Black community feminism in the Southwest of Colombia as a form of self-governance

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Abstract

This article explores a possible definition of Black community feminism based on the experience of one of the Mayoras of the Pacific region of Colombia. The research also seeks to contribute to the recognition of the work of women in the region and their own government and governance, based on organizational studies from the Afro-diasporic perspective. The methodology adopted is the ethnographic autobiography. The results show that this feminism could be understood as the practices of some Black women of the Pacific region of Colombia while leading the community, considering art as an essential element in this process.

Keywords: Self-government. Leadership. Re-existence. Resistance. Comadreo.

O feminismo negro baseado na comunidade no sudoeste da Colômbia como forma de autogovernação

Resumo

Este artigo visa explorar uma possível definição de feminismo da comunidade negra com base na experiência de uma das Mayoras da região da Colômbia do Pacífico, e contribuir para o reconhecimento do trabalho das mulheres desta região, do seu próprio governo e governação a partir de estudos de organização em perspectivas afro-diasportivas. A metodologia é a autobiografia etnográfica. Entre os resultados e conclusões está que este feminismo poderia ser entendido como as práticas e compromissos que algumas mulheres negras da região do Pacífico colombiano estão a assumir e a liderar da comunidade, vindicando a arte como um elemento fundamental neste processo.

Palavras-chave: Autogoverno. Liderança. Re-existência. Resistência. Comadreo.

Feminismo negro comunitario del suroccidente colombiano como forma de autogobierno

Resumen

El presente artículo pretende explorar una posible definición de lo que sería un feminismo negro comunitario a partir de la experiencia de una de las mayoras de la zona Pacífica colombiana, y aportar al reconocimiento de las labores de las mujeres de esta región, su gobierno propio y gobernanza desde los estudios de organización en perspectivas afrodiaspóricas. La metodología es la autobiografía etnográfica. Entre los resultados y conclusiones se encuentra que este feminismo se podría entender como las prácticas y compromisos que algunas mujeres negras del Pacífico colombiano están asumiendo y liderando desde lo comunitario, reivindicando el arte como elemento fundamental en este proceso.

Palabras clave: Gobierno propio. Liderazgo. Re-existencia. Resistencia. Comadreo.

INTRODUCTION

Black, Afro-descendant, Raizal and Palenquero communities have been violated in their participation and rights, (Zuñiga, 2015) in Colombian cities such as Cali and Popayan, among others, and the Community Councils of Sucre, Magdalena, Guajira, Cesar, Atlantico and Córdoba. The communities share and maintain cultural practices, they are self-recognized as an expression of a differentiated collective but are historically marginalized.

Therefore, the unity of the Afro-Colombian people in their political projection is broken, the institutional view is biased and limited, and the actors that make up the cultural collective of the communities are politically configured on the basis of identity differences, of dissimilar histories associated with overseas origins, social structures of kinship, problems of organizational policies in unintelligible scenarios, and intervention in social movements (Lofland, 1996). And forms of specialization of community political roles are generated, incipient practices of organizational participation that promote ethnic rights, legal guarantees and generate frustrations, non-compliance, and uncertainties (Zuñiga, 2015).

The participation of black women in public spaces requires to be read in the light of theoretical developments for and from them, in order to transform reality from the action and of women subjective and group experiences (Cargallo, 2011), to question from the political struggle the institutionalization of reflexive spaces and political action dominated by white academic women (Curiel, 2002) and to critically decide their role and political subjective position before the patriarchal system from empowerment and not by subjective lack (Piedrahita, 2009).

Researching women can be done from the classic topics of organizational studies and critical management in leadership and teamwork, however, its multiculturalism implies different methods, including feminist research. When it comes to women's organization, this focuses on "experience" and the narrative capacity to express what they feel and think, uses categories such as sexuality, social class, gender and race, assumes reality as non-neutral, identity exists because of the organizations context; organizational features are linked to gender behavior patterns; and can be done according to a feminist mode of analysis: organization as process, organizational control, and, gender and body (Calas & Smircich, 2006; Gherardi, 2003).

While postcolonial feminist studies criticize contemporary transactional politics and the historical condition of women in different social, political, economic, cultural organizations (Clavo, 2014). This perspective addresses intersectionality and subjectivity with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and class (Calas & Smircich, 1999) through discourse analysis (Calas, Ou, & Smircich, 2013); and sometimes they have studied emotions, or used poststructuralist analysis (Calas & Smircich, 1999), or a deconstructive interpretation of organizational culture (Martin, 1990). Thus, it is relevant to understand the ways in which Black women organize themselves and how their organizations enable the agency, and resistance to the unequal and violent context.

Recent studies (Caicedo-Muñoz, Silva, & Arcand, 2021), incorporate feminist theory into organizational theory and conclude that forms of domination over women's management have been reinstated during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the processes and results of empowerment. Thus, the "voluntary" confinement transferred to the house, the bureaucratic labor organizational forms, in terms of structure and mode of operation (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000); and affected the welfare, their processes of socio-political awareness and of themselves as psychological subjects, and stress the subjective demands associated with work and family.

Therefore, the resolution of problems in an efficient, pragmatic, and unique way does not occur, because the understandings about women, workers or race-ethnicity continue to be made with respect to goals, values, forms of consciousness and communicative distortions within the organizations (Caicedo-Muñoz et al., 2021). However, when it comes to black women with sociocultural and contextual characteristics based on community organizational agency and collaboration (gathering among black women), their way of governing themselves represents the possibility of being fundamental actors of their own development in the face of state intervention, of transmitting the ancestral legacy generationally and learning values with the reference of the Mayoras and the environment.

Consequently, it is necessary to explore whether such a form of organization constitutes a possible particular form of feminism, of agency, of self-government, of effective participation of black women with a feminist perspective in the administration of welfare of the belonging of communities that is, if there is a black community feminism: what is a possible definition based on the experience of a Mayora of the Pacific zone and in the perspective of organizational studies in Afro-diasporic perspectives?

THEORETICAL REFERENCE: SELF-GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE. A CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE BLACK PEOPLE

In Colombia, the focus of public administration on the thinking of indigenous communities made possible the development of the concept of self-government, defining it as: "Self-government corresponds to forms of organization with cultural criteria that define norms, laws, habits and behaviors based on indigenous traditions that regulate social relations and with nature" (Gaia Amazonas, 2013).

Currently, the concept has been extended to other communities. That assume it as a way of referencing the processes in the framework of their autonomy, as is the case of the black people, which in the north of the Cauca according to the plan of good living (Ethno-development plan) is referred to as "the construction of welfare and self-regulation of the community through its ethnic authorities, as they establish their own form of organization, internal rules, to manage their territories, resources and collective projects" (Aguilar, Acosta, & Moreno, 2015).

In the framework of the Good Living plan and other organizational processes of the black people in Colombia, the principles governing self-government are autonomy and self-determination. These guide the communities to propose, participate, execute, monitor, and carry out the necessary follow-up to the actions and plans drawn up to guarantee the quality of life and of future generations, valuing their culture and difference, in the framework of sustainable economic, social, political, and environmental development, honesty and transparency is framed in that the truth and rectitude in public and private actions must guarantee that the proposals and their development will always be for the benefit of the Black Community and the product of consensus within the same, equity and solidarity.

It also implies that the black community works together with other Afro-Colombian groups against any form of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination that limits or hinders the integral development of any human being that is part of its community, identity and affirmation of being; it defines that all actions and strategies of the community are associated with an ethnic approach, linked to the defense, promotion and dissemination of its ancestral culture, traditions and cosmovision of its territory. Therefore, the territory is fundamental in the conservation of the multicultural being and identity, sustainability, and conservation; it determines that the actions in the black community are directed to the consolidation of a local capacity and guarantees in the long term the community appropriation with a view to self-sustainability.

Democracy guides the actions and interventions that materialize a tangible change through a consultation process with the participation of the community in general (community councils, social organizations, NGOs, government authorities and competent local, national, and international institutions). The members of the black community participate in the different processes respecting the internal regulations. For Colombia, the welfare management of the black communities is established from the concept of leadership, which is understood as the action that the ethnic-territorial authorities, the community councils, must mobilize their community to solve the problems that affect it, they must develop community leadership capacities to lead a communal work; in which they convene to discuss problems and look for joint solutions. However, this article is interested in reconstructing other forms of self-government, which do not necessarily cross the theoretical concept of leadership. This is only constituted as a dominant narrative of community management.

In the current Colombian context, called a social state of rights, which recognizes pluri-ethnicity and multiculturalism, and which lays the foundations for what ethnic peoples call self-government, governance is an important tool for thinking and acting on the progress of this complex and diverse society, which requires greater efforts of articulation in the recognition of difference, It is an opportunity to think about better conditions of participation, effectiveness and efficiency in the guarantee of rights, which in turn translates into the needs of the people in the territories, as a new style of government, different from the hierarchical regulation model of the State and the market. It presents a greater degree of interaction and cooperation

between the State and non-state actors, autonomous and organizational networks (Natera-Peral, 2005). This makes it possible to advance in the articulation of diverse governments, of the Black people's own cosmovision and government for interventions in the Black communities territories.

Governance is a concept introduced in the 1980s that focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of government and governmental organizations" (Alcantara & Marín, 2013). This, depending on the context, is a new method of government that suggests collective decision-making under participatory management modalities, or it can be a system for dealing with the growing complexity of problems in which the participants belong to civil society (Graña, 2005 as cited in Alcántara & Marín, 2013). It has recently become a useful category to analyze, from new theoretical and methodological perspectives, the totality of institutions, actors and relationships involved in the processes of government and public management, linking the political system to the economic and social environment (Natera-Peral, 2005).

The Afro-Colombian/Black, Palenquera and Raizal population has its own culture, a shared history, traditions, and customs within the rural-populated relationship, and reveals and preserves an awareness of identity that differentiates it from other ethnic groups. The rights to cultural identity and autonomy are closely linked to the rights to land and territory ownership (Aguilar et al., 2015).

The identity of the Black People is related to the uses and customs gestated in the territory they inhabit. "The Negro, in the different regions of the country where they settle (the Pacific lowlands, the Caribbean Coast, the riparian areas of the lower and middle Magdalena and lower Cauca and the department of Cauca) have created and maintained cultural forms that are associated with the black identity (Castillo, 2008). Spiritual practices, mortuary rituals, life rituals, cultural expressions related to singing, dancing, worship, production practices such as agriculture, fishing and ancestral or artisanal mining are aspects that form the basis of self-government.

Self-government then generates a form of governance (Caicedo-Muñoz et al., 2021). In the case of black organizations, they preserve an identity that is not static, which is created individually and collectively according to their social environment, social relations, rites and ceremonies, or collective behaviors, that is, value and belief systems, the sense of belonging to a community, a social sector, or a specific reference group (Molano, 2007).

The governance of women and their feminist black communities includes strategies of socio-community intervention by own action, with community networks, by cohesion, and linkage of (Caicedo-Muñoz et al., 2021), with an affective demand, awareness about their feminist discourse and action that questions the social condition of inequality (Caicedo-Muñoz, 2019) and political deliberation with other women, organizations, and institutions (Follett, 1919).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses ethnographic autobiography (Chang, 2008), for data collection around the cultural aspects in the narratives of Mayora Elena Hinestroza Vente and her community. She represents the black women of southwestern Colombia. She is a singer, poet, storyteller, and singer.

> Good afternoon, well I am Elena Hinestroza Vente, I am from the Colombian Pacific from the municipality of Timbiqui, department of Cauca, I have been living in the city of Santiago de Cali for 14 years, I arrived in this city in a situation of forced displacement.

> Well, when I arrived in the city of Cali, I arrived at a settlement with my nine children. The struggle was very complex, because we came to live in that settlement where the water rose to the beds where we slept. And it was a pipe, and when the water rose, we had to throw away, if possible, our blankets, sometimes we bought the refrigerator and it damaged right away, there was a lot of crime, a lot of drug addiction, it was very hard, I lived there for 7 years.

> I arrived at the time when my hut fell, and I had to sleep with my children almost in the street and I told my children from here down there is no further down to go. Now we must start going up and, as if God was listening to that phrase because from there everything went up, up, our situation was changing, and everything improved.

Data were collected through non-direct interview, due to the COVID-19 restriction conditions, between June and September 2021, in 6 hours of recording. The script incorporated spontaneous and unstructured questions about the community action performed by the Mayora, highlighting the chronology of past and present, cultural artifacts and visualization of the self, between 2004 and 2021. For the researchers, it implied a safe journey through a territory in an iterative relationship, in which unknown topics emerged, such as: resistance, re-existence and implied an openness and reflexivity on the part of the participant.

The data analysis strategy using Chang's (2008) ethnographic autobiographical methodology allowed the reconstruction of the Mayora's memory, rewriting the self-narratives presented in the audios, simultaneously with the transcription of the recordings. Therefore, the concepts described by her, a categorization by convention and the incorporation of one of the researchers' personal experiences with respect to black women's feminist collectives and the multicultural social context were incorporated into the analysis. This process implied 6 meetings of the researchers to establish the meaning of the data and to return to the Mayora for amplification or contrast; in this way, a reflexivity was made possible.

As a result of the interpretation, four elements were jointly established around some experiences of her life history: leadership, re-existence, resistance and comadreo. The data analysis established the characteristics of what could be understood as black community feminism in southwestern Colombia (FNCSC)[1] and of self-government. Some of the data were not used because the categories that were considered most relevant in the construction of a possible definition of such feminism were prioritized.

Since the emerging categories have not all been conceptualized, contextualization was used as a way of explaining and interpreting some behaviors and events related to sociocultural, political, economic, religious, historical, ideological, and geographical aspects. The texts were then understood considering the following:

   a) *Feminism cannot be one because women are diverse. Contributions to a decolonial black feminism from the experience of the Colombian Pacific's black women* by Betty Ruth Lozano Lerma (Lerma, 2010);

   b) *Distinctive features of the black feminist thought* by Patricia Hill Collins (Collins, 2012);

   c) *Struggles of good living for black women from Alto Cauca* written and compiled by Charo Mina Rojas, Marilyn Machado Mosquera, Patricia Botero and Arturo Escobar (Roja, Mosquera, Botero, & Escobar, 2015);

   d) *Towards El Buen Vivir From the everyday-extraordinary of community life* written and compiled by Charo Mina Rojas, Marilyn Machado Mosquera, Patricia Botero and Arturo Escobar (Rojas, Mosquera, & Escobar, 2018).

The contextualization suggests that caring for life and ancestral territories is important as a manifestation of resistance by Afro-descendant women from municipalities in Northern Cauca (Rojas et al., 2015). Similarly, it emphasizes the context of violence, exclusion, marginalization, racism, and resistance struggles to rebuild living conditions and knowledge (Lozano, 2010).

In sum, the use of the method in this research, in addition to the ethical considerations, favored that the categories identified reformulated the research question; going from being interested in investigating the forms of organization of women in black communities, to proposing an approach to self-government and its relationship with community management in the framework of black community feminism. Also, it was ensured that there was not an excessive concentration on the participant's narrative, and an imbalance in the analysis and multicultural interpretation of the aspects of community management; and of several sources of information (videos, songs, forums, articles), to ensure the interconnectivity of the self, of the others and others.

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[1] For the sake of synthesis, it will be abbreviated hereafter as FNCSC.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: CAN WE SPEAK OF A BLACK COMMUNITY FEMINISM?

In the Colombian context there are black women who, with their socio-cultural, emotional, and psychological resources, manage the access to rights, to better living conditions, trying to solve social problems. Their actions question representative democracy as an instance of full rights for their communities and generate the establishment of diverse social, cultural, economic, and essentially curative practices that guarantee life and protection of ethnic, environmental, and cultural rights. Therefore, they constitute tools to protect themselves from the effects of a policy of uprooting.

Therefore, in this article, through ethnographic autobiography, we narrate from the practice and daily life of black feminist women in the voice of the Mayora, as far as possible, is it possible to speak of a Black Community Feminism? With a form of government, or ways of governance, which does not necessarily imply an absolute truth about these issues, but to reflect on them and if it is possible to open a dialogue about it.

In this sense, the memory narrated by the Mayora associates black community feminism with leadership. Understood as the action of the community path, based on the capacities of self-resolution that are favored in the organizational scenarios and are directed to the relationship and balance of the ecosystem and its culture, and the defense of life. Especially in black women, with ontological roots in the socio-productive practices of artisanal miners and planters.

Likewise, she raises the concern of other feminisms about the care of the other – how to raise their children – given that inequality of opportunities produces more public and/or social problems. Thus, her cultural narrative before the leaders of the human settlement in which she lives advocates for a leadership initiative based on traditional musical community resources.

> Well, first of all, I left because of my community work, because of my work as a leader, I was an informal worker woman day-to-day because I was a miner in an artisanal mine, I was a plantain and corn planter, I was a planter of chinese potato, yam, but I was also a woman who thought beyond what I was doing on a daily basis, I always thought that we as human beings and people with rights in the country should also have opportunities, right?

> And this was in 2004, we organized a women's group, a women's organization, we organized 60 women, including those who lived from scavenging and some community mothers. We met in Timbiquí and organized an association of Anas, which was called Association of women defenders of the environment and promoters of the Pacific culture. We began to do very valuable things, to be recognized in the community for our work with the cleaning and protection of the environment and our culture.

> But it did not go down very well with the people who were in control of the community, so I had to pay leaving an early morning with my family, with my children, yes, I left the organization, we had four women already employed, we had four places in our town which was a small village, and we were ready to get more and more things. But I had to run away and when I arrived here, I had to take a tray in my hand and go out to sell, I went back to continue working informally until God helped us with an artisanal mine that my father had worked all his life [...] and then in that mine we got enough money for each son to buy a house.

> And then when I arrived here in this city, with my children, and I arrived at a settlement where drug addiction and the crime were very prevalent, I thought about my children, why did I bring my children here so young, so I thought how am I going to raise them here?

> Well, I started to think, and I said no, I'm not going to go out and show who I am, because I arrived with a very low profile. They did not know that I had social work. But when I told the leaders of the invasion, they told me, Doña Elena, do you like to promote your culture? I said of course, I had my group there too and I want to set up a group here so that my children do not forget their traditions. And so it was, they told me Well, as soon as we hear something we will tell you and they told me about a month later, Mrs. Elena, we are there, a man is coming here on Saturday, as a talent scout so that there will be other music groups and I really went with my music, with cans as rums to play. When they heard us, they said Well, this lady has talent and they told me we are going to give her the instruments and the costumes, I didn't believe it, but they really gave us that and I was very happy.

> Well, and as for leadership, black women, we always end up as leaders end up being artists, because it is much easier for us to show our feelings in a song, in a poem, in a play, in a performance, but not in a soap opera, what it is within our reach, we work on it as to also circulate, yes, as well as to circulate the word and make it reach other populations.

The characteristics of black women when they work in the community before their agencies configure initiatives of self-government from the need to externalize their own voices. Art (poetry, songs, plays) enables the development of different strategies to circulate the word. It is an affirmation of the right to participation, which in turn contains other rights such as ethnic integrity (life), cultural integrity (survival as a culture or non-forced disappearance) and self-determination (autonomy). Thus, it can be seen how it states Caicedo-Muñoz et al. (2021) the way in which the governance of women and their communities incorporates strategies of socio-community intervention by own action, with community networks, by cohesion, and linkage. The action questions the social condition of inequality and is associated with feminist discourse, as well as political deliberation with other women and other actors.

La Mayora also mentions that she sometimes feels "a bit of insecurity and selfishness". Due to the mistreatment, the exclusion to which they have been exposed, and the effort they have had to make throughout their lives to resist and re-exist. It recognizes and explains that the great weaknesses to exercise leadership are insecurities, fears that arise in a context of historical and structural racism and exclusion. Therefore, art with its songs, music, poetry can be seen to heal, to rest, to communicate with other people. It is the way they resist.

> Sometimes you feel a little bit of insecurity, because we have also been very mistreated, very excluded and you feel a little bit of selfishness and of wanting to shine, one more than the other, but all this is because of what black women have lived through, we have always had to make a great effort to resist and to re-exist.

> Because we have our strengths, but we also have our weaknesses and the great weaknesses that we have are given to us by racism and exclusion, insecurity, the fear that we have. Because sometimes we believe that they are going to tell us no, that what we are doing is not right and that sometimes causes controversies among ourselves and competitions among ourselves, so that is what it is, but always the black woman, the leadership strengthens it with her art.

> Those songs are to heal, to cleanse us, to communicate, and when you know that when you say what you feel (singing, comadrear, dancing), you feel a rest. Well, all those things are very useful, art is our resistance.

Now, there is a distinction between re-existing and resisting, of the black women of the Colombian Pacific in relation to agency, change, and systematic invisibilization. The former refers to the capacity for transformation, the latter to not allowing the person to do what one wants, without her doing what she considers she can do. Re-existence constitutes a characteristic of what is proposed in this article to be called Black community feminism. This is related to the capacity of black women to reorganize, resymbolize, resignify themselves, and seek transformation after facing systematic deaths.

> The re-existence, is to re-exist, is like to have the great ability of transformation. Of that re-existence you arrive to the point of not resisting, that you don't exist anymore, you arrive to the point of no more, practically, symbolically, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally you don't exist anymore. But your capacity to transform resilience makes you arrive to the point of re-existence, live again after a systematic death.

> Death is when they take you out of your territory, when they kill someone loved, when they take away what you have worked for all your life and they tell you that you have to leave it there, you have to give it to me, is like an emotional death, but then with your ability to transform and change the adversities to change difficulties, so that maybe a favorable road, then that's what re-existence does the ability of transforming, ability of resilience.

The form of self-governance is related to the way in which black feminist women are forced to re-exist, manage change for and from their communities, and transform realities (Mayora, 2021); to be reborn from the ashes like the phoenix. Resistance, on the other hand, consists in not accepting the place that is given to you in an imposed way, consists in not accepting the place of periphery and death, but that people do what they see they can do. He affirms:

> Resistance for me means to resist the place that has been given to me in society, the place that the Colombian State or the Colombian government has told me this is, the place of death, the place of the periphery is segregation, it is everything bad, it is the place that has been given to me. But I resist to receive it, then that is the resistance has many connotations, but in politics, the resistance is: not to let them do with you what they want to do but what you see that you can do.

The characteristics of self-governance that describe resistance and existence configure a form of named and agentic feminism with its particularities, consequently, there may be other forms of black community feminism according to the contexts of women's subjectivities. The comadreo constitutes the political subjectivity of black community feminist women, they raise their voices, they express what they feel, what they think and what they desire. Thus, according to Caicedo-Muñoz et al. (2021), self-government then generates a form of governance, in which an identity is preserved that is not static but is built from the individual and the collective in relation to its social context, traditions, social relations, behaviors, from the sense of belonging to a community (Molano, 2007).

> So, we talk to each other, we tell each other what is happening to our people, what is happening to our women, how they are being abused and that we cannot remain silent. We tell each other, but we act, we go out, as we do in the villages, to make the noise so that the State, since the law does not act, we act, to take out the pain to march, to take out the pain from inside the house where it is killing me, where it is drowning me, where the abuser is telling me and is telling me this has to stay here, what happens to you here must stay here, nobody can notice. And many women today, young women, girls, older women, adults, have died or are dying because they have endured abuse, violence, and that is also the comadreo: to tell young women not to be silent, because there are many abuses.

This feminism recognizes the relevance of art: song, dance and poetry, an example of this is the song *YA NO MAS* by Integracion Pacifica, the musical interpretation, arrangements, composers, singers and the comadres narrate the realities of many women in the territories and reject the different types of violence, as shown:

> Aguita source of life I have wanted to talk to you, I am living a hell inside my home, sometimes I want to scream for help, he is going to kill me and he asks me to be quiet, to keep this at home [...] I confess, my little water, I don't know if I can stand it [...] No, I can't stand it anymore, I can't stand it anymore, tell your neighbor that the authorities have arrived, girl, run for your life, take the pain out to march.

Finally, the Mayora's narration allowed the establishment of the Comadreo as a transmission of knowledge. This process is strengthened as a community through the project called "Comadreo for Life, Peace and Memory of the Colombian Pacific", with other Mayoras in which they participate by sharing their experiences through orality.

> The comadreo came out of Integración pacífica, we made a song called Comadreo por la paz and the objective of the song was comadreo for life, peace and the memory of the Colombian Pacific, comadrear to deliver our knowledge to the new generation, comadrear is to converse, but a sacred conversation, a conversation that takes you directly to look at life in another way, to understand ourselves, to know why are we like this? Why are we women of the Pacific like this? why do we sing so much? why is dance in us? why orality? what happens with that? So if you comadreo with us you are going to learn because we do it because we want to be allowed to express ourselves the way we want to.

> [In the comadreo] We are going to be asked to express ourselves in our experiences without make-up, without putting any polish, just as we live them, without inventing something to make it sound good, no, that it sounds as it is and that the sense and the good side of this pure and clean tradition of ours is seen. That is what the comadreo is for, the comadreo acts from orality, from the a cappella singing, from the praised, from poetry and verse, the décima, the copla, acting and from the conversation that

is the comadreo. Because the comadreo does not demand that you have to refine, it does not demand that you have to perfect your lexicon, your lexicon can be the same that you brought from your Pacific, because in other things, we are involved in many things, but in those other spaces we are, sometimes other changes are demanded of us because there are leaders who tell us: no, no, no, we are not going to do things this way, we are going to do it that way and we do not feel so good like that, we feel better to be free because that is the way we were in our land.

So that is what it is, the comadreo has to do a lot with that, to be free, to be us, and to give to the new generations that why, why we want to be free, because that way, because when we arrive to the cities, here we get people who have the tradition but they have already taken it to the academy and they began to see it in a different way.

The comadreo is another characteristic of organization and self-government, it is related to the power of being free to express what they think, what they feel, to be themselves and to deliver to the new generations the reasons why they want to be free. To comadreo is to be able to bring out from the soul, what we have, what we know, what we live, our experiences and why we want to comadreo because we want to deliver. As shown in the Comadreo for Life, Peace, and the memories of the Colombian Pacific in the 1st Meeting of Afro-Feminist Orality (Mude Palmira, 2021). The dynamics that takes place in the comadreo is woven through sung verses, in this way Maja Mina, one of the members of the comadreo says: But I am going to tell Comae Elena, listen comae, we went to the top together, communicating the two, there were my excesses when you said goodbye to me, listen comadrita, why are you here, tell me a little more, what is the comadreo, how was it born and why are we here comadreando?

- To this another member, Mayora Elena, responds: when you said goodbye to me comadre, *my torments were so great that I could not hold back tears of feelings* [...].

- After the personal presentation of the Mayoras, each one narrates her territory through verses, poems, songs and at the end they sing together accompanied by the instruments and conclude singing with the other participants of the meeting.

La Mayora also reports on the transmission of knowledge, which takes place with new generations and contemporary women. For example, when La Mayora arrived in Cali, she met other black women who wanted to learn and reconnect with their roots. She accompanies them in their process, and they weave networks: "to make plots". Through the music of the Pacific, to know and recognize "el guasa"[2]. This organizational strategy strengthens self-government as it generates community organizational identity by recovering ancestral memory and, in some women, returning to their traditions and knowledge. In her words:

We had a great time because I was like reminding them, every time I said a word from the Pacific, it came to their minds and so on, until I awakened their memory, that ancestral memory awakened, because I had the tradition from here and they were already, very much from the city, they came from the city since they were children, but then I entered as well as my children, I did not let them lose their tradition. So, I was able to recover them and well, I was happy because I was able to do something very important, very interesting, because when you arrive, you leave your land and arrive to the city, and you have to unlearn the little you can learn there as a child and arrive here and with taking other cultures sometimes it does not feel good.

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[2] It is a musical instrument from the Pacific.

SANKOFA: DISCUSSION FROM COMADREAR

The FNCSC can be conceived as the way in which some of the black women of the Colombian Pacific have organized themselves interorganizationally and have been building networks to narrate their territories from their experiences and those of other women, taking art as a fundamental pillar with which, they express their feelings, thoughts, as black women who mostly inhabit complex territories permeated by violence, exclusion, discrimination, among other problems. They constitute a set of measures that attempt to materialize the deliberative democratic principle and popular sovereignty, as well as to guarantee the human rights of these culturally different groups, as authentic subjects of law; through which the deliberate reductionism of some governmental instances that try to compress the dissimilar political, social, cultural, and economic expressions of the communities is confronted and revealed.

In this sense, based on the Mayora's statement, the FNCSC could be understood as the practices and bets that some black women of the Colombian pacific region are managing and leading from the community, seeking changes in the life conditions that are hostile for their families and communities, vindicating art as a fundamental element in this process. The comadreo has been constituted in this feminism as a way of narrating their territories, from a sacred conversation in which there is respect and trust among the people who participate, where the possibility of understanding and questioning the place of black women in front of the problems that happen in their lives and in their communities is opened.

The forms of black feminist community organization that underlie a way of governing themselves are contained in symbols such as myths and stories that orally transmit the values of the forms of community organization of the Mayoras and their ideologies in favor of non-violence against women. In the same sense that Mumby and Putnam (1992) point out, symbols facilitate decision making and the identification of community organization with the emotions of the members with the key issues of the rationality of the community and the organization. As well as their deliberative practices (Follett, 1919) in the neighborhoods achieve changes in welfare through a process of women's socio-political awareness, transforming their psychological subject in time; solving problems in a unique way, as each neighborhood/community presents unique collective processes and with its own way of governing itself (Elias, 2010).

This feminism, in perspective of the management of public action, has the characteristic of resorting to verses, narratives and songs, oral forms that help to express messages related to different aspects, such as: care for life, belonging to their territories, their women's vision of the world, the problems they face, among others. Thus, Mayora Elena and some of her comadres as it was seen in the interview have found the way to externalize their realities through poetry, songs, dances, music, so different artistic expressions have become the possibility for these women to face several of the problems that happen in their lives and in their territories.

Also, from what the Mayora said, another aspect that could be highlighted is the contribution to the transmission of knowledge in the community, so that there is no loss of Afro-descendant traditions, but that they can endure in time, since they consider that in them there are relevant values that have contributed to the continuity of their communities through music, for example. In this way, art for these women is presented as a way of resisting and re-existing in the contexts in which they find themselves and has become a way of self-government in their communities.

Government processes and the Afro-Colombian population have been framed by the vision of conventional development, with residual and centralist community participation in state action. In the absence of real organizational strength and leaderships, they systematically and without any result repeat a discourse of commercial openness and internationalization of regional relations of the Colombian Pacific, where the most preeminent categories are: backwardness, biodiversity, resource, poverty, surplus, extraction and development (Zuñiga, 2015). Although Act 70 of 1993 (Ley 70 de 1993) has opened a political dialogue with the State, it is required to stimulate empowerment for the governance of communities from their cosmogonic representation, their own spiritualities, and material existence.

In this context, alluding to self-government represents the opportunity to transmit knowledge in a generational way, from practice, in this case from different artistic expressions such as the Mayoras. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the vision of governance that exists in black communities and take it up again as a fundamental element at the moment of thinking about their development; that the communities be constituted as primary actors in these processes.

In conclusion, it is considered that the FNCSC is characterized by using art to accompany processes carried out by some black women in the communities, in addition, from what has been stated, some questions could be raised to discuss in the academic on this topic, for example, can other kinds of FNCSC be found? what characteristics would they have? is the context where women develop related to their self-government? among other questions that arise from what has been mentioned.

CONCLUSIONS

Modern participatory democracy, enshrined in the 1991 Constitution, is configured as a system in which social control is exercised by citizens and those who represent them, in order to make the spaces and mechanisms for participation and oversight of efficiency in public decision-making processes more efficient. However, the emergence of the FNCSC addressed in this article, from the experience of Mayora Elena Hinestroza Vente, is an example of self-government, of the way in which certain actors of the population carry out actions to be recognized as persons. The limitations of the research are centered on the fact that there may be many feminisms, as contexts. Likewise, the forms of governance. Therefore, it is considered pertinent to reflect on the political subjectivity of black women, their ideologies, and public actions in other contexts.

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