 41:06-42:48; Wade, 2000, pp. 14–15).

As has also been stated by the Jamaican cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997a), this naturalisation of difference has located specific groups of people in ‘binary oppositions’ (p. 243). On the one hand, some people -usually white (or whiter) people - are located in high social categories, where they are believed to be the most ‘civilised’ and ‘developed’. These people appear to be able to control nature, or in other words to restrain their emotional, sexual and civil life, through culture, which is usually related to the intellect. On the other hand, the people located in the lower categories -which are usually black people- are believed to be led by their nature or ‘instincts’. By this it is intended that they are led not by their intellect but by their emotions and feelings, which end up controlling their culture and thus, their sexual and social life. This last group of people have historically been categorised as ‘primitive’ (Hall, 1997a, pp. 243–244; Quijano, 2000a, p. 42; Wade, 2000, pp. 45–46).

Based on Fanon’s (1986) understanding of race, the Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel (2011) affirms that these hierarchical categories of superiority and inferiority are generated in relation to the line drawn under that which constitutes being a human. Those who are above the line are the ones considered humans and thus, are in the ‘zone of being’ and own all of the privileges that this category entails. On the other hand, those who are below the line are those whose humanity is always in question and even sometimes denied. This last group is in the

‘zone of not being’ (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 98). As will be developed further (See Chapter Three), Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota have historically been related to the notion of ‘primitiveness’ or located in the zone of non-being, and thus, Marimberos and Bomberos are believed to be a group of people with uncontrollable emotions (for instance, happiness) and sexual needs.

### **Coloniality and racialised colonial difference in Latin America**

Unlike the present day, where racial classifications that include Afro-descendants are usually related to specific phenotypes such as skin colour, in the first centuries of the arrival of Spanish conquerors to America, the Roman Catholic Church classified Afro-descendants and other groups mainly according to their religion (Mignolo, 2001, p. 170). For instance, in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, African and Afro-descendant people were classified by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas not based on their skin colour but in relation to western Christian ideals. Based on these criteria, Las Casas located under the category of ‘primitive and barbarians’ those human groups with specific behaviours considered pagan, strange, irrational, turbulent or violent or those who did not embrace the ‘proper’ Christian faith (Mignolo, 2007, pp. 52-54).

Africans and Afro-descendants were located under the category of primitive and barbarians for, among other things, not conventionally embracing Spanish people’s religion (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 182–186). At that time, religion was related to a discourse of ‘pureza de sangre’ (purity of blood) that obsessively stated that unfaithfulness was transmitted by blood. The idea of purity of blood became the

basic principle for hierarchically locating Africans and Afro-descendants in the category of the less pure, and therefore, the lesser humans. The categorisation of Africans and Afro-descendants as lesser humans contributed to their transformation into ontological slaves, and therefore, it was instrumental in the justification of Atlantic slavery (Hall, 1997a, p. 245; Mignolo, 2002, p. 83).

As part of the racialisation of Africans and Afro-descendants based on their relation to the divine world, practices such as Marimba and Bomba were ‘racialised’ in Atlantic slavery. Although influenced by Judeo-Christianity, enslaved people’s Marimba and Bomba were believed to be ‘polluted’ by West African beliefs. As will be explained in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis, one of the Marimberos and Bomberos’ ‘polluted belief’ was their relation to the diablo or the ‘duende’ (elf or imp). Although the term ‘race’ was not used during colonialism, the basic principle of this categorisation, blood purity, was backed by supposed biological evidence. Therefore, following the understanding of ‘race’ as an analytical category that includes both ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ characteristics, the conceptualisation behind the negative perception of Afro-Ecuadorians’ Marimba and Bomba from the 15<sup>th</sup> century is considered racial.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Latin American countries such as Ecuador began to gain their independence, scientific discourses regarding race became more popular. Thus, racial classification moved from the paradigm of mixture of blood to that of skin colour and other distinguishable phenotypical characteristics. The phenotype or external appearance became a marker of cultural qualities (Arias & Restrepo, 2010, p. 59; Walsh, 2010, p. 99). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ecuadorian government created

official racialised categories that include white, mestizo and black people, among others. These racialised categories have been the basis for legitimating post-colonial power relations in the modern 'national' society.

Currently, especially in Latin American countries such as Ecuador, only people with a particular phenotype or racial signifier that corresponds to the geographical encounter of Europeans and their colonies in the Americas, which is usually the dark skin colour and the hair type, are identified as a black person. Through a process of mestizaje, defined by Rahier (2014, p. 79) and Walsh and León Castro (2005, p. 11) as an ideological tool in the service of white or mestizo people elites, a superiority/inferiority hierarchy usually relates 'whiter' Ecuadorians to the highest social category and dark-skinned Ecuadorians to the lowest social position or the zone of non-being. Parallel to this phenotypical identification, there are fixed cultural characteristics that have been historically related to Afro-Ecuadorians. As it has been statistically proven by the first and only national survey related to racism in Ecuador (STFS, SIISE, & INEC, 2005), this relation between specific phenotypical and cultural characteristics has occasioned a racialised colonial difference or structural racism that exists until now (See fig. 10).

Interestingly, despite the historical analysis and statistical evidence about the lingering relationship between 'natural' and 'cultural' characteristics sustaining a racialised colonial difference until the present day, racialised colonial difference remains a challenge to identify in public representations of Marimba and Bomba and beyond. This has become especially clear in the last three decades because of the disappearance of the term 'race' from official discourses and the replacement of the

pejorative 'cultural' traits of the nature-culture construction with more 'positive' ones.

A further aspect, which is of relevance for this research, is the relationship between the term and the concept of race. I follow authors such as Arias and Restrepo (2010, p. 49) and Wade (2010a, p. 54) to affirm that the absence of the term race should not be confused with the absence of the conceptualisations of race. As is shown in detail in Chapter Three, within the Ecuadorian context, until the 1990s 'race' was a term freely used in academic and official circles. However, since the Ecuadorian Constitution of 1998, where for the first time in history Afro-Ecuadorians were officially included as a specific group of people, the term 'race' is avoided in official and academic discourses and instead, other terms such as 'ethnicity' are used. Ethnicity is outwardly related to 'cultural' differences, but their relationship with 'natural' characteristics is denied. Thus, ethnicity appears as a politically correct and 'colour-blind' term. The term 'race', on the other hand, is believed to be related to 'natural' particularities as markers for cultural characteristics (Wade, 2010a, p. 15). However, as has been stated by Wade (2010a, p. 14) terms such as 'ethnicity' are nothing other than politically correct and less emotive terms that function as an official strategy to mask a racialised colonial difference based on the hybrid of nature-culture. Thus, despite this constructed difference between race and ethnicity, the notion of ethnicity still focuses on the racialised hybrid of nature-culture.

Perhaps the most unequivocal evidence that shows how 'ethnicity' is used to sustain the nature-culture relation is the prevalence of the usage of a 'language of

place'. Through a 'language of place', the geographical origin of a person or group of persons' ancestors is naturalised and used as a way to state that one single and fixed identity or essence has intergenerationally been transmitted since colonial times. This transmission throughout generations is still tacitly related to the passing of information through the 'blood' (Wade, 2010a, pp. 16–20). In countries like Ecuador, this language of place remains because black people have historically been pushed to specific geographic locations of the national territory such as the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, or black neighbourhoods in the principal cities of Ecuador. These locations are related to, among other things, laziness and ignorance. This fixed geographical relation has made many Ecuadorians think that Afro-Ecuadorians 'naturally' belong to these impoverished territories (See Fig. 11; Rahier, 1999, p. 91). These beliefs are related to the historical assumptions that portray black Ecuadorians as lazy, 'naturally' happy, hyper-sexual, and good at dancing. However, these assumptions overlook the historical economic inequalities and racism that have made many Afro-Ecuadorians acimarronarse in specific geographic areas. At the same time, Afro-Ecuadorians from those geographic areas are perceived as a homogenous group of people with fixed characteristics that have been part of their supposed 'essence' since colonial times.

### **Coloniality and racialised colonial difference in Marimba and Bomba**

The prevailing notion of a racialised colonial difference has affected the representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota throughout coloniality. To understand this, two fundamental concepts proposed by the renowned Colombian anthropologist Nina de Friedemann are of relevance. These concepts are

‘invisibility’ and ‘estereotipia’. De Friedemann (1984 in Silva, 2014) defines invisibility as the constant negation of the history of Afro-descendants (pp. 29-30). More recently, the Afro-Colombian Latinoamericanist Santiago Arboleda Quiñonez (in Albán Achinte, 2013) proposed the notion of ‘negative visibility’ as a way of being terminologically more specific. Albán Achinte affirms that Arboleda Quiñonez sustains his proposed notion of negative visibility to clarify the fact that black people have never been invisible but have been visible as lesser humans (Albán Achinte, 2013, p. 5). Both notions, that of invisibility and negative visibility point out that there has been a systematic process of negation and silencing of Afro-descendants’ contributions, as well as the structural violence that they have faced for centuries.

On the other hand, de Friedemann’s (1984 in Silva, 2014) notion of estereotipia refers to the visibility of Afro-descendants as related to the savage, primitive and exotic (p. 30). Similarly, stereotypical representations of black people have been analysed by Hall (1997a). According to Hall, stereotypes are symbolic modes of violence based on the hierarchical simplification of the most highlighted and widely recognised characteristics of a historically excluded group of people, which are permanently reduced to those characteristics (Hall, 1997a, pp. 258–259). Within the Ecuadorian context and as it is developed further in Chapter Three, although Marimba and Bomba were completely ignored until the 1970s, afterwards these began to be acknowledged by first, relating them to pejorative racialised characteristics and afterwards (from the 1990s), to ‘positive’ or ‘aestheTic’ characteristics. Interestingly, both, even the ones, are part of a process of invisibility and estereotipia of Afro-Ecuadorians.

It is suggested here that one of the most successful strategies that allowed for colonial difference to remain being comfortably sustained over the last decades is related to Hall's and Mignolo and the Mexican sociologist Rolando Vazquez's notions of 'positive' (Hall, 1997a) and 'aestheTic' representations (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013). Hall (1997a) suggested that any fixed representations of black people, even the ones that are considered 'positive', are racialised (p. 273). Moreover, the so-called positive characteristics attributed to Afro-Ecuadorians are usually related to hidden pejorative connotations. Following Arboleda Quiñonez' notion of negative visibility, the 'positive' characteristics that are still part of a racialised colonial difference could be said to be a sort of 'pseudo-positive visibility'. In a similar vein, but more related to the notion of colonial difference, Mignolo and Vazquez (2013) approached these pseudo-positive racialised strategies with the notion of aestheTics. Etymologically, the word aesthetics has a Greek origin. It evolved from the word 'aesthesis'. However, whereas aesthesis is an essential human attribute related to the perception of any sensation from any living organism, the notion of aestheTics is one that has been created to express the idea of a colonial, Eurocentric and universalised key concept to regulate and reproduce a specific notion of taste, sensibility, sentiments and sensations and through this, the notion of the beautiful and the sublime.<sup>37</sup> Thus, through the notion of aestheTics, any notion of beauty that did not fit with the Eurocentric idea of beauty was devalued (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201; Mignolo, 2010, pp. 13–14; Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, pp. 5–7). Mignolo and Vasquez specifically question the

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<sup>37</sup> I understand Eurocentrism as the universalised character of European historical experience, which is perceived as the only valid and objective way of knowing (Lander, 2005, p. 15).



colonial usage of the term aesthetics and thus, propose the spelling of aestheTics with a capital T to signify that it is specifically related to a Eurocentred concept that originated during colonialism (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, p. 12).

It is argued here that the Eurocentric notion of aestheTics has been the frame within which public representations of Marimba and Bomba have attempted to hide colonial difference since the 1990s. By this, I mean that the ‘cultural’ characteristics that since then have been overtly related to Afro-Ecuadorians in official circles have been carefully crafted in order not to be understood as insults but as aestheTic, pseudo-positive, and therefore, politically correct perceptions of which Afro-Ecuadorians should feel proud. Also, through a process of internalised colonialism, even some Marimberos and Bomberos have learned and adapted to these aestheTic racialised perceptions and thus, have been inscribed and even “trapped by stereotypes” (Hall, 1997a, p. 263). It is suggested here that these Marimberos and Bomberos have adopted some of these aestheTic characteristics as a desperate response to a need to construct a unified identity that distinguishes them from the rest of the population and is recognisable by the Ecuadorian community as a whole as theirs. Thus, Marimberos and Bomberos are still related to racialised, though aestheTic, characteristics such as being hyper-sexual and always being happy. For instance, in official spaces, Afro-Ecuadorians are positively considered as being good at performing physical activities such as dancing and being naturally happy. However, as has been conclusively shown by Birenbaum-Quintero (2006), dancing is usually considered an unproductive activity that does not require intellectual capacities and which is usually preferred by ‘lazy’ and intellectually inferior beings who, since they do not make any effort, can afford to always be in a good mood

(para. 10).

On the other hand, although racialised pejorative perceptions are not publicly verbalised any more in official or academic circles, including within some public representations of Marimba and Bomba, these are still freely expressed in non-official spaces such as informal conversations, soccer games, TV talk shows and some public performances. As is shown in detail in Chapter Three, in these non-official spaces, Afro-Ecuadorians are straightforwardly related to laziness, animal-like behaviour, hyper-sexuality and stupidity. Since both official and non-official spaces are part of the historically racist Ecuadorian society, non-official spaces constitute ideal sites to voice that which is silenced, though tacitly present, in official discourses.

Locating the analytic category of race at the centre of colonial difference contributes to the understanding of public representations of Marimba and Bomba throughout history as part of a dehumanising colonial difference that highlights the estereotipia related to Marimberos and Bomberos, making them either invisible or negatively visible. From the 1990s, however, this negative visibility has been masked under pseudo-positive racialised traits. Despite this significant change, public representations of Marimba and Bomba are still part of a racialised colonial difference. Thus, currently, Afro-Ecuadorians in general and their music and dance-based events, in particular, are visible as a presence full of estereotipia and stigmas. Meanwhile, as has been mentioned by several authors (Albán Achinte, 2013, p. 5; STFS et al., 2005, p. 5), the epistemologies they have generated are still not taken into account. In opposition to this naturalistic approach to Afro-Ecuadorian music

and dance-based events, this thesis proposes a decolonial approach. This decolonial project is developed by exposing the colonial matrix of power that has silenced some of the Marimberos and Bomberos' complex and heterogeneous collective memories and also by including that which, although silenced, has survived for centuries as part of some Afro-Ecuadorians' processes of resistance.

### **Decolonising Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

This research is framed within a decolonial approach. It aims to highlight the enduring colonial matrix of power within which Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota have developed. The term 'decoloniality' is rooted in the term 'decolonisation'. In turn, the development of the term decolonisation is one of the legacies of the Bandung Conference that was held in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955. This conference was the first large-scale gathering of 29 recently independent Asian and African countries and had as its primary aim opposing colonialism in any nation. After that, the notion of decolonisation dispersed all over the world. Decades later, Latinamericanist scholars such as Quijano and Mignolo developed the notion of decoloniality which refers to undoing the damage that colonial modernity has caused by confronting and delinking from the colonial matrix of power (Gómez & Mignolo, 2012, pp. 7–8; Mignolo, 2011c, p. xxvii).

As part of the decolonial perspective of this thesis, one of the aims is to acknowledge some of the Marimberos and Bomberos' surviving collective memories that go beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system and that

almost four hundred years of colonial rule and two hundred years of internal colonialism have not been able to erase. Essential for the development of a decolonial option is the relation of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota to historical practices of freedom: cimarronaje or maroonage, collective memories and communicative competence. I suggest that although all performances of Marimba and Bomba can constitute sites of contestation since these can generate spaces to re-affirm and, more recently, to expose Afro-Ecuadorians' existence, only some of them can be considered part of the decolonial lineage of cimarronaje.

### **Cimarronaje**

During colonial times, the term 'cimarronaje' or maroonage referred to the process through which some enslaved people managed to escape from their working spaces (for instance, plantations or mines) as a way of rejecting their condition of subjugation and unlimited exploitation (Albán Achinte, 2013, p. 234). These enslaved people who escaped were known as 'cimarrón' or, in the plural, 'cimarrones'. Cimarrones would fight for freedom from specific created locations where they built new communities such as 'palenques' (León Castro, 2017, p. 153). Importantly, cimarrones were as heterogeneous as any other group of people. For instance, their relationship with their former masters was diverse. According to Wade's (1995) studies of Afro-Colombian cimarrones during Atlantic slavery, not all of them completely cut their ties with the masters or colonizers; "some [cimarrones] had trade relations with nearby haciendas, some requested priestly visits for religious purposes, some negotiated their freedom with the colonial authorities" (p. 344). Despite the different strategic relationships with masters, what all cimarrones had in

common was their successful physical escape from their sites of subjugation.

More recently, some Latinamericanist activists and academics have re-signified the notion of cimarronaje as a “symbol of resistance to [racial] oppression and the continuity of African tradition” (Wade, 1995, p. 344). For instance, Albán-Achinte (2013) and the Afro-Ecuadorian Latinamericanist Edizon León Castro (2017) state that cimarronaje should not be reduced to enslaved people’s practices that aimed for a physical escape but should also include any other non-mechanical practices of freedom that have existed at any point from the period of Atlantic slavery to the present day. In this new meaning, the ideology of cimarronaje that was translated into physical escape during Atlantic slavery, was transformed into creative behaviours that were reproduced from the period of Atlantic slavery itself but that also persisted in the following generations according to the needs of specific historical moments (Albán Achinte, 2013, pp. 233–237; León Castro, 2017, p. 153). Thus, according to the Ecuadorianist intellectual and militant, Catherine Walsh, and Mignolo (2018), although cimarronaje is rooted in the practices of the time of slavery, it also extended to post-slavery periods as “embodied standpoints and practices that disobey the reign and rule of coloniality and its axes of dehumanisation, racialisation, negation, and condemnation. It affirms collective being, memory, and knowledge...” (p. 43).

Similarly, León Castro understands cimarronaje as a collective consciousness aimed at reconstructing existence, freedom and liberty in the present but in conversation with the ancestors. Importantly, it confronts the dehumanisation and nonexistence that coloniality has marked (León Castro, 2017, p. 162; Walsh & León

Castro, 2005, p. 10). Following these authors, it is essential to highlight that practices of cimarronaje are not limited to political strategies but can be any collective attitudes or actions that achieve collective freedom (either momentarily or permanently) while being in constant relation to the past of Atlantic slavery. If the practices of cimarronaje have remained continual, we might even think of a “permanent cimarronaje”, understood as “an alert attitude and continuous escape from subjugation...” (Grueso, 2006, p. 152).

Importantly, in order to locate specific practices under the notion of permanent cimarronaje, it is essential to take into account the intentions of the ‘resistors’ and the perception of the ‘oppressors’. Taking into account these intentions and perceptions allows us to avoid being based solely on a categorisation imposed by the researcher, and especially, to avoid an essentialist perception of all the members of a specific group (for instance, all Marimberos and Bomberos) as being ‘indomitable resisters’ (Wade, 2010a, p. 158). In this respect, Montaña Escobar (2002, 2015) has already related the practice of Marimba Esmeraldeña during the Atlantic slavery period to the notion of cimarronaje as “the sounds that made possible emancipation” (Montaña Escobar, 2002, para. 3) or “that provoked the cimarrones’ optimism and developed a combative happiness” (Montaña Escobar, 2015, para. 3). Also, in the dialogues I had with some Marimberos and Bomberos, they expressed that they indeed consider some events of Marimba and Bomba as spaces that allowed them to ‘escape’ from the structure or ideology imposed by the patrón (plantation or mine owner), or even many mestizo people, over their bodies and minds despite constant attempts to either censor or at least control these practices.

Following Wade (1995, p. 344), it is stressed in this thesis that just as not all enslaved people were cimarrones, the fact that the Marimberos and Bomberos with whom I talked relate their practice to the notion of cimarronaje does not mean that all Marimberos or Bomberos that have existed throughout history have identified with the notion of being a cimarrón. This clarification is essential for avoiding the naturalisation of this post-colonial conceptualisation of cimarronaje or for it to be understood as implying that, “if you are a black person, your real nature is to resist” (Wade, 1995, p. 352). This would, of course, exclude people who identify themselves as black or Afro-Ecuadorian but who are not interested in being included within the notion of cimarronaje.

Regarding the position of ‘oppressors’, although a process of analysis of the perceptions of such a group, that would include some mestizo people, goes beyond the scope of this research, the various attempts to prohibit or control Marimba and Bomba express the oppressors’ need to silence practices that have historically been considered ‘dangerous’ since they do not conform to the oppressors’ idea of how music and dances should be performed and the moral values they want to reproduce. In the context of this thesis, I locate Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota events within the diverse music and dance-based events of the African diaspora that have been part of a process of permanent cimarronaje, since these originated during the Atlantic slavery period and are performed until the present day within a context of collective violence and resistance. However, as a matter of heuristically distinguishing the different events of Marimba and Bomba, I locate under the category of cimarrón specifically those events of Marimba and Bomba

that, as mentioned above, ‘escape’ from an imposed structure or ideology through the expression of embodied and collective memories beyond their sound and movement system.

Following Albán Achinte’s (2013, p. 236) studies of Afro-Colombians and the North American feminist historian Stephanie Camp’s (2006; 2002, 2004) studies on slavery in the United States, I suggest that Marimba and Bomba are part of a group of music and dance-based events that have historically existed as sites of escape from subjugation (permanent cimarronaje) permitting Marimberos and Bomberos to regain ownership of their lives. Whereas slaveholders and patrones during the Huasipungo period in Chota-Mira or during the period of mining and oil extraction in Esmeraldas generated fixed sites of domination or containment such as plantations or mines in order to control the landscapes and determine the uses of Afro-Ecuadorians, Afro-Ecuadorians generated dynamic “social worlds” (Lovejoy, 1997, p. 7) as practices of ‘re-existence’.

Albán-Achinte proposed the term ‘re-existence’ to overcome the limits he encountered in the usage of the term resistance, which has been “a defining term used by social movements as oppositional and defensive actions” (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 33).<sup>38</sup> Moreover, there has been a strong tendency to relate the notion of Afro-descendants’ resistance to “an international community of blacks who share a history of suffering” (Wade, 1995, p. 350). Conversely, in the usage of the notion of

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<sup>38</sup> Although most of the times social movements have utilised the notion of resistance as part of their fight against the official political powers, the Ecuadorian government itself has also utilised it. For instance, the Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa (2007-2017) urged Ecuadorians to invoke their right to ‘resist’ Indigenous-Ecuadorians’ demands as a way of diminishing their importance (Walsh, 2010, p. 117).



re-existence there is an attempt to focus more on Afro-descendants' propositional actions - instead of on oppositional ones - that have constructed strategies to intervene towards an otherwise reality (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 34, 46). Albán-Achinte (2009) defines re-existence as "the daily mechanisms of human groups to create and develop strategies to confront the realities established by a hegemonic project that from the colonial era to the present day have silenced, inferiorised and negatively made visible the existence of Afro-descendant population" (p. 94). According to León Castro (2017, p. 153), the black enslaved people's process of cimarronaje during Atlantic slavery was not just an act of resistance but also of re-existence, since enslaved people did not just run away from enslavement but also generated antagonistic spaces to rebuild their lives (p. 153). Also, León Castro (2016) argues that the decision of some Afro-Ecuadorians in the last decades to deconstruct their music and dance-based events by acknowledging the existence of memories that tell about their political and historical process and allow a re-learning about their roots is also an act of re-existence (p. 79). In this research, I suggest that the notion of permanent cimarronaje, resistance and re-existence could be related to all the events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota as well as to the decolonial project in hand. However, as is discussed in detail below, in this thesis I have strategically chosen to relate to the category of 'cimarrón' those events that express collective memories that go beyond the sound and movement system of Marimba or Bomba, since those are precisely the memories that counteract the generalised belief that these two music and dance-based events are a fixed and repetitive set of sounds and movement.

## **Collective memories**

As has been mentioned above, a characteristic that is essential for the purpose of this thesis in regards of a process of permanent cimarronaje and thus, a continuous experience of resistance and re-existence in the events of Marimba and Bomba, is the dynamic relation of Marimberos and Bomberos' to their collective past. This collective past has affected the events of Marimba and Bomba through what has been named as collective memories. Collective memories are understood by the French sociologist and psychologist Maurice Halbwachs (2004/1968) as the evocation of an occurrence from the perspective of a person or a group of people as a way of reconstructing past events lived and experienced by themselves or other members of the group (p. 36). From Halbwachs' pioneering studies of collective memories, other authors have developed more specific and recent approaches that are of relevance for this research. According to the Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli, the Nicaraguan anthropologist María Dolores Alvarez Arzate and the Argentinean sociologist Elizabeth Jelin, collective memories began as events narrated (or transmitted) by a person (individual memory) or a group of persons who shared their experience through an active process of creation of meanings to be passed to new generations (Alvarez Arzate, 2017, p. 101; Jelin, 2002, p. 33; Portelli, 1991, p. 69).

Collective memories can also be understood as shared or overlapping memories that are a product of multiple interactions framed in specific social environments (Jelin, 2002, p. 22). It is because of this multiplicity of voices and interactions that interpretations of specific events can vary, generating more than one version of the same event. Therefore, it would not be accurate to refer to ‘collective memory’ but to ‘collective memories’ as the interweaving of personal memories in constant dialogue and flux with each other. Importantly, as has been stated by the Mexican psychologist Jorge Mendoza García (2005), collective memories do not necessarily refer to the factual description of some events but to the significance that those events had on people (p. 7). Thus, collective memories do not just focus on what happened but on why and how it happened; in other words, they constitute a dynamic and affective assessment in terms of each person’s or persons’ understanding of justice (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987, p. 9).

The affective character of many collective memories is especially crucial since an ever-present issue in research that involves collective memories is that since they are not just factual and are usually transmitted orally or through the body, with no written documentation, a lack of consistency or even credibility can be related to some of them (Jelin, 2002, p. 20). Collective memories frequently end up being considered as an a-critical belief, a myth or a romantic and idealised version of the past, whereas official or written history tends to be understood as fact, which is scientifically proven (Jelin, 2002, pp. 64–65). However, as Portelli and Rivera Cusicanqui have affirmed, it is not about being able to distinguish false or invented memories, but it is about looking into the diversity of narratives that are generated around each particular occurrence (Portelli in Jelin, 2002, p. 77; Rivera Cusicanqui,

1987, p. 9). Thus, there is no one version of a historical event that can be considered as the totality of what happened, but there are different perspectives on the significance that a specific event has had. This approach also contributes to acknowledging collective memories not as opposite perspectives from official history but as another, much more affective, dynamic and actualized, version of history.

Importantly, official history and collective memories function within a specific power relation that has existed since colonialism, where official history is the hegemonic narrative and therefore, the ‘legitimate’ one (Jelin, 2002, p. 22). Moreover, official history is usually portrayed as a single version of history. Most of the time, through the apparently ‘singular version’ of official history, colonial difference is reproduced. As has been stated by García Salazar (n.d.-b, Conferencia Negra); “they have never included our [Afro-Ecuadorians’] history in the textbooks. Moreover, each time they mention us it is to remind people that we used to be slaves” (13:00). Important for this research, official history is also the basis of what is being communicated through some public performances of Marimba and Bomba.

The monopoly of official history is precisely the reason why this thesis is framed within the option of decoloniality. Through the understanding of decoloniality, here it is proposed the dynamic insertion of portions of collective memories beyond the sound and movement system of Marimba and Bomba in public representations of Marimba and Bomba in order to expose them and make them as widespread as official history. Collective memories beyond sound and movement system are precisely the ones that are seldom taken into account. Thus, as Karavanta

(2013) affirms, such insertion constitutes other ways of imagining, thinking and representing the human being who produced and generated her/his aesthetics, ideas, language and community practices (p. 44). Essential for this research, the vast majority of the collective memories beyond sound and movement system are passed on orally. Importantly, as is shown in detail by the Peruvian sociologist Rafael F. Narváez (2006), collective memories can also be passed through the body. In that sense, this thesis is limited to the sounds and silences of collective oral memories, which includes mainly testimonies as well as other embodied sounds related to those oral testimonies, such as laughter or sighs. However, this thesis does not include the vast array of collective memories transmitted mainly through bodies.

Issues of representation related to collective memories are also crucial. The fact that some memories are collective in the sense of coming from a few members of a specific group does not mean that each collective memory necessarily represents the whole group. In that respect, local authors such as Garcia Salazar and Walsh (2017), who have developed the notion of collective memories specifically concerning Afro-Esmeraldeños and Afro-Choteños, have highlighted the relation between collective memories and Afro-Ecuadorians as a group. For these authors, collective memories' communal aspect is essential; "[collective memory] is rooted in modes of coexistence and social organisation marked by communal cohesion..." (Walsh, 2002, p. 69). However, their communal aspect does not mean that they are part of each Afro-Ecuadorian but that they are related to most of them. For instance, although no memory could represent all Afro-Ecuadorians, according to García, most Afro-Ecuadorians are more or less aware of historical and contemporary facts that affect them. These facts refer to a meaning, a value, a way of saying or being, or

a particular way of understanding the world (García Salazar & Walsh, 2015, pp. 81–83).

In regards to the relation between collective memories and past experiences, García and Walsh (2017) affirm that collective memories are precisely “the group of philosophies and teachings that come from the elders” (p. 181). They are also “...a result of a dynamic and collective production that articulates past and present...” (Walsh, 2002, p. 69). Importantly, these collective memories can be related to past experiences from different historical periods. Based on the categorisations developed by the Afro-Peruvian researcher and folklorist Victoria Santa Cruz Espejo, García Salazar and Rivera Cusicanqui, it is suggested here that collective memories can be part of a ‘memoria ancestral’ (ancestral memory), ‘memoria larga’ (long memories) or ‘memoria corta’ (short memories).

The relationship between ancestrality and memory is related to the embodied and oral transmission of memories from pre-colonial periods. To further explain it, Santa Cruz Espejo generated the concept of ‘ancestral memory’ as part of her creative methodology for staging folk Afro-Peruvian dances. For Santa Cruz Espejo, ancestral memory is a strategy to connect herself with her African ancestors by finding the ancient secrets kept within her own body. Thus, it constitutes a bodily process of rediscovery, her own body representing an ‘Africa’ where lost ancestral memories get accumulated (Santa Cruz Espejo in Feldman, 2005, p. 210, 2009, pp. 79, 82, 261). As Feldman affirms, this and other creative methods of relating to a pre-enslavement past, some of which are included in this research, have been used by artists and scholars from the diaspora to restore fragmented collective memories

(Feldman, 2005, p. 211).<sup>39</sup>

Likewise, according to García Salazar (in Walsh & León Castro, 2005), ancestry is a mode of history and a way of thinking and acting that is related to ties between Afro-Ecuadorians' and their African ancestors. It responds to the fragmentation, dispersion, discontinuity and disarticulation that the experience of Atlantic slavery caused. The intention behind keeping ancestral memories alive is not just to keep rearticulating those memories in new historical, social, cultural and spatial logics, but also to reconstruct the histories and spiritual ties that have been hidden and silenced and to cultivate a source as well as a sense of belonging in order to culturally live on and survive. In that respect, the diaspora signifies both dispersion and creation. Ancestrality then implies learning of and from what preceded them to be allied or united to those who came before (García Salazar in Walsh & León Castro, 2005, pp. 5–6).

A notion of ancestral memories is especially relevant since many Africans and Afro-descendants, including most Afro-Ecuadorians with whom I have talked and African scholars such as Irobi (2007), feel the need of continuously reclaiming their 'Africanness'. This factual reality goes against Gilroy's (1993) famous claim of a need to reject an imagined Africa as an influential homeland for Afro-diasporic music and dance-based events. Independently of Gilroy's well sustained argument, some people from the African Diaspora, including some Afro-Ecuadorian

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<sup>39</sup> Importantly, based on her dialogues with Santa Cruz Espejo, Feldman relates Santacruz-Espejo and others' experiences related to ancestral memory with what she calls a "diasporic imagination" (Feldman, 2009, p. 62). However, it is my contention that utilizing the term 'imagination' in relation to Santacruz-Espejo's approach could be dangerously confused with something that is untrue.

Marimberos and Bomberos, feel and most probably will keep feeling (and have the right to feel) the need of continuously reclaiming their belonging to not just Atlantic slavery and its aftermaths but also to an Africa that, although without historical documentation, they feel they can still relate to.

Throughout these ten years, I had had two important although brief conversations about ancestry with the Afro-Choteño Iván Pabón (personal communication, 2014) and the Afro-Esmeraldeño Juan Montaña Escobar (personal communication, 2018). When I asked them their opinion about Gilroy's affirmation of the importance of leaving behind the romanticised idea of an imagined Africa as influential for the African diaspora, both strongly disagreed and argued that the urgency they have always felt to relate to Africa and their feeling of an Africanness has been central to their personal and professional choices. Moreover, they think that their urgency is genuine and valid. Similarly, throughout my very many visits to Afro-Esmeraldeño and Afro-Choteño communities, one of the first questions that villagers ask me when they find out I am a researcher is; when are you going to be able to tell us where we come from?

Concerning long and short memories, within the Latin American context, Rivera Cusicanqui refers to long memories as those related to the colonial period such as Atlantic slavery whereas short memories are those related to post-colonial periods such as the period of independence and formation of Latin American nations (Rivera Cusicanqui in Accossatto, 2017, pp. 171–172; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2014, p. 64).



In this research, collective memories were gathered principally from previously recorded interviews and from my fieldwork conversations.<sup>40</sup> Many of these gathered collective memories are certainly part of the ‘*memoria corta*’ (short memories). For instance, the collective memories included in the compositions about a racialised colonial difference and the censorships of Marimba clearly include testimonies of post-colonial periods (See Chapter Four). On the other hand, although the time of origin of many collective memories is uncertain, archival information suggests that some of them could also belong to a *memoria larga*. This is the case with the testimonies presented in the composition about the diablo, which seem to be connected with experiences of enslavement and to have even kept some Africanisms (See Chapter Four). As for ancestral memories, the possibility of some of the collective memories included in this thesis being influenced by collective memories prior to Atlantic slavery is not ignored. For instance, portions of the poetic narration written by the marimbero cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales and the Bombero Cimarrón Diego Palacio Ocles, both of which are included in this research (See Chapters Three and Four), are memories related to their African past. According to Gonzales and Ocles (personal communication, 2018), these ancestral memories were not transmitted orally but through emotional and spiritual ties (dreams or divine inspiration) between them and their African ancestors.

According to Feldman (2005), this need for developing a specific relationship with Africa in spite of the insufficient evidence to sustain it, is particularly clear in countries such as Ecuador, which are part of the black Pacific, since most Afro-

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<sup>40</sup> The oldest recording used in this work is the one with the famous marimbero cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez. Escobar Quiñónez was interviewed in 1983 when he was 72 years old.

descendants from these countries were taken away from almost all of their African past, unlike those that belong to the black Atlantic such as Cuba, Brazil or Trinidad who were able to retain many more ancestral memories (pp. 211, 220). Similarly, most Marimberos and Bomberos with whom I talked in this research and also some authors such as the Latinamericanist ethnomusicologist Helmut Brenner and the Afro-Ecuadorian Latinamericanist José Chalá Cruz do mention the African influence of Marimba Esmeraldeña (Brenner, 2007, pp. 19–20) and Bomba del Chota (Chalá Cruz, 2010, pp. 1–32). Thus, some of the sounds of the music of marimba and bomba are considered as the main ancestral memories that are included in this research. It is argued here that it is Marimberos and Bomberos' relation to collective memories (ancestral, long and short) that makes the events of Marimba and Bomba part of a process of permanent cimarronaje, resistance and re-existence despite the various historical attempts to erase many of those memories.

A central concern in this research is the systematic forgetfulness and silencing of many of the collective memories related to Marimberos and Bomberos. This has been named as 'olvido social' (social oblivion) or 'desmemoria' (oblivion). Although desmemoria is part of memory, two forms of desmemoria can be recognised, a voluntary and a forced one (Alvarez Arzate, 2017, pp. 108–109). It is the latter which has been related to Mendoza's (2005) notion of olvido social, understood as the impossibility of evoking or expressing significant events, that at some point were important for a group of people, due to the fact that the communication of these events was blocked or prohibited. When desmemoria affects a majority of the society, then the imposed desmemoria is assumed, and it becomes social. According to Mendoza (2005), olvido social is usually provoked by those

with power who determine what must be forgotten and what should remain in memory and utilise specific strategies to make this happen (p. 9).

Similarly, local scholars such as García and Walsh have also pointed out the relation between olvido social and the power structure by what they have named as ‘desmemoria’ (oblivion). These authors understand ‘desmemoria’ not as a condition of the present, but as a strategy of power that works to transgress the past and even to divert attention from colonial legacies, and, in doing so, weaken the very elements upon which a collective black identity and existence are built (García Salazar & Walsh, 2015, p. 92; Walsh, 2012, p. 29). Following García Salazar (Bicentenario n.d.-a, 42:19), although there is an insistence upon forgetting specific facts of Afro-Ecuadorians’ history (collective memories), what this and other similar research aims to accomplish is to make evident that what the Marimberos and Bomberos remember and what they say is valid. Thus, this thesis is an attempt to question and disobey what colonial difference, through official history, has taught Afro-Ecuadorians and mestizo people about Afro-Ecuadorians. In order to achieve this, it is essential to realise the different types of relations between Marimberos, Bomberos and their collective memories through what has been named as ‘communicative competence’.

### **Communicative competence**

During conversations I held with a good number of Marimberos and Bomberos over the course of the years, I have noticed that they made a clear distinction between those Marimberos and Bomberos who expressed knowledges

that were limited to playing or dancing marimba or bomba and those who expressed knowledges that went beyond the performance of sounds and movements. This second group of Marimberos and Bomberos were acknowledged as being also connected to what has been named here as collective memories that go beyond sound and movement systems and thus, have been located in this thesis under the category of cimarrones. Based on these conversations, I suggest that the Marimberos and Bomberos' relation to collective memories beyond sound and movement system and thus, to the category of cimarrones, can be expressed in some events of Marimba and Bomba through what the North American ethnochoreologist Adrienne Kaepler (2000, 2001, 2002) has named as 'communicative competence'.

To build upon the notion of communicative competence, I follow Kaepler (2002) to state that some music and dances are not a universal language limited to the performance of sounds and movements ( p. 16). Based on Kaepler, I underscore that not all persons who learn how to play or dance marimba and bomba learn the 'language' that is needed to become part of a process of what has been named here as permanent cimarronaje. I relate Kaepler's statement of the non-universality of music and dances to the local example of an Ecuadorian who in 2011 uploaded a video on YouTube of a performance of Marimba, Bomba and other Ecuadorian rhythms (Freeze, 2011). The video shows a group of US students performing the choreographies she directed. In the written explanation of the uploaded video the choreographer wrote that she believes that music and dance are a universal language that can unite people with different backgrounds. Although it seems that the main aim of the choreographer was to share the culture of her country with the group of US students, the dancers do not seem to have any other knowledge of Marimberos

and Bomberos beyond some costumes usually utilised in folk performances of these music and dance-based events. Especially in the case of the representation of Bomba in the aforementioned video and as has been explained above, the costumes the dancers chose to wear (short skirts and blouses) and the hyper-sexual way of performing the dance steps resulted in representing the Bomberos through the lens of a racialised colonial difference, in other words, as a group of happy and hyper-sexual people (See fig. 12).

In order to counteract colonial representations, it is crucial to take into account that although Marimba's and Bomba's movements and sounds have a symbolic meaning, other expressed collective memories are also an intrinsic part of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. The importance of collective memories beyond a sound and movement system becomes clear through the notion of communicative competence. Within this research, communicative competence refers to the expression of those collective memories that include but go beyond a tradition of sound and movement. These collective memories have to do with the cognitive learning of the shared rules of a specific tradition of sound and movement (Kaeppeler, 2002, p. 15) or with specific experiences that have shaped the events of Marimba or Bomba. Therefore, it is expected that not all collective memories of Marimba and Bomba would be transmitted while singing and dancing, but also while, for instance, being immersed in Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba and Bomba events and when listening to the retelling of past experiences -collective memories- among Afro-Ecuadorians' families and friends. It is within the deep understanding of collective memories and in the ability and choice to express them (verbally or not) that communicative competence is located. Importantly, this does not mean that the

passing on of collective memories directly related to how to play and dance marimba and bomba is not essential. Conversely, as is explained throughout this thesis, learning how to play and dance marimba or bomba is not just the basis of any of its performance but constitutes the clearest indication of the state of Marimba and Bomba as a whole. That is, when the collective memories related to sound and movement systems begin to get lost, it automatically affects the survival of the rest of the collective memories.

In this research, I consider the communicative competence of the participants of an event as their oral or embodied expressed collective memories; in other words, their collective memories used as a way of communicating among each other. In light of my conversations with Marimberos and Bomberos and as a way of including some of them in the Afro-Ecuadorians' continuous process of liberation, here I refer to the Marimberos and Bomberos who have communicative competence as 'Marimbero/s Cimarrón/es' or 'Bombero/s Cimarrón/es' for men and in the plural form, and 'Marimbera/s Cimarrona/s' or 'Bombera/s Cimarrona/s' for women. Importantly, these proposed terms differ from how the term Bomberos or Marimberos are used among Afro-Ecuadorians. Usually, Bomberos or Marimberos refer to people who know how to play or dance marimba or bomba. However, the people named in this thesis as Marimberos or Bomberos Cimarrones do not necessarily imply that they know how to play or dance marimba or bomba. Indeed, although a good number of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones who participated in this thesis are directly related to the performance of cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba, some of them do not know how to play or dance marimba or bomba but have vivid memories of cimarrón participatory

events and can choose to have communicative competence. Their older relatives usually organised these events, thus they were able to witness them when they were children. Other people with whom I spoke did not witness an event but inherited oral or embodied collective memories related to past events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba. Consequently, not all of them are performers; some in fact are academics, militants, activists, poets, writers, cultural managers and makers of musical instruments. Since in this thesis I prioritise participants' relation to collective memories, beyond the performances of their sound and movement system, these diverse groups of people are still considered Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones here.

It is essential to understand that people who are related to Marimba's or Bomba's collective memories are a heterogeneous group. Thus, some of them may have a level of awareness of the collective memories embedded in Marimba or Bomba (communicative competence) but choose to not exteriorise them during a specific performance of Marimba or Bomba. Thus, being a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón is not necessarily a permanent role but is instead an option for those who have a relationship to Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories. For instance, one of the most famous performers of Marimba Esmeraldeña, Guillermo Ayoví, widely known as 'Papá Roncón', expresses precisely how becoming a Marimbero Cimarrón is an option in his conversation with the North American ethnomusicologist Jonathan Ritter (1999a). Papá Roncón explains that when he sees tourists come, "since they know nothing and have no respect for tradition" (Ritter, 1999a, p. 73), he plays the marimba alone. However, when someone he feels is genuinely interested in Marimba comes and asks him to play, he does not do it if he

is alone since “Marimba is communal [just one person cannot play it]” (Ritter, 1999a, p. 73). Likewise, the collective memories gathered here come mainly from Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, who are people who know collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba that go beyond playing an instrument or knowing a specific set of dance steps. Clearly, the fact that some Marimberos and Bomberos can choose to be cimarrones affects the events of which they are part.

Importantly, I suggest that a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón does not have to be necessarily Afro-Ecuadorian, although most of them are. However, for a non-Afro-Ecuadorian to become a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón he/she must be temporarily or permanently considered as such by a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón. Within the Afro-Ecuadorian context, this recognition is not done through any specific ritual but through informal comments or shared perceptions. An example of the transference of collective memories that go beyond dancing and playing comes from personal experience. Although I joyfully learned how to perform the basic steps of the dance of bomba ten years ago, during my first months in Chota-Mira Valley, it took me much longer to realise the detailed and complex relationship between the dancing bodies’ hips, which includes an embodied ability to listen and to ‘play’ with one’s dance partner under specific cultural rules. In recent years, when I performed Bomba with my Afro-Choteño friends, they would sometimes tell me ‘usted ya baila como negra’ (you are dancing like a black woman). Through asking what they meant by this, I understood that sometimes, my behaviour while performing Bomba went beyond performing the right step but also included other knowledges related to collective memories that I have managed to



grasp, understand and embody throughout these years. One of these knowledges was performing the Bomba's main hip movement with 'cadencia' (looseness and precision), which is one of the characteristics of Bomba that has prevailed (See Chapter Two). I believe I understood the 'cadencia' of cimarrón-participatory Bomba after years of debunking the beliefs I grew up with, like that of the Bomberos Cimarrones' hip movement necessarily having sexual or sensual connotations, and realising that it was more about a learning process of intimately sensing the dance partners' body and movements and following them.

On the other hand, when a person who is not related to Marimba's or Bomba's collective memories observes a performance of Marimba and Bomba and spontaneously decides to dance or play the instrument, even if she/he performs the movements correctly, he/she would not be considered as Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón in this research since her/his knowledge is limited to the imitation of the movements he/she is witnessing.

To further contextualise the origin and development of Marimba and Bomba in regards to the practice of permanent 'cimarronaje' or maroonage and its relation to collective memories and communicative competence, a classification of the events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota into the categories of cimarrón-participatory and presentational or public is proposed. This classification proves especially useful for the development of a counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba.

## **The counter-representation of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

As stated in the last section, I affirm that the different relations that participants of an event of Marimba or Bomba have to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories are crucial. Thus, a participant with a relationship to those collective memories makes sense of Marimba or Bomba differently than a participant who does not have that relationship. Based on their relationship to collective memories and also on other important characteristics that derive from it, such as the relationship between participants, their official or non-official and public or intimate character, I propose to classify Marimba and Bomba events in 'cimarrón-participatory' and 'presentational'. I also suggest using these proposed categories as the basis for the periodisation of Marimba and Bomba (See Chapter Two). The distinction between cimarrón-participatory and presentational events is essential for generating a counter-representation through the questioning of presentational representations (level of the enunciation) and the inclusion of silenced collective memories (level of the enunciated). Importantly, these two levels, although interrelated, are developed separately through what has been named as a 'ch'ixi' product and with a focus on sound.

In spite of the complexity of periodising events or classifying participants based on their relationship to collective memories, especially in terms of the bias it can entail, I am locating myself as the arbitrator of these classifications, building on my long-term relation and my conversations with the most renowned Marimberos and Bomberos of Ecuador. My decision to propose this creative and innovative strategy of classification responds to the need to avoid approaching the events of

Marimba and Bomba without any kind of distinction. The tendency to generalise the events of Marimba and Bomba has caused the silencing of those collective memories that go beyond their sound and movement system, and that constitute an essential part of their powerful history of resistance and re-existence. This seemingly radical proposal of categorising Bomba and Marimba through a binary analysis is considered specially relevant given the particularly stark racism Afro-Ecuadorians have historically endured (See Chapter Three). However, these classifications must be approached with caution and with the understanding that they work mainly as a necessary heuristic device and not as an attempt to test the ‘authenticity’ of each performance or period, a concept that this thesis does not follow. Furthermore, these classifications are not an attempt at ignoring or over-simplify each event of Marimba and Bomba or the complex development that these two music and dance-based events have gone through over time. Thus, it is important to point out that the different modes of relation of each event and period to collective memories proposed here do not disregard the fact that each event is complex and multi-layered, and that participants certainly have agency and the ability to propose innovative ideas in all events.

An interesting example to clarify the complexity of Marimba and Bomba is the fact that very often, in Afro-Choteño music and dance festivals in Chota-Mira or black people’s neighbourhoods, what has been named here as presentational and cimarrón-participatory events are performed at the same time. Whilst the folk group doing music and dances is performing on stage (presentational), a portion of the Afro-Choteño audience, located ‘outside’ that frame, and thus, beyond the formality and expectations of a presentational performance, is being affected by the

presentational event and engages in a cimarrón-participatory event. Whereas the participants in the presentational performance direct their creativity to produce a vibrant and appealing spectacle based mainly on Bomba's sound and movement system, the cimarrón-participatory performance happening in front of them also performs other collective memories beyond Bomba's sound and movement system, such as energetic hip-pushing among dancers (see Chapter Four). In this example it becomes clear what I mentioned above, which is that although each performance has unique characteristics, especially in their way of relating to collective memories, both groups of participants are clearly cognizant, agential and innovative in their engagement with Bomba<sup>41</sup>. It is also worth mentioning that the categorization of a performance of Marimba or Bomba as cimarrón-participatory, presentational or counter-representation and the proposed periodisation based on these categories, has been based on a steady process that has included a deep engagement with these dances. By this I mean that I did not just witness a few performances but also built a long-term relationship with participants in order to comprehend its historical and social context (what has been named here as a *relación de escucha* – See the Introduction). The cimarrón-participatory and presentational categories and the process of development of the proposed counter-representation are explained in detail throughout this section and also through a comparative table (See fig. 13) and a transformational diagram (See fig. 14).

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<sup>41</sup> This example is specific to Bomba since I have not seen an Afro-Esmeraldeño audience engaging with a presentational performance of Marimba by performing among themselves. In fact, usually the Afro-Esmeraldeño audience are sitting down during a presentational performance of Marimba, unlike when the presentational performance is about for instance, Salsa, where then all the audience stands and performs.

## **Cimarrón-participatory and presentational categories**

Drawing on Hall (1997a, 1997b), who argues that a practice of representation is the embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form which can be transmitted and meaningfully interpreted, I wish to affirm that all events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota are systems of representation that construct specific meanings. These meanings are continually being generated and interpreted. As Hall (1997b) suggested, the importance of understanding the meanings portrayed in each practice (or category) of representation lies in the fact that it is meaning that helps to set rules, norms and conventions by which social life is ordered and governed (p. 3). Moreover, meanings mobilise powerful feelings and emotions, define what is normal, who belongs, and therefore, who and what is excluded (Hall, 1997b, p. 10). In order to understand the different meanings that the events of Marimba and Bomba have communicated throughout history, I found it useful to build on the North American ethnomusicologist Tomas Turino's (2008) classification of performances into participatory and presentational modes. Importantly, although Turino's proposed characteristics of each category of performance constitute important ways of classifying the events of Marimba and Bomba, in order to apply Turino's approach, I have adapted his categories to the events of Marimba and Bomba through developing some of his proposed characteristics and adding some new ones.

According to Turino, a participatory performance is a particular type of practice in which there are no distinctions between dancers or musicians and the audience, only people who are actively contributing and leading the sound and

motion of an event through dancing, singing, clapping and playing musical instruments, and where each of these activities is considered as being integral to the performance. Usually, the quality of a participatory performance is judged by the intensity of participation achieved. The result is that a participatory performance leads to a special kind of concentration by the participants who are interacting with and through sound and motion and who are focusing on the performance in and for itself. This heightened concentration of the participants is one reason why a participatory performance is such a strong force for social bonding. Another reason is that a participatory performance welcomes different levels of expertise to join, avoiding the exclusion of someone because of her/his low level of expertise. This openness ensures that a full range indicative of the learning curve is audibly and visually present and provides reachable goals for people at all skill levels. In a participatory performance, pieces often have what Turino calls ‘feathered’ beginnings and endings. That is, the start and the conclusion of the pieces are not sharply delineated (Turino, 2008, pp. 26–36).<sup>42</sup>

In this thesis, I do not necessarily relate the term ‘participatory’ to everyone joining the performance through dancing, singing or clapping. As is shown below, there is also the possibility of everyone dancing and singing in some events of Marimba and Bomba that I have located within the second category of performance. I relate Turino’s notion of participatory to performances where the participants who have knowledge of Marimba and Bomba’s collective memories beyond their sound

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<sup>42</sup> I have purposefully excluded terms such as ‘artist’ and ‘professionals’ from the group of characteristics originally proposed by Turino (2008). From the decolonial points of view I am following in this thesis, these terms are problematic since they are related to a colonial division of roles that is not necessarily applicable to all events of Marimba and Bomba (Mignolo, 2011a, para. 5). Thus, their usage needs a broader discussion that cannot be developed here due to space constraints.

and movement system choose to express this knowledge. This knowledge does not necessarily have to be expressed through dancing and singing. Likewise, a participant dancing or singing does not guarantee his/her being related to collective memories of Marimba and Bomba beyond their sound and movement system.

On the other hand, participants who are not dancing or singing could still show their relation to collective memories beyond the sound and movement system through being able to immerse themselves in the performance. This immersion could be accomplished through expressing knowledges of shared rules or past collective experiences that have shaped events of Marimba and Bomba over time; in other words, they possess communicative competence. In the same manner, I relate Turino's affirmation of participatory events welcoming different levels of expertise and the fact that participatory performances can be a strong force for social bonding to participants' communicative competence. I suggest that it is precisely some Marimberos and Bomberos' communicative competence that allows them to pass on collective memories and thus generate a learning space for younger generations. It is this transference of collective memories that could potentially generate social bonding in this category of performance. As was explained in the last section, events of Marimba and Bomba whose participants have communicative competence are located in this thesis as part of a process of permanent cimarronaje. Accordingly, I refer to these events as cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba or Bomba.

I also consider it essential to take into consideration that cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba are not in line with official discourse. As has been explained in previous sections and will be explained

furthermore in Chapter Four, since the colonial period, cimarrón-participatory events have contested official discourses related to, for instance, Judeo-Christian beliefs. More recently, since the decolonisation of Ecuador, cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba are not included in government-led policies but are communal or independent events that are mainly controlled by participants themselves and thus, are based on their expectations. Therefore, cimarrón-participatory performances are considered part of the many decolonial projects that have existed since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the colonial matrix of power was put in place.

The last characteristic of cimarrón-participatory performances that should be taken into account is their sense of intimacy. A sense of intimacy refers in this thesis to the choice to perform cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba just among participants who have communicative competence. During Atlantic slavery, this choice was related to the fact that cimarrón-participatory events were performed secretly, far away from the presence of the enslavers or patrones (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 79–80). Interestingly, even after slavery, some older Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have related this sense of intimacy to the notion of hiding, in both Marimba (Whitten, 1974a, pp. 118–120) and Bomba (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 114–115). As will be shown in Chapter Four, this has been influenced by, among other things, collective memories of various attempts at censorship. Importantly, new generations do not always ‘hide’ or look for enclosed or dark spaces to perform cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba as in previous generations. For instance, I have seen cimarrón-participatory Bomba being performed by Bomberos Cimarrones that were part of the audience of dance and music festivals while Bomba



groups were performing on stage (presentational). These festivals were held in public spaces. However, even in these cases, the notion of intimacy is present through the fact that Bomberos Cimarrones perform cimarrón-participatory Bomba exclusively among participants who have communicative competence and not among the rest of the audience. This necessary sense of intimacy in cimarrón-participatory performances excludes people with no communicative competence and thus, lead to events that are not as crowded as, for instance, some presentational performances.

Essential for this research, sometimes cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba or Bomba are transformed into the second category proposed by Turino (2008), that is, presentational performances (p. 59). While a cimarrón-participatory performance is mainly a social and communal activity in which everyone is actively focusing on the performance in and for itself, when it is transformed into a presentational performance it becomes an object or product to be presented as a mode of entertainment for an audience (Turino, 2008, p. 24). According to Turino, a presentational performance involves a clear separation between a group of people providing music or dance as a product or a spectacle and another group of people for whom the product is generated. A presentational performance's start and conclusion are typically fixed (Turino, 2008, pp. 52–58). I relate these characteristics to the notion of 'public'. Importantly, the notion of public does not necessarily refer to public spaces but to the fact that any person is welcome irrespective of their knowledge. Therefore, in this thesis, I treat the notion of 'public performances' as a synonym for 'presentational performances'.

Essential for this thesis, I affirm that, most of the time, participants in

presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba do not have communicative competence. This means that they do not express collective memories beyond the performance of a sound and movement system. What is more, most presentational events of Marimba and Bomba are limited, above all, to a system of movements and sounds. Frequently, these movements and sounds are related to a social construct of Marimberos and Bomberos as hyper-sexual and ‘naturally’ happy and thus, communicate the meanings generated through a racialised colonial difference. The relation of this category of performances of Marimba and Bomba to a racialised colonial difference makes them part of what Hall has called a “racialised regime of representations” (Hall, 1997a, p. 232). This can be better understood by following what was stated by Mignolo (in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) in relation to some museums; “they could only collect artefacts representative of ‘other’ memories but not the memories contained in those artefacts, removed and displaced from their cultural environment, their owners, their authors” (p. 199).

Along the same lines, the Indigenous-Canadian writer, musician and academic Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, when interviewed by Klein (2013) has proposed the concept of ‘epistemic extractivism’. This concept was developed further by Grosfoguel (2015). Simpson and Grosfoguel understand epistemic extractivism as a colonial mentality that does not prioritise a horizontal dialogue or understanding of specific knowledges with the producers of those knowledges. Instead, it extracts useful ideas, which then turn into resources that need to be depoliticised and decontextualised in order for them to be part of a market of consumption (Grosfoguel, 2015, p. 38; Klein & Simpson, 2013, para. 12).

It is suggested here that in most presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba, performers and directors only ‘collect’ sets of sounds and movements and contextualise them with stereotypical beliefs of Marimberos and Bomberos without taking into account the nuances of the past (collective memories beyond sound and movement) or anything that questions what they are representing. For instance, the popularised belief that ‘all Afro-Ecuadorians are happy people who love dancing’ is reflected in presentational performances through smiling and submissive performers that are trained to appear as happy and energetic. These characteristics are usually even more highlighted through commentaries of the hosts that introduce the audience to these performances.

Interestingly, although it could be said that all public performances have these characteristics, these are much more highlighted when related to Afro-Ecuadorians’ Marimba and Bomba. Over the years that I have attended public performances of Marimba and Bomba, there have been many times when the host of the festival or programme has overtly said that specifically Afro-Ecuadorians, and not another Ecuadorian ethnic group, are especially happy and naturally good at dancing. However, as has been stated by L. T. Smith (2012) and by some of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked, when they see presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba, they concur by saying, “when we see ourselves represented there we can barely recognise us” (p. 37).

As will be developed further in Chapter Three, I propose two sub-categories of Marimba and Bomba’s presentational performances; ‘folk’ and ‘show’. Although these two subcategories can be recognised as presentational through the

characteristics presented above, there are also significant differences between them. The main distinction between folk and show-presentational performances is that whereas folk performances are in line with official discourses, show performances are not. From Ecuador's independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, governmental policies have officialised folk presentational events as a vehicle to communicate the meanings portrayed in official history. This is related to the North American ethnomusicologist Peter Judkins Wellington's (2012) affirmation of people in power being able to explicitly and implicitly impose the ideas that are communicated through folk performances (pp. 15–16). Interestingly, the relation between folk and official discourse has its origin in the colonial period. Although the official category of 'folk' was non-existent during this period, the slaver, patrón or priest already had the power of controlling the meanings portrayed in presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba. Also, in folk performances, the members of the audience generally engage with dancers and musicians mainly visually.

As for show-presentational performances, although participants of these events do not question the official discourse as Marimberos Cimarrones do, they do not follow it either. Show-presentational events were created to welcome people who do not identify with the official discourse and look for more participative and informal spaces for the audience. Importantly, the audience members of show-presentational events usually participate through singing or dancing. A final essential characteristic of presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba is that, since their main aim is to generate a product for a public audience, their outreach is much bigger than the intimate cimarrón-participatory performances. Therefore, presentational events are the most widespread representations of Marimba and

Bomba in Ecuador and beyond, and thus, most people engage with Marimba and Bomba through presentational events. Since, as has been stated above, presentational or public performances of Marimba and Bomba are related to a racialised colonial difference, this approach is the one that becomes popularised and fixed as the ‘natural’, more valid and inevitable truth (Hall, 1997b, p. 21). As has been stated by Mignolo (in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018), one of the most significant dangers of representations referred to in this thesis as public or presentational (and which Mignolo refers to as representations in general) is that they appear as a mirror of a world that apparently can be described independently of the colonial power structures that are managing what is represented. This is that they represent the totality of a group of people (Marimberos and Bomberos) who are believed to be homogenous (Mignolo in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 109, 139, 151, 194).

I have argued that in Marimba and Bomba’s performances that fall under the category of cimarrón-participatory, most participants have a strong relation to their past (collective memories) and choose to express this relation (communicative competence). Thus, it is through the manifestation of the cognitive learning of shared rules of a specific tradition of sound and movement (expressed collective memories) that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones are able to use the relation between past and present to generate a performance not only to re-affirm and expose their existence but also to contribute to the historical Afro-Ecuadorians’ process of liberation from oppression. If Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have managed to be participants in events of Marimba and Bomba throughout history, occasioning a recurrent lineage of participatory events, then Marimba and Bomba could be considered as part of the process of permanent cimarronaje or a cimarrón-

participatory performance. On the other hand, in presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba, they do not express communicative competence. This last point is crucial for this research since, as will be explained in the following section, the main aim of this work is to decolonise public representations of Marimba and Bomba by proposing a counter-representation that questions the silencing of collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory performances while including them in a presentational product.

### **The category of counter-representation**

This research seeks to critically respond to the colonial amnesia that has historically silenced many collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones in presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba. This critical approach is achieved by re-inventing how Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota are represented publicly through a decolonial process referred to as ‘counter-representation’ to refer to the counter-representation of presentational or public performances. The proposed counter-representation aims to first, challenge the audience’s understanding about Marimba and Bomba by exposing these as part of a colonial aesthetic approach (Chapter Three), and then secondly, introduce them to aesthetics, that is, traces of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba’s collective memories (Chapter Four).

Importantly, although this research is critical towards the racialised colonial difference on which most public representations of Marimba and Bomba are based, it is not against the existence of these performances, nor does it promote their

disappearance. Through this research, I acknowledge the right that Marimberos and Bomberos have to participate in them as they can represent a financial income that would allow them to improve their living conditions, or because some of them think that the inclusion of Marimba and Bomba in presentational performances is still better than the historical exclusion of their music and dance-based events. As a parallel but still relevant example, in one of my conversations with Don Nacho Caicedo, a local carpenter and one of the last builders of the instrument of marimba, I was sharing with him how beautiful I felt it was seeing the boats and canoes passing by from his house in the village of Telembí (Esmeraldas), in the middle of the Chocoan jungle, surrounded by trees and birds and just in front of the Cayapas river. He smiled and said, ‘Yes, you are right. It is nice. However, people from the government promised us they would build a road to connect Telembí with the city of Borbón, so we will not have to travel just by river anymore, and I am really happy for that’. My immediate reaction was to share with him how painful it sounded to imagine a road built in the middle of the jungle that would probably be built to benefit the mining industry more than local villagers. Don Nacho, replied, ‘Yeah yeah, I know, but, I am getting old, you know? And it is not just me, when people from this village get sick, they either die or have to bear a lot of pain travelling through the river for hours to reach a clinic. So, I want the road. Things will be better for us with the road’ (personal communication, 2017).

My conversation with Don Nacho was crucial to understanding the complexity of questioning the destruction of the Chocoan jungle as well as the silencing of many collective memories without taking into account the lack of options of local people. I left his house realising that I am not the one who lives in

Telembí and who has felt the desperation of being sick and not having a hospital nearby. If the government, researchers or NGOs do not find an alternative solution to improve villagers' access to a proper health system, then the road perhaps should be built. Don Nacho and the rest of the villagers deserve to improve their living conditions. However, Don Nacho also deserves to be informed of the long term consequences of this road for him and his family, especially in terms of the mining industries that certainly invade the villages once the road is constructed and that will directly affect the conservation of the jungle from which he obtains the materials to work as a carpenter and the water from which they get their food. Similarly, new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos and beyond deserve to know the violent relation between public representations of Marimba and Bomba and coloniality.

Another valid reason why Afro-Ecuadorians such as the academic and ethno-education leader Iván Pabón, acknowledge public performances as a something positive, is because they argue that it was the intense arousal of presentational Marimba and Bomba that permitted Afro-Ecuadorians to feel proud of their heritage, including their music and dance-based events (personal communication, 2017). Moreover, festivals of presentational Marimba and Bomba could become an ideal scene for encouraging Afro-Ecuadorians to be appreciative of their culture. For instance, throughout the last Annual Esmeraldeño 'Festival de la Marimba', which I attended in 2018, the presenter recited a variety of poems from local and international authors related to a vindication of blackness such as the Afro-Costa Rican poet Shirley Campbell Barr's (2013) famous poem 'Rotundamente negra' (Unambiguously Black). The audience received this poem, which vindicates the beauty of being a black woman, with applause. On the other hand, as has already



been observed by Wade (2010a, p. 158), some research, mine included, which aim to deconstruct public representations, may seem to contribute to weakening certain identities that some local activists and performers are trying to develop.

For instance, I have been working for years on performing, documenting and understanding the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña (See Chapter Four). When I attended the ‘Festival de la Marimba’ in Esmeraldas, I briefly mentioned to some of the organisers that I think what I refer to as cimarrón-participatory Marimba did not exist anymore. They were clearly disturbed by the possibility of someone informing people that what they are presenting on stage was not ‘the real thing’ or not ‘authentic enough’. However, after engaging in a more in-depth conversation, we all agreed on the fact that it could also be creatively productive and innovative to include in detail some of the collective memories that are not there anymore in most presentational performances.

Thus, unlike Mignolo (in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 198; in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 253), who has proposed the elimination of the term representation since it relates to an apparently objective, total, homogenous and universal truth or reality and does not take into account the power structure that invents and controls each (presentational) representation, I propose a term that highlights the notion of public representation by acknowledging it as a point of departure towards what has been called here a ‘counter-representation’. Moreover, following what was proposed by the Chicana feminist writer, poet and academic Gloria Anzaldúa (2015) and examined by Mignolo (in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 82), I affirm that a counter-representation is more related to generating a ‘rajadura’ (opening) in public

performances fixed by coloniality than to the dismissal of them. Anzaldúa's proposal of *rajaduras* allow us to realize something from a different perspective, and therefore "to construct alternative roads, create new topographies and geographies... to look at the world with new eyes [or to listen to it with new ears], use competing systems of knowledge, and rewrite identities. Navigating the *rajaduras* is a process of reconstructing life anew" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 82). In short, this work constitutes an option against the erasure of specific collective memories in public representations and not against public representations themselves. This is precisely what locates this research within a counter-presentational notion rather than within an anti-presentational one.

Following Hall (1997a, p. 270), who affirms that meanings can never be finally fixed, a counter-strategy to the colonial meanings portrayed in presentational representations, here referred to as a counter-representation, is proposed in this research. Through this counter-representation, I would like to propose other creative possibilities of thinking, knowing and sensing *Marimba Esmeraldeña* and *Bomba del Chota* within their social and historical context. Importantly, this proposal begins with a critical approach to the homogenised, universalised and predatory aesthetics of presentational representations of *Marimba* and *Bomba* that have perpetuated the silencing of the diversity of *Marimberos* and *Bomberos Cimarrones'* collective memories related to the notion of aesthetics.

As has been suggested earlier, in presentational *Marimba* and *Bomba*, there is an emphasis on producing aesthetic representations of *Marimberos* and *Bomberos* that are developed within a colonial framework. However, older *Marimberos* and

Bomberos Cimarrones and some members of the new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos are the only ones who know many of the collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory performances. Thus, most members of public performances' audiences, who are not aware of the existence of these collective memories, end up believing that the aesthetic versions they see on stage are everything that has ever existed and that this music and dances were always meant to entertain others.

To challenge this widespread notion, I locate the decolonisation of aesthetic representations of Marimba and Bomba through the notion of 'decolonial aesthetic' at the centre of the proposed counter-representation. The concept of 'decolonial aesthetic' has its origin in the concept of 'decolonial aesthetics', which was first introduced by Albán Achinte. Afterwards, other performers and intellectuals developed the notion of 'decolonial aesthetic' (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, p. 2). Decolonial aesthetic or aesthetic is understood as an option other than aesthetics that allows us to understand that every society in the world has a particular notion of that which is beautiful or joyful and that this notion is related to their collective memories. As Mignolo and Vasquez have affirmed, "decolonial aesthetic does not seek to regulate a canon [that is, the Eurocentric notion of aesthetics] but rather to allow for the recognition of the plurality of ways to relate to the world of the sensible that have been silenced" (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, pp. 8–9). In a similar fashion to what they proposed concerning aesthetics, Mignolo and Vazquez (2013) also propose spelling 'aesthetic' with a capital S to signify that it is used to counteract the modern effect of aesthetics (p. 12).

It is worth taking into account that although the conceptualisation of aestheSis is relatively recent, the epistemic shifts that have challenged coloniality in the artistic practices of the global south are as old as the system itself. For instance, within the context of this research, I locate cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba as part of the notion of aestheSis. On the other hand, presentational events, throughout their process of transformation from cimarrón-participatory events and because of the historical relation of those events to spectacular aestheTic products to entertain, have lost their connection with their aestheSis, that is, with cimarrón-participatory performances, and thus, with many of the collective memories of Marimba and Bomba beyond their sound and movement system.

In that sense, what the proposed counter-representation aims to do is to contribute to a product, given that the generation of a product is one of the main characteristics of public performances. However, as is explained below, this counter-representational product does not aim to ‘entertain’ an audience through an aestheTic approach as in public representations. Conversely, the proposed counter-representation constitutes an invitation for the audience to consciously re-evaluate and confront the pre-conceived and largely colonial beliefs related to the aestheTics of presentational representations and re-connect them with their point of origin, that is, the aestheSis of collective memories of cimarrón-participatory ones. It is suggested here that this re-evaluation of aestheTics and re-connection to aestheSis could potentially heal the colonial wound that most groups, whose ancestors were formerly colonised and even enslaved, inherited.

## **Healing the colonial wound**

Following García Salazar, the focus on aesthetic perspectives of Bomba and Marimba constitutes a colonial way for people outside Afro-Ecuadorian communities to tell Afro-Ecuadorians how they should be (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 117). In the same line and based on Afro-descendants' testimonies gathered by the Afro-Venezuelan sociologist Esther Pineda (2018) and Afro-Ecuadorians' ones gathered by Rahier (2011) and the Ecuadorian Latinamericanist Rocío Vera Santos (2016), it becomes clear that these and other racialised public representations and discourses, such as the ones from television shows or magazines, indeed have direct and devastating consequences on the lives of Afro-Ecuadorians, specifically in their perception of the self. This is related to the previously mentioned notion of a 'coloniality of being'. In that sense, Pineda carried out an extensive study in many Latin American countries, including Ecuador, to understand the consequences of racism for Afro-descendants. Based on her study, Pineda affirms that 98 per cent of the interviewed Afro-descendants felt that they had been emotionally affected by racist experiences against them. Among many other effects, some of them develop a sense of "shame of being black". This sense of shame was expressed through more specific feelings like; "I never felt I was beautiful" or "I used to dream of becoming white" (Pineda G., 2018, pp. 60–62). Interestingly, as is expanded in Chapter Two, in the early 1960s, a sense of shame related to Marimba was also developed as a way of responding to all the rejection and mocking that Marimberos used to face.

Importantly, despite the profound consequences of this coloniality of being

for Afro-Ecuadorians, such as the ones mentioned above, there are also testimonies that demonstrate how some of them defended -and healed- themselves from the wounds left by racist experiences through strategies to recover their dignity. One of the most common strategies seems to be the development of consciousness of their ancestry and origins (Pineda G., 2018; Vera Santos, 2016, p. 47). Therefore, there is a need for some Afro-Ecuadorians to dig into their collective past, which is unknown for many of them. Following Rivera Cusicanqui (2012b), who stated that “it is the negation of the collective past which kills us and mutilates us” (para. 10), I propose that through the questioning of the colonial mechanisms that have reduced Marimba and Bomba to aesthetic representations and through the exposure of aesthetic, there is a potential decolonial effect of ‘healing’. Decolonial notions of healing have already been developed by the Chicano artist and scholar Gloria Anzaldúa (2009) and Mignolo (2011b) through the concept of ‘healing the colonial wound’ and by Rivera Cusicanqui (2012) through the concept of ‘recovering the *ajayu*’.

Based on Mignolo (2011b, p. 63), I understand the colonial wound as the harmful consequences inflicted through colonial difference’s aesthetic epistemologies that despise local or aesthetic knowledges. Similarly, Rivera Cusicanqui (2012b), explains the Aymara concept of *ajayu* as the sparkle in the eyes, which is related to the continued existence of the flux of memories and collective roots in each individual. Rivera Cusicanqui warns us of the danger of losing the *ajayu* when forgetting the collective past to which one belongs, occasioning, among other things, a ‘comfortable drowsiness’ (para. 7). I take most presentational performances and the generalised belief that these performances are a natural and

fluid transformation of cimarrón-participatory events to spaces in which the colonial wound and the loss of the *ajayu* are reinforced. This reinforcement can even cause a ‘comfortable drowsiness’ that could leave the audience, including new generations of *Marimberos* and *Bomberos*, without the will to recover their past. On the other hand, healing the colonial wound is related to delinking or regaining pride and dignity by the fact of affirming Afro-Ecuadorians’ humanity in the face of a series of representations that make many of them believe they are less human. Thus, to heal the colonial wound is to recover one’s autonomy or to be open to recognising a collective past through realising that a constructed racialised colonial difference was what reduced *Marimberos* and *Bomberos* to an aesthetic version of ‘happiness’ and ‘sensuality’.

Rivera Cusicanqui (2012b) suggests that in order to recover the *ajayu*, the collective past must be re-invoked in the present through practical ways of articulating the individual within their collectivity. These practical ways, where the memories are brought to the present, are the only way to secure the future spiritual health or *ajayu* by remembering and reflecting on memories that recall where one comes from (para. 8). In this sense, and drawing on L. T. Smith’s (2012, pp. 29–30) reflection that “voices can be a really powerful source to give testimony to restore the spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying”, it is proposed here that being exposed to the aesthetic of the voices of *Marimberos* and *Bomberos Cimarrones* and to the understanding of the colonial matrix of power that has silenced them, can potentially be a space of nurturing the *ajayu*. This can be achieved through remembering or recognising beauty and joy in memories that differ from the information that might be communicated through presentational events.

Through contributing to the decolonisation of public representations of Marimba and Bomba, I aim to contribute to “liberat[ing] the senses from the regulation of modern aestheTics” (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, p. 7), which has made many Ecuadorians reduce Marimba and Bomba to a fixed and racialised set of sounds and steps. This liberation will be achieved through the inclusion of notions of aestheSis that have been denied validity by colonial difference in presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba. Thus, I follow Mignolo and Vasquez (2013) to locate this thesis’ theoretical and practical component as part of “popular practices of re-existence, artistic installations, theatrical and musical performances, literature and poetry and sculpture that make visible [or hearable] decolonial subjectivities” (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, p. 4).

### **The decolonial levels of the enunciation and the enunciated**

In order to contribute to a counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba and to effectively uncover not just collective memories but also the process through which those collective memories have been historically silenced, I found it most useful to employ Mignolo’s (in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014; in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) division of a decolonial project into two levels, the level of the enunciation and of the enunciated. Below, each of these two levels is explained in detail. Also, these are related to Marimba and Bomba in Chapter Three (level of the enunciation) and Chapter Four (level of the enunciated).

According to Mignolo, homogenized and universalised representations of the



world usually hide ‘the enunciation’, which refers to the colonial forces that control these representations, making people believe that what they are experiencing is the total truth (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 199; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 151). Opposite to this, one of the principal aims of a decolonial project is to intervene in the system of disciplinary management of representations. Thus, its first level, that of the enunciation, constitutes a central part. Based on Mignolo (in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 139, 208, 223), the level of the enunciation is understood as the critical reflection and uncovering of the colonial structure embedded in public or presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba. As is explained in detail in Chapter Three, these structures are constituted by certain actors, languages, categories of thoughts, beliefs and sensorial experiences that have the power to manage the meanings or contents (aesthetics) represented as the one and only truth. Following Rivera Cusicanqui, realising the existence of a colonial structure is necessary for the audience to have the option to disassemble presentational representations, in order “to understand its magic so that it does not hypnotise us. If we do not understand, we end up as consumer somnambulists, swallowing everything that is given to us. Then, individual liberty becomes to choose between Adidas and Calvin Klein [or between folk or show-presentational performances]. This is the seeming freedom of choice we have as consumers” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018, p. 150).

Within the context of this research, the level of the enunciation is used as a way of understanding the Ecuadorian colonial matrix of power and its aesthetic effects on public representations of Marimba and Bomba. Specifically, it refers to the understanding and critically reflecting on the formation and transformation of

hierarchical structures - colonial difference- that have made presentational Marimba and Bomba the 'ultimate truth'. Only after recognising the forces that have shaped, maintained and fixed the colonial meanings represented in presentational Marimba and Bomba, is it possible to delink from them and re-exist, that is, propose a different trajectory. In this research, the proposed new trajectory is to relink to some of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories - that coloniality has displaced - within the second level of a decolonial project, that of the enunciated.

Once the audience has been given a space to delink from the idea that Marimba and Bomba are the colonial beliefs communicated through presentational performances, the second level of a decolonial project can be developed. This second level, called 'the enunciated', is related to epistemic decolonisation, which refers to the inclusion of those knowledges that have been historically ignored not just in public performances, but also in official history. I connect the level of the enunciated with what has already been developed by academics such as the Greek scholar of literature, Mina Karavanta (2013), and the Grenadian-born academic, poet, playwright and publisher Joan Anim-Addo (2008), who have named it as 'counter-writing'. According to Anim-Addo, counter-writing refers to an urgent need for registering and writing other memories against a history of exclusion, deracination and subjection of those who have been recently recognised as humans (Anim-Addo, 2008, p. 250). This registration includes a process of rewriting history and generating new information that is not included in the official history.

Some other authors, such as Rivera Cusicanqui (2012a), L. T. Smith (2012)

and Albán Achinte (2013), have also developed conceptualisations that can be related to Mignolo's level of the enunciated and Karavanta and Anim-Addo's notion of counter-writing. These conceptualisations are specifically related to the central role of 'memories' or of 'the past' in decolonial projects. For instance, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), an Indigenous professor of Indigenous education from New Zealand, writes about "re-writing and re-righting [in the sense of reclaiming their rights] of indigenous people" (p. 29). Similarly, Albán Achinte (2013) writes about a "reconstitution of memories" (p. 106) and an "ethics of recognition" as the urgency of highlighting black people's experience and struggles throughout history (p. 144).

Likewise, Rivera Cusicanqui (in Accossatto, 2017, p. 175; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 96), based on her understanding of the Indigenous-Andean concept of 'rebelión Andina' (Andean rebellion) or 'Pachakuti', develops a notion that is in line with the importance of preserving the past to defeat colonialism, seeing 'Pachakuti' as "the upside-down world created by colonialism [which] will return to its feet as history only if it can defeat those who are determined to preserve the past, with its burden of ill-gotten privileges" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 96). All of these proposals have in common an attempt to disrupt and decentralise colonial perspectives, such as aesthetic representations, through highlighting past experiences or memories. Similarly, the level of the enunciated of the current decolonial research is aimed at rendering 'audible' to the audience, especially new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos, some of their collective memories that have been historically neglected in most public representations.

In this research, both the level of the enunciation (Chapter Three) and of the

enunciated (Chapter Four) are developed theoretically and practically based mainly on a group of audio-recorded material related to Marimba and Bomba. This group of recordings has been analysed and contextualised theoretically and has also served as the basis for the research-based sonic compositions, which constitute the practical contribution of this work to the counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba. Currently, the most well known performances of Marimba and Bomba are the presentational ones, even for new generations of Afro-Ecuadorians themselves. In these widespread events, visuals have constituted an essential part of the representations through which the colonial notion -aesthetics- of Marimba and Bomba has been communicated. As has been widely studied (Camp, 2002; Gilroy, 2000; M. M. Smith, 2006, 2008), the centrality of visuals in public representations has a colonial origin in which racialised pejorative aspects such as ‘voluptuous’ bodies as related to a supposed hyper-sexuality are emphasised over collective memories of violence, resistance and re-existence. Likewise, since the Atlantic slavery period, visuals have occupied a central role in the racialised construction of Afro-descendants, helping to control and maintain an image of black people. This image of Afro-descendants included the important marker of skin colour. Supposedly, this visible marker was intrinsic to a “physical structure for enduring a tropical sun... for instance, his skin was believed to be guarded against blistering” (M. M. Smith, 2008, p. 383). The idea of the apparent superior strength of black skin encouraged the belief that Afro-descendants were best fit for outdoor and manual labour and not so much for intellectual work and this, therefore, helped justify their enslavement. Even more recent decolonial understandings of the history of Afro-descendants such as de Friedemann’s notion of invisibility and Albán Achinte’s notion of negative visibility continue prioritising sight over the rest of the

senses.

Interestingly, the primary source of transmission of the lived knowledge, histories, experiences and thoughts -collective memories- of peoples of African origin who settled in the Ecuadorian Chocóan jungle and Andean region almost 500 years ago, continues to be accomplished orally. It is precisely in these oral sources that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' interpretations and understandings of Marimba and Bomba's intimate collective memories have been kept. Also, most of the recorded information related to cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba has neither been visual nor written but oral. Of course, the recording of some oral sources has also included other senses, as is the case of some videos of show-presentational performances, when I danced with some Bomberos as part of a cimarrón-participatory event of Bomba, or when a Marimbero Cimarrón showed me how to play the marimba. Still, the information that is usually not portrayed or highlighted in public representations has been mainly transmitted orally/audibly, through words or sounds. That is, what has not been taken into account in public representations is that Marimba and Bomba do not just exist to be seen. This is, there is much more to understand about these two Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events than the "convenient illusion" (Noxolo, 2009, p. 61) that public performances show.

Importantly, the fact that they were not also transferred into a more permanent system, such as written words, by Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones themselves until recently has been circumstantial and not necessarily a product of choice. As has been affirmed by Quijano (1992, p. 13), enslaved people were

forcefully kept illiterate and condemned to communicate just orally. The Afro-Esmeraldeño Juan Montaña also affirms that orality was a necessity (and sometimes still is) for Afro-Ecuadorians because the oppressor took away all other means of documentation (personal communication, 2018). Even in post-slavery periods, most of the mayores Marimberos and Bomberos, with whom I talked for this research, have never written down their memories before and some of them are illiterate. The only exception is the book *Memoria Viva: Costumbres y tradiciones Esmeraldeñas* (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997) in which the collective memories of the renowned Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar were transcribed. The central focus of this thesis is to sonically contribute with a counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba in the two levels mentioned above. Importantly, these two levels are exposed separately, on what has been named as a ch'ixi division.

### **A 'ch'ixi' interrelated division**

Another essential characteristic of this decolonial project, other than being divided into the levels of 'the enunciation' and of 'the enunciated', is the fact that each of those levels remains distinguishable from the other. In that respect, my proposal can be related to Rivera Cusicanqui's (2010a; Rivera Cusicanqui & de Sousa Santos, 2015) approach expressed through the re-signification of the Aymara term 'ch'ixi'. Ch'ixi literally means "a colour that is the product of the juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of opposed or contrasting colours" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 105). Ch'ixi can be, for instance, "something grey, with black and white stains that do not mix" (Rivera Cusicanqui & El-Colectivo, 2010, p. 154; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 105). Rivera Cusicanqui and her collective named 'El

Colectivo' or 'Colectivo Ch'ixi' have developed this concept as a metaphor to understand "opposites [points of view or ideologies] living together without mixing... carriers of contradictions that do not seek a synthesis. It is a dialectic without synthesis...that never completely dissolve in one" (Rivera Cusicanqui & El-Colectivo, 2010, p. 9; Rivera Cusicanqui & de Sousa Santos, 2015, p. 84).

Within the context of my research and following Rivera Cusicanqui's approach to ch'ixi, I am proposing a distinguishable co-relation between a critical approach to the colonial structure that sustains presentational performances (the enunciation) and some of the collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory events (the enunciated). By this I intend "something that is [a presentational product] and is not at the same time [because it is counter-representational and thus, questions the presentational and includes traits of cimarrón-participatory performances]" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, p. 105). A ch'ixi approach could also be understood as "a polluted and stained" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010a, p. 6) product, that is not just a mixture of both nor a way of locating them in simple opposition but within a relational construction that helps shape each of them. According to Rivera Cusicanqui, it is precisely there, in ch'ixi versions of reality as a dialogue and not in purist versions, that the force of decolonisation (this work's decoloniality) lies (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 98).

Following Rivera Cusicanqui, the counter-representation proposed here constitutes a ch'ixi way to creatively rethink firstly, the on-going effects of coloniality and secondly, the exclusion of local knowledge by questioning the control of our learning processes and the silencing of most collective memories exerted

through most presentational representations. Moreover, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three, the notion of ch'ixi allows this thesis to distance itself from proposals based on fusions or hybrid versions of Marimba and Bomba, which constitutes mixtures that neither question nor expose the colonial relations of power they are embedded in.

Notably, the ch'ixi product proposed in this work has a theoretical and also a practical component (See Chapters Three and Four). Each of these components is an integral part of the current thesis. This is because the practical part of this research (the group of research-based sonic compositions) is not independent but needs both contextualization and analysis in order to be understood. The research I have developed does not pretend to be universally known, and thus, the research-based sonic compositions presented here do not have to be universally understood. For instance, a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón would be able to comprehend the research-based sonic composition related to Marimba Esmeraldeña or Bomba del Chota respectively, but maybe a Marimbero will not be able to understand the composition about Bomba and vice versa. The same goes for people who are neither Marimberos nor Bomberos Cimarrones. As for the theoretical part, it works as that which the Portuguese sociologist and activist Boaventura de Sousa Santos refers to as an 'intercultural translation'. In this respect, this work is presented for different 'cultures' and the intercultural translation that the theoretical part attempts to do works as a space of negotiation of meanings between the 'cultures' of Marimbero Cimarrones, Bomberos Cimarrones and non-Marimberos or Bomberos Cimarrones. Thus intercultural translation, understood as a fundamental methodological mechanism for intelligibility and coherence between cultures (de Sousa Santos,



2010, p. 57; Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 106), is included throughout the theoretical part of this research.

Another important reason why this research's theoretical and practical component are dependent on each other is that, since the research-based sonic compositions focus exclusively on Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' 'voices', my presence as the editor and producer of this creative work is 'unheard'. However, my theoretical and practical intervention is explained in the theoretical component. Thus, by engaging these two interrelated components, my participation and that of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones can be understood in detail. This is especially important since, as has been widely addressed by Portelli (1991) in his studies of oral history, there is a risk of these compositions being perceived as a creation developed exclusively from the point of view of the Marimberos and the Bomberos Cimarrones, with the theoretical part being a construction from the researcher's point of view, and not as it actually is; a shared project between them and the researcher.

### **The sonic product**

In this research, the choice of going beyond a written document and including a sonic component also concords with what was expressed by García Salazar concerning the audio-recordings currently located at the archives named 'Fondo Documental Afro-Andino' at the UASB (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito, Ecuador). He recorded most of these sonic archives. García Salazar affirmed; "this wasn't something that aimed at producing written documents; the desire of our

ancestors was that we should keep these memories and make them hearable again...” (García Salazar, 2017, 6:10). In his last co-authored book, García Salazar refers to this need as a ‘*memoria nueva*’ (new memory). He understands *memoria nueva* as the urgency of finding new ways of portraying and disseminating collective memories of resistance and re-existence that have been born among *cimarrones* (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, pp. 128, 169). García Salazar’s thinking is in line with Samuels (et. al., 2010) who affirmed that there is a need to disseminate alternative sensorial histories that have always been there as subterranean histories, at the margins of the mainstream history (p. 333). For this research, audio-recorded material, which represents a fuller sensorial vocabulary that attempts to question coloniality while uncovering hidden *Marimberos* and *Bomberos Cimarrones*’ collective memories, becomes crucial. It is essential to take into account that the importance of the exposure of this audio-recorded material also lies in the fact that it significantly differs from transcribed material. In that respect, Portelli (1991), Massumi (2002) and Lane (2006) have affirmed that most of the time, written words have been frozen into their semantic meaning, rarely taking into account their affective component as an essential part of the holistic transmission of knowledge. Similarly, García Salazar affirmed that some Afro-Ecuadorians’ memories are only meant to be heard (García Salazar & Walsh, 2015, p. 87).

Specifically, the practical component of this research includes three research-based sonic compositions. Based on Feld’s (1987, 1996) and Samuels’ (et.al., 2010) approach to sound, a research-based sonic composition is understood in this work as a source of acoustic knowledge about how people perceive and are affected by specific experiences, which dictates how they make sense of it.

Importantly, the compositions presented here are a clear consequence of an in-depth theoretical and practical research developed through a *relación de escucha* between Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and me. Although most of the oral material that is used in the current research includes words, none of the information provided by these recordings is limited to words alone and/or their meanings but also to their affective potential to communicate in specific ways through unique characteristics of, for instance, the voices' timbre, cadence, resonance, densities and even silences.

Browning (2003), for instance, while writing about the Afro-Brazilian dance Samba, suggests new ways of approaching the past in a non-linear way by including not just the words per se but their rhythm of falls and silences. Interestingly, she emphasises the fact that silences should not be filled but highlighted, since these could represent possible moments of ruptures within specific historical contexts (Browning, 2003, p. 166). García Salazar, who also validates its existence within Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories, shares Browning's notion of silence. García Salazar affirms that while some silences can be as much related to secrecy as to acts of resistance, others are specific ways of relating to the spiritual world (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 19). Silence has a special meaning within Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories; it is not just about keeping one's voice, but it is also about letting the brother, the sister, the mother or the 'compadre' (Godmother of one's child or close friend) talk. Silence is also a way of sharing (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 132). Thus, secrets could be a whisper or a silence - an absence of sound. These secrets and silences that García Salazar mentions are an essential part of the sonic corpus of Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories.

Based on this sonic primary material, I propose the integration of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories through the generation of research-based sonic compositions. These compositions were built from the words, music, silences and other sounds found in sonic archives, audio-recorded testimonies, documentaries and songs related to Marimba and Bomba. Taking into account the violence, resistance and re-existence that surround the events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba, I explored these recorded testimonies as the primary material to find elusive sonic traces of Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories beyond their sound and movement system as audible experiences.

Decoloniality, as I aim to demonstrate through this research, is first and foremost the ch'ixi liberation of knowledge on two levels, namely, of exposing and de-linking from the colonial matrix of power that has displaced, negated, and destroyed much of Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories as well as validating and relinking with the meanings and the ways of knowing through which cimarrón-participatory events have defied it, but that have been devalued by the narratives of modernity.

This decolonial option will hopefully allow the audience to have the choice to confront the meanings related to Marimba and Bomba that comes from colonial difference and at the same time, recognise or become acquainted with some collective memories of violence, resistance and re-existence related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota and that go beyond their sound and movement system. In order to achieve this goal, the next chapter problematises the social and historical context of Marimba and Bomba within three periods that have been established based on the frequency of the two proposed categories of performances, cimarrón-participatory and presentational or public.

## **Chapter Two. Cimarrón-participatory, threshold and presentational periods of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

In the last chapter, the origin and development of the two Afro-Ecuadorian populations from which Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota originated were exposed. Also, three categories of representation: cimarrón-participatory, public or presentational, and counter-representation were proposed. This was done with the aim of developing a decolonial strategy for the counter-representation of public performances of Marimba and Bomba. In this chapter, the available archives and research about each of the two dance and music-based events are discussed. Importantly, as has been pointed out by Feldman (2005, p. 207), Afro-descendant populations from the ‘black Pacific’, such as Afro-Ecuadorians, are usually more overlooked than the Afro-descendant populations directly related to the black Atlantic. This disregard of Afro-Ecuadorians is reflected in the limited research about Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota in comparison to research that has been carried out on other Afro-descendant music and dance-based events from countries such as Brazil or Colombia.

Having mentioned the available archives and bibliography, the origin and development of the music genre, dance and instrument that are the basis of the events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota are problematised. Understanding the origin and development of these three elements from a critical perspective is crucial for the aim of this thesis since, as has been mentioned before, their performance constitutes the basis of the whole event. Moreover, although in this thesis I am focusing mainly on those collective memories of different

experiences of resistance embedded within but also beyond the sound and movement system of Marimba and Bomba, the state of those collective memories that are directly related to playing instruments and dancing clearly affect the state of the rest of collective memories.

Based on archival evidence and gathered collective memories, I argue that from the Atlantic slavery period, both Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota have existed either as cimarrón-participatory or as presentational performances. However, the existence of these two Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events began with a historical period in which mainly cimarrón-participatory events were generated. Since, in the process of both Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories becoming established, Afro-Ecuadorians were isolated - although in distinctive ways for Afro-Esmeraldeños and Afro-Choteños - for a considerable amount of time, I argue, most of them were strongly permeated with Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories and thus, could choose to have communicative competence. As shown by a few travellers' (Festa, 1909; Hassaurek, 1967/1868) and locals' (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997) descriptions, in this period, presentational events did take place but only seldomly. I refer to this period as the 'cimarrón-participatory period'.

After the cimarrón-participatory period, the relation of some participants to Marimba and Bomba's collective memories began to be transformed and, with it, many of the events of Marimba and Bomba, which became presentational. In this period, presentational events co-existed with cimarrón-participatory events, and both were or are strongly present. I refer to this period as the 'threshold period'. Specifically, it was in the threshold period that two subcategories of presentational

performances arose. These two subcategories have been named here as folk-presentational, and hybridizations or fusions. This last sub-category includes that of show-presentational.

Finally, the historical period in which the presentational events have been actively present and much more exposed and acknowledged than the cimarrón-participatory ones, the ‘presentational period’ is discussed in detail. Based on testimonies and archival evidence, I argue that cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña no longer exist. Because of this, I suggest that the events of Marimba are currently located in the presentational period. In the case of Bomba del Chota, I suggest that, although there is a strong presence of presentational events, there are also cimarrón-participatory events. It therefore remains in the threshold period until the present day.

### **Marimba Esmeraldeña: Archival information and previous research**

Archives and published research related to Marimba Esmeraldeña have been the basis of this thesis. Archival information, however, is exceptionally limited due to specific events such as a fire in 1855 that destroyed the municipal building of Esmeraldas, which held all the provincial documentation (Pérez Estupiñán, 1996). According to the Afro-Esmeraldeño historian and artist Xavier Vera Kooke, this could undoubtedly have included significant evidence related to Marimba (personal communication, 2018). As has been previously mentioned, an important amount of audio recorded interviews of hundreds of older Afro-Ecuadorians from all over

Ecuador, carried out between 1980 and 2015, opened to the public as part of the “Fondo Afro” (Afro-Archives) of the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (one of Ecuador’s major universities) in Quito, Ecuador. The renowned Afro-Ecuadorian scholar, activist and storyteller Juan García Salazar and his research team were responsible for these archives. Some of these recorded interviews contain information from Marimba’s cimarrón-participatory and threshold period that has been crucial for this research. Another source of information that has been vital for this thesis is a published book that constitutes the only written testimony of a Marimbero Cimarrón; *Memoria viva, Costumbres y tradiciones Esmeraldeñas* (“Living memories, customs and traditions of Esmeraldas”; Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997). In the mentioned book, the Afro-Esmeraldeño musician and cultural promoter Lindberg Valencia and his group at the time, ‘La Canoita’, transcribed and organised in specific topics Escobar Quiñónez’ collective memories. This source is especially important because Escobar Quiñónez was involved in Marimba events during the cimarrón-participatory period, but also witnessed the death throes of these events and the beginning and strengthening of folk-presentational events of Marimba. Thus, *Memoria Viva* offers a valuable and detailed perspective of all three proposed periods of Marimba Esmeraldeña.

Academic studies concerning Marimba Esmeraldeña are sparse. Dr. Norman E. Whitten Jr., an anthropologist and current Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois, is perhaps the only researcher who conducted fieldwork in Ecuador during the beginning of the threshold period of Marimba. He is the only researcher who wrote extensively about it in an academic framework (Whitten, 1965, 1974b, 1974a; Whitten & Fuentes, 1966; Whitten & Torres, 1998). Whitten’s articles and books’



sections explain in detail how Marimba Esmeraldeña used to be performed, not just during the period of his fieldwork (1964-1968) in the province of Esmeraldas - specifically in the town of San Lorenzo- but even before, during Marimba's cimarrón-participatory period.<sup>43</sup> Whitten also produced a CD of music of marimba that he recorded during his fieldwork (Whitten & Clyne, 1967). Other more recent academic research includes Ritter's (1998) and Wellington's Masters thesis (2012); Ritter's (1999a, 1999b, 2002, 2010, 2011) and Palacios' (2017) articles; and Minda's (2014) and Palacios' (2013) books. Importantly, based on archival and historical research, the Afro-Esmeraldeño writer, militant and politician Juan Montaña Escobar (2002, 2003, 2015), who from the 1980s to the present day has been the only Afro-Ecuadorian who has permanently written a long-term editorial in the leading newspapers, has produced a good number of newspaper articles about Marimba and Afro-Ecuadorians' history that have been crucial for this research.

### **Marimba's cimarrón-participatory period: From the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the early 1960s**

In this thesis, Marimba Esmeraldeña or Marimba refers to an event based mainly on the performance of a group of dances, a xylophone-type instrument and a specific genre of music, which includes a diversity of instruments and rhythms. It was during the Atlantic slavery period that Afro-Esmeraldeños created this event. The Marimba is traditionally used in sacred contexts or for 'lo divino' (that which is for the divine) and in secular contexts for 'lo humano' (that which is for humans;

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<sup>43</sup> The author includes in his work important testimonies of people who described specific marimba dances as performed decades before his research.

Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 14). This research focuses specifically on Marimba in contexts of 'lo humano'. As discussed in the Introduction, especially during the cimarrón-participatory period, Afro-Esmeraldeños were isolated from the rest of the Ecuadorian territory. This isolation and also the fact that Afro-Esmeraldeños are part of the Black Pacific, caused Marimba to be influenced mainly by the music and dance-based events from the Colombian Chocoan region and the Indigenous-Ecuadorian group known as the Cayapas. Importantly, Chocoan region in Colombia also has many Afro-descendants living there as a result of slavery. For instance, the marimba rhythms of 'Agua Larga' and 'Agua Corta' are influenced by Cayapas rhythms whereas rhythms such as 'Bambuco' and 'Berejú', among others, are influenced by Afro-descendants from Colombia (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 65).

With regard to the origin of Marimba Esmeraldeña, there is a vigorous scholarly debate concerning whether it was introduced by indigenous groups in Latin America such as the Cayapas, or by Africans. In this sense, the Latinamericanist ethnomusicologist Helmut Brenner (2007), the author of one of the largest texts about the music genres and dances named marimba in Latin America, strongly defends the African origin of all marimba instruments and/or dances that have existed throughout various countries in the region. Brenner makes clear that, etymologically, the word marimba comes from the Bantu linguistic field and is composed by the root 'rimba' (or limba) and the prefix 'ma'. 'Rimba' or 'limba' refers to a note, plate or rod that produces sound, while 'ma' refers to an instrument composed by a few of the components mentioned above, meaning, plates or bars that

produce sound (Brenner, 2007, pp. 19–20).<sup>44</sup> Brenner states further that marimba instruments and/or dances have been present in ten Latin American countries whose indigenous populations have not necessarily interacted between each other. Thus it seems that Marimba reached each of these territories in an isolated manner (Brenner, 2007, p. 22). The performance of marimba by indigenous groups other than Afro-descendants is precisely the case of Ecuador, where the Cayapas also play the marimba. In this respect, Brenner argues that the theories that defend the indigenous origin of marimba are driven by nationalistic sentiments which suggest that to defend the African origin of Marimba is to betray each Latin American nation (Brenner, 2007, p. 59).

While most Marimberos Cimarrones strongly defend the African origin of Marimba, one of the most renowned Marimbero Cimarrón, Papá Roncón, affirms that he learned to play and build this instrument from the Cayapas. However, the same Papá Roncón affirms that perhaps the instrument of marimba did have an African origin, but if so, it was first adopted and played by the Cayapas and not by Afro-Ecuadorians (Ritter, 1998, p. 29). Papá Roncón's experience and thoughts could be suggesting that although it seems that marimba did not arrive with the first known groups of Afro-descendants who are believed to have populated Esmeraldas, it could have arrived earlier, with other groups of Afro-descendants. Papá Roncón's view is supported by the fact that Alonso de Illescas, the African leader who arrived in Ecuador with the first known group of Africans, was known to play the guitar, but no evidence has been found in regards to him or any other member of the group

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<sup>44</sup> Brenner's original text is in German. It was translated by Sofia Herrera from German to Spanish language and by me from Spanish to the English.

playing the marimba (Wellington, 2012, p. 20).

As for the date of origin of Marimba, during Atlantic slavery Afro-Esmeraldeños had periods of freedom and enslavement (See the Introduction). Thus, although it could be deduced that it was more plausible that Afro-Esmeraldeños created and performed Marimba during their periods of freedom, it could also have been developed during the periods of enslavement. Even during their period of enslavement, which began with the introduction of mining in the area in 1738, enslaved Afro-Esmeraldeños had one free day known as ‘el sábado para sí’ (the Saturday for themselves). This day was meant for enslaved people to have a space for socialising and getting extra income through specific independent jobs (Rueda Novoa, 2010b, p. 61). Also, there were considerably long periods where the owners of the mines were absent, so enslaved Afro-Esmeraldeños could develop their own traditions (Lapierre Robles & Macías Marín, 2018, pp. 62, 65).

The oldest records of a performance of Marimba among Afro-Ecuadorians in Esmeraldas province during its cimarrón-participatory period comes from the British traveller William Bennett Stevenson (1808, pp. 393–394) and the Peruvian engineer Santiago Manuel Basurco Tarelli (1902; fig. 15). Another interesting historical mention of Marimba Esmeraldeña during this period comes from a book written by the local historian Marcelo Pérez Estupiñán (1996), who writes that during the celebrations for the independence of Ecuador, in around 1830, marimba instruments were being played (p. 47).

It is also important to mention that Marimba Esmeraldeña shares strong similarities with the Colombian Marimba, sometimes referred to as ‘Marimba de Chonta’, since the Ecuadorian and Colombian territories where Marimba exists are part of the same biogeographic territory officially known as ‘Chocó’, and also named by members of Afro-Ecuadorian communities of the area as ‘La Gran Comarca Territorial de Comunidades Negras’ (literally, the Big County of Black Communities; P. de la Torre, 2011, pp. 91–98). Moreover, there was no official boundary between the current Colombian and Ecuadorian Chocoan jungle in that area until 1822. Before that date, both countries were part of the ‘Audiencia de Quito’. However, even once the official borders were settled, Afro-Esmeraldeños continued to have strong ties with the neighbouring Colombian areas, so much so, that they have historically referred to the official boundary as ‘la raya’ (the line). The notion of ‘la raya’ refers to the fact that they freely cross the official border through the jungle of the biogeographic region of Chocó. Even in the present day, some Afro-Esmeraldeños state that Esmeraldas is an extension of Colombia (Wellington, 2012, p. 24). Moreover, some of the Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I spoke stated that the Ecuadorian Marimba came from Colombia and evolved in Ecuador into Marimba Esmeraldeña.

Importantly, from their first descriptions to the present day, many of the instruments of marimba Esmeraldeña and the Colombian marimba have had the particularity of being hung from the ceiling by ropes tied on each side of the instrument (See fig. 15). Besides the local materials used to construct the marimba, the fact that the marimba is usually hung is a unique development among all Latin American marimbas that come from the marimbas of the regions of Ecuador and

Colombia (Brenner, 2007, pp. 175–176). According to the Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez (1997), they hang the marimba Esmeraldeña because this helps the sound of the instrument to be heard from far away. The sound of the marimba does not travel as much when it sits on an object. Also, when the marimba Esmeraldeña is not being used, it must be hung as close to the roof as possible for it to pick up all the good vibrations and spirits that come from far away through the air (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, pp. 51–52). Without denying the intrinsic relation between the Ecuadorian and the Colombian Marimba, the focus of this research is specifically on the Ecuadorian one, the Marimba Esmeraldeña. However, some information about the Colombian Marimba is included to reinforce the information found about Marimba Esmeraldeña.

As for the perception that non-Afro-Esmeraldeños had concerning Marimba Esmeraldeña in the cimarrón-participatory period, there are many short narratives that tell about the way that Marimba was firmly rejected by non-Afro-descendants, especially Spanish people during the Atlantic slavery period, and highland mestizo people and foreigners afterwards. Although there are no records that state that Marimba was a performance directly connected with rebellious political practices, this rejection was perhaps related to the fact that Marimba Esmeraldeña was a practice of former slaves that managed to remain independent for centuries. As Ritter states, “as the dominant musical and cultural expression of freed or escaped slaves living in the quasi-autonomous state, the currulao’s [meaning Marimba Esmeraldeña’s] association with liberation was perhaps more implicit than expressly stated” (Ritter, 1999b, p. 144).

Another reason for Marimba's rejection could be the discourse built by the Church in regards to its relation to the diablo. As is developed in detail in Chapter Four, whereas this relationship was perceived by some members of the Church as a dangerous and evil one that should be prohibited, for black communities of the biogeographic region of Chocó, it constituted an opportunity to challenge power relations established during the Atlantic slavery period. The relationship between Marimba and the diablo caused a good number of priests to focus on the destruction of the instruments of marimba in order to make the event as a whole disappear. For instance, Zawadzky (1947 in Miñana Blasco, 1990) undertook research into the missionary journeys of the Franciscan friar Fernando de Jesús Larrea in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He writes that in 1734, in the Colombian region of Barbacoas, this Franciscan friar "made people gather all the instruments of Marimba; they brought more than thirty marimbas, and he made them burn them all" (p. 3).

Another well-known priest, whose primary goal was to destroy all marimbas in the Colombian region of Tumaco, was Manuel María Mera (in Merizalde del Carmen, 1921, p. 204). In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this priest made all black people throw all the marimba instruments into the river, under the threat of excommunication (Díaz-Díaz, 2005, p. 36). Despite this priest's efforts to destroy all marimba instruments in the area, another priest named Bernardo Merizalde del Carmen (1921) passed through the same area in 1917 and still found a marimba instrument in most houses (p. 153). Although Barbacoas and Tumaco are located in Colombian territory, they are also part of the biogeographic region of Chocó, which is shared between Colombia and Ecuador. I can deduce therefore that perhaps similar actions were taking place and were adversely affecting Marimba Esmeraldeña in

Ecuadorian territory. Also, as part of this research, I have gathered evidence that shows that Marimba Esmeraldeña was officially censored on at least five occasions during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (See Chapter Four). Importantly, no historical evidence was found of a presentational event of Marimba in the cimarrón-participatory period.

For the music genre of marimba Esmeraldeña, the principal instrument is called marimba or marimba Esmeraldeña. Marimba is a xylophone-type instrument with 20-28 (or less) hardwood keys and graded bamboo resonators. It is made with local materials such as ‘Chonta’ (Arecaceae) and ‘Caña Guadúa’ (*Guadua Angustifolia*). Other instruments also accompany the xylophone-type instrument of marimba. The drums that are usually part of the music genre of marimba Esmeraldeña are one or two ‘bombos’ and two ‘cununos’. Also, there is one or two ‘guasás’, which are bamboos filled with corn and seeds into which hardwood nails are driven. The music of marimba Esmeraldeña also included voices. The marimba’s singers are divided between a lead singer who is called the glosador and a group of ‘respondedoras’ (answerers) who do the chorus (See fig. 16; Montaña Escobar, 2018b, pp. 47–58; Whitten, 1974a, pp. 107–109).<sup>45</sup>

Unlike when marimba is played for lo divino, when it was performed in a secular context or as part of lo humano, it was usually accompanied by dancing and performed at night. The marimba music genre is composed of a variety of rhythms. Each rhythm used to have its own dance. As Escobar Quiñónez (1997, pp. 60–66) explains in detail, some of these rhythms alluded through their lyrics to specific

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed description of the structure, usage and explanation of how to build each of the instruments of the music genre of marimba see Escobar Quiñónez (1997, pp. 47–58).



situations. Most rhythms were danced in a free manner. According to Escobar Quiñónez, the dance of marimba always began with the rhythm called ‘Agua Larga’ (long water), which is the principal rhythm of marimba. Afterwards, they would change to other rhythms. Among the rhythms that used to exist one can name the following: Caramba, Bambuco, Guabaleña, Chafireña, Canoíta, Fabriciano, Peregoyo, Caderona (big-hipped woman), Fuga or Juga (fugue or flight), Torbellino (whirlwind or restless person), Amanecer (dawn or arrival), Patacoré and Andarele (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, pp. 60–66; Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, pp. 176–177).<sup>46</sup>

As was mentioned by all Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I dialogued and also by Whitten and Fuentes, during its cimarrón-participatory period, Marimba Esmeraldeña used to be performed very frequently – from a few times per week to every weekend - mainly in a house specially built for its performance named the ‘Casa de la Marimba’ (House of Marimba). This was a bamboo or wooden house from around eighty or more feet in length and over fifty feet wide (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 70). A cimarrón-participatory performance of Marimba would typically last one whole night but could also go on for up to eight days. It usually ended when the musicians and dancers were in a state of total exhaustion, too tired to continue (Whitten, 1974a, p. 118). Food was served, and special places for people to rest, eat and take care of their babies were arranged.

It seems that the cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba were being performed until the early 1960s. Importantly, and as is discussed in detail in Chapter

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<sup>46</sup> In both Whitten and Fuentes’ article (1966, pp. 176–177) and Escobar Quiñónez’ book (1997, pp. 60–66) there is a detailed explanation of how each of these rhythms used to be danced.

Four, from the 1910s to the 1950s, Marimberos faced several official censorships that slowly began to weaken cimarrón-participatory events. As a desperate attempt to save Marimba from its imminent ‘murder’, older Marimberos Cimarrones created the first folk-presentational events of Marimba, giving rise to what I have named here as the ‘threshold period’.<sup>47</sup>

### **Marimba’s threshold period: early 1960s**

Whitten and Fuentes (1966) write that in the early 1960s, the contact between Afro-Esmeraldeños and mestizo people and foreigners from Central America and Europe began to increase. These authors also mention that many of the people that moved to Esmeraldas city began to ridicule the Marimba, which led to black people in the area feeling ashamed of being Marimberos or even of being related to Marimba in any way (p. 179). Indeed, Marimberos, who had survived so many official censorships at that point, were more vulnerable to feeling ashamed. It has been suggested that this feeling of shame could have even been passed down generationally (Wellington, 2012, p. 47). This means that generations who were not necessarily born during the decades when being a Marimbero was shameful, could have inherited that feeling from older Marimberos who did experience rejection. Parallel to this process of shaming and ridiculing Marimberos, official regulations began to control the already weak cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba.

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<sup>47</sup> I talked extensively about the disappearance of Marimba Esmeraldeña as a ‘cultural murder’ in the paper I presented at the conference entitled “Seamed by its Own Bitter Juice: Voice, Visibility, Literacies” held at the British Library in June 2018. My paper was entitled “On how to murder a dance, music genre and instrument from the African Diaspora: The case of the Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba Esmeraldeña”.

According to the Marimbero Cimarrón Escobar Quiñónez (1983), after the period of official censorship, Marimberos Cimarrones were never able to perform freely again. Immediately after the four decades of constant persecution of Marimba in the 1960s, official regulations concerning cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña began to appear. Interestingly, Whitten (1974a, p. 97), who happened to be in Esmeraldas (specifically in the town of San Lorenzo) in those years also describes the official regulations surrounding Marimba Esmeraldeña. Both Escobar Quiñónez and Whitten narrate how Marimberos had to ask for permission to hold cimarrón-participatory events. This official permission included the negotiation of a payment of a specific amount of money (Escobar Quiñónez, 1983; Estupiñán Bass, 1992; Whitten, 1974a, pp. 110–111). Whitten’s description offers more details about the complexity of these regulations, such as the need for Marimberos to prove to the authorities that nothing that would be considered inappropriate behaviour by some mestizo people would happen at these events. Specifically, Whitten and Fuentes mention that Marimberos had to convince authorities that there was not going to be a changing of sexual partners. Furthermore, they began to describe Marimba as a ‘baile de respeto’ (a dance of respect), where they not only ensured they did not re-arrange sexual partners but did not even touch each other while dancing (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, pp. 176–177).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, when, in early 2017, I asked some of my Afro-Esmeraldeño friends involved in the traditional Afro-Ecuadorian music scene if they knew that people used to refer to Marimba as ‘Baile del respeto’ they told me they were not aware of it. This could be due to the fact that perhaps this reference was limited to the town of San Lorenzo, where Whitten did his fieldwork.

According to the Marimbero Cimarrón Galo Rivera León, parallel to the regulation of cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba, some of the recently arrived foreigners brought new rhythms such as merengue, chachachá, guaracha, danzón and boleros (personal communication, 2018). Mainly the official censorships and regulations, but also the sense of shame that spread among Marimberos, led it to being considered a strictly lower class phenomena (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 179).<sup>49</sup> This reduced the opportunities for organising events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and contributed to newly imported rhythms slowly beginning to take over from the cimarrón-participatory events in Esmeraldas. As Escobar Quiñónez (1983) noted, the saloons that initially followed the official regulations needed to hold cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña were slowly transformed into spaces where marimba was replaced by guitar-based genres of Ecuadorian or Latin American music, such as the ones mentioned above.

Although Whitten and Fuentes did have the opportunity of witnessing cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba, they were aware of their imminent disappearance. As suggested in their statement, "...it might be said that the Marimba has played an important part in the social life of the Negroes in Northwest Ecuador, but as we shall now point out, it is disappearing" (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 179). Similarly, the Colombian intellectual and writer Arcelio Ramirez (1970), who spent most of his life in Esmeraldas, wrote, "... and nobody that I am aware of has done anything for Marimba to remain on this earth as is its right... Marimba is leaving us. Marimba is departing to the depths of the jungle to die and

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<sup>49</sup> The notion of shame has also been mentioned by Albán Achinte (2013) in his approach to the Afro-patías (Afro-Colombian communities located in the Patía Valley; p. 19).

return to the eternal substance... Marimba has already felt the call of the jungle. It runs away from this snobbish air that wants to be confused with a sign of civilisation...” (pp. 15-16, 35).<sup>50</sup>

One of the most tangible pieces of evidence for the process of disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña during the threshold period is precisely Whitten and Fuentes' (1966) description of the transformations of marimba dances. When they describe the nine marimba dances or currulao mentioned above, they do mention that the most common is the Bambuco (as it is until the present day), whereas the rest of the dances are either danced as Bambuco (although dancers did tell them that they were once separate dances), are not danced as often anymore, or are only remembered but not performed (p. 176). For instance, these authors state that they only saw a Patacoré on one occasion and that the informants told them that they seldom dance it. The authors did not see an Andarele or Amanecer and could not find any person who could remember how to dance these (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, pp. 176–177). The death throes and ultimate ‘murder’ of cimarrón-participatory events are widely known by all older Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I talked as part of this research. However, new generations of Marimberos do not know much about it.

In the same years, cimarrón-participatory events were gradually transformed into presentational events. However, during Marimba's threshold period, as Whitten and Fuentes (1966) witnessed, Marimberos could still choose to be part of cimarrón-

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<sup>50</sup> According to Agier (1999, p. 205), what has been described in this work as cimarrón-participatory Marimba also disappeared in Colombia around the same decade (the 1970s).

participatory events, among their communities and neighbourhoods, or in presentational events, that is, as an entertainment for tourists, which would entail negotiating their relations among each other. The negotiations mentioned by Whitten and Fuentes included,

...seeing themselves through the eyes of the nationally oriented highlanders, who propagate their ideas of what marimba should be... this temptation is strong even in some rural areas to make the marimba “fit” better with the way of dancing and music of the highlanders. Many negroes look at their own folk music as out of style and try to make it more adaptable to what they think highlanders will appreciate (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, pp. 180–181).

Whitten and Fuentes also write that “serious dancers”, by which the authors meant Marimberos who did not accept performing Marimba for tourists, only performed Marimba within communal (what this thesis refers to as cimarrón-participatory) settings (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 180).

As part of my research, I visited several Afro-Esmeraldeño communities over the last ten years. Each time I mentioned to locals that I was interested in the type of Marimba performed among Marimberos who are connected with communal memories beyond the performance of the music and dance (for this thesis, cimarrón participatory) and not so much with its staged or touristic version (for this thesis, presentational), many of them would tell me that there is still an annual celebration of ‘that sort’ each December at Telembí, a community located on the banks of Cayapas river. With that in mind, in 2018, I finally managed to travel to Telembí on those dates. I visited the community a few times before the celebration. I talked to the villagers, whom I had not seen in years. I talked especially with Don Nacho

Caicedo, who is the elder Marimbero Cimarrón of the community and the person who still remembers how to build and play marimba. I explained to them that I would like to attend their annual Marimba celebration and audio-record it for my research and we agreed on the trueque they would be interested in. I went back in December 2018 as planned, and I hired a young villager to help me with the audio equipment during the celebration. Fortunately, this young villager used to be part of a folk group of Marimba and was very interested in understanding what I was trying to do. I was very excited and grateful to be able to be part of the perhaps last cimarrón-participatory celebration of Marimba Esmeraldeña I had heard so much about.

The celebration was held in the rather small ‘casa comunal’ (communal house), located in front of the church, right in the centre of the village. Telembí’s casa comunal is an unfinished two-storey house of concrete blocks, whose windows have no glass. Villagers told me that they do not have the money to finish the house, which had been left unfinished years ago. They also told me that while the ground floor is used for funerals and this annual marimba celebration, the upper floor is the place where the Animeros would gather during Holy Week. Don Nacho and the rest of the musicians arrived earlier to set up the instruments, specially the heaviest ones such as the marimba, the bombos and the cununos. A while after, the Cantaoras arrived with their guasás. I was sitting on the floor in one corner with the audio-recorder and a few bottles of energy drinks in order to be able to stay as long as possible, while minimising the disruption that my presence could potentially cause. The microphones were installed and the young villager who was helping me was ready to move through the space with one of the microphones if needed. Slowly, the

celebration began. Villagers of all ages arrived. The place was not crowded, so it was clear that just a small portion of villagers attended. I was intrigued when I saw a group of women wearing clothes that did not look like the party clothes they usually wear for other communal celebrations but were much more like the costumes usually worn for presentational performances of Marimba. At first, most people would gather among their close friends. Everyone was talking and laughing out loud while some were having drinks. Some of the elders would even share how this celebration used to be decades ago, when all the community did attend. They especially remembered how crowded and exciting it used to be. I could also hear some of the youngest people talking about their experiences of being part of presentational performances and how they found those experiences exciting too. Slowly, in the midst of people talking and laughing, the musicians began to perform marimba. They did not have amplifiers but the small size of the venue plus the strength of musicians' instruments and voices made the sound occupy the whole room. It could even be heard from blocks away. A villager told me, excited, 'I am sure that even people that are going down the river in a canoe can hear this!'. At the beginning, the youngest people seemed cautious and even shy and just observed the musicians. I asked them and the young man who was helping me with my equipment why this was, and they replied that they just were not sure how to relate to the Marimba music in a non-folk setting. The young man helping me also mentioned that although he himself had heard about Marimba's celebrations decades ago from his elder relatives, he was not sure how to behave. Meanwhile, a few elders slowly began to perform the Bambuco and little by little, more people joined them. Although the venue was still not crowded, people began to dance closer to each other, showing through big smiles and cheerful phrases how much they were enjoying the music



performance. From the beginning, the musicians, which were mainly old Marimberos, played the marimba hard and sang loudly. Unlike the people who were dancing, who joined musicians little by little and did not show any tiredness until hours later, the musicians played hard right from the start. Beads of sweat were running down the faces of most of them, who did not stop playing for hours apart from a few seconds to have a drink. The event lasted the whole night until the next morning. Around four hours after the event began, a good group of people were either dancing, singing or playing marimba. I began to remember the old recordings I was able to listen to of marimba music performed in San Lorenzo in the 1960s.<sup>51</sup> Although it still felt that most people were not sure what to do, meaning how to dance or which lyrics to sing, they were genuinely trying to become part of what was happening, especially through observing the elders. I could just imagine the amount of effort required to be playing the instruments, dancing and singing for such a long period of time, especially considering the age of some of them.

Despite most attendees' willingness to engage with the celebration and all the genuine effort put in, it slowly became apparent that the musicians and singers could not remember many of the marimba's rhythms and kept repeating the same two or three most popular rhythms such as the Bambuco or the Caderona. As for people who were dancing, most of them could just perform the step of the Bambuco that is usually performed on stage. I could not witness any 'glosa' (improvised poetic composition) nor any sign of engagement with collective memories other than some of the Marimba's sounds and certain movements. Amongst the people, I could

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<sup>51</sup> Here I refer to the music of marimba Esmeraldeña recorded by Whitten. See Whitten and Clyne (1967).

recognise an older woman who was singing and dancing differently, performing a series of steps other than the Bambuco's ones and singing clearly with confidence and enthusiasm the songs that were being performed by musicians. It was clear that she remembered many more steps and songs than most of the rest of the attendees. Later on, I would learn she was the Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Catalina Ortiz and that indeed, she took part in many cimarrón-participatory celebrations when she was younger. I also learned that she was the leading dancer and dance teacher of the emerging marimba group of the village and that she was recognised by elder Marimberos Cimarrones as one of the few Marimbera Cimarrona that could remember how it used to be decades ago. I would also see her again at the village school's celebration of the 'Children's Day'<sup>52</sup> I attended, joyfully dancing to the only two songs of marimba included in the music set while talking to me about how the "diablo" (the devil) used to go to their performances.

Having been able to attend this celebration was a profoundly emotional moment for me, especially because I got to see the older Marimberos Cimarrones perform with whom I have talked so much and who have even taught me how to play the marimba. I stayed until the end of the celebration. Afterwards, I went outside and had a long and fruitful conversation with the young villager who was helping me. I asked him a few questions, and we shared how we felt about what we had just experienced. He straightforwardly confirmed that, indeed, what I have named in this thesis as a cimarrón-participatory Marimba event was gone as a communal practice, but was still remembered by a few elders. An important detail

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<sup>52</sup> The Children's day is a commemorative day celebrated annually in honour of children. In Ecuador, the Children's day is celebrated through a special artistic program that can include dancing, food and sweets for the children.

that was clear for both of us and also for other Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I talked, is that the music of marimba had been more preserved than its dance.

Although, currently, Marimberos do not perform all the variety of marimba rhythms that used to exist during the cimarrón-participatory period of Marimba, they do perform, and thus, remember, most of them.<sup>53</sup> However, the dances that accompany each music rhythm of marimba, which used to be unique, have been almost totally forgotten.

I must also highlight, that, as I hope will be clarified in the next chapters, Marimba Esmeraldeña is not gone necessarily because people do not care or do not want to engage with their collective memories anymore. It has gone because it is difficult to fight against all the factors -related to coloniality, especially the level of the enunciation- that have made it impossible to organise a cimarrón-participatory event more than once a year and thus, made it very difficult for younger generations to engage with Marimba Esmeraldeña's collective memories that could regenerate a once fluid relationship between past and present experiences. The most obvious and devastating effect of this is that new generations grow up thinking that presentational Marimba equals Marimba as a whole.

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<sup>53</sup> The fact that Marimberos Cimarrones do remember most of the music rhythms of marimba was also confirmed during my fieldwork in other cities and communities. Among the five Marimberos Cimarrones that played the rhythms of marimba when I visited them, all of them remembered most of the rhythms. A generalised exception was the rhythm of the Guabaleña that most of them had trouble remembering. As for the dances, just a few of them remembered the dances of marimba other than the Bambuco.

## **Marimba's presentational period: From the late 1960s to the present day**

It seems that the first events of presentational Marimba were the events of “Marimba Callejera” (Street Marimba; Minda Batallas, 2014, p. 136; Wellington, 2012, p. 169). According to the Marimba dancer and musician Santiago Mosquera (interviewed by Wellington), this form of Marimba, which was already strong around 1963, was performed on the streets as a way to take advantage of the increased tourism in the area. Marimba dancers and musicians would dance and play the Marimba while asking for a financial collaboration from the people who stopped to watch. Marimba Callejera lasted for around six to eight years. According to Mosquera, Marimba Callejera was the source of the folk movement of Marimba. As is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, from the late 1960s the folk movement of Marimba began to get stronger, the principal agents of this movement being Marimberos Cimarrones themselves. The members of this folk movement were still considered part of the lower class of Esmeraldas (Wellington, 2012, p. 21), in the same way as they were during Marimba's threshold period.

As I argue in detail in Chapter Three, the first generation of Marimberos Cimarrones that led the folk movement wanted cimarrón-participatory Marimba to continue existing, and thus, generated a variety of creative strategies to include a good amount of collective memories, which they had learnt from their ancestors, in their performances. However, the younger generations began to be more disconnected from cimarrón-participatory Marimba's collective memories. Importantly, their aim changed too. It was not just about ‘saving’ Marimba anymore, as it had been before, but it also was, and perhaps was especially, about generating

financial income and more official visibility.

Afterwards, from the recognition of Ecuador as a pluricultural (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente del Ecuador, 1998) and an intercultural state (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente del Ecuador, 2008), folk-presentational Marimba Esmeraldeña began to be part of a political project in which the Ecuadorian nation went from an excluding and homogenous mestizaje to a heterogeneous and officially inclusive ideal of pluriculturality and afterwards, interculturality. At this point, and as has been stated by Ritter, folk-presentational Marimba was already “divorced from its earlier expression of community values” (Ritter, 1998, p. xi).

Other critical phenomena that arose during Marimba’s threshold period are the fusions or influences of the event of Marimba Esmeraldeña with other music and dance genres. Ritter (2011) uses the term ‘hybridization’ to define the process of creative fusion between Marimba and other music genres. In that regard, Ritter has affirmed that Marimba’s process of hybridization is part of the continuity of Afro-Esmeraldeños’ “always-already hybrid history” (p. 575). Thus, Ritter has argued that the hybridization of Marimba is still “continuously in dialogue with the very histories that define and inform it” (Ritter, 2011, p. 587). In these assertions, Ritter is referring to the Africans’ inter-mixture with Indigenous-Ecuadorians when they arrived in Ecuador and created the Black people’s Comarca (also known as the Zambo Republic), centuries ago.

Authors such as Ritter (2011) and Wellington (2012) mention a few advantages of presentational events of Marimba such as folk music or dances, or

specific fusions such as Marimba-Reggaeton (termed in this thesis as ‘show-presentational’, see Chapter Three). Regarding fusions, Ritter states that it has made Marimba much more appealing than the folk representations of Marimba which are limited to specific festivals and other folkloric venues (Ritter, 2011, p. 572). He explains further that this has helped Afro-Ecuadorians to become more visible in the political and cultural arena. He argues that this would not have been possible with folk representations of Marimba (Ritter, 2011, p. 587). Again concerning folk representations, Wellington (2012) has stated that folk events principally aim at the “preservation of Marimba as a cultural emblem and to gain more respect and appreciation from both Afro-Esmeraldeños and non-Afro-Esmeraldeños” (Wellington, 2012, p. 31).

Moreover, Wellington (2012) has stated that some folk-presentational events of Marimba have counteracted the sense of shame that became strong in many Afro-Esmeraldeños from the threshold period (p. 12) through the assertion of a connection to their heritage, both explicitly and implicitly (p. 22). Also, in one of his other articles, Ritter (1999b) affirms that “the performance of traditional music is a practice of liberation” (p. 146). Similarly, León Castro (2016) mentions the fusions of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events with other music and dance styles and genres as a way of resisting a constant attempt at freezing these music and dance-based events in a distant past, without acknowledging their dynamic processes (p. 80).

Interestingly, Ritter makes an important distinction between the agents of what he refers to as Marimba’s process of hybridization. Ritter states that this

process is not the same if the ones leading these processes are North Americans, Europeans or even mestizo people, who generate products for a mainly international audience as a way to offer a mixture of the “exotic” and more familiar sounds, as when the process is lead by Afro-Esmeraldeños (Ritter, 2011, p. 574). Ritter cites Carvalho (2002) who affirms that “hybridity is only resistant to the extent that social actors are capable of maintaining a critical reading of its cultural symbols, and constantly resist the intent of the powerful to dissolve their ambiguity and restore the norm and the unidirectionality of their meaning” (p. 12). However, it is not clear in which hybrid performances that include Marimba, either produced by Afro-Ecuadorians, mestizo people or foreigners, that Ritter recognises an intent to dissolve the ambiguity of mixing two rhythms, or offers a critical reading of, for instance, the racialised colonial difference that has historically located Marimba Esmeraldeña on the bottom rung.

Contrastingly, the most renowned Marimbero Cimarrón, Remberto Escobar Quiñónez, briefly refers to an Afro-Esmeraldeño musician that, although he learned to perform Marimba Esmeraldeña from a “true master” (here named as Marimbero Cimarrón), decided to make his own fusions. Escobar Quiñónez explicitly calls this musician a “cochino”, signifying a dirty person. Escobar Quiñónez further explains the term cochino as people who disrespected the elders’ teachings, became disconnected from their own roots, and without any reason or due care just changed essential details such as the rhythms. Similarly, Escobar Quiñónez strongly criticises people who modify marimba’s dance steps, stating that these modifications break the relation of the bodily movements to the daily activities of Afro-Esmeraldeños (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 21). Many of the older Marimberos Cimarrones

with whom I conversed have similar views to Escobar Quiñónez. Rather than being against a conscious development of, or creative inputs into Marimba Esmeraldeña, most of them are against the forgetfulness that usually accompanies these fusions. As stated by Escobar Quiñónez;

I am conscious that the world is changing, but when this implies damage to the morals and the good consciousness of the human being, it is better to live in the past, without technology, in other words, in a natural way. If our music has to change with the world, the only thing I ask is that the innovations you do are based on profound research, for just superficial things to be changed, but always keeping the root intact (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 22).

Although Escobar's powerful suggestion of maintaining Marimba's roots 'intact' may appear as a purist perspective, when engaging with the whole paragraph, it becomes clear that he was asking for something similar to what is proposed in this thesis. By this I mean that although the usefulness of presentational performances for the process of visibility of Afro-Esmeraldeños and even for them to obtain financial gain for the performers is undeniable, it is not about whether or not to innovate Marimba. Furthermore, it is not about being Afro-Esmeraldeño or not, it is about innovating Marimba but only after really engaging with its collective memories in order to prevent it from being reduced to one more representation of a racialised colonial difference.

In this thesis, I argue that most presentational events of Marimba, except the ones produced by the first generation, constitute a violent rupture from cimarrón-participatory events. Moreover, most events of presentational Marimba, I suggest,



are not rich in collective memories of resistance beyond those memories directly related to its sound and movement system, and target the generation of an object that although it is intended to be “protected” (Wellington, 2012, p. 71), remains nevertheless as part of a racialised colonial difference. In this thesis, cimarrón-participatory Marimba and two specific examples of presentational Marimba, ‘folk’ and ‘show’, are analysed in detail (See Chapter Three).

### **Bomba del Chota: Archival information and previous research**

Similar to Marimba Esmeraldeña, Bomba del Chota has not been widely documented or researched. Also, as has been stated by some academics (Fernández-Rasines, 2001; Rueda Novoa, 2015), one of the most significant caveats of researching about Afro-Choteños has been the difficulties in accessing historical archives such as the ones from the Order of the Jesuits located in Quito, that until now remain closed to the public. As for the archives located at the Jesuits General Curia in Rome that were studied for this thesis, only one mention was found about enslaved people in Cartagena (one of the principal ports where enslaved people were disembarked for countries such as Colombia and Ecuador) playing ‘their own’ music and dances. However, it is unknown if the aforementioned music and dances were related or not to Bomba del Chota.<sup>54</sup>

There are three descriptions of Bomba that were printed before the Reforma Agraria (1964) and therefore, during its cimarrón-participatory period. These

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<sup>54</sup> Revised folder: Antica Compagnia/Assistentia Hispaniae/n. r. et quit. 107V. 1633 .

descriptions are from Hassaurek (1967/1868), Festa (1909) and Costales and Peñaherrera (1959). Hassaurek and Festa were two travellers who visited Chota-Mira Valley in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century respectively. Both observed what is considered here as presentational Bomba since it was performed to entertain the patrones and them. It can be assumed that performers of Bomba who were part of this event and who were undoubtedly familiar with Bomba's collective memories did not find the need to express this relation. Following these two descriptions, the renowned Ecuadorian anthropologists Alfredo Costales and Piedad Peñaherrera published a third one. Unlike the first two descriptions, it seems that these anthropologists had the opportunity to witness a cimarrón-participatory event of Bomba since they did not intervene but silently observed a communal encounter of Bomba del Chota. They are, therefore, the only ones who mention, "all the village gathered in a huge shack" (Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959, p. 191). More recently, Bomba has been briefly mentioned in publications that focus either on diverse aspects of Afro-Choteños' culture (Bouisson, 1997; Chalá Cruz, 2006; Chalá, 2004; de la Cruz Santacruz, 2012; Medina, 1996; J. Narvaez, 2013; Pabón, 2007; Santillán Cornejo, 2006; Valarezo, 2010), on Ecuadorian music and dances (Coba Andrade, 1980, 1981) or more specifically, on Bomba del Chota (Bueno, 1991; Franco, 2000; Lara & Ruggiero, 2016; Schechter, 1994). Also, two PhD dissertations (Lara, 2011; Ruggiero, 2010) and my MA thesis (López-Yáñez, 2013) focus specifically on Bomba del Chota.

### **Bomba's cimarrón-participatory period: From the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1980s<sup>55</sup>**

Bomba or Bomba del Chota is an event based on the performance of a dance, a percussive rhythm and a genre of music called bomba that includes a variety of instruments. Unlike Marimba, Bomba del Chota is performed exclusively in secular contexts. As part of the black Pacific, Bomba del Chota has been strongly influenced by Spanish, Indigenous-Ecuadorian and mestizo people's rhythms (Coba Andrade, 1980, p. 41; Schechter, 1994, p. 292).

The most reliable evidence regarding the origin of Bomba del Chota is based on the lyrics of a bomba song entitled "Put the cane in the sugar mill"; "Shake your hips, shake your hips, I'll give you a half, I am already shaking my hips, Where is my half?" (Coba Andrade, 1980, pp. 45–47). Coba Andrade affirms that this song would have been created during the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century when the 'real' and 'half real' were used as currency, before the creation of Ecuador as a Republic, and one or two centuries after the arrival of African slaves. Since slavery was abolished in 1852 in Ecuador, it is safe to affirm that Bomba del Chota originated during the Atlantic slavery period in Ecuador. Due to the arduous living conditions of Afro-Choteños during the slavery period, the music of bomba may have originated just with the voice accompanied by any idiophone-type instrument and not with what nowadays is known as the bomba drum (Lara, 2011, p. 140). Lara suggests that even a less

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<sup>55</sup> The Bomba's period named here as 'cimarrón-participatory' resembles the historical period proposed by Lara. However, Lara (2011) divides it in two; "period of origination: 1700-1860" (pp. 139-140) and "period of consolidation: 1860-1970" (pp. 141-151) and focuses specifically on the development of the instruments of the music genre of bomba.

sophisticated drum than the one which is known now, which is similar to the one described by Hassaurek (1967/1868, p. 192), would have required time and specific resources, such as various animals' skins, something which could have been a difficult thing to acquire for Afro-Choteños during the official slavery period (Lara, 2011, p. 140). Thus, perhaps, the drum of bomba originated after the end of slavery.

Unlike cimarrón-participatory Marimba, there are no records of cimarrón-participatory Bomba being performed in any space in particular. Cimarrón-participatory Bomba has always been performed among Bomberos Cimarrones in open spaces such as plazas (squares) or streets and also in enclosed spaces such as Afro-Choteños' houses. As for the music genre of bomba, its principal instrument is a drum known as bomba, which has two sides and is played with the fingers or fists of both hands (Bueno, 1991, pp. 174–175; Festa, 1909, p. 333; Hassaurek, 1967/1868, pp. 118, 192).<sup>56</sup> Each of these two sides is covered by leather and used to be called 'cielo' (sky) and 'tierra' (earth). Some Bomberos Cimarrones like David Lara and Teodoro Méndez have affirmed that the bomba drum must have 'cielo' and 'tierra'. A bomba drum without its two sides covered by leather can have significant consequences not just in terms of sound quality but also in terms of the safety of Bomberos Cimarrones; the absence of cielo or tierra could potentially attract the diablo (See Chapter Four). Hassaurek (1967/1868) also observed another instrument in the performance of Bomba, the 'alfandoque'. This instrument is described as a hollow cane or reed into which a quantity of buckshot, peas or pebbles is put,

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<sup>56</sup> For a detailed audio-visual description of the process of construction of the drum of bomba, see Pabón (2010).

whereupon the openings are closed with cotton or a bundle of rags to imitate the sound of the falling rain (p. 118). Bomba music also includes one or two guitars. According to Lara, the inclusion of the guitar in the music of cimarrón-participatory Bomba is relatively recent. Based on testimonies from enslaved people's descendants and an analysis of the deplorable living conditions of Afro-descendant inhabitants of Chota-Mira Valley at the time, Lara affirms that the guitar would have been introduced almost exclusively through the patrones during the 1960s, once slavery was officially abolished and the period known as Reforma Agraria was established (See fig. 17; Lara, 2011, p. 150).

The Afro-Ecuadorian Latinamericanist José Chalá Cruz (2006) also mentions other instruments that may be included, such as the donkey's jaw, the 'güiro' or 'raspa', the 'maracas' or 'sonajeros' (rumba shakers) and orange leaves. The author describes the 'güiro' or 'raspa' used in the performance of Bomba as "a scraping instrument made from a calabaza or puro [*Cucurbita* spp.] or with a piece of guadúa [*Guadua* spp.]. It is dented [meaning with a serrated edge] and is played by scratching at it with a comb". Chalá also describes the maracas or sonajeros as "two small puros filled with seeds and with a handle to hold it from there". Leaves are taken from an orange tree; "one folds one leaf and places it with both hands between the lips, and with a special blow one can produce a sound that resembles the one produced by a clarinet" (pp. 160-161). The music of cimarrón-participatory Bomba has also included sung lyrics. Interestingly, the travellers Hassaurek (1967/1868, p. 118), Festa (1909, p. 333), Costales and Peñaherrera (1959, p. 119) and the Bomberos Cimarrones Mario Polo and Benedicto Calderón (in Franco, 2000, pp. 90–91) affirm that there was always a chorus of women and children who not only sang

but also accompanied the music by clapping their hands.

Sometimes, the 'banda mocha' interprets the music in Bomba. The banda mocha is an orchestra composed of 12-15 musicians. Their name is banda mocha because of the various types of pumpkins that they use and that are trimmed or 'mochos' (without a sharp end). It is said that these types of bands constitute a local Afro-Choteño version of the typical mestizo people's 'bandas de pueblo' that use metal instruments. These instruments, which are taken from the country that surrounds Chota-Mira Valley, reproduce the sound of metallic instruments such as the clarinet, trumpet, baritone and bass guitar. The music of the banda mocha is only instrumental. It does not include voices. Other instruments of a banda mocha are orange leaves, tubes made with cabuya fibres, puros (pumpkins), flute made from reeds, a bombo (bass drum), a drum, cymbals and a güiro (See fig. 18; Chalá Cruz, 2006, pp. 162–164).

As for the dance of cimarrón-participatory Bomba, the principal movement is a sideward hip-movement that provokes specific interactions among dancers, the principal one being the interaction of hip-pushing. As I explain in detail in my MA thesis (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 121–126) and a forthcoming publication (López-Yáñez, in press-b) and based on archival information and my fieldwork experience, this interaction seems to have existed since the Atlantic slavery period. Hip-pushing among dancers appears to have as its main aim to provoke a sense of joy and freedom in all participants. Another characteristic of cimarrón-participatory Bomba during its cimarrón-participatory period that is mentioned in Costales and Peñaherrera (1959, p. 192), was that the female dancer would balance a bottle on

her head while performing the sideward hip movement. According to the Bombera Cimarrona Doña Belermina Congo, the bottle on the female dancer's head while performing the hip-pushing action, was related to the ability of the female to distribute the alcohol that was inside the bottle among participants in a fair way and without spilling it (personal communication, 2013).<sup>57</sup> A final characteristic of the event of cimarrón-participatory Bomba that is noticed by Hassaurek (1967/1868, p. 193) and Costales and Peñaherrera (1959, p. 119) is the long period of time that Bomba is performed, literally until dancers are too exhausted to continue. Similarly to cimarrón-participatory Marimba, an event of cimarrón-participatory Bomba can last for days and nights.

It is worth taking into account that although in Bomba's cimarrón-participatory period, most of the events were cimarrón-participatory, there is evidence that presentational Bomba was occasionally performed. For instance, the traveller Hassaurek writes, "the hospitable owner of the hacienda gave me the spectacle of a Negro dance..." (Hassaurek, 1967/1868, p. 192). Similarly, the traveller Festa wrote, "all the blacks in the hacienda gathered in front of the master's house, to pay homage to their owners..." (Festa, 1909, pp. 332–334). In this last description, however, it seems that after the spectacle of presentational Bomba, Bomba dancers and musicians could have generated a cimarrón-participatory event; "after a while, the owners of the hacienda allowed the dancers and their companions to leave ...and all blacks went back to their village where the dances continued during the whole

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<sup>57</sup> Following Blanco Borelli's (2014, p. 78) statement about the Mulata's hips, the virtuous role of the bottle in the head of female dancers while moving their hips in cimarrón-participatory Bomba is clearly part of the women-centred strategies and tactics (knowledge) of agency of Afro-Choteño females.

night...” (Festa, 1909, pp. 332–334). Gualberto Espinoza also mentioned these presentational performances of Bomba organised by the patrones (personal communication, 2018). Espinoza affirmed that his father and his uncle, two of the most renowned Bomba performers, used to tell him that the patrones used to organise parties where they would hire the Bomba group of the hacienda.

### **Bomba’s threshold period: From the late 1980s to the present day<sup>58</sup>**

Unlike cimarrón-participatory Marimba, which in this thesis is considered extinct, cimarrón-participatory Bomba is still often performed among Bomberos Cimarrones in Chota-Mira Valley. The descendants of enslaved people from this Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory still live in Chota-Mira Valley and, unlike Esmeraldas, the area has not been so appealing to the mestizo people. There have also been no significant confrontations with official authorities in regards to the performance of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. Moreover, since Chota-Mira Valley is located in a rural area, the presence of the police or other official authorities has historically been limited. Perhaps this is the reason why the thread of Bomberos Cimarrones’ collective memories appears much stronger in the present day in comparison with that of the Marimberos Cimarrones.

Most of the authors who mention Bomba within their research publications

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<sup>58</sup> The Bomba’s period named here as ‘threshold period’ resembles the historical period proposed by Lara (2011). However, Lara divides it in two; a “period of commercialization, decline and dissemination: 1960s-1990s” (pp. 157-162) and a “period of revitalization, bifurcation and transformation: 1990s-2007” (pp. 141-151) and focuses specifically on the development of the instruments of bomba music.



about Chota-Mira Valley (Chalá Cruz, 2006; Chalá, 2004; Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959; de la Cruz Santacruz, 2012; Franco, 2000; Guerrón, 2000; Hernández Basante, 2009; Santillán Cornejo, 2006; Valarezo, 2010) indicate that this thesis' cimarrón-participatory Bomba still occupies a central role in the daily group activities of Afro-Choteños who live in Chota-Mira. My field observations of the last ten years confirm that Bomba is still performed very frequently among children, adults and old Bomberos Cimarrones in Chota-Mira Valley and even in Afro-Choteños' neighbourhoods in the main cities of Ecuador. Each neighbourhood usually has a specific Afro disco-bar that opens during the weekends and includes sets of Bomba del Chota each night. As for Chota-Mira's communities, cimarrón-participatory Bomba is usually performed at celebrations related to marriages, baptisms, anniversary of the foundation of the community, or to the feast day for the patron saint of each community or the Virgin Mary. In both rural and urban settings, Bomba del Chota is usually performed alongside other Latin American rhythms such as salsa. However, there are also special events consisting almost exclusively of Bomba (López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 64). Also, there is at least one music group that almost exclusively performs Bomba music in most of the 38 villages of Chota-Mira Valley. Concerning the bandas mochas, there are two that still perform, although not often; the banda mocha "San Miguel de Chalguayaco" (Imbabura province) and a banda mocha of the Carchi Province (López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 65).

Another indication of the current importance of cimarrón-participatory Bomba in Chota-Mira comes from my fieldwork experience. When I began to live for small periods in some Afro-Ecuadorian communities of Chota-Mira Valley from 2008, I attended a few meetings where members of the communities would gather to

discuss the main projects and needs of their communities. One of the main points that was raised in most of the meetings I attended was the importance of either building or maintaining the community's communal house, which is the place where most communal celebrations take place. Interestingly, the topic of communal houses usually took more time and more strongly held the interest of attendees than other needs such as education or health. Along the same lines, when I talked with the Afro-Choteño historian and anthropologist Iván Pabón, who is the author of one of the most comprehensive books on Afro-Choteño culture, entitled *Identidad Afro* (2007), he mentioned an important detail that is not included in his book. Pabón remembered that in his community, which is named Piquiucho, the first time electricity arrived it was not because of any specific emergency as perhaps it might have been expected, but it was through a power generator that someone brought to the community for a celebration that, of course, included Bomba (personal communication, January 2018).

To the present day, cimarrón-participatory events of Bomba maintain various characteristics that have existed since its cimarrón-participatory period. The main ones are the percussive rhythm, which is the main sound that makes the music of bomba distinguishable, and the dancers' interaction of hip-pushing among each other. As I explain in detail in my MA thesis (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 117–126), the fact that this interaction has survived through centuries constitutes the most palpable evidence of the connection of cimarrón-participatory Bomba with collective memories of *memoria larga*. Importantly, the bottle on the top of female dancers' heads, seen in cimarrón-participatory Bomba, is utilized just seldomly (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 120–121).

As for the transformation of Bomba throughout time, it has included the introduction of new instruments, rhythms and dancing steps from other music and dance genres and styles to cimarrón-participatory, as well as the generation of presentational events. While many Bomberos Cimarrones usually welcome the transformations of cimarrón-participatory Bomba since they still identify the performance as connected to collective memories that include but go beyond the sound and movement system, they and other people have intensively challenged the transformation of cimarrón-participatory into presentational Bomba.

Although cimarrón-participatory Bomba is still strongly present in most communities of Chota-Mira Valley, its structure has radically changed. There are no records of the music of bomba being performed with a cimarrón-participatory structure in the threshold period, by which is meant with no distinction between dancers and musicians and the rest of the participants. Instead, one now usually finds a clear distinction between dancers and musicians and the rest of the participants. However, even in this new structure of bomba music, the songs are not fixed, and the performance is not under the control of the musicians, as in purely presentational events. The event is in the control of the participants who are dancing, watching or listening to the music. These participants are the ones who decide and cheerfully inform the musicians or even DJs how long each piece should last, which is usually when they are, or see that the others are, too exhausted to continue dancing. People who dance are usually of all ages and levels of expertise, and even the ones who perform the music of bomba have learned it from older Bomberos Cimarrones.

These Bomba events are still considered cimarrón-participatory events since they still have most of the characteristics of one (See fig. 13).

Another meaningful change of cimarrón-participatory Bomba in its threshold period is that almost all of the singers of the current music groups of bomba are male, rather than female as at the beginning of the cimarrón-participatory period. Also, the bomba drum does not appear as indispensable.<sup>59</sup> The only essential element is the presence of the specific percussive rhythm that characterises Bomba. This percussive rhythm can also be performed on another type of drum, another type of percussion instrument (for instance, donkey's jaw, güiro, maracas, rumba shakers) or even on any surface that can produce sound such as the edge of the guitar or a can (de la Cruz Santacruz, 2012; López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 46; Schechter, 1994, p. 292). Although the bomba drum does not seem essential, since the transformation of the structure of the event of Bomba in the cimarrón-participatory period, many Bomba music groups have reinserted the bomba drum. Importantly, this reinsertion has a symbolic and not a utilitarian character. As has been stated by the Bombero Cimarrón Plutarco Viveros (personal communication, 2011), who is a Bomba performer and director of one of the most prominent Bomba groups, 'Marabú', and Pabón (personal communication, 2018), all groups of Bomba should use a bomba drum because they are representing the Afro-Choteños' identity, and the drum is an essential symbol of it.

The musicians of cimarrón-participatory Bomba in this period also added

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<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the bomba drum was not indispensable from the cimarrón-participatory period. However, there are no records to prove this.

new instruments such as electric guitars or piano and speeded up the music. As a consequence, the dance of bomba became faster, and the dance steps began to be modified. The Afro-Choteño anthropologist Paulo Ayala Congo suggests that the arrival of the Reforma Agraria in 1964, which as mentioned before constituted the beginning of the actual process of liberation from slavery for Afro-Choteños, could have influenced the creation of a faster bomba music, making it less melancholic and happier (personal communication, 2018). A cimarrón-participatory event of Bomba in its threshold period can last for long periods of time (two or three days) as in Bomba's cimarrón-participatory period (López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 2).

According to Pabón (2007) and local musicians of the time, like Milton Tadeo and Ermundo Congo (in Schechter, 1994), the diverse transformations of cimarrón-participatory Bomba were due to the fact that from the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, cimarrón-participatory Bomba was not being performed as often anymore in Chota-Mira Valley. Although it never completely disappeared, a change was required to 'save' Bomba (Pabón, 2007, p. 55; Schechter, 1994, p. 297). For instance, when Pabón asked some older Afro-Choteños why they thought that the cimarrón-participatory Bomba suddenly became less popular when they were younger, in the 1980s, they replied that they neither liked the sound nor the lack of instruments in bomba, in comparison with the vast amount of instruments in other genres such as salsa (Pabón, 2007, p. 55). On the other hand, Ayala Congo thinks that there could have been a good number of young people who did not stop being interested in cimarrón-participatory Bomba in those years and that the changes that occurred in Bomba were due to the inclusion of foreign rhythms, like salsa, that had reached the area. These foreign rhythms were able to arrive in the Chota-Mira

Valley through the increase of migration, the arrival of electricity and the construction of the highway (personal communication, 2018).

One of the many performances of cimarrón-participatory Bomba that I participated in was part of the Afro-Choteño community of Tumbatú's annual patron saint's celebration. I attended this event in January 2018. This was a local event of almost exclusively cimarrón-participatory Bomba where almost all participants were from the community or nearby communities in Chota-Mira. As usually happens in communal celebrations in Chota-Mira, the most important Bomba groups of the valley were invited to perform. All local groups of Bomba members are usually Afro-Choteños from different generations that have learned to play the different instruments of this kind of music from older generations. The DJ would just play other rhythms, such as 'Salsa' or 'Reggaeton', before or after the event or in the breaks between bomba music groups. What made this experience different from the ones I have had before is that for the first time, I was not dancing and mingling with people but audio-recording.

I arrived at the place where the Bomba performances were going to be held at around six pm, a couple of hours before the scheduled starting time. As is customary in many contemporary cimarrón-participatory Bomba events, the venue was an empty field with a dirt floor located in the middle of the village. Since the organizers, who were locals, were charging a small fee for people to be able to enter the venue, it was enclosed with wooden fences that would be removed once the performance finished. A temporary stage was also erected on one side of the venue.

Above the stage, all the necessary equipment, such as microphones and amplifiers, was being installed. My good friend Amaru, who is the Bombero Cimarrón who, ten years before, brought me to my first celebration in Chota-Mira, accompanied me. Since I was as interested in documenting the people who attended the event as well as the musicians who were on stage, I positioned my audio equipment in the corner of the stage, pointing a microphone towards the audience and another one towards the musicians. Amaru, who is also a photographer, was near me with his camera.

As usual, I was prepared with comfortable clothes, a snack and a few bottles of energy drinks, since I had experienced cimarrón-participatory Bomba events lasting even two days and two nights and I did not know at what point I was going to be able to rest. Like most of the events I had attended, the event did not begin on time but at around midnight, when people arrived at the venue, and it immediately got crowded. Most members of the community and many other Afro-Choteños from other nearby communities were there. Although most of the audience members were younger, older villagers and children were also present. Most groups already had their alcoholic drinks, beers or puntas, ready for the night.

More or less from the beginning of the bomba music performance, the majority of people began to dance, performing the usual sideward hip movement either by themselves while watching the music performance, in couples, or in bigger groups that formed a circle. People were laughing and applauding with excitement. Little by little, and as it is customary in Bomba performances, the music groups began to play faster and more popular bomba songs. In between each song, music performers made sure they kept encouraging people to dance. The place was so

crowded that people would be touching each other so much that it became hard to move. Even when someone was dancing alone, he/she would be touching all the people surrounding him/her while dancing. When the Bomba song was especially appealing for some or all participants, they would begin laughing out loud, yelling with excitement and performing hip-pushes either among couples or in bigger groups. Sometimes, the hip-pushes would cause one or more people to fall. People would laugh at the people who fell, commenting sometimes on how dusty the person's clothes became. I even saw a group of young people bringing an older woman to the middle of the venue, where the floor was wet because of alcohol that had spilled there, just to hip push her until she finally gave up and fell. This older woman was precisely my friend, with whom I was staying. When I later on asked her why they did that to her, she answered laughing; "It is their way of protesting because I did not make my famous alcoholic drink for everyone today. But don't worry, next year, I'll do the same to each of them," and she laughed again. At some points in the night, most people were so intensively hip-pushing that, from where I was recording, I could only see one mass of joyful people laughing and dancing, hip-pushing and hip-moving, frenetically. Since most of the venue was dry, waves of dust covered the crowds of people. Some of them even began to sidewardly move their hips alone with such intensity that the rest of people would surround the person to make more space for the person to move, encouraging the person to go to the floor and keep moving his/her hips there. People danced intensively and non-stop for the whole night. As usual, if someone decided to leave, the crowd would do anything, from blocking the entrance to giving the person a drink, to stop the person from leaving the venue.



At one point in the night, I felt so exhausted that I was about to give up and leave, but I decided to stay. At seven am, around seven hours after the event began; I witnessed the power of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. It was an especially exciting and emotional moment since, although I had felt many times the ‘calentura’ (heating up) during the performances of cimarrón-participatory Bomba, I was always dancing and living it and not witnessing it. I had written and read so much for this thesis before my fieldwork that tears of joy were rolling down my cheeks while I could not stop thinking; ‘Bomba cimarrona is alive, Bomba cimarrona is so alive!!!’ Amaru, who has been part of cimarrón-participatory events since a young age, was standing next to me.

At one point, when the intensity of the music and the calentura of the dancing participants reached its peak, and the laughings, yellings and hip-shaking and pushing became faster and more intense, I realised I was feeling genuine fear. The extremely expressive joy of the participants, which would show on their sweaty and smiley faces and their relaxed bodies after having danced for so many hours, was such a powerful moment to be witnessing that I found myself relating it to violence or anger. Amidst clouds of dust, people were ‘crazily’<sup>60</sup> dancing, hip-pushing each other and moving frenetically (Later on, I would reflect on the impossibility of

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<sup>60</sup> I use the term ‘crazy’ as borrowed from the vocabulary of the Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I have shared and dialogued for years. However, it is necessary to point out that the usage of this term is a clear example of what de La Cadena (2015) understands as different “modes of intention” (p. 22). Thus, whereas I learned from Bomberos Cimarrones that ‘crazy’ can be used to define their own performances as related to an encouraged and culturally accepted freedom and a non-everyday embodied attitude, in other contexts (for instance, presentational contexts) it could also be used as a defining term to locate Bomba as part of a racialised colonial difference. This is what happens for instance, in the usage of the term ‘crazy’ as part of the lyrics of a Bomba-Tecnocumbia song that is analysed in Chapter Three, which clearly relates the ‘craziness’ of Bomba to its supposed hyper-sexuality. The distinction between how this and other terms are understood in different contexts is especially important since it is part of the ch’ixi approach of this thesis. In a ch’ixi approach, it is essential to recognize, rather than dissolve in one or ignore, that there can be opposite points of views embedded in the understanding of the same term.

something like this happening in more official or urban spaces, where most of the time, everything needs to be ‘under control’).<sup>61</sup> The musicians did not stop performing even for a minute, with a mixture of excitement but also a sort of fear that if they dared to stop playing the music, people would go after them and their instruments. I assume I have been part of similar intense moments in the past but was not aware of how it looked from the outside. I was still feeling afraid, if it had not been for the presence of Amaru next to me, I think I would have panicked. The intense moment lasted for around half an hour.

Afterwards, I realised that the musicians, who were on stage and close to me and my pieces of equipment, were also beginning to panic. Suddenly, one of the organisers took the microphone from one of the musicians and asked the attendees to calm down, otherwise they were going to have to stop the performance for fear of the makeshift stage falling down and the equipment being damaged. It took them a while, but they managed to calm people a bit. Amaru never panicked. He just enjoyed each moment with a big smile. I realised that in all of the years we had gone together to cimarrón-participatory events of Bomba, he had always known what I had just understood, that the joy and intense energy that cimarrón-participatory events have historically generated is nothing to be scared about; it is just freedom and joy at its peak.

Months after this intense experience, I reflected on the fear I felt while witnessing Bomberos Cimarrones dancing. Although, as I mentioned earlier, the on-

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<sup>61</sup> For a detailed description of the hip-movement as related to ancestral embodied collective memories of Bomba go to López-Yáñez (2013, pp. 117–136).

stage Afro-Choteño musicians were also scared, I recalled that their fear, which was specifically related to the safety of their instruments, was different from mine. I could recognize that my heightened emotions were an embodied testimony of my still colonial being. This is, in spite of having decided to be, for more than a decade, part of a process of decolonising myself, specifically in my relation to Afro-Ecuadorian culture, there still are, and perhaps will always be, hidden layers inside me that are colonised. I specially understood my feelings as part of my colonial being since, although I had been told numerous times how ‘dangerous’ it supposedly is to even visit, never mind to stay or work in, Afro-Ecuadorian neighbourhoods and communities, I have personally never felt unsafe, nor I have experienced any moment of danger, throughout all the time I have been present in Afro-Ecuadorian territories. On the contrary, I have always felt protected by the community members that have known me for years. What I mean to say is that, without trying to disqualify the obvious probability of facing dangerous experiences in any Ecuadorian neighbourhood or community, it was not a matter of me being connected to past personal experiences of actual danger or unsafety, since these are non-existent, but more of being connected to the beliefs with which I grew up, that are reacting to Afro-Ecuadorians with fear.<sup>62</sup> Reflecting on my reaction through this precise experience certainly helped to acknowledge the attempt at decolonising myself as a never-ending process.

From the 1960s, presentational Bomba began to emerge. It began to be performed in bars, restaurants, theatres and artistic spaces in various areas of the

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<sup>62</sup> See Chapter Three for a thorough explanation of the historical perception of Afro-Ecuadorians by many mestizo-Ecuadorians, which is related to them being ‘naturally’ dangerous and violent people.

country (Lara & Ruggiero, 2016, p. 149). However, it was during the 1980s when presentational Bomba reached its peak. Local musicians such as the ‘Hermanos Congo’ (Congo Brothers) and Milton Tadeo (in Schechter, 1994), mestizo musicians such as Azucena Aymara, and more recently, Margarita Lasso, are some of the most famous performers of presentational Bomba. Similar to Marimba Esmeraldeña and as analysed in detail in Chapter Three, folk Bomba began to be officially included from the 1990s, as one of the consequences of the Ecuadorian nation becoming pluricultural and, later on, intercultural. As for the transformation of Bomba from cimarrón-participatory to presentational, the perceptions of it are diverse. According to some researchers, including Chalá Cruz (2006), Pabón (2007), Ruggiero (2010) and Lara (2011), Bomba del Chota was able to survive partly because of its transformations. It is even argued that this transformation “revitalised” Bomba (Chalá Cruz, 2006, p. 158). Also, Pabón affirms that although cimarrón-participatory and presentational events remain clearly distinguishable, these have strongly influenced each other. For instance, according to one of Pabón’s (2007) interviewees, Nelson Folleco, the fact that presentational Bomba began to gain popularity outside Chota-Mira Valley was a factor that helped Afro-Choteños themselves appreciate Bomba (p. 55). It is worth highlighting though, that presentational Bomba’s popularity could have also contributed to the belief that presentational Bomba equals Bomba as a whole, ignoring the importance of a diversity of collective memories portrayed in the events that presentational Bomba is rooted in, that is, cimarrón-participatory ones.

On the other hand, most of the Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I spoke feel that presentational Bomba is a distorted version of cimarrón-participatory. This is

because essential details, such as the quality of the singers' voices, are not taken into account anymore.<sup>63</sup> Also, new dancing steps are freely added with no clear notion of the steps that used to be performed in the past. For instance, the principal movement of the cimarrón-participatory dance of Bomba has historically been a sideward hip movement. The hip follows the percussive rhythm of bomba music. According to most Bomberos Cimarrones, this sideward hip movement must be performed with 'cadencia', which has been explained by them as a loose and precise movement. The loss of cadencia and the performance of other hip movements, such as circular patterns, are strongly criticised by Bomberos Cimarrones. Bomberos Cimarrones consider these movements ugly and sometimes even "deshonestos" (indecent; López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 58). Another important characteristic of presentational Bomba is the usage of the bottle on the head of female dancers. As Narbed also observed (2016, p. 240), in folk-presentational Bomba, it has become the famous 'baile de la botella' (bottle dance) that, similar to what happened with the reinsertion of the bomba drum, has become an essential symbol of Bomba.

Some Bomberos Cimarrones feel that outsiders have manipulated Bomba and that, little by little, they are taking away its essence. Afro-Choteños communities have even accused some new interpreters of presentational Bomba of usurping Bomba for their own commercial purposes (López-Yáñez, 2013, p. 53). Recently, a young Ecuadorian musician and researcher even proposed the creation of a drum that he named as 'bomba 2.0'. According to this musician, bomba 2.0 is a drum

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<sup>63</sup> It is important to note that some of the bomba songs that are part of the sonic composition that includes Bomba (Chapter Three) are valuable also because the quality of Bomberos Cimarrones' voices, such as Rey David and Teodoro Méndez, which is not so common anymore, can be appreciated.

constructed with different materials and procedure than how the drum of bomba del Chota is traditionally made. It would seemingly have the advantages of the materials being more accessible and thus, it would be possible to build the drum on a large and commercial scale (D. Ortiz, 2015). Although this musician did mention the importance of Bomba's collective memories, it is unclear how he plans to preserve those collective memories as linked to the materials and construction process of the drum of bomba del Chota.

In regard to such rejections of the transformations of Bomba during its threshold period, based on Bomba's historical descriptions (Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959; Festa, 1909; Hassaurek, 1967/1868) and recent testimonies, Lara (2011) strongly criticises the belief that it is only in the last decades that Bomba has begun to be transformed. This author affirms that Bomba's malleability has existed probably since its origin (Lara, 2011, p. 137). He also questions a supposed authenticity as something that some Afro-Choteños believe they should preserve, since the musical and stylistic elements that are considered nowadays as authentic were consolidated just at the end of the Huasipungo period (Lara, 2011, p. 167). However, according to the Afro-Choteño activist, anthropologist and musician Gualberto Espinoza's testimony in his interview with Ruggiero (2010), what really concerns some Bomberos Cimarrones is not the adding of new instruments, steps or the style but that some changes are taking away the communal sense of Bomba, that Gualberto considers its essence (p. 93). I relate what Gualberto named as 'Bomba's essence' to the collective memories that go beyond the performance of specific songs and dancing steps. I contend that, although Bomba's malleability and

dynamism have probably existed since its origin, the changes that occurred during its cimarrón-participatory and its threshold period significantly differ and, as is argued in this thesis, are directly related to their loss of connection with many of their collective memories. It is problematic, therefore, to affirm that Bomba has always been malleable without enquiring into the particularities of this malleability in each of its periods. In order to contribute to the understanding of the importance of clearly distinguishing cimarrón-participatory and presentational Bomba as two categories with different characteristics and aims, two specific examples of presentational Bomba, ‘folk’ and ‘show’ (See Chapter Three) and some collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Bomba, are analysed in detail in this thesis (See Chapter Four).

To highlight the notion of intimacy in Bomba, although there are no records of cimarrón-participatory Bomba being as actively policed as in the case of cimarrón-participatory Marimba, some Bomberos have expressed their need to hide.<sup>64</sup> This Bomberos’ notion of hiding could be related to what has been stated by Gualberto Espinoza. In his interview with Lara (2011), Espinoza affirmed that Bomba could sometimes be used to attenuate Afro-Choteños’ protests. For instance, Espinoza narrates how his uncle and his father, Mario Polo and Eliécer Espinoza, two of the most renowned performers of Bomba, gathered to perform Bomba that included songs written either by the patrón or by themselves. Sometimes, these were interpreted in front of the patrón. Gualberto thinks that this situation could have been similar in other communities of Chota-Mira, making it challenging to create bomba

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<sup>64</sup> According to Narbed (2016, p. 237) Bomba was banned during colonial rule. However, no information has been found to support her assertion.

songs of protest. That is why Gualberto thinks that the performances of Bomba were also used as a way to keep Afro-Choteños entertained (p. 156).

Gualberto's narration resembles what Baptist and Camp wrote concerning slavery in the United States. They wrote that some planters used plantation frolics as a paternalist mechanism of social control. The sponsored frolics were supposed to control black pleasure by giving it periodic, approved release. However, since these frolics were not enough for enslaved people, they managed to organise hidden frolics that acted as spaces outside of the slavers' control (Baptist & Camp, 2006).

Interestingly, it seems that Afro-Choteños were also able to organise hidden events of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. Indicatively, when older Bomberos feel they are dancing in an open space, where children or visitors can see them, they just hold hands or gently perform hip-pushing. Even when younger couples begin to embrace each other in open spaces or during the daytime, they are immediately and overtly criticised by older Bomberos. However, when young people perform cimarrón-participatory Bomba without older Bomberos, they freely embrace each other while dancing as long as they dance among other Bomberos Cimarrones (López Yáñez, 2013. p. 3). Therefore, their notion of intimacy does not appear to be related necessarily with hiding anymore, but lies in relation to the rest of participants with collective memories. The distinction between the public and the intimate is of significance for my research as it informs the characteristics that I have drawn for cimarrón-participatory and presentational events (See fig. 13).

In this chapter, I have explained in detail the origin and development of Marimba Esmeraldeña in its three periods (cimarrón-participatory, threshold and



presentational) and Bomba del Chota in its two periods (cimarrón-participatory and threshold). In the chapter that follows, I develop –theoretically and sonically- the proposed decolonial project of a counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba. This thesis’ sonic component is of special relevance since, based on considerations of decoloniality, a decolonial research does not focus only on theoretical deconstructions of colonial structures but also prioritises the generation of practical options. As Mignolo and Rivera Cusicanqui have stated, “decolonial thinkers are also doers” (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 196) and “to decolonise is to do” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018, p. 151). Importantly, the research-based sonic compositions are not a counter-representation by themselves. Part of the decision to not present the practical part of this research as a finished counter-representational product but rather as a contribution that aspires to be part of one, is that the results of my research need to continue to be in dialogue with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and beyond, in other words, with people from different backgrounds who profoundly are interested in Marimba and Bomba.

Necessary for this thesis, these theoretical-practical approaches allow decolonial intellectuals to, among other things, recognise the central role of the communities or groups of people that have enabled their scholarship. It also allows researchers to engage in discussions, not just with other scholars but also with artists and activists.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, despite this more or less recent conceptualisation of decoloniality, decolonial projects, such as cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba, can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the colonial matrix of power

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<sup>65</sup> For detailed discussions about practical or artistic works that follow a ‘decolonial’ or ‘ch’ixi’ perspective see Rivera Cusicanqui and El Colectivo (2010), Gómez and Mignolo (2012), Lockward (2012, 2018) and Lasch (2013).

was put in place.

This thesis' decolonial project has been divided in two levels. In the next chapter, the first of the two levels that divide the attempt to contribute with the decolonisation of the presentational representations of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba and Bomba through a counter-representation is developed. This first level is that of the enunciation. Also, based on a thorough theoretical analysis of the historical racialised colonial difference that has located both Marimba and Bomba in the bottom rung, I develop the first research-based sonic composition. Both the written component and the research-based sonic composition include examples of a racialised colonial difference in Ecuador that are related to the representation of presentational (folk and show) Marimba and Bomba and some contesting opinions ('voices') of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones.

### **Chapter Three: Representation and Difference: Understanding the level of ‘the enunciation’ of a decolonial project**

In the previous chapters the main historical commonality between Afro-Ecuadorians from each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories was examined, namely the fact that they settled on those territories as a consequence of the Atlantic slave trade. As a result, Afro-Ecuadorians from Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira Valley have always had a history of dehumanisation in common that continues until the present day. Crucial to the process of dehumanisation of Afro-descendants in Ecuador is a racialised colonial difference through which the definition of who is ‘human enough’ is established, in order to distinguish and classify dark-skinned people and force them to become lesser in relation to the prototype of the (white) human. Within the context of this thesis, I have argued that from the colonial period to the present day, most presentational performances have been shaped by a racialised colonial difference. In presentational performances, there is a constant emphasis on Afro-Ecuadorians being ‘lesser’ human beings through their representation as a naturally happy and hyper-sexual group of people. Although these characteristics may seem innocent, as I explain in detail in this chapter, they are implicitly related to a lack of ability to produce knowledges or to engage to a collective past.

In this research, I propose to decolonise presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba through a counter-representation. I follow Mignolo’s proposed method to divide this decolonial project into two *ch’ixi* levels; the enunciation and the enunciated. The current chapter is devoted to the theoretical and practical examination of the first level, that of the enunciation. This level refers to the

uncovering of the formation, transformation and consequences of hierarchical colonial structures that have historically made presentational Marimba and Bomba the only, and more powerful, truth and, at the same time, have devalued cimarrón-participatory performances.

Although presentational representations have existed since the 15th century, during what this research refers to as the cimarrón-participatory period, they were seldom performed, only specifically when travellers were passing through Afro-Ecuadorian communities (See Chapter Two). However, from the 20th century, that is, from what is referred to in this research as the threshold period (Marimba from the 1960s and Bomba from the 1980s), three main categories of classification were consolidated; Ecuadorian ‘Música Nacional’ (National Music), folk performances, and show performances. Whereas Música Nacional has historically excluded Marimba and Bomba, these have been officially included within the subcategory of folk-presentational and unofficially included within what I have called here show-presentational performances. I suggest that these sub-categories represent the way in which a racialised colonial difference has signified from the threshold period.

In this chapter, I critically examine the first sonic composition that I developed for this thesis. Firstly, I analyse the history of the three categories - Ecuadorian Música Nacional, folk performances, and show performances - to understand and sonically question the meanings that presentational Marimba and Bomba have historically represented. Secondly and following the notions of aestheTics and aestheSis developed in Chapter One, I relate them to the colonial categories of the ‘primitive’ and the ‘civilised’. In general, the Eurocentric notion of

aesthetics is considered a 'civilised' and therefore, an accepted sense of beauty. On the other hand, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' notion of aesthetics is considered a 'primitive', and therefore, a rejected sense of beauty. Both notions have been part of the colonial matrix of power since the 15th century and exist to the present day.

Thirdly, I suggest that the understanding of presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba as being part of the racialised colonial difference that has historically considered Afro-Ecuadorians as primitive and thus, lesser humans, is a way to expose the 'colonial wound' that this denigrating process has occasioned in many Afro-Ecuadorians. I specifically question the aesthetic notion of a decontextualized and enduring 'happiness' and the constructed relation of 'happy' black people considered as 'naturally' lazy, animal-like, hyper-sexual and violent. This relation becomes clearer in public spaces -leaving aside presentational performances - such as TV shows, in the street and at stadiums. Finally, I bring to the fore diverse Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' 'voices' as an opening to their aesthetics, which challenges the above-mentioned naturalised characteristics.

The focus on presentational performances from the threshold period becomes of particular importance since these have been the most public and widespread representations of Marimba and Bomba within the Afro-Ecuadorian context, mestizo people's context and beyond. Thus, they appear as a total reflection of reality. By this is meant that there is an implicit denial of the fact that all meanings are constructed and it is assumed that these performances mirror all the ways of existing for Marimberos and Bomberos. Moreover, presentational events of Marimba and

Bomba constitute one of the few ways through and in which mestizo people have contact with Afro-Esmeraldeños and Afro-Choteños' culture, who remain to the present day geographically and socially isolated.

The exclusiveness of presentational events as one of the few spaces for mestizo people to get in touch with Afro-Ecuadorians' culture has reinforced the reality that the few cultural characteristics of Afro-Ecuadorians that are invariably publicly highlighted are those related to performing Marimba and Bomba under the lens of a racialised colonial difference. As the Ecuadorian sociologist Carlos de la Torre (2010) has stated, "Afrodescendants' apparent innate ability to happily dance and the reduction of their existence to the display of their music and dances are still common" (p. 36). Moreover, presentational events have become an essential way for new generations of urban Afro-Ecuadorians to get in touch with their music and dances. As García Salazar affirms, the public representations of Afro-Ecuadorian culture (presentational events) have had so much power that they have even affected young Afro-Ecuadorians' understanding of their music and dance-based events (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 109).

***\*\*\*Please listen to the first research-based sonic composition:***

***Its transcript can be found in Appendix B\*\*\****

## **Ecuadorian ‘Música Nacional’, ‘folk’ and ‘show’ as part of a racialised colonial difference**

This thesis’ first sonic composition begins with an emphasis on the racialised meanings that are usually transmitted through folk and show performances. In order to understand the context of both, folk and show performances and their meanings, I historically contextualize the origin and development of each of these categories. Afterwards, in the first subsection, I analyse the category of ‘Música Nacional’ to understand the location of show and folk-performances as lowest categories in relation Música Nacional, which has historically been positioned as the highest category. In the second subsection, I discuss the origin of Afro-Ecuadorian folk performances in order to understand their later development. Finally, in the last two subsections, I contextualize the two phrases that inaugurate this thesis’ first composition, which are part of songs that were created after the 1990s and that are related to the constructed relation of folk and show performances to a naturalized happiness and hyper-sexuality.

Ecuador emerged as an independent country in 1822 following its liberation from Spain. Despite its official independence from Spain, there was no creation of an Ecuadorian social order different from the one that was already established. On the contrary, social hierarchies that had been present since colonial times prevailed and gave rise to an internal colonialism. Within this internal colonialism, the main change in comparison with the previous period was the replacement of the ‘white’

Spanish colonizer elite with the local ‘whiter’ citizens, meaning, mestizo or criollo elites.<sup>66</sup> One of the symbolic operations of this newly formed and primarily mestizo people’s nation-state was the elaboration of a rhetoric that would define an ‘authentic’ local identity, separated from that of the former colonisers. The mestizo people’s elites that carried out this nation-building process, which extended well into the 20th century, tackled the political goal of establishing conflict-free societies by attempting to unify the identity of all Ecuadorians (Fischman, 2012, pp. 265–269). The ideal of building conflict-free societies was consolidated by attempting to generate a sentiment of belonging that would allow the maintenance of social cohesion and the defence of symbolic frontiers (Jelin, 2002, p. 40). For this purpose, the leaders of the newly created nation constructed an ideology of “ethnic homogenization” or mestizaje (Whitten, 1981, p. 15).

The racialised process of mestizaje was based on an attempt to annul racial difference (Wade, 2017, p. 37) and generate a prototype of a ‘modern Ecuadorian’. This meant a mestizo citizen, who was not just limited to phenotypical ‘whiter’ features but also to a cultural ‘blanqueamiento’ (whitening) in terms of how a ‘truly’ Ecuadorian citizen should be, look, and even how she or he should dance and play instruments. Therefore, the process of mestizaje was developed in order to be as close as possible to an idealized version of European culture and as far as possible from an indigenous or African ancestry. As a consequence of the process of mestizaje, until the 1970s, Afrodescendants’ practices such as Marimba and Bomba were not a priority in official circles. In those centuries, a racialised colonial difference was expressed in Bomba and Marimba by the fact that most of the time

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<sup>66</sup> A ‘criollo’ person is a Spaniard Ecuador-born offspring (Wade, 2010a, p. 27).



black people's music and dances from all over Ecuador were made invisible and not considered a worthy part of the Ecuadorian nation's official music and dances. In the few times these were mentioned or included, pejorative racialised perceptions were overtly expressed among the elites of each period, including enslavers and patrones during Atlantic slavery and elite mestizo and criollos people during the first two centuries of the Ecuadorian Republican period (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century). Also, academics and other public figures used to portray Afro-Ecuadorians as a 'homogenous race', with practices that were considered part of their 'natural' tendencies for being lazy, violent, hyper-sexual, and intellectually inferior.

More than a century after Ecuador's independence and as one of the effects of a romanticised and paternalistic discourse of inclusion of the recently formed Ecuadorian nation, the notion of *Música Nacional* was successfully implemented, followed by the notion of Ecuadorian folk music or dances. The notion of Ecuadorian folk was implemented as a first official attempt to include non-mestizo people's music and dances. However, given that *Música Nacional* and folk music and dances are not two ontologies but two colonial concepts, the generation of these categories allowed an imposed hierarchical relationship and control of the diversity of Ecuadorian music and dances as part of the national project of *mestizaje*. Whereas through a racialised colonial difference non-mestizo people's music and dances were excluded from the notion of *Música Nacional*, these were located in the inferiorised category of folk music and dances as part of the same racialised colonial difference. Under the name of folk music and dances, the continuation, although with different strategies, of the process of 'negative visibility' of those racialised 'others', such as

the Afro-Ecuadorians, which began during colonialism, continued.<sup>67</sup> Importantly, in those decades, Marimberos and Bomberos were still overtly related to pejorative racialised characteristics.

From the 1990s and in accordance with the constitutional declaration of the Ecuadorian nation as ‘pluricultural’ (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 1998) and ‘intercultural’ (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008), folk Marimba and Bomba began to gain more importance in official circles. Although the strengthened inclusion of folk performances of Marimba and Bomba from those decades came hand-in-hand with the disappearance of pejorative racialised expressions in official circles, the racialised colonial difference did not disappear. Instead, given the prevailing racialised categories, folk Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba and Bomba continued to be part of a racialised colonial difference through the representation of Marimberos and Bomberos’ as black people with ‘positive’ characteristics.

Also from the 1990s, other phenomena, which have been named in this research as show performances, arrived in Ecuador. It is argued here that show performances have worked as a way of denying the official notion of folk music and dances by actively including the audience’s participation and overtly representing specific pejorative racialised characteristics of Afro-Ecuadorians such as their supposed hyper-sexuality, which are excluded from folk representations. Although show performances do deny folk ones, they do not contest their relation to a racialised colonial difference, and still locate Afro-Ecuadorians as the ‘inferior

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<sup>67</sup> A similar process of a hierarchical classification of local music and dances took place in most Latin American countries after their independence, see Rowe and Schelling (1991, pp. 38-42,99-101,151-172). For a detailed explanation of the Colombian case, see Wade (2000, pp. 30–47).

other’.

Since its inception, the racialised classification of music and dances within the categories of Música Nacional, folk and show performances has proved to be an effective strategy because it has been hidden under the notion of cultural differences. However, as is exposed in detail in the following subsections, these cultural differences are classified according to their proximity either to the idea of modernity, meaning civilisation (Música Nacional), or traditional (folk) and vulgar celebration (show) meaning primitiveness, which are categories that are part of the on-going process of coloniality (Mignolo, 2011c, pp. 160–161).

### **The Ecuadorian ‘Música Nacional’**

The notion of Ecuadorian Música Nacional appeared during the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the 1930s, hand in hand with the resurgence of the mestizo people middle class and the formalisation of other national symbols like the flag and the national shield. However, elite mestizo people developed what were to become the music and dances that officially represented the newly formed Ecuadorian nation, exclusively through the appropriation of Indigenous-Ecuadorian elements. The appropriation of Indigenous-Ecuadorian elements was necessary since, as Wade (2000) affirmed, the idea of building a nation-state includes the need to develop ‘authentic’ and original cultural traditions (p. 12).

As part of the on-going process of coloniality, the symbolic ‘whitening’ and ‘civilisation’ of these elements followed this appropriation, which basically meant

their hybridization with European music and dances.<sup>68</sup> It also meant the negation of Indigenous-Ecuadorian music and dances by transforming them into separated entities or the “not-seeing, not-listening and not-naming non-mestizo people” (W. Villa & Villa, 2013, p. 396).<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the Ecuadorian sociologist Erika Silva (in Wong, 2000) affirms that most elite mestizo people of the time considered as anti-national everything that was not as white as them, or as Catholic (p. 2).<sup>70</sup> For instance, in one of the seminal books about Ecuadorian music and dances written by the first Ecuadorian ethnomusicologist Segundo Luis Moreno (1972), marimba and bomba are absent. These series of hybridizations and negations brought into existence the notion of *Música Nacional*. *Música Nacional* began to be spread through history books, used to the present day within formal education and the official media (Jelin, 2002, p. 40).

More recently, what is officially ‘national’ in Ecuador has been questioned, and a process of inclusion of Indigenous-Andean music and dances began (Handelsman, 2001, p. 20).<sup>71</sup> However, non-Andean Indigenous-Ecuadorian music and dances are still entirely excluded from the notion of *Música Nacional*. Thus, it has not yet been questioned that the recently assumed Andean national identity still excludes Ecuadorian groups such as Afro-Ecuadorians (Handelsman, 2001, p. 13), whose music and dances are still located exclusively in the official category of folk and the unofficial category of show performances. As stated by Feldman (2009), this

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<sup>68</sup> Here I am using the term ‘hybridization’ as understood by Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 118) as a product of a synthetic mixture without clearly acknowledging the parts from which it is constituted.

<sup>69</sup> The mentioned process of negation is named by Wade (2000, pp. 8–9) as a process of ‘differentiation’.

<sup>70</sup> Mestizo people’s monopoly is what Rivera Cusicanqui (1996, 2010b, p. 80) has named as “mestizaje colonial matrix”.

<sup>71</sup> The term ‘Andean’ refers to the music and dances from indigenous people of the Ecuadorian highlands.

is common in countries that belong to the black Pacific, where ideologies of whitening and mestizaje prioritize the inclusion of indigenous peoples rather than Afro-descendants (p. 10). At the same time, the exclusion of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances proves that Afro-Ecuadorians are not just othered like Indigenous-Ecuadorians, but they are the “ultimate other, some sort of historical aberration, a noise in the ideological system of nationality” (Rahier, 1998, p. 422).

### **Origin of Ecuadorian folk-presentational Marimba and Bomba**

The concept of folk performances, as both the research and staging of non-mestizo people’s music and dances, began to be established among elite mestizo people and intellectuals in Ecuador from the last decades of the 19th century as part of the transition period from an Ecuadorian monocultural (mestizo) state to a pluricultural one. The narratives that supported this mestizo people’s monoculturality contributed to the creation of an ideological order that situated mestizo people in urban spaces as the holders of political power, modernity and ‘civilisation’. On the other hand, the same notion of monoculturality located Indigenous-Ecuadorian people and Afro-Ecuadorians on the margins of the nation, in rural spaces where a supposed ‘primitivism’ reigned. This notion of primitiveness was related to a sort of backwardness and was considered innate to specific Ecuadorian ethnicities and not necessarily related to the historical violence generated against them. Moreover, the cataloguing of Afro-Ecuadorians as a primitive group of people was also reflected in their relegation from official categories, such as that of citizens. Once slavery was abolished in 1852, Afro-Ecuadorians did not fully gain the condition of citizenship. This denial of citizenship to Afro-Ecuadorians was

justified by the fact that the vast majority of them did not know how to read and write, and did not have any properties or money, which were - very strategically - essential requirements for being considered an Ecuadorian citizen until as recent as 1979 (Paz & Cepeda, 2007, p. 4).

Within that context, the introduction of the notion of the 'folk' was an official way of contesting monoculturality, which until that moment had also meant the marginalisation of non-mestizo people's music and dances from the national imaginary. However, this process of inclusion was not led by Indigenous-Ecuadorians or Afro-Ecuadorians but by elite mestizo people, whose role became, "to civilise and symbolically whiten the non-whites" (de la Torre Espinosa & Hollenstein, 2010, p. 11). This role becomes clear when one sees the paternalistic and permissive ways in which non-mestizo people's music and dances were described at that time, namely hiding their 'primitiveness' (for instance, their 'natural hyper-sexuality') and only writing about the most 'civilised' qualities in the music and dances (for instance, their 'natural happiness').

The folk as a field referred to both the archival gathering and study as well as the practice of specific music and dances, mainly from indigenous people and Afro-descendants; this, although seen as rural, out of time and primitive, were also considered authentic, pure and unpolluted expressions, unlike the mestizo people's expressions which, as noted above, were a hybrid product. Moreover, as has been pointed out by the Colombian ethnomusicologist Ana María Ochoa (2001), folk music and dances were related to a homogenous group of people with an essentialist and static identity, as if they were part of a "time without history" (p. 9).

The goal of folk scholars was the collection and classification of these so-called uncivilised rural practices produced in remote areas by isolated peoples and that intellectuals and performers had previously disregarded. Scholars gave special attention to those considered as relics and survivals to preserve them before they disappeared (Fischman, 2012, pp. 270, 280). In spite of some well-intended efforts by the first folk scholars in Ecuador and beyond to ‘save’ folk expressions and give them a sort of dignity, they failed to realize that it was through racialised colonial difference that Afro-Ecuadorians were historically -and not naturally- located in rural areas. Moreover, they apparently did not realise that it was because of a colonial mind-set that they were convinced that there was not much beyond the sounds and movements they were so eager to preserve.

The almost desperate attempt of the first generations of folk scholars to register as much music as possible did not allow them to realise the importance of also trying to understand the thoughts, feelings and inherited knowledges (collective memories) of the musicians and dancers they were recording.<sup>72</sup> This concept of folk music and dances remained almost intact for over a century within academic settings in, for instance, the work of renowned Latin American scholars such as de Carvalho-Neto (1964) and Saignes (1962), who were very influential in the Ecuadorian context. Later, this essentialist notion of folk began to be contested by other Latin American academics (Aretz, 1972; Blache & Magariños de Morentin, 1980; Dannemann, 1976), who attempted to move the notion of folk from a descriptive,

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<sup>72</sup> The collecting methods of some researchers and research fields that are practiced until the present day have been sharply criticised by L. T. Smith (2012, p. 64).

uniform and a-critical framework to an analytic one.

Folk as a practice, which is the primary field of interest of this research, can be defined by following the North American anthropologist Nájera-Ramírez (2012, p. 162) and the Argentinean anthropologist Fernando Fischman (2012, pp. 273, 278), as the recreation and promotion of non-mestizo people's dances and songs outside what was thought of as their 'original' rural context through stylized and choreographic performances developed for urban and usually mass audiences at theatres and festivals. In the Ecuadorian context, these performances are informed by Indigenous-Ecuadorians, Afro-Ecuadorians and more recently, montubio people's dances, music and traditions. Although the origin of folk performances in Ecuador remains unclear, its popularity reached its peak during the 1960s, almost three decades after the appearance of the notion of *Música Nacional*.

In its first decades, mainly elite mestizo artists from the capital city, Quito, led the practice of folk in Ecuador. These artists focused almost exclusively on the representation of either Indigenous-Andean music or Indigenous-Andean dances. In those decades, folk productions, especially the ones led by the renowned Ecuadorian dancer and choreographer Patricia Aulestia, had theatrical influences and were massively embraced by an elite mestizo audience since for the first time specific histories of violence against Indigenous-Ecuadorian peoples were recreated on stage (Mariño & Aguirre, 1994, pp. 219–220). However, elite mestizo people were just beginning to accept the indigenous component of their *mestizaje*. Thus, they did not include Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances in their representations. At that point, Afro-Ecuadorians still did not seem to fit into the idea of an Ecuadorian society.



Moreover, since during those decades Afro-Ecuadorians were not just excluded but were still considered an anomaly that had polluted the blood of the grassroots classes (de la Torre Espinosa & Hollenstein, 2010, pp. 11–12), neither folk academics nor practitioners even talked or wrote about Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba or Bomba.

It was only at the beginning of the 1970s, that the first attempt to include Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances within the category of folk appeared. The Ecuadorian music folk group ‘Jatari’, which developed the politically motivated folk-based concept of ‘Nueva Canción Latinoamericana’ (New Latin American Song), included for the first time in Ecuadorian history one song with the Afro-Ecuadorian rhythm of bomba del Chota in its repertoire. The song was entitled ‘La Flor del Café’ (The Coffee Flower). Similarly, some of the first folk dance groups, such as the ones directed by the mestizo artists Virginia Rosero and Patricia Aulestia, began to include dance choreographies of Bomba del Chota within their folk repertoire.<sup>73</sup> This slight inclusion of Bomba del Chota in a predominantly ‘Andeanized’ space, was mainly due to the fact that the above-mentioned groups had a close relationship to researchers from the ‘Instituto Ecuatoriano de Folklore’ (Ecuadorian Institute of Folklore) such as Alfredo Costales and Piedad Peñaherrera (Mariño & Aguirre, 1994, p. 214). As already mentioned in Chapter Two of this research, in the 1960s these two anthropologists developed the first detailed ethnography of Bomba del Chota in Chota-Mira Valley. Unlike Bomba, until that point, Marimba Esmeraldeña was not included at all in the folk representations led by elite mestizo people in Quito.

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<sup>73</sup> For a detailed and accurate account of the first folk groups in Ecuador see Salvador (2006).

Interestingly, a concrete development of folk representations of Marimba and Bomba, which began in the late 1970s, constituted an exceptional, if not unique, period in the history of folk as a practice in Ecuador since it was not led by elite mestizo people but by some Afro-Ecuadorians. The initiative of these Afro-Ecuadorians, which generated some of the first folk representations of their own music and dances, was strongly influenced by the fact that, as stated by Sánchez (2007, p. 237), in the same decade Afro-Ecuadorians began to establish political organisations and to think about themselves as a distinctive ethnic group (p. 237). Afro-Ecuadorians' political strengthening occasioned a radically different, although temporary, approach concerning the goals and understanding of what folk as a practice meant within the Afro-Ecuadorian context. From its first decades, the elite was not involved in the development of folk representations of Marimba and Bomba, they were not officially recognised outside the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories or black people's neighbourhoods and their vicinities but reduced to expressions with no significant impact.

Specifically in the case of Marimba Esmeraldeña, according to the Marimbero Cimarrón Don Remberto Escobar Quiñónez (1997, p. 19), the first Marimba folk group, named 'Verdes Palmeras' (Green Palm Trees), was formed in the city of Esmeraldas in 1956, immediately after the censorship of Marimba was lifted (See Chapter Four). However, it was only from the 1960s that folk Marimba began to gain popularity. The first local folk festival was organised in Esmeraldas in 1963 (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 169) and with it, local government projects that provided funding for the performance of folk Marimba slowly began to emerge (Wellington, 2012, p. 26). According to Wellington, the creation of the first

Marimba folk events constituted an attempt by some Afro-Esmeraldeños to contest the sense of shame around Marimba that existed during the threshold period. Wellington clarifies that this attempt included only some Afro-Esmeraldeños. The rest decided to reject Marimba and not to get involved with Marimba events anymore (Wellington, 2012, p. 21). According to several authors (Ritter, 1999b, p. 146; Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, p. 169; Zúñiga, 2008, pp. 83–100), around the 1970s and following the arrival of these Marimba festivals, Marimberos Cimarrones began to teach people interested in learning and thus, to restore interest in Marimba. Unfortunately, there are no records of what exactly they were teaching or how they moved these taught knowledges (collective memories) from a cimarrón-participatory to a folk context.

By the end of the 1970s, the Marimba folk movement was already very present in Esmeraldas (Ritter, 2011, p. 580). The strength of folk Marimba, which is even considered by some authors as ‘la segunda vida’ (second life) of Marimba (Montaño Escobar, 2002, para. 13), was primarily due to the work of an Afro-Esmeraldeña woman who founded a folk group of Marimba music and dances in the city of Esmeraldas in 1976, Doña Petita Palma Piñeiros (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, pp. 20–21). As Zúñiga narrates in detail and as I corroborated during my conversations with Palma Piñeiros and other important Marimberos Cimarrones who knew her trajectory, she created her first folk group in 1946 based on her memories of cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba. Afterwards, she also became an eager empirical researcher who has devoted her whole life to gathering testimonies of elder Afro-Esmeraldeños about the cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba Esmeraldeña (Zúñiga, 2008, pp. 83–100). Palma Piñeiros has directed and

choreographed a diversity of folk groups of Marimba music and dances, which have been active and successful for around four decades. Members of some of the groups she has directed have also created around thirteen new folk groups of Marimba. Especially during her first years as a director, she became famous because of her insistence upon talking about the history of Afro-Esmeraldeños by including theatrical interventions about, among other things, enslavement and racism, and even controversial and rebellious songs in the Marimba performances of her folk groups, as a clear means of resistance and re-existence that go beyond this music and dance-based event's sound and movement system.<sup>74</sup>

As for Bomba del Chota, the pioneers of folk music representations were the Afro-Choteños, Milton Tadeo and the 'Hermanos Congo'. As described in detail in Schechter, until the 1980s, these Afro-Choteño musicians considered themselves as agriculturalists who used to perform in cimarrón-participatory Bomba events that were part of local festivities such as baptisms and marriages in Carpuela, one of the 38 Afro-Choteño communities. However, from the 1990s, they began to perform outside their community for a non-Choteño audience (Schechter, 1994, p. 287). There are no records of Milton Tadeo and the 'Hermanos Congo' considering themselves as members of a 'folk group'; for them, they were a 'traditional music group'. The Hermanos Congo's decision to refer to the music they performed as traditional was perhaps related either to their isolation from the folk groups of Ecuadorian cities or to their cimarrón-participatory origin, leading them to use the

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<sup>74</sup> For instance, perhaps one of the few audio-visual recordings of the work of Palma Piñeiros during her first decades as a choreographer is available on-line and clearly shows this inclusion. It was uploaded a few years ago by her grandson. See SALSOTK CHANEY RUMBA DIFERENTE (2011, June 24).

term ‘traditional’. Despite their self-denomination, currently, the Hermanos Congo’s music and the music of the rest of the presentational performers of Bomba from Chota-Mira is commonly referred to as folk.

As for folk groups of the dance of bomba, in the 1980s, the Afro-Choteña Luzmila Bolaños created her first folk dance group of bomba del Chota (Bolaños, 2015, pp. 58–59). Bolaños was living in the capital city, Quito, specifically in one of the peripheral neighbourhoods that to this day has a high percentage of Afro-Choteño migrant people. The fact that she was part of the first Afro-Ecuadorians’ study group ever created, called ‘Centro de Estudios Afroecuatorianos’ (Centre for Studies of Afro-Ecuadorians), strongly influenced her artistic work (Bolaños, Luzmila, personal communication, 2012).<sup>75</sup> Bolaños asked other Afro-Choteño females who were living in her neighbourhood to join the group. Based on their memories of cimarrón-participatory Bomba del Chota, they began to choreograph their first folk dance pieces.<sup>76</sup> Bolaños created around four folk dance groups throughout her career and is still working as a choreographer. Her choreographies and ways of approaching the folk-presentational representations of Bomba del Chota have been the most evident example found in this research of a folk-presentational work with strong ties to cimarrón-participatory events of Bomba.

All the Marimberos and Bomberos who laid the foundations of folk representations of Marimba and Bomba were intimately connected to cimarrón-participatory events. As Bolaños (2015), Zúñiga (2008) and Schechter (1994)

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<sup>75</sup> The Centro de Estudios Afro-Ecuadorianos was a unique initiative that was led by a group of Afro-Ecuadorians such as the Afro-Esmeraldeño Juan García Salazar.

<sup>76</sup> A glimpse of Bolaños’ work can be found in GuandulArtes Ecuador (2011).

documented in detail, this group of pioneers showed great concern with the weakening of cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. Their awareness and strong ties to collective memories affected their folk performances, which therefore cannot be considered as purely presentational but as presentational events strongly influenced by cimarrón-participatory ones. Thus, in this research, this first generation of Afro-Ecuadorian folk dancers and musicians are considered as Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and their performances fall in between the categories of cimarrón-participatory and folk-presentational performances (See fig. 13).

From the next generations of folk performers of Marimba and Bomba, although some of the Marimberos and Bomberos were still related to cimarrón-participatory events, most of them began to prioritise what could be immediately perceived from these music and dances. I suggest that one of the reasons for this radical change to the approach of folk representations of Marimba and Bomba is related to their official inclusion through the notions of pluriculturality and interculturality that occasioned a sort of epistemic extractivism. That is, the costumes, a fixed set of steps and some of the songs of marimba and bomba that were more attractive to tourists became almost the only components of their presentational performances.

**Folk-presentational representations in an official ‘pluricultural’ and  
‘intercultural’ context: the ‘naturally happy and hot’ marimba and bomba**

This thesis’ first composition begins with the voice of a young dance teacher who describes two ‘happy’ and ‘hot’ Afro-Ecuadorian rhythms to his students. Afterwards, a radio broadcaster is heard affirming that black people are ‘naturally’ good at music. In order to comprehend these generalised assumptions, I find it useful to understand first the context in which folk performances have developed from the 1990s until the present day.

Since the early 1990s and as a consequence of around a century of numerous Indigenous-Ecuadorians uprisings and the formation of the first Afro-Ecuadorian organisations (de la Torre Espinosa, 2006, p. 248), non-mestizo people went from being considered a ‘problem’ to being considered political contenders (Wade, 2010a, p. 91). Thus, from 1998, almost three decades after the establishment of Afro-Ecuadorian folk music and dances in designated black people’s spaces, Indigenous-Ecuadorian and Afro-Ecuadorian political movements managed to push the Ecuadorian government to officially include the collective rights of Indigenous-Ecuadorians and Afro-Ecuadorians in its constitution. In 1998, the Ecuadorian Constitution recognised the country as pluricultural (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente del Ecuador, 1998) and after a decade, as intercultural (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente del Ecuador, 2008). The recognition of Ecuador as pluricultural and intercultural was promoted as two attempts to guarantee the rights, respect for, and non-hierarchical coexistence of different identities which would allow the democratic representation of different people groups. Also, from 1998,

Afro-Ecuadorians became the only Afro-descendants in Latin America that are recognised by the government as an ancestral collectivity with fifteen collective rights (Walsh & León Castro, 2005, p. 3).

Although the official recognition of Afro-Ecuadorians was undoubtedly part of an important transnational tendency to provide them with a basis to organize and make specific claims (Wade, 2010b, p. 59, 2017, p. 27), it is essential to highlight that whereas pluriculturalism was used as a tool to recognise an ahistorical and naturalised diversity, interculturalism aimed to highlight a supposedly harmonious relationship between different Ecuadorian identities. Neither of them was used to question or destabilise the historical power relations that have caused the social and economic marginalisation of Afro-Ecuadorians until the present day. Thus, pluriculturalism and interculturalism were by no means a rupture from coloniality but rather a ‘new vocabulary’ or a discursive practice that allowed the continuation and re-inscription of the colonial hegemonic and racial order -referred to in this thesis as racialised colonial difference (Rahier, 2011, p. 70; Wade, 2017, p. 36; Walsh, 2010, pp. 112, 121). Thus, the recognition of Ecuador’s pluriculturalism and interculturalism worked as a supposedly colour-blind ideology to make it appear that Ecuador, as a nation, had already overcome structural racism.

As part of the political project of publicly acknowledging diverse Ecuadorian people groups, especially since the last Constitution (2008) and the presidential period of the Ecuadorian politician and academic Rafael Correa Delgado who promoted it, the government began to officially include folk-presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba within its events all over Ecuador. The



official functional usage of the notion of interculturality had direct effects on the folk representations of Marimba and Bomba, which were manipulated to construct a romantic relation to their past in order to meet nationalistic goals, turning them into what Walsh and Mignolo (2018) have referred to as “ahistorical versions of music and dance as a [racialised] colonial difference” (p. 86).<sup>77</sup> A clear example of these Marimba’s and Bomba’s ahistorical and colonial versions is the emphasis put by the Afro-Ecuadorian rhythms teacher whose description inaugurates the first composition, namely their sole relation to characteristics of happy -“women express their happiness through this rhythm” - and hot -“this rhythm is really hot”- events. Furthermore, the radio broadcaster that is heard immediately after mentions how “black race are naturally good at music”.

Following Rivera Cusicanqui, I argue that this process, which operated similarly throughout many Latin American countries, did not just turn these representations into a lower level of hierarchy through “a theatricalization of the ‘originary’ condition of people rooted in the past and unable to make their own destiny” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, pp. 98–99). It also contributed to the neutralization of some of the decolonial impulses that the cimarrón-participatory representations can have, and that are undoubtedly related to Afro-Ecuadorians’ contemporary existence and not to them as primitive and static beings.

Furthermore, when Marimba Esmeraldeña was registered in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO

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<sup>77</sup> The decontextualisation of local knowledges is neither limited to those related to music and dances nor to Ecuador. To see a similar case related to a Colombian music genre, see Birenbaum-Quintero (2006) and about ecological knowledges in Canada, please see L. T. Simpson and Klein (2011).

(2015), the major invisibility of Marimba's context and its collective memories of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond its sound and movement system in folk-presentational events, which are the only events that are left of Marimba since cimarrón-participatory Marimba finally disappeared in the 1960s, was not a priority. As mentioned by Pablo Minda Batallas (2014), the Afro-Ecuadorian anthropologist who produced the document that made possible this recognition by UNESCO, although it was expected that this registration would promote performances with more depth and research, they have become even more superficial (personal communication, 2018).

Thus, UNESCO's posture in relation to Marimba Esmeraldeña is neither transformative nor critical of the established social, political and economic order. On the contrary, UNESCO's discourse is vague and paternalistic, framed in terms of choosing which cultural expressions are worthy of preserving and safeguarding from the threat of globalization as "authentic legacies from our past" that "speak about our roots" (Fischman, 2012, p. 281; L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 77). Moreover, UNESCO's approach to Marimba is similar to the approach that the elite mestizo people have used in their approach to folk Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances. Both have declared as their main aim to 'protect' Marimba. However, all they have done has acted as a repetition and reproduction of colonial relations. Following the 'General issue' number 34 of the Durban Declaration (2001), it is worth reflecting on whether to "protect their [Afro-descendants'] traditional knowledges [for instance, the ones embedded on their music and dance-based events], and their cultural and artistic heritage" (p. 9) refers to protecting exclusively the category of folk.

Therefore, besides the pioneers of folk representations of Marimba and Bomba, within the context of Ecuadorian folk as a practice, what it means to perform Indigenous-Ecuadorian and Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances has not varied much since the 19th century. Although, as is explained in detail in the following sections, the usage of terms such as ‘primitive’ or ‘uncivilised’ to refer to folk representations is not considered politically correct any more, the performance of Indigenous-Ecuadorians and Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances still include important signs related to the ‘primitive’ and ‘uncivilised’. This fixed notion of folk as a practice has been sharply criticised by some academics that affirm that currently, most folk representations of music and dances are done with no research or analysis but through a series of essentialist distortions of local expressions. For instance, Whitten and Fuentes, who, as I discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, could be said to have witnessed the two different categories of Marimba Esmeraldeña during its threshold period, affirmed that the establishment of folk Marimba constituted a forceful attempt to resuscitate Marimba (referring to this thesis’ cimarrón-participatory Marimba, which had recently disappeared). Whitten and Fuentes suggest that the attempt to resuscitate Marimba was generated to make Marimba part of the national (meaning mestizo) styles by transforming it into a touristic product for which dancers and musicians are paid and where the roles had to be redefined and adapted for commercial purposes. It is these authors’ opinion that, during the presentational period, Marimba became what they refer to as a “forced form of fake music” (Whitten & Fuentes, 1966, pp. 180–181).

Although the academic field of folk constituted an academic space where the study of dances and music other than mestizo people’s was included for the first

time, a racialised colonial difference underpinned the perceptions of most members of that field. Until now, many folk representations are still based on what was produced by the academic field of folk decades ago. Thus, currently, there is a strong criticism of folk representations. This criticism has been so sharp that some authors (Mullo Sandoval, 2009, pp. 50, 228; Ritter, 2011, p. 587), including this researcher, have transformed the usage of the term ‘folklorisation’ which initially meant the transformation of a cimarrón-participatory event to a folk-presentational one, to refer instead to essentialist, uniform, decontextualised and romanticised folk-presentational representations of Ecuadorian music and dance-based events.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, folk-presentational events are not perceived as innocent or positive anymore by these authors. In this sense, I follow Villa and Villa who define the dance and music groups that self-identify as ‘folk groups’ in most parts of Latin America as “groups that reduce the culture to one instance of expression that is described according to a taxonomic system that has occasioned the schematic exoticization of the others” (Villa & Villa, 2013, p. 159). García Salazar complements this definition when affirming that folk events tend to reduce Marimba and Bomba to events whose primary function is that of “entertaining or making the rest of the people happy” (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 109), with no acknowledgement of most collective memories.

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<sup>78</sup> Importantly, although the transition between cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba to folk-presentational that began in the 1990s is state-led and has occasioned superficial and stereotypical representations, there are other cases such as the Afro-Peruvian folk ‘revival’ that began in the 1960s, which was led by Afro-Peruvian scholars and performers Nicomedes and Victoria Santacruz-Espejo. Similarly to the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones who were the pioneers of Afro-Ecuadorian folk, but with much more impact, these Afro-Peruvians were strongly connected to their collective memories and had as their primary objective to communicate to the audience their cultural heritage. See Feldman (2005, 2009).

Despite the substantial critiques against folk as a practice in Ecuador, some authors also recognise that the folklorisation of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances has had some advantages. For instance, with regards to Marimba Esmeraldeña, the North American ethnomusicologists Ritter (2011) and Wellington (2012) write that the many black people's folk groups in Esmeraldas situate themselves as part of the continuity of the ancestral (cimarrón-participatory) tradition of Marimba in the light of the new political and social context. Also, Wellington has stated that folk events principally aim at the "preservation of Marimba as a cultural emblem and to gain more respect and appreciation from both Afro-Esmeraldeños and non-Afro-Esmeraldeños" (Wellington, 2012, p. 31). Moreover, Wellington (2012) affirmed that folk-presentational events of Marimba have even counteracted the sense of shame that had become strong in many Afro-Esmeraldeños (during what this thesis refers to as the threshold period; p. 12) through a connection to their heritage, both explicitly and implicitly (p. 22). As for the previously mentioned Whitten and Fuentes' (1966) affirmation of folk Marimba constituting a "forced form of fake music" (pp. 180-181), Wellington (2012) affirms that it responds to a "preservationist sentiment" and that it is more useful to think that "people are not moving away from their music, but their music is just as malleable as other facets of social life" (p. 37). Also, Ritter affirms that folk groups see their work as "authentic" and not "forced" or "fake" as Whitten and Fuentes (1966) stated decades ago (Ritter, 2011, p. 572).

As I show in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis, I find it more accurate to understand the folklorisation of Marimba as a consequence of a violent interruption of the transmission of collective memories of cimarrón-participatory events

occasioned by power relations rather than a continuation of them. Moreover, most events of folk-presentational Marimba, I suggest, are not rich in collective memories of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond its sound and movement system, and target the generation of a ‘happy’ and ‘hot’ object that, although aimed at being “protected” (Wellington, 2012, p. 71), remains part of a racialised colonial difference nevertheless. For instance, as Ritter (1998) observed and as I have verified, in most folk events of Marimba, the Bambuco is the only marimba dance performed, and it consists of just one step. Moreover, new generations of folk musicians and dancers are forgetting most of the musical rhythms of marimba. As the famous Marimbero Cimarrón musician Papá Roncón stated when interviewed by Ritter and myself (personal communication, 2017) regarding his concerns about new generations of folk Marimba musicians and dancers, “there is an ignorance and worse, disinterest in the Marimba... they would play in the touristic venue without first properly learning the instrument and its repertoire” (Ritter, 1999a, p. 75). As has been mentioned earlier, the process of forgetfulness of the sound and movement system of marimba is directly related to the forgetfulness of Marimberos Cimarrones’ other collective memories related to experiences of violence, resistance and re-existence. Moreover, there is no support or encouragement for new generations to learn from (this includes listening to) Marimberos Cimarrones about the social and historical context (collective memories beyond sound and movement system) of Marimba anymore.

As for Bomba del Chota, The North American ethnomusicologist Francisco Lara and the Argentinean Latinamericanist Diana Ruggiero mention some advantages with regards to its process of folklorization. Namely, these have allowed some Afro-Choteños to consciously manipulate Bomba as part of their

fight for social, economic and political equity (Lara, 2011, p. 79) or even as an anti-discourse in order to become more visible in Ecuador (Ruggiero, 2010, p. 97).<sup>79</sup> In light of the signifiers that are usually present in folk-presentational events of Bomba and that are related to a ‘naturally happy and hot’ group of people, I contend that although the recent visibility of folk Bomba could be interpreted as something positive that counteracts the apparent historical invisibility of Afro-Ecuadorians, it is more accurate to relate it to the previously mentioned notion of negative visibility (See Chapter One).

Importantly, questioning the folklorisation of Marimba and Bomba does not negate the right of Marimberos and Bomberos to enjoy being applauded or to have an extra income for the performance of the music and dance that belong to them. However, it is crucial to be critical towards what exactly the audience is applauding and why and how much folk-presentational performances inform the audience of the dignified history and existence of Marimberos and Bomberos and through them, of all Afro-Ecuadorians. Following the ideas of Luis Macas, a ‘Runa’ (Kichwa Indigenous-Ecuadorian) leader, and his thinking regarding Runa culture, in this thesis, it is considered much more urgent to understand Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota as dynamic products of both domination, resistance and re-existence.<sup>80</sup> Thus, Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota

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<sup>79</sup> Both authors make these assertions referring to Bomba in general. It is my contention, however, that their affirmations are only applicable to folk-presentational Bomba. In folk-presentational Bomba, there is a product that goes in line with the official discourse and is presented in front of an audience who usually does not have communicative competence, the music is usually fixed, and the musicians usually have control of the performance.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Runa’ is a Kichwa term translated as human being. Many Kichwa members of Indigenous-Ecuadorian political movements have stated that they prefer to be called Runas rather than ‘indigenous’ because of its Kichwa meaning. Their decision also constitutes a way of reclaiming the term Runa as a dignified term in spite of the fact that it is still commonly used by many Ecuadorians to refer to dogs without pedigree.

are not to be merely acknowledged, but rather to be offered as a contribution from Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones to society in its entirety as a function of change or as substantial elements of an alternative proposal (Macas, 2004, para. 5).

In this thesis, I argue that most folk-presentational events, except the ones conceived by the first generations, constitute a violent rupture from cimarrón-participatory events. As is shown in the next subsection, the negation and silencing of collective memories other than those directly related to their sound and movement system are not specific to presentational representations such as folk but also to other sub-categories of presentational representations, such as what I have called here ‘show’. I contend that show performances constitute a more recent phenomenon in which Afro-Ecuadorians’ collective memories have still not been taken into account. Importantly, unlike the official spaces of folk, show performances constitute unofficial and less ‘sanitised’ public representations of Marimba and Bomba. Thus, show performances constitute an excellent opportunity to understand in detail the perception most Ecuadorians have concerning Marimba and Bomba more easily than in official folk events.

### **Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota show-presentational performances: the ‘hyper-sexual’ movements of marimba and bomba**

Within this research, I pay particular attention to two of the most popular, commercial and mass appeal show-presentational phenomena, led mainly by



business people who have appropriated specific songs and dance steps of marimba and bomba and reduced them to a static set of hyper-sexual performances to entertain an audience. Specifically, I analyse Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton as show-performances that unlike folk-presentational performances, overtly included the supposedly ‘hyper-sexualisation’ of Marimberos and Bomberos in their representations. In order to understand the meanings portrayed in many show-presentational performances, in this chapter’s sonic composition I highlight the racialised meanings portrayed in two performances, one Bomba-based Tecnocumbia and one Marimba-based Reggaeton. These songs constitute two of the most popular songs that have included Marimba and Bomba in show-presentational contexts, and thus, these are songs that have taken Bomba and Marimba beyond Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories.

One of the most successful songs of the Ecuadorian Tecnocumbiera Hipatia Balseca, who has been declared as the ‘Diva de la Tecnocumbia’ (Tecnocumbia’s Diva), is precisely a song that is based on the rhythm of bomba del Chota called ‘La Bomba’, a portion of which can be heard in this chapter’s sonic composition. In this song, with an erotic voice tone characteristic of Tecnocumbieras, Balseca repeats over and over phrases exclusively related to the women’s hip movement inviting everyone to dance; “and now, let’s shake our hips, move your hips, let’s dance bomba... left, right, come on! With rhythm, dance this bomba with me, because it is really good, my hip movements drive you crazy...” (NNEcuador, 2012, 01:06-01:26). Tecnocumbia has been so successful that currently, it is one of the most popular Ecuadorian rhythms in most provinces. Interestingly, the only Ecuadorian province where Tecnocumbia has not been as successful is in Esmeraldas, where

people prefer Salsa, Merengue and Reggaeton (Puente Hernández, 2004, p. 13).

Unlike Bomba del Chota, Marimba Esmeraldeña has not been utilised much to generate show-presentational performances. The lack of inclusion of Marimba in show-presentational performances may be because while Bomba del Chota is still a big part of cimarrón-participatory contexts to the present day -especially in Chota-Mira Valley and black people's neighbourhoods in various cities of Ecuador-, Marimba Esmeraldeña had disappeared by the late 1960s (See Chapter Two). The disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña is perhaps what makes it harder for the rhythm of marimba to appeal to contemporary performers and audiences for whom the idea of Marimba being part of an event that may include an active audience is entirely unfamiliar. Nevertheless, there are specific examples of Marimba-based fusions, as in the case of the artist 'Joel La Clave' who created the Reggaeton song 'Marimba Perreo' based on the traditional rhythm of marimba called 'Andarele', which can be heard in this chapter's sonic composition immediately after the Bomba-Tecnocumbia. As has been mentioned by Ritter (2011), this song was already a favourite in Esmeraldas during his fieldwork in 2006 (p. 572). Based on my fieldwork observations and conversations, the song produced by the artist Joel La Clave is one of the few marimba-based songs that have had enormous success, so much so that it is still being reproduced in parties and celebrations in Esmeraldas. Similar to Balseca's Bomba-based Tecnocumbia performance 'La Bomba', this fusion between Marimba and perreo focuses on explicit erotic female movements as the trigger point for a celebratory or 'happy' party; "come and be part of our happiness... with a hand behind, with a raised ass, I want you to move and keep it up, I want to see you here and hot, if you are tired then shake it slower, slower, with

Javari and La Clave, softer, cause this ain't gonna finish, this is marimba, and this is also perreo, shake it with La Clave and you will see the gracefulness, this is marimba, and also perreo..." (X. Ortiz, 2007, 1:54-2:30). Although there are just a few examples of Marimba Esmeraldeña-based fusions, according to the Marimbera cimarrona Petita Palma (in Paredes & Kashinsky, 2006), these fusions have slightly increased since Marimba was designated as part of the UNESCO's intangible heritage list in 2015.

As for the historical context of these two sub-categories of show performances, Reggaeton and Tecnocumbia were developed in Latin American urban contexts as spaces detached from representations related to national identity and focused on massively attracting those groups of people who identified neither with National nor with folk music. It was developed through a mixture of a wide range of Latin American and non-Latin American rhythms. Tecnocumbia originated in Mexico and spread out to the rest of Latin America, including Ecuador, in the early 1990s as an evolving form of 'Música Rocolera' (Albán Gallo & Romero Quiroga, 2005, p. 75). Importantly, performers of Música Rocolera were based on rhythms such as bomba and brought those rhythms to a national scale (Ibarra, 1998, p. 43). Tecnocumbia constitutes an innovation from Música Rocolera with the addition of new elements such as the live show and choreographies that include specific costumes (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 50).<sup>81</sup> Tecnocumbia is not considered a music genre since it is not homogenous enough, but it does have a characteristic electronic rhythm produced by either a synthesiser, an electric drum kit

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<sup>81</sup> Usually, Tecnocumbia shows include from ten to fifteen artists. Their audience can reach two thousand people (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 47).

or any computerised apparatus that can create a melody. Although the term Tecnocumbia is a merging of the music and dance genres of Techno (a musical trend that originated in the 1970s and that is characterised by electronic instruments and sequential rhythms) and Cumbia (dance and rhythm from the Atlantic Colombian coast), Tecnocumbia is not a fusion of these two (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 45). The music of Tecnocumbia is based on innovation through imitation. That is, Tecnocumbia artists (Tecnocumbieros) incorporate elements from already existing music genres that have had great success by, for instance, recycling well-known songs or rhythms and then modernising them into Tecnocumbia (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 46). The modernisation of some genres of local traditional music through Tecnocumbia refers mainly to the mixture and fusions between traditional and electronic music (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 44). The term Tecnocumbia is related to the fact that the first traditional rhythms in which Tecnocumbieros added a specific electronic rhythm were from the music genre of Cumbia. Currently, Tecnocumbieros include many more music genres. One of the music and dance genres that Ecuadorian Tecnocumbia artists have included the most in the last ten years is bomba del Chota. As for Reggaeton, it originated in Puerto Rico in the 1990s and spread to the rest of Latin America, including Ecuador, from the early 2000s. The term Reggaeton is related to the Reggae (a music genre that originated in Jamaica in the late 1960s) and 'ton' which is a Puerto Rican slang suffix that refers to something bigger or more important. In the beginning, Reggaeton was a mixture of Reggae and Dancehall. Currently, Reggaeton is more influenced by a diversity of other rhythms such as Hip Hop, Rap, Salsa, Merengue, Pop and House music. Because of its diverse influences, Reggaeton has been defined as a socio-musical collage (Martínez Noriega, 2014, p. 64).

Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton significantly differ from each other, not just in the rhythms each of them brings together but also in their style and target audience, amongst other things. For instance, whereas Tecnocumbia is considered a family show that welcomes people of all ages -from children to the elderly- Reggaeton, as a much more subversive and overt way of challenging females' relation to their body, is essentially a phenomenon for young people (Negrón-Muntaner & Rivera, 2009, p. 30). Another critical difference is that most singers, on-stage dancers and producers of Tecnocumbia are mainly female. As for Reggaeton, although most on-stage dancers are female, most singers and producers are male.

Despite the crucial differences between Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton, here the focus is mainly on those characteristics that these two phenomena have in common. The commonalities between Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton are of relevance for this research since these are precisely what have made them ideal spaces to develop mainstream representations that have included marimba and bomba sounds and movement systems with no connection with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories beyond portions of Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement systems. Following the terminology proposed in Chapter One of this thesis, Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton fall into the category of show-presentational performances. In this way, a differentiation is made between them and the cimarrón-participatory performances that have existed from the slavery period and that are strongly connected to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories beyond their two music and dance-based events sound and movement system.

One of the predominant characteristics that Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton have in common and that makes them fall into the category of show-presentational is that, unlike folk-presentational performances where usually the audience sits down, the events produced by Tecnocumbia performers (Tecnocumbieros) and Reggaeton performers (Reggaetoneros) encourage their audiences not just to see and listen but also to participate in the performance actively. Thus, Tecnocumbieros and Reggaetoneros transform the passive audience of folk-performances into an active one, either when their music is reproduced on a CD player or during their live shows. Moreover, during the live shows of Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton, artists include choreographies and encouraging phrases in their lyrics as the most important part of their performances, since this stimulates the audience to dance and sing along with them (Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 45).

Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton dancers that usually accompany singers on stage during a live show are most of the time females whose costumes and dancing steps are meant to expose their sensuality and physical attributes (Galluci, 2008, p. 86; Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, pp. 44–45). Unlike many Ecuadorian women, female Tecnocumbia artists (Tecnocumbieras) and female Reggaeton artists (Reggaetoneras) expose their bodies to the public without any apparent fear of what people might say (Estrella Silva & Tapia Aguirre, 2004, p. 5). Among these two phenomena, Reggaeton is the space where sexual interactions are alluded to more explicitly, so much so, that the ‘perreo’, which refers to dancing with the music of Reggaeton, literally seeks to imitate the coitus between two dogs (Martínez Noriega, 2014, p. 65). During perreo, females’ and males’ bodies rub into each other while dancing to imitate sexual positions (Galluci, 2008, p. 86; Rodrigues Morgado, 2012,

p. 9). As for Tecnocumbia, the sensual and the erotic play the role of suggesting, but not of representing, a sexual encounter. The emphasis that Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton performances put on female eroticism is also enhanced by the songs' lyrics and the singers' erotic tone of voice.

Importantly, in Ecuador, neither Tecnocumbia nor Reggaeton have been overwhelmingly supported by the state or the elites, as is the case of Música Nacional and folk performances, but rather by low-income, working class groups (Rodrigues Morgado, 2012, p. 82; Santillán & Ramírez, 2004, p. 44).

Tecnocumbieros and Reggaetoneros have been able to survive despite lack of official support mainly because they do not just perform but also produce their events either by themselves or with the support of their families or close friends. Nevertheless, neither Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton independence nor their massive success have allowed these phenomena to penetrate spaces that Música Nacional and folk are part of, such as official cultural events or museums.<sup>82</sup> Thus, show-presentational performances such as Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton differ from folk-presentational ones also because of their unofficial character (See fig. 13).

Tecnocumbieros and Reggaetoneros have received innumerable critiques.

For instance, these two phenomena are firmly rejected by the state and the elite, who

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<sup>82</sup> This became clear in an incident that happened in one of the leading public museums of the capital city, Quito in 2005. An innovative project was funded by the museum to produce a curated exhibition that would describe Tecnocumbieros' world called "Las Divas de la Tecnocumbia". It included photography, a CD produced jointly by Tecnocumbieros and an Ecuadorian music group famous for its fusion between traditional and modern rhythms, and a few performances. However, most of the events were cancelled at the last minute. The director of the museum argued that this cancellation was due to disagreements between the researchers and curators of the exhibition and her, and denied any censorship against Tecnocumbia. However, some media coverage and research such as Albán Gallo's (2005) suggest that the exhibition was actually censored because it was too unsettling to be accepted by the authorities of the museum and some of the museum's visitors.

consider these as mediocre and poor quality performances that are vulgar, superficial and in bad taste (Puente Hernández, 2004, p. 2). One of the most common criticisms against Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton is that they are believed to lack poetry, understood as the use of metaphors in their songs, and to require greater technical and music production quality (A. de la Torre, 2003, p. 17; Martínez Noriega, 2014, p. 65). Also, the erotic quality of Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton performances is what has made them two of the most controversial phenomena in Ecuador. In spite of these severe critiques against the performances of Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton, it is clear that these genres have been developed and are supported, in general, by people that do not identify with folk performances, and thus, that are agential and cognizant enough to creatively utilising them as forms for expression of the kind of syncretic lives and the kind of changes in their realities that they must perforce deal with. Importantly, it is also clear that, as it was emphasized early, this seemingly ‘empty forms’ might be passing down cultural knowledge related to, for instance, portions of the sound and movement system of Marimba and Bomba or the bodily freedom that the cimarrón-participatory version of the two Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance-based events that are the focus of this thesis have historically expressed. However, the focus of this research is more on the straightforward, limited and stereotypical meaning that is communicated in Marimba and Bomba-based show performances that have had a great success in Ecuador. These meanings have even been considered as disrespectful for some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. As the Marimbera Cimarrona Petita Palma exclaimed during one of her interviews (Paredes & Kashinsky, 2006, p. 2016), “my ancestors must be spinning in their graves when they hear the crazy music that is being produced since Marimba started to get fashionable... Reggaeton-Marimba, Perreo-Marimba...”.



In this regard, authors such as de la Torre have argued that this sense of Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton being disrespectful of traditional rhythms responds to a sort of purism that disqualifies anything that is out of the original scheme, without taking into account the generational dynamics and the social reality (A. de la Torre, 2003, p. 17). De la Torre's affirmation is similar to Ritter's (2011, p. 572) and Wellington's (2012, p. 37) argument about Marimba Esmeraldeña's fusions.

Some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' arguments and mine, however, should not be confused with the purists' points of view or claims for authenticity, mainly because - as has already been stated by Ritter (2011, p. 757) concerning Marimba and by Lara (2011, pp. 138–168) concerning Bomba - these performances have already been hybrids for centuries. Thus, it is not about assuming an originary narrative, a immutable form or a nostalgic longing for Marimba and Bomba, that, because of time, regardless, are going to change. In this sense, I find it crucial to distinguish the role of the hybridization process in recent decades and during Marimba's and Bomba's cimarrón-participatory period. I find Rivera Cusicanqui's approach to fusions or hybridizations relevant to clarify my position. Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 118) understands 'hybridization' as a product of a synthetic mixture without clearly acknowledging the parts from which it is constituted. Following her definition, Rivera Cusicanqui also affirms: "It is not about being purely traditional or purely modern. We are maybe both, but the two things are not fused, because the fusion is always going to privilege one and only side" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018, p. 153). Thus, what the aforementioned Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones are challenging through their experience and what I am

challenging through my work are not the fusions themselves as a product for entertainment but the ability of Tecnocumbieros and Reggaetoneros to reduce Marimba and Bomba to hyper-sexualised and ‘happy’ performances, excluding the collective memories that have historically been an intrinsic part of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba and thus, not allowing the audience to understand and appreciate the different nuances of the collective past from which Marimba and Bomba come.

Contrastingly and essential for this thesis, Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 118) proposes the notion of *ch’ixi*, as opposed to the notion of hybridization or fusions where these are understood as synthetic products, rendering invisible the opposite sides from which they were formed. In accordance with the decolonial purpose of this research, the genesis of a *ch’ixi* product purposefully reveals the opposing and even contradictory worlds that are recombined, turning *ch’ixi* representations into an arena of antagonisms and seductions (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010a, p. 5) and not into an unrealistically harmonic product, as is the case with most fusions or hybrids, including show-presentational performances of Tecnocumbia and Reggaeton. In this respect, the renowned Marimbero Cimarrón Larry Preciado, who is considered one of the best Marimba Esmeraldeña’s performer alive, shows an understanding similar to that of a *ch’ixi* performance;

When I perform the Marimba, the base is my ancestry (termed ‘collective memories’ in this thesis). But I also have every right to move on. However, it is very important to conserve where I do come from, what is Marimba, how Marimba is performed, and not mix it up. If I modify something, I have to find a way to say that what I am doing and what my ancestry tells me to

do is not the same, because it is not. If I do not do that, I sell my product, but that which is ancestral drops out of the picture, and I begin to perform something that has lost its identity (personal communication, 2018).<sup>83</sup>

### **Exposing the aestheTics from presentational representations of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimba and Bomba**

Following the understanding of the meanings related to folk and show-performances of Marimba and Bomba, I locate some of them within the on-going process of coloniality. Specifically, these meanings are related to a racialised colonial difference. Following Wade (2017, p. 38), I contend that locating the meanings portrayed in folk and show performances within a racialised colonial difference is especially important since these public events are usually perceived not just as innocent representations but even as positive portrayals of those whose humanity has historically been called into question, that in the context of this thesis are the Afro-Ecuadorians. Thus, these apparently positive portrayals keep being signified in public representations without being called into question. On the other hand, the critical recognition of specifically constructed hierarchies generated through the coloniality of power is essential to understand how what we learn through folk, show and other public representations has been manipulated and, more

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<sup>83</sup> The UK-based practitioner and choreographer of African and Afro-Caribbean dances, 'H' Patten, shared a similar reflection. While explaining his approach on the development of a performance that included African and Afro-Caribbean dances, he affirmed; "you need to know which dances come together and work together, the meaning of the individual dances... I don't just use any movement that I don't know where it come from, I make it a duty to know the dance and know the background" (Noxolo, 2015, p. 188).

importantly, constitutes effective mechanisms for the continued exclusion and stigmatization of Afro-Ecuadorians.

Specifically, I contend that the colonial meanings that are communicated through public representations are related to the historical distinction made between those groups of people considered 'civilised' and those considered 'primitive'. Presentational representations have historically been related to the notion of the 'primitive' through the depiction of naturally happy people and hyper-sexual people. Furthermore, it is contended here that a notion of primitiveness has been extended to most Afro-Ecuadorians' public representations. Thus, in this chapter's composition, I relate the racialised meanings of presentational representations that are examined to a group of more complex and overtly racist characteristics that are part of other public representations such as being less human (for instance, animals), lazy and violent people with less, or non-existent, ability to produce knowledge or to be affected by a collective past. The public representations that I have chosen to theoretically and sonically examine constitute the most remarkable and well-known examples of a racialised colonial difference in Ecuador during the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Also, it is especially important to understand the process of transformation that takes place to represent Afro-Ecuadorians from what has been historically perceived about cimarrón-participatory performances to folk and show performances. Since most presentational events are considered public spaces of entertainment, the aestheSis of cimarrón-participatory performances suffer a process of transformation from a group of people related to 'primitive' characteristics associated with 'being black' to a group of characteristics that represent the

‘civilized’ aesthetic, or what is considered ‘beautiful’ from an Eurocentric point of view.

### **The colonial categories of the ‘civilised victims’, mestizo-Ecuadorians, and the ‘primitive animal-like’ Afro-Ecuadorians**

The particular distinction between the ‘civilised’ and the ‘primitive’ has existed from the 15th century when the notion of the European conquerors as the civilised and the indigenous and Afro-descendant groups as primitive was established and fixed. Usually, the notion of the civilised was related to everything brought by the conquerors, whereas the primitive was everything that was perceived as different from what the conquerors were used to. According to Mignolo (2011c), this distinction was one of the bases of colonialism (p. xiv), which worked as an epistemic strategy to create colonial difference (p. 153). The basis of this (racialised) colonial difference has historically been the continuous attempts to become, or push the rest to become, ‘civilised’. Moreover, the attempt of civilising ‘primitive’ people is usually justified by the danger that ‘civilised’ people face until ‘primitive’ ones, to whom animal-like characteristics are often attributed, are transformed, turning civilised people into the victims of the non-civilised, primitive-group. Importantly, these attempts are precisely what have sustained the racialised colonial difference until the present day and what have affected most public representations of Afro-Ecuadorians.

Specifically, in the Ecuadorian context, the notions of Afro-Ecuadorians as primitive are diverse. Although an exhaustive investigation goes beyond the aim of this thesis, it is possible to make sense of some of the most remarkable examples that reflect the constructed beliefs that have shaped most public representations of Afro-Ecuadorians. One of the most significant examples during the Atlantic slavery period is related to the Black people's Comarca generated by the first generations of Afro-descendants who arrived in Ecuador (See Introduction). Although some contemporary historians (Rueda Novoa, 2015; Tardieu, 2006) have acknowledged the arrival of Afro-descendants to Esmeraldas as a creative and strategic process that allowed them to survive as cimarrones during their first decades in Ecuadorian land, the chronicles written by Cabello de Balboa (1945/1583), describe Afro-descendants as primitive, barbarians and demonic beings that were characterised by the usage of a 'brute force' to subdue Indigenous-Ecuadorian communities (p. 19-20).

Once Ecuador gained its independence from Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new racialised discourse in which Indigenous-Ecuadorians were portrayed as primitive people who urgently needed to be civilised began. At this point, black people were not even mentioned, communicating through their silence the belief that they were not even human enough to ever be able to become civilised (Walsh, 2010, pp. 97, 103–109). Just a century later, precisely during the years when the notion of folk was being developed in Ecuador, influential local writers and intellectuals published novels and research related to black people, although highlighting mainly their 'primitiveness' (Handelsman, 2001, p. 39). For academic texts, the sociologist Alfredo Espinoza Tamayo and the anthropologist and archaeologist Humberto García Ortiz, considered two of the most important Ecuadorian intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wrote strong statements related to black people supposed primitiveness

(Espinoza Tamayo, 1979/1962, pp. 162–167; Estupiñán Tello, 1983, pp. 25–34; García Ortiz, 1935, p. 62). All of these authors related black people ‘primitiveness’ with lack of intelligence, childish attitudes, a natural tendency to being violent and animal-like features and attitudes.

The notions of the civilised and the primitive also affected Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances, which began to be classified according to their dissimilarity or similarity with the goal of becoming civilised. For instance, a cimarrón-participatory Bomba event was described by Hassaurek (1967/1868) as “characterised by wild sweeping and sashing, and extravagant gesticulations...” (p. 193). As for the musicians of cimarrón-participatory Bomba, Hassaurek affirmed that a drummer of bomba performed “with the agility of a monkey...” (p. 193). Similarly, Festa (1909) said, “all the instruments [of bomba] were the most primitive that can be imagined” (p. 303). The same author also mentioned that bomba was a sort of “wild and barbaric music...” (p. 333). As for the lyrics of the songs of cimarrón-participatory Bomba, Costales and Peñaherrera (1959) describe them as “random words from a conversation with a child - but with a child that has been forced to become a man and thus says unstructured things, **without beauty** [emphasis added]” (p. 205). With regard to cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña, the traveller Basurco (1902) describes it as an “infernal racket” and also mentioned how desperate he felt listening to a Bambuco (one of marimba’s rhythms) and how much he felt Afro-Esmeraldeños needed to learn to play the marimba ‘properly’ (p. 64).

Evidently, the relation of Afro-Ecuadorians to that which is ‘primitive’ goes beyond novels, academic books and travellers’ field notes and is also part of more

quotidian and public interactions. In this respect, ‘being Afro-Ecuadorian’ has commonly been related by many Ecuadorians almost exclusively to a homogenous and fixed version of ‘ser negro’ (being black), which is in turn associated with negative and unchangeable characteristics. For instance, Whitten (1974a) mentioned that “many Ecuadorians use such nouns as dirty, lazy, stupid, uncivilised, subhuman and ugly to depict blackness in general” (p. 192). Among the most unequivocal evidence that the notions of primitiveness as related to Afro-Ecuadorians are the continuation of a racialised colonial difference that has existed since colonial times in the various incidents of racial discrimination in Ecuador. Importantly, these incidents have happened in public non-official mass media, and thus, reflect in a much more apparent way the perceptions of most Ecuadorians with regards to blackness.

Among the public representations that are considered by most Afro-Ecuadorian activists as the most degrading and stereotypical ones are those that are spread through mass media such as the radio and the television (de la Torre Espinosa & Hollenstein, 2010, p. 33; STFS et al., 2005, p. 27). Some of these pejorative perceptions have even officially (through a lawyer) or unofficially (in websites such as YouTube or through documentaries) been denounced as ‘hate crimes’.<sup>84</sup> In the last six years, the government has banned many TV shows in which Afro-Ecuadorians were depicted as lazy, violent and hyper-sexual beings. However, currently, there are still TV shows that include characters depicting Afro-Ecuadorians through blackface

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<sup>84</sup> Acts of racism have been classified in the Ecuadorian Penal Code as ‘hate crime’ since 2009. According to Sánchez (2016), hate crimes refer to acts of physical or psychological violence motivated by intolerance, in which the hatred towards someone because of their different nationality or ethnicity is the motivation for a criminal act (pp. 40-41).



and other pejorative characteristics. The most popular pejorative depictions of Afro-Ecuadorians that still exist in public television and radio are the ones that compare Afro-Ecuadorians with animals such as monkeys; highlight Afro-Ecuadorians' apparent lack of ability to think; dirtiness; a 'natural' propensity to be always happy, or to become either thieves, murderers or soccer players and dancers.

Two of the most complex and telling contemporary examples of representations of Afro-Ecuadorians that are part of a racialised colonial difference, which can be heard in this chapter's composition, are the public commentaries of the Ecuadorian human rights activist and television presenter Giovanny Dupleint in a local talk show in 2010 and the production of a song as part of a political campaign in 'La Concordia' of the Ecuadorian politician and broadcaster Walter Ocampo in 2009. Although these examples might be thought of as isolated ones, previous studies (Cervone & Rivera, 1999; de la Torre Espinosa, 2002; de la Torre Espinosa & Hollenstein, 2010; Handelsman, 2001; Vera Santos, 2016) have shown that they constitute valid evidence of how Afro-Ecuadorians are still perceived and represented in Ecuador. Indeed, although there is a generalised consensus among most intellectuals of 'race' being a social construction that is a product of specific historical contexts, the social understanding of race as a natural, and, thus, a supposedly neutral categorisation, still exists.

The first example that is part of this chapter's composition occurred during one of the episodes of the popular talk show 'Vamos con Todo' in 2010. One of the presenters, Giovanny Dupleint, straightforwardly voiced his opinion regarding Afro-Ecuadorians. Dupleint referred to 'los Afroecuatorianos' as lazy, unintelligent and

animal-like thieves that were ‘only good for selling coconut candies or for being soccer players’. Although Dupleint was not officially accused, a petition through the webpage Change.org organised by the Afro-Ecuadorian Carlos Martín Cabezas (2010) began to circulate in order to encourage people to sign, in order to be able to bring Dupleint to justice at the Federal Judicial Council. Four years later, another statement appeared in the YouTube channel entitled ‘Antirracismo en Ecuador’ (2014) to protest against Dupleint’s appointment as the Director of Human Rights in Ecuador despite his discriminatory comments in previous years.

The second example, which can also be heard in this chapter’s composition, occurred in La Concordia. ‘La Concordia’ is the name of an Ecuadorian canton with a population of about thirty thousand inhabitants that is located between the Esmeraldas and Santo Domingo provinces. Its Afro-Ecuadorian population is approximately 8.5% (Ponce, 2006, p. 60). Until 2011, La Concordia was not officially part of either Esmeraldas or Santo Domingo provinces. According to some newspapers, many mestizo inhabitants of the city were against La Concordia becoming part of Esmeraldas province mainly because of Esmeraldas’ high Afro-Ecuadorian population and preferred it to become part of Santo Domingo, a province with fewer Afro-Ecuadorians inhabitants.<sup>85</sup> In 2009, a political campaign began to invite La Concordia’s inhabitants to a referendum to decide which province the canton should be part of. As part of this campaign, a song entitled ‘Negros de mierda’ (Shitty blacks) was broadcasted on the radio programme ‘Super W’ owned by Walter Ocampo, the Mayor of La Concordia at that time. The song was

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<sup>85</sup> Whereas 22.5% of the population of Esmeraldas province is Afro-Ecuadorian, just 2.7% of the population of Santo Domingo province is Afro-Ecuadorian (CODAE, CODENPE, & CODEPMOC, 2010, p. 36).

composed and released by the Argentinean humour-focused music group ‘Jamón de Mar’ in 2000 (Melgar Bao, 2005, p. 47). Although in the Argentinean context the phrase ‘negros de mierda’ refers to rural poor people who migrate to the city to work and that are considered lazy, dirty, thieves and drug addicts, the song was utilised in the aforementioned Ecuadorian political campaign to refer to Afro-Ecuadorians. In the song, which can be heard in this chapter’s composition, the ‘negros’ are depicted as dangerous and animal-like beings that should be got rid of.

The broadcasted song ‘Negros de Mierda’ immediately aroused a wave of protests, especially from some Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous-Ecuadorian political movements. Despite the evidence that showed that the song was played from his radio station, Ocampo denied responsibility for it and suggested that his political enemies could have infiltrated his radio station. Although it is not clear how many times that song was played on the radio, after two days it was permanently removed. Walter Ocampos was never sanctioned for the reproduction of the song and never gave an official statement about it. Even though the song was not played over the radio for more than a few days, it gained substantial popularity in Ecuador because it was included in a documentary against racism entitled ‘Sospechosos’ (Suspects; Lasso, 2012). This documentary, whose excerpts are also included in this chapter’s composition, tackles racism in Ecuador based on a racist incident that happened in the central park of the capital city of Ecuador, Quito, in 2008, where twenty eight Afrodescendants who were playing soccer, resting or just walking by the park were arrested. In an interview, the chief policemen who led their arrest said they did it because Afro-Ecuadorians ‘tend to look suspicious’. The inclusion of the song in this documentary and its straightforward message made it an emblem of the persistent

problem of racism in Ecuador.

In 2011, 70% of the population of La Concordia voted for it to be officially part of Santo Domingo province. A year later, in 2012, the same mayor, Walter Ocampo, who affirmed he had nothing to do with the polemic song, got involved in a new dispute related to the pejorative representations of black people in Ecuador. Ocampo led the construction of a monument in La Concordia's Central Park, which was named 'Monumento a la Raza' (Monument to the Race). The monument depicted three figures of black-skinned women holding a figure of a white-skinned woman standing over a large shell. Once more, a wave of protests arose. In 2013, Ocampo was officially accused of having committed the crime of racial discrimination, to which he replied in an interview that he and his team just wanted to show the unity and strength of 'their' peoples, referring to the inhabitants of La Concordia ("Retirarán monumento 'racista' del Parque Central La Concordia," 2014). Despite these and other arguments in favour of the monument, it was finally removed in a ceremony in 2014, in which La Concordia was declared a territory free of racism (See fig. 19).

I argue that both Dupleint's and Ocampos' statements could represent the humiliation and indignity that many Afro-Ecuadorians still face in being considered lesser humans, and thus, being depicted continuously as inferior, ignorant, out-dated and 'uncivilised' people. Therefore, in the same way that Mignolo highlighted the relevance of Bruce Gilley's (2017) controversial article in which he asked for the return of colonialism due to its supposed innumerable benefits, for "making public and explicit what is in the mind of many people" (Mignolo in Walsh & Mignolo,

2018, p. 232), I emphasise the significance of these crude examples as a representation of what is still believed by many Ecuadorians. Interestingly, Afro-Ecuadorians, who are depicted as lesser human beings and not entirely 'civilised' in some spaces of radio and television, appear as happy and energetic people, both considered positive characteristics, in folk and show representations of Marimba and Bomba. I suggest that this apparently 'positive' representation of Afro-Ecuadorians in presentational performances is due to a process of transformation that Afro-Ecuadorians' representations go through to end up in the public spaces of folk and show.

### **Staging the aestheticised 'primitive': Transference of a racialised colonial difference to presentational performances**

Despite pejorative representations and comments of Afro-Ecuadorians such as the ones discussed above, folk and show-presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba are considered as beautiful depictions of Afro-Ecuadorians' music and dance-based events for their respective audiences. Far from this being a contradiction, I suggest that the categorisation as folk and show of a group of people that have been historically considered primitive constitutes the farthest point along a continuum towards the notion of 'civilisation'. The relation between public performances and the categories of 'primitive' and 'civilised' is especially relevant with regards to folk representations since it is precisely these representations that are directly linked to an official discourse of interculturality through which the non-hierarchical coexistence of different identities is supposedly supported. However, as has been stated by Rahier (2011), this newly created discourse is still based on the

discrimination between the ‘civilised’ and the ‘primitive’ as racially marked instances of contested cultural differences (p. 70).

The racialised perceptions of Afro-Ecuadorians in general, and Marimberos and Bomberos in particular, point to Marimba and Bomba performances as primitive. It is affirmed here that this categorisation is due to a lack of understanding and historical rejection of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ perception of beauty or their aestheSis. As affirmed by the traveller Basurco (1902) who registered a performance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba, “their pleasure [of the Marimberos Cimarrones] can be felt, but cannot be understood” (p. 64). Needless to say, this perception was extended to Bomberos Cimarrones. In this sense, the Colombian historian Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez (1998) stated, “from the perspective of the colonisers, black people belonged to a mysterious continent with an aesthetic sense completely different than the one that evolved through Judeo-Christianity” (p. 117). Because of this incomprehension and rejection of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ aestheSis, this is transferred to folk and show performances through a process that I have named ‘staging the aestheTicised primitive’ in order to refer to the process of transformation of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ aestheSis into aestheTic characteristics.

Within the context of folk and show performances, the notion of aestheTics refers to the normative and Eurocentric framework for what is allowed to be presented on stage. As Birenbaum-Quintero (2006) and Grosfoguel (2015) have analysed, a universalised idea of beauty (referred to in this thesis as aestheTics) is almost always represented through a sense of homogeneity, annulling the diversity

of voices, experiences and collective memories into one mass of similar people with no relation to their history. As part of a racialised colonial difference, this homogeneity is almost always related to naturalised characteristics. In this respect, one can hear the voice of García Salazar in the composition, who affirmed, “because they want to put all the negative upon us, they relate all of us together within only one group through one word: blacks” (Lasso, 2012, 23:35).

Importantly, there are some examples in which although specific historical events are included, these are either romanticised or trivialised. This is precisely the case of one of the performances of the Afro-Esmeraldeño folk groups, ‘Raíces folklóricas del Pacífico’, which has been already analysed by Wellington (2012, p. 4). In 2017, in the popular TV contest ‘Ecuador Tiene Talento’ (Ecuador Has Got Talent), two young members of this group reached the finals. They presented a short performance that combined Marimba, other music and dances and also theatre. Interestingly, their performance focused on the arrival of the first Afrodescendants who reached the coast of Ecuador. Dressed in sparkling loin cloths and holding a wooden lance and shield, there was a visual and sonic emphasis on portraying music and dances as ways to fight the enemy. Also, they repeatedly referred in their declamation to Afro-Ecuadorians’ courtesy, respectfulness and openness to other ethnic groups. The performers received a standing ovation because of their innovative and virtuous work that portrayed a portion of Afro-Esmeraldeños’ history, which is totally unusual in these types of performances. Although the inclusion of these and other historical experiences is essential in the process of decolonising presentational performances, I suggest that this performance in particular constituted nothing more than another attempt to civilise the apparent

primitiveness of 'Afro-Ecuadorians'. Instead of creatively portraying strategies that Afro-Esmeraldeños used to survive as an independent group of people on their first decades in Ecuador (See Introduction), or even utilise their performance as a sort of "map" (Noxolo, 2015) for the audience to get in touch with the continual existence of group of Africans that settled in Ecuador five centuries ago, the performance is limited to the portrayal of a 'primitive' group of people that, although unable to do anything other than dancing to defend themselves, were submissive - or civilised - enough to not be violent to anyone, thereby reinforcing the historical stigma of Afro-Esmeraldeños as 'brave and uncivilised primitive people'.<sup>86</sup> Thus, through silencing Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' relation to a past full of nuances of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system, they appear in these and other public representations as a homogenous group of people that cannot go beyond innate happiness and hyper-sexuality, still at a distance from where 'civilisation' has reached.

Among the examples above of racialised characteristics depicted in public representations of Marimba and Bomba, the two clearest characteristics are the supposed happiness and hyper-sexuality of Afro-Ecuadorians. As for the inclusion of a naturalised Afro-Ecuadorian happiness, most people, including the ones who control folk and show performances, consider it as an aesthetic trait. The decontextualised notion of an Afro-Ecuadorian 'pure' happiness on stage is a socially accepted code that is usually going to appeal to all types of audience. As de la Torre (2010) has affirmed, there seems to be the assumption that once slavery

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<sup>86</sup> A similar critique related to performances presented at the Colombian folk festival 'Petronio Alvarez' was developed by Birenbaum-Quintero (2006).



ended, Afro-Ecuadorians happily stayed on their ancestral territories, singing and dancing in isolated and impoverished communities (p. 36).<sup>87</sup>

As for the supposed hyper-sexualisation of black people, as part of colonial difference this belief was utilised by the conquerors during the Atlantic slave trade to re-affirm their own identity relating to a mandatory Judeo-Christian chastity as the ideal of what is right, and the other people's identity as full of 'natural' deviations (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 132, 164). Specifically, the supposed hyper-sexualisation of black people was used to affirm that the black female of the newly conquered lands was "waiting to be penetrated" by male conquerors (Schick, 1999 in Rahier, 2003, p. 298), therefore justifying the sexual violence that was part of the Atlantic slave trade. Meanwhile, conquerors also generated extreme measures to control Afrodescendants' hyper-sexuality through, for instance, forcing enslaved people to have nuclear families and to marry among each other, as was the case of the Afro-Choteños who were enslaved by the Jesuits, or by prohibiting or monitoring their music and dances which were perceived by the conquerors as the ideal sites for Afro-Ecuadorians' uncontrollable sexual practices, as was the case of Afro-Esmeraldeños.

Although many authors such as Fanon (1986, p. 106) have made it clear that sexual desires or practices are dependent on social and historical circumstances, the belief that black people are 'naturally hyper-sexual' has remained strong until the

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<sup>87</sup> The naturalised relation between Afro-descendants and happiness has also been mentioned by Hall (1997a, p. 245) when he mentions the belief of 'happy natives' as "black entertainers, minstrels and banjo-players who seemed not to have a brain in their head but sang, danced and cracked jokes all day long, to entertain white folks; or the 'tricksters' who were admired for their crafty ways of avoiding hard work, and their tall tales, like Uncle Remus".

present day. As Rahier has stated (2011, pp. 60–63), like in many other countries, stereotypes that depict Afro-Ecuadorians’ immoral, abnormal, obsessive, irrepressible, permissive and therefore, ‘savage’ sexuality in relation to a mestizo ‘señora’ or ‘dama’ (lady) are abundant. The created ‘hyper-sexualisation’ of black people can also be observed in the way African and Afro-descendants’ music and dances are seen as markedly sexual practices. Wade, in his research on black people in Latin America, affirms that black people’s dances have historically been seen as the context within which sexual desires can be reflected in black people’s movements while dancing. While studying black people in Colombia, Wade argues that “styles of music and dance associated with black people, or as danced to by black people, are still seen as sexually immoral by many people” (Wade, 2010a, p. 110). For instance, among all Ecuadorian music and dances, only Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance include hyper-sexual signifiers such as dancers’ clothes and even the music’s lyrics. As Walmsley has stated, Esmeraldas and Chota Mira Valley (the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories) are considered places where people are naturally ‘calientes’ (‘hot’) and good at dancing (Walmsley, 2005, p. 184).<sup>88</sup> The notion of people who are calientes is related to party people who are not so good at other activities such as working or thinking. Importantly, some people can also relate the notion of caliente to a supposed hyper-sexuality.

A crucial point to arise within the analysis of the hyper-sexualisation in presentational events is the relationship between cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba and sexual encounters. Although in previous research,

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<sup>88</sup> Importantly, hyper-sexualisation clearly has different implications for men than for women, women being the target much more frequently.

including my own, it has been stated that cimarrón-participatory events had nothing to do with sexual intercourse, it is now my contention that this affirmation cannot be totally proven. I argue that the constant need to justify the non-relation between cimarrón-participatory events and sexual intercourse that can be found in my previous work (López Yáñez, 2013, p. 57-58) and Wellington's (2012, p. 48), is not only unnecessary but could also be morally biased. I consider it crucial to remember what Karavanta (2013) has already pointed out in relation to the intense affective experiences that enslaved people went through, and that are negated in most representations, regarding their attempt to sustain their relationships with their siblings, partners and communities in suffering, whilst sustaining their own existential depth and ontological matter (p. 45). As Ayala Congo stated during our conversation, "a lot of sexual tensions do get released while dancing" (personal communication, 2018). Thus, even if some of the events of Marimba and Bomba are related to sexual encounters, it is the reduction of these events to sexual encounters and the attempt to be continually exposing Afro-Ecuadorians' sexual life that can become problematic and which has colonial roots. Therefore, it is not about convincing the audience that Marimba and Bomba performances have never been related to sexual intercourse but rather it is about not exposing Marimberos and Bomberos' sexual behaviour, nor assuming their sexual behaviour is 'natural', fixed or homogenous.

The final important point is that, while still being part of a racialised colonial difference that relates Afro-Ecuadorians to primitiveness, folk and show-presentational performances represent Marimba and Bomba in strikingly different ways. I suggest that both the elite who controls folk performances and the popular

classes that control show performances perceive cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba as a-historical music and dances of naturally happy and hyper-sexual people. However, the relationship between folk and show performances with the notion of aesthetic significantly differs. Whereas in folk performances that which is considered aesthetic is related to the 'civilised', in show-performances the aesthetic is related to any qualities that will attract more audiences, whether these are considered 'civilised' or 'primitive' traits in the official arena.

For instance, official spaces extend their notion of what they consider Afro-Ecuadorian aesthetic happiness to 'civilised' signs such as smiles, subtle laughter or colourful costumes. On the other hand, isolated erotic qualities, although considered an intrinsic part of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba through the lens of a racialised colonial difference, are not regarded as civilised. Therefore, these are censored from folk-performances. As for show-presentational performances, these do not just straightforwardly include erotic qualities on stage, but the erotic constitutes one of their most highlighted characteristics since that is what attracts huge audiences. Going against a racialised colonial difference in which Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' perspectives are silenced and reduced to happy and hyper-sexual performances, I aim to include their 'voices' as part of the development of the current counter-representation.

## **Challenging aesthetics: Voicing Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' thoughts**

Previously, the apparent 'innocent' meanings of folk and show-presentational performances and their relation to other racist perceptions of Afro-Ecuadorians have been exposed through the contextualisation of their lyrics and their relation to racialised perceptions in public spaces such as TV and radio. In this subsection and through this chapter's sonic composition, I aim to contrast these pejorative meanings with Afro-Ecuadorians' contesting 'voices' and perceptions around what is assumed about them and how those assumptions affect them. As part of the level of the enunciation of the proposed ch'ixi product, I consider the inclusion of the Afro-Ecuadorians' sonic stance with regards to public representations as a way to introduce the audience to their aesthetics. In this regard, an important point to include is that even the most apparently innocent public representations that portray racialised beliefs of Afro-Ecuadorians contribute to their permanence in the bottom rung of Ecuadorian society.

It is crucial to understand that the racialised meanings transmitted through public performances have clear and tangible consequences for Afro-Ecuadorian lives. The consequences that were most repeatedly stated by Afro-Ecuadorians with whom I have talked is the difficulties they face when they try to penetrate those spaces that have historically belonged to mestizo people, such as urban spaces (See Introduction). As can be heard in this chapter's composition, these difficulties range

from being unable to rent a room or an apartment in the main cities -“they tell me they have already rented an apartment because I am black”-, and continually feeling that their presence causes fear among mestizo people -“they get scared when they see me...”- to them being compared to animals and even being catalogued as murderers or dangerous just for being black people -“they say, beware! Blacks are coming!... they change their seat when I am near...” as part of their daily life.

As a result of these racist experiences, black people have continuously raised their voices in protest. As can be heard in this chapter’s composition, when the police were taking the group of black people to jail in the racist incident that happened in the central park of the capital city in 2008, which is also mentioned above, they did respond; -“... why do you take just blacks!!... If you wanna kill us because we are blacks just do it!!... it can’t be possible that they violate our rights because we are black... we are not thieves, we are not criminals!!”. As can also be listened to in the composition, even a mestizo woman who was passing by tried to defend them by stating that the policemen were taking them solely because they were black people.

After the powerful voices of Afro-Ecuadorians protesting against the violation of their humanity, a creative work that challenges racist perspectives against Afro-Ecuadorians is included in this chapter’s composition. This creative work is the Rap-Bomba song ‘I am’, written and interpreted by the young academic, communal activist and Bombero cimarrón Diego Palacios Ocles. During our conversations, Palacios Ocles shared with me that in 2011, he heard that song while dreaming. He got up and called his friends to record it immediately. Going against

purist notions that reject any transformation of Ecuadorian rhythms such as marimba and bomba, Palacios Ocles' song constitutes an example of a ch'ixi product that through its rhythm, aesthetics and semantics does not erase but hierarchically highlights its dual origin. This is achieved by a variety of resources, ranging from acknowledging his African ancestry, 'I am Yoruba from the Ubuntu, I am Ubuntu from the Bantu'; the horrors of slavery, 'we were victims of a kidnapping'; exposing the still prevalent misconceptions against Afro-Ecuadorians as thieves, animal-like and even people who should be decimated, 'that they have to shoot me like an animal';<sup>89</sup> to challenging an Eurocentric audience, 'they do not know who we are, we have to tell them!'. Importantly, the central part of the song constitutes a reaffirmation, 'Yo soy' (I am), referring to a sense of belonging to the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, 'I am from Coangue (Chota-Mira Valley), I am from the river, I am from the sun... I am from Esmeraldas, and I fight for a dignified life'; their knowledges and spiritual beliefs, 'I am a believer, I am a healer, Orishas take care of me'; and the continuous existence of Bomberos and Marimberos Cimarrones' collective memories, "I brought in my mind my Bomba and my Marimba, I cherish intact my collective memories, my grandparents' stories and even my way of talking,

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<sup>89</sup> When I talked to him, Palacios Ocles mentioned that the phrase "...that they have to shoot me like an animal..." was improvised in the version of the song that I used in my composition because it was sung by him and other two members of the 'Red de Jóvenes del Territorio Ancestral Chota, Salinas y La Concepción', Kimberly Minda Borja and Henry Mendez, prior to an interview about the recent murder of the 26 years old Afro-Choteño Andrés Martín Padilla Delgado on September 2018. Andrés was unarmed and shot in his back by a policeman during a protest in Chota-Mira Valley. Recently, in December 2019, the policeman who shot Andrés was declared innocent under the assumption that he was just carrying out his tasks while trying to control the protest. However, Andrés' relatives and some Afro-Ecuadorian activists state that the policeman did not need to shoot him because he did not represent a threat. The incident was video-recorded by someone who was passing by. The sounds of the moment at which Andrés was murdered are included in this chapter's composition, right before Palacios Ocles' song, as a way of emphasizing the cruel and radical consequences of racism in Ecuador. For more information about Padilla Delgado's murder, see the press releases (Caiza, 2018; Montaña Escobar, 2018b).

I have African roots, I am Salomón Chalá'.<sup>90</sup> All of these, while playing the bomba drum with its traditional rhythm and singing the lyrics in a rap mode.

As for the notion of happiness in Marimba and Bomba, which was analysed sonically and theoretically at the beginning of this chapter, one of the first challenges a decolonial work should face when dealing with Afro-Ecuadorian culture is to reconsider the understanding of joy, which is often simplified. As García Salazar affirmed, “our joy is not simple or banal” (personal communication, 2011).

Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked confront the idea of happiness being a natural or fixed trait. As I discuss in detail elsewhere (López-Yáñez, in press-a), Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones do acknowledge and cherish the festive and the joyful in cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba and beyond. However, they understand their happiness as an agential and cathartic liberation for a group of people who recognise similar experiences of joy within specific ancestral ways of being in community (collective memories) to ‘understand the joke’ (communicative competence).

Through their memories of these experiences, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones selectively and strategically reactivate patterns that they have developed in past interactions, providing schema and order to their social universes. This agentic notion of choosing to be joyful is not just connected to past collective memories but also to their ability to improvise and innovate, by making practical and

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<sup>90</sup> Salomón Chalá is one of the first Afro-Choteños who, after a lot of hardships, managed to learn to read and write, and became the first teacher of younger generations of Chota-Mira during mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.



normative decisions between possible alternatives of action in response to emerging demands and dilemmas in present situations. By generating collective spaces of joy, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones perpetuate and renovate history, bringing it to the present and thus transforming it into an ancestral always-existent knowledge. This way of existing through joy has as its ultimate goal the search for psychological and physical freedom.

A sense of freedom is precisely the reason why Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have chosen to generate joyful spaces of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba for centuries. Moreover, a sense of freedom through joy constitutes a form of autonomous and transformative ‘auto-reparación’ (self-reparation). As García Salazar affirmed in an interview that is included in this thesis’ composition: “we had to repair this, but by ourselves, nobody was going to repair us from the pains of slavery, from the wounds of violence, from having been separated from our families, nobody was going to repair it. We needed to repair it ourselves” (Buen Vivir TV, 2016, 21:56-22:18).

The notion of diverse artistic practices of the African diaspora as an act of auto-reparación has also been addressed by Rengifo Carpintero and Díaz Caicedo (2017) in their work related to the transformative role of traditional female Afro-Colombian singers. Rengifo Carpintero and Díaz Caicedo argue that collective singing, dancing and playing instruments and all the joy that is included in these practices is a strategy that has been maintained by Afro-descendants as a festive way to psychologically heal themselves from a history of social exclusion and marginalisation (Rengifo Carpintero & Díaz Caicedo, 2017, p. 23). These festive

spaces can transform participants' lives. This understanding of auto-reparación is especially relevant since one of the reasons why Marimba and Bomba are reduced to happy and hyper-sexual, and by implication superficial events, is because Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' laughter and happiness are believed not to have transcendental qualities. In that sense, Montaña Escobar (2015, para. 3) has referred to 'Afro-Ecuadorians' joy' as an 'alegría combativa' (combative happiness) to refer to a political attitude with transformative qualities that allowed them to survive strategically amid structural violence. Similarly, García Salazar's testimony (Buen Vivir TV, 2016), which is included in this chapter's composition, explains how an Afro-Ecuadorian woman with whom he talked, explained to him that she always seems happy but not because she is naturally like it but because she has learned to look for happiness in her life. Moreover, García Salazar can be heard affirming that it would be ridiculous to think that Afro-Ecuadorians are naturally happy after all the violence they have historically faced. Furthermore, León Castro (Ranti Ranti, 2016) can be heard overtly affirming that stating that Afro-Ecuadorians are naturally happy is racist, since their happiness is a construction.

Based on the above mentioned Afro-Ecuadorians' testimonies, I suggest that the happiness and joy of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba have managed to generate practices of re-existence through a transformative and renovating effect among its participants. Moreover, the act of auto-reparación is not a social option, but, first and foremost, is a need in order to exist as full and free human beings. Thus, marginalised people continuously fight to become fully human, despite a history that has continuously denied them. This chapter's composition continues with another testimony of García Salazar (n.d.-b, Conferencia Negra), who strongly

criticises folk-presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba. García Salazar, along with Estupiñán Bass (1981) and Montaña Escobar (personal communication, 2018), have highlighted the fact that the category of folk has reduced the two music and dance-based events into a spectacle with no knowledge of their deep meanings and which has led Marimberos and Bomberos to be exploited and humiliated in exchange for “unos cuantos centavos” (a few pennies; García Salazar, n.d.-b, Conferencia Negra, 24:54). In the final part, an Afro-Ecuadorian female teacher sings her wish for new generations to learn their own history, which is usually not taught. This last testimony works as a powerful reminder of the relevance of including Marimba’s and Bomba’s history (collective memories beyond its sound and movement system) within public representations.

Through the introduction of some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ ideas of happiness, a reinterpretation of it is proposed. This reinterpretation constitutes an opening up for the aesthetic of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked after the understanding of public representations of Marimba and Bomba as part of a racialised colonial difference that has concrete consequences in the life of Afro-Ecuadorians. Furthermore, the next chapter begins precisely with a group of collective memories shared by Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I dialogued and that were shared precisely with one of the primary sonic ways to express joy: laughter. As will become clear in the next chapter, for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones laughter is also a way of acknowledging the transgression of certain imposed norms, making fun of them through jokes and sayings, in a space where this is culturally accepted and understood; in other words, where participants have communicative competence.

## **Chapter Four: Collective Memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones: Understanding the level of the ‘enunciated’ of a decolonial project**

*De la cachimba de mi abuelo,  
tengo mucho que aprender,  
guarda todos los secretos,  
del humo al amanecer.<sup>91</sup>*

In the previous chapter, the first level of this decolonial research, the level of the ‘enunciation’, was explained through the analysis of the history and functioning of the leading public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, which are folk and show-presentational representations. Importantly, public representations of Marimba and Bomba are part of a racialised colonial difference that reduces these events to performances that are meant solely to entertain an audience. As was already mentioned in the last chapter, from the threshold period of Marimba and Bomba, folk and show-presentational events have become the most acknowledged and widespread representations. Meanwhile, the cimarrón-participatory ones, including many of the collective memories related to them, began to be thought of as something residual, non-important and dispensable. Consequently, in the last decades, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, who represent the ancestors, have begun to lose people who want to listen to their collective memories (García Salazar & Walsh, 2015, p. 84). In this thesis, it is argued that through the exclusion of collective memories, specially the ones that go

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<sup>91</sup> The renowned Marimba folk group ‘Jolgorio Internacional’ recited this short poem during the annual ‘Festival de la Marimba’ in 2018 (Esmeraldas, Ecuador). The translation is: “from the tobacco of my grandfather, I have a lot to learn, it keeps all secrets, from the smoke [of his tobacco] at the dawn” (fieldwork notes, 2018).

beyond Marimba's and Bomba's sound and movement system, most public representations miss the potential for knowledge production and transmission, creativity and healing that Marimberos Cimarrones and Bomberos Cimarrones have been able to generate as a way of repairing the damage inflicted upon them during slavery and post-slavery periods.

Importantly, in spite of the monopoly of what is considered as music and dances for entertainment, the demonization and devaluing of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' praxis of living and knowledges, and the fact that cimarrón-participatory events have either disappeared (Marimba Esmeraldeña) or are not as strong as folk and show-presentational ones (Bomba del Chota), many collective memories still exist. As affirmed by the Marimbero Cimarrón Lugerio Montañó (1985) when interviewed in a small town of Esmeraldas province, La Tola; "although Marimba [referring to this thesis' cimarrón-participatory] does not exist anymore, I could still organise a celebration with Marimba, I still remember how it used to be". It is precisely in some of the collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, the ones who had already passed away but that left audio-recordings or the ones that I managed to talk to during my fieldwork, where the level of the 'enunciated' of this ch'ixi project lies. As Walsh and Mignolo (2018) affirmed, "they [Marimberos Cimarrones] could not be [totally] destroyed, and can re-emerge today" (pp. 172–173).

The current chapter works as a theoretical and practical contribution to the inclusion of the level of the enunciated in public performances of Marimba and Bomba. At the level of the enunciated, the pejorative reduction of Marimba and

Bomba to a mere spectacle is denied through the re-connection and dissemination of their still existing collective memories. It is suggested that by filling the gap left by the absence of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' experiences in presentational events, a transformation of perceptions of the past could be initiated. Thus, it is hoped that these perceptions, which have been usually learnt through official history as experiences where Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones are constantly victimised and passive, will transform to a perception of a group of people who are an active part of their own history.

The level of the enunciated of this thesis focuses on some of the collective memories that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have in common and some that are specific to each group. Importantly, the Marimba's and Bomba's collective memories gathered in this thesis are much more than the ones presented here, and are related to the narration of historical experiences, liberty, a connection with the non-human world, love and attachment to ancestral territories, a sense of belonging to their communities, respectfulness towards the elders and 'enamoramiento' (flirting). Concerning the 'enamoramiento', although it has historically been part of the cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba, it has also been the main focus of most show and folk-presentational events. Even in current cimarrón-participatory events of Bomba (since this thesis' cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba do not exist anymore), where participants are still firmly tied to collective memories related to a variety of themes, most of the contemporary bomba songs' lyrics are related to enamoramiento. Going against this unbalanced focus, I have purposefully chosen not to include collective memories related to enamoramiento. Instead, I focus on songs, testimonies and experiences -collective memories- that were shared with a deep

excitement, respectfulness and pride for their ancestors by most Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom other researchers and I talked. I have also included some collective memories I found in books or public archives. Through these collective memories, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones contribute their understanding of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba's beauty or aestheSis.

In this chapter, firstly, I tackle theoretically and practically some of the collective memories that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have in common. However, I do not treat them as homogenous. This clarification is especially important since most Ecuadorians see Afro-Choteños and Afro-Esmeraldeños as one single entity. As the president of the Ethnographic museum of Quito stated; "Afro-descendants in Ecuador belong to one big community, there is no need to differentiate them" (Ruggiero, 2015, p. 169). On the other hand, within scholarly work about Afro-Ecuadorians, most research has focused either on Afro-Choteños or Afro-Esmeraldeños' culture. In contrast to these perspectives, that either homogenise or separate Marimberos from Bomberos, I approach their common experiences through traces of their shared history of forced migration and its consequences. As becomes apparent, this shared history remains crucial to the collective memories of some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. I specifically focus on the historical origin and relation between the diablo or the duende and cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba as one of the most essential collective memories that they share in common.

In the case of cimarrón-participatory Marimba, Marimberos Cimarrones' testimonies about the diablo are related to specific songs of marimba. One of these

songs is analysed in detail further in this chapter and is a central part of this section's composition because of the light it sheds on the relationship between them and the diablo. As for cimarrón-participatory Bomba del Chota, collective memories related to the diablo operate differently. Although testimonies gathered in this work show that there is a strong relationship between cimarrón-participatory Bomba and the diablo or the duende, no bomba song's lyrics have been found that speak about this relationship. This lack indicates that the collective memories of cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba are not limited to lyrics but to a sense of belonging to a community, not just through songs but also through testimonies and different modes of verbal and non-verbal aesthetics that are shared by most participants. Importantly, the included collective memories aim to depict how Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones have been able to reverse and bring down the power structure brought by colonisers and transform their values and dominating power.

Additionally, I develop in detail some of the unique collective memories related to Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota separately, in an attempt to move away from the homogenising notion of blackness and to highlight the specificities of Marimberos Cimarrones and Bomberos Cimarrones. It is important to stress that both groups of collective memories speak to the consequences of Marimba and Bomba's relationship to the figures of the diablo or duende. As for Marimba Esmeraldeña, I focus, theoretically and practically, on the numerous censorship attempts that cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña has faced throughout history, and that resulted in the disappearance of this category of performance. One of the main justifications for most of these censorship attempts



was that cimarrón-participatory Marimba was perceived as a devilish practice. This was not the case for Bomba del Chota. Although cimarrón-participatory Bomba del Chota was also related to the devil, it did not disappear.

Concerning Bomba, I focus on the relation of children to cimarrón-participatory events as part of the collective memories that were more mentioned by Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked. I also propose that one of the oldest and most popular songs of bomba could be an attempt at an oral transmission of collective memories. Although children's relation to cimarrón-participatory events is part of many Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories, it is not referred to in any lyrics. Thus, the bomba songs and the collective memories presented in this chapter are not semantically related. Importantly, the section about Bomba's collective memories is the only section in the current thesis that does not include a practical component.

### **The shared collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones: The diablo's revelations**

***\*\*\*Please listen to the second research-based sonic composition:***

***Its transcript can be found in Appendix B\*\*\****

This chapter's composition begins with a group of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' testimonies about the origin of Marimba and Bomba. As has been previously stated, Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota originated in each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, north Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira Valley. It seems that these two territories did not have much contact among

each other during the Atlantic slavery period. However, there are some exceptions. For instance, Rueda Novoa, based on intensive archival research, affirms that a small number of runaway enslaved people from Chota-Mira Valley did manage to reach Esmeraldas during Atlantic slavery to join the substantial cimarrón population of that area (Rueda Novoa, 2015, p. 12). Similarly, Godoy Aguirre (1995) has suggested that some of the black people who arrived in Ecuador on one of the ships that was wrecked on the coasts of Esmeraldas could have reached Chota-Mira Valley by travelling up the Mira river.

Although the geographical disconnection between the inhabitants of each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories is apparent, they share strong commonalities. Many of their commonalities are related to the fact that most Afro-Ecuadorians from both territories arrived as part of the Atlantic slave trade (See Introduction). However, there is no much archival evidence of their presence during the Atlantic slavery period in the country. Thus, as it can be heard in this section's composition, the way Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones connect to their pre-colonial past is through 'ancestral memories' (See Chapter One). For instance, according to the Marimberos Cimarrones Juan Montaña and Maura Manuela Medina and the Bomberos Cimarrones Teodoro Méndez, Iván Pabón and Ezequiel Sevilla (personal communication, 2018), the 'first moment' or the origin of Marimba Esmeraldeña or Bomba del Chota have in common the courageous and healing generation of a momentary sense of celebratory liberation through music and dances in the midst of the extremely hard conditions of Atlantic slavery. Moreover, this generated freedom would have had to be built based on the ancestral collective memories that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones brought from Africa to

Ecuador. For instance, since apparently they did not bring any instruments with them, it is assumed they had to adapt what they could find in Ecuador to create instruments for their events (See Chapter Two). The creation of the two music and dance-based events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota was so successful that these events exist until now. As can also be heard in this section's composition and through the testimonies of Marimberos Cimarrones such as Juan García Salazar and Rosa Huila and the Bomberos Cimarrones María Rogelia Minda, Jesús Torres Minda and Ezequiel Sevilla, cimarrón-participatory events have historically lasted for days and nights and have had as their main aim to gather the community. Importantly, these celebrations that included Marimba and Bomba have always been related to spiritual beliefs or celebrations such as baptisms or festivities connected to the saints.

Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones had also in common their relation to the Spanish colonisers' spiritual beliefs. As Walsh and León Castro have stated (2005, p. 3), in contrast to the Caribbean, where African elements can still be observed in religiosity and religious practice, the Catholic Church, through its varied tactics, was able to absorb most of the vestiges of African spirituality and other practices in both Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories. Although Afro-Ecuadorians have been able to reconfigure spiritual systems and practices, the colonial efficacy of the Church continues as a significant determinant even today in the processes of identity and knowledge articulation.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Another similarity found in this research between Marimba and Bomba is the 'Bundi', which is the name of a dance performed with the bomba drum in the description of Hassaurek (1967/1868, p. 118), and 'Bunde' which was an Esmeraldeño rhythm whose lyrics could be related to labour (Ramirez de Morejón, 1984).

Despite the fact that the power of the Catholic Church was exercised over the inhabitants of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, Afro-Esmeraldeños and Afro-Choteños were affected by it in different ways. As has previously been stated (See Introduction), most of the members of the first generations of Afro-descendants that arrived in Esmeraldas in the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were cimarrones that managed to strategically build an independent way of organisation apart from the contours of the colonial society. This experience affected their future decisions and strategies of freedom even during their posterior period of enslavement that began around 1738. The history of Afro-descendants in Esmeraldas contrasts with the history of Afro-descendants in Chota-Mira, who were enslaved for a much longer and consistent period of time from their arrival (beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century). The enslavement of both Afro-Ecuadorian groups officially lasted until the abolition of slavery in Ecuador in 1852. These strikingly different historical contexts of Afro-Esmeraldeños and Afro-Choteños and thus, of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, clearly affected the origin and development of their music and dance-based events in particular ways. For instance, as is shown throughout this chapter, there was a daily surveillance of the Church's representatives and followers in Chota-Mira, especially in the phase when the sugar plantations and enslaved people were under Jesuit control. Contrastingly, although there did not seem to be a daily but an occasional surveillance in north Esmeraldas, it seemed to be much more violent and effective.

Afro-Choteños were forcefully introduced to Christianity from their arrival to Ecuador - or even before - and were enslaved by the Jesuits until the latter's

expulsion from Ecuador more than a century later (1773). Even after the Jesuits left the country, when enslaved people and the haciendas were sold to private owners, their relation to the Church was still strong. On the other hand, Afro-Esmeraldeños had long intervals of time in complete freedom and had brief periods of contact with Christianity, possibly before they arrived on Ecuadorian coasts, or when they began to negotiate their freedom with political powers as a Black People's Comarca. Contact also happened when mining arrived on their territory, and they were enslaved; their masters had the obligation of introducing them to Christianity. Thus, although Afro-Esmeraldeños were intermittently forced to relate to Christianity, they also had long moments of total freedom in which they could question and even straightforwardly rebel against Christian teachings and put their own beliefs to the front. For instance, Rueda Novoa (2010a) mentions a letter written by a group of mine owners in north Esmeraldas in 1866 (just around a decade after the official abolition of slavery) which narrates that the Afro-Esmeraldeños told them that they would not work for him since they know the owner has not bought the land from God and that they know the land belongs to God, not to him (p. 240). Despite the different relationship of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones to spiritual beliefs, these were always interrelated to their music and dance-based events. The fact that both worlds, that of the divino and that of the humano, were interrelated, did not mean these were totally mixed. Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones or even beings from the spiritual world would make sure for these two worlds to have a division. For instance, as it was mentioned by the Marimbero Cimarrón Don Remberto Escobar Quiñonez, who is part of this section's composition, there were occasions where celebrations for Saints and Virgins would take place in the same venue than Marimba performances. However, they would be careful enough to cover

the images for the Virgins and Saints not to ‘see’ their Marimba celebrations. As shared by the Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón and the Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez, another way of relation between these two music and dance-based events and spiritual beliefs was that, in order to protect themselves from evil forces during the performances of cimarrón-participatory Marimba or Bomba, they would find a way to pray.

In this section, I theoretically and sonically focus also on the relation between the diablo and cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba as another powerful example of a group of collective memories that are very similar for both Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. In order to understand the complex role of the diablo in cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba, whereas in the first subsection the idea of the diablo for Spanish colonizers and Afrodescendants is developed, in the second subsection I focus specifically on Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ collective memories related to the diablo, which are also the main focus of this section’s composition. The focus of the second subsection works as an essential attempt to decentre the knowledges and perceptions of colonizers and emphasize solely those of Afro-Ecuadorians.

Specifically, in the written section I develop the notion of the diablo in cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba as a product of the syncretism of two belief systems, the Judeo-Christian and the African ones. Because of its scarcity, I do not draw on information focused solely on Ecuador but on a variety of authors who have extensively written about enslaved black people in the Americas in general (Taussig, 1980; Thornton, 1998), especially the ones who focus on nearby locations

such as 'Nueva Granada' (currently Colombia; Borja Gómez, 1998; Cedeño Canga, 2015; Díaz-Díaz, 2005). Although it is not intended to homogenise all Africans or Afro-Americans' beliefs, it is suggested here that the facts described in the previously mentioned research can be applicable also to Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories of Esmeraldas province and Chota-Mira Valley, since both of them, like most of the Afro-descendants in Latin America (excluding Brazil) were colonized through the same belief system: Spanish Judeo-Christianity.

### **The notion of the diablo for the Spanish colonisers and Afro-descendants**

As has been analysed by authors such as Taussig (1980) and Díaz Díaz (2005), archival records demonstrate that there was a mutual apprehension between European conquerors and colonised people in the Americas in regard to the spiritual beliefs and practices of the other, which were extremely different. This mutual apprehension was strengthened by the fact that neither African enslaved people nor Spanish colonisers learned each other's belief systems deeply. African enslaved people were violently and rapidly forced to get baptised and to memorise their new names without being given much information. Similarly, most colonisers were not so interested in understanding in a profound manner the spiritual beliefs of black people but just assumed they understood them, based on their observations, their financial interests and their Judeo-Christian background.

Despite the reluctance of each side to accept the belief system of the other as a whole, and their superficial knowledge of the other's beliefs, these were mutually affected (Taussig, 1980, p. 41). Thus, a process of transformation took place, which,

although with specific power dynamics, cultural confrontations and tensions, resulted in an “Africanisation of Christianity and a Christianization of that which had an African origin” (Díaz-Díaz, 2005, p. 30).<sup>93</sup> According to Thornton (1998), this mutual transformation was possible despite their differences because some ideas that each of the parties could recognise from the other were similar to their own (p. 236). The clearest commonality for both, Africans or Afrodescendants and Spanish colonisers, was the belief in the existence of another world that could not be perceived so frequently but just through ‘revelations’ (Thornton, 1998, p. 236).

Especially important for this thesis, the existence of specific beings related to that which was considered evil and that could be perceived through revelations were strongly believed by both Spanish conquerors and enslaved people. The notion of revelations referred to different ways that the non-earthly or divine world might ‘speak’ or communicate to people, especially in order to remind or warn them about specific events (Thornton, 1998, p. 239). Also, contact with the divine world had a relation to magic. Both the Judeo-Christian and African belief system understood magic as the possibility of using supernatural properties of objects, animals, gestures, words and even thoughts to get in touch with the divine world in order to protect themselves from danger (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 131). In this respect, archival evidence shows that European colonisers accepted some revelations and magic of some African diviners and mediums, just as Africans did with Christianity (Thornton, 1998, p. 255). Despite such consensus, one significant disagreement concerned their relationship with evil creatures. As shown below, whereas for

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<sup>93</sup> Although the focus of this research is on black enslaved people, indigenous people were also part of the colonised people of the Americas that transformed the Christian notion of the diablo into a more syncretic character. See, for instance, Auza-Aramayo (2010, pp. 120–136).



Spanish colonisers anything related to them was subject to fear, for enslaved black people, these creatures could also be subject to playfulness and creativity.

As part of the process of colonization of the Americas, Spanish people introduced indigenous and Afrodescendant people to Judeo-Christianity, which included the notion of the diablo. For Spanish colonizers, the diablo was a real presence that should always be evaded. They related African people - themselves or their practices - to the diablo. According to Borja Gómez (1998), Judeo-Christianity of the time was full of symbolic codes that were interpreted by Spanish people as proof of this relation. For instance, Judeo-Christian tradition is based on analogies such as day and night. Spanish people began to relate Christ, the good and life to the day, and the diablo and death to the night. Based on this analogy, Spanish conquerors began to relate dark-skinned people to the diablo. The relation of black people to the diablo was reinforced when Judeo-Christians began to have more contact with Muslims, whom they related to black people. Since many Spanish people of the time considered Islam as a religion led by the diablo, their rejection of black people became stronger (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 113, 119). Although Judeo-Christianity also included the legend of the 'Good Black' referring to one of the three Kings, this did not have as much influence as the previously mentioned symbols (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 112). Importantly, these interpretations were merely the way Spanish colonisers chose to process their encounters with people who looked and behaved differently to them.

When colonialism of the Americas began, thoughts that associated black people to the diablo already existed in the minds of Spanish colonisers (Borja

Gómez, 1998, p. 114). Based on these previously existent thoughts, other Judeo-Christian symbols were interpreted by theologians of the time in a manner that would allow them to justify the institution of slavery (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 109, 122, 144, 147). Thus, Spanish colonisers arrived in America with set beliefs that included the demonization of black people at different levels, whether their whole existence or some of their practices (Díaz-Díaz, 2005, p. 32). By strategically ignoring the history of the African continent, full of great empires, complex organisation systems and vast cultural traditions, black people were reduced by colonisers to a group of beings that belonged to “a world without God and dominated by the diablo” (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 116–117).

According to Borja Gómez (1998), Spanish colonisers projected the idea of ‘barbarian bearers of the demon’ first towards indigenous people, and afterwards towards black enslaved people. The fact that a great number of enslaved black people were reluctant to accept slavery, Christianization, the white people’s manners, and reacted violently towards the process of enslavement, was taken as one more proof of their devilish nature (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 103).<sup>94</sup> Thus, Spanish colonisers spread the idea of a supposed need that black people had of their presence in order to take care of them (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 145). Moreover, they stated that enslaving black people was the only way of baptising and ‘saving’ them from their devilish nature and practices. In this way, the Roman Catholic Church had the protagonist role in transforming Africans and Afro-descendants into ontological slaves.

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<sup>94</sup> For instance, in Venezuela, the ‘cimarrón rebelde’ (rebel maroon), a mythical character that has its origin in collective memories from slavery period, was believed to be the diablo by colonisers (Ramón Guédez, 2011, p. 82).

Since most Spanish colonisers believed that the Africans' existence was related to the diablo, it was assumed that their practices came from the diablo too and therefore, should be exterminated. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that within Judeo-Christian beliefs, the diablo was related to the pleasures of the body as an antithesis of the martyred, bleeding and motionless body of Christ, who rewards submission and self-abasement (Marino, 2015, p. 11). These beliefs occasioned the Church's combat against enslaved people's 'devilish' practices, especially the ones that were related to embodied celebrations through dances and music (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 147; Thornton, 1998, p. 239).<sup>95</sup> One of their combat strategies was through baptism. Spanish people believed that the ritual of baptism would suffice for African enslaved people to comprehend and accept the Spanish belief system, which would magically remove their 'devilish' instincts (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 130).<sup>96</sup>

Even after the Atlantic slavery period, Afro-descendants' practices were still rejected and considered devilish. For instance, based on years of gathering testimonies, the Afro-Esmeraldeño artist and historian Xavier Vera Kooke states that mestizo Esmeraldeños used to see cimarrón-participatory Marimba as a performance that promoted savagery among Afro-Esmeraldeños. Vera Kooke reminds us that, at

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<sup>95</sup> Enslaved people's practices in Latin America during the Atlantic slavery period were not the only black people's practices that attempted to be eradicated at least subdued in order for the new Islamic order to take root. In the context of Hausa people, who are the largest ethnic group from Nigeria, Bori, one of their traditional performative practices, was considered evil. See Okagbue (2007, p. 97).

<sup>96</sup> Another aspect of the diablo related to Afro-Ecuadorians, specifically to Afro-Esmeraldeños, is that other groups like the indigenous Cayapas, with whom they have historically shared the Esmeraldas' territory, used to relate them to the diablo too. The well-known Afro-Esmeraldeño writer Adalberto Ortiz wrote a novel entitled *Juyungo*, which means precisely diablo in Chachi's language. As one of the novel's character explains and as the novel's author reaffirms in the glossary section; "Juyungo is the evil, Juyungo is the monkey, Juyungo is the diablo, Juyungo is the black" (A. Ortiz, 1984, p. 94).

that time, most middle and high-class mestizo people used to listen mainly to European waltzes, which was considered the music of civilised people. He mentions marimba songs like ‘Caderona’ (big-hipped woman) or ‘Fabriciano’ as a few of the songs that were understood as hyper-sexual, violent and even devilish (personal communication, 2018).

While Spanish hegemony was targeting religious submission, primarily through their continuous attempts to turn enslaved people into diablo-fearing Christians through the eradication of what they understood as the devilish practices of African enslaved people, enslaved people were focusing on developing symbolic mechanisms to adapt to their new reality (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 140). The need of African enslaved people of each region to create a new sense of community to make existence more bearable was so urgent that they managed to generate a belief system that would transform or hide their own beliefs behind the Judeo-Christian ones (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 171). As stated by Beatty-Medina (2012), their forced adoption of Judeo-Christianity through baptism neither precluded Afrodescendants’ agency nor interrupted the development and evolution of syncretic local practices that observed not just Judeo-Christian religious beliefs but also beliefs of African origin (p. 96). Thus, Afrodescendants did not just resist through negating pure Judeo-Christian beliefs but re-existed through establishing a new way of relating to that which was considered evil.

One of the beliefs that was part of the cultures of the coloniser and the colonised and thus resulted in a syncretic new belief, was the existence and momentary revelations of evil through specific beings. The belief in evil beings

turned into an important point of convergence and even a strategic weapon for the two cultures to negotiate cultural norms, values, and behaviours (Marino, 2015, p. 3). This belief generated the beginning of a new way of relating to reality (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 171). As a syncretic creation, African enslaved people's notion of evil creatures was not the same notion that existed within Judeo-Christianity belief system. Their relation to that which they considered evil was deeply influenced by African cosmologies. These cosmologies allowed black enslaved people a re-interpretation of Christianity that allowed them to generate strategies of resistance and re-existence to re-group and deeply re-enact the ancestral sense of the communal. Following this re-interpretation of Judeo-Christian beliefs, a notion of a diablo as a being with unique characteristics that represents evilness was developed (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 171). The absence of the 'cosmologic dualism' of Judeo-Christianity that would strictly separate good from evil, confronted with a basic knowledge of Judeo-Christianity, allowed black people to develop a notion of a diablo that also included the African belief of nothing being considered entirely good or bad (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 132). Therefore, their understanding of the diablo was not based on a schematic binary of good versus evil that would turn the diablo exclusively into a vengeful and cruel being but was much more related to a complex and multifaceted being that could have a variety of traits. Thus the diablo for black enslaved people could range from a figure of mirth, or protective buffoon with a caring and gracious side, to a source of evil or a powerful trickster (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 138, 169; Cedeño Canga, 2015, p. 149; Taussig, 1980, p. 43). By appropriating the Judeo-Christian notion of the diablo and transforming it into a being with whom enslaved people could negotiate and play and that they could even defeat, they were appropriating the enemy of their enemies as a mechanism of

defence for Afro-descendants against the dominant society, creating a new system where they could re-exist and be temporarily free from colonialism. From this point of view, a new power relation was established (Borja Gómez, 1998, pp. 137–152).<sup>97</sup>

In the Afro-Ecuadorian context, whereas Marimberos Cimarrones always refer exclusively to the diablo, Bomberos Cimarrones also refer to the presence of the duende. According to some Bomberos Cimarrones and also to Agier's (2002) research, the duende is a transformation of the diablo that represents his strengths and weaknesses (p. 309). Also, the Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar states that both the diablo and the duende used to be angels that were expelled from heaven because they disobeyed God. God gave them the talent of being great performers, but they used this given talent for evil purposes instead of good ones. As for the duende, its presence specifically in cimarrón-participatory Bomba can be related to the fact that according to both Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, the duende is the one who is very good at playing the guitar (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, pp. 77–78). Unlike in Marimba, the guitar is included in cimarrón-participatory Bomba (See fig. 20).

As shown by the gathered collective memories, the diablo or the duende appears as an elegantly dressed, playful, joyful and extremely smart being, who could also be a dangerous and powerful creature and with whom it was always possible to compete and negotiate. Although in specific instances some Afro-Ecuadorians do fear the diablo and duende and anything related to him, this fear is

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<sup>97</sup> Defeated diablos by Afro-descendant people can be found all over the oral histories of different groups of the African diaspora. See, for example, the Guadeloupean tale "Tétiyette and the Devil" (Anonymous, 1991).

not as permanent as it was for many Spanish colonisers. It should be stressed that instead, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked expressed a diversity of feelings concerning the diablo or duende and his world; fear, curiosity, playfulness, respectfulness and even comradeship. As stated in a famous Afro-Ecuadorian saying mentioned by the Ecuadorian musician and researcher Agustín Ramón San Martín: “to heaven goes the nun, the priest and those who pray, who are precisely those who oppress us, therefore, I don’t want to go to heaven, I want to go to hell!” (personal communication, 2018).

According to the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones included in this thesis, the diablo or duende lives among people, but we do not see him all the time, either because he is invisible or because he is very good at going unnoticed. Another essential characteristic of the diablo or duende is that, although the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones whose testimonies are part of this work affirm that the diablo or duende is a male presence, in Afro-Ecuadorian cosmology there are other creatures with supernatural powers that are female, locally named as ‘la bruja’ (the witch), ‘la tunda’ or ‘la mula’ (the mule), among others. According to Fernández-Rasines’ (2012) research, these creatures are also considered as types of diablos.

## The diablo's revelation in Marimba and Bomba

*Los que están bailando,  
Bailen con cuidado,  
A debajo de casa  
Está el diablo  
parado.*<sup>98</sup>

With regards to the diverse music and dance-based events of the African diaspora, including Marimba and Bomba, these were usually perceived by colonisers as some of the Afro-descendants' devilish, and therefore, harmful practices (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 139). However, according to the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked, cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba were not created by the diablo. On the contrary, according to what the elders used to tell the Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina, who is also the healer of the community of Telembí (Cayapas river, Esmeraldas), the Marimba came from God. As it can be listened to at the beginning of this section's composition, Doña Maura mentioned that she had heard that some people say that Marimba belonged to the diablo, but that she does not agree, because the elders used to love Marimba, and they were good people. Some Bomberos Cimarrones shared a similar perspective. Moreover, the Bombero Cimarrón Don Ezequiel Sevilla, from the community of San Juan de Lachas (Mira, Imbabura), affirmed that it could even work the other way around. Don Ezequiel said that his elders used to tell him that some Bomberos Cimarrones could visit hell, and thus the diablo, through performing Bomba, and that they said that hell was a beautiful place full of beautiful women. Although cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba are not considered devilish practices by the

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<sup>98</sup> This is a 'copla' gathered by de Friedemann and Arocha (1986, p. 416) in the Chocoan region. Translation: Those who are dancing, dance carefully, under the house, the diablo is standing up.



Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones whose collective memories I gathered, some of their events do have a connection to the diablo or the duende.

According to some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, unlike sacred events like masses in the Catholic Church, where it is very difficult for the diablo or the duende to get in, the diablo or duende can get in more easily into cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba. As the Bombera Cimarrona Doña Eudocia Chalá from the community of Chota (Ibarra, Imbabura) shared, “the duende could never reach the altar of their Church during a mass, people used to see how he could just get up to the first half of the church and then, he would be forced to stop by God” (personal communication, 2018). On the other hand, the Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina affirmed that the diablo could be sometimes seen first standing in front of the main door of the house where they were performing cimarrón-participatory Marimba and then, mingling among dancers. Most Bomberos and Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I talked confirmed this. The diablo or duende physically appears or reveals himself in some of the events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba as an uninvited guest.

Importantly, Judeo-Christianity has historically considered the physical appearance of the diablo as one of his most essential revelations (Thornton, 1998, p. 242). Similarly, when the diablo or duende reveals himself in a cimarrón-participatory event of Marimba or Bomba, he constitutes a central force that affects the whole event in specific ways. According to the Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez, the diablo chooses to go to Marimba celebrations to win souls, since Marimba is considered by the diablo a moment where the pleasures of the flesh

and impure thoughts arise (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 77). Importantly, although Escobar Quiñónez' testimony shows a strong influence of Judeo-Christianity, the diablo of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones is different from the diablo portrayed in Judeo-Christian beliefs. Similarly to what happened in other Afro-diasporic music and dancing spaces (Agier, 2002, p. 311), Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones reacted to the colonial system that was oppressing them and their practices by appropriating and strategically transforming the Judeo-Christian negative idea of the diablo as a mechanism of resistance and hostility towards colonisers.<sup>99</sup>

Following some authors (Agier, 1999, 2002; Beatty-Medina, 2012; Borja Gómez, 1998; Taussig, 1980) and their works about a diversity of practices from the African diaspora in Latin America, it is suggested here that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' strategy of resistance and re-existence was based on one main discovery that enslaved people historically used to their advantage: the fear that colonizers, settlers, masters and patrones, among others, had towards cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba that they had historically related to the diablo. Indeed, various historical archives demonstrate that Spanish people were terrified by what they interpreted as black people's devilish powers, including their music and dancing events (Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 131). By fearing enslaved people's devilish practices, 'colonisers indirectly validated the diablo's worship and invested it with power' (Taussig, 1980, p. 43). Thus, as stated by Taussig (1980) concerning Afro-

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<sup>99</sup> This is also the case of, for instance, the Jab Jab, a character of the Carnival of Trinidad and Grenada that has its origin in the slavery period. According to Cozzart Riggio and Gibbons (2015, pp. 189-220) and the Grenadian academic Professor Joan Anim-Addo (personal communication, 2019), the Jab Jab was not about the diablo as a supernatural being but much more about utilising that image as a way of mocking the slave owners.

diasporic practices ‘they [Afrodescendants] fought the conquerors [the Spanish colonisers’] as God did to the diablo’ (1980, p. 42).

Like other music and dance-based events from the African diaspora (Agier, 1999, p. 233; Borja Gómez, 1998, p. 116), the fear that revelations of the diablo caused was strategically transformed by Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones into performances to resist and re-exist in spite of the terrible living conditions occasioned by those who were violating them. These performances were generated by opening themselves to the possibility of overcoming fear and confronting the diablo, who turned out to be a being that mocks and plays with Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. They understood this playful and mocking attitude of the diablo towards Marimberos and Bomberos as a ‘desafío’ (challenge). Interestingly, both, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones use the same denomination -desafío- to express how the diablo or duende would go to their spaces and challenge them. For instance, as it can be listened to in this section’s composition, both the Bombero Cimarrón Don Teodoro Mendez from the community of Tumbatú (Bolívar, Carchi) and the Marimbero Cimarrón Don Remberto Escobar Quiñónez from the city of Esmeraldas narrate how the diablo or duende would challenge them to see who is the best at performing Marimba and Bomba.

Regarding the physical characteristics of the diablo or duende, there is a diversity of traits that he can have. According to the Marimberos Cimarrones Doña Medina, Nacho Caicedo and Remberto Escobar Quiñónez, whose testimonies are included in this section’s composition, the diablo has two horns and a tail, dresses in red and holds a massive trident. The Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia

Minda from the community of Tumbatú said that when she saw the duende, he had animal-like legs and big teeth (personal communication, 2018). However, according to Remberto Escobar Quiñónez, this is just his natural appearance. When the diablo appears in a party, he dresses elegantly to hide his horns and his tail, but he always leaves visible the spurs on his boots (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 76). Similarly to Doña María Rogelia, the Marimbero Cimarrón known as Papá Roncón from the city of Borbón (Esmeraldas) and the Bombera Cimarrona Doña Rogelia Minda, shared that once he was in a performance where the diablo was floating, without touching the ground with his feet. The three Bomberas Cimarronas members of the Bomba group ‘Las Tres Marías’ from the community of Changuayacu (Pimampiro, Imbabura), affirmed that when they saw the duende, he had a wooden leg (personal communication, 2013). Each of these traits was important primarily as a way of recognising the diablo in an event of cimarrón-participatory Marimba or Bomba. Thus, realising that someone was flying, or had a wooden leg or was of an unusual height would alert Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones to his presence.

As for the diablo or duende’s personality, according to some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and as it can be listened to in this section’s composition, one of the main attributes of the diablo or duende seems to be that he loves performing cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba. Moreover, he is considered by some to be the best Marimba and Bomba performer, who sometimes appears in the Marimba or Bomba celebrations to challenge the best musicians and dancers. For instance, the Bombero Cimarrón Don Teodoro Méndez shared a vital testimony about one of the duende’s way of challenging the renowned Bombero Cimarrón David Lara, known as ‘Rey David’ (King David; See fig. 22);

Rey David used to tell me that a small creature appeared one day. He came to his community, and he challenged David. This small creature was a duende or the diablo. I am not sure. So he took Rey David to the mountains. It was midnight, and he made him walk for hours. Then, he stopped, and he challenged David to perform Bomba. So Rey David did so. Then it was the turn of the duende. Then of Rey David...” (personal communication, 2018)

Also as shared by Papá Roncón, sometimes, the diablo also likes being close to beautiful Marimberas and Bomberas Cimarronas to flirt with them, ‘enamorarlas’ (make them fall in love with him) or kidnap them.<sup>100</sup>

As has been stated before, the revelation of the diablo or duende in events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba is never welcomed. For instance, some Marimberos Cimarrones shared that they would even pray before playing the marimba rhythms that tend to attract the diablo more, such as the Bambuco. As some of them mentioned: “if we play the Bambuco, the dance ‘coge profundidad’ [becomes deeper] and then the ‘cachudo’ [long-horned person] comes” (personal communication, 2018).

However, if the diablo or duende manages to arrive at one of their events, the most important part was for participants to stay together and maintain solidarity with each other to defeat him (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 74). The first important step was to realise his presence. According to most testimonies, the diablo

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<sup>100</sup> The relation of Afro-Ecuadorian women as a temptation for the diablo is also mentioned by Rahier (2011, p. 63). As for other location of the African Diaspora, the Guadeloupian tale “Tétyette and the Devil” (Anonymous, 1991) is part of the oral tradition of Caribbean funeral tales, tells a story on which the diablo manages to marry a girl to eat her subsequently.

or duende is very good at hiding or at going unnoticed during an event of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba. Just on some occasions, the diablo himself lets everyone know about his presence. As the Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón shared;

My mum used to tell me that one day people were performing Marimba, and it was great, everyone was elegantly dressed and joyfully dancing, when suddenly, an old man came and asked a Marimbero: ‘Do you want me to help you play the marimba?’ So the Marimbero gave him the instrument. Then, the man sang: ‘Angelina is in the room, my brothers are elsewhere, come! My friends, we will take you’... Angelina is the wife of the diablo, you know? So the Marimbero realised he was in front of the diablo... (personal communication, 2018)

One of the ways in which the diablo manages to hide is by dressing similarly to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. As some of them shared, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones used to dress elegantly to go to events of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba. So, sometimes the diablo dresses elegantly not just to hide his tail or his wooden leg as previously mentioned, but also to resemble a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón. Another strategy for the diablo to go unnoticed is to make a sort of incantation over the Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón near him. For instance, the Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda affirmed that after an episode with the diablo that was near a beautiful Bombera Cimarrona who was almost kidnapped by him, she asked the woman why she did not seem to want to escape, and the woman replied that she did not realise anything because he had enchanted her. Other testimonies of some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones

point out that sometimes the diablo enchants them so that they do not realise he is not touching the ground and therefore, do not realise that he is not human.

Once the presence of the diablo or duende is acknowledged, the duty of a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón is to get rid of him as soon as possible. Sometimes, they would make him go by force. The Bombera Cimarrona María Rogelia Minda shared an example of this, ‘When we saw the diablo, we screamed, and the rest of people saw him, so they grabbed their machetes and began to chase him, so he just crossed the yard, and we did not see him again’ (personal communication, 2018). Other times, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones would have specific strategies to make the diablo or duende go away. Among the ones that were shared the most by the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones that I listened to was that of speaking out loud specific prayers or incantations, or competing with the diablo or duende through creatively performing Marimba or Bomba.

The fact that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones did use prayers as part of their Marimba and Bomba events constitute a fascinating intertwining between two spaces, the sacred and the festive, that are usually separated within the Afro-Ecuadorian context. For instance, most Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones mentioned that they would perform Marimba and Bomba after the mass or as part of sacred festivities. Moreover, the Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez gave an extraordinary testimony of how Marimberos would even use the same space they used for performing the mass. In that case, people would cover the images of the saints after the mass, for the saints ‘not to see’ the Marimba performance. Therefore, although the sacred spaces of the mass (called spaces of ‘lo divino’ by

Marimberos Cimarrones) and the spaces of celebration (called spaces of 'lo humano' by Marimberos Cimarrones) were usually separated, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones did pray during a Marimba or Bomba event as a way of getting rid of the diablo or the duende.

As for the prayers or incantations, Coba Andrade (1980) shared the following Afro-Ecuadorian saying; "in that which is related to 'lo humano' [for instance, cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba] the diablo is always around, but when we include that which is related to 'lo divino' [prayers, spiritual incantations or phrases] we can make him vanish" (p. 152). For a Marimbero and Bombero Cimarrón, being able to pray is considered a significant advantage. As shared by the Bombero Cimarrón Don Teodoro Méndez, whose testimony is part of this section's composition:

One of the advantages that Rey David had is that he could play the drum with his elbow and with just one hand. Being able to play bomba with his elbows was a considerable advantage because while playing, he had his hand free to cross himself. So David was playing bomba but was also crossing himself over (personal communication, 2018).

According to some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, there is a diversity of prayers that can be used to get rid of the diablo. Importantly, since for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones these prayers are not considered a simple superstition but an act of magic, some of them do not reveal the whole prayer but just a part of them or their title. One of the most famous prayers used by Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones is the 'Credo al revés' or 'Padre Nuestro al revés' (The 'Our Father' prayer read backwards). As stated in Moschetto's research (1995, p.



194) about Afro-Esmeraldeño traditions, the expression ‘Padre Nuestro al revés’ always refers to a prayer that is directed against the diablo.

Another prayer mentioned by some Marimberos Cimarrones is called ‘Ave María Purísima’ (the Hail Mary). Some of them, also mentioned the religious phrase or incantation ‘Magnífica y en grandeza’ that has its roots in the Judeo-Christian prayer called ‘La Magnífica’ (the Magnificat). As the Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Rosa Huila from Esmeraldas city said:

Don Rember (Remberto Escobar) used to tell me that the elders would shout the prayer, ‘Magnífica y en grandeza!’, and then, bang! the diablo would disappear. From then on, a strong smell of sulphur would hang in the room.

This is what Don Rember, my dear friend, used to tell me....

Doña Rosa’s testimony was corroborated by information shared in Remberto Escobar Quiñónez’ interview (1983) where he also mentions that usually, the prayer ‘Magnífica y engrandeza!’ is sung to the favourite rhythm of the diablo, which, according to his book, is the ‘Berejú’ (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, pp. 71, 76).

Similarly, Papá Roncón shares that once, when a Marimbero Cimarrón had an encounter with the diablo he sang, “ayayayay, I come from the sea, I have a headache, and I just have one thing to say, Magnífica y en grandeza!” (personal communication, 2018). Because of the prayer Papá Roncón sang, people then realised that all of them had been flying all the time because they fell to the ground. When reviewing the audio recordings at the Fondo-Afro (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito, Ecuador), I found that the Marimbero Cimarrón that Papá Roncón was referring to was Severino Escolástico. When his son, Hermógenes Rodríguez

(1985), from La Tola, a small town connected by the Cayapas river to Borbón, which is Papá Roncón's town, was interviewed, he narrated an almost identical story that happened to his father as the one narrated by Papá Roncón.

A prayer mentioned a few times by some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones like the members of the Bomba group 'Las Tres Marías' and Escobar Quiñónez is a prayer called 'El Tono de las Vacas' (The Tone of the Cows). According to Escobar Quiñónez (1997, p. 79), the Tono de las Vacas has this name because once, the duende was in charge of a group of cows, but instead of taking care of them, the duende began to play the guitar. The duende's music provoked a big and noisy celebration among the cows, which began to respond specifically to melodies that were played in E minor. That is why people call melodies played in E minor the Tono de las Vacas. Because of all the noise and mess that this cows' party organised by the duende caused, he was expelled from heaven, and since then, the duende has had to stay on earth as a soul in torment, making parties each time he is near cows and trying to kidnap young women (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 79). More recently, Peters (2005, p. 110) and de la Cruz Santacruz (2012, pp. 101–102) have affirmed that the Tono de las Vacas is not exclusively related to music anymore but to specific prayers that are not just used in cimarrón-participatory events of Bomba but are also used when Afro-Choteños went to their crops at midnight, when they are near a ravine or in any dangerous situation, to drive away duendes, bad spirits or other evil forces.

According to the gathered collective memories in this research, when the diablo or duende reveals himself as the best musician and dancer, he usually ends up

challenging a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón. They have to accept his challenge in order to get rid of him. Sometimes the diablo or duende wins, however, according to the gathered testimonies, most of the times Marimberos and Bomberos are the winners.<sup>101</sup> The notion of the diablo or duende ‘winning’ means that the Marimberos or Bomberos would either die or go mad. If a Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón wins, this means not only that he does not die but also that he will be able to tell his experience and, usually, that would increase his prestige since it would mean he is a better performer than the diablo.

Interestingly, for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, being a good performer is not limited to being able to sing or play the marimba or bomba with virtuosity but also to their creativity while doing so. In that respect, the Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda, whose testimonies are included in this section’s composition, remembers what Rey David used to tell her and her group of friends when they were children;

Rey David used to tell us that he wanted to challenge the duende because he heard the duende saying that he knows more than him. So Rey David took his bomba drum and won against the duende. He won because he knew how to perform Bomba in different ways, sitting down and standing up. It was also because of the particular way he had of holding the bomba (drum). He used to sing and play in many ways, even with his elbows, it was so beautiful! So he did win (personal communication, 2018).

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<sup>101</sup> Among all the gathered testimonies, I just found one narrated by Abril Mojarrango (1984) from the community of Selva Alegre (Eloy Alfaro, Esmeraldas) where she narrates that once, the diablo won a Marimbera Cimarrona. He put a spell on her to punish her for dancing too much and as a consequence, she passed away.

Also, sometimes, the diablo would lose because his bomba drum was not as good as the one belonging to the Bombero Cimarrón who was competing with him. As the Bombero Cimarrón Don Teodoro Méndez shared;

Rey David used to tell me that he won a competition with the diablo also because the bomba (drum) of the diablo did not have ‘tierra’ (land); many people would ask, what is ‘tierra’? But the thing is that his bomba just had ‘cielo’ (sky). This means, it just had the leather on one side and not on both. But Rey David’s bomba had the leather on both sides, so he won... (personal communication, 2018)

Both Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones expressed how playful, although respectfully so, they were towards the diablo. However, in cimarrón-participatory Marimba the presence of the diablo is acknowledged in a much more overt way than in cimarrón-participatory Bomba, not just through testimonies but also through songs and even rhythms that contain verses that are explicitly related to the diablo. This significant difference is undoubtedly related to the fact that the process of Christianisation during the Atlantic slavery period of Afro-Esmeraldeños was very different from that for Afro-Choteños. In comparison to Marimberos Cimarrones, Bomberos Cimarrones were controlled and oppressed for a much longer and consistent period of time, having to even develop specific non-verbal strategies of joy and freedom during their events.

According to Escobar Quiñónez (1983), and as it can be listened in this section’s composition, the verses that were related to the diablo were known as

‘versos chocantes’ (shocking verses) and were used in spaces of ‘lo humano’ and not in spaces of ‘lo divino’ in confrontations between Marimberos or between Marimberos Cimarrones and the diablo. Some of these verses were part of marimba’s rhythms of Bambuco, Patacoré (which according to some Marimberos Cimarrones is a type of Bambuco) and Berejú. In this regard, some Marimberos Cimarrones said that the diablo prefers the marimba’s rhythm of Bambuco.

According to the Marimberos Cimarrones Doña Petita Palma from the city of Esmeraldas and Papá Roncón, the Bambuco is the first marimba rhythm that reached Esmeraldas from Colombia. The Bambuco is the favourite piece of the diablo. It is also the piece that was usually more enjoyed by Marimberos Cimarrones because it is the more caliente. For Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, caliente refers to a rhythm that makes Marimberos Cimarrones dance and enjoy more. According to the Marimberos Cimarrones Don Nacho Caicedo, from the community of Telembí, and Papá Roncón, the Bambuco is the music that attracts the diablo the most, so elders did not use to play it for long periods of time because if they did, the diablo would come.

One of the most engaging testimonies that shows Marimberos Cimarrones’ playful fearlessness towards the diablo comes precisely from a famous marimba song of Patacoré played with the rhythm of Bambuco and beautifully interpreted by Papá Roncón. In this Bambuco song, which is a central part of this section’s composition, a few verses that are part of the Afro-Esmeraldeños collective memories are included. Some researchers also record these verses in their works. For instance, de Carvalho-Neto (1964, p. 93), affirms that a researcher named Chavez

Franco saw a performance of Marimba in 1927 and that one of the verses he could hear was, “Here he comes the diablo, let him come, if he comes alone, it is better for me”. Whitten (1965) also registered the verses “Come hear the marimba. It chases the diablo. I am the diablo. I am going on a trip. Do not dance with me, because I might decide to stay with you” and “The diablo is coming, good-bye by a man, I now hold my man” (p. 125). Coba Andrade (1980, p. 17), also transcribed another verse of this song that is related to the diablo, “the diablo fell into the water, and another diablo said: how did the diablo fall?”

Also, Papá Roncón (personal communication, 2018) and Escobar Quiñónez (1997, p. 70) mention another verse that is part of the collective memories of not just Afro-Ecuadorians, but of many parts of the Chocóan bioregion, which includes Colombia, and that is: “Here it comes the diablo, let him come, if he comes angry, I’ll make him laugh...”. As has already been mentioned in Chapter Three, laughter constitutes one of the most effective strategies of resistance and re-existence, having the power to destroy fear and giving rise to a communal space of joy and celebration. As for cimarrón-participatory Bomba, although the testimonies of the diablo or duende’s revelations were as abundant as in relation to Marimba, no song was found that referred to it. As is discussed in the Introduction, this critical difference could be related to the fact that Bomberos Cimarrones were enslaved for centuries, and thus, were more oppressed, whereas only some Marimberos Cimarrones were enslaved and for a more limited time.

Another Bomberos Cimarrones’ strategy to win a competition with the diablo was to play specific tunes on their guitar. According to the Bombero Cimarrón Don

Seberino Méndez, from the community of Chalguyacu, there used to be two guitar tunes that Bomberos Cimarrones could play to get rid of the diablo. These were called ‘Olmedo’ and ‘Galindo’. The most mentioned tune by some Bomberos Cimarrones such as Teodoro Méndez and some researchers is the Galindo tune. Franco (2000, p. 99) and Lara (2011, pp. 149–150) mention that the Galindo guitar tune used by Bomberos Cimarrones is also played by Runa people from the northern Ecuadorian highlands during the festivities of ‘San Pedro’ and ‘San Juan’. These authors do not mention any relation between the Galindo tune and the diablo. However, one of de la Cruz Santacruz’ interviewees, an Afro-Choteño from the community of Piquiucho (Bolívar, Carchi), affirmed that a Bombero Cimarrón told him how his compadre used to tell him that he and the duende competed with their guitars in a ‘duelo’ (confrontation), but that he played the Galindo, which he defined as a unique sound. Since the duende cannot tune the guitar in Galindo, he disappeared. Because of this, his compadre would always tune the guitar in Galindo before going to other villages. According to the interviewed Afro-Choteño, the Galindo is like a tuning from the saints, but just some people know about it (de la Cruz Santacruz, 2012, p. 140).

As shown in the testimonies mentioned above, being able to defeat the diablo is a source of pride for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones. As the Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda shares in this section’s composition: “when Rey David defeated the diablo he told my friends and me, laughing, ‘I won because I am stronger than him, he cannot defeat me, and if he cannot defeat me, nobody can!’”. Similarly, most Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones included in this section’s composition expressed how pleased they felt when they defeated or heard that

someone else defeated the diablo or duende. Importantly, as it was mentioned in the beginning of this section, Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' sense of pride and joy when they win evil forces is clearly related to them gaining back their humanity through resisting those racialised beliefs that have historically located them and their practices in the bottom rung. This resistance permits their re-existence. As it is beautifully expressed by Juan García Salazar (n.d.-b, Conferencia Negra) in the powerful testimony that ends this section's composition; the re-enactment of Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories is what make them "become once more what they were not before".

As shown by the above-mentioned collective memories, the relationship between the diablo and Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones represents a clear way of transforming a racialised colonial difference -including ostracism or negative visibility- into daily strategies to 'play' with the hegemonic power, that demanded them to be rigidly guided by fear, submission and penitence, by using wisdom, bravery and creativity. These strategies allowed Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones to confront Spanish colonisers, priests, patrones and masters and therefore, to momentarily jeopardise white and mestizo people's supremacy. Therefore, for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, the fact that they had any relation to the diablo strengthened in them a proud sense of belonging to these events and of being Marimbero or Bombero Cimarrón. However, the fact that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones were able to build essential performances of resistance and re-existence occasioned the rejection of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba by colonisers, masters, patrones and Ecuadorian political powers. Consequently, and similarly to other music and dances from the African diaspora



(Díaz-Díaz, 2005, p. 36), cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba have been hidden, prohibited, minimised and demonised even in post-slavery periods. As is shown below, this had specific consequences for Marimba Esmeraldeña.

### **Collective memories of Marimberos Cimarrones: The disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba**

***\*\*\*Please listen to the third research-based sonic composition:***

***Its transcript can be found in Appendix B\*\*\****

This section's composition begins with a poetic story that describes an event of cimarrón-participatory Marimba and which was written by the Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonsales. Similarly to the beginning of the previous composition, Gonsales begins his story sharing how he feels Marimba was originated; "by the one whom we all know" who "put the Marimba in our skin" (personal communication, 2018). Afterwards, his voice mixes with other voices of other Marimberos Cimarrones who are being part of a celebration while laughing singing and playing a Patacoré, an Agua Larga and an Andarele. Afterwards, Gonsales describes the painful moment on which 'some people' came to the room where the marimba was and destroyed all the instruments. This last part of Gonsales' description represents the violent and innumerable persecutions cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña faced for decades.

As previously indicated, cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba and Bomba have historically been persecuted. Therefore, colonisers, masters or patrones frequently tried to control Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones from freely performing and through it, from freely relating to their syncretic beliefs. This control especially affected cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña.<sup>102</sup> I argue that the numerous bans that Marimberos Cimarrones have faced throughout history were one of the main reasons that caused Marimba's disappearance and thus, its transition from threshold to presentational period.

Although Marimba Esmeraldeña's censorship have been mentioned by several authors (García Salazar, 2003; Minda Batallas, 2014; Ritter, 2010), these censorship have never been exposed in detail. Moreover, when I did my fieldwork in Esmeraldas, unlike most Marimberos Cimarrones, just a few Afro-Esmeraldeños were aware of the significant impact and complexity of the numerous censorship, but vaguely recalled some details about them. Something similar happens with new generations of Marimberos. Instead, as has already been mentioned, they vividly remember the sense of shame their relatives used to feel in the years, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where Marimba was banned continuously. This generalised unawareness clearly responds to the previously mentioned process of olvido social or desmemoria (See Chapter One). I suggest that a collective forgetfulness of the numerous bannings of Marimba and therefore, of its forced transformation from cimarrón-participatory to presentational performances, could be occasioned by the fact that

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<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, according to Escobar Quiñónez, when Marimba was prohibited, it was prohibited in both contexts, sacred ('lo divino') and secular ('lo humano'). Moreover, Marimba was not the only Afro-Ecuadorian practice that was persecuted. The 'yerbateros', who are Afro-Esmeraldeños who heal with herbs, were actively persecuted too in Esmeraldas city on the 1920s (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 84).

decades ago it became shameful to share anything related to Marimba Esmeraldeña. This sense of shame could clearly weaken the intergenerational transmission of collective memories related to its violent disappearance. Moreover, a process of olvido social or desmemoria could have been exacerbated by the fact that, as it has already been mentioned, presentational performances are believed to be the only possible way of existence of Marimba. Therefore, their connection to cimarrón-participatory performances is blurred and new generations are convinced that whatever happened before or outside presentational performances is not significant.

Following Rivera Cusicanqui's (2012b) statement in which she warns about the collective negation of the past as what can emotionally 'kill' and 'mutilate' us (para. 11), I consider of particular importance for new generations of Marimberos and beyond to understand the sense of shame of some Marimberos Cimarrones of the time as part of a racialised colonial difference within which some mestizo people and foreigners did not just mock Marimberos Cimarrones but also established numerous bans that greatly affected the survival of cimarrón-participatory Marimba. Therefore, a central focus of this section is to, theoretically and sonically, widen the understanding of the transition of Marimba from one period to another, or, in other words, to uncover the reasons why "...the historical moment of this ritual [referring to cimarrón-participatory Marimba performed until the 60s] passed..." (Ritter, 1998, p. 102, 1999b, p. 146).

In this work, one focus is on the bans and censorships faced by Marimberos cimarrones throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The choice to focus mainly on the 20<sup>th</sup> century is because most Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I talked or whose

testimonies were found in other research and are utilised in the theoretical and practical component of this section, referred to the bans of that particular century, which is also the century when cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña finally disappeared. It is essential to mention that unfortunately, I did not find collective memories about the various strategies of resistance and re-existence that Marimberos Cimarrones of the time undoubtedly generated to be able to survive - as they did - so many censorship before cimarrón-participatory Marimba finally disappeared. Despite this lack of testimonies, it is vital to acknowledge the survival of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña for more than three centuries as a consequence of Marimberos Cimarrones agency. That is, Marimberos Cimarrones did resist and re-exist, by which I mean that they did manage to perform cimarrón-participatory Marimba for centuries.

The first evidence of censorship, which took place in 1912, is documented through written testimonies from history books. The next six samples of evidence, which belong to 1926, 1936, 1939, 1949, the 1970s and 2017, are mainly documented through my conversations with Marimberos Cimarrones during my fieldwork in Esmeraldas from October 2017 to February 2018. Another important source of documentation was a recorded interview of the deceased Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar, found in the 'Fondo Afro' of the Universidad Andina. García Salazar did this interview in 1983, when Remberto Escobar was in his 70s. Finally, the Afro-Esmeraldeño novels *Juyungo* by Adalberto Ortiz (1984) and *Bajo el cielo nublado* by Nelson Estupiñán Bass (1981) were vital sources of information. Although these last sources are not conventional ones, they are taken into account due to the lack of archival sources in Esmeraldas and also due to the broad historical

research and experiential background that the writers mentioned above had.

Besides analysing the evidence I gathered, I verified all the dates of official events and the names of authorities/figures mentioned in testimonies and novels through historical books and archival sources. Also, these pieces of evidence more or less correspond to the decades briefly mentioned by other persons with whom I talked, such as the Afro-Ecuadorian anthropologist Pablo Minda and the Afro-Esmeraldeño musician Edgardo Prado (personal communication, 2017). When I talked to Minda and Prado, both of them stated that they remembered Marimba Esmeraldeña was prohibited from around the 1920s to the 1940s. On the other hand, based on his interview with the Afro-Ecuadorian researcher and musician Lindberg Valencia, León Castro (2016, p. 78) mentions that Marimba Esmeraldeña was prohibited precisely from 1936 to 1956. Following these testimonies and because of the proximity indicated in the pieces of evidence (from 3 to 14 years), rather than taking each of them as isolated incidences of censorship, I locate them as a group of continuous attempts to ban the Marimba that resulted in almost 40 years of more or less permanent censorship.

It is important to mention that most of the documented attempts to ban or limit the performances of Marimba Esmeraldeña correspond to the last decades of the cimarrón-participatory period of Marimba Esmeraldeña (from the 1910s to 1950s). Therefore, it is assumed that the governmental and personal endeavours to ban these performances were targeting the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña. In the end, they were successful. As was already mentioned in Chapter Two of this research, cimarrón-participatory Marimba finally disappeared

in the late 1960s. The only two testimonies that are about folk-presentational performances and that correspond to the presentational period of Marimba Esmeraldeña are the two last testimonies from the Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Petita Palma (in the 1970s) and some participants of the ‘Festival de la Marimba’ that I attended a year ago (in 2018). These two testimonies are understood as vivid consequences of the still current rejection of Marimba Esmeraldeña, even in its folk and therefore, official version.

Importantly, most information related to the banning of cimarrón-participatory Marimba comes from written sources. Therefore, although each of the pieces of evidence is analysed in detail in this section’s written part, in the composition, only the testimonies given by Marimberos Cimarrones with whom I talked, and thus, whom I could audio-record, are included.

### **Censorship during Marimba’s cimarrón-participatory period**

The first documented attempt to prohibit the performances of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña in the 21<sup>st</sup> century started in 1912. The Ecuadorian president at the time, Leonidas Plaza Gutierrez (1912-1916), was a member of the Conservative party. Plaza Gutierrez appointed the Esmeraldeño conservative Luis Tello Ripalda as the mayor of Esmeraldas province and the ‘Intendente’ Benigno Ayora as the chief police officer (May 1912 to November 1913; Estupiñán Tello, 1980, p. 307). In those years, the Ecuadorian Liberal Revolution was taking place. Since many of the people who were liberals were Afro-Esmeraldeños, Esmeraldas city was under strict surveillance, so much so that Tello

Ripalda built trenches around the main parks and entrances to the city of Esmeraldas to prevent the invasion of liberals from other provinces or from outside the city (Moreno, 1939, p. 5). Ayora's brutal role in this process of surveillance was specifically documented by Moreno (1939) and Pérez Estupiñán (1996).

According to Pérez Estupiñán and Moreno, Benigno Ayora's personal and political rejection of Afro-Ecuadorians was such that, on the excuse that any Afro-Esmeraldeño could be a liberal, he and the rest of the police officers of the time began a racist persecution against black people. Pérez Estupiñán (1996) describes how those police officers would catch Afro-Esmeraldeños with 'tramojos' (wooden shackles) to drag them, beat them and leave them in 'cepos' (stocks) under the sun with no food or water for days (pp. 279-280). Performing Marimba, drinking alcohol or not greeting the chief officers properly, were some of the reasons why Afro-Esmeraldeños were imprisoned and sometimes tortured by the police officers. Moreno (1939) mentions explicitly how Ayora prohibited black people from performing the Marimba, stating that it was prohibited precisely because Ayora knew how important it was for Afro-Esmeraldeños (p. 16). According to Foote, the prohibition of cimarrón-participatory Marimba performances could also be related to the fear of authorities concerning black people's involvement in a potential revolution. Therefore, they were prohibiting Marimba as a way to prevent black people from gathering where they could not be supervised (Foote, 2004, p. 252).

A year later, the liberal Plaza Gutierrez became president, and because of the murder of the most important liberal leader in the history of Ecuador, General Eloy Alfaro, the Guerra de Concha broke out in Esmeraldas province. As has already been

stated, most soldiers that fought in Guerra de Concha were Afro-Esmeraldeños who decided to use this war to fight for their rights (See Introduction). Moreover, it has been stated that their participation was also especially high and brave because of a strong desire for revenge against their oppressors (Pérez Estupiñán, 1996, p. 283). This revenge was linked on one side to the historical abandonment and violence against the black population and also, as stated by Moreno (1939), to the more recent inhuman treatments by the police officers led by Ayora (p. 17).

There is even a photograph taken in the middle of Guerra de Concha, in which an instrument of marimba can be seen between mestizo people and Afro-Esmeraldeño liberal soldiers (See fig. 22). Although there is no information about this photograph or the existence of cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba Esmeraldeña during this war, it seems that the presence of the instrument of marimba in that historical moment could have worked as a powerful symbol of the liberals', and therefore Afro-Esmeraldeños', fight for freedom, after centuries of violent oppression, including the banning of Marimba. Indeed, Marimberos cimarrones were victorious since, through their agency and in spite of all the aforementioned adversities, cimarrón-participatory Marimba did outlast the war and survived for a few more decades.

In 1926, amidst a coup that destabilised Ecuador, the second documented effort to ban cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña in the 20th century took place. There is little archival information about this attempt in particular. It is known that Esmeraldas had two mayors in that year, Borja and Díaz Castrillón (Estupiñán Tello, 1980, p. 308). Based on the research of the Afro-Ecuadorian historian Xavier



Vera Kooke (personal communication, 2017), whose testimony is included in this section's composition, Carlos Enrique Díaz Castrillón was the mayor at the time when cimarrón-participatory Marimba was censored. Although there is no written documentation or direct testimonies that prove this censorship, Vera Kooke stated that he got the information from archival records, which later on were destroyed in a flood, and from Díaz Castrillón's children. Moreover, Vera Kooke affirms that Díaz Castrillón's children were perfectly aware of the banning of Marimba during Díaz Castrillón's term as mayor and did not see it as something negative or unfair but as a necessary action to preserve the civility and peacefulness of Esmeraldas (personal communication, 2017).<sup>103</sup>

A third documented attempt related to limiting the performances of Marimba Esmeraldeña was in 1936. This attempt is described in detail in an interview with one of the most famous Marimberos Cimarrones, Remberto Escobar. Because of the uniqueness of this testimony, I have translated and transcribed a good portion of it as follows;

This was in 1936. I was eating at Benito Montaña's place. I was going to have dinner there really early, at around 5 pm. When I was about to reach the central park (of Esmeraldas), I heard the drums of the Military Band of the 'Batallón Quinto Guayas' (an army regiment), so I said to myself: what is this about? I went closer to the park's corner and then, I saw the political

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<sup>103</sup> On a personal note, I visited one of the offspring of Díaz Castrillón during my fieldwork in Esmeraldas in 2018. Vera Kooke arranged the visit and accompanied me. The person whom we interviewed was working for the government, and he received us in his office. He was very polite and even gave us a few books from Afro-Esmeraldeño authors as a gift. However, although I did not have any recording device with me to not make him feel uncomfortable, he did not want to comment further on the banning of Marimba. Later on, Vera Kooke mentioned that when this person told him that he did remember in detail, it was in an informal setting and perhaps afterwards he regretted having mentioned that controversial theme that involved his relative Díaz Castrillón.

chief with a rolled sheet. The military band stopped in front of him, and he said: Attention, attention! Then he unrolled the sheet and read: ‘In the name of justice and as the mayor of Esmeraldas province, I inform you that from now on the music and the dances of marimba are strictly prohibited for a mile around (this place). The person who breaks this rule will be severely punished, because this dance and music shouldn’t be heard anymore, shouldn’t be played anymore, because it is music from savages, music from crazy people, music from blacks, music from old people. Signed by Gonzalo Gutierrez, mayor of Esmeraldas’. Then I said: ‘Oh my! We black people are ruined!’ And then, this new decree spread out like wildfire, so then, yes, blacks just found new ways to have fun, especially through opening ballrooms... that is how Marimba still survived, marginalised and oppressed... because they used to supervise us. We really could not perform Marimba at all. So, little by little, me and other people began to play the guitar instead. The dances with guitar went on. But not with marimba, no! No!...<sup>104</sup> (Escobar Quiñónez, 1983)

The fourth source of evidence of an effort to censor cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña during those decades comes from a famous Afro-Esmeraldeño novel named *Juyungo: Historia de un negro, una isla y otros negros* (‘Juyungo: A story of a black, an island and other blacks’) written in 1942 by the

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<sup>104</sup> According to Estupiñán Tello (1980, p. 308), the mayor of Esmeraldas up to September 1936 was José María Tello Ripalda. As for Gonzalo Gutiérrez, he was mayor of Esmeraldas just on 1955. However, Escobar states that when he witnessed the Marimba censorship in 1936, Gutiérrez signed it. Despite this inconsistency and because of the accuracy of the rest of his testimony and based on Escobar Quiñónez’ age at the time, it seems that Escobar did witness this particular censorship in 1936. Besides, the extended interviews done with Escobar Quiñónez and also some comments of people who used to know him always highlight his privileged memory, which is precisely one of the reasons why he could remember in detail most collective memories from a variety of themes.

Afro-Esmeraldeño writer and poet Adalberto Ortiz. Although the novel portrays the life of a fictional Afro-Esmeraldeño man, it is framed in real historical events such as Guerra de Concha (1912-1916) and the Peruvian invasion (1941). Moreover, through the story of this character, the discrimination and injustice that Afro-Esmeraldeños have historically faced are described in detail. Also, as is stated in a newspaper article (“Revisitando a Adalberto Ortiz diez años después de su muerte,” 2013), Ortiz did mention that many stories that are part of his novel *Juyungo* were shared with him by Afro-Esmeraldeños from the jungle of Esmeraldas since he used to live there with his grandmother. Ortiz also stated that other portions of the novel are based on his conversations with an Afro-Esmeraldeño man who fought in the Ecuadorian war of 1941.

In a part of the novel *Juyungo* (A. Ortiz, 1984, pp. 135–136), a character named ‘Mr Valdez’, is described as a rich man, owner of many lands and who had political aspirations. Based on some history books and descriptions (Cedeño Canga, 2015; Chavez Gonzalez, 1971) and on the year the novel was written, it can be concluded that the character ‘Mr Valdez’ could refer to Rafael Valdez Murillo, who belonged to a well-known wealthy and traditional political family of large landowners. Valdez Murillo was the great-grandson of the famous Spanish Colonel Ramón Valdez. Afro-Esmeraldeños knew Colonel Ramón Valdez better as ‘Amo Valdez’ (Master Valdez). According to the testimonies gathered in Cedeño Canga (2015, p. 77), Amo Valdez established slavery in the gold mines of some black people’s communities such as ‘Playa de Oro’ near the Santiago river in Esmeraldas. There, he imported enslaved people from Barbacoas (Colombia; Chavez Gonzalez, 1971, p. 8). Amo Valdez was well known because of the inhuman treatment he gave

to enslaved people.<sup>105</sup>

According to research by Vera Kooke, Amo Valdez used to rape a different black enslaved woman each night. He also used to leave enslaved people locked up with no water or food for days (personal communication, 2017). In a part of the novel, progressive members of a mestizo workers' union convinced the owners of a local radio station to play the music of marimba as a way to support local traditions. When the great-grandson of Amo Valdez, 'Mr Valdez', listened to the songs on the radio, he turned it off and promised that he would make Marimba disappear from the city;

'How dare they?' he said. 'How can these savage manifestations be broadcasted? What will foreigners think about us? They will think we are all blacks here! It's up to us, my friends, we must make these immoral public Marimba performances disappear. There is no doubt that we will make them disappear!' (A. Ortiz, 1984, pp. 135–136).

Later in the novel, Mr Valdez reaffirmed his rejection of Marimba Esmeraldeña;

... this is a savage act from those blacks. Civilisation cannot come to our province if we allow those things to happen. My duty as a member of Congress will be to help this place develop. We need people to move from outside to better the race and our customs... For the time being, we should try to stop those marimba dances (referring to Marimba performances) being performed in central places (A. Ortiz, 1984, p. 235).

Finally, a formal letter appears in the novel. It is dated 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 1939 and

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<sup>105</sup> The detailed collective memories about the Amo Valdez in Playa de Oro can be found in Cedeño Canga (2015, pp. 173–179).

signed by the ‘police chief’. It consists of an official order of prohibition of Marimba dances in the central part of the city of Esmeraldas, ‘since it constitutes an attack against the public order, morals and good manners of civilised cities...’ (Ortiz, 1984, p. 246-247).

A fifth documented attempt to limit the performances of cimarrón-participatory Marimba took place in 1949. This time, the Church played a much more direct role in prohibiting cimarrón-participatory Marimba (although it has been related to every act of censorship in the previous centuries). Xavier Vera Kooke affirmed that church authorities such as Hieroteo Valbuena and Lázaro García played an essential role in this ban (personal communication, 2017). According to some Spanish on-line archives (Censo-Guía, 2011), the priest Hieroteo Valbuena arrived in Esmeraldas in 1941 and stayed there until 1954. Valbuena is described by Savoia (2012, p. 10) as a dynamic and controversial person. These priests, backed by the demands of a group of high-class mestizo people such as the ones from the rich neighbourhood of ‘La Merced’ in Esmeraldas, influenced local authorities and asked them to expel and put in jail people who performed cimarrón-participatory Marimba.

Thus, cimarrón-participatory Marimba was prohibited in the centre of the city, and Marimberos Cimarrones could only perform it in peripheral areas. Moreover, peripheral neighbourhoods such as the ‘Caledonia’ neighbourhood were specially created for Afro-Esmeraldeños, who worked mainly as maids, dockworkers and water carriers. Currently, the Caledonia neighbourhood is famously known as ‘Barrio Caliente’ (Hot Neighbourhood; Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 30). The creation of the neighbourhood mentioned above for black people to move to was

confirmed not just by Vera Kooke but also during my conversations with the Afro-Ecuadorian anthropologist Pablo Minda and the Marimberos Cimarrones Alberto Castillo and Edgardo Prado (personal communication, 2017).

As for the years between censorship, it seems that although there could have been sporadic cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba in-between or even during censorship, Marimba was never freely performed again. For instance, Escobar Quiñónez (1983; 1997) stated that even when the authorities that prohibited Marimba went away, it kept being prohibited. Escobar Quiñónez states that Marimba was prohibited from 1936 to 1956 (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 19). Escobar (1983) also remembered that from the 1950s, people even had to ask for permission to perform the Marimba. These permissions had certain restrictions; for example, they could only perform until midnight. Importantly, the control of Marimba's performances using permissions coincides with what was described by the North American researcher Norman Whitten (1974a, pp. 110–111), based on his fieldwork in Esmeraldas city (1964-1968; See Chapter Two). Thus, cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña could have still existed, but with certain conditions, since, according to Escobar, 'the police were always around' (Escobar Quiñónez, 1983).

It is essential to take into account that all of the pieces of evidence presented here belong to the city of Esmeraldas, not other locations of the northern part of the province of Esmeraldas where cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña also used to exist. Although I have verified that cimarrón-participatory Marimba disappeared from the whole province, I have not found much evidence verifying how the censorship of Marimba in the central city affected the performances of Marimba

in the rest of the province. In this respect, significant evidence could be related to what Remberto Escobar (1983) mentioned in a recorded interview, which is that although the order of censorship and thus, the robust surveillance, was limited to the city of Esmeraldas and not for the whole province of Esmeraldas, it did also affect rural areas. Remberto stated that even the people from small villages obeyed the decrees because they got scared of the various punishments they heard Marimberos Cimarrones were receiving in the city.

### **Censorship during Marimba's threshold and presentational period**

Another literary text that could be taken as undated evidence of the banning of Marimba, perhaps during its threshold period, is a narration included in the novel *Bajo el cielo nublado* (Under the cloudy sky) written by the Afro-Esmeraldeño Nelson Estupiñán Bass (1981). Throughout this book, the author gives voice to a variety of objects, including the Marimba Esmeraldeña. A part in which the Marimba 'speaks' about its persecution is the following:

...for a long time she gathered signatures, asking for the Marimba and all the despicable African music to be abolished from Esmeraldas province. This petition was accepted by the mayor of Taramburo and one morning, she, along with Miss Baltazara Cueva and Miss Grimanesa Bobadillas, who is the president of the Church committee of the Arrayán Virgin and of the Academy of Aristocratic Manners, with the help of ten policemen, came to the 'Ensenada', and took me with my two guasás, cununos and a bombo, and they threw all of us here.... (Estupiñán Bass, 1981)

Estupiñán Bass' (1981) narration closely resembles a part of the Afro-Esmeraldeña

Marimba dancer and choreographer Petita Palma Piñeiros's testimony. Palma Piñeiros began to direct her folk group of Marimba in the 1970s, at the beginning of Marimba's presentational period. In my conversation with her, she shared this striking testimony as a way of explaining the condition of the marimba instruments around a decade after the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña;

... When I arrived (in the 1970s), yes, there was Marimba, but it was dead, because they used to say it was something from blacks. Here people can be really racist, they did not like even to hear the Bombo... so, I literally had to go and rescue the instruments of marimba that were thrown away near the rivers or in some people's backyards. I had to ask for some help to recover, carry and clean those instruments. They were so dirty! So damaged! it was very very sad, so sad.... (personal communication, 2017)

Two other pieces of evidence of the banning of Marimba in its presentational period are relevant enough to include in this section, and can serve to explain the consequences of decades of prosecution against Marimba. The first one comes also from Petita Palma, who shared a testimony of censorship that happened during the first years of her group in the 1970s:

They even took my boys [performers of her Marimba folk group] to jail. We were just finishing our rehearsal. We used to rehearse there, surrounded by mud. We were so tired! But we went to the central park on foot. In those days, there was this huge black policeman called Lumbumba. Anyway, after a while, I went back home. The next day, my boys called me, 'Miss Petita, Miss Petita, he put us in jail, Lumbumba put us in jail!!!'. I remember the



chief policeman was Carlos Montaña, so I changed my clothes as fast as possible and went to the jail. I told him: ‘Let my boys go!!!’ and he replied, ‘We had to take them because they were making noise and some ladies [referring to mestizo women] told us to do it’. I began to cry. Then I told him, ‘Don't you dare mess with us blacks!’ Because you are white but your wife is black, and I know it!’ (Personal communication, 2017)

Importantly, Carlos Montaña is also mentioned in Vera Cooke’s testimony, which is included in this section’s composition, as being the chief police officer who did not just prohibit the Marimba but that also jailed some Marimberos Cimarrones.

The last evidence of a rejection of Marimba during its presentational period was gathered recently, in February 2018. I was part of the jury of the most important Marimba Festival of Esmeraldas. Around 15 Marimba folk groups from Ecuador and abroad arrived in Esmeraldas to participate in a contest, which was the central part of the Festival. Through my role as a juror, I had the opportunity to talk with some of the organisers and the participants of the Festival. A few of them mentioned that they had had many issues concerning obtaining funding for their festival. I then learnt that the Festival was even interrupted for three years (2015-2017) due to lack of funding. Although in Ecuador governmental funding for cultural festivals is always scarce, some of the participants with whom I talked also mentioned that some inhabitants of Esmeraldas still relate Marimba to a ‘black people’s noise’ that has the power of gathering troublemakers. Thus, they thought that some elite people who lived near the area where the Festival is usually held, a recently refurbished area called ‘Las Palmas’, were not satisfied with the Festival since they did not feel safe. Of course, another group of locals, who were mostly Afro-Esmeraldeños, were very grateful for

the Festival's existence since it allowed them to earn extra income through the sale of food and handicrafts to visitors and also to enjoy the performances.

The final part of this section's composition is a testimony given by Vera Cooke, who asserts that the complaints of Marimba because of its being 'noisy', the geographical relocation of Marimberos Cimarrones and the jail that some of them had to face, are directly related to racism in Ecuador.

The thread of evidence presented here, most of which comes from collective memories and is backed up by historical research, constitutes essential information to understand some of the bans and censorship of cimarrón-participatory Marimba that ended with its disappearance. Moreover, the exposure of cimarrón-participatory Marimba's violent process of disappearance constitutes a way to acknowledge the fact that not being able to keep performing cimarrón-participatory Marimba is also part of history, and thus, of collective memories. Therefore, it is important to understand how it disappeared in order to keep building strategies to resist and re-exist, in other words, to keep making decisions for the present and the future of what is left, and what new generations of Marimberos still have time to learn about cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña.

## **Collective Memories of Bomberos Cimarrones: Their survival beyond spoken words**

Unlike collective memories related to Marimberos Cimarrones, I argue that those ones related to Bomberos Cimarrones are mainly transmitted through the body and not necessarily through spoken words. The lack of a consistent relation between collective memories and spoken words in cimarrón-participatory Bomba is the reason why a sonic composition specifically about Bomba is not included in this research. Nevertheless, I suggest that specific collective memories related to the important role of children in cimarrón-participatory Bomba, hip interactions among dancers and the presence of the famous song ‘María Chunchuna’ are relevant approaches to Bomberos Cimarrones’ collective memories.

Some of the collective memories that most Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked pointed out is the fact that children were not allowed to be part of a cimarrón-participatory event of Marimba and Bomba. Almost all Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked and who were interviewed in other works have affirmed that it was forbidden for children to attend those events. They even had specific ways of organising communally to take turns looking after the children of all the participants, who would usually be in a nearby house in the case of Marimba, or in the ‘soberado’ (attic) in the case of Bomba.<sup>106</sup> However, on some of the rare occasions when children managed to snoop around cimarrón-participatory performances, they were the ones who alerted the adults to

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<sup>106</sup> For more information about the role of the soberado on cimarrón-participatory performances of Bomba see López-Yáñez (2013, pp. 112–114).

the diablo or duende's presence. As shared by one of the most important Cantaoras of the city of Esmeraldas, the Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila;

I didn't see the diablo, but my good 'compadre', Don Remberto Escobar, used to tell me that he saw the diablo. He saw him coming to the dancing room. He was 'zapateando' (dancing marimba), but Don Remberto could see his tail between his clothes. So a child that was hiding under a table said, 'Mum, mum, that man has a tail, uncle, that man has a tail!' (personal communication, 2018).

Escobar Quiñónez points out that the diablo cannot hide from children because children, through a mixture of innocence and naivety, curiosity and astuteness, are always able to recognise him and alert the rest (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 77).<sup>107</sup> Similarly, some Bomberas Cimarronas, such as Doña María Rogelia Minda, remember the role of a child in realising the duende's presence:

Once, we were dancing, and a small boy that managed to get in kneeled and told us that an elegantly dressed man with big animal-like legs was dancing among us. So then we grabbed the man and yes! We discovered he was a duende and that he was dancing among us, so elegantly dressed that no one could imagine he was not human. So we screamed, and he opened his mouth and showed us his teeth.

The three Bomberas Cimarronas that are part of the music group 'Las Tres Marías', Gloria, Rosa and María Magdalena Pabón Méndez, shared a similar testimony;

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<sup>107</sup> Don Remberto also affirms that children are God's allies, so much so that when they die they go directly to heaven (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 77). Here Remberto is referring to the Afro-Ecuadorian belief that unlike adults, when a child dies, he or she does not need special prayers for God to forgive him/her but just needs people to be dancing and singing because the child will for sure go to heaven.

Long ago at a dancing party, people saw a really small boy, he was hidden under his mum's skirt, and he saw this man with a wooden leg. Then he began to scream, and people then realised that the diablo was abducting the child, he was going to take him far away! (Personal communication, 2013).

Interestingly, all Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked specifically acknowledged the role of children as the 'saviours'. They affirmed that since they realised children could protect them by warning them of the diablo's revelations, they decided to allow children to be part of the performances of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. The thought-provoking part of this last testimony that was repeated by most Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked is that, unlike cimarrón-participatory Marimba, cimarrón-participatory Bomba is still being performed. Although there are many reasons for the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba, it is valid to point out that perhaps the presence of children in cimarrón-participatory Bomba was an essential route for intergenerational knowledge transmission that could strengthen the existence and therefore prevent the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. Of course, this assumption does not take away the specific circumstances of strict surveillance that Marimberos Cimarrones faced as one of the main reasons for the disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba.

Following the important relationship between cimarrón-participatory Bomba and the diablo or duende, another essential characteristic of cimarrón-participatory Bomba is that, unlike marimba, there are no bomba lyrics that depict this relationship or any other controversial theme. This absence has made some artists and academics

think that cimarrón-participatory Bomba is not a space of resistance or re-existence, and thus, of knowledge production of Afro-Choteños. Moreover, a couple of well-known Ecuadorian anthropologists of the 1970s, Piedad and Alfredo Costales Peñaherrera, who according to their descriptions witnessed performances of cimarrón-participatory Bomba, openly stated this assumption;

...But this man (a Bombero Cimarrón) that seems a child in his verses, does not mourn through his songs and verses as the Indian (referring to an Indigenous-Ecuadorian person) does. He is a perfect concealer. He does not mention his life, does not insult the white, or the Indian, and does not talk about the anguish of his experience of slavery. He seems not even to recall it. The outsider who listens to him believes that he is well-adapted, totally satisfied with nature's selfishness, happy in the valley, joyful in his singing. Is it that he really does not care about the past? Is it that he does not want to remember? Is it that he has already forgiven the white that denied him a home or a family, who whipped him, who pulled him off like a plant without caring about the mourning of his roots? We think that these blacks have the philosophy of a sweet clown. Just in the intimacy of his rickety and dark hut, under the soft light of the kerosene lamp, he will liberate from the bottom of his tormented soul his sad reality of a pariah and exiled person... he never complains, he never wants to (Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959, pp. 205–207).

As I have discussed in detail elsewhere (López-Yáñez, in press-a), the lack of rebellious spoken words in the songs that are part of cimarrón-participatory Bomba does not mean that cimarrón-participatory Bomba is not related to a process of resistance or re-existence, nor does it mean that Bomberos Cimarrones joyfully sing

because they do not recall their past and they are completely satisfied with their present. This Bomberos Cimarrones' strategy was necessary because spoken words were used to oppress them. It is widely known that during the Atlantic slavery period, there was a tacit prohibition of enslaved Afro-Choteños expressing the injustices or violence they were experiencing. Peters (2005) states that at the time of Atlantic slavery in Chota-Mira Valley, enslaved people "used to be lashed for contradicting the authorities ... so the enslaved person who dared to speak against oppressors publicly was at risk of torture or even of losing his life" (pp. 140-141). Therefore, as confirmed by Lara (2011), it is not surprising that in the lyrics of cimarrón-participatory Bomba's songs, Bomberos Cimarrones did not include direct protest; neither did they provide critical commentary on the institution of slavery or exploitation of the huasipungueros (p. 156).<sup>108</sup> Similarly, and as has already been mentioned before, the Afro-Choteño musician and anthropologist Gualberto Espinoza affirmed that the close relationship between Bomberos Cimarrones and their patrones meant they were constantly being surveilled; for this reason, it was complicated to protest through the lyrics of the bomba songs (See Chapter Two).<sup>109</sup> Instead, Gualberto thinks that in those times, the role played by the lyrics of bomba music was to keep people happy and entertained (Lara 2011, p.156). Moreover, as has been stated by León (2016, p. 76-77), the lack of direct confrontations through their song's lyrics could be seen as a "strategy of cultural survival" of Bomberos Cimarrones to make their oppressors believe that Bomba was harmless and that it was nothing more than a leisure space for enslaved people. Thus, the 'masters' did

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<sup>108</sup> Although interestingly Ruggiero (2010, p. 88) suggests that it could be that the lyrics of some bomba songs contain hidden meanings, not recognised by the patrones, this is still to be verified.

<sup>109</sup> This patrones' strategy of constantly surveilling Bomberos Cimarrones described by Espinoza is often a constitutive part of how voice is denied to the marginalised (Bussie, 2007, p. 143).

not pay much attention to Bomba.

Furthermore, as was mentioned in Chapter One, collective memories beyond sound and movement systems are not necessarily transmitted orally. Therefore, I argue that cimarrón-participatory Bomba has historically been related to collective memories of resistance and re-existence beyond its sound and movement system, by triggering laughter and embodied freedom among participants (See Chapter Three). I suggest that although this ability of Bomberos Cimarrones is shared with Marimberos Cimarrones, the particularity of Bomberos Cimarrones is that their joy is achieved through, among other things, performing specific dancing interactions that have been part of cimarrón-participatory Bomba since Atlantic slavery period. As I have written extensively about previously (López-Yáñez, 2013, pp. 121–126, 2020b), one of these dancing interactions is hip-pushing among Bomberos Cimarrones. The interaction of pushing, which is present from the first descriptions of Bomba and is still being performed by new generations, has as its main aim to provoke joy and laughter among Bomberos Cimarrones. Importantly, this hip-interaction that has survived for more than five centuries (though with many changes in terms of the relation and proximity of Bomberos Cimarrones' bodies, and the terms used around it), clearly “speaks” (Blanco Borelli, 2014, p. 66) of the resistance and re-existence beyond sound and movement system of Bomberos Cimarrones in spite of the prevailing racialised colonial difference in which they are constantly immersed. Moreover, it becomes clear that the point of view of anthropologists of previous decades, were also part of a racialised colonial difference.



Despite the understanding of Bomberos Cimarrones as knowledge bearers and the validity of their strategies of resistance and re-existence that go beyond words, in this thesis the focus is on the collective memories transmitted orally and in all of the other sounds, emotions and knowledges that surround this mode of transmission. Therefore, a research-based sonic composition specifically about Bomberos Cimarrones would have to highlight mainly the “embodied textuality” (Blanco Borelli, 2014, p. 75) embedded in the performance of Bomba or non-semantic sounds such as laughter. Collective memories related to embodied experiences other than verbal communication go beyond the scope of this research, and thus, although some collective memories of Bomberos Cimarrones are included in the first and second composition, a research-based sonic composition exclusively about Bomberos Cimarrones was not developed in this thesis. However, although Bomberos Cimarrones did not usually protest openly against injustice through bomba’s lyrics, many of their oral collective memories constitute valuable, sensitive and creative stories related to their experiences of slavery and the post-slavery period. What follows is a brief analysis of one bomba song to illustrate these points. The analysis of this song is included in this thesis as an attempt to incorporate one of the songs that was frequently performed and that perhaps, at some point in history, was one of the Bomberos Cimarrones’ attempt to communicate orally specific collective memories.

Of all the songs of bomba, the one that was either mentioned or sung by many of the Bomberos Cimarrones with whom I talked (Ezequiel Sevilla, Jesús Torres Minda and ‘Las Tres Marías’) and other research (Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959; Lara, 2011) is a song entitled ‘María Chunchuna’. Espinoza, the Afro-Choteño

anthropologist and Bomba performer, mentioned in his interview with Lara (2011) that this song appeared on one record dated 1984. However, this song appears to be much older. Furthermore, the Bombero Cimarrón Don Ezequiel Sevilla even suggested that ‘María Chunchuna’ was one of the oldest bomba songs. According to Costales and Peñaherrera’s research (1959), the song ‘María Chunchuna’ was written in honour of an Afro-Choteña female named Custodia de Lara, who was a famous Bomba performer. ‘Chunchuna’ also means ‘poor woman’ (p. 201). It has also been an emblematic song for the famous Afro-Choteño traditional music group ‘Las Tres Marías’. Because of the popularity of this song among Bomberos Cimarrones, its lyrics are transcribed here;

Today Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup>,  
It is October of 52  
María Chunchuna don’t be like that,  
Don’t behave as bad,  
If you need something, ask your lover  
Maybe he will not say no to you,  
What a great party we had on that day,  
There were also beatings and bombings,  
The man of the mail was passing by,  
Luckily he could hide; otherwise, he would have been killed,  
They crowned Mr Chala with beautiful summer flowers,  
Please, I ask you that once I leave,  
to not tell anyone that I am legal now,  
I say goodbye, but I ask you not to be ungrateful to Mr Tahuando,  
He has promised to build a shack for you to live with tranquillity,

(Costales & Peñaherrera, 1959, pp. 201-202)

It seems that the version from Costales and Peñaherrera is the oldest written version of this song. In its first lines, the exact date of Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October of 52 is mentioned. Based on the day, it can be deduced that they are referring to the year 1952. The 1950s was the last decade of the Huasipungo period, which is perceived by most Afro-Choteños as an ‘extended’ or unofficial period of slavery that ended only in 1964 through the Reforma Agraria (See Introduction). Thus, those years were full of conflicts and small rebellions (Oberem, 1981, p. 320). Moreover, Rodriguez Jaramillo (1993) mentioned that the uprisings that took place in the 1950s were a consequence of previous attempts to end the period of Huasipungo. From the 1930s, going against landowners and church representatives, Afro-Choteños from various haciendas began to get organised to complain about their living conditions which they described as too harsh and even inhuman. As one of the consequences of this process, during the presidency of Galo Plaza, specifically from 1952 to 1956, some large landowners in Chota-Mira began to be expropriated from their lands with the plan to distribute those lands among Huasipungueros (Rodriguez Jaramillo, 1993, pp. 31–35). Also, Barsky (1984, p. 33) mentions that in the 1950s some landowners began a process that included offering their Huasipungueros a living place in order to make a smooth transition to their being free peasants, and avoiding having to pay them for their previous work. Therefore, the ‘beatings’, ‘bombings’ and ‘killings’ mentioned in the song’s lyrics could be referring to an uprising that brought, as a consequence, the ‘legalisation’ of the lands of the Huasipunguero who composed this song. Hence, even when they are not mentioning the context explicitly or in great detail, they do communicate specific historical facts.

In the two last chapters, I have presented collective memories related to the level of the enunciation and of the enunciated of this ch'ixi counter-representation proposal. In Chapter Three, I presented collective memories as a way of contesting meanings portrayed in public representations of Marimba and Bomba. In the current chapter, I have presented collective memories as a way of first, acknowledging Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' historical processes of resistance and re-existence beyond their music and dance-based events sound and movement systems, and secondly, of exposing collective memories that are not widely known and finally, of pointing out that those collective memories are not necessarily transmitted orally. In the next section, a specific strategy that has already been used to include collective memories in public representations is analysed in detail in order to open up a possibility for the future usage of the material presented in this thesis.

### **Incorporating collective memories in a public performance**

In this section, I argue that the inclusion of collective memories in public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota is still rare. However, in nearby locations such as Tumaco (Colombia) clearest attempts of inclusion of collective memories have been developed. Based on a specific carnival performance named 'El Retorno de la Marimba', here I propose a potential alternative to include collective memories in a public performance. I highlight the process through which this performance was developed to point out possible routes through which the material presented in this thesis could be included in public

performances.

In various parts of the African diaspora of Latin America and the Caribbean, a strategy through which specific beings or experiences related to cimarrón-participatory events have been transferred to public representations is by transforming them into characters or theatrical depictions in different carnivals. These carnivals arose as an Afro-descendants appropriation of the European tradition in the post-emancipation period of many Latin American countries (Cozzart Riggio, Marino, & Vignolo, 2015; Irobi, 2007, p. 903). Within carnivals, the ritualistic presence of irreverent and humorous characters such as the diablo or important experiences such as the reaction of participants to his presence can be depicted to remind people of a remote past of slavery. These ritualistic presences also link past experiences (collective memories) to the present by either maintaining similar traits that obeyed the collective memories of Atlantic slavery or transforming the characters and experiences according to current circumstances. Of course, these adaptations to post-slavery realities are not necessarily related to processes of resistance and re-existence but could also be transformed to become part of a racialised colonial difference. For instance, in the Dominican Republic's carnival, the irreverent presence of the diablo is transformed into a redeemed diablo that is not evil anymore but that now just dances tirelessly (Harris, 2015, p. 230). The transformation of the diablo in this carnival resembles the example that I previously mentioned, where an Afro-Esmeraldeño folk group depicted the first black people who arrived at Esmeraldas as over-friendly dancers, perhaps to counteract the stereotype of Afro-Esmeraldeños being 'naturally' and 'inevitably' violent (See Chapter Three).

Within the Afro-Ecuadorian context and unlike other locations of the African diaspora, Afro-Ecuadorian cimarrón-participatory performances did not evolve into carnivals. Instead, Afro-Ecuadorian music and dance festivals have been promoted, although recently. From 2002, the ‘Fundación Piel Negra’<sup>110</sup> and various governmental bodies from Esmeraldas have been organising annual music and dance festivals in the communities of Chota and Juncal (Chota-Mira Valley) and in the city of Esmeraldas respectively (Afluencia de Turistas, 2010; Festival Internacional, 2010). Within these festivals, there have already been attempts to contribute to the re-emergence of collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba through their re-inclusion in presentational products.

As Ritter (2011, p. 582) highlighted, in 1997, when he attended the annual ‘Festival de la Marimba’ in the city of Esmeraldas, some folk groups did include in their performance portions of the history of slavery and other collective memories related to specific historical moments. Accordingly, when I attended the annual ‘Festival de la Marimba’ in 2008 and 2009 and returned in 2018 to participate as one of the jurors, I could also witness the efforts that some local Marimba folk groups were making to include their collective memories on stage. For instance, there were two main categories in which each folk group had to perform, ‘traditional’ and ‘original’. Unlike the first category, where folk groups had to perform traditional marimba music and dances, in the second category, they had to stage a performance

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<sup>110</sup> The ‘Fundación Piel Negra’ is a group created in 2000 by Afro-Ecuadorians from Imbabura to promote Afro-Ecuadorians’ culture.

related to Marimba Esmeraldeña but with their creative input. A good number of the folk groups included certain mentions of collective memories related to a nostalgic sense of an imagined mother Africa or the powerful presence of elders in their communities. Some of them even included songs about environmental problems that are occasioning huge adverse effects on the lives of Afro-Esmeraldeños, one of the most important ones being strip mining. I witnessed something similar in my almost annual trips (2008 to 2018) to a Bomba festival named ‘Coangue’ in the communities of Chota, La Victoria and Juncal (Chota-Mira Valley).

In spite of the validity of the previously mentioned efforts, in this thesis I propose the detailed inclusion of collective memories based on thorough research, which goes beyond briefly mentioning some of them. In this sense, a clear example of how collective memories can be included in detail based on research in a presentational event is a theatrical piece called ‘El Retorno de la Marimba’ (‘The Return of Marimba’) that was part of an Afro-descendants’ carnival in 1998. Although this presentational representation did not take place in Ecuador, it is still relevant for this research since it took place in the Colombian city of Tumaco, which is part of the bioregion of Chocó and thus, historically linked to the Marimba of the Afro-descendant population of Esmeraldas (See Introduction). In addition, ‘El Retorno de la Marimba’ includes a group of collective memories that are closely related to the ones that were analysed previously in this chapter.

As is described in detail by Agier (1999, 2002), the creation of this presentational product in the city of Tumaco was possible because of the governmental support it received as a consequence of the 1991 constitutional reform

in Colombia that aimed to support research around memory (Agier, 1991, p. 203). Also, the fact that in 1997, the second black mayor in the history of Tumaco was elected, triggered even more support, especially because of this mayor's close relationship with the cultural groups of the area who were critical about reducing Marimba solely to the status of a spectacle (Agier, 1999, p. 206-212). Within that framework, from 1998, the performance called 'Retorno de la Marimba', which in the following years was re-named as the 'Llegada de la Marimba' ('The Arrival of Marimba'), became the leading section of the recently officialised Carnival parade in Tumaco. The creation of this performance was done with the explicit aim of re-enacting collective memories that were being forgotten.

The 'Retorno de la Marimba' was based on the gathering of collective memories related to a priest named Jesús María Mera, a Marimbero Cimarrón named Francisco Saya, and the diablo. According to Agier (1999, 2002), at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically from 1910 to 1912, the priest Mera settled in that region and used to spend a lot of his time and energy trying to find ways to expel the diablo from the bodies and lives of people (Agier, 1999, p. 236-237). Because of Mera's focus on demonic presences and the generalised belief that black people and their practices were devilish, the priest used to force black people to throw their marimba instruments into the nearby river named 'Patía Viejo'. Mera would excommunicate people who would not throw away their marimba. People say that this may be the reason why cimarrón-participatory marimba disappeared. Another group of people, however, believe that the priest himself was the diablo. A third group of people say that he was a very nice man and not as white (whiteness understood as a representation of the violence of colonizers) but more like a 'mulatto' (mixture of



black and white people ancestry). Moreover, according to a biography of the priest Mera, by another priest named Garrido, he was a descendant of an enslaved person (Garrido, 1980 in Agier, 1999, p. 35). Some people thought that Mera was a kind of saint who did not touch the ground while walking (Agier, 1999, p. 237). This last group of people state that the Marimba did not disappear because of the priest but because of the arrival of the 'vitrola' (a type of record player) to the region. They also state that the diablo was not the enemy of the Marimberos but his teacher (Agier, 1999, p. 229).

Another important group of collective memories highlights the existence of an Afro-Colombian named Francisco Saya, who was a Marimbero Cimarrón that lived near the Chagui River, located in the northern part of Tumaco. Saya lived there from his birth in 1913 until his death in 1983. People said that Saya got his marimba from the Chagui River. This was possible because when the priest Mera forced people from Tumaco to throw their marimbas in the river nearby, one of those instruments was dragged by the current to the Chagui River and was found years later by Saya (Agier, 2002, p. 307). It is believed that Francisco Saya won a battle with the diablo through playing the National Hymn on the marimba he got from the river (Agier, 2002, p. 304-309). Thus, some people think that Francisco Saya proved to be stronger than the diablo and better than the priest Mera since he managed to do what the priest could not do, namely, get rid of the diablo (Agier, 2002, p. 307).

Some of the aforementioned collective memories around Marimba, the Church and the diablo were theatrically represented to produce the event of 'La Llegada de la Marimba'. The theatrical piece was constructed with a marimba

instrument and a few characters: a horned one dressed in red representing the diablo; a 'whiteface' one with a bishop's mitre that walked among people while burning incense that represented the priest Jesús María Mera, and therefore, incarnated the power of the Catholic church; and a third one that represented Francisco Saya. During the performance, a satirical battle between the diablo and the Marimbero was depicted behind the back of the priest who did not seem to realise it (Agier, 2002, p. 305, Agier, 1999, p. 227). Based in information gathered through some of the collective memories of the area, in the presentational event, Francisco Saya won the battle with the diablo.

Interestingly, the effects of this theatrical piece could immediately be observed in the carnival itself. Agier narrates how locals symbolically transferred the re-introduced collective memories from the 'fictional' presentational event of the carnival to a kind of liminal space created during the contest of the carnival queen. In this contest, an old Marimbero Cimarrón who was attending the event suddenly decided to play the National Hymn on his marimba (Agier, 1999, p. 228). According to the area's collective memories, Francisco Saya's performance of the National Hymn on the marimba was what made him defeat the diablo. Therefore, playing the National Hymn on the marimba was a way to demonstrate the pride that Afro-descendants of the area felt about their victories through their historical strategies of resistance and re-existence.

The performance 'El Retorno de la Marimba' works as a viable and clear example of a successful attempt to include collective memories of resistance and re-existence beyond sound and movement systems in a public representation. Similarly,

collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota could be incorporated in presentational representations. Specifically, the collective memories that have been gathered in this thesis theoretically and sonically could become part of a presentational performance as a soundtrack or as the main part of an art installation.

Throughout this thesis, I have developed in detail my proposal for counter-representing public representations of Marimba and Bomba based on the ch'ixi questioning of coloniality and the exposure of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories. In the conclusion, I summarize the contributions of this work and offer future practical and theoretical possibilities.

## Conclusions and further research

*Nuestros abuelos amaban la magia de la palabra.  
Por eso, en los espacios ‘Casa Adentro’<sup>111</sup>,  
hablen con sus propias voces.  
Los ancestros mandan a abrir el corazón  
y dejar que sus palabras fluyan  
para convertirnos en dueños  
y guardianes de su magia y poder.  
Según la tradición que heredamos,  
toda hechicería es hechicería de la palabra,  
es conjuración y encantamiento,  
bendición y maldición.  
Mediante la palabra,  
el hombre impone su dominio sobre las cosas,  
porque la palabra misma es fuerza.  
Quien ordena las cosas con la fuerza de su palabra,  
hace magia,  
porque los que murieron ayer están ahora y aquí,  
la voz de los guardianes de la tradición no se va...*

(García Salazar in García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, p. 29,103-104,143,172).<sup>112</sup>

In this thesis, the relevance of collective memories embedded in Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ voices has been central. I argue that although the sole

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<sup>111</sup> For the Afro-Ecuadorian historian and storyteller Juan García Salazar (2017, p. 10), whereas ‘Casa Afuera’ (Outside Home) refers to the group of Afroecuadorian codes that are useful for dialoguing with non-Afro-Ecuadorians, who have other codes or versions of the world, ‘Casa Adentro’ (Inside Home) refers to the ancient law that demands the creation of ways of transferring knowledges from old to new generations of Afro-Ecuadorians as a tool to build and strengthen a sense of belonging, comprehension and involvement among new generations distanced from their own past -collective memory and elders- because of modernity and technology (García Salazar & Walsh, 2017, pp. 19, 103; Walsh & García Salazar, 2015, p. 82).

<sup>112</sup> I was planning to work with the renowned historian, militant, storyteller and Marimbero Cimarrón Juan García Salazar during my fieldwork from October 2017. However, he passed away unexpectedly on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Although we had engaged in deep discussions in previous years, we never had the chance to talk about his thoughts on the counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba. Thus, I chose to put together some extracts of his last book to build up a conclusion about what I believe he would have told me. Translation: Our grandparents loved the magic of words; this is why, in the spaces Inside Home, you should speak with your own voices. The ancestors ask us to open our hearts and let their words come to become owners and guards of their magic and power. According to the tradition we inherited, every witchcraft is witchcraft of the word, is spell and invocation, blessing and curse. Through the word, the human being imposes his power over things, because the word itself is strength. He who orders things with the strength of words does magic. Because those who died yesterday are here and now, the guardians of tradition are not going anywhere.

existence of these collective memories already questions public representations, the ‘magical imposition’ mentioned by García Salazar in the epigraph, takes place in the development of a counter-representation of widespread racialised events of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. In this chapter, I summarize the contributions of this thesis, to then suggest its expected impact. Finally, I propose some alternatives for further research.

### **Contributing to the process of the decolonisation of public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

This thesis has been underpinned by ten years of a diversity of experiences that began while performing, laughing, eating and talking with villagers from the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories and that then extended to a myriad of encounters with academics, activists and performers with similar approaches in different parts of the world. These experiences shaped the *relación de escucha* I could develop with a group of expert Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones whose life and experiences constitute the basis of the thesis. The central focus has been to propose a counter-representation of public representations of Marimba and Bomba. The proposed counter-representation was developed to contribute to the active incorporation of specific collective memories in public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, which otherwise are just passively kept in a limited number of archives or remembered by just a handful of people. Moreover, the exposure of collective memories that talk about the dynamic role of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones in shaping their own history is a contribution to the

acknowledgement of a group of experiences that are literally or symbolically ignored through, for instance, reducing Marimba and Bomba to a fixed, a-historical and repetitive set of sounds and steps.

The chosen collective memories evoke some of the effects of coloniality, and thus are rooted in experiences of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond sound and movement systems and throughout slavery and post-slavery in Ecuador. Importantly, their incorporation has been made not just through written research, but also through three research-based sonic compositions that could potentially form part of public events of Marimba and Bomba and therefore be more widely disseminated. Thus, this thesis hopes to contribute to the exposure of hidden Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories in order to have a deeper understanding of Marimba and Bomba beyond racialised representations.

Based on the notion of collective memories understood as experiences passed from old to new generations throughout time, I have argued that Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota do not refer solely to the collective memories directly related to the performance of the music genre, dance and instrument that carry their name. Marimba and Bomba are also related to other collective memories that have to do with specific ways of relating among participants, such as hip interactions or their relation to mythical characters such as the duende or the diablo. Also, there are those collective memories related to specific events that have shaped the development of these music and dance-events, such as the various bannings of Marimba Esmeraldeña. These other collective memories are expressed orally or through the body as a result of the performance of the three integral elements named

as marimba or bomba; the instrument (drum of bomb and xylophone-type instrument of marimba), the dance and the music genre. Importantly, some performances of Marimba and Bomba are disengaged from collective memories other than some of the ones related to their sounds and movements. Many of those performances have been transformed into racialised spectacles to entertain a specific audience.

Working against racialised representations, in this thesis I have paid particular attention to the shared origin of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. Marimba and Bomba were created during the Atlantic slavery period (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century) by Afro-Ecuadorians from each of the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, north Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira. Through the analysis of archival information and the gathering of collective memories, it is clear that during Atlantic slavery, a tendency to reject and control some events of Marimba and Bomba arose because these events constituted temporary although recurrent strategies of ‘cimarronaje’ (maroonage). Within the context of this research, Marimba and Bomba as strategies of ‘cimarronaje’ refer to the ability of some Marimberos and Bomberos to resist, and re-exist beyond the control they were being subsumed into during bondage through the creation of intimate and even hidden collective practices that had a transformative and renovating effect. Here, it has been suggested that Marimba and Bomba as intimate practices of cimarronaje continued to be performed even after Atlantic slavery. The survival of Marimba and Bomba as practices of cimarronaje has been possible since these have been handed down from old to new generations by means of the transference of collective memories that include but go beyond their sound and movement system.

Based on the type of relationship between participants in events of Marimba and Bomba, their relation to collective memories and their character of public or intimate and official or unofficial, I have categorised them into cimarrón-participatory, show-presentational and folk-presentational events. Likewise, based on the recurrence of each category, I have divided the development of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota into three periods: cimarrón-participatory, threshold and presentational period. When the participants of an event own a sense of communicative competence and intimacy, I have named it a cimarrón-participatory event. As a consequence, the participants of a cimarrón-participatory event have been named here as Marimberos Cimarrones or Bomberos Cimarrones. By communicative competence, I refer to the participants' relation to collective memories of Marimba and Bomba that go beyond their sound and movement system and to their choice to express this relation through for example, the verbalization of their relation to the diablo or duende in songs and testimonies, their memories related to the banning of Marimba and specific hip interactions. As for intimacy, it refers to performing Marimba and Bomba among participants with communicative competence.

In contrast, when participants lack communicative competence and are part of public rather than intimate events, in other words, events that include participants that do not necessarily have communicative competence, I have called them show-presentational and folk-presentational events. It must be noted that these last two categories are at present the most widespread events of Marimba and Bomba. In both show-presentational and folk-presentational events, there is a distinction between



'performers' and the audience. Also, in these two categories of events, performers usually present a public and racialised product to be offered to an audience as a means of entertainment. The main difference between these two is that whereas in a show-presentational performance most participants, performers and the audience included, are actively contributing by singing or dancing, in folk-presentational performances the audience is usually not actively participating. Another critical difference is that an external control has historically influenced folk-presentational performances. From Ecuador's independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, this refers to the ways in which official governmental institutions impose a colonial discourse on the performances of Bomba and Marimba. Through this colonial discourse, Marimberos and Bomberos are overtly portrayed as naturally happy and implicitly portrayed as hyper-sexual people. Importantly, this governmental control is rooted in colonial experiences in which the slaver and afterwards the patrón played a similar role to the current government. On the other hand, show-presentational performances have been unofficially developed as public performances that separate themselves from the official notion of a national identity through the overt representation of the supposed Afro-Ecuadorians' hyper-sexuality. Here I am referring for example to Marimba-based fusions of Reggaeton and Bomba-based fusions of Tecnocumbia.

As for the recurrence of each category of performance of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota throughout history, from the Atlantic slavery period until the 1960s and 1980s respectively, the events that were most often performed were cimarrón-participatory events. Presentational events were only occasionally performed when, for instance, the slave owner wanted to entertain himself, his family or his guests. The period when cimarrón-participatory

performances were at their peak has been named in this thesis ‘cimarrón-participatory period’. During the early 1960s for Marimba, and from the 1980s until the current day for Bomba, cimarrón-participatory and presentational events were more or less equally recurrent. This period has been named the ‘threshold period’. Whereas Bomba del Chota appears to still be in its threshold period, during the 1960s, cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña disappeared. Thus, in this thesis I argue that Marimba Esmeraldeña has moved to a period where all its events fall into the category of presentational. This period has been named the ‘presentational period’. Importantly, the temporal classification (cimarrón-participatory, threshold and presentational period) and the one based on specific characteristics (cimarrón-participatory, folk-presentational, show-presentational), constitute an innovative contribution developed specifically for the re-organisation of existing knowledge of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.

Since many presentational versions, although originated from cimarrón-participatory events, have historically excluded the detailed expression of most collective memories that go beyond sound and movement systems, a central question for this research has been how representation as a product, by which I mean as a public event, might render audible some of the differentiated collective memories of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. The understanding of coloniality as the articulation of power that has existed since the colonial period, and of a racialised colonial difference that has located ‘black people’s’ Marimba and Bomba in the lowest rung of hierarchy in relation to the performances of white, mestizo or Indigenous-Ecuadorian people throughout history, has been crucial to answering this question critically. Moreover, following Haraway

(1988), this question has been answered by prioritising the “partial sight and limited voices” (p. 590) of Latinamericanists, including a number of theories and approaches from thinkers that are not so widely known in Anglophone academia such as García Salazar, Albán Achinte and Rivera Cusicanqui. The development of a work that contributes to the broader academic dissemination of ideas and theories written in the Spanish language works as a way of contributing to a wider and more diverse set of epistemological approaches when theorizing about music and dances. This is a method of resisting to, and re-existing outside of, Anglophone and/or global models of theorizing. The inclusion of Hispanophone and Latinamericanist authors has certainly added depths of understanding that are usually not available in Anglophone academia.

The approach to the notion of coloniality within the Ecuadorian context has been especially important. The understanding of the Ecuadorian process of coloniality has allowed the study to comprehend the mechanism of the official rhetoric of pluriculturality and interculturality, which was included in the 1998 and 2008 Ecuadorian Constitutions to supposedly allow Afro-Ecuadorians and Indigenous-Ecuadorians to envision themselves as legitimate members of the Ecuadorian nation. Despite this innovative discursive construct, the dominant paradigm of a colonial mestizaje ideology that has been built based on the denial of Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous-Ecuadorian culture has not fundamentally changed. Until now, Ecuadorian mestizaje, located in the highest hierarchy of the racialised colonial difference, continues to control and impose a colonial perspective on the public representations of Marimba and Bomba, turning them into racialised performances that are generated solely to entertain an audience.

By questioning the colonial difference that shapes the racialised meanings produced and reproduced in presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba, and by privileging some of the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories, a decolonial counter-representation has been proposed. Importantly, it was clear from the beginning that completely decolonising an academic field or, in the case of this research, public representations of Marimba and Bomba, is hardly possible. Thus, in this thesis, the aim has been to “open decolonial rajaduras (openings)” even from colonial roles such as the academic one (Walsh in Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 28). Through the notion of *ch'ixi*, understood as a relational approach of opposite points of view without dissolving them in one, this counter-representation has been divided into two contrasting although related levels. These two levels, which have been established and developed separately, are that of the enunciation and the enunciated. The main aim of the two levels of the proposed counter-representation is not solely to entertain an audience but also to invite them to question widespread public performances (called in this thesis ‘enunciation’) to then introduce them to histories that have been silenced (called in this thesis ‘the enunciated’). Importantly, this decolonial counter-representation has been developed theoretically and also practically through three research-based sonic compositions.

The practical component of this research was developed for it to be used as part of presentational performances or art installations in future projects. It is expected for these research-based sonic-compositions and for the methodology that brought them into existence (*relación de escucha and trueque*) to also be a contribution to the possibility of re-imagining academic research as a site of not just

theoretical questioning but also of practical intervention. Importantly, one of the unique traits of these compositions is that they are almost entirely based on recorded collective memories obtained from testimonies, songs and from the Ecuadorian mass media. Thus, these compositions do not include fictional versions. This last trait is especially important since one of the main objectives of this thesis has been to ‘give voice’ to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones themselves. Furthermore, although the central focus has been the passing on of collective memories through spoken words, the recorded testimonies that are an essential part of the compositions also include other affective sounds such as laughter that are an intrinsic part of their transmission. Importantly, the archive of experts’ insights and testimonies that has been generated for this thesis and that constituted the basis of the developed sonic compositions, can be considered as a contribution in and of itself. Once this thesis is published, the aforementioned archive will be donated to the “Fondo Afro” of the Universidad Andina for it to be available to the public.

The development of the first level of the proposed counter-representation, the level of the enunciation, had as its main aim to demystify presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba as innocent and non-racialised ‘happy performances’ by demonstrating instead that they are still very much contributing to the on-going process of coloniality through a racialised colonial difference. Within this thesis’ level of the enunciation, one research-based sonic composition was developed. In the process of exposing the colonial difference embedded in presentational events of Marimba and Bomba, the understanding that aesthetics, in other words that characteristics related to a universalised and Eurocentric notion of beauty, have ruled most of those events, has been crucial. Although colonial

difference has existed in Ecuador since the colonial period (15<sup>th</sup> century to 1822), the level of enunciation of this research has focused on colonial difference over the last twenty years (1998-2018). The decision to focus specifically on this recent period responds to the fact that most recorded testimonies, and thus, most of the evidence gathered, derived from this period.

During the last two decades, political discourses claiming that the inclusion of terms such as ethnicity are colour-blind, along with policies that defend the validity of presentational performances as the best way of representing Afro-Ecuadorians and the framing of the nation in the political constitution as pluricultural and afterwards, intercultural, have contributed to the belief that the constructed notion of race does not matter anymore and that racial discrimination is just about a few individuals, and is not structural. To contest this belief, an analysis of the most emblematic examples of racism in the last decades in Ecuador and their relation to the racialised meanings performed in folk and show presentational events has been presented. These colonial representations have historically perceived everything related to Afro-Ecuadorians, including Marimba and Bomba, through the lenses of a racialised colonial difference. Thus, the racialised meanings transmitted in presentational events as part of colonial difference have been critically exposed. As an essential part of the level of the enunciation, the ‘voices’ of some Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones were highlighted. That is, voices of people who, on the one hand, contest racialised and a-historical representations of their music and dance-based events and position themselves as part of a specific historical context of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond those events’ sound and movement system. Among other things, they explained their own understanding of happiness.

Through their voices, this group of Marimberos Cimarrones made it evident that a potential liberation from racialised representations is still possible, that is to say, a liberation imagined, recreated and defined collectively.

Subsequently, the level of the enunciated of the decolonial counter-representation of Marimba and Bomba was developed. This level focused on the epistemic decolonisation of the knowledges transferred through specific collective memories related to Marimba and Bomba beyond their sound and movement system. Importantly, aestheSis, in other words, the characteristics related to the local notion of beauty for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, was highlighted at the level of the enunciated. In this research, the level of the enunciated was divided into three sections. In each of them, some of the collective memories of cimarrón-participatory events have been respectfully deconstructed. The first two sections include one research-based sonic composition each, and the third section is purely theoretical. Whereas the first section includes a group of shared collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, the second and the third focus on collective memories exclusively related to Marimba and Bomba, respectively.

The first section of the level of the enunciated is intended to be an exceptionally unique contribution of this research since it constitutes the first known theoretical and practical in-depth exploration into the commonalities between Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. The group of shared collective memories of Marimba and Bomba that were chosen to be part of the written and sonic components of this section are those related to the presence of the diablo or duende in cimarrón-participatory performances. Through collective memories

obtained from testimonies and marimba and bomba's songs, the diablo or duende has been found to be not just a fearless and powerful character as in Judeo-Christian beliefs, but also a playful and astute one with whom Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones would always find a way to negotiate. The vast majority of the collective memories that have been gathered point out the possibility of some Marimberos or Bomberos Cimarrones being stronger, better dancers or musicians and smarter than the diablo or duende. This appropriation of the Judeo-Christian image of an extremely powerful and almost invincible diablo into someone that can potentially be defeated constitutes a clear way of creatively resisting, and re-existing over and beyond the Spanish colonizers' imposed Judeo-Christian beliefs, and even temporarily inverting a colonial power structure.

The second section of the level of the enunciation of this thesis focuses on the process of the gradual disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña. In the research-based sonic composition that belongs to this section, first, some of the Marimberos Cimarrones' testimonies, poetry, literature and music are utilised to produce a narration of how cimarrón-participatory Marimba was performed. Afterwards, a group of collective memories related to some of the official attempts to ban or censor, and thus make cimarrón-participatory Marimba disappear, were prioritised. Although attempts to prohibit cimarrón-participatory Marimba have been documented since colonial times, this section focuses on some of the attempts that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly to the level of the enunciation, the choice to focus on the attempts to ban Marimba from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and not from before lies on the fact that most of the information gathered emanated from that century. Collective memories about the process of extermination of cimarrón-



participatory Marimba were chosen in order to question the widespread belief that the disappearance of these performances responds to a ‘natural process’. This belief constitutes one of the clearest examples of the consequences of the erasure of collective memories (desmemoria or olvido social) as part of coloniality. Therefore, this section constitutes a contribution to the exposure of a group of collective memories that could be potentially utilised as a basis for developing future strategies of resistance and re-existence of Marimba Esmeraldeña beyond the performance of its sound and movement system. As for the third and last section of the level of the enunciated, it focuses on a group of collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Bomba. Specifically, the relation of children to cimarrón-participatory events and a song of bomba that seems to be one of the oldest, is included.

Interestingly, it was found that most of the collective memories gathered related to cimarrón-participatory Bomba were not transmitted orally but through the body. Therefore, there is not a composition specifically focused on some of Bomba’s collective memories, but some of the embodied experiences of Bomberos Cimarrones are explained.

### **Questioning the scope of a decolonial approach in public representations of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota**

A first important point worth considering in any research related to the option of decoloniality is the risk that it might turn into a new form of colonisation within and beyond the academic world. For instance, the risk that decolonial research will ‘colonise’ academic centres or a specific field of knowledge has been

strongly exposed by Rivera Cusicanqui (2012a, pp. 101–102) and Grosfoguel (2011, pp. 102–103, 2015, pp. 39–40). These authors' statements alert us to the importance and coherence of decolonising one's methodologies while theorising about decoloniality through, for example, carefully acknowledging the sources that influenced the production of academic research. Also, Rivera Cusicanqui and Grosfoguel remind us about the fact that building bridges between the academic and non-academic world is not an option but an intrinsic part of a decolonial approach, which should be a praxis as much as a theorisation. In that respect, although Rivera Cusicanqui and Grosfoguel's affirmations have indeed been taken into account in the development of this thesis, as has been stated by Walsh, there is also the risk of limiting the diverse ways in which decolonial research could be developed (Walsh in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 99).

Even when taking into account the importance of being coherent about one's methodological approach and theoretical discourse, the risk of decolonial research being utilised as a colonial tool is inevitable. This risk is related to what has already been stated by Walsh (2007) when she questions, how can we ensure that decolonial knowledges published by academics will not become just another knowledge, an element of folklorization or even worse, a tool for manipulation and political control? (p. 110). Indeed this research, like any other, could be appropriated in ways not necessarily related to the purpose it was developed for. For instance, the research-based sonic compositions included in this work could certainly be manipulated for them to become part of the fixed 'stage decorations' that are typical of most public performances. The loss of the dynamism and deep meaning of the collective memories presented in this work could certainly be considered a new form

of colonisation. However, part of developing a decolonial posture in one's work is to avoid ideological impositions and to allow people (especially Marimberos and Bomberos) to decide by themselves how they want to use this material. Thus, although I consider it essential to personally commit to spreading this thesis further in a way that goes in line with the purpose it was developed for, it is as essential to allow people to appropriate it as they wish afterwards.

As an initial strategy to disseminate this research, the plan is that it will be revised and published in English and Spanish and in a diversity of formats. A variety of formats of publication with different target audiences will allow not just academics but also Marimberos and Bomberos who are not related to the academic world to engage in detail with what is proposed in this research. Following de Sousa Santos' (2010, p. 57) notion of "intercultural translation", understood as a methodological mechanism for intelligibility between cultures, and the need for developing a "deep reciprocity" within academic research as proposed by L. T. Simpson (2013, para. 19), the exposure of this research to more Marimberos and Bomberos will be one of the primary future outcomes of this thesis. As this research has not yet been presented to an audience, intercultural translation has so far been one-sided and is not yet reciprocal. This means that Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories have been explained for the academic 'culture' to understand them. However, for it to be reciprocal, and thus, part of a legitimate trueque, this work still needs to be disseminated amongst Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones other than the ones who directly participated in this research by sharing their knowledge and collective memories. This point is especially important since one of the main critiques that has been made in this thesis in regards to public

representations and the academic world in general is precisely that they seldom take into account the Afro-Ecuadorian communities' thoughts or their financial and social needs but just 'consume' their knowledges without any notion of reciprocity. Therefore, part of the future of this research must be about generating mechanisms (and products) to include, as much as possible, the Afro-Ecuadorian communities from whom much of this thesis' knowledges came.

The wider dissemination of this research can be potentially important for new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos since some of them have demonstrated interest but have no access to most of the collective memories and theoretical and archival information that have been included in this research. For instance, a few young Marimbero and Bombero friends who are based in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, when listening to earlier versions of my research-based sonic compositions, expressed that they felt surprised and even ashamed they did not know many details about Marimba and Bomba. Moreover, there are non-Marimberos and non-Bomberos that are also open and even curious to know about what they intuitively perceive goes beyond the erotic hip movements and never-ending smiles they have been taught Marimba and Bomba is all about. As Walsh states (2010, p. 104), through the whitening process of Ecuador, which denies everything 'black', there are also "mesticismos", which are people who do not want to 'whiten' themselves or others but feel a curiosity and a desire to get to know realities that have historically been silenced.

In this sense, I follow L. T. Smith (2012, pp. 16-17) and Wade (2010a, p. 160) to confirm the need to turn this research into a continuous and long-term

negotiation, trueque and debate with Marimberos and Bomberos and beyond. As L. T. Smith explains in detail (2012), the long-term commitment to the ethical dissemination and management of one's research is part of engaging with a decolonial option:

Sharing knowledge is a long-term commitment... I use the term sharing knowledge and not sharing information because the responsibility of researchers and academics is not simply to share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and analyses, which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented. By taking this approach seriously it is possible to introduce communities and people who may have had little formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think just like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concerns in similar sorts of ways. To assume in advance that people will not be interested in, or will not understand, the deeper issues is arrogant. The challenge is always to demystify, to decolonize (L. T. Smith, 2012, pp. 16-17)

This thesis has been generated based on the fact that a development of a *relación de escucha*, and through it a better understanding of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones' collective memories, as shaped by an on-going process of coloniality, can heal the colonial wound, contribute to the recovery of the *ajayu* or at least connect the audience to a potential healing process and thus, can enlighten decisions about the future of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. For instance, this work aspires to contribute to the reestablishment of some of the broken inter-generational links that are mentioned continuously by some older Marimberos

and Bomberos Cimarrones when they say, ‘Ahora a los jóvenes ya no le importa cómo era antes’ (nowadays young people are not interested in how it used to be before). Conversely, new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos and beyond claim their right not to get stuck in the past and to develop new music and dancing forms and styles. Through the critical exposure of collective memories, which includes practices of violence, resistance and re-existence beyond Marimba’s and Bomba’s sound and movement system, I am confident that my thesis could potentially work as a bridge between these two seemingly opposing points of view. Although this thesis’ focus could be misinterpreted as an attempt at ‘condemning’ new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos to a collective past, it is an invitation to, rather than an imposition on, new generations to be exposed to elements of their collective past and to be allowed the information they need to affect the decisions they all have the right to make. Following Rivera Cusicanqui (1987), this thesis constitutes a contribution “for the past and the present to recover their fluidity” (p. 8).

Specifically, in order to make sure that the compositions developed in this thesis will be useful for Afro-Ecuadorian communities, I will begin to take action one year from this thesis’ completion. First of all, I aim to visit each of the Marimberos and Bomberos that were part of this thesis, to listen with them to the final versions of the three research-based sonic compositions and get their feedback on both the compositions themselves and their ideas on how the material could be useful for them and the rest of Marimberos and Bomberos. Secondly, I will systematize the outcomes of the received feedback and incorporate that feedback which is technically viable. I will also catalogue the feedback I could not incorporate

and their ideas for the material's potential use. Thirdly, within a year from these meetings, I aim to gather with at least three of the folk groups with whom I talked for my PhD thesis, and who, therefore, already know about my work. We will then listen to the compositions and, in case they are interested in them, I will propose the incorporation of one or more of the compositions in their performances. I will also share with them the ideas gathered from the Marimberos and Bomberos that I visited first. Fourthly, I will evaluate the appeal of the material for the audience and decide the next phase, which could be either to tailor these compositions to the folk groups and audience needs or to rethink their usefulness. Sixthly, and parallel to my work with the folk groups, I will gather with local sound artists and members of the new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos to discuss the creation of an "Oral History Sound Installation" to be based on this thesis' compositions and to be presented mainly to Afro-Ecuadorian communities. I aim to create the aforementioned installation within three years of this thesis' completion. Finally, after the presentation of the Oral History Sound Installation, I will upload the improved version of these compositions to the Internet for anyone to use. The release of these compositions will be done through a blog where I aim to explain the research on which these compositions were based.

Essentially, even though much research in 'traditional' performing arts has been developed with the specific aim of 'reviving' music and dances that are in the process of being forgotten, this research was not developed to revive or even strengthen cimarrón-participatory Marimba or Bomba. Moreover, from a decolonial point of view, an attempt at reviving cimarrón-participatory performances would constitute more of an imposition than a choice. This research is, however, a proposal

for academics and Marimberos and Bomberos to be aware of the forces that have violently shaped presentational representations of Marimba and Bomba (the ‘enunciation’) and of the collective memories related to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones (the ‘enunciated’). Through a deeper understanding of the levels of the enunciation and the enunciated, they can potentially develop tools to control and counteract what is questioned in the level of the enunciation and include, re-interpret or re-signify what is part of the level of the enunciated.

Importantly, although this research has proposed the inclusion of collective memories in public performances of Marimba and Bomba, the effect this proposal could have on academics or new generations of Marimberos and Bomberos is yet to be seen. Once this research is made public, it is expected to open up more possibilities of interpretations and appropriations than the ones that were envisaged when developing the thesis. By this is meant that although this research will keep being spread further, there will undoubtedly be many more usages and interpretations than I envisage. Moreover, as has already been argued, this research includes a diversity of ‘voices’. Just as my voice as a researcher and a ‘listener’ is ‘loudest’ in the theoretical part, I have tried for Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ voices to be strongly present in the research-based sonic compositions, not just by including their recorded testimonies and songs but also by allowing the compositions to be affected by their aestheSis.

As part of the process of decolonising public representations of Marimba and Bomba, our ‘voices’ - Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and mine- should be appropriated, diluted and transformed (ideally by or in conversation with



Marimberos and Bomberos) into new ways of understanding what has been gathered in this research. This could be done through, for instance, incorporating in the current research-based sonic compositions the sounds of other collective memories that were not included in this thesis, or even incorporating embodied experiences through visuals or other sensorial devices. Similar to Baucom's (2005) affirmation relating to a specific case where official written documents were the only physical trace left for the murder of a group of enslaved people in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and that made him affirm that "the text guards its secrets even as it demands that we listen to them over and over again" (p. 133), this research brings together a few of the already scarce tangible traces left of specific collective memories related to Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones.<sup>113</sup> Thus, new secrets, meanings and usages (decolonial and not) can be discovered through engaging over and over with the information presented here.

### **Further research**

As has already been stated, this research hopes to contribute to a decolonial perspective on public representations of Marimba and Bomba. During the development of the work, new interdisciplinary paths to develop this research further have become clear. The most relevant one would undoubtedly be a detailed analysis of the relation between the process of weakening of cimarrón-participatory performances of Marimba and Bomba and the environmental deterioration that the

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<sup>113</sup> Baucom is specifically referring to the 'Zong Massacre' where the crew of the British slave ship Zong murdered 133 enslaved people in order to claim the insurance.

two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, north Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira, have historically faced. This type of interdisciplinary research is relevant since, although throughout this thesis it has become clear the central role of ‘race’ in the on-going process of coloniality, as Wolfe has stated (2006, p. 388), ‘colonizers<sup>114</sup>’ have as their primary motive access to territory. Colonizers’ methods of accessing territory are in line with what has been named by Walsh (2007, pp. 106–107), as the “coloniality of nature”, of which the environmental degradation of the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories is clearly part. According to Walsh, coloniality of nature refers to the binary Cartesian division between nature and society that does not take into account the ancestral relation between beings, including human beings, plants and animals and also spiritual beings and ancestors.

Moreover, within the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, there is a precise parallelism between how knowledge and land are treated. As is mentioned by Lapierre Robles and Macías Marín (2018, p. 15) in relation to natural resources, and by Rivera Cusicanqui (2015, p. 89) in relation to knowledge production, territories such as the Afro-Ecuadorians’ ones have mainly been used as the source of extraction of ‘raw material’ (from gold and oil to ancestral knowledges) in order to be exported and subsequently re-imported as ‘refined’ products. Of course, in this extraction the intrinsic relationship between the preservation of the territory and the production and reproduction of knowledges and natural resources is not taken into account. The urgency of this kind of research is pressing since, from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the environmental destruction of Esmeraldas and Chota-Mira has intensified on a

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<sup>114</sup> Here I include in the notion of ‘colonizers’ not just Spanish colonizers from the colonial period but also transnational companies that have bought large pieces of land in Ecuador and that are certainly part of a phenomenon of neo-colonialism.

much faster scale.<sup>115</sup> This rapid deterioration is mainly due to the violent introduction of the mining industry through transnational companies in north Esmeraldas and the excessive usage of pesticides in the crops of Chota-Mira. This severe environmental degradation has had devastating consequences for the quality of life of the inhabitants of these areas, which includes deterioration of their living quality and thus, their ability to keep producing and reproducing their collective memories.

Some of the diverse consequences of environmental pollution of these territories were personally experienced during my stay in these territories in 2018. Villagers from a few communities located on the banks of the Cayapas river (north Esmeraldas) told me they could not eat the fish from the river anymore because it made them sick. Also, it is essential to remember that the materials needed to create the instruments of the music genres of marimba and bomba come mainly from their ancestral territories. The Marimberos Cimarrones Remberto Escobar Quiñónez (1997, p. 48) from Esmeraldas city and Don Nacho Caicedo (personal communication, 2018) from the community of Telembí mentioned another example of the relation between nature and Marimba Esmeraldeña. Both shared that they used to tune the marimba through the song of a bird that lived in the jungle called ‘the marimbero’. Don Nacho also told me that he does not hear that bird any more.

I can also recall a long conversation I had in 2012 with a Bombero Cimarrón from the Afro-Choteño community of Chalgayacu. He was narrating one of his

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<sup>115</sup> For an excellent and contextual analysis of the environmental history of Esmeraldas, see Lapierre Robles and Macías Marín (2018). For a detailed explanation of the relation between the land and knowledge, see García Salazar (2011; 2017).

encounters with a duende and mentioned that he thinks they are not around anymore. When I asked him why he thinks they disappeared, he replied that he thinks it is because duendes are creatures that used to live in the uninhabited part or 'el monte' (the mountains) when it was not so full of crops and polluted land and before electricity arrived, so it always used to be silent and dark. However, he said, nowadays, even in the farthest point of the mountain, the lights of communities, the sounds from the parties and the polluted air can reach up there, so the duendes do not feel comfortable there anymore. 'I am sure they have already left', he said. Similarly, when in 2013 I talked with one of the last Afro-Choteño 'Animero' (carers of the 'ánimas' or souls of villagers who have passed away) from the community of Caldera (Chota-Mira Valley), he affirmed that the 'ánimas' are running away from the light, noise and pollution that did not exist decades ago.

The radical environmental degradation of the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories has been exacerbated since some state policies have prioritised an idea of 'progress' and financial gain over environmental protection. For instance, the 'Ley Minera' (Mining Law), which was approved by the Ecuadorian government in 2009, opened up the possibility of large scale mining by transnational companies and thus marked a much more radical time for the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories and beyond which had already suffered environmental degradation. This is clearly part of coloniality. As has been stated by Liboiron (2018), the entitlement to exploit land with a high risk of polluting rivers and air is a direct consequence of colonialism or a new form of it. Since the environmental crisis that is rapidly evolving in these two territories has already been studied, the critical relationship between protecting Afro-Ecuadorians' collective memories and knowledges and protecting the territory

urgently needs more detailed research.

Also, although the current research constitutes an important step towards a deeper understanding of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, one of the most relevant questions for the vast majority Afro-Ecuadorians with whom I have talked remains unanswered. A study of the relationship between Marimba and Bomba to performing arts in West Africa in order to trace possible West African components needs to be done. This study is especially important since it is what many Afro-Ecuadorians want the most: to find out an exact origin for their African ancestors. Such studies would constitute plausible initiatives since similar research has already been successfully done. For instance, the research and documentary ‘They are We’ managed to achieve precisely this: the identification of the common lineage of the Ganga-Longoba between the people of Perico (Cuba) and relatives in their ancestral home of Mokpangumba in Sierra Leone despite hundreds of years of severance by the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, this link was done through some songs and dances that were still remembered by these two groups. A similar example can be found with the members of the Temne nation in Africa and its connection with the Temnes from the tiny island of Carriacou in Grenada (GIS-Grenada, 2016). An intensive project held from 2011 revealed that the Temnes in Carriacou still practice a group of song, dances, chants and drums routines that are very similar to those practiced by the Temnes in Sierra Leone (Martin, Opala, & Schmidt, 2016). In both cases, members of the two groups were eager to reunite with each other. Possible connections between some of the collective memories of Afro-Ecuadorian Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones and West African people groups

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<sup>116</sup> The full documentary is available online here <http://theyarewe.com/>.

could certainly help to reveal ancestors and collective memories held in common.

More specific future research related to this thesis would be first, the development of a practical work of cimarrón-participatory Bomba. As has already been mentioned, a composition was not developed in this thesis since most of the collective memories that were gathered about Bomba were non-semantic. Thus, a composition or any other creative strategies to “engage with the bodies making, doing, or simply just making do” (Blanco Borelli, 2014, p. 67) is needed. Second, research related to a detailed understanding of the intersectionality of race, class and gender in Marimba and Bomba is relevant. Although this thesis has focused on the role of ‘race’ and has mentioned class and gender, an in-depth analysis of the roles of class and gender have been beyond the scope of this work and thus, would need further research.

This thesis constitutes a path that can light the way to thinking and feeling - remembering- differently about Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota, despite the continuous structural attempts of collective forgetfulness. Thus, I would like to close this thesis with one of Rivera Cusicanqui’s strongest statements, made during a lengthy conversation with de Sousa Santos (2015). Rivera Cusicanqui affirmed that “Nada es irreversible” (nothing is irreversible; p. 107). Rivera Cusicanqui’s statement is related to García-Salazar’s reminder of the fact that “the guardians of the tradition [this thesis’ Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones] are not going anywhere”, with which this chapter began. In spite of the continuous and structural attempts to erase and ignore the collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba and that go beyond its sound and movement

system, one sees all over the world a permanent process of reinvention, not in order to go back to the past but to regenerate the path that connects with it. This thesis constitutes, indeed, a contribution to that permanent reinvention. I am confident that we still have time, although perhaps not so long, to 'fight' for the recovery of our memories.

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# Figures.

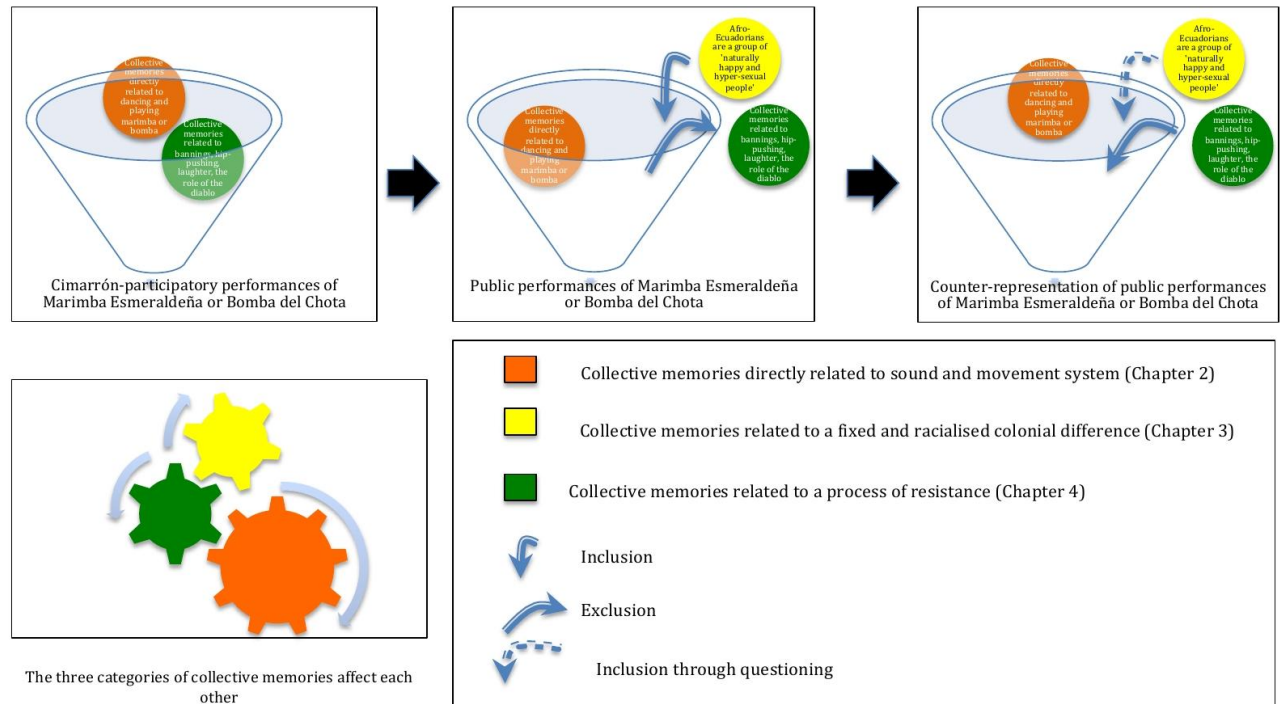
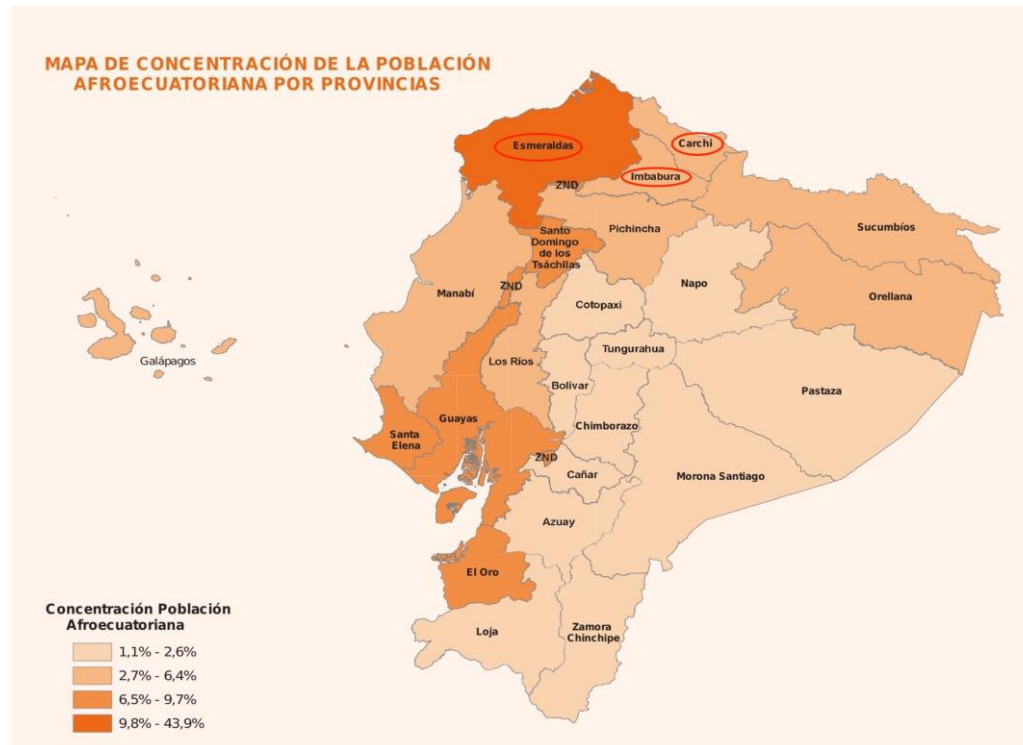


Figure 1. Thesis Scheme

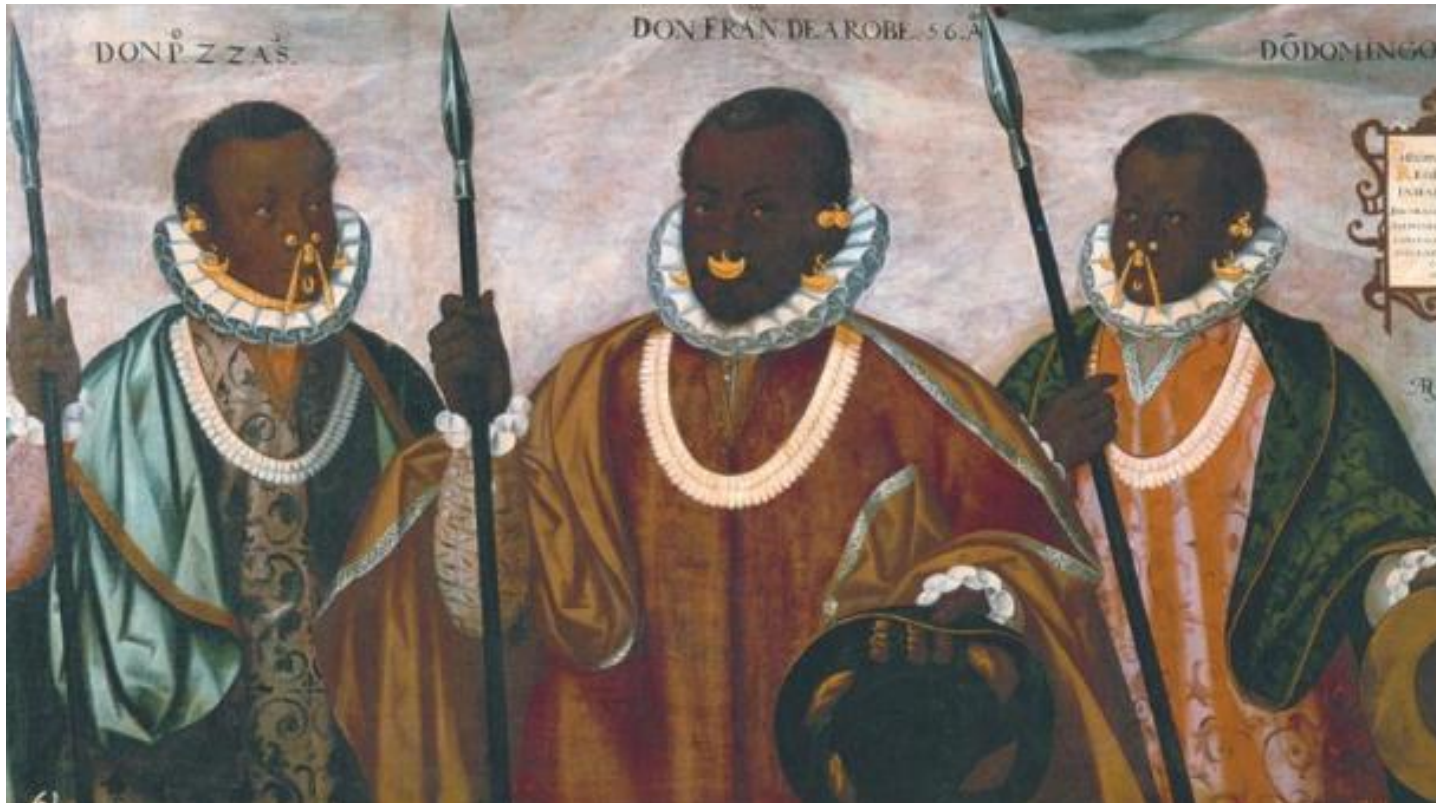


**Figure 2. Location of Ecuador** (File:ECUOrthographic.svg, 2017).



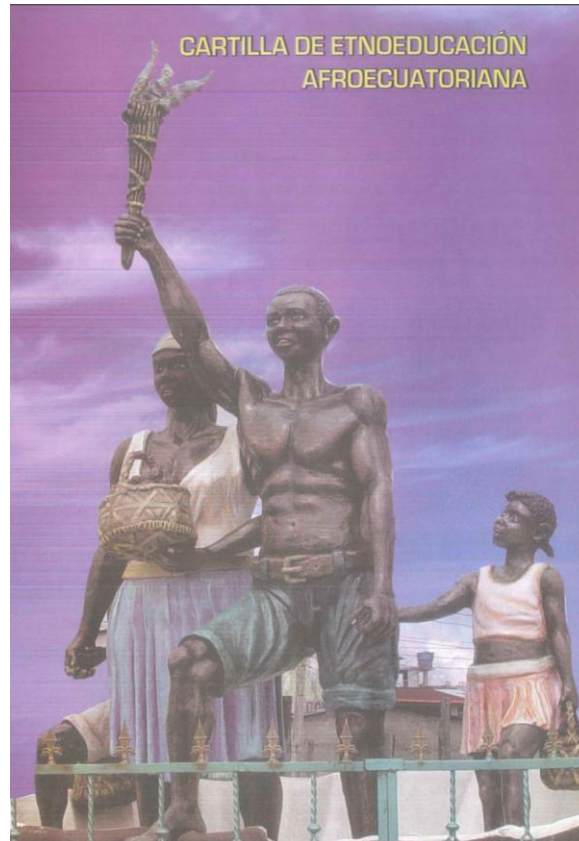
**Figure 3. Fieldwork map by provinces.** The three provinces that are included in this research, Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Carchi, are enclosed in red circles. The map also shows the different ranges of concentration of Afro-Ecuadorian population by province (Source: CODAE, CODEMPE, CODEPMOC, 2010, p.15).



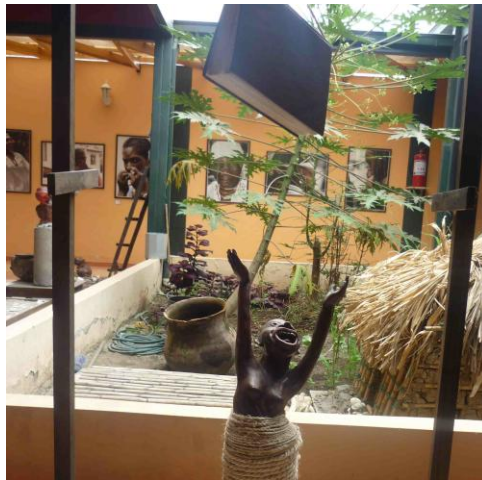


**Figure 5. Leaders from the Black people Comarca (also known as Zambo Republic).** Portrait painted by Adrián Sánchez in 1599. It shows a group of Afro-Esmeraldeño who held a meeting with the political powers of the time and strategically agreed to give peace and obedience to the King of Spain. Sánchez was ordered to paint this portrait precisely to be sent to the King to prove that the pacification of Esmeraldas was finally happening (Navarro, 1929, pp. 449 - 474).





**Figure 6.** Cover of one of the ‘*Cartillas de etnoeducación Afroecuatoriana*’ (Textbook of Afroecuadorian ethno-education). This and other textbooks were developed as part of the Afroecuatorians-led project of ethno-education (García Salazar & Balda, 2012).



**Figure 7. Artwork about the lack of access to a good quality education for most Afro-Choteños.** Photographs taken by me during an exhibition of the Afro-Choteño artist Alicia Villalba, which took place in the Afro-Choteño community of Juncal in 2012.

AAT	North Esmeraldas				Chota-Mira river basin			
Province	Esmeraldas				Imbabura	Carchi		
Canton	Esmeraldas	Quinindé	Eloy Alfaro	San Lorenzo	Ibarra	Pimampiro	Mira	Bolivar
Communities/cities	Esmeraldas city	Quinindé city	Communities of Telembí and Playa de Oro, Borbón city	San Lorenzo city	Communities of Chota, Juncal, Salinas, Carpuela and Palo Amarillo, Ibarra city	Community of Chalguayacu	Communities of Santa Ana, Concepción, Mascarilla, Estación Carchi and San Juan de Lachas	Communities of Pusir and Tumbatú
Marimberos/as and Bomberos/as cimarrones/as included in this thesis	<b>Marimberos/as cimarrones/as</b>				<b>Bomberos/as cimarrones/as</b>			
	Agustín Ramón San Martín, Alberto Castillo, Edgardo Prado, Galo Rivera, Juan Montaña Escobar, Larry Preciado, Pablo Minda, Petita Palma, Rosa Huila Xavier Vera Cooke and Katya Ubidia	Jalisco Gonzales †	Camilo Arana, Catalina Ortiz, Marimba group 'Los Embajadores de Telembí', Maura Medina and Nacho Caicedo (Telembí); Juan García † (Playa de Oro) and Papá Roncón (Borbón)	Numas Ramírez †	Zoila Espinoza †, Eudocia Chalá and Urceino Carcelén (Chota), Cristobal Barahona and Diego Palacios (Juncal), Iván Pabón (Carpuela), Jesús Minda (Palo Amarillo), Amaru Quelal (Ibarra)	Margarita Rosa Helena, María Magdalena † and Gloria Pabón Julius	Gualberto Espinoza (Santa Ana); Paulo Ayala (Estación Carchi); Plutarco Viveros (Mascarilla); Ezequiel Sevilla (San Juan de Lachas)	Belermína Congo and Teodoro Méndez (Tumbatú); Alejandro Congo (Pusir); María Minda (Tumbatú)

**Figure 8. Fieldwork map and participants by canton, city and community.** It shows the exact location of the visited provinces, cantons, communities and cities from the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories. Maps' source: INEC (2010). The abbreviation AAT means Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory. The symbol † indicates that the person passed away while this research was being developed.

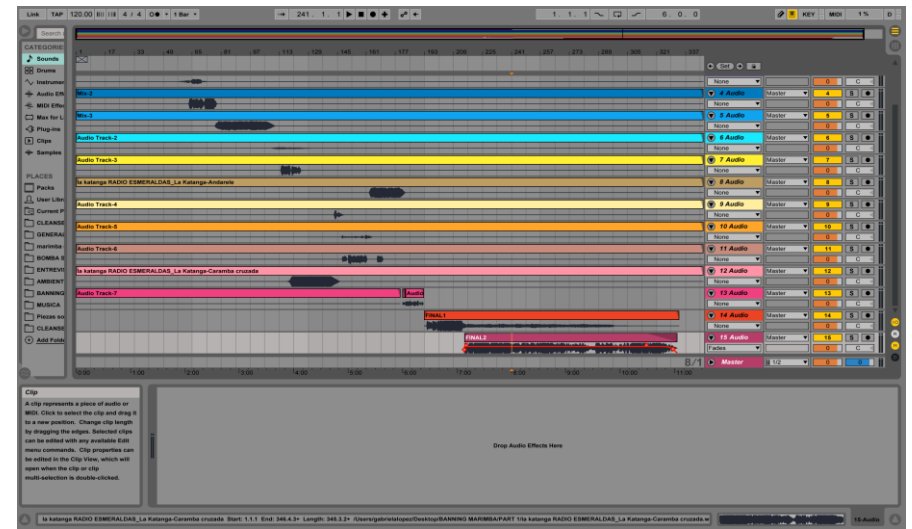
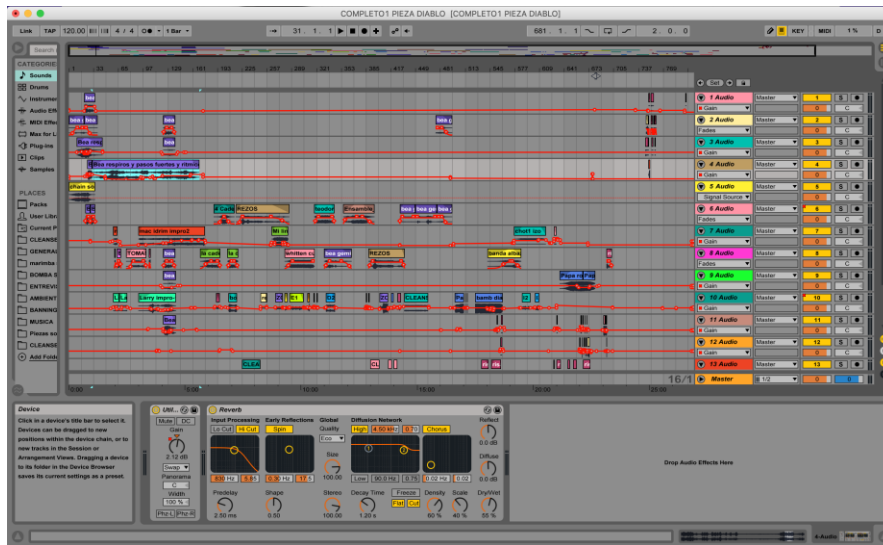
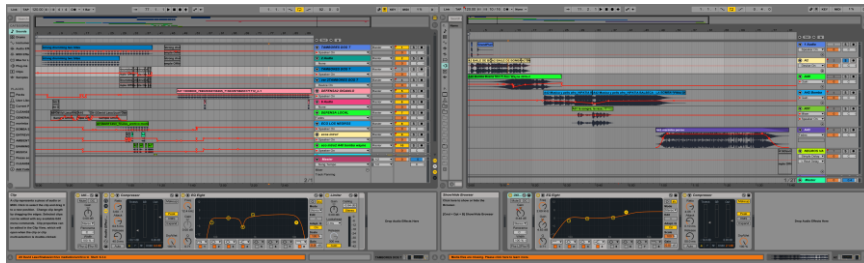
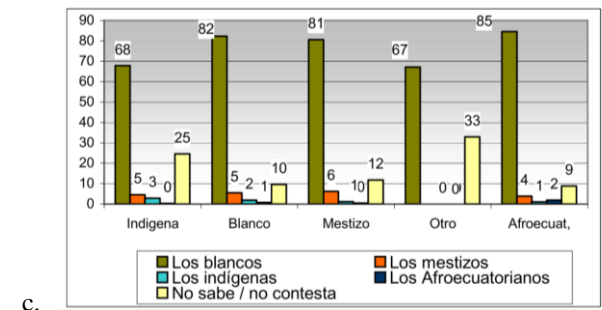
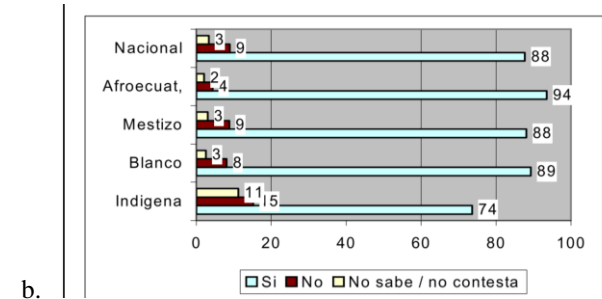
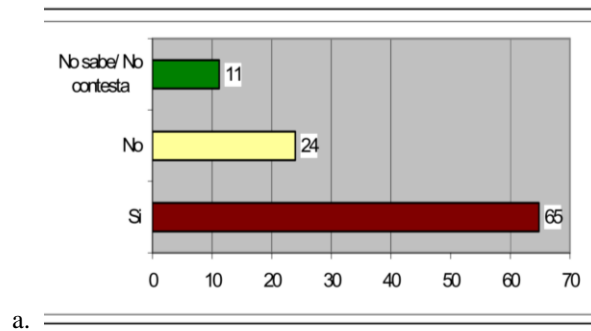
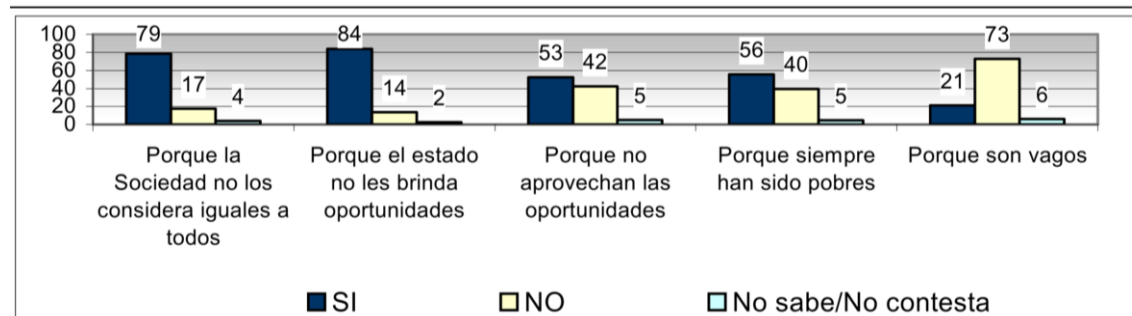


Figure 9. Process of creating and editing of the three research-based sonic compositions. Photo shots of the process of editing of the compositions in Ableton Live.



**Figure 10. Racism in Ecuador.** Results of the National Survey about racism and racial discrimination in Ecuador (STFS, SIISE e INEC, 2005). The survey demonstrates that most Ecuadorians think that the majority of citizens are racist (p. 8; a. Question: do you think Ecuadorians are racist? 65% of interviewees replied 'sí'; yes). This racism is reflected in the ill treatment Afro-Ecuadorians receive because of pejorative cultural assumptions (pp. 20-21; b. Question: Do Afro-Ecuadorians suffer from racism in Ecuador? An average of 83.7% of the non-Afro-Ecuadorian -white, Indigenous-Ecuadorian and mestizo people- and 94% of the Afro-Ecuadorian surveyed people said 'sí'). Racism and thus, the quality of personal treatment in Ecuador, are mainly related to the skin colour (pp. 27-28, 34; c. 52% of the total of people surveyed and 60% of Afro-Ecuadorians think that the quality of personal treatment depends on the skin colour).



**Figure 11. Reasons why Ecuadorians think Afro-Ecuadorians are the poorest members of society.** Results of the National Survey about racism and racial discrimination in Ecuador (STFS, SIISE, & INEC, 2005, p. 34). From left to right: ‘Because society does not consider everyone equally’; ‘Because the government does not give them opportunities’; ‘Because they do not take advantage of opportunities’; ‘Because they have always been poor’; ‘Because they are lazy’. Blue colour means ‘yes’, yellow colour means ‘no’ and light blue colour means ‘does not know or does not answer’. The results show that more than a half of Ecuadorians still think that many Afro-Ecuadorians are the poorest either because ‘they do not take advantage of opportunities’ or because ‘they have always been poor’



a.



b.



c.

d.

Ritmo/baile Ecuatoriano Andino - Bombas del Chota.Marimba Ecuatoriana,

99,477 vistas 139 15 COMPARTIR GUARDAR ...

SUSCRITO 87

Carmen Edith Freeze believes that dance and music is universal and unites all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and age. PACHACAMAC FOLK is inspired by art and culture, nurtured by the generous human spirit, and bonded by love. PACHACAMAC represent the universal language of the heart and knows no borders.

Five years ago, women of various ethnic and national origins,including Bulgaria, Colombia, Ecuador, France,Italy, Mexico, Mongolia/Puerto Rico, the Philippines,Romania, Turkey, and the United States, came together to form PACHACAMAC FOLK, an Ecuadorian dance group directed by Carmen Edith Freeze. Carmen Edith created the group to honor her family and ancestors traditions and to promote multiculturalism and the empowerment of women

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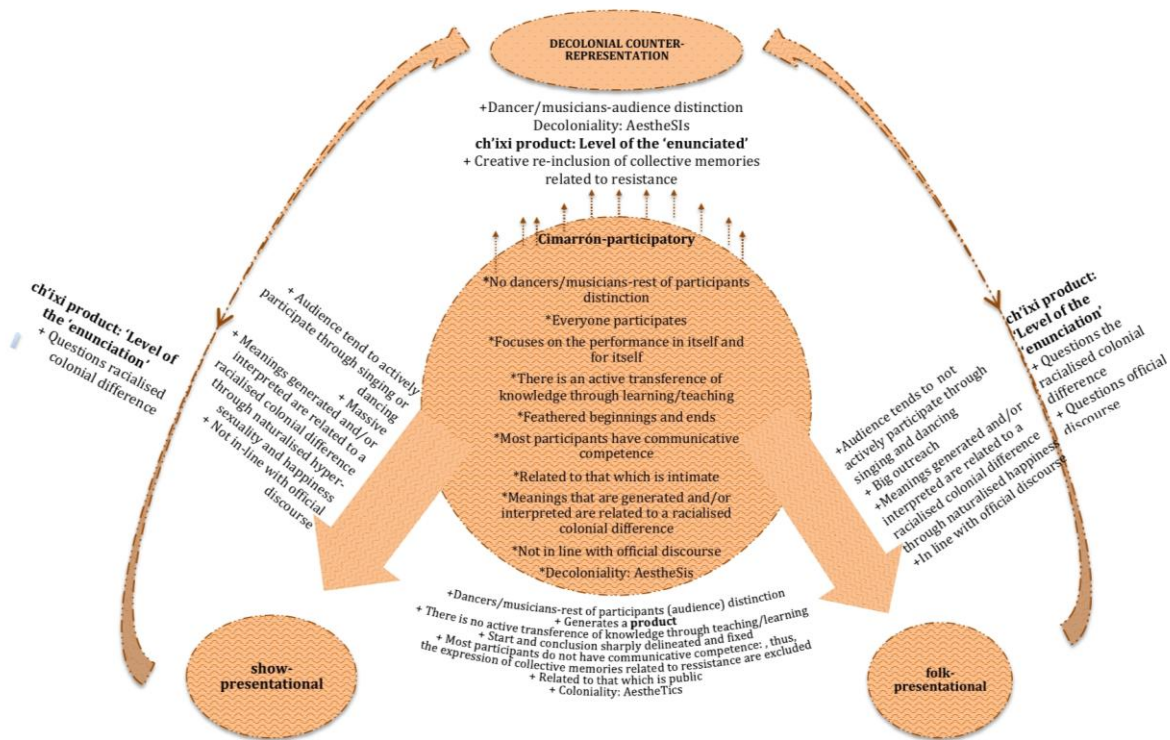
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**Figure 12. Hyper-sexualisation in a choreography of Bomba del Chota** (Freeze, 2011). In a, b and c, it is shown the costumes the dancers chose to wear (short skirts and blouses) and the hyper-sexual way of performing the dancing steps, which resulted in representing the Bomberos through the lens of a racialised colonial difference, in other words, as a group of happy and hyper-sexual people. In the written explanation of the uploaded video (d), the choreographer wrote that she believes that music and dance are a universal language that can unite people with different backgrounds.

#	Cimarrón-participatory	Show-presentational	Folk-presentational	Counter-representation
1	No dancers/musicians-rest of participants distinction	Dancers/musicians-rest of participants (audience) distinction		Dancers/musicians- rest of participants (audience) distinction
2	Everyone participates	Audience tends to actively participate through dancing or singing	Audience tends to not actively participate	---
3	Non-massive	Massive	Big outreach	---
4	Focuses on the performance in and for itself	Generates a product		Generates a ch'ixi product
5	There is an active transference of knowledge through teaching/learning	There is no active transference of knowledge through teaching/learning		---
6	Feathered beginnings and ends	Start and conclusion are sharply delineated and fixed		---
7	Most participants have communicative competence, thus, the expression of collective memories related to resistance are included	Most participants do not have communicative competence, thus, the expression of collective memories related to resistance are excluded		Creative re-inclusion of collective memories related to resistance (Level of the enunciated)
8	Not in-line with official discourse		In-line with official discourse	Questions official discourse
9	Related to that which is intimate	Related to that which is public		---
10	Meanings generated and/or interpreted are not related to racialised colonial difference	Meanings generated and/or interpreted are related to racialised colonial difference through naturalised hyper-sexuality and happiness	Meanings generated and/or interpreted are related to racialised colonial difference through naturalised happiness	Meanings generated and/or interpreted question the racialised colonial difference (Level of the enunciation)
11	Decoloniality: AestheSis	Coloniality: AestheTics		Decoloniality: AestheSis

**Figure 13. Comparative table of the four proposed categories of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.** The characteristic #7 is highlighted because it is the one that is more widely addressed in this thesis. The characteristics of the category of counter-representation that are dashed represent that it could potentially be any of the two options. The dashed borders of the table indicates the non-fixity of each of the proposed categories or characteristics and the in-betweenness of some performances, which can have mixed characteristics from more than one category. For instance, cimarrón-participatory Bomba, during its threshold period, does not comply with the characteristic #1, however it is still considered cimarrón-participatory since it complies with all the rest (See Chapter Two). Similarly, Marimberos and Bomberos from the first generations of folk-presentational Marimba and Bomba did have communicative competence, however, they follow the rest of the characteristics from the category of folk-performances, thus, they are located in between these two (See Chapter Three).





**Figure 14. Transformational diagram of the four proposed categories of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.** It shows cimarrón-participatory category as the initial one with the potential of being transformed into either show-presentational or folk-presentational categories. It also shows to possibility of the transformation of folk or show-presentational categories to a counter-representation, which is the main proposal of this thesis. The text to the outside of each arrow shows the specific changes a representation should go through (+) in order to be transformed. The texts located in between two arrows show the transformations needed for both sides.



**Figure 15. Marimba Esmeraldeña in 1891.** Engraving made from the photograph taken by Santiago M. Basurco in the community of Limones (Esmeraldas: Basurco, 1902). It shows the unique particularity shared just by Marimba Esmeraldeña and Colombian Marimba, which is that the xylophone-type instrument is hanged.



a.



b.



c.



d.

**Figure 16. The event of Marimba in 1966** (Whitten, 1966, pp. 173-174). The photographs show the xylophone-type instrument of Marimba Esmeraldeña played by two musicians. These also show two cununo drummers and two bombo drummers (a); a woman playing the instrument named guasá and a few respondedoras (female singers who do the chorus) (b) and Afro-Esmeraldeños dancing Marimba (c and d). The name of the specific dance/rhythm they are performing is unknown.



**Figure 17. Afro-Choteño bomba musicians.** Photograph of two of the most renowned Bomberos Cimarrones, Mario Polo and Eliécer Espinoza, playing the guitar and singing Bomba. It was taken in the 60's. The anthropologist Gualberto Espinoza, son of Eliécer Espinoza, generously shared this photograph with me.



**Figure 18. The banda mocha of Chota-Mira Valley.** Photograph taken by the traveller Enrico Festa (1909). The puros, orange leaves, flutes and percussive instruments can be observed.



a.



b.

**Figure 19. Controversial monument named ‘Monumento a la Raza’ (Monument to the Race).** It was built in the central park of La Concordia in 2012, while Walter Ocampo was mayor. The monument depicted three figures of black-skinned women holding a figure of a white-skinned woman standing over a large shell. In 2013, Ocampo affirmed that the monument represented the unity and strength of ‘their’ peoples, referring to the inhabitants of La Concordia (El Diario, 2014). In the same way, the sculptor of the monument, the local artist Marco Tulio Ochoa, affirmed that the memorial was a depiction of how Afro-descendants, indigenous, and mixed race people, who, according to him, were represented through the dark-skinned female figures, gathered to give birth to La Concordia. According to the artist, the white-skinned woman that emerged from a shell, like a pearl represented the canton of La Concordia (a). Despite these and other arguments in favour of the monument, it was first covered (b) and finally removed in a ceremony in 2014, in which La Concordia was declared a territory free of racism. Photo taken from El Diario (2004).



**Figure 20. Graphic representations of the devil (diablo) and the duende (elf or imp) in cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota.** On the left, a painting of the diablo in the middle of a performance of Marimba, from the Esmeraldeño Alberto Acosta (photograph taken by me during an exhibition in 2017; Esmeraldas, Ecuador). On the right, an illustration of the duende talking to a Bombero Cimarrón, drawn by the Ecuadorian Iván Guamán. The image is part of one of Guamán's illustrated book (Guamán, 2015, p. 48).



**Figure 21. The Bombero Cimarrón David Lara and his encounter with the diablo.** Drawn by the Ecuadorian Marco Chamorro and the French Alice Bossut. On the left, is shown him playing the drum of Bomba in the middle of his battle with David Lara. On the right, is shown David's and the diablo's facial expressions in the moment David realises he did not walk towards the mountain with a man but with the diablo (Chamorro & Bossut, 2016).





**Figure 22. Marimba Esmeraldeña during the Guerra de Concha (1912-1916).** The instrument of Marimba Esmeraldeña is in the middle, perhaps as a symbol of Afro-Ecuadorians participation in the war. Interestingly, although Afro-Ecuadorians appear as elegantly dressed as mestizos, unlike mestizos, they do not have shoes (This photograph is part of the personal archive of Xavier Vera Cooke, 2018. The exact date or place where it was taken is unknown).

## Appendix A. Glossary of terms<sup>117</sup>

**Acimarronarse:** Historical tendency of black people to gather and live in a specific location in order to support each other and avoid racism (Juan Montaña Escobar, personal communication 2018; Luzmila Bolaños, personal communication 2012).

**AestheSis:** Term developed by Mignolo and Vazquez (2013, p.12) based on the notion of ‘aesthesis’. Aesthesis has a Greek origin. It refers to an essential human attribute related to the perception of any sensation from any living organism. Mignolo and Vasquez specifically propose to recover the non-universalised character of the term through spelling aestheSis with a capital S to signify that it is a way of contesting the Eurocentric notion of aestheTic.

**AestheTic:** Term developed by Mignolo and Vazquez (2013, p. 12) based on the notion of ‘aesthetic’. Aesthetic evolved from the term ‘aesthesis’. However, it turned into a colonial, Eurocentric and universalised key concept to regulate and reproduce a specific notion of taste, sensibility, sentiments and sensations and through this, the notion of the beautiful and the sublime. Thus, through the notion of aestheTics, any notion of beauty that did not fit with the Eurocentric idea of beauty was devalued (Mignolo in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201; Mignolo, 2010, pp. 13–14;

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<sup>117</sup> It is important to note that these definitions are not general but correspond to the ones utilized in thesis.

Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013, pp. 5–7). Mignolo and Vasquez specifically question the colonial usage of the term through the spelling of aesthetics with a capital T to signify that it is specifically related to a Eurocentric concept, which originated during colonialism.

**Afro-Ecuadorian:** Category of Ecuadorian citizens with an African ancestry (Afro-descendants). It is a term mainly used by those who are related to academia or activism in most official documents and political statements, influenced by the renowned ‘World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia’ (Durban, South Africa, 2001).

**Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory:** A specific geographic Ecuadorian area that is under the cultural influence as well as the social and political control of one or more Afro-Ecuadorian communities or neighbourhoods that share a history in common (García Salazar, 2017, p. 49). There are two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, Chota-Mira river basin and north Esmeraldas. This last one has also been baptised as ‘La Gran Comarca del Norte de la Provincia de Esmeraldas’ (literally, ‘The Large County in the North of the Esmeraldas Province’; P. de la Torre, 2011, pp. 91–98).

**Ajayu:** This is an Aymara concept defined as ‘the sparkle of the eyes’, which is related to the continued existence of the flux of memories and collective roots in each individual (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012b, para. 7).

**Banda mocha:** Afro-Choteño orchestra composed of 12-15 musicians. Their name is banda mocha because of the various types of pumpkins that they use to make their instruments; these pumpkins are trimmed or ‘mochos’ (without a sharp end). It is said that these types of bands constitute a local Afro-Choteño version of the typical mestizo ‘bandas de pueblo’ that use metal instruments. These instruments, which are taken from the country that surrounds Chota-Mira Valley, reproduce the sound of metallic instruments such as the clarinet, trumpet, baritone and bass guitar. The music of the banda mocha is only instrumental. Other instruments of a banda mocha are orange leaves, tubes made with cabuya fibres, puros (pumpkins), a flute made from reeds, a bombo (bass drum), a drum, cymbals and a güiro (Chalá Cruz, 2006, pp. 162–164).

**Black Pacific:** Term coined by Feldman based on Gilroy’s (1993, p. 15) “black Atlantic”. It refers to an extension of the black Atlantic, including not just a dual and ambiguous identification with Africa and the West (as the colonisers) but also a series of equally ambiguous relations with local creole and indigenous cultures (Feldman, 2005, p. 206).

**Black people:** People with an African ancestry. In Ecuador, it is used in most rural areas since it is the way they have historically referred to each other. Some members of rural communities, academics and activists have even affirmed that they do not adhere to the self-identification of Afro-Ecuadorian or Afro-descendant because they prefer to re-signify the pejorative meanings that the denomination ‘black’ has in other contexts. On the other hand, other groups reject the denomination ‘black’, arguing that it is a colonial denomination that does not take into account their African origin (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 51).

**Bomba del Chota:** In the context of this thesis, also referred to as Bomba. Bomba (with capital B) refers to an Afro-Choteño music and dance-based performance or event that has existed since the Atlantic slavery period. It includes the performance of the instrument, music genre and dance, each of them named as bomba (with lower case b). It also includes specific meanings that are generated through the performance of bomba, whereas racialised (presentational Bomba del Chota) or based on collective memories (cimarrón-participatory Bomba del Chota).

**Bombero/a:** Within the Afro-Esmeraldeño context, it refers to a male or female who knows how to perform the xylophone-type instrument or the dance called bomba.

**Bombero/a Cimarrón/a:** Male or female who can choose to have communicative competence related to Bomba del Chota. Importantly, they are not necessarily Bomberos, meaning that they do not always know how to play or dance Bomba but have vivid memories of cimarrón participatory events or inherited oral or embodied collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Bomba.

**Caliente:** Translated as hot. Within the Afro-Ecuadorian context, it refers to people or dancing and music events that are full of contagious energy and euphoria. A person who is considered 'caliente' is usually good at dancing (Walmsley, 2005, p. 184). It can also be related to a person's supposed hyper-sexuality. Both, being good at dancing and being considered hyper-sexual, are usually related to black people. For instance, a famous neighbourhood in the city of Esmeraldas is referred to as 'Barrio Caliente' (Hot Neighbourhood). This denomination is related to the fact that

the majority of its inhabitants are black people.

**Cantaora:** Traditional female singer of Marimba Esmeraldeña.

**Cimarrón/es:** Translated as maroon/s. During colonial times, it referred to the enslaved people who managed to physically escape from their working spaces (for instance, plantations or mines) as a way of rejecting their condition of subjugation and unlimited exploitation (Albán Achinte, 2013, p. 234). More recently, it has been resignified as any collective and creative (non-mechanical) practice of freedom that disobeys the dehumanising process of coloniality, and which is rooted in the practices of the time of slavery. (Wade, 1995, p. 344; Walsh & León Castro, 2005, p. 10; Albán Achinte, 2013, pp. 233–237; León Castro, 2017, pp. 153, 162; Walsh, and Mignolo, 2018, p. 43).

**Cimarrón-participatory performance or event:** Within the context of Marimba and Bomba, it refers to a performance or event in which the participants have communicative competence.

**Civilised:** Colonial category that has been used in the Latin American context from the 15th century as an epistemic strategy to create colonial difference (Mignolo, 2011c, p. 153). It is related to the supposed ability of specific groups of people, usually Europeans or ‘whiter’ Latin Americans, to restrain their emotional, sexual and civil life, through their intellect.

**Collective memories:** Different versions of an event narrated by a person or a group of persons who share the personal significance (in other words, the what, why and how) of an experience through an active process of creation of meanings to be passed to new generations who are members of a collective group of people (Alvarez Arzate, 2017, p. 101; Jelin, 2002, p. 33; Portelli, 1991, p. 69, Mendoza García, 2005, p. 7). Collective memories are usually passed orally or through the body (Narvárez, 2006).

**Coloniality:** Shorthand for ‘colonial matrix of power’. It refers to the identification and description of the articulation of power that has taken place since the conquest of America in the 15th century (Quijano, 1992, 2000b). Also referred to as the darkest side of modernity (Mignolo, 2009a, 2009b). Related to the concept of ‘Horizonte colonial de larga duración’ (colonial horizon of long duration/the long colonial horizon; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012a, 99-100)

**Coloniality of being:** the notion of colonialism that is internalised in each colonised subject.

**Coloniality of knowledge:** The establishment of Eurocentric approaches as the only valid ways of knowing.

**Colonial wound:** The harmful consequences inflicted through colonial difference’s aesthetic epistemologies that despise local knowledges or perceptions, this is, aesthetic (Mignolo, 2011b, p. 63). It is related to Rivera Cusicanqui’s (2012b, para. 7) notion of ‘losing the ajayu’.

**Comarca:** Geographic region where people have a shared history. For instance, north Esmeraldas has been baptised as ‘La Gran Comarca del Norte de la Provincia de Esmeraldas’ (literally, The Big County of North Esmeraldas) and part of the bioregion of Chocó as ‘La Gran Comarca Territorial de Comunidades Negras’ (literally, the Big County of Black Communities) to acknowledge the significant presence of Afro-descendants whose ancestors arrived through enslavement (P. de la Torre, 2011, pp. 91–98). Montaña Escobar (personal communication, 2018) has also suggested the term ‘Black’s People Comarca’ to be used as a decolonial option to refer to the political organization generated by the first Africans who arrived in Esmeraldas, usually referred to as ‘The Zambo Republic’ or ‘The Zambo State’.

**Communicative competence:** Within Marimba and Bomba’s context, it refers to the oral or embodied expression of those collective memories that include, but go beyond, a tradition of sound and movement. These collective memories have to do with the cognitive learning of the shared rules of a specific tradition of sound and movement (Kaepler, 2002, p. 15) or with specific experiences that have shaped the events of Marimba or Bomba.

**Concertaje:** Also called ‘Huasipungo’. It refers to an indebtedness system that arose after the official abolition of slavery in Ecuador, through which some Afro-Choteños were forced to stay in the same haciendas where they used to be enslaved as servants until they paid all the debts they had to their former owners.

**Criollo:** The child of a Spaniard born in Ecuador (Wade, 2010a, p. 27).



**Counter-representation:** A category of representation proposed in this thesis, in which the colonial meanings or the aesthetic portrayed in presentational or public representations are questioned and other creative possibilities of thinking, knowing and sensing Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota (their aesthetic) within their social and historical context are developed and included in a presentational product.

**Ch'ixi:** Aymara term that has been resignified to refer to a juxtaposition of opposed or contrasting opposite points of view or ideologies that are interrelated but do not merge into one in order to expose the colonial relations of power they are embedded in (Rivera Cusicanqui & El-Colectivo, 2010, p. 9; Rivera Cusicanqui & de Sousa Santos, 2015, p. 84).

**Decoloniality:** Rooted in the term decolonisation, which is one of the legacies of the Bandung Conference that was held in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955. It was developed by Latinamericanist scholars such as Quijano and Mignolo to refer to undoing the damage that coloniality has caused by confronting and delinking from the colonial matrix of power (Gómez & Mignolo, 2012, pp. 7–8; Mignolo, 2011c, p. xxvii).

**Desmemoria:** Translated as ‘oblivion’ or ‘loss of memory’. It refers to the systematic forgetfulness and silencing of certain collective memories related to Marimberos and Bomberos that at some point were essential for them. This is due to the fact that the communication of these events was blocked or prohibited by those with power, who determine what must be forgotten and what should be remembered in order to divert attention from colonial legacies (Mendoza, 2005, p. 9, García

Salazar & Walsh, 2015, p. 92; Walsh, 2012, p. 29). It is also referred to as ‘olvido social’ – societal loss of memory.

**Diablo:** Translated as devil. Within the Afro-Choteños and Afro-Esmeraldeños cosmology and similarly to the duende, the diablo used to be an angel but was expelled from heaven. He lives among people but sometimes goes unnoticed. When he appears, he usually looks like an elegantly dressed, playful, joyful and extremely smart being and an excellent and creative musician and dancer, who could also be a dangerous and powerful creature and with whom it was always possible to compete (by performing Marimba or Bomba) and negotiate. Although the diablo is usually thought of as male, in Afro-Ecuadorian cosmology, other types of diablos are female, locally named as ‘la bruja’ (the witch), ‘la tunda’ or ‘la mula’ (the mule), among others (Fernández-Rasines, 2012).

**Don/Doña:** ‘Don’ for male and ‘Doña’ for a female is a title equivalent to ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’ and is placed before the name to indicate respect, e.g. Don Cristobal, Doña María. It is primarily used to refer to mature people.

**Duende:** Translated as elf or imp. Within Afro-Choteños’ cosmology and similarly to the diablo, it is believed that the duende used to be an angel. God gave the duende the talent of being a great musician. Once, the duende had to take care of a group of cows. Instead, he began to play the guitar. Because of all the noise and mess that he caused, the duende was expelled from heaven and since then, he stays on earth as a soul in torment, making parties each time he is near cows and trying to kidnap young women (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 79). According to some Bomberos Cimarrones and also to Agier’s (2002) research, the duende is a transformation of

the diablo that represents his strengths and weaknesses (p. 309). Like the diablo, the duende lives among people but sometimes goes unnoticed. When he appears, he usually looks like an elegantly dressed, playful, joyful and extremely smart being and an excellent and creative musician and dancer, who could also be a dangerous and powerful creature and with whom it was always possible to compete (by performing Bomba) and negotiate.

**Ecuadorianist:** A scholar whose research focuses on Ecuador.

**Enslaved people:** Adjective used instead of ‘slave’ (noun) since this last disaggregates the condition of being enslaved with the status of “being” a slave. People were not slaves; they were enslaved (Foreman, n.d.).

**Epistemic extractivism:** Colonial mentality through which there is a process of extraction of useful ideas, which then turn into resources that need to be depoliticised and decontextualized in order for them to be part of a market of consumption (Grosfoguel, 2015, p. 38; Klein & Simpson, 2013, para. 12).

**Estereotipia:** The visibility of Afro-descendants as related to the savage and the exotic (De Friedemann, 1984 in Silva, 2014, p. 30). It is related to the stereotypical representations of black people.

**Eurocentrism:** The universalised character of European historical experience, which is perceived as the only valid and objective way of existing (Lander, 2005, p. 15).

**Folklorisation:** Initially meant the transformation of a cimarrón-participatory event to a folk-presentational one. However, currently, it refers instead to essentialist, uniform, decontextualized and romanticised folk-presentational representations of some Ecuadorian music and dance-based events.

**Folk-presentational performance or event:** A presentational or public performance or event that is in line with the official discourse and thus, is utilised as a vehicle to communicate the meanings portrayed in official history. Usually, the members of the audience engage with dancers and musicians mainly visually.

**Glosa:** Poetic composition that used to be improvised during cimarrón-participatory events of Marimba.

**Glosador:** The lead male singer of Marimba who usually also improvises glosas.

**Guasá:** Instrument that is part of the music genre of marimba and that consists of bamboos filled with corn and seeds, into which hardwood nails are driven.

**Guerra de Concha:** Liberal rebellion that took place in Esmeraldas from 1912 to 1916. In spite of numerous texts that are part of the official history (Chavez Gonzalez, 1971), that describe the Guerra de Concha mainly as a battle heroically led by the mestizo liberal Carlos Concha, other authors (Montaño, 2014; Moreno, 1939), highlight that most soldiers that fought in that war were Afro-Esmeraldeños who fought for improving their living conditions in a country where the government never fulfilled the basic needs of the black population of Esmeraldas. Therefore, it has been stated that the rebellion should not be remembered as the Guerra de Concha

but as the ‘Black people’s or Afro-Esmeraldeños’ revolution’ (Montaño, 2014; Vera Kooke, personal communication, 2018).

**Hacienda:** In the Afro-Ecuadorian context, it refers to a landed estate (plantation or mine) of significant size that was owned, and in some cases still is, by Spaniards, criollos or elite mestizos.

**Healing the colonial wound:** Delinking from the colonial matrix of power and regaining pride by questioning aesthetic representations and exposing aesthetics, and through it, a collective past (Anzaldúa, 2009, Mignolo, 2011b). It is related to the notion of ‘recovering the ajayu’ (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012).

**Huasipungo:** Kichwa term. ‘Huasi’ means house and ‘pungo’ signifies door. It was an indebtedness system that arose after the official abolition of slavery in Ecuador, through which some Afro-Choteños were forced to stay as servants in the same haciendas where they used to be enslaved until they had paid all the debts they had to their former owners. It is also called ‘Concertaje’.

**Hybrid:** Refers to a product of a synthetic mixture of two or more music and/or dance genres without clearly acknowledging the parts from which it is constituted (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 118). It is also referred to as ‘fusions’.

**Intercultural translation:** Methodological mechanism for intelligibility and coherence between cultures (de Sousa Santos, 2010, p. 57; Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 106).

**Intimacy:** Within the context of Marimba and Bomba, it refers to the choice to perform cimarrón-participatory Marimba and Bomba just among participants who have communicative competence. It can be related, although not necessarily, to a sense of secrecy, especially during the Atlantic slavery period.

**Invisibility:** As utilised in this thesis concerning Afro-Ecuadorians, it refers to the constant negation and silencing of their contributions (De Friedemann, 1984 in Silva, 2014, pp.29-30). It is related to the notion of ‘negative visibility’.

**Kichwa:** Name of an indigenous group that lives in Latin American countries like Ecuador, especially in the Ecuadorian Andes and Amazonia. It also refers to the language this indigenous group speaks. Kichwa is one of the two Ecuadorian official languages of intercultural relations.

**Knowledge/s:** It is defined as “thinking while walking, ritualistic thinking or the thought embedded in a song or a dance. Knowledges have to do with the many memories that are also part but are not limited to, the linguistic terrain” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018, p. 121). Knowledges in plural was introduced in the last Ecuadorian Constitution (2008, Art. 57, Art. 384-388) and utilised in this thesis to officially acknowledge a diversity of ways of knowing.

**Latinamericanist:** A scholar whose research focuses on Latin America.

**Level of the enunciated:** Second level of this thesis’ decolonial project. It refers to an epistemic decolonisation; this is, to the relinking to collective memories that have been displaced coloniality (Mignolo in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 139, 208, 223).

**Level of the enunciation:** First level of this thesis' decolonial project. It refers to the critical reflection and uncovering of the colonial forces that control presentational representations, making people believe that what they are experiencing is the total truth, in order to delink from them (Mignolo in Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 139, 208, 223)

**Losing the ajayu:** The forgetting of the ajayu, or the collective past to which one belongs, occasioning, among other things, a 'comfortable drowsiness' (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012b, para. 7).

**Marimba Esmeraldeña:** In the context of this thesis, also referred to as Marimba. Marimba (with capital M) refers to an Afro-Esmeraldeño music and dance-based performance or event that has existed since the Atlantic slavery period. It includes the performance of the instrument, music genre and dance, each of them named as marimba (with lower case m). It also includes specific meanings that are generated through the performance of marimba, whereas racialised (presentational Marimba Esmeraldeña) or based on collective memories (cimarrón-participatory Marimba Esmeraldeña).

**Marimbero/a:** Within the Afro-Esmeraldeño context, it exclusively refers to a person, usually male, who knows how to perform the xylophone-type instrument called marimba. In this thesis, this denomination has been extended to refer to any person, male or female, who knows how to play or dance marimba.

**Marimberos/as Cimarrones/as:** Male/s or female/s who can choose to have communicative competence related to Marimba Esmeraldeña. Importantly, they are

not necessarily Marimberos, this is, they do not always know how to play or dance Marimba but have vivid memories of cimarrón participatory events or inherited oral or embodied collective memories related to cimarrón-participatory Marimba.

**Memoria ancestral:** Translated as ancestral memory. It refers to memories from the pre-colonial period, which are not necessarily accessed through experience or oral transmission but through specific strategies such as finding the ancient secrets kept within their own bodies. These strategies allow Afro-Ecuadorians to connect with a sense of belonging to their African ancestors and restore collective memories that have been fragmented because of the experience of Atlantic slavery (Santa Cruz Espejo in Feldman, 2005, pp. 210-211, 2009, pp. 79, 82, 261; García Salazar in Walsh & León Castro, 2005, pp. 5–6).

**Memoria corta:** Translated as short memory. It refers to those memories related to post-colonial periods such as the period of independence and formation of Latin American nations (Rivera Cusicanqui in Accossatto, 2017, pp. 171–172; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2014, p. 64).

**Memoria larga:** Translated as long memory. It refers to those memories related to the colonial period such as the period of Atlantic slavery (Rivera Cusicanqui in Accossatto, 2017, pp. 171–172; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2014, p. 64).

**Mestizaje:** Ideological tool in the service of white or white-mestizo elites, in which a hierarchy of superiority/inferiority relates ‘whiter’ Ecuadorians to the highest social category and dark-skinned Ecuadorians to the lowest social position (Rahier, 2014, p. 79; Walsh & León Castro, 2005, p. 11)



**Mestizo/a:** In the Ecuadorian context, it refers to a category of a male or female who is considered of a mixed ancestry based on having a European family name, direct mestizo ancestry and/or physical features like skin colour or even gestures that distances him/her from his/her indigenous ancestry while locating him/her closer to a ‘whiter’, in other words, European or mestizo, ancestry. Most of the times, there are social and financial advantages in self-identifying or being identified as mestizo/a (Kingman Garcés, 2002).

**Montubio:** Within the Ecuadorian context, it refers to a sub-category of mestizo people from the countryside of the coastal Ecuador who identify themselves as distinct from the rest of mestizo people because of their geographic location and culture.

**Música Nacional:** Translated as National Music. Within the Ecuadorian context, it refers to the group of mestizo music and dances that officially represent the nation. Although the exclusion of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances from the notion of Música Nacional has been recently contested, this has not had far-reaching results. Until the present day, the vast majority of Ecuadorians do not include music and dances other than that of mestizos in their understanding of Música Nacional.

**Negative visibility:** As utilised in this thesis concerning Afro-Ecuadorians, it highlights the fact that they have historically been visible as ‘lesser’ humans (Santiago Arboleda Quiñonez in Albán Achinte, 2013, p. 5). It is related to the notion of invisibility.

**Official performances or events:** Those that are in line with official discourse related to, for instance, Judeo-Christian beliefs. Usually, they are included in government-led policies and events.

**Olvido social:** Translated as ‘social oblivion’ or ‘societal loss of memories’. It refers to the systematic forgetting and silencing of certain collective memories related to Marimberos and Bomberos that at some point were important for them. This ‘olvido social’ is due to the fact that the communication of these events was blocked or prohibited by those with the power to determine what must be forgotten and what should be remembered, in order to divert attention away from colonial legacies (Mendoza, 2005, p. 9, García Salazar & Walsh, 2015, p. 92; Walsh, 2012, p. 29). It is also referred to as ‘desmemoria’.

**Participatory performance or event:** A category of representation in which there are no distinctions between dancers or musicians and the audience; they are all focusing on the performance in and for itself (Turino, 2008, pp. 26–36).

**Patrón/es:** Translated as master. During the Atlantic slavery period, it was a way for enslaved people to formally refer to the slave owner. During the Huasipungo period, former enslaved people continued to refer to the former slaveholders or current Hacienda owner as patrón. Even in the present day, it is common for Afro-Ecuadorian or indigenous people to refer to any mestizo person as patrón.

**Permanent cimarronaje:** The continual practice of cimarronaje that implies “an alert attitude and continuous escape from subjugation...” (Grueso, 2006, p. 152).

**Presentational performances or events:** Category of representation that developed from participatory performances with the main difference being that it involves a clear separation between a group of people providing music or dance as a product or a spectacle and another group of people for whom the product is generated (Turino, 2008, pp. 24, 52–59). Most of the time, participants in presentational performances of Marimba and Bomba do not have communicative competence. Two sub-categories of presentational performances are included in this thesis, ‘show’ and ‘folk’. Presentational performances or events are also referred to as public performances or events.

**Primitive:** Colonial category that has been used in the Latin American context from the 15th century as an epistemic strategy to create the colonial difference (Mignolo, 2011c, p. 153). It is related to specific groups of people, perceived as different from Europeans or ‘whiter’ Latin Americans, and who are always believed to be led by their ‘instincts’, by which is meant that they are led not by their intellect but by their emotions and feelings, which controls their sexual and social life.

**Public performances or events:** Category of representation that developed from participatory performances with the main difference being that it involves a clear separation between a group of people providing music or dance as a product or a spectacle and another group of people for whom the product is generated (Turino, 2008, pp. 52–59). Most of the time, participants in public performances of Marimba and Bomba do not have communicative competence. It is not necessarily related to public spaces. Two sub-categories of public performances are included in this thesis, ‘show’ and ‘folk’. They are also referred to as presentational performances or events.

**Puntas:** The name for an indigenous alcohol that has been distilled in a non-industrial distillery.

**Race:** System of classification based on an ever-changing hybrid construction between the culturally produced artefacts of nature and culture (Wade, 2000, p. 14, 2002, p. 272, 2015, 41:06). Throughout coloniality, the notion of race has been the basis for locating some groups of people over others hierarchically.

**Racialised colonial difference:** Hierarchical framework based on the notion of ‘race’, which began during colonialism. Ontologically and epistemologically, it locates distinctive groups such as Afro-descendants into a category of ‘lesser’ humans in relation to an ideal (whiter) prototype of human throughout coloniality (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 153–158, Mignolo, 2009a).

**Recovering the Ajayu:** The reinvocation of the past in the present through practical ways that allow a collective group of people to remember and reflect on memories that recall where they come from (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012b, para. 8). It is related to the notion of healing the colonial wound.

**Re-existence:** Term proposed to overcome the limits of the term resistance. Re-existence refers to propositional actions (instead of oppositional ones) that create and develop strategies to confront the silencing, inferiorisation and negative visibility of the Afro-descendant population as a direct consequence of coloniality (Albán-Achinte, 2009, p. 94; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, pp. 34, 46).

**Reforma Agraria:** Within the Afro-Choteño context, it refers to the passing of land that used to be part of the haciendas to some Afro-Choteños, who could then stop depending on the owners of the haciendas. The first and most important Ecuadorian Reforma Agraria took place in 1964.

**Relación de escucha:** Translated as relationship of listening. A methodological approach that refers to a long-term, sensitive, creative, honest and open recognition of the voices, feelings, knowledges and perspectives of both the researcher and the communities as the basis for producing specific research (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987, p. 10, 2015, p. 286).

**Research-based sonic composition:** Based on Feld's (1987, 1996) and Samuels' (et.al., 2010) approach to sound, a sonic composition is understood in this work as a source of acoustic knowledge about how people perceive and are affected by specific experiences, which dictates how they make sense and transmit it through testimonies and music, and also through the voices' timbre, cadence, resonance, densities and even silences. Importantly, it is based on thorough theoretical and practical research (relación de escucha).

**Resistance:** Oppositional (non-propositional) and defensive actions against oppression (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 33). Within the Afro-descendants' context, the term resistance has been criticised since it tends to be limited to "an international community of blacks who share a history of suffering" (Wade, 1995, p. 350).

**Runa:** Kichwa term translated as 'a human being'. Many Kichwa members of indigenous political movements in Ecuador have stated that they prefer to be called

Runas rather than indigenous because of its Kichwa origin and meaning. Their decision also constitutes a way of reclaiming the term Runa as a dignified term, even though it is still commonly used by many Ecuadorians to refer to mongrel dogs.

**Show-presentational performance or event:** A presentational or public performance or event in which participants do not necessarily identify with the official discourse in the moment when they are being part of the event. Usually, the audience members of show-presentational events participate through singing or dancing.

**Stereotypes:** Symbolic modes of violence based on the hierarchical simplification of the most highlighted and widely recognised characteristics of a historically excluded group of people, who are permanently reduced to those characteristics (Hall, 1997a, pp. 258–259).

**Tono de las Vacas:** Translated as the Tone of the Cows. Within Afro-Choteño cosmology, it refers to melodies that are played on the guitar in E minor. It is called el Tono de las Vacas because once, when the duende was in charge of a herd of cows, instead of taking care of them, he began to play the guitar. The duende's music provoked a big and noisy celebration among the cows, which began to respond specifically to melodies played in E minor (Escobar Quiñónez et al., 1997, p. 79). The Tono de las Vacas is used as a Marimberos and Bomberos' defence against the diablo or duende, and also when Afro-Choteños go to their crops at midnight, when they are near a ravine or in any dangerous situation, to drive away elves, bad spirits or other evil forces (Peters, 2005, p. 110; Cruz Santacruz, 2012, pp. 101–102).

**Tontódromo:** This signifies walking up and down the main street for hours when there is nothing else to do, looking at the same shop windows, greeting the same people.

**Trueque:** Translated as 'barter'. Exchange of goods and services without or with minimal intervention of money.

## **Appendix B. Transcriptions of the research-based sonic compositions**

These research-based sonic compositions constitute a creative approach based on my encounters with a group of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones (2008-2018) and the theoretical engagement developed during my PhD (2015-2019). Here, I expose some of their silenced collective memories (called in this thesis ‘the enunciated’ - Chapter Four) and also the prevailing colonial structure that has managed to silence them (called in this thesis ‘the enunciation’ - Chapter Three). In the first part of the research-based sonic composition of Chapter Three, the exposure of the level of the enunciated was accomplished through the inclusion of ‘voices’ that represent the racialised colonial difference that still exists in Ecuador. In the last part of the same composition and in the two research-based sonic compositions of Chapter four, the Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones’ ‘voices’ and thus, the knowledges, reflections and feelings of them and through them, of their ancestors, are central. These were utilized with much care and respect. The aestheSis of these compositions was influenced by what I learned and lived with this group of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones, not just in terms of the collective memories they shared with me with much pride and trust, but also through those knowledges that go beyond what can be transmitted through words, and which were experienced through dancing, playing instruments, laughing, eating, travelling and dreaming together.

These research-based sonic compositions were developed as part of the main aim of this PhD thesis, which is to contribute to the creation of a counter-representation of Marimba Esmeraldeña and Bomba del Chota. Importantly, these do not constitute a



counter-representation by themselves. Also, they do not include all the details that are included and theorised in a much more explicit way in the written part of this thesis. Therefore, the compositions may not be totally comprehensible without engaging with the written part first.

### **Please wear headphones**

**Disclaimer:** All the audio material has been utilised in accordance with copyright exceptions contained within the British ‘Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988’ Part I, Chapter III, General, Section 30 of ‘criticism, review, quotation and news reporting’<sup>118</sup>. The research-based sonic compositions and their transcripts can be quoted or reproduced as long as they do not interfere with the moral rights of the author<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup> See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/48/section/30>

<sup>119</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-rights-granted-by-copyright>

## First Research-based Sonic Composition

### Chapter three: Representation and Difference: Understanding the level of ‘the enunciation’ of a decolonial project

Disclaimer: As a way to question racism in Ecuador, in this audio, racist episodes that may be disturbing are purposefully exposed. Discretion is advised.

-Please listen after reading up the introduction of Chapter Three, and before the subsection entitled **Ecuadorian ‘Música Nacional’, ‘folk’ and ‘show’ as part of a racialised colonial difference -**

Folk-dance teacher <sup>120</sup>	<i>Hello my friends, in this space we are going to present a typical rhythm of the Afros, which is a very strong rhythm where men and women express their happiness through this rhythm that is really hot...</i>
Lyrics ‘Bomba Buena’ <sup>121</sup>	<i>People are loving Bomba!....</i>
Lyrics song ‘La Bomba’ <sup>122</sup>	<i>...and now my people, let’s shake our hips, move your hips, let’s dance bomba...</i>
Public radio broadcasters	<i>It seems that people from the black race are good for music, at least for music that is from them, they are naturally good at music because it is in their blood, right? we send a big hi to all of them...</i>
Lyrics song ‘La Bomba’ <sup>123</sup>	<i>Hip, hip, left, right, come on!, with rhythm! dance this bomba with me, because it is really good, my hip movements drive you crazy...</i>
Lyric song ‘Marimba-perreo’ <sup>124</sup>	<i>...With a hand behind, with the ass lifted, I want you to move and keep it up, I want to see you here and hot, if you are tired then shake it softer, softer, with Javari and La Clave, softer... cause this ain't gonna finish, this is marimba, and this is also perreo, shake it with La Clave and you will see the gracefulness, this is marimba, and also perreo.</i>

<sup>120</sup> Baile-Salón, “Baile de Bomba Coreografía Baile de Salón y Danza Afro,” [Video File], September 20, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX-3O1ST63k>.

<sup>121</sup> The-SBN, “Sbn Ft Alex Wayne Bomba Buena,” [Video File], December 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmDYb-RIHcc>.

<sup>122</sup> NNEcuador, “Hipatia Balseca - La Bomba (Video Oficial HD),” [Video File], June 29, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JztGPK2rX8Y>.

<sup>123</sup> NNEcuador.

<sup>124</sup> Xavier Ortiz, “Joel La Clave - Marimba Perreo,” [Video File], February 4, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybz9HzAaP14>.

Juan García Salazar (in an ironic voice tone) <sup>125</sup>	<i>The only thing that blacks do is dancing, having sex and drinking alcohol...</i>
Geovanny Dupleint <sup>126</sup>	<i>I was using my phone and two big blacks wearing shorts and t-shirts approached us, since I did not know them, a friend of mine, who is a businessman, said: they are gonna rob us! Cause they do not know how to read or write, and they do not respect anyone, because in here (in their heads), they have nothing, not even a monkey playing dices, which would be a lot, these blacks have nothing, they are demonstrating that Afro-Ecuadorians, are either good for selling coconut candies or for being soccer players, and just some of them, cause the rest of them, have nothing, nothing here...</i> <sup>127</sup>
Political campaign – La Concordia <sup>128</sup>	<i>With endless love, for La Concordia not to belong to the blacks, bullshit blacks, they look like cockroaches that pile up in the garbage, bullshit blacks, they are not good for anything and are always taking drugs, bullshit blacks we have to disinfect them to not get stained with their blackness, vote against blacks...</i>
Juan García Salazar <sup>129</sup>	<i>...If anytime a door has been closed for me, if anytime a security guard stands up behind me, if anytime a person has told me that they have already rented the department, it is because I am black...</i>
Alexandra Ocles <sup>130</sup>	<i>When our brothers are looking for a place to live, an apartment or a house to rent, they immediately tell them, no, it is already taken...</i>
Juan García Salazar <sup>131</sup>	<i>One goes to rent an apartment and they say no!... or they say, beware, blacks are coming!</i>
Afro-Ecuadorian interviewed in the street <sup>132</sup>	<i>When white people see a black crossing the street they get scared, and they immediately imagine that he is going to rob them...</i>
Afro-Ecuadorian activist Kimberly Minda Borja <sup>133</sup>	<i>If you haven't been in a bus, and people have changed their seat, if you haven't walked in Quito city at 6 pm and people</i>

<sup>125</sup> “Personal Archives - David Laso,” n.d.

<sup>126</sup> “Personal Archives - David Laso.”

<sup>127</sup> The background music of this fragment was not used in the original TV show. However, I could not find a recording without it.

<sup>128</sup> “Personal Archives - David Laso.”

<sup>129</sup> Buen Vivir TV, “Acuerdo Para El Buen Vivir 4T - El Buen Vivir Dentro de Ti Cap. 15,” [Video File], May 8, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hy-wQmGVks&list=PLB2S8f3qlsyk4MYMXIQhcByKrGVCVybac&index=2>.

<sup>130</sup> TCtelevisión, “TC Televisión -Especial de Racismo,” [Video File], 2008.

<sup>131</sup> Buen Vivir TV, “Acuerdo Para El Buen Vivir Cap. 42 - Juan García, Historias Afroecuatorianas 3T,” [Video File], November 30, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30bwzeSGXPc>.

<sup>132</sup> TCtelevisión, “TC Televisión -Especial de Racismo.” Personal Archives - David Lasso.

<sup>133</sup> Darwin Minda, “Actualidad Afrochoteña Diego Palacios Ocles, Kimberly Minda Borja, Henry Mendez,” [Video File], August 24, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/delsonero/videos/1975275765835994/UzpfSTIwOTUyMTYwMDA2OT>

	<i>have crossed over to the other side of the street, if you haven't been chased after in the Quicentro mall, if you haven't been in any governmental office in Quito and they have asked you if you are either an artist or a soccer player, if you are one of those people that when they see an Afro-descendant they ask him if he knows a soccer player, you are not understanding the problem...</i>
<b>Two of the captured Afro-Ecuadorians during a racist incident in 2018<sup>134</sup></b>	<i>Why don't you take to jail the rest of the people that are around here??? Why don't you take them??? You are just taking the blacks, what do we blacks have??? It's always just blacks, it's always just blacks!!! I come here to this park to have fun, to play soccer, I am not a second-class citizen, I just come here to play soccer and you take me to jail, what do we have that the rest do not have? Why??? Why??? Why does it have to be always the blacks??? If you wanna kill us because we are blacks just do it!</i>
<b>Afro-Ecuadorian Assembly member Alexandra Ocles<sup>135</sup></b>	<i>65% of Ecuadorians have declared they are racist...</i>
<b>Alexander Quiñonez, one of the Afro-Ecuadorians who were caught by the police in a racist incident of 2008<sup>136</sup></b>	<i>It can't be possible that they violate our rights just because we are blacks, or because our hair is like this, because we are not thieves, we are not criminals, we have all our documents...</i>
<b>A mestizo women who was passing by during the racist incident of 2008<sup>137</sup></b>	<i>...These guys weren't doing anything bad, watch it, because you are treating them like that because they are blacks...</i>
<b>Juan García Salazar<sup>138</sup></b>	<i>...What they really want is to put everyone under the same labels, so, everything that is pejorative, everything that is negative is related to our whole group, knowing that the label of black homogenises a whole group of people, black people...</i>
	<i>Blacks-happiness, blacks-they are hot, blacks-they are huge, blacks-bullshit blacks, blacks-cockroaches, blacks-garbage, blacks-the only good thing they have is the ability on their legs, blacks-they are good for nothing, blacks- we have to get disinfected from their blackness</i>

M5NTI6MjE5NzU3NDg0MDQ1ODA2Nw/

<sup>134</sup> David Lasso, "Sospechosos Hd," [Video File], December 5, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HgYqPamDgQ>.

<sup>135</sup> TCtelevisión, "TC Televisión -Especial de Racismo."

<sup>136</sup> Lasso, "Sospechosos Hd."

<sup>137</sup> TCtelevisión, "TC Televisión -Especial de Racismo."

<sup>138</sup> Lasso, "Sospechosos Hd."

<i>Sounds of the unarmed Afro-Choteño Andrés Padilla being shot to death by a policeman during a protest in Chota-Mira</i> <sup>139</sup>	<i>(People screaming and guns)</i>
<b>A fan in the stadium of Quito city when an Afro-Ecuadorian soccer player did not manage to score a goal</b> <sup>140</sup>	<i>blacks sons of a bitch...</i>
<b>Afro-Ecuadorian activists Kimberly Minda, Henry Mendez and Diego Ocles</b> <sup>141</sup>	<i>They are saying that I am a criminal, that I am a wrongdoer, that they can shoot me like an animal, they don't know who I really am, they just don't know, I, we have to tell them what we are, right? Listen to it! We have to tell them that I am Africa, from the mother of my mother, from the siblings of the parents, from the grandparents and grandsons, from the ancestors, who were victims of a kidnapping, that the law or the policemen have not been able to solve, 500 years have passed, the case is filed, that does not mean I am a failure, because I am Yoruba from the Ubuntu, I am Ubuntu from the Bantu, I have Aché and I am Ashante from the Congos I am from here, I am Chalá, Anangonó, I am Mina, I am Carabalí, I am from the Coangue, I am from the river; I am from the sun, I am from the malignant hot weather of Chota, I am from Esmeraldas, and I fight for a dignified life, I am a believer; I am a healer, the Orishas take care of me, I take out the evil from the peoples through planting good seeds, look at our smiles, I dance like Matamba, and Caramba Bye, Bye that I am leaving, bye, I have in my mind the Bomba and the Marimba, I cherish intact my collective memories, the stories of my grandparents, and even my way of talking, I have African roots, I am Salomón Chalá, I am!...</i>
<b>(Rhythmic base of the Marimba rhythm of 'Caderona')</b> <sup>142</sup>	

<sup>139</sup> Soy-Revolución-Ciudadana, “‘No Fue El Policia Sino Una Mujer La Que Disparo.’ P Armijos Abg. de David V,” [Video File], September 9, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69u1uXRZfGs>.

<sup>140</sup> Esteban Coronel, “Tarjeta Roja Reportaje Día a Día,” [Video File], November 9, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAoGg-osvrY>.

<sup>141</sup> Rap-Bomba song ‘Yo Soy: Caminando hacia adentro’ written by Diego Palacios Ocles and interpreted in Minda, “Actualidad Afrochoteña Diego Palacios Ocles, Kimberly Minda Borja, Henry Mendez.”

<sup>142</sup> Chopin Thermes, “1. Caderona,” in *CD: Equatoriales Juyungo*, 1992.

Juan García Salazar <sup>143</sup>	<i>We had to repair this, but by ourselves, nobody was going to repair us from the pains of slavery, from the wounds of violence, from having been separated from our families, nobody was going to repair that, it was a self-repairing that we needed...</i>
Juan García Salazar <sup>144</sup>	<i>The other day we asked a black woman from here, from the highlands, she is always happy, so we asked her, does happiness come from the heart? And she told us, no, it's not just there, we have to look for it in life, and that is true, we have to look for it through playing music, through dancing, we look for it by not asking too much of life, but happiness is something we look for, so then, if happiness is something we look for, it is not like the Afro is naturally happy, but he is just optimistic, because after so many pains, after so much racism, after so much violence, it would not be right to be happy, it would not make sense...</i>
Afro-Ecuadorian academic Edizon León <sup>145</sup>	<i>It has a racist origin, what they say about us having happiness in our blood, no! Happiness is what you just said, it is a construction, it is an attitude to face life in spite of our history, right?</i>
Juan García Salazar <sup>146</sup>	<i>... We are still trapped in folklorisation, I get so angry when I hear that there is a folk performance, for heaven's sake, no! It is our culture, what comes from our inner selves, our dances, these are part of our culture.</i>
Juan García Salazar <sup>147</sup>	<i>They are not folk dances. It is not like they are folkloric dances, it is not entertainment in exchange for a few coins as a few cultural groups make us believe, we have to teach it with respect, with dignity, our culture, not folk dancing or music, our culture, our identity, who are we as black people? How much have we given to this country? How much have you learned from me? Yes! You! You who believe you are white! How much have you learned from me???</i>
Afro-Ecuadorian teacher from the school Barón de Carondelet, Esmeraldas and Palenquera Mayor-Confederación Comarca Afroecuatoriana del Norte de Esmeraldas Inés Morales Lastra <sup>148</sup>	<i>I would really want, black teachers to teach the history of our people, black teachers, let's do it! Because the history that is not taught is the history of our people...</i>

<sup>143</sup> Buen Vivir TV, “Acuerdo Para El Buen Vivir Cap. 42 - Juan García, Historias Afroecuatorianas 3T.”

<sup>144</sup> Buen Vivir TV.

<sup>145</sup> Buen Vivir TV, “Acuerdo Para El Buen Vivir 4T - El Buen Vivir Dentro de Ti Cap. 15.”

<sup>146</sup> Juan García Salazar, “Conferencia Negra” (Esmeraldas, Ecuador: Radio Antena Libre, n.d.).

<sup>147</sup> García Salazar.

<sup>148</sup> Ranti Ranti, “Programa 10: Afroecuatorianos En Esmeraldas,” [Video File], February 12, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3AQA8D\\_9to](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3AQA8D_9to).

## Second Research-based Sonic Composition

Chapter four: Collective Memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones:  
Understanding the level of ‘the enunciated’ of a decolonial project

### **The shared collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones<sup>149</sup>: The diablo’s revelations**

-Please listen before reading **Chapter four- section: The shared collective memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones: The diablo’s revelations -**

	<i>(Background: sounds of chains, sighs, water)<sup>150</sup></i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Juan Montaña Escobar	<i>That first moment, which we are never going to find in a document, must have been an episode similar to the liberation of souls and bodies, in that order, so it must have been a huge impact for them, more than in their bodies, I would say, in people’s souls, in the collective and individual soul of people who heard for the first time those tunes, those notes, and began...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Larry Preciado	<i>(Background: improvisation with the instrument of marimba Esmeraldeña)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Juan Montaña Escobar	<i>And well, it must have been in between tears and laughter, until they improvised some melodies, and that surely was a recreation of a world, that at that point, seemed really hard to live in.</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>Well, the elders had their sayings, they used to say that Marimba was left by God, that the dance of Marimba was left by God and didn’t offend anyone...</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez	<i>Look, la Bomba came from our ancestors, who were brought from Africa</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Iván Pabón	<i>Because definitely, when our ancestors arrived here, they didn’t bring anything, but they saw the goatskin’s leather here. When they arrived at Chota Valley there were lots of goats, so the first black people who arrived saw that, and they realised that that leather was very similar to the leather they used in Africa for their drums, so then they began to play, right? They just took it, tied it in one side and in the other, hardened it, heard what it sounded like, began to give the drum a rhythm, and that rhythm</i>

<sup>149</sup> This thesis’ author recorded the audios of the second and third compositions during her fieldwork in the two Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories, unless stated otherwise. For a detailed biography of each of the included Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones go to Appendix A.

<sup>150</sup> The sounds of chains and water were taken from the BBC online sound effects bank (<http://bbcsfx.acropolis.org.uk/>). The sounds of sighs and steps were recorded with permission during the movement workshop about Afro-Brazilian funeral rites of passage lead by the Afro-Brazilian artist and academic Ana Beatriz Almeida. The workshop was held at Goldsmiths College (London, UK) in 2018.

	<i>began to be contagious...</i>
<b>Bombero Cimarrón</b> <b>Ezequiel Sevilla</b>	<i>It is like saying, I have an instrument and if I leave, I'll take it with me, but no! They didn't bring nothing with them, they brought everything in their minds, in their hearts.</i>
<b>Marimbero Cimarrón</b> <b>Juan Montaña Escobar</b>	<i>Human beings, any human being, in tremendously adverse conditions, can survive and create and also give their existence a different relation, in spite of the inhuman conditions they were subjected to.</i>
<b>Mac Dende</b> <sup>151</sup>	<i>(Background: rhythm of the drum of bomba)</i>
<b>Marimbero Cimarrón</b> <b>Juan García Salazar</b>	<i>A lot of children from African ancestry do not know that in this country there was slavery, there are a lot that just don't know, but they also don't know that after slavery we gathered together, we healed ourselves, we looked for each other, and we forgave, and we went on, and that takes courage, it is not something funny, you know? Sometimes people say, this 'moreno' is funny, but I say no, it is not funny, it is courage, it is about loving yourself, hugging yourself, giving warmth to yourself, it is not funny, I mean, it is not a fault, not even humorous, it is courage. An Afro-Ecuadorian is always self-healing, self-adjusting, gathering the pieces of her/his own body, gathering them together to make one</i>
<b>Banda Mocha 'San Miguel de Chalguayacu'</b> <sup>152</sup>	<i>(Background: Bomba version of the song 'La Caderona')</i>
<b>Bombera Cimarrona</b> <b>Doña María Rogelia Minda</b>	<i>In that time, we loved Bomba a lot, whenever we had a child's baptism, we would perform Bomba</i>
<b>Bombero Cimarrón Don Jesús Torres Minda</b>	<i>Usually it lasted three or four days, especially when there were the festivities for our saints, three or four days.</i>
<b>Unknown</b> <sup>153</sup>	<i>(Background: Marimba version of the song 'La Caderona')</i>
<b>Marimbera Cimarrona</b> <b>Rosa Huila</b>	<i>My mum, my grandmother, they used to organise huge performances of Marimba, I will never forget those memories. I was pretty young but I remember perfectly how they used to dance.</i>
<b>Banda Mocha 'San Miguel de Chalguayacu'</b> <sup>154</sup>	<i>(Background: Bomba version of the song 'La Caderona')</i>

<sup>151</sup> Sounds recorded at Goldsmiths College (London, UK) in 2018 with the permission of the musician.

<sup>152</sup> Material undated. Generously donated by Juan Ruales and Javier Torres from the 'Universidad Técnica del Norte' (Ibarra, Ecuador).

<sup>153</sup> Material undated. Generously donated by Nora Bammer. The name of the group that is interpreting this version of Marimba is unknown.

<sup>154</sup> Material undated. Generously donated by Juan Ruales and Javier Torres from the 'Universidad Técnica del Norte' (Ibarra, Ecuador).



Bombero Cimarrón Ezequiel Sevilla	<i>There was Segundo Delgado, also Juan Delgado, when those two brothers began to play, one of them began playing the guitar and the other one would follow, it was so beautiful, can you imagine? They used to dance eight, even fifteen days, that long!</i>
Villagers at the church of the community of Telembí (Cayapas river, Esmeraldas)	<i>(Prayers and chants)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>When there were the celebrations for 'lo divino', that was to celebrate the saints, the Virgins, then they would first pray, then they sung, then they would perform the 'alabaos', the 'salves', all of that, then the 'arrullos' until four in the morning, then they would cover the divine image with a cloth, and then, the Marimba or the guitar began, that was for 'lo humano'.</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón <sup>155</sup>	<i>Because our elders, when we were children, they taught us how to pray for the 'Tunda' not to take us, for the diablo not to take us and all of that, and I remember everything until now, I do know the words for, if the diablo comes, making him go away.</i>
Bombera Cimarrona Doña Eudocia Chalá	<i>People say that the duende just reached until half way towards the door in the church, people say the duende comes in through under the altar.</i>
Banda Mocha 'San Vicente de la Victoria' <sup>156</sup>	<i>(Background: song 'Mi linda Victoria')</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez	<i>David could play Bomba with just one hand, the advantage of David of playing with one hand was that when he realised he was loosing, he would play with one hand and make the sign of the cross with the other one.</i>
Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>People say that the diablo would go to the celebrations they used to say that he waited at the door...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>And he used to be there, with women, flirting with them, they were about to leave.</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>Here the person who used to tell us the story of the diablo was the decedent Remberto, I heard him talking about it, that once in the middle of a celebration I don't know where, and because he was a child, his mum had to take him with her, his mum went to a Marimba celebration so he was there with her. Suddenly, he saw a man arriving at the saloon, he saw him doing the steps for Marimba, and then he began to dance with a dancing couple,</i>

<sup>156</sup> Song taken from the 'Disco del Primer Festival de Música y Danza Afroecuatoriana de la Cuenca del río Mira' (1992). Material generously donated by Juan Ruales and Javier Torres from the 'Universidad Técnica del Norte' (Ibarra, Ecuador).

	<i>and suddenly, the decedent Remberto saw his tail!</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Don Nacho Caicedo	<i>They used to say that the diablo used to come, and that he had a tail, and horns, they used to say that he was a different being</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>There were people who saw a man with horns and a tail</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>Did you hear that? They used to say that the diablo was there, dancing, he was so well dressed they said, he came up here with his fine clothes, with his hat</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>The diablo is the best dancer of this life, the diablo made a female dancer faint</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez	<i>(Background: Bomba song 'Bonito se ve el arado')</i>
Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda	<i>He danced, the duende used to dance, with the woman with whom he fell in love, but she didn't realise it, she said she saw he had a normal height, but we realised his height wasn't normal, he was really tall, we also realised he wasn't touching the ground.... Then we found out that he went to face the duende, because the duende was saying that he knows more than him, but when David heard that, he just carried his Bomba on his back...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>And then, an elder was playing the marimba, and a man arrives and tells him, 'Elder! Don't you want me to help you play a bit of marimba?' 'OK', said the elder, 'here are the sticks'. And then, the man who just arrived plays the marimba, he plays a Bambuco and he sings and adds his 'glosa', that was like this; 'Angelina is in the room', who is Angelina? Angelina is the diablo's wife, she is Angelina, 'my brothers are there, come with me my friends, we will take all of you'. So then the elder just stood up and thought; 'Angelina? everyone come, we will take you?'</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón 'Don Naza' <sup>157</sup>	<i>(Song lyrics: The death asked me the letter that I was keeping, but I cannot read, so I cannot understand the letter...)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>The elders – very old elders- first prayed for the diablo not to come.</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>For him to run away...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Don Nacho Caicedo	<i>Then they began to pray...</i>
Villagers at the church of the community of	<i>(Prayers and chants)</i>

<sup>157</sup> ExpresarteEC, "Ensamble Papá Roncón y Don Naza (EXPRESARTE Música)," [Video File], May 21, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nO0ehtsg6I>.

Telembí (Cayapas river, Esmeraldas)	
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>And when they are praying, they are invoking words for 'lo divino', a prayer, such as 'La Magnífica', which is the most important of all prayers, because with it, if Satan is even ten yards off, he runs away, otherwise 'Magnífica y en Grandeza'</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>So he shook himself and said: 'Give me the sticks!' and he added his verse; 'from the sea I come, I have a headache, to not say anything else, Magnífica y en Grandeza!'</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>Or they said; 'from the sea I come, I come inside a clamshell, for a diablo who is unleashed, Magnífica y en Grandeza!'</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>Magnífica y en Grandeza! Were the sort of words that that man said</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>Or they said, 'Holy Mary from Jesus creed, I denounce Satan, tell me if you are the diablo, or if you have more cards'</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Don nacho Caicedo	<i>They said; 'Most Holy Mary', and the rest replied, 'conceived without sin', and then they began to pray</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Linberg Valencia	<i>Can we say the verses of 'lo divino' belong to God and the verses of 'lo humano' belong to the diablo?</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>Exactly, that is the belief, 'lo humano' is when we make up verses, you know? Like, for example, if there is an enemy, or a person who is mad at you, right? So to provoke him you give him a 'Desafío' that is what elders used to call 'versos chocantes' but that is only when we are mad, so to provoke the fight I make up a verse for him, but first I sing loudly with the marimba</i>
	<i>(Background: sighs)<sup>158</sup></i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Mendez	<i>That person gave him a Desafío and brought him up to the mountain, possibly at midnight, so they walked for I don't know how many hours during the night, through the bushes and the mountain, and then they arrived in a place where they sat down. There the battle between David Lara and the duende began</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>There comes the diablo, throwing sticks, they say I am leaving, that the day is coming, there comes the diablo...</i>
Bomberas Cimarronas 'Las Tres Marías'	<i>(Background: laughter)</i>

<sup>158</sup> Sounds recorded with permission during the movement workshop about Afro-Brazilian funeral rites of passage lead by the Afro-Brazilian artist and academic Ana Beatriz Almeida. The workshop was held at Goldsmiths College (London, UK) in 2018.

Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón <sup>159</sup>	<i>(Background: Marimba song ‘Bambuco’)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>And then when they looked for him, they couldn’t find him anymore</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>When suddenly they fell and bang! They were in the living room</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>And boom boom boom! People fell down and the house stood rocking for a while, he was about to take all of them, but then the elder shook himself because he saw that the glosa that the diablo sang said Angelina, so he thought; ‘Did he said Angelina?’ you didn’t know that Angelina was the name of the diablo’s wife right? Yes, Angelina is the name of the diablo’s wife</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón <sup>160</sup>	<i>Here comes the diablo, let him come, ‘cos if he comes angry, I’ll make him laugh</i>
Bomberos Cimarronas ‘Las Tres Marías’	<i>(Background: laughter)</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>He would just listen to those verses and run away, because the elders used to sing powerful verses</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón <sup>161</sup>	<i>Don’t you dare sing silly things, because if I want to...</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>The diablo disappeared!</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>To expel the diablo</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>And a strong smell of sulphur stayed in the room</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Mendez	<i>The bomba drum of the diablo didn’t have ‘tierra’, and a lot of people would say, what is tierra? His bomba just had ‘cielo’, the bomba from the demon, or from the diablo, that means it had the leather just on one side, let’s say that they had this side with leather but not the other side, but David had the advantage that he had a bomba drum with the leather on both sides, that was his advantage. Also that David Lara played bomba with a Galindo tune, and the diablo couldn’t play Bomba with that sound</i>

<sup>159</sup> CD: Papá Roncón & Katanga: Marimba Magia (Papá-Roncón, Mina Quintero, & Huila Valencia, 2000)

<sup>160</sup> CD: Papá Roncón & Katanga: Marimba Magia (Papá-Roncón, Mina Quintero, & Huila Valencia, 2000)

<sup>161</sup> CD: Papá Roncón & Katanga: Marimba Magia (Papá-Roncón, Mina Quintero, & Huila Valencia, 2000)

Bombero Cimarrón David Lara <sup>162</sup>	<i>(Background: Music of Bomba)</i>
Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda	<i>Because he used to play in a variety of ways, standing up, sitting down, and he used to hold the bomba in a particular way, with his two hands while playing, and he sang in a thousand ways, and he could play the drum with his elbows, it was so beautiful!</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez	<i>Then the diablo, when he realised he was defeated, disappeared because he couldn't defeat David Lara, because of his instrument, because he made the sign of the cross, because he played Galindo, so then the diablo turned around and disappeared like a flame</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>In this way a lot of 'cantores' could defeat the diablo and strip him from his power, men and women could do it</i>
Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda	<i>So then he did beat him, Don David beat the duende by playing bomba, that's why we used to tell him when we saw him; 'Instead of David, we'll call you duende, because you defeated the duende!' and he would laugh and reply; 'you do what you want, I know I defeated him, I am stronger than the diablo, and if the diablo can't defeat me, neither you can!'</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón <sup>163</sup>	<i>You can come now diablo, we are not afraid of you, we will make you laugh, come near, we can pray and strip you from your power, because we know how to pray, come and we'll make you laugh diablo</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón	<i>I do know the words that make the diablo go away...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Remberto Escobar Quiñónez	<i>They destroyed the diablo...</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Rosa Huila	<i>He just left...</i>
Bombero Cimarrón Teodoro Méndez	<i>The diablo when he realised he was defeated...</i>
Marimbera Cimarrona Doña Maura Manuela Medina	<i>The diablo disappeared...</i>
Bombera Cimarrona Doña María Rogelia Minda	<i>I am stronger than the diablo, even the diablo cannot defeat me, so nor can you!</i>

<sup>162</sup> This song is one of the few recorded performances of the Bombero Cimarrón David Lara - 'El Rey David'. It was video-recorded by Jean Muteba Rahier and Ataulfo Tobar and included in their documentary 'Chota: Vida y Palabras' (Ecuador: Departamento de Antropología de la PUCE, 1988).

<sup>163</sup> Song 'Bambuco'. Taken from the CD: Papá Roncón & Katanga: Marimba Magia (Papá-Roncón, Mina Quintero, & Huila Valencia, 2000)

<p>Marimbero Cimarrón Papá Roncón</p>	<p><i>I'll make him laugh</i></p>
<p>Marimbero Cimarrón Juan García Salazar</p>	<p><i>The ones who used to be dominated, the ones who used to be enslaved, with their power of resistance, with their music, their poetry, their healing wisdom, their remedies, and their diverse ways of oral traditions, their tales, their stories, their myths, have become once more what they were not before, because let us not forget that they were enslaved people, chattel goods, but now, they have become once more human beings...</i></p>

### Third Research-based Sonic Composition

Chapter four: Collective Memories of Marimberos and Bomberos Cimarrones:  
understanding the level of ‘the enunciated’ of a decolonial project

#### **The collective memories of Marimberos Cimarrones: The disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba**

-Please listen before reading up to **Chapter four - section: The collective memories of Marimberos Cimarrones: The disappearance of cimarrón-participatory Marimba -**

Village of Telembí	<i>(Background: Sounds of the jungle and river)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>...Back, way way back, when the world was made from nothing, and everything that can be seen was made from nothing, as far as they have told me, men, sorry, I am saying it wrong, and women too, come from the one whom we all know. I do not know, if in the moment of distribution everything was divided into so many groups of humans, but what I do know, about people my colour, and what I say and shout with pride over and over again, is that the one whom we all know, the one who made everything without asking for any help, put the Marimba in our skin, in the best way possible, within our happiness, in its own way, vociferous, rowdy, primitive....</i>
Marimberos Cimarrones Papá Roncón, Rosa Huila and Catalina Mina <sup>164</sup>	<i>(Laughter) and the tobacco!</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Gurmecinde Ibarra and others <sup>165</sup> and voices of villagers of Telembí	<i>(Background: music of marimba and voices)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>On that day, the Marimba was getting ready for the party, the celebration was ready, and people were saying that it should last until the next day. The tiple and Bombo began to</i>

<sup>164</sup> Material undated. Generously donated by members of the ‘Radio Antena Libre’ (Esmeraldas, Ecuador)

<sup>165</sup> Song 101 entitled ‘Currulao Bambuco’ recorded in the city of San Lorenzo (Esmeraldas, Ecuador). Taken from the ‘CD: Afro-Hispanic Music from Western Colombia and Ecuador - Smithsonian Folkways’ Norman E. Whitten and Ronald Clyne, *CD: Afro-Hispanic Music from Western Colombia and Ecuador - Smithsonian Folkways* (New York: Smithsonian Folkways Records, 1967), <http://www.folkways.si.edu/afro-hispanic-music-from-western-colombia-and-ecuador/african-american-music-latin-world/music/album/smithsonian>. Used with permission.

	<i>play the notes of a Patacoré</i>
Music group 'Los Embajadores de Telembí' lead by the Marimbero Cimarrón Don Nacho Caicedo	<i>(Background: Music of Marimba)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>An Agua Larga that began to show off...</i>
Marimberos Cimarrones from San Lorenzo <sup>166</sup>	<i>(Lyrics: Ayayay!!! people pay attention! Listen to those words!!! I am learning how to read... I am going to die, because the two of them are going away from me, water that crying goes...)</i>
Villagers of Telembí <sup>167</sup>	<i>(Laughters)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>...The glosador, who was so elegant, did not look too good, but when he began to sing</i>
Unknown <sup>168</sup>	<i>Lyrics: Bye bye, I am going Caramba, I am going...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>I am not the one who is saying this; the Marimba is the one who told me. Maybe, I am about to understand that Marimba and that man did not speak the same language, when he said, or the rest of them said: Aaaa, Marimba never said: Hopa, she just sang...</i>
Villagers of Telembí <sup>169</sup>	<i>Andarele! Andarele is beautiful!</i>
Marimberos Cimarrones Papá Roncón, Rosa Huila, Catalina Mina and others <sup>170</sup>	<i>Lyrics: Andarele, let's go</i>
Villager of Telembí <sup>171</sup>	<i>Andarele! Andarele was beautiful!</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>...The Marimba was the one who told me, she thought that maybe they told her things like busybody, deceitful, dimwit, lazy but mmm what do I know?</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Jalisco Gonzales	<i>...The Marimba told me, that some people appeared from nowhere, saying that we should all pay attention, saying</i>

<sup>166</sup> Song 104 entitled 'Currulao Agua Grande' recorded in the city of San Lorenzo (Esmeraldas, Ecuador). Taken from the 'CD: Afro-Hispanic Music from Western Colombia and Ecuador - Smithsonian Folkways' (Whitten and Clyne). Names of the performers non-specified. Used with permission.

<sup>167</sup> Recorded during the celebration of Marimba in the community of Telembí (Cayapas River, Eloy Alfaro-Esmeraldas)

<sup>168</sup> Material generously donated by Nora Bammer. The name of the group that is interpreting this version of the Marimba song 'Caramba' is unknown.

<sup>169</sup> Recorded during the celebration of Marimba in the community of Telembí.

<sup>170</sup> Material undated. Generously donated by members of the 'Radio Antena Libre' (Esmeraldas, Ecuador)

<sup>171</sup> Recorded during the celebration of Marimba in the community of Telembí.



	<i>that they were authorities. What attention did they want? Those so-called authorities kicked their heads with clubs, and boom boom boom! Their blood came out, and they destroyed the Marimba, bombo and cununo, everything got in pieces, and they threw them on the street, thinking they were dead...</i>
Church of Telembí	<i>(Sounds of bells)</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Xavier Vera Kooke	<i>...Marimba's censorship had a lot to do with the influence of the church, during those years and even until now, there has been only one accepted religion here, and they were the ones who could say which music could be listened and which could not. The first argument for banning the Marimba was that its music was from the diablo, that it incited wildness and lust, and at that time non-black people used to listen to European waltzes or music that was brought from Europe, so they did not like these performances...</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Alberto Castillo	<i>Because here one of the things that were supposedly an insult was if someone told us, look, there is a Marimbera!</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Xavier Vera Kooke	<i>In 1926, the governor Don Carlos Díaz Castrillón prohibited the sound of Marimba in the city of Esmeraldas with the threat of jail. The Church talked with the local authorities and asked for people who performed Marimba to get expelled or jailed, and they would say, but we just expelled them here, nearby, to the 6 de Diciembre street, but, the city of Esmeraldas had two streets, they did send them many streets far away from the city and then, they even wanted to send them up there to the 'Gatazo', which is the highest mountain around... relatives of Don Carlos Díaz who are still alive say that yes, they stick up for him, they do not see it as something negative, they just say, oh yes, my grandfather, my great-grandfather was the one who prohibited Marimba, they said it with such insolence that it was scary...</i>
Pablo Minda	<i>People said that in Bolivar Street, which, used to be called the tontódromo<sup>172</sup> of Esmeraldas, they could not perform marimba, so, Marimba was taken to the suburbs, there, to a neighbourhood now called 'Barrio caliente', where most black people lived, so there, people did their dances, thus, Marimba was prohibited here in Esmeraldas until 1940</i>
Marimbero Cimarrón Edgardo Prado	<i>Marimba was prohibited for a while, then, people could just perform at the 10 de Agosto Street... ..It wasn't possible to find that music anywhere else. What kind of fuss are those black people making?? Was more or less the type of the derogatory comments they used to make to us...</i>

<sup>172</sup> This signifies walking up and down the main street for hours when there is nothing else to do, looking at the same shop windows, greeting the same people.

<p><b>Marimbero Cimarrón Vera Kooke</b></p>	<p><i>Afterwards, in the 1950s, more or less in 1954, when Carlos Montaña was the chief police officer in Esmeraldas, he did not just prohibit Marimba in the central part of the city but he also jailed some people for performing Marimba</i></p>
<p><b>Marimbera Cimarrona Petita Palma</b></p>	<p><i>I would lie if I said that when I arrived here there was no Marimba. Yes, there was Marimba, but it was dead, because they used to say that it was a thing from blacks. Here, they were really racist. They didn't want to hear that bombo...</i></p>
<p><b>Marimbero Cimarrón Xavier Vera Kooke</b></p>	<p><i>But they do not acknowledge it as something racist. They say, no! it wasn't racism! It is just that blacks are too noisy. So because blacks are too noisy, we had to send them there, far away... Telling someone black is not racism? telling someone that it is too noisy is not racist? Creating a new neighbourhood, far away from the city, like ten blocks away, for them to make their 'noise' without disturbing people from 'La Merced' is not racist? Expelling them, and putting them into jail for playing marimba, is not racism? They do not acknowledge that all of these are racist attitudes and that they were against the Marimba and maybe against something else. So then, racism becomes way too big a word for me. If everything they have done to us is not because of racism, then, I do not know what racism is anymore. If you know, tell me...</i></p>

## **Appendix C. Biographies of the main experts whose testimonies and experiences are included in this thesis<sup>173</sup>**

**Agustín Ramón San Martín:** Born in 1953 in the city of Loja (Loja province).

Agustín learned to sing and play guitar and flute when he was five years old from his father. He is a cultural promoter, writer, musician, interpreter and composer.

Agustín is well known among Marimberos, Bomberos and local and foreign researchers and musicians because of his friendliness, hard work and continuous support of Afro-Ecuadorian culture. Agustín worked for almost a decade at the Universidad Técnica del Norte in Ibarra city (Imbabura province), where in 1992 he organised two unique festivals of ‘Bandas Mochas’ that brought together Afro-Ecuadorian musicians from Imbabura and Carchi provinces at a time when this was extremely uncommon. Agustín is also one of the people who, in 2001, founded the ‘Conservatorio de Música de la Municipalidad de Esmeraldas’, which includes Marimba Esmeraldeña as one of its principal genres. He works in the Conservatory to this day. Agustín has also written two unpublished books that narrate in detail the history of Esmeraldas.<sup>174</sup>

**Alberto Castillo Palma:** Born in Esmeraldas city in 1961, where he still lives.

Alberto is the only son of the renowned Marimbera, Petita Palma Piñeiros. He learned to perform and make the instruments of Marimba from his mother and from other well-known Marimberos of the time such as Remberto Escobar, Escolástico

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<sup>173</sup> The experts included in this list are Ecuadorians. Also, with the two exceptions of Agustín Ramón and Numas Ramírez, all the rest self-identify as Afro-Ecuadorians.

<sup>174</sup> To know more about Agustín Ramón’s work watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2-l3c8fJ7w>

Solís and José ‘Josesito’ Vicente Castillo Montaña, whom Alberto considers the best Marimba performer of all times<sup>175</sup>. Alberto is a performer and also knows how to make all the instruments of the music genre of Marimba Esmeraldeña. So far, he has made around two thousand instruments. Alberto is the current director of the Marimba folk group ‘Tierra Caliente’, which was founded by his mother decades ago. He also teaches Marimba at the ‘Conservatorio de Música de la municipalidad de Esmeraldas’. Alberto has three daughters, all of whom perform Marimba.<sup>176</sup>

**Catalina Mercedes Ortiz Palacios:** Born in 1954 in Telembí, a community near the Cayapas river (Esmeraldas province), where she still lives. Doña Catalina is one of the founders and leading voices of the village’s group of traditional ‘cantaoras’ (singers) and ‘bailadoras’ (dancers). She has vivid memories of the performances of Marimba that used to be organised by her older relatives when she was a child. Doña Catalina loves performing Marimba and can recall many of the dance steps and other memories that most Marimberos have already forgotten.

**Cristobal Barahona:** Born in 1931 in the Afro-Choteño community of Juncal. Don Cristobal is one of the last builders alive of the bomba drum. In 2013, one of his bomba drums even became part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is also a singer and drum player. Although he is less well known for his singing, he plays and sings Bomba with the voice quality of the ‘mayores’<sup>177</sup>.

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<sup>175</sup> Edgardo Prado shared that José Castillo was the only Marimbero that could play the marimba with four drumsticks.

<sup>176</sup> To know more about Alberto Castillo’s life and work watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ta8PPsogUI>

<sup>177</sup> To listen Don Cristobal singing bomba go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooNuaKqwk0>

**Diego Palacios Ocles:** Born in 1988 in the Afro-Choteño community of Juncal, Diego has played and sung Bomba since he was a child. Diego comes from a lineage of Bomberos. The famous Bombero Cristobal Barahona is his great uncle. Diego is also a young academic, activist and PhD candidate at FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - Quito, Ecuador). He is a very talented actor and singer, influencer and YouTuber. In 2004 he began to rap and formed a few groups of urban music. From 2007 he became an activist and co-founded the ‘Red de Jóvenes del Territorio Ancestral Chota, la Concepción y Salinas’, of which he is an active member until now. He successfully runs the YouTube channel ‘Ovo Pepino Ovo’ which is widely viewed, especially among young Afro-Choteños. In his YouTube Channel, Diego produces and acts in short sketches that show in a satiric way the daily lives of Afro-Choteños.<sup>178</sup>

**Ezequiel Sevilla:** Born in 1948 in the community of Ponce (Carchi province), he moved to the community of San Juan de Lachas when he was five years old and has been living there since then. Don Ezequiel has vivid memories of performances of Bomba among his family and friends since he was a child, when each family used to have his Bomba drum hanging up in the living room. In those days, it was very difficult for a family to loan their Bomba drum to another family. As Don Ezequiel told me, ‘la bomba era de uso personal y familiar’ (the Bomba drum was for use by the individual and their family). Usually, the father of each family was the one who

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<sup>178</sup> To watch Diego Palacio’s Youtube channel go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0dcUGo5crZHR9WJzdKswQQ>

built the drum. Therefore, he learned to perform and build the Bomba from his father when he was in his twenties. Nowadays, there are only a few builders of the Bomba drum left. In the 1990s, the renowned Afro-Choteña Aida Espinoza helped spread the word of a man -Don Ezequiel- who still remembered how to build the Bomba drum. In recent years he has been more widely recognised for this unique ability. Don Ezequiel receives a good number of foreign and local visitors that are interested in buying a drum or interviewing him.

**Galo Rivera León:** Born in Esmeraldas city, Galo is a lawyer and cultural promoter. He grew up in the neighbourhood ‘Barrio Caliente’, where Marimba Esmeraldeña was frequently performed. Thus, Galo has vivid memories of a variety of performances, including the period when Marimba began to disappear slowly. As a cultural promoter, he had the opportunity to talk with many of the most renowned Marimberos of the time.

**Gualberto Espinoza:** Born in 1966 in the Afro-Choteño village of Santa Ana, Gualberto is the son and the nephew of two of the most renowned Bomba musicians and composers, Eliecer Espinoza and Mario Polo. He is a farmer, tailor, anthropologist, diplomat, and dancer and musician of Bomba. Gualberto is a fierce advocate of Bomba and has lots of memories of his relatives performing Bomba. Gualberto has been interviewed widely by local and foreign researchers. He is a member of the Bomba music group ‘Diamantes Negros’ for whom he has composed a good number of Bomba songs. The lyrics of his songs are usually related to Bomba as an essential part of the collective memories of Afro-Choteños.

**Guillermo Ayoví Erazo ‘Papá Roncón’:** Born in 1930 in Borbón, Esmeraldas. When he was a young boy, he used to help his father sell a fish called ‘roncador’ (snorer) by yelling throughout the streets ‘el roncador, el roncador!’. From then, people began to call him ‘roncador’ and afterwards, ‘roncón’. The adding of ‘Papá’ (father), is a way to acknowledge his father in his daily life. Papá Roncón is one of the most celebrated and charismatic Marimberos alive. He learned to perform Marimba as a young adult from the indigenous group named as ‘Chachis’. From the 1970s, Papá became a renowned performer. He has performed in most Ecuadorian cities and also in the United States, Venezuela, Colombia and Japan. Papá Roncón also founded the group and Marimba school ‘La Catanga’. There is no researcher, musician, or person interested in Marimba or Afro-Ecuadorian culture who has not heard of Papá and wanted to visit him. As Juan García Salazar mentioned, if one hears about Papá but has not witnessed his stories and powerful performances, he could seem like a mythical and magical character taken from a book. In 2011 he was awarded the ‘Premio Eugenio Espejo’ for his contribution to Afro-Ecuadorian culture. In 2016, a monument was built in his honour in the central park of Borbón. Papá still lives in Borbón, where he generously receives many visitors.<sup>179</sup>

**Iván Pabón Chalá:** Born in 1966 in the Afro-Choteño community of Piquiucho. Anthropologist, historian and PhD candidate at the Universidad de Oviedo. Iván remembers that when he was a teenager, as in those days there was no electricity, villagers used to play music just with the Bomba drum and the guitar, for people to dance. So in each village, there used to be a group of musicians. Although he never

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<sup>179</sup> To know more about Papá Roncón go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WersOIPRKXA> and to listen to his music go to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QcO\\_K9xJI0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QcO_K9xJI0)

danced or played Bomba, he still remembers those performances in detail. Iván is also one of the founding members of the FECONIC (Federación de Comunidades Negras de Imbabura y Carchi). He has also plays an essential role in the Afro-Ecuadorian ethno-education program.<sup>180</sup>

**Jesús Torres Minda:** Born in a small farmhouse in ‘Palo Amarillo’ (near the old road that goes from Esmeraldas city to San Lorenzo city) where he lives until now. Don Jesús wanted to learn to play the guitar since he was a child, but he could not get a guitar, so he learned to play the ‘Hoja de Naranja’ (orange leaf) first and then he learned to play the guitar by ear. For a long time, he was the principal musician of a banda mocha. Thus, Don Jesús also knows how to build all the instruments for the banda mocha, such as the flutes and puros. Don Ezequiel became famous for his ability to play a variety of instruments of the Bomba music genre, including the drum, the guitar, and especially, the Hoja de Naranja, that not many people know how to play anymore.<sup>181</sup>

**José David Lara ‘Rey David’ (King David):** Born at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Afro-Choteño community of Tumbatú. He is the most renowned Bombero of all times. Rey David is remembered with love and pride by many adults and elders among Afro-Choteño communities because of his happiness, kind heart, humbleness and bravery. Rey David loved to perform Bomba music, especially in order to make people dance and have fun. For instance, Doña Belermina Congo

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<sup>180</sup> To learn more about Ivan Pabón’ knowledge of Bomba del Chota go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0u7E9kOmNM>

<sup>181</sup> For more information about Don Jesús Torres Minda see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNQYB7IYn0>



remembers that Rey David used to tell her; ‘yo le voy a hacer regorgorear a esta bomba, para que baile mi sobrina’ (I will beat the drum so fast my hands will become a blur for you to dance my dear niece). He is also remembered as a mysterious man who was better than the diablo to perform Bomba del Chota. El Rey David used to live in an old shack in the middle of the mountain, and he never wore shoes, not because he could not, but because he did not like to. People said he could even walk over cut glass without harming himself. Rey David passed away in 1995. However, as Don Teodoro Mendez mentioned when sharing his memories about Rey David, ‘He is the king until now’.

**José Gabriel ‘Nacho’ Caicedo Ayoví:** Born in 1948 in the community of San Miguel, by the Santiago River in Esmeraldas. A long time ago, he moved to the nearby community of Telembí where he has lived ever since. When he was a young boy, his father brought home an old Marimba, which was always hung in the ceiling of the house. Don Nacho could never go to school. However, each day, before leaving for work, his father would teach Don Nacho and his brothers a little bit of Marimba, and they, especially Don Nacho, would practice the rest of the day. Don Nacho also learned how to build the instruments of the Marimba music genre from his father. He is one of the few builders of the Marimba instrument still alive who know how to build it in a traditional way, for it to sound ‘as if the forest was singing’. Recently, Don Nacho had an operation in which he lost his sight. However, he still has vivid memories of Marimba Esmeraldeña and enjoys sharing them. His dream is teaching new generations about Marimba Esmeraldeña.

**Juan García Salazar ‘Bambero Mayor’ (the wisest):** Born in 1944 in a small town of north Esmeraldas named ‘El Cuerval’ but lived most of his life in the community of Playa de Oro (Santiago river). Juan always defined himself as an ‘Obrero del Proceso negro de Ecuador y Colombia’ (Community activist of Black Ecuadorians’ and Colombians’ civil rights). However, people usually refer to him as the Bambero Mayor. ‘Bambero’ refers to a wise and mature person. Bambero Mayor highlights his enormous wisdom and the impact his life and work has had on many Afro-Ecuadorians. Juan is remembered as a knowledgeable, kind and humble man, and as a fierce advocate of Afro-Ecuadorians’ dignity and traditions. Juan was a renowned historian, thinker, teacher, activist and storyteller. In 1989, he did his MA in the North American University of John Hopkins. He was also the leading producer of the recorded material that is currently held at the ‘Fondo Afro’ of the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar. Juan gathered this material by visiting most villages in both Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories in a period of more than fifty years. The Afro-Esmeraldeño writer Juan Montaña affirms that Juan García might have produced around fifty thousand research documents including books, unpublished texts, recorded interviews and performances, communal meetings and photographs. Juan also founded the Afro-Ecuadorian ethno-education group and until his death, led the production of school texts for Afro-Ecuadorian children to know their history. He also published extensively about Afro-Ecuadorian myths and stories, and the importance of the territory and collective memories of Afro-Ecuadorians. After a long battle with cancer, Juan passed away on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> To know more about Juan García Salazar’s idea watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU-Nb11gopM>

**Juan Montaña Escobar:** Born in Esmeraldas city. Juan Montaña is an activist, teacher, journalist, writer, poet and public servant. He has published poetry and prose and has been a columnist for the major newspapers of Ecuador such as ‘El Hoy’ and the online webpage ‘Rebelión’ where he critically writes about Afro-Ecuadorians’ history and struggles. In 2005, one of his stories won the third place at the ‘VIII Bienal de Cuento Pablo Palacios’.

**Larry Preciado Hernández:** Born in 1969 in Esmeraldas city, where he lives until now. Considered one of the best performers alive of the music genre of marimba. Larry learned Marimba as a young person in the ‘Escuela de Música del Banco Central’ with Alberto Castillo and Petita Palma, among others. He was part of the Municipal Symphonic Band ‘Coral y Esmeraldas’, with whom he travelled all over the world. Larry is a gifted improviser who is conscious of both the importance of tradition and the development of Marimba. For two consecutive years, 2000 and 2001, Larry won the category ‘Best marimba musician’ in the renowned Colombian music festival ‘Petronio Álvarez’.<sup>183</sup>

**‘Las Tres Marías’:** Margarita Rosa Helena (1940), María Magdalena (1941) and Gloria Pabón (1944) Julius are three sisters who are part of this renowned music group of Bomba del Chota. They were born in the Afro-Choteño village of Changuayacu, where Margarita Rosa Helena and Gloria live until now. Margarita Rosa Helena is also the midwife of the village, whereas María Magdalena was the

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<sup>183</sup> To watch Larry Preciado performing the Marimba watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-TL0tXeYS0>

healer and Gloria is a farmer and a trader. Their father was part of the banda mocha, and they used to see him perform all the time. Since they could not use their fathers' instruments to perform, since it was unusual for females to be part of a banda mocha, they began to sing the songs of bomba performed by the banda mocha while making the sounds of the instruments with their mouths. Although they have a long trajectory as performers, they became famous only in 2008, when the Afro-Ecuadorian musician and activist Linberg Valencia spread the word about their work and the government of the time began to support local artists more. Since then, Las Tres Marías have performed widely in numerous local festivities and also in the principal cities of Ecuador and Colombia. Unfortunately, in September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Doña María Magdalena passed away. Despite this tremendous loss, Margarita Rosa Helena and Gloria are eager to continue performing. Currently, the daughter of one of Las Tres Marías is training to replace María Magdalena.<sup>184</sup>

**María Belermina Congo de Jesús:** Born in 1930 in the Afro-Choteño community of Chalguyacu. Doña Belermina grew up in the Afro-Choteño community of Juncal, where she became a renowned performer of Bomba, especially of the 'Desafío' (challenge) and the 'Baile de la Botella' (bottle dance). When she was young, villagers used to say that no one could perform Bomba better than Doña Belermina. Doña Belermina's love for performing, especially Bomba, goes beyond what she can explain with words. When she dances, she feels loved, alive and happy, so much so, that even now, between dancing and eating, she always chooses dancing. She has been widely interviewed by many local and foreign musicians and researchers. Doña Belermina is also known for her cooking skills, especially for the

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<sup>184</sup> To know more about Las Tres Marías watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mizkw1-Olxc>

‘arroz de cebada’ (barley rice) she cooks each Monday, because it brings good luck.<sup>185</sup>

**María Rogelia Minda:** Born in 1942 in the Afro-Choteño community of Chota. Doña María moved to the Afro-Choteño community of Tumbatú when she was ten years old and has been living there since then. Doña María loves performing Bomba. She has vivid memories of the performances of Bomba when she was young, especially during birthdays and other celebrations. Doña María got to meet the famous Bombero Rey David, whom she feared because she knew Rey David was stronger than the diablo. She is known in her community because of the ‘compuesto’ (sweet beverage) that she brings to each communal celebration as a gift. During her whole life, Doña María has prepared her compuesto with spices like cinnamon, ‘ishpingo’ (native sweet spice), ‘clavo de olor’ (cloves), ‘limoncillo’ (lemongrass) and ‘maracuyá’ (passion fruit), which she boils and mixes with puntas. She is the grandmother of the young activist, graphic designer and photographer Gilson Insuasti.

**Maura Manuela Medina Caicedo:** Born in front of the community of Telembí (Cayapas river, Esmeraldas). When she was young, Doña Maura used to dance Marimba for days, always with the permission of her parents. Eighteen years ago, she moved to Telembí and built her house there. Doña Maura has never travelled to a city, but she hopes that soon she will be able to visit the city of Guayaquil. She is the healer of the community, with an in-depth knowledge of herbs and rituals to physically and emotionally heal villagers who frequently go to her house in seek of

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<sup>185</sup> To learn more about Belermina Congo, watch [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yDA--iJ\\_04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yDA--iJ_04)

advice when they are feeling unwell.

**Numas Ramírez ‘Don Numas’.** Born in the city of San Lorenzo (Esmeraldas province) in 1929, where he lived his whole life. Don Numas was well-known because he is the first Ecuadorian who built a ‘Marimba de doble teclado’ or ‘Marimba cromática’ (double keyboard Marimba). According to Palacios Mateos’ research (2017, p. 198), because of Don Numas’ initiative, the Afro-Esmeraldeño musicians Alberto Castillo and Benjamin Venegas continue until now with the construction and performance of double keyboard Marimbas. A few years ago, Don Numas passed away.

**Pablo Minda.** Born in 1961 in the community of Rocafuerte (Imbabura province). Pablo comes from a lineage of Bomba musicians. His father was a musician, and his grandfather was a member of the banda mocha. Pablo is an anthropologist and PhD candidate in Latinamerican Studies at ‘Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar’ (Quito, Ecuador). He has also been a public servant. Pablo was in charge of producing the research document that was submitted to UNESCO for Marimba Esmeraldeña to be included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Pablo is highly critical about the process of folklorisation of Afro-Ecuadorian music and dances and has devoted part of his work to researching the role of Marimba in the life of Afro-Esmeraldeños. Currently, he is a teacher at ‘Universidad Vargas Torres’ in Esmeraldas city.

**Paulo Ayala Congo:** Born in 1986. Paulo is part of the first generation born in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, from a family who is originally from the Afro-Choteño community ‘Estación Carchi’. Paulo comes from a lineage of Bomberos, he

is not just the relative of the renowned Bomberos ‘Hermanos Congo’ but he has also been part of Bomba celebrations organised by his family both in Chota-Mira and in Quito from a young age. Paulo enjoys performing Bomba, which he feels as a vital part of his life and identity. Paulo is a Social communicator and anthropologist. Currently, he is a PhD candidate of Latin American history at UASB (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar-Quito, Ecuador).

**Petita Palma Piñeiros:** Born in 1928 in the village of Carondelet (Esmeraldas province), Petita comes from a lineage of Marimberos. Her grandfather used to build marimbas; her mother was a ‘cantaora’, and her father used to build and perform Marimba. She was the pioneer of the recovery of many collective memories related to Marimba at a time when it was about to disappear. In 1969, Petita created her first Marimba school, and in 1972 she founded the renowned Marimba folk group ‘Tierra Caliente’. Most Marimberos affirm that Petita is the person that has fought the most for the survival of Marimba Esmeraldeña. In the 1990s, Petita and her group were invited by the University of Harvard to perform in New York and Boston. In 2017, the Ecuadorian Embassy in Nigeria baptised its pressroom ‘Petita Palma’ to honour her essential role in preserving Marimba Esmeraldeña. In that room, a photograph of Petita and a history of her trajectory and essential contributions can be found. Petita lives until now at the same house in central Esmeraldas city that was donated by her decades ago to build her Marimba school.

**Plutarco Viveros ‘Don Plutar’:** Born in the Afro-Choteño community of Mascarilla, in 1964, where he lives until now. Plutarco is a bomba musician who

plays the ‘requinto’ and guitar with such virtuosity and creativity that he is considered a legend in this genre. He is primarily known for being the director of the bomba music group ‘Marabú’. Marabú was founded in 1986, and they are one of the ground-breaking groups who introduced new instruments to the music genre of bomba with such success that they have toured throughout all the communities of Chota-Mira and even to other locations nationally and internationally. They are considered the best group of bomba music by many Bomberos.<sup>186</sup>

**Remberto Escobar ‘Don Rember’:** Born in 1911 in Borbón, Esmeraldas, Don Rember lived most of his life in Esmeraldas city. He is the most famous Marimbero of all times. Don Rember comes from a lineage of Marimberos. His father played marimba, and his mother sang marimba. He is remembered with love and respect by Marimberos because of his insightfulness, excellent memory, great talking and lovely character. He loved playing jokes on people and was an extremely humble, friendly and approachable person. Don Rember was a ‘decimero’ (composer of décimas), hunter, builder of the instruments such as the Marimba Esmeraldeña and guitar, and performer of Marimba. He was a member of one of the first folk groups of Marimba, ‘Verdes Palmeras’ and also of other folk groups such as ‘Jolgorio’, ‘Tierra Caliente’, and ‘Tierra, Sol y Tambor’. Don Rember is the only Marimbero that has a book based on his memories (Escobar Quiñonez, 1997). He passed away in 1998.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> For more details about Vivero’s life and Marabú’s trajectory, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV6gN8wtxzo>

<sup>187</sup> To watch Remberto Escobar recite some décimas go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTatvPpTa1A>



**Rosa Huila:** Born in 1934 in Borbón, Esmeraldas. Rosa is a cultural promoter, singer and dancer of Marimba Esmeraldeña and ‘arrullos’ (sacred Afro-Ecuadorian music). From 1982 she gained recognition because of her participation in an Afro-Esmeraldeño festival. Since then, Rosa has become the leading singer of Papá Roncón’s groups. Rosa is also a celebrated cook of traditional Afro-Esmeraldeño dishes such as ‘encocao de pescao, camarón y guanta’ (stew made out of coconut with fish, shrimp or lowland paca) and traditional desserts such as the ‘cocadas’ (coconut based sweet), which she sells in the streets of Esmeraldas.

**Segundo Nazareno Mina ‘Don Naza’:** Born in Esmeraldas city in 1921. Until his early 20s, he used to work cleaning seeds of bananas, growing cacao and collecting the latex (sap) of rubber trees. However, in the late 1990s he joined the folk group ‘Bambuco’ and began to be widely acknowledged for his unique voice. In 2001 Don Naza was awarded as the best vocal interpreter of traditional music of the Colombo-Ecuadorian Pacific in the renowned Colombian Festival ‘Petronio Alvarez’. Don Naza passed away on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.<sup>188</sup>

**Segundo Teodoro Mendez de Jesús:** Born in 1962 in the Afro-Choteño community of Tumbatú, where he lives until now. Teodoro is the only son of the renowned Bomba dancer Doña Belermina Congo de Jesús. He proudly remembers that he began to play the rhythm of the Bomba drum by practising over glass bottles when he was eight years old; he saw David Lara ‘El Rey David’ performing Bomba. Later on, Teodoro would build his own bomba drum to keep practising. When he was

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<sup>188</sup> To know more about Don Naza watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGk3ceFZZ2k>

eighteen, he decided to learn more about Bomba because he saw how happy it made his mother. Don Teodoro became especially famous when in a contest in the 1990s, he suddenly began to perform Bomba with a bottle on his head. He surprised all the audience, not just because it is unusual for a male to perform with a bottle on his head, but because he did it with such virtuosity that he won the contest. Smiling as he recounts this, Don Teodoro remembers that after this victory, the renowned Bombera Mamá Zoilita told him, ‘Oiga Teodoro, usted baila como compactado del diablo!’ (Listen, Teodoro, you dance as if you have made a pact with the diablo!). Afterwards, he became the dancing partner of Mamá Zoilita. Both of them became the most acknowledged dancing couple of Bomba. They have performed widely in many of the Afro-Choteño communities, in the main cities of Ecuador and in Colombia- where they won the first prize-, Cuba, El Salvador and Perú. Teodoro is also well known for being a fierce advocate of everything related to Bomba del Chota. His dream and future project is to build a Centre about Afro-descendants’ culture, for which he even has the scale model ready. For this purpose, he has already gathered a lot of traditional instruments of the banda mocha and a good number of bomba drums built by different Bomberos.

**Walter Jacinto ‘Jalisco’ Gonzales Tenorio:** Born in 1943 in the city of Quinindé (Esmeraldas province), where he lives until now. Although it is not his real name, he is known and signs as Jalisco, since that is the way people call him because he used to frequently perform a song called ‘Ay Jalisco no te rajes’. Jalisco comes from a lineage of Marimberos. His father was a Marimbero and ‘glosador’, who improvised verses during performances and his mother was a dancer of Marimba. Jalisco remembers observing performances of Marimba since he was a small child.

Although he does not consider himself good at dancing or playing the marimba, he is a renowned writer and poet. Jalisco thinks he inherited this from his father's ability to improvise verses as a glosador during the performances of Marimba. Jalisco is also a cultural promoter and has served in several public administration posts. He has written four books, three of poetry and one about the history of his city, Quinindé. Most of his poetry describes the life of Afro-Esmeraldeños. Jalisco received the award 'La Marimba de Oro' from the Casa de la Cultura Benjamín Carrión - Núcleo Esmeraldas in 2014 for his work on Afro-Esmeraldeños' oral tradition. Jalisco passed away on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Xavier Vera Kooke:** Born in Esmeraldas city in 1971. Historian, sociologist, anthropologist, visual artist, writer and cultural promoter. Xavier has written a diversity of published and unpublished texts of history, poetry and prose. He is perhaps one of the most knowledgeable people about the history of Esmeraldas, including a vast list of famous historical characters that are not known anymore by younger people. Xavier is known because of his sincere generosity to share his knowledge with people he feels can contribute to making visible the hidden history of Afro-Esmeraldeños.

**Zoila Espinoza 'Mamá Zoilita, la Reina de la Bomba':** Born in 1933 in the Afro-Choteño community of Chota. Mamá Zoilita was well known not just by most Afro-Choteños but also by most Ecuadorians. Each time a journalist needed to write an article related to Bomba or Chota-Mira Valley's culture, he or she would directly go to interview and video record Mamá Zoilita dancing and telling stories. She was an extraordinarily charismatic and outgoing woman, who told me once she was able to

become a dancer just because her beloved husband was not like many other men and did support her. Mamá Zoilita was a great dancer of Bomba, primarily known for her latter years' participation with her dancing partner, the Bombero Teodoro Mendez, and for her encounters with a few Ecuadorian presidents in official events, where she would invite them to dance bomba with her. She was also a fierce and radical advocate of some of the collective memories related to Bomba. On one occasion, around six years ago, a group of young Afro-Choteño girls performed a presentational version of Bomba in the community of Chalguayacu in a small living room of a house while Doña Zoilita, other people and I were there. Suddenly, Doña Zoilita stood up and angrily left. Once the performance finished, I asked her what happened, and she, looking clearly disturbed, told me she could not stand how new generations 'jump' while performing the main dancing step of bomba, instead of doing the 'asentadito' (dragged) step. She told me that for her, this showed a lack of respect for the ancestors.<sup>189</sup> Mamá Zoilita passed away on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

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<sup>189</sup> For more information about Mamá Zoilita's life, go to <http://edizonleon.blogspot.com/2017/04/mama-zoilita-la-reina-de-la-bomba.html>. As for the 'arrastradito' step, I discuss it in detail in my MA thesis (See López Yáñez, 2013, p. 59).