

BLACK POLITICS OF FOLKLORE

EXPANDING THE SITES AND FORMS OF POLITICS IN COLOMBIA

A Thesis Presented

by

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To my loving family, wife and friends
For their continuous support and unconditional love

ABSTRACT

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May 2014

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This paper puts into question ideas of politics limited to the theories of social movements and contentious politics. In using the concept of black counterpublic, understood as a web of relations and spaces, I show how black politics of folklore expands the sites and forms of politics in Colombia of 1960. In doing so, I describe two aspects of the black counterpublic from the point of view of black political intellectuals into the racialized field of Colombian folklore: a. the way black political intellectuals understood race and racism in Colombia and, b. their forms of politics. That is, their form of organization and mobilization. For this, I propose a new understanding of folklore beyond ideas of entertainments, apolitical culturalism and essentialism which, in turn, make black politics look trivialized and less political under the integrationist racial project of the mestizo State. Also, I shed some light on the idea of race and racism from below, from the point of view of black political intellectuals; and I pluralize and decentralize black politics from social movement understanding of politics.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I contribute to the comprehension of the black counterpublic in Colombia. I focus mainly on the black politics of folklore, understood as forms of black politics that involve black cultural practices, discourses and political thoughts; forms and sites of politics that seek to contest, dispute and re-define power relation in a political context when the mestizo racial project took place in Colombia around 1960s. Thus, I will sustain that politics, as “the art of the possible” (Hanchard, 2006:30) can occur beyond the boundaries of the “contentious politics” (Tarrow, ([1994] 2011 and Tilly and Tarrow, 2007).

In Colombia, scholars have paid attention to black politics that involve public events and radical strategies such as manifestations, marches, protests, occupations, etc. These are, in other words, “contentious politics” (Tarrow, [1994] 2011; and Tilly and Tarrow, 2007). From different perspectives, scholars have studied black urban grassroots organizations (Valderrama, 2009), political parties mobilizations (Agudelo, 2005), rural and semi-rural social movement organizations (Hurtado, 2001; Escobar, 2008; Agudelo, 2005; and Wade, 1996), hip hop organizations (Wade, 1999), religious and urban cultural organizations (Arboleda, 2001 and Valderrama, 2008), trade unions, civic organizations and neighborhood associations (Agudelo, 2005), and antisystemic movements (Lao-

Montes, 2010). Clearly, massive and formal confrontational political mobilizations and strategies oriented towards and/or against the Colombian State are common among these collective actions. Thus, from this understanding of black politics, scholars share the idea that these massive forms of black politics emerged around 1980s (Hurtado, 2001; Escobar, 2008; Agudelo, 2005; Castillo, 2007 and Wade, 1996); this idea is also shared by international scholars (Mullings, 2009; Oslender, 2001; Paschel and Sawyer, 2009; and Wade, 1996).

The problem I identify in these understandings of black politics is that they obscure other less massive and confrontational forms of politics. They ignore forms of black politics such as ideas, thoughts and discourses in the public sphere. As Singh (2004) sustains, “the public is less a concrete aggregation of persons than an ethical ideal and symbol construct that signifies the democratic institution of modern politics itself, to which the watch-words of 'publicity', 'public opinion' and above all, 'publication', attest. Intellectuals in turn can be understood to be among the primary producers of public discourses (...) knowledge that becomes a key stake in social and political struggle to conserve or transform that world” (Singh, 2004: 69).

Social movement theories are the reasons scholars have overlooked ideas, discourses and thoughts as form of politics. Empirically, social movement theories delimit their unit of analysis to massive and confrontational forms of politics whose primarily target is the State (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007; and Tarrow, 2011). For example, some scholars have used “political process” to study how the National Constitutional Reform of 1991 structured

the political opportunities that gave rise to the emergence of black mobilizations in Colombia (Agudelo, 2005; Castillo, 2007, and Hurtado, 2001). Others have used the “collective identity model” (see Melucci, 1999) to study the emergence of black politics in the Pacific region and their identity formation to protect their territories, natural environments and communities against international corporations, far rights organizations, armed conflicts and drug organizations (Escobar, 2008, Wade, 1995 and Oslender, 2001). In all of these studies, black politics has been associated with the struggle for and against the cultural and economic project of neoliberalism embedded in the State policies.

Therefore, forms of politics which do not fulfill these requirements do not represent a form of politics. For example, between 1945 and 1975 there emerged a black cultural mobilization aiming to posit black cultural tradition and black identity in Colombia. Among others, black writers, poets, singers, folk choreographers, dancers and musicians participated in this cultural mobilization developing their own forms of politics to claim their understanding of black identities. They created networks and relations among and between black folkloric dance groups, black folkloric musical groups, black intellectuals and politicians. Thus, collective expressions such as “Club Negro”, Center for the study of afrocolombian culture (Arboleda, 2011 and Pisano, 2012), “Comite de Asuntos Afrocolombianos” (Mosquera, 2002) and “Colonies” in Cali (Arboleda, 2011) exemplify the character of this black cultural mobilization.

I contend that “in much of the black world, the realm of culture provides opportunities and sites for the exercise of politics” (Hanchard, 2006: 10). Paraphrasing Fanon ([1963]

2004: 245), in post-colonial times, conscious and organized undertaking by subordinates to re-establish their “peoplehood”¹ constitutes the most complete and obvious cultural manifestation that exists. Therefore, black cultural mobilization could shed some light on our understanding of black politics that involves less confrontational collective actions. It speaks to us about cultural-based forms of politics that seek to redefine relationship of race and power.

I will characterize this black cultural mobilization that occurred during 1960s from the point of view of three black political intellectuals in the field of folklore. They are: Delia Zapata Olivella, Teófilo Potes and Rogério Velásquez. Although their ideas, discourses and thoughts about black culture and folklore can be seen as less confrontational in comparison to those that occurred during the Colony and wars of independence, and later, in the process of the Constitutional Reform (1991), these black political intellectuals unfolded actions to change the conditions of invisibility of the black communities in a mestizo nation that denied them. For me, black political intellectuals' forms of politics, understood as black counterpublic, and their understanding of race and racism when writing about Colombian folklore, are one of the first form of a '*war of position*'² in the field of Colombian folklore and one of the first visible black politics that questioned the liberal and modern construction of the mestizo nation-state.

The concept of “black counterpublic” allows for tracing forms of black politics that do not fit into social movement theories, specially, those forms related to black political

1 For the idea of peoplehood see Wallerstein (1991).

2 For the idea of *war of position* see Omi and Winant (1996) and Gramsci ([1971] 1992 and 2006).

intellectuals' actions. According to Thayer, counterpublic is “broader, more internally heterogeneous, and less coherent than the term 'social movement' usually implies. Their boundaries are defined, not by fully shared strategic visions, but by the choices of social actors to engage with one another in some form, however partial or tentative” of social relation (Thayer, 2010:27). In this sense, I use the term counterpublic as an alternative and less rigid perspective to study collective actions, I will be able to show a much longer trajectory of black politics by describing the ways black political intellectuals engaged in forms of counter discourses to produce ideas, discourses and thoughts about race and racism within white institutions: journals, magazines and newspapers.

The study of black folklore is not new in Colombia. Ethnomusicologists, literary critics, anthropologists, and historians have studied it. Also, these studies have covered the same period that I am interested in this research. For example, ethnomusicologist Michael Birenbaum (2009) studies the musical meaning and practices of black people in Colombia's southern Pacific coast which are embedded within a number of different systems of meaning: a web of rival forms of sociality and overlapping belief systems from which modern Pacific music originated. Birenbaum refers to racial hierarchies, mainstream conceptions of folklore as scientific practices, political claims and black contestations (Birenbaum, 2009). Literary critic Prescott (1996 and 1999) studies how the racial structure in Colombia has constrained black poets, novelists and essayists from publishing their literary work; and Lewis, (1987) studies the ways black poets, novelists

and essayists have proposed new prose fiction articulating black identity, cultural dualism, psychic liberation and social confrontation (Lewis, 1987)³.

Anthropologist Peter Wade (2000) focuses on how and why during the middle decades of the twenty century certain musical styles, originally folkloric and confined to the Caribbean coast of the country, a region relatively marginal and rather black of the national frame, became most successful both in the country and internationally, although it was incompatible with the dominant version of the national identity and despite the initial resistance of some sectors of the population which saw the music as vulgar and sexually licentious (Wade, 2000).

All of these studies share an emphasis on studying black folkloric cultural expressions without considering them as a site and form for political and critical thought formation. In contrast, Historian Zapata-Cortés (2010) describes how Delia Zapata Olivella and Manuel Zapata Olivella contested the idea of mestizo nation by promoting an idea of mestizo that recognizes the presence of indigenous and blacks in Colombia; Arboleda (2011) describes the historical process by which black political intellectuals have changed, ruptured, and continued a political movement for the transformation of the race relations in Colombia; and finally, Pisano (2012) reports the political thought of four black politicians from Cauca and Chocó in the Pacific region (Pisano, 2012). For me, these studies are sources that characterize the black counter public movement phenomena

³ Although I do not list of the books and article I came cross when I was doing my literature review, I can tell that the biggest contribution in the study of black intellectual come from literary critics. See for example the lit review that Prescott presents (1999).

in Colombia of 1960. Unlike them, I will describe how black political intellectuals thought about race and racism and the role of the Colombian State.

I depart from a critical sociological perspective to understand the socio-historical process that gave rise to forms of politics and black political intellectuals in the field of folklore. These socio-historical processes are race, Colombia racial state, international racial dynamics and the black collective agency. I maintain that folklore provides black political intellectuals with an opportunity to develop not only their own political thoughts about race and racism but also forms of politics as a black counterpublic. Therefore, folklore is a racial terrain of contestation similar to those cultural practices of “religious nationalism” (Bracey et al., [1970] 1990), black jazz, gospel and blues in the United States (Reed, 2005); Rastafarianism in Jamaica (Hall, 1985); hip hop culture in the United States, Cuba, Brazil, South Africa, Colombia and the United Kingdom (Codrington, 2009; and Perry, 2009); funk music in Brazil (Hanchard, 1994); black literature in Cuba (Prescott, 1996) and the United States (Dawson, 2001); paintings in the United Kingdom (Hall, 2006); and cinema productions in the Caribbean (Hall, 1999).

I want to make a contribution to the study of black counterpublic and the development of black political intellectuals in Colombia. First, describe two aspects of the black cultural mobilization from the point of view of black political intellectuals into the field of Colombian folklore: a. the way black political intellectuals understood race and racism in Colombia and, b. their forms of politics. Second, propose a new understanding of folklore beyond ideas of entertainment, apolitical culturalism and essentialism which, in turn,

make black politics look trivialized and less political under the integrationist racial project of the mestizo State. Third, include black politics of folklore into 'the repertoire of black politics'⁴. Fourth, shed some light on the idea of race and racism from below; from the point of view of black political intellectuals; and fifth, pluralize and decentralize black politics from social movement understanding of politics. So, I am hoping that this study will become an empirical instrument and contribution for afrocolombian social movements, African diasporic and black politics studies in Colombia and/or elsewhere.

1.1 Black Counterpublic and Black political Intellectual

Counter-public is a “parallel discursive arena where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser, 1990:67). As an alternative space, counterpublic is a different and an autonomous relational dynamic from state apparatus, economic markets and political parties (Fraser, 1990: 57). To support my arguments, I will define racial state, the black politics of folklore, race and racism, and black political intellectuals and how they constitute the black counterpublic within the “racialized field of contestation” in Colombia⁵.

4 I am paraphrasing Tilly and Tarrow's concept of repertoire of action. See Tilly and Tarrow (2007).

5 I have used the concept of “*racialized field of contestation*” to characterize the terrain of racial dynamics and conflicts that have been “structured in dominance” (Hall) and within which black politics has taken place since the modernity/colonialism (see Valderrama, 2012:64). This field is the result of a racial conflict consisting of an uneven relation of power between black politics and the Colombian State. It also speaks about how race and racism have been deployed and instrumentalized in power relations. Thus, the racialized field of contestation is a terrain where racial discourses, racial politics and racial strategies circulate either to dominate or to liberate/create black political communities (Hanchard, 2006).

Black politics are political struggles that go from “war of maneuvers” to “war of positions” (see Gramsci, [1971] 1992 and 2006)⁶; from slave revolts and runaways in the colony to black social movements and cultural expressions in modern time (see Lao-Montes, 2010 and Winant, 2001). I assume black politics of folklore as one modality of 'war of position'; a racial form of politics that consists of oppositional cultural forms. Thus, black political intellectual unfolded their oppositional black politics of folklore in a context where “the existence of diverse institutional and cultural terrains upon which oppositional political projects can be mounted, and upon which the racial state can be confronted.” (Omi and Winant, 1994:81). Also, black politics of folklore emerged when culture and folklore became one of the central field of State actions; when “culture ceased to be the privilege and prerogative of the cultivation of private individuals and began to be a matter for which the state takes public responsibility” (Hall, 2006:364) for the modernization of Colombian society. Thus, Colombia State is both of and over society (Hall, 2006, Gramsci, 2006 and Jessop, 2008). “It arises from society; but it also reflects, in its operations, the society over which it exercises its authority and rule. It is both part of society and yet separate from it.” (Hall, 2006:363). The State produces and is produced by culture (Stainmetz, 1999).

The Colombian State produces and is produced by a racist culture. My idea of racist culture comes out of David Theo Goldberg's definition. He defines it as ideas, attitudes and dispositions, norms and rules, linguistic, literary, and artistic expressions, architectural forms and media representations, practices and institutions (Goldberg, 1993:

⁶ For the definition of black politics see Lao-Montes (2010), Winant (2001), Omi and Winant (1996), Hanchard (2006) and Sawyer (2006). For a critique about the conceptual limitations of these perspectives see Valderrama (2012).

8). Thus, when talking about racist culture, I mean racist culture of governmentality; racial technologies and mechanisms unfolded by the Colombian State in order to preserve a racial rule. So, I consider the Colombian State as a racially formed⁷; and black politics of folklore is a non-confrontational strategic war of position⁸ that critiques the ideology of racial democracy that was the basis for the endurance of the Colombian State's racial hegemony (Omi and Winant, 1996).

I propose to understand folklore as terrain of contestation where conflictual and oppositional cultural meaning and representations take place. If “culture is political because meanings are constitutive of processes that, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power” (Alvarez et al, 1998:7), so is folklore. Then, black politics of folklore is a “result of discursive articulations originated from the existing cultural practices -never pure and always hybrid- but whose exhibited meanings, representations and cultural contents contrast to hegemonic visions” of folklore (Alvarez et al, 1998:7). As I will show, as cultural practices, the black politics of folklore become political; a tool for emancipation and liberation. In this sense, the black politics of folklore constitutes a folkloric 'war of interpretation' (Slater, 1998) over race and racism that counter the meaning of the national identity in Colombia. Thus, when talking about the black politics of folklore, I mean the diverse range of social practices, actions and political thoughts

7 I define the Colombian State as an “incoherent illusion of unified entity, multifaceted ensembles of power relations and a vehicle of massive domination -racial, class, gender and sex- whose state power is not exclusive bounded to the state institutions, it goes further on the social relation as an ensemble of discourses, techniques, rules, and practices, cohabiting in limited, tension and often contradictory relation with one another institution and mechanism of control (see Valderrama, 2012: 64).

8 This is perhaps the biggest difference between the political struggle that Omi and Winant (1996) describe in their book and the black politics of folklore. The second is not a tactical war of position that includes overtly confrontation against the state as it happened to be with the civil rights movements.

through which black political intellectuals struggle and negotiate power relations into the racialized field of contestation -particularly, the folkloric side.

The meaning of race is crucial for my study. I use the concept of racial formation to trace the “sociohistorical processes by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (Omi and Winant: 1996:56) in Colombia. This perspective is US based. However, it offers valuable analytical tools to understand race and racism as a “matter of both social structure and cultural representation” (Omi and Winant, 1996:56). I use Omi and Winant's definition of racial projects to delineate the interpretations, representations, or explanations of racial dynamics that individuals and/or groups produce as an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines. Nonetheless, their understanding of politics and conflict needs to be re-formulated in term of what constitute the particularities of the 'black-life world' (Hanchard, 2006) in Colombia. That is, their definitions of politics are similar to those of social movement theories explained above.

My idea of politics goes beyond the limits of state/social movements' racial dynamic and contestation to include political actions related to thoughts, discourses and ideas. Politics is an “art of the possible” (Hanchard, 2006:31); as opportunities or the lack of them to transform or maintain social realities into the racialized field of contestation. Thus, the Colombian State policies and black political intellectuals' politics of folklore represent two oppositional racial projects whose interpretation, representation or explanation of the racial dynamics in Colombia dispute the meaning of race, the national identity and social

organization of the society. This does not mean that both, the Colombian State and the black counterpublic are two separated and unified entities that struggle over the meaning of race. In the racialized field of contestation, the Colombian State and black counterpublic reflect their own internal contradictions and divisions.

In Colombia the idea of race is, particularly, complex; and its complexity makes it also difficult to delineate the racial conflict that takes place in the racialized field of contestation. Race is and is not about skin color. Race is also a matter of culture as the racist culture in Colombia has been defined as *mestiza* to deny black cultural presence. Hence, culture and skin color have been articulated to dominate and preserve a racial rule and power of the ruling class in Colombia. In this sense, if a “racialized social system” is a society in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races (Bonilla-Silva, 2001), Colombia has been organized as a racialized social system by denying the presence of race as factor in public and official spheres. Anyone who would speak publically about race and racial grievances/conflicts became the subject of criminalization in the 1800s (Iasso, 2007) and of social censorship/rejection around 1960 (Friedemann, 1986). White actors have denied that racism and race have placed white, black and indigenous people in racial categories, hierarchies or races.

In contrast to the US history of racial formation that went from legal and overt institutionalized racism -Jim Crow system and white supremacy- to a color-blind society (Omi and Winant, 1996), Colombia has been built its racial system based on the denial of

race and racism. An example is the myth of racial harmony in the period right after the wars for independence and Republic -around 1810- 1900- (Lasso, 2007 and Munera, 2008); the mestizo nation -around 1920-1991- (Wade, 1993)⁹ and, recently, multiculturalism. In all of these racial projects white patriots, elites, politicians and intellectuals have articulated discourse that deny race, racial conflicts and racial inequality (see Lasso, 2007; Wade, 1993; Almario, 2010 and Munera, 2008). For the purpose of this study, I will focus mainly on the time when the mestizo racial project took place around 1960s in Colombia.

While the presence of race and racism has been denied historically, their terrible effects have been endured dramatically. Forms of racialization, classification, hierarchization, exclusion and denigration have been produced against black communities, yet dissociated from the meaning of race and racism as discriminatory practices. Thus, I approach race and racism in Colombia as a modern discursive practices that deny its own existence in public and official spheres as core political instrument by which Colombian society has been 'structured in dominance' (Hall, 1980), and whose effects have been the endurance of racist practices and racial inequality in a capitalist racial formation¹⁰.

This racial logic is essential to comprehend the emergence and constitution of the black counterpublic in Colombia. It developed out of the racial dynamics that belong to the

⁹ Wade states, “the possibility of seeing in nationalist discourse about race mixture both a celebration of mixture and a discrimination against black and Indians are a characteristic of the contradictory coexistence of mestizaje and discrimination in Colombia society” (Wade, 1993: 19).

¹⁰ Currently, we can argue that this racial dynamic have changed. The Colombian State and some of its citizens have sort of recognized the existence of racism. However, I would say that this recognition does not include the existence of a structural view of it. The common understanding of racism is reduced to racial relation.

racialized field of contestation. Therefore, black counterpublic reflects the partial inclusion/exclusion of the black communities in Colombia. That is, discursively included, but empirically excluded from full citizenship, social and political rights up to the point that Castillo (2007) describes it as an abstract inclusion and concrete exclusion. In this sense, unlike the racial dynamic that caused the emergence of black counterpublic in US¹¹, black counterpublic in Colombia emerged out of the web of relations and spaces situated into the racial dynamic produced by the denial/endurance of race and racism; and racial inclusion/exclusion. Likewise, this tension and ambiguity characterizes the subalternity and afromodernity of black political intellectuals in Colombia¹².

Black cultural mobilization articulated black counterpublic as a form of politics. It emerged out of several spaces and dynamics. First, black political intellectuals participated in non-conventional and autonomous spaces such as meeting in coffee houses, living rooms of hotels, festivals and tours in the Pacific region and Atlantic coast to meet other black intellectuals and politicians and to formulate, invigorate, exchange and promote their thoughts, ideas and actions. They also went to black areas, met vernacular intellectuals (see below), they collected and studied local black cultural traditions and formed folkloric dance and musical groups, and wrote articles about black folklore. Black folklorists Delia Zapata Olivella and Teófilo Potes went separately on a tour through countries in Europe, North America and South America. When they returned

11 According to Dawson, (2011), in US black counterpublic emerged as the consequence of racial stratification. He states that the racial order that this system has created and its ideological components severed to “exclude African Americans both formally and informally from participating within the American bourgeois public sphere” and also from those “subaltern counterpublics such as those associated with the labor, populist and women's movements of the late-nineteenth century” (Dawson, 2011: 27). See also Singh (2004) and Baker (1995).

12 For the idea of afromodernity see Lao-Montes (2010) and Hanchard (1999).

to Colombia, they occupied positions in State Institution (Delia Zapata) or white dominated spaces (Teófilo Potes). In the 1960s, when they were able to publish their folkloric works in State institutions and white dominated journals, publishing companies, distribution networks, research centers, academic programs, conferences, conventions, festivals, organizations, and local meeting places. As I will show, several factors converged to open these possibilities, yet it does not mean that black production of knowledge was valued positively by the Colombian academy. For this, I will argue that although black political intellectuals did not created their own black press exclusively oriented towards black communities (Pisano, 2010), their ideas, discourses and actions criticized the imposed ideology of racial homogeneity -mestizaje- that made black communities invisible and consequently absent from the official idea of a Colombian national identity.

For this, I understand black counterpublic is a historical process by which black political intellectuals networked and connected dominant and subaltern nodes and sites at the national level. It is a web of institutionalized, white dominated and autonomous relations and spaces that reveal the tensions and contradictions linked to the racial logic that denies/endures race and racism, and includes/excludes black communities from certain social, cultural, political and economic benefits. Thus, although it seems that black political intellectual participated in dominated white public sphere, what characterizes the subalternity of black counterpublic refers to the unequal conditions of power on which black political intellectuals negotiate power relations to formulate oppositional interpretations of their racial identities, interests, and needs; it is a subaltern space

because it is the result of the racial dynamics of Colombia which reveals the ambiguous and contradictory cultural, political, economic and social conditions of racial exclusion/inclusion of black communities. As I will describe, this process of black counterpublic formation reveals the racial contradiction of inclusion/exclusion of blacks in Colombia but also the state contradictions and divisions (Jessop, 2009) to open possibilities for black political intellectuals to get into the Colombian state and white dominated spaces, yet they were trivialized and denigrated (Arboleda, 2011).

How can we define the black political intellectual? What kind of knowledge, ideas and projects s/he is able to produce in conditions of inclusion/exclusion? What abilities and skills does s/he have to develop in order to fulfill her/his purpose of circulating her/his counter-discourses? So, critical theory provides some elements that I consider relevant for this study. In fact, we have learned from Gramsci ([1971] 1992 and) that an 'organic intellectual' has a social function. "Every social group (...) creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (Gramsci ([1971] 1992: 5). While useful, this organic definition of intellectual is an unsatisfactory category to explain the black political intellectuals. 'Organic intellectual' refers to the functions and sociological relationships between an intellectual, its social class and social struggle for the mean of production in a capitalist system, but it does not address the nature and engagement that black intellectuals may engage in their commitments for racial struggle and for racial liberation (Bogues, 2003).

Although referring to a different racial rule, which is characterized by a racial dictatorship (see Omi and Winant, 1996), Frantz Fanon ([1963] 2004) offers insightful contributions to my idea of the black political intellectuals. Fanon defines 'native intellectual' as a man (and woman) of culture who passionately takes a black political stance in the field of history built by colonialist intellectuals (Fanon, [1963] 2004). A native intellectual is an intellectual who looks to the past for tools, historical facts and motivation in order to help blacks to recover their dignity, glory, solemnity and peoplehood; is an intellectual “must demonstrate that a Negro culture exists” (Fanon, [1963] 2004: 212); and native intellectual is intellectual that not only turns her/himself into a defender of his people's past; “he is willing to be counted as one of them (...)” (Fanon, [1963] 2004: 212). I find this definition compelling as to the racial function of the black political intellectual that Gramsci's organic intellectual definition does not provide. While Gramsci's organic intellectual seems to be the product of a fixed class identity, Fanon's native intellectual seems to recognize the subjective formation by which an intellectual decide to be counted as one of the people s/he says s/he represents. Thus, it is not about an identity through which social categories belonging to the social structure are given (Marxist view), it is more about an identity formation from the multiple positionalities that one actor occupies as my former black political intellectuals may occupy in a racialized social system that denies/endures race and racism.

So, I approach black political intellectuals focusing on their political practices, discourses and actions as the art of the possible. For me then black political intellectuals are those who not only recognize the racial power that has historically oppressed, excluded, and

marginalized black communities, but they also develop a set of actions, ideas, discourses and projects to change the social reality of black communities¹³. In this sense, black political intellectuals must reflect intentions, goals and actions that may operate “within the same discursive, rhetorical field of national, even transnational racial politics, but from different subject positions and perhaps more important, with different reasons (...)” (Hanchard, 2006:261). Furthermore, black political intellectuals reveal a set of practices, actions and discourses that show a “critical memory” that maintains a collective record that “draws into relationship significant instance of time past and the always uprooted homeless of now” (Baker, 1995:7); vernaculization as they craft subaltern political positionality from which black political intellectuals speak “as they address the issues of the day that directly affect their community” (Farred, 2003: 22); and radical and anti-systemic discourses and actions that go against the racial order (see Valderrama, 2012 and Bagues, 2003).

1.2 Data and Methodology

This study departed from a critical and relational sociohistorical perspective. While I paid attention to structural processes such as racial and state formations in Colombia, I also considered international racial dynamics that converged at the local, regional and global levels. So, I was not only able to recognize contradictions and ambiguities between the local-global relations but also between black agency, national racial formation and

13 In Fanon's words, black political intellectual is formed when a man of culture passionately takes a political stance in the field of Colombian folklore in order to describe, justify and praise the actions through which black communities have created themselves and kept themselves in a collective existence; when this man uses the past with the intention to open the future and hope and takes part in action and throws himself body and soul into the struggle for liberation (Fanon, [1963] 2004).

international racial dynamics. Also, this perspective allowed me to understand the historical events that happened around 1960s.

I chose to study this period because it represents the time when Colombia witnessed the rising of black folkloric activities and black political intellectuals' production of knowledge alongside with the debates about Colombian racial identity and Latin America racial identity as mestizo (Wade, 1997). Globally, this was also the time when countries around the world were redefining their national symbols and identities, and UNESCO unfolded global strategies oriented to change the view of racial minorities. For this, I used available data (books and testimonies related to my main research questions) to describe this local, national, regional and global racial dynamics.

I have used a qualitative research methodology for this thesis (Lawrence, 2007). As I characterize my former black political intellectuals' production of knowledge and forms of politics into the field of folklore, this method allowed me to search for their actions, political stances, their social and political relations, the political environments they were part of, the forms of politics they organized and their interpretations of race and racism. I study Zapata Olivella (1929-2001), Teófilo Potes (1917-1975) and Rogério Velásquez (1908- 1965) production of knowledge about black folklore. First, they were well known as the former promoters and precursors of the black folkloric tradition; in the academy (Rogério Velásquez) and from social and cultural processes (Delia Zapata and Teófilo Potes).

Second, each of them represents the geographical diversity of the racial formation in Colombia. Delia Zapata was mulatto woman from the Atlantic coast, which is considered racially mixed between European, indigenous and blacks. That is why her racial project recognizes not only black cultural traditions but also indigenous traditions'. Teófilo Potes was a black man from the south of the Pacific Region, which is considered the place least influenced by European cultures. And Rogério Velásquez was a black man from the north of the Pacific Region, which had some European cultural influence but not as much as the Atlantic coast. Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella were writers and choreographers. Both Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella, organized folkloric dance groups and wrote about black folkloric expressions. In contrast, Rogério Velásquez was an anthropologist and academic. As far as I know, he did not form any folkloric dance group. Third, they met and knew each other in Bogotá and interacted with one another through participation in festivals and folkloric events (see below). Fourth, they were “black elites” who had access to “higher education” in Colombia.

I combined two techniques to collect the data for this study: interviews and archival research. For the first technique, I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (see Lawrence, 2007). I obtained information about folkloric actors, the trajectory of black folklore in the Pacific region, dates and events, and meanings of black folklore. I interviewed 8 black women, 4 black men and one white man. They were dancers, musicians, teachers, singers and grassroots organizers involved in folkloric dynamics, organizations and state institutions. Their ages ranged from 30 to over more than 50 years old. I used the snow ball technique to contact these interviewees. After

professor Santiago Arboleda, an important black intellectual in Colombia, suggested that I contact one folkloric dancer, I asked my interviewees again and again for other well-known folklorists and choreographers. Based on their suggestions, I decided to contact those folklorists who my interviewees agreed upon.

I recorded all the interviews in Spanish. Then, I hired a specialist to transcribe the interviews from tape to paper. Once I selected the interview's fragments I use for this study, I hired a translator to interpret and translate the fragments of interviews from Spanish to English. The data that I collected using interviews is used for section "3". Although, I considered all information collected from my interviewees, I incorporated only Leonor Gonzales Mina's account into the actual report. The reason I chose her is she participated in Delia Zapata Olivella' folkloric dance group and met Teófilo Potes in person. In other words, she was part of the black cultural mobilization of the 1960s that I describe in section "3". In contrast, my other interviewees were part of a process that started in the late 70s.

For the second technique, archival research, I read 8 articles of Delia Zapata Olivella published in "Paginas de Cultura" (6 articles) and "Revista Colombiana de Folclore" (1 article) between 1960 and 1970. Gorge List translated one article of Delia Zapata Olivella from Spanish to English and published it in the journal of Ethnomusicology in 1967. I also read her book "Manuel de Danzas de la Costa Pacífica Colombiana, Danzas sacras y profanas" published in 1998. I read two articles written by Teófilo Potes. Both were published in the journal of ALEPH in 1975. Finally, I read 11 articles of Rogelio

Velasquez published in “Revista Colombiana de Folclore” (9 articles) and Revista Colombiana de Antropología (2 articles). I also read an article published in Revista Universidad de Antioquia. All of these articles were published between 1950 and 1970.

The interpretation and analysis of these data was as follows. First, I coded terms, words, expressions, concepts and categories used repetitively and related to ideas of race and racism (manifest analysis) (Lawrence, 2007). For example, race, black, white, “negredumbre” (blackness), mestizo, colonizers, conquerors, etc. Second, I identified contexts, descriptions and meanings associated with these racial terms. For example, the association between white, colonizer, conqueror and dominant ruling class, or the association between blacks, exploited and enslaved populations (latent analysis) (Lawrence, 2007). I used all these data in section “4”.

CHAPTER 2

Political Context: The Racist Culture Of Governmentality

I propose to characterize the cultural, economic and political context within which black counterpublic emerged as the historical moment when the Colombian racial state unfolded its “racist culture of governmentality”, the racist cultural dimension of what David Theo Goldberg has defined as a “racial governmentality” (2002). Governmentality has been used to describe the “art of exercising power in the form and according to the model of the economy” (Foucault, 2006:135). Foucault (2006) defines it as an “ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyzes and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security” (Foucault, 2006:142). So, racial governmentality refers to a racial state power; the range of institutional, definitive and disciplinary practices oriented to define, regulate, govern, manage, and mediate racial matters (Goldberg, 2002:109). In this sense, racist culture of governmentality represents the ways how the Colombian racial State displayed its racial governmentality using racist cultural policies to sustain its racial state power. Then, in what follows, I will outline some points of the racist culture of governmentality in Colombia.

Foucault (2006) sustains that both the formation of governmental apparatuses and the production of knowledge characterize the tendency towards the establishment of new

forms of power called governmentality. On the other hand, Hall sustains, “the nation-state was never simply a political entity. It was always also a symbolic formation -a 'system of representation'- which produced an 'idea' of the nation as an 'imagined community', with whose meanings we could identify and which, through this imaginary identification, constituted its citizens as 'subjects' (Hall, 1993:355/quotation marks from the original).

The establishment of a governmentality that contributed to imagine Colombia as mestiza dates back to 1850 when the Colombian State sought to modernize and institutionalize governmental apparatuses and its production of knowledge. This was the “Chorographic Commission” (Comisión Corográfica) which sought to study and to map Colombian geographies to shed some light on the racial composition of Colombian society, its natural resources and populations (Restrepo, 1984). Among others the recommendations, made by Agustin Codazzi, the foremost representative scholar of this commission, are the need to consolidate the Colombian market by creating means of communication between regions, reaffirming the State and stabilizing social order (Restrepo, 1984). All of these with the purposes approaches were used to capture the attention and interest of white Europeans so they would want to come to Colombia.

The chorographic commission created the basis of a system of racial representation that would define the Colombian racial identity, the racial representations of its citizens and the features of its popular culture; racist system of representation that promoted an underestimated view of the blacks as lazy and backward. For example, when Birenbaum

describes that this chorographic commission “brings up the marimba in his description of the Pacific: not as an ethnological *costumbre* or even a curiosity, but as an indication of the poor use of time better spent working or consuming” (Birenbaum, 2009;138), I can observe that the chorographic commission used a racist utilitarian discourses (Goldberg 1993) that undermine black culture. On the other hand, When Wade (1993) reports that Agustin Codazzi sustained that blacks in the Chocó province were “a race almost all of which passes its days in such indolence is not that which is called to make the country progress” (Wade,1993:13), I can observe that like other members of this commission (see Wade, 1993), Agustin Codazzi used a system of representation that not only expresses its racist utilitarianism but also ideas of *virtue* (Goldberg 1993) in term of the lack of self-restraint, obligation, temperance and progress of the blacks. Finally, according to Alvaro Villegas (2008) Chocó, Magdalena and Cauca, places where blacks predominate, were represented as “place of beast; of barbarians; of backwardness; of laziness; and of stupidity (Villegas, 2008). In contrast, big cities like Bogotá, Medellin and Cali where modernization and virtuosity are (Wade, 1993 and Birenbaum, 2009).

Years later, in 1886, President Rafael Núñez imposed a strongly centralist Constitution (Wade, 2000). As an expression of the ideology of racial harmony and democracy, this constitution was the basis for the idea of Colombia as homogeneously mestiza (Castillo, 2007). From this legal framework, I can argue that the racial character of the state institutions and their production of knowledge as mestizo were established since 1886 until 1991. Likewise, it was almost one hundred years of denying/enduring race and

racism in Colombia until State recognizes black presence constitutionally; after years and years of black struggles.

In 1927, the Colombian State created the Ministry of National Education giving it two responsibilities according to Aristizabal (2002). First, this Ministry orientated and directed universities and institutions which promoted 'high culture'. Second, this Ministry orientated and directed the 'fine art' institution, libraries and monuments. As Aristizabal (2002) states, this also suggests that the Colombian State did not make any effort to preserve what was considered “low culture” or popular culture (Aristizabal, 2005); particularly if this culture was associated with black cultural traditions. At this time, the conservative political party, alongside the Catholic Church, governed the Colombian society. Both, the Colombian State and Catholic Church, saw black culture as vulgar, dangerous, sinful and evil. As Goldberg (1993) would argue, these racist cultural representations justified the State's willingness to diminish black cultural manifestations and expressions off of Colombia.

The Colombian State sought to modernize the Colombian society by consolidating the nation-state between 1930 and 1948. Therefore, the Colombian State, under the leadership of the liberal party (Silva, 2005), launched a cultural state policy, “Extension Cultural” -Cultural Extension- with the purpose of establishing a better relationship between its social and ruling classes after years of civil wars and political conflicts. To fulfill this purpose, the Colombian State “rediscovered” the “popular culture” and defined it through the lens of folklore. Thus, the traditional, local and cultural practices and

expressions that have historically remained “intact” and survived through the time (For example, traditional rituals, music, rhymes, popular sayings and riddles, proverbs, and local dances) became the “quintessence of the national soul.” (Silva, 2005: 26).

We know that “racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism” (Balibar, 1991: 53; see also Hall, 1993), and this cultural State project was one space where “the cycle of historical reciprocity” between racism and nationalism, “which is the temporal figure of the progressive domination of the system of nation-states over other social formations” (Balibar, 1991: 53), took shape. Thus, this cultural state project articulated nationalism and racism as its programs and actions reveal the Colombian State's intention to reinforce a “fictive” national ideality constructed around a “system of representation” called mestizaje, which is “the belief in the use of racial mixture to lighten the complexion (culture) of a nation in the movement toward whiteness and thereby promote racial hegemony” (Hernandez, 2013:20). In other words, this cultural state project intended to whiten the idea of popular cultural and in turn, the nation.

The Extension Cultural State project had two phases and both reveal the white mestizo project. In the first phase (1930-1940), the Colombian State diffused and infused high forms of culture such as reading, writing, poems, science, hygiene, agricultural modernization, rights and duties (Silva, 2005). For this, the Colombian State created a cultural program, “Cultura Aldeana” -Village of Culture- (Pisano (2010) describes it as *Aproximación Cultural* -'cultural approach' -see below), which brought education to

everywhere in Colombia with the purposes of educating and civilizing “the masses” (Silva, 2005).

I describe this State program in section 4.3 as the “culturalist bio-politics project of mestizaje” which intended to let blackness die and make whiteness live. However, I want to point out here that Hernandez (2013) considers this type of State program as the Spanish American approach to eugenics that intended to integrate the “inferior” culturally into the society. Accordingly, this ideology of genetic acquisition proposed that an individuals or groups can be influenced by the environment and thereby their heredity can be modified over generations (Hernandez, 2013). Thus, the fact that the Colombian State pretended to accommodate the Colombian society into a homogenous standard of high culture entails its intention to homogenize racially the Colombian population through the ideology of Blanqueamiento¹⁴.

In the second phase (1940-1948) of the Extension Cultural State project, the Colombian State promoted social and anthropological investigations to rediscover, know, and articulate the popular culture of “masses” into the idea of mestizo nation. For this, the Colombian State reoriented previous State Institutions and official journals (Ministry of National Education, National museums and Revista De las Indias), created other institutions and Journals (Escuela Normal Superior (National School) and the National

14 There are other State actions that intended to whiten the Colombian population. They are a. the Colombian State encouraged European immigrants to come to Colombia with economic and political benefits such as travel fund and tax breaks; and b. in 1843 Colombian State omitted the racial category question in the Census and reinstated it around 1993. (See also Wade, 1993, Pisano, 2012; and Hernandez, 2013).

Ethnological Institute; Boletín de Arqueología and Revista del Instituto Etnológico Nacional) and decreed new cultural State programs.

As it can be seen, the popular culture through the lens of folklore became the object of study and of intervention of the Colombian State, academics (anthropologists, folklorists, etc.) and politicians that turned their view toward folklore hoping to create and consolidate the Colombian national identity by unifying the “masses” and the ruling classes (Silva, 2005 and Miñana, 2000). Therefore, conferences, folkloric festivals, publications, television and radio programs were sponsored by the Colombian State to promote the Colombian folklore or popular culture of the masses.

While the Colombian State displayed its cultural “strategic selectivity” (Jessop, 2008) for educating and unifying the nation as mestiza, the Colombian State also showed its racial strategic selectivity that denied the racial differences and inequalities under the ideology of mestizaje. In other words, by promoting the ideology of mestizaje as the path to the modernization of Colombian society, the Colombian State also displayed some State practices that endured racism and racist practices of exclusion. For example, State institutions and journals were devoted to the study of Indians and indigenous societies. In contrast, the studies of black societies were denied, invisibilized, disgraced and subordinated (Friedemann, 1986; Wade, 1993; Birenbaum, 2009; and Pisano, 2012).

This is the racist way the Colombian State could govern, manage and mediate racial issues; by promoting a mestizo state-nation which promoted study about indigenous and

white peasant as the roots, past or basis for the new national identity. Therefore, the Colombian State also promoted the obscuring of black cultural contributions. However, I need to clarify that indigenous traditions were seen as something of the past but not of the present. So, the cultural state project ended up trying to whiten the Colombian populations.

By the time when the web of relations and spaces that constitute the black counterpublic had gotten at its peak, two ideas of mestizaje predominated in official spaces. The first idea was a biological conception that emphasized on the immigration of Europeans to Colombia in order to whiten the Colombian society. The Second idea of mestizaje emphasized on the education and the improvement of the Colombian State. Both versions of mestizaje were contested and re-signified by the black political intellectuals (See section 4 below).

In Latino America countries, folklore and mestizaje overlapped in constructing the national identities. Seigel (2009) sustains that black popular music offered the grounds for the assertion of racial harmony in Brazil (Seigel, 2009). Also, Peter Wade (2009) manifests, “in many ways, these were musical style that developed in the working-class barrios of Latin America cities, often by adopting European styles and combining them with African-derived (...) aesthetics and rhythm, and that were then fastened upon by the middle class, 'cleaned up', modernized, and made into acceptable national (mestizo) symbols” (Wade, 2009:43/emphasis from the original). Thus, I would hypothesize that several Latin American States developed their own local racist culture of governmentality

to address their own racial issues as Colombian did¹⁵. For example, Argentinian State promoted tango music; Brazilian State advocated, among others, samba, maxixe and capoeira; Puerto Rican State advocated danza; Mexican State advocated ranchera; and Cuban State promoted son, rumba and guaracha (Wade, 2000). Thus, while the States in Latin America promoted mestizaje, they simultaneously sustained racial inequalities (Wade, 1993).

This idea of mestizo that each Latino American country developed in their own occurred in dialogue both among Latin American countries, and between Latin American countries and Europe, United State and South Africa. According to Wade (1993), De la Cadena (2000) and Pisano (2012) the terrible racist events that occurred in Germany, United State and South Africa served and worked as empirical arguments to differentiate Latino American countries from those with overt and legal racial systems. As result of this differentiation, Latino American countries promote the idea that they were racially democratic societies; a “racial paradise” (Telles, 2004). In understanding the black politics I am studying, we need to recognize the effect that this particular ideologies had in shaping language and discourses of racism in Colombia around 1960. For black political intellectuals to complain about race and racism was obviously problematic. The word ‘racism’ intermediately connected and referred to the meaning and image popularized by the atrocities occurred in Germany and in the United State. Thus, the word racism itself became a ‘trap’ to describe the racial formation and ways that racism took shape in a covertly racist regime as Colombia.

15 For the particular case in Peru see De la Cadena (2006). For Brazil see Hanchard (1994).

Parallel to the racial mestizo formation in Latino America countries, a consumption market of and interests in 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms had already been established globally since 1900s. When black political intellectuals deployed their racial project in Colombia, European countries and the United States had been enjoying and entertaining the performance of black artists, musicians and of their 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms (Seigel, 2009; see also Hall, 1993). It was an established economic cultural circuit through which black artists from different countries traveled and performed black traditions, minstrels, music, etc. According to Seigel (2009), some black artists and performers embraced the role of black exotic and others contested it by producing anti-racist version of the black exotic (see Seigel (2009)).

A final international factor that influenced the art of the possible for black political intellectuals in Colombia relates to the mutation of the racial rule that governed the world until the War World II in 1950s. According to Winant (2000), the global racial project - white supremacy- began to experience an unprecedented crisis. Its ideological and scientific foundations were discredited as a consequence of the terrible events that occurred in United States and Germany. Ideas of modernity, democracy and equality that these two countries promoted were criticized for their inapplicability when relating to race and racism. Also, social and political mobilizations spread the world in multiple forms. These political struggles emphasized on the elimination of Jim Crow System, the liberation of African countries and equal racial opportunity. According to Winant, all of these factors (and other too numerous to list in this paper) contributed to the

problematization of the traditional and overtly racialized forms of rule that has shaped the world order (Winant, 2000:32).

White supremacy as global racial project did not fulfill the requirement to preserve the racial order any longer. A new racial project was needed. I argue that the racial project of mestizaje developed in Latin America fit into the requirements this new racial order needed. Mestizaje was the perfect racial model of governmentality that met the needs of the new situation that required a less overtly racist regime to preserve the racial hegemony. Thus, the ideology of mestizaje resonated with the ideas of democracy, individual opportunities and freedom.

This new racial order is what I call the global racial mestizo project: a racial project that was advocated by international organizations – e.g. the United Nation- after the War World II. For example, UNESCO financed studies, international events and conferences to discuss race and cultural differences related problems and issues (see Garcia, 1987). Brazil was a particular case of interest for its ideology of racial democracy. UNESCO financed several social investigations in there. Accordingly, although these studies had “little evidence to sustain the idea of racial democracy (..:),” “there was still a tendency to deny the significant of race or to see it as declining over time: Brazil was basically a class society” (Wade, 1997:57). In Colombia, black political intellectuals met UNESCO representative. Teófilo Potes was one of them as I show below. Leonor Gonzales Mina also had the chance to meet a representative of the UNESCO in Cali. She sates: “I entered the conservatory here, and here I continued to study drama, and I was very lucky

to study drama with Enrique Buenaventura, with Fanny [Mikey], with Pedro Martínez, Fanny's husband, and UNESCO brought a French teacher, a mime that taught us too.” (Leonor GonzalesMina, interview, January 2012).

This need more study to be proven. However, one can find some of the principles and racial dynamics of mestizaje in the current racial rule. That is, the racial logic of inclusion/exclusion, endurance/denial of racism and race. In this respect, Winant suggests that the new global racial rule “simultaneously incorporates and denies the rights, and in some cases the very existence, of others whose recognition was only so recently and incompletely conceded” (Winant, 2000: 35). In this sense, even though black counterpublic was constituted in Colombia, we cannot deny its connections to the global racial politics of this time, and to the celebratory and welcoming global atmosphere of the cultural and ethnic differences; particularly, this global celebratory opening for the cultural difference brought contradictions into the local racial dynamics as I will describe below.

CHAPTER 3

The Web Of Relations And Spaces Of The Black Counterpublic

To describe the types of relations and spaces within which black counterpublic emerged, I assume a theoretical perspective which understands forms of politics as complex process of self-organization (Escobar, 2008). That is, “as self-producing, autonomous entities whose basic internal organizations, despite important changes, is preserved in their interaction with their environments through structural coupling” (Escobar, 2008:259). From this perspective, I understand black counterpublic as a self-produced, ensemble and autonomous network of social relations and spaces whose individual and groups' actions shape black counterpublic by converging around possible spaces and relations (see Escobar, 2008:261).

3.1 Assembling Black Counterpublic: the black cultural mobilization as a meshwork

My argument is that my former black political intellectuals belonged to a black cultural mobilization that can be described as “meshwork”: decentralized, self-organized, heterogeneous, multi-oriented goals constituted by nodes and sites of convergence (Manuel de Landa quoted by Escobar, 2008: 274). Here, sites or nodes refer to relations, places and positions from where folkloric musical and dance groups and black writers emerged.

The first site of this meshwork is the black settlements. In these places, blacks learned black traditional practices as part of their culture. When I interviewed Leonor Gonzales Mina, she remembered the following: “I dance because there, in Robles, lived Mrs. Tita. I will never forget Tita, black Tita, she used to love all those things, and at Christmastime she would dress me and the other girls like little *virgencitas* (ladies) and we would all go out, and she would teach us songs and help us make musical instruments with wires, all that and more.” (Leonor GonzalesMina, interview, January 2012). Like Leonor Gonzales expresses, blacks get to know how to play musical instruments such as Marimba – traditional instruments – and drums, or to recite poems, “decimas” and stories, or to sing and to dance songs as part of their local cultural traditions. Also, places as Annual Festivities, Christmas Celebrations, Funerals, local carnivals, parties, local churches and clubs were sites of the meshwork where blacks produce and reproduce autonomously their cultural and religious traditions such as Lumbalú in Palenque de San Basilio, and Alabaos and Arrullos in the Pacific Region.

Much of the music and dancing styles, songs and clothes created and recreated around black cultural and religious practices were later taken by local brass bands around 1940 and folkloric dance groups around 1950. For example, Peter Wade (2008) reports that brass bands composed of peasants emerged in the late 1930s performing music originated in the Caribbean coast such Cumbia, Porro, Mapale, Vallenato, and Fundango (Wade, 2000). Cuevas (2007) reports that, in 1940, a local band “La Banda Pellejo”, was created in Barbacoas, a local town in the Pacific Region. Accordingly, every Sunday the “Pellejo band” performed their music in open spaces such as parades, celebrations, processions

and funerals in Nariño and Cauca, states of the Pacific Region. Like Cuevas, Birenbaum (2009) reports similar processes in other places of the Pacific region. Around this time, 1940, individuals and municipalities created brass bands in places like Barbacoas, Guapi, Buenaventura, Nariño, and Robles (Birenbaum, 2009).

The emergence of local bands was not exclusively in the black communities. They were everywhere in Colombia. Regularly, they were composed of no less than 20 members. They were basically local ensembles which played local traditional music. Also, they played European, indigenous and peasants related musical styles. As Wade (1998) describes, they played waltz, Contradanza, Polka and Mazurka, Bambuco, Pasillo, Rumba, Tango and Jazz related musical styles. However, by the entrance of the recording industry and mass musical consumption, a new racial dynamic emerged into the music consumption in Colombia.

Wade (2000) stresses, “the commercialization of the media in Colombia meant that standardization occurred in specific ways. Some Colombian styles became successful – and thus pervasive- at the expenses of others which, in the new commercial climate, remained purely local or faded into background (...)” (Wade, 2000:27). Although the music industry mediated the tension between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity (Wade, 2000:26), the pattern of preference for white associated musical styles and genres prevailed over those of blacks. The reason for this is, white associated music fit better into mestizo identity, and, in turn, met the needs of the record industry to be commercialized and commodified.

By the end of the twentieth century, Bambuco, Passillos and Danzones musical styles, the white music styles, were incorporated into the discourses of national identity. For white elites, journalists, intellectuals and politicians from the interior, Bogotá and Medellín, these music styles represented the mestizo nation as whitening. That is why they praised it as the national melody (Wade, 1998 and 2000). In contrast, costeño music, the mixed and less black associated musical style from the Atlantic coast, and black music from the Pacific region were represented as vulgar, foreign, and threat to the mestizo national identity (Wade, 1998 and 2000). When local record companies such as Discos Fuentes in Cartagena, Sonolux in Medellín and Discos Vargas en Bogotá, they commercialized costeño music related styles such as Porro, Cumbia, Vallenato, Fundango. (Wade, 2000). Furthermore, from the 1940s on, costeño music acquired an orchestra feature and was played mostly by light-brown skin tone players, reducing the presence of dark skin tone players almost to nothing (Wade, 2000:103).

In contrast, orchestras and musical groups led by blacks did not have the same impact and support of the record companies. For example, Peregoyo's group Vacana (an acronym from Valley, Cauca, and Nariño from which the Buenaventura-resident musicians came from) was the first black musical group from the Pacific Region that had the chance to record an LP disc with Sonolux in 1967. Leonor Gonzales Mina was the main singer of this group. She recorded “mi Buenaventura” song with this Peregoyo's group. Also, this group was the first in playing Pacific-derived music to become nationally- and internationally- known. However, it seems that they did not have the same welcoming as their white/mestizo counterparts in the Atlantic coast. Birenbaum stresses, “unfortunately,

the band was not heavily promoted by its record company, and the members refused to tour for fear of losing their day jobs” (Birenbaum, 2009: 172).

The emergence of folkloric dance groups was simultaneous to the emergence and consolidation of the music groups. As Birenbaum, (2009) sustains, by the late 1940s, folkloric dance groups were not exclusive to black communities. In contrast, it had been “a fairly generalized phenomenon in most of Colombia” (Birenbaum, 2009: 224). Also, Leonor Gonzales Mina remembers two groups that reflect the magnitude of the cultural movement of that time:

“(…) and then Jacinto Jaramillo showed up, but Jacinto Jaramillo was a *Paisa*, a white person from Antioquia; he played and danced other kinds of music, music from the Llanos, *bambucos*, even *cumbias*, he brought a lot, but nothing as pretty as the music we made. Then came Sonia Osorio with her show. I think that that show, her show, was a thing of beauty, but she should not have called it a Folkloric Ballet; she should have called it simply a Colombian Ballet.” (Leonor GonzalesMina, interview, January 2012).

Folkloric dance groups were composed by not less than 15 members between men and women. Their genres were varied and diverse as Leonor Gonzales Mina explains. They performed indigenous, European and peasants cultural and traditional dancing musical styles. Also, a new form of folkloric organization emerged at this time. It was a combination between folkloric musical groups or orchestras and folkloric dance groups. The number of members increased up to more than 25. Some members played musical instruments and others danced. In term of their cultural performance, they played musics, sang songs, performed dances and wore cloths representative of their regions, racial group or locality.

Two of my former black political intellectuals, Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella, founded their own folkloric dance groups at this time. Teófilo Potes founded “Acuarelas del Pacifico” group in Buenaventura, Pacific region around 1950 (Arboleda, 2010 and Birenbaum, 2009), and Delia Zapata founded “Danzas Folklóricas Colombianas” group in the Atlantic coast in 1954 (Zapata, 1985). I think that we can consider these actions as the result of their vernaculization. If “vernacular intellectuals are oppositional public figures who use the cultural platforms and spaces available to them to represent and speak in the name of their community” (Farred, 2003:23), I found that in Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella's projects, there are actions of vernacular intellectuals. They founded their own groups as folkloric platforms to represent and speak in the name of their communities in a context that disgraced and discriminated them. Through their groups, they were able to articulate black traditions and national folkloric spaces.

In the early 1950s, they went separately to these regions, sailed rivers and stayed in black settlements to record songs, melodies, sayings, dialects and legends; and to register labor practices as fishing, mining, sowing, and shepherding, and funeral practices such as Lumbalú, Arrullos, Chigualos, Alabaos, etc. Thus, their vernaculization refers to their political agenda were to show black culture and tradition by using black bodies to perform choreographed black dances that represent the black life-world of the Pacific region and Atlantic coast. According to Manuel Zapata Olivella, until these historical moments, folklore from these areas was “recondito” (not seen) in Colombia (Zapata, 1985). Then, I hypothesize that they were pioneers in performing the everyday life and traditions of black communities as if they were performing a play in a theater. Because,

their folkloric dance group performances included dialogues of the local dialect styles, imitations of the labor and funeral practices, and dance styles of black festivities and funerals¹⁶.

Other black folkloric dance groups emerged between 1960 and 1970. Each, Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella, formed at least three more groups. Also, members from their previous groups formed their own folkloric dance groups. For example, Mercedes Montaña, who was born on the Rosario River, Tumaco, danced and sang in Teófilo Potes' "Acuarelas del Pacifico" folkloric dance group, created her own group in 1958. Her group was named "Danzas del Litoral Pacifico" of Buenaventura with similar cultural agenda to that of Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella.

The final cultural phenomenon that emerged parallel to folkloric dance and musical groups is the emergence of black writers from different places in the Pacific region and Atlantic coasts. Some of them combined their political activism with writing of poems, novels and doing scientific researches. Others were journalists and pedagogues. Among them, Jorge Artel (1909-1994), Manuel Zapata Olivella (1920-2004), and Juan Zapata Olivella (1922-2008) from the Atlantic coast; Hugo Salazar Valdez (1926), Marco Realpe Borja (1927), Teresa Martínez Arce de Varela (1913-1998), Marco Realpe Borja (1927), Carlos Arturo Troque (1927-1977), Diego Luis Cordoba (1907-1964), Miguel Caicedo (1919-1995), Arnoldo Palacios (1924), Carlos Carderon Mosquera (1927-2012) from Chocó; Helcias Martan Gongora (1920-1984), Natanael Diaz (1919-1964) from Cauca;

16 Although it is in Spanish, if the readers are interested in knowing how folkloric dance groups perform their dances, you can watch it in the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7uBUioi16o>

Lino Antonio Sevillano Quiñones (1928) from Nariño; and Rogério Castillo Candelo from Buenaventura (see Friedemann, 1984; Lowis, 1987; Prescott, 1996 and 1999; Leal, 2007; Antón, 2003; and Arboleda, 2010). Although this list of black writers, novelists and poets is significant, it is not exhausted. There are black intellectuals 1950s who deserve attention. For example, anthropologist Aquiles Escalante, who funded a Center for the Study of Folklore in the University of the Atlantic.

My third former black political intellectual, Rogério Velásquez, belonged to this group of black intellectuals. He was an ethnologist and anthropologist from Chocó. According to Antón (2003) and Friedemann (1984) he developed and created his own anthropological methods out of the methodology created to study Indigenous cultural tradition in Colombia. He studied black folklore in a historical moment when studying black culture was seen as not doing anthropology (Friedemann 1984). So, like Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella, I see actions of a vernacular intellectual in Rogério Velásquez's academic project because he used the academy as his cultural platform and space to represent and speak in the name of their community. He created methods and theories to study black communities in a context where the academy in Colombia was designed to study almost exclusively Indians (Wade, 1993).

In general, these black intellectuals were black middle class who had opportunity to access to education. Some of them managed to be state representative and congressman. Their political affiliations and identifications were diverse. Some were leftist supporters (communists) in the liberal political party, for example, Delia Zapata Olivella and Teófilo

Potes, and others were part of the conservative political party, Rogério Velásquez. Due to this diversity of political affiliations, black counterpublic cannot be seen as homogenous (see Thayer 2010). They might agree upon making black cultural traditions visible in a context where mestizaje denied them, but they had different political affiliations in Colombia.

The assembling of the black counterpublic as a meshwork started from multiple and decentralized sites in the Pacific Region and Atlantic coast. It began as self-organized and heterogeneous process oriented to the formation of folkloric dance and musical groups that incorporated black traditional and local cultural practices as part of their performance. Then, the record industry and its market dynamics influenced the emergence of some local bands over others as the result of the racialized pattern of preference in Colombia for white associated musical style. Finally, the assembling of the black counterpublic as a meshwork was influenced by the emergence of black writers from different places in the Pacific region and Atlantic coasts. As one can see, the project of these black intellectuals was to demonstrate that a black culture existed in Colombia.

3.2 Black cultural mobilization: Spaces and relations of Convergence

The spaces where my black political intellectuals converged between and among other cultural activists should be understood *as sites and nodes of collaborative relation* between black musicians, writers and folkloric choreographers. The collaborative relations were possible because of what Raymond William describes as “structure of

feeling”: “the way meanings and values were lived” in a particular historical moment (Raymond William quoted by Hall, 1993: 351). I understand this structure of feeling as an “intimate sufficiency” (suficiencias íntimas): “Clusters of experience and values that are always liberating; a reservoir of operational mental constructions, a product of the social relations established by a group throughout its history, which take concrete form as effective elaborations and leadership structures, briefly verbalized on occasion, which become guiding principles for their socialization and livelihood” (Arboleda, 2011:11). Thus, the intimate sufficiency made black musicians, writer and folkloric choreographers create the black counterpublic by exchanging experiences and information of their personal “black life-world” (Hanchard, 2006).

Black counterpublic began as a national relational space since the 1940s in Bogotá, when black students from the Pacific Region, Cauca and the Atlantic coast converged in central cities -Cali, Bogotá, Popayan and Medellin- in Colombia to develop their studies. The convergence of these students in hostel (pensiones), coffees shops, libraries, and informal meetings gave rise to the emergence of group dynamics such as those that Delia Zapata Olivella's older brother, Manuel Zapata Olivella, describes in *Levántate Mulato* (1990). In this autobiography, Manuel Zapata Olivella reports that it was slow but steady growing awareness of racial discrimination in Bogotá; racial experiences that also were shared by other black students from Cauca and the Pacific regions (Zapata, 1988: 177-190). He states,

“...we, the students from the Caribbean coast, were led to violent confrontations, which were evident given our condition as *mulatos* or *zambos* and the pure black complexion of our classmates from Cauca. During those encounters in the capital, in tenement houses, in classrooms,

and in the streets, we would discuss, without really knowing, the most important aspect of a humanist education: our own identity. ‘You are black, I am *mulato*, we are both victims of discrimination.’ (...) Slowly, painfully, my sister (Delia Zapata) and I started to untie the unconscious knot of racial complex.’ (Zapata, 1988:184)

These discussions about black identity and the racial situation in Colombia were supported by reading materials, books and articles about Africanness in the Americas, both north and south. Among the authors they read were the Cuban Fernando Ortiz, the Brazilian Nina Rodriguez and the Mexican Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran. Manuel Zapata Olivella remarks that they read novels such as Romulo Gallegas's “Pobre Negro” and the Adalberto Ortiz's “Juyongo”. In using these materials, black students were able to discuss issues not only about class but also about their racial identity (Zapata, 1990).

Manuel Zapata Olivella narrates in *Levántate Mulato* (1990) all the details of an iconic public event that took place in June 20, 1943. This was war of maneuver in which black intellectual celebrated the “El Día del Negro” (The black day). Zapata Olivella, Delia Zapata, Natanael Diaz, Adolfo Mina Balanta and Marino Viveros were black students who invited others to protest against racism in Colombia. They combined black culture and politics to protest. First, they marched in the streets demanding racial solidarity for two blacks lynched in Chicago and for the liberation of Africa (Zapata, 1990: 189). I would argue that this protest represented their political strategy to get make racism visibility, to form collective recognition as black people and to look for Afro diasporic connections and solidarity in a country that denied them and their racial problems. When marching on Bogotá's streets, they chanted “Long live blacks!” “Down with racial

discrimination!” “We decry the lynching of our colored brothers and sisters in the United States!” “Long live Africa in the year 2000!” (Zapata, 1990: 189).

They also marched and peacefully occupied the library of the Universidad Nacional. There, they requested African American music to honor and to remember the assassination of the blacks in US. Later that day, black students marched up to coffee shops where white intellectuals, merchants, students and unemployed gathered together to meet, chat about national issues and drink beverages. On one occasion, Natanael Diaz gave a speech referring to the racial discrimination in the United States, and other black students recited Candelario Obeso and Jorge Artel's poems, read chapters from Richard Wright's novel, “Native Son” (translated in Spanish as *Sangre Negra*), and performed and danced black music such as Cumbia and Rumba (Pisano, 2012). The march ended up with a police arrest, when the protestors decided to go to the Plaza de Simon Bolivar in Bogotá where the Simon Bolivar's statue is located. They complained to him for not keeping the promise of freeing blacks after the wars of independence (Zapata, 1990).

The reaction of the white elites and politicians to the “El Día del Negro” event shows the logic of racism in Colombia. They attacked the black students who organized this event. Pisano (2012) documents that journals such as “El Espectador”, “El Liberal” and “El Tiempo” published articles condemning “El Día del Negro” event. He remarks that these journals critiqued the protest and classified it as dangerous and inconvenient because in Colombia skin color was not persecuted. If racism existed in Colombia, it was in the past. It was eliminated after the war of independence and the abolition of the slavery (Pisano,

2012:68). So, for white elites and politicians, what these black students were doing was promoting a type of reverse discrimination.

“El Día del Negro” also was important for organizing the “Club Negro de Colombia”. After the manifestations of “El día del Negro”, black intellectuals and politicians such as Marino Viveros, Helcias Martan Gongora, Manuel Zapata Olivella, Victor M Viveros y Natanale Diaz funded this organization for the purposes of creating a black library; organizing conferences about the afro diasporic conditions in the world and the processes of liberation in Africa; the construction of a black neighborhood; the eradication of feelings of inferiority in black populations; and the stimulation of black participation as way to improve the democratic system in Colombia (Pisano, 2012).

In 1947, the “Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos” was funded. Some participants were Manuel Zapata Olivella, Delia Zapata Olivella, Arcesio Viveros, Carlos Carderon Mosquera, Adolfo Mina Balanta, Marino Viveros, Natanael Diaz, Diego Luis Cordoba and Arquimedes Viveros (Friedemann, 1986 and Pisano, 2012). This collective action was meant to be part of the Ethnological National Institute; a State institution. The goals of this collective action reflect their understanding of culture as political action. They wanted to develop historical, ethnographic and linguistic studies of black cultural traditions in order to recognize the ethnic specificity of black populations in Colombia.

There are some differences and similarities between the “Club Negro” and the Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos. These differences refer to the concept of black identity.

While the “Club Negro” promoted a biological definition of blackness -the idea of negro-, the latter promoted blackness as a form of ethnic identity using the term Afrocolombian. As to their similarities, both collectivities were organized against the racial invisibility in Colombia (Friedemann, 1986). Like “Club Negro”, Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos lasted for a short time (Pisano, 2012). However, Friedemann, (1986) documents that the Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos became a reality in 1975 when it was finally formalized before the State. There is not enough evidence to suggest whether or not this organization disappeared between 1947 and 1975. Nevertheless, this organization was important for providing a basis for the contributions of the black culture to Colombian society (Pisano, 2012 and Arboleda, 2012).

Another collective action called “Comite de Asuntos Afrocolombianos” emerged around 1950s. Mosquera (2002) maintains that Natanael Diaz funded this organization in Bogotá in 1950. Its goal was to promote black cultural traditions. Although Mosquera does not provide more details about this organization, he suggests that black intellectuals and politicians such as Manuel Zapata Olivella, Juan Zapata Olivella, Nestor Urbano Tenorio, Adan Arriaga Andrade and Diego Luis Cordoba participated in this organization. Finally, Arboleda (2010) describes what he calls “Colonias”: forms of autonomous social institutions composed of black immigrants from the same place of origin. Thus, by the 80s several “Colonies” had been constructed in central cities such as Cali, Buenaventura, Bogotá and Medellin (Arboleda, 2011). Colonies became fundamental to the production and reproduction of black cultural practices in Colombia since that time.

The convergence of black students in central cities such as Bogotá, Cali and Popayan had another implication for the constructions of the black counterpublic at the national level.

The relationships that black students created in the cities were extended to their relatives in their places of origins. When I interviewed Leonor Gonzales Mina, she described how she met Delia and Manuel Zapata Olivella in Robles, her hometown in the Cauca state when she was 18 years old. Her brother, Raul Gonzales Mina, who studied and met the sibling Zapata Olivella in Bogotá, introduced her to Delia and Manuel Zapata Olivella.

Here is our conversation:

Leonor: My brother Raúl, who was living in Bogotá and already studying Law, talked with Manuel (Zapata) and said, Listen, I have a sister! “She’s crazy, stark raving mad,” but, Oh yeah! She can really sing a tune, and is a great dancer! “She dances like a spinning top.” You should go and see her. Besides, the music there is really pretty (...) Then Manuel said, I’ll be there!

Carlos: But how did Raúl meet Manuel?

Leonor: My brother was studying Law at the Universidad Libre.

Carlos: What year was that?

Leonor: Oh, I can’t remember!

Carlos: Was it 1944 or ’45?

Leonor: Yes, it must have been in or around ’45. My brother then talked to Manuel and Manuel came along and he loved the music, he loved everything, but he didn’t tell me that my brother had started it all.

Carlos: You didn’t know who Manuel Zapata was?

Leonor: I knew, more or less, because I had heard about the group.

Carlos: What group?

Leonor: His sister’s group, Delia’s.

Leonor: Oh, yes, then Manuel came here one day and said to me, We’re organizing a trip to Russia, to Paris. Would you like to come along? I said, Yes, I want to go, I want to leave this place, I want to be an artist.

Carlos: And where in Cali did you see him?

Leonor: No, he was in Robles, he had gone to Robles with my brother, and he stayed a whole month there, taking it all in, recording a bunch of things. What did he record? The story of *tío conejo*, of *tío guatín*, all that (...) He got help from an uncle of mine that played the violin and sang and talked about *tío conejo*, about *tío guatín*, about *tía chucha* and scores of other animals, and when he sang he would play something

symbolic between songs. Manuel recorded all that and later published a book. (Leonor GonzalesMina, interview, January 2012).

Delia and Manuel Zapata Oivella followed the same procedure everywhere they went in Colombia. First, they went to a black settlement, recorded and studied black cultural practices and traditions, and recruited dancers, singers and musicians for their folkloric dance group. Members such as “Madolia de Diego, Leonor Gonzales Mina, Julio Renteria, Lorenzo Miranda, Erasno Arrieta, Clara Vargas, Teresa Diaz, Toño Fernandez, Jose Lara, Juan Lara and others” were recruited in this way (Zapata, 1985:12). Perhaps, when doing their research, they might have met local musicians and communitarian public intellectuals such as Mrs Tita or Leonor Gonzales Mina's uncle, who taught Leonor Gonzales Mina how to dance and sing when Leonor Gonzales was a child. Also, we have to consider that as Leonor Gonzales Mina's brother, Delia and Manuel Zapata might have had similar invitations from other black students or supporters who participated in “El Día del Negro” events.

According to Tompkins and Foster (2001), before Delia Zapata and her brother embarked on the year-long research trip throughout the Pacific region, black writers such as Carlos Arturo Truque and Arnolando Palacios, and the black politician, Diego Luis Cordoba, had already alerted Delia Zapata Olivella about some of the differences between the Caribbean coast and Pacific region and to the cultural riches ensconced in the small fishing villages scattered along the Pacific coast. Thus, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Diego Luis Cordoba, who had a political movement in Chocó, and Natanael Diaz, who had a political movements in Cauca (see Pisano, 2012) invited them to Chocó and Cauca,

respectively, to do their research, thereby creating a network of collaborations between them and the local inhabitants.

The case of Teófilo Potes is similar to that of the sibling Zapata Olivella. He may have created some collaboration with local intellectuals when doing his research in the Pacific region. Also, he broadcast on a local radio station called “Buenaventura radio station”. He had a radio program called “Conjunto de la Estrallas”. He played not only black traditional music but also invited local black musicians and dancers to perform live. Mercedes Montaña was recruited in this way. She was invited to perform black dance on Teófilo Potes' radio program. She was member of his group “Acuarelas del Pacifico”. Peregoyo's vacana group was also invited to play music in Teófilo Potes' radio program.

Pisano (2012) suggests that the cultural project proposed by the Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos in 1947 ended up being carried by individuals but not collectivities. Although I could not find data to suggest the opposite, I think Pisano (2012) overlooks the relational meshwork which paralleled to the experiences of “El Día del Negro” events, the “Club Negro” and the Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos. The web of relations and spaces composed of nodes and sites of collaborative relationships by political intellectuals provided a way to share information and knowledge. This web of relationships was not massive and confrontational, but worked as political platform for the visualization and promotion of the black cultural traditions.

3.3 Negotiating Power Relations

By negotiating power relation I mean the national and international network created by black intellectuals that gave them negotiating power so that they were able to fold their projects into Colombian society. I will describe how the existence and impact of black cultural traditions and forms evolved from denial on the part of mainstream to partial inclusion in Colombia. In negotiating racial power relation, contradictions and ambiguities emerged as a result of the racial dynamic inside and outside of Colombia.

By the late 1960s, the Colombian State had created state institutions dedicated to Colombian folklore with many local branches as part of its racist culture of governmentality. These institutions are the “National Ethnological Institute” and its local branches; the Folkloric National Commission; the Board of National Folklore; the Colombian Academy of History; The Colombian Institute of Anthropology; Caro y Cuervo Institute, the National Academy of Music; the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and its Folkloric Research Institute, School of Fine Arts and National Music Conservatory; Colombian Journal of folklore; and the National Public Television and Radio. Other white dominated organizations of this time were CEDEFIM,-Centro de estudios folklóricos y musicales Cedefim-, directed by white intellectuals worked for the above institutions; and several Folkloric Festivals, Conferences and Congresses financed by the Colombian State.

All of these State Institutions and folkloric spaces aimed at studying, collecting, classifying, preserving and promoting the popular culture of the masses in Colombia. However, “no institutes were set up (...) to study blacks, and certainly no by the state (...)” (Wade, 1993:35). In fact, “blacks have been of much less interest to the states, intellectual elites, and the mestizo population of Latin America” (Wade, 1993:34). Few studied black communities but indirectly; they focused mostly on “the institution of slavery rather than on blacks. The Colombian State and its policies reflect the racial logic I defined above. The Colombian State did not unfold in ways similar to those of United State – i. e. Jim Crow-. However, if we focus on the effects of these racial policies, we can see similarities between the United States and Colombia racial formation. For example, both racial systems have disdained, excluded and undermined blacks and black cultures. Leoner Gonzales Mina also remembers how Colombian society viewed blacks at the time. According to her, black folkloric dances and music were represented as shameful, vulgar and obscene:

“Carlos: During the fifties and sixties, was black folklore accepted?

Leonor: *No, no, no, don't believe it for a minute.* Delia's struggle was fierce.

Carlos: Yes?

Leonor: Yes

Carlos: Why do you say that? What was happening at the time?

Leonor: Well, I say it because in Bogotá for a while people didn't want that. When I started, when I got into Delia's group, she had formed it a long time back, in fact it had already changed. When I made it to Delia's she was at her second stage already, but they say at the beginning it was quite tough.

Carlos: Was it because they thought she was not...?

Leonor: *They thought it was shameful, that they were an embarrassment, that their dances were vulgar and obscene.*

Carlos: Who said that?

Leonor: The people, the public, many ignorant people, how else can you call them.” (Leonor Gonzales Mina, interview, January 2012/ italic is mine).

At the time that black political intellectuals began to mobilize their cultural and academy projects, black communities were completely invisible (Friedemann, 1986). Black political intellectuals were aware of this racial exclusion, and wanted to change this situation. For example, Delia Zapata Olivella sustained, “in Colombia there are many tasks yet to be accomplished, one of them being the study of ‘African transculturation’ in our country, so we can establish the influence of black and *mulato* cultures brought about by slaves.” (Zapata, 1965b: cover); Rogério Velásquez complained, “in Colombia, where black people have not yet been studied because of the lack of interest in their history and in the patterns they have developed in response to their needs, it is worth to spell some of the names given to the wretched Africans that came to the New Kingdom of Granada thanks to European greed.” (Velásquez, 1962:113); and Teófilo Potes proclaimed, “I ask, where in Colombia is the vocabulary of the Colombian people compiled? Where are all the songs and such, given that we lack a primary institution (...), an Institute of Folklore Research?” (Potes, 1975a:14).

Other black intellectuals made similar claims. Manuel Zapata asked, “Why did it not exist a section of the black men into the National Ethnological Institute?” He replies, “Answer forbidden even today.” Then, he asked again, “why did it not establish an academic program of the black and indigenous art into the Fine Arts Institute? He replies silence.” Also, Anthropologist Aquiles Escalante complained, “until today all the Colombian anthropology’s interests have focused on Amerindian; little or no effort has been made for the study of the negroid ethnic tree, forgetting that blacks have dyed the skin of a great amount of compatriots and contributed to verity of European and

indigenous traditions with rich black culture” (Escalante, 1954:207). Finally, the Comité de Asuntos Afrocolombianos”, Club Negro” and the Centro de Estudios Afrocolombianos had the same claim as I described above. They were interested in studying and making black culture visible.

I argue that their desire to study blacks reflects the structure of feeling that compelled them to see the racial exclusion of the black communities; and this is the reason black counter public was a subaltern and autonomous sphere. It emerged out of the articulation and collaborations between black political intellectuals who developed the same “intimate sufficiency” against the racist culture of governmentality. They developed a collective racial consciousness as members of the black communities as the following expression show: “Yo soy del pueblo” (Potes, 1975a:14) and “el alma de *mi raza*” (Velásquez, 1960a). I would argue that these expressions represent their ways to reaffirm and contest the invisibility produced by ideology of mestizaje.

When black poets, writers, dancers, politicians, choreographers and folklorists tried to affirm their black identity, the result was a racial conflict as Manuel Zapata describes it. Around 1940s and 1960s, they were ostracized by society for their strong assertions of their racial identities. They were judged even more harshly when complaining about race and racism in public spaces such as the “El Día del Negro” event. Manuel Zapata adds, “The attitudes my sister Delia and I adopted as we affirmed our identity made us learn bitter lessons. The surprised and scornful looks we got from the youngsters we saw in our

travels helped us discover the locks on the doors, the laudatory but useless comments purporting to change the rigid structures of a racist society.” (Zapata, 1990:178).

During the sixties black political intellectuals managed to occupy State positions. Several phenomena converged at the local level for this racial inclusion of black political intellectuals into State institutions. First of all, the racial dynamic at the international level influenced this inclusion. As it is well known, during the nineteenth century, Latin American countries developed their own local and particular definition of *mestizaje*¹⁷. Like in Colombia, the idea of *mestizo* excluded blackness: “blacks were much less likely to be symbolized this way -as a special category that needs the attention of the State, church and intellectual- and were rarely held up as the symbols of a glorious heritage” (Wade, 1997:33). For Colombia in particular, *mestizaje* represented a “structure of alterity” (Wade, 1997:36) that advocated indigenous -ambiguously- and Europeans heritages and denied and labeled blacks as backward.

This international context of *mestizaje* and cultural consumption for exotic cultural forms and primitivism opened possibilities to my former black political intellectuals. During the 1950s, both Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata embarked in a tour through Latin America, European and United State countries. Accordingly, Teófilo Potes' *Acualelas del Pacifico* folkloric dance group “traveled through South America, Spain, France, and Africa, leaving the message of his Pacific culture” (Cifuentes, 2002:247). Likewise, Delia

17 For some countries (Mexico and Peru), indigenous and Europeans heritages constituted the cultural elements used to imagine the nation as *mestiza* (see De la Cadena, 2000 and Wade, 1993). For others (Brazil and Cuba) black and European heritages constituted the cultural elements that formed their idea of *mestizaje* (see Telles, 2004 and Sawyer, 2006).

Zapata's Danzas Colombianas folkloric dance group went “on a tour of Europe. They began their trip in Paris and were later invited to perform in Czechoslovakia, East and West Germany, the Soviet Union, and China. Upon their return to Paris, they were invited to participate in the Spanish-American Festival of Art and folklore in Cáceres, Spain, where they were awarded first prize for their dances and performance” (Tompkins and Foster, 2001:297).

Although, I need further investigation to determine whether or not Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata embraced the role of black exotic, there is evidence that suggests that they did not. Tompkins and Foster (2001) reports that in a personal interview, Delia Zapata expressed that she was fascinated by dancers such as Judith Jamison, Pearl Primus, Agnes de Mille, and Antony Tour, and she adsorbed as much as she could from them. However, she concluded that “before undertaking the process of reinterpretations through modern dance, it was essential to recover and understand” Colombian national heritage. As a result, she developed a style that responded and informed the cultural transculturation she had been studied in Colombia (Tompkins and Foster, 2001:298). So, this shows that Delia Zapata prioritized Black tradition, and she might develop a critical view of the international boom of the black primitivism and 'exotic' cultural forms.

In 1965, Delia Zapata was awarded a fellowship to study in the United State. According to Tompkins and Foster (2001), she “traveled cities, delivered a lecture at Indiana University, and taught a course on Colombia dances in the Music Department of the Organization of American State” (Tompkins and Foster, 2001:298). It was in this trip that

Delia Zapata met Alvin Alley, Judith Jamison, Pearl Primus, Agnes de Mille, and Antony Tour. Also, Delia Zapata studied African dance at Dunham School of Arts and Research with the famous African American dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham; of whom she said: “I saw that, of all the (U.S.) schools I visited, Katharine Dunham’s was closest to our spirit because they specialize in the origin of the black African dances that have had such an influence on us as well.” (Zapata, 1967a:10).

I argue that this global context of consumption on and interests in 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms gave possibilities to black political intellectuals to negotiate power relation in Colombia. That is, the art of the possible for black political intellectuals to diffuse their racial project owed a lot to this international racial dynamics. Delia Zapata Olivella, Teófilo Potes and their racial cultural project were accepted and recognized more from outside than from inside of Colombia. As I have shown above, Colombian society did not recognize their value, not even their 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms. In fact, when musical styles such as jazz, Cuban guaracha, Brazilian maxixe arrived to Colombia as a result of the entrance of the record companies and the international cultural consumption, white intellectuals and politicians criticized them because their blackness, vulgarness and obscenity threaten the Colombia national identity (Wade, 2008). Also, they complained, “modernism requires this, that we should dance like blacks in order to be in fashion.” (Journal Sábado quoted by Wade, 2008:48).

Teófilo Potes gives some elements to support my argument about the art of the possible opened by the international racial dynamic for black political intellectuals to negotiate

power relation in Colombia. He states, “One more thing it hurts to say is that my hut in the outskirts of Buenaventura is the folklore capital of the world. People from the Sorbonne have visited, from the University of Paris, from UNESCO, from Cambridge; from Oxford (...) they come from all around to ask what there is of folklore in Colombia. (...) A hut that offers no security to anyone, not even to its owner. But we have endeavored quixotically to sustain this tradition of the blacks from the Pacific, a tradition that has come close to oblivion.” (Potes, 1975a:14). Notably, International organizations - UNESCO, Cambridge and Oxford - were interested in what Teófilo Potes has to say about black culture. In contrast, as I have shown, black culture in Colombia was not given importance.

Friedemann (1986) provides another example to support my argument about how the international racial dynamic influenced the inclusion of black culture into the Colombian State institutions. She states that although Rogério Velásquez was an anthropologist, his anthropological works were never published in the *Journey of Anthropology*. They were published as folkloric works in the *Journey of Colombian folklore*. In contrast, Thomas Price, a white American anthropologist trained by Herskovitz, was the first scholar who published an anthropological work about black culture in this journey. Finally, Prescott (1999) sustains, “from the dawn of this century, Afro-Colombian authors, especially those that practice the genre of poetry, have gained renown beyond Colombian borders, mainly thanks to anthologies of Latin American literature devoted to racial (i.e., black) or social issues.” (Prescott, 1999: 556).

The art of the possible for black political intellectuals to diffuse their black cultural project in Colombia was constrained by these local and international racial dynamics. The international market of and interests in 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms required and accepted their folkloric racial project as a cultural product of entertainment and scientific production of anthropologists. However, in Colombia black cultural resonated little and were rejected and discredited both as valuable and modern cultural manifestation and as 'primitivism' and 'exotic' cultural forms.

Finally, in Colombia there were several white supporters that helped black political intellectuals to diffuse their black politics of folklore. They were white allies that mobilized state's resources to support black intellectuals. I understand these alliances and collaborations between black and white intellectuals as part of the internal contradictions of the State. These coalitions represent the type of contradictions that reveal how the State apparatuses have their own resources and powers according to what political party controls the branches of the State in a particular social regime (Jessop, 2007). For example, Enrique Buenaventura was writer, playwright and essayists. He was leftists supporter and the director of the Direccion de Bellas Artes in Cali; he was the founder of the TEC -Teatro Experimental de Cali-, and the director of the Instituto Popular de Cultural in Cali where Delia Zapata worked for a while in the 1963. Between 1957 and 1958, he contacted Mercedes Montañó to bring Teófilo Potess' Acualera del Pacifico folkloric dance group to perform in folkloric Festival in Manizales, and then in the Municipla Theater of Cali.

In letters they exchanged, I found that they talked about dates, rehearsals, places and economic resources that musicians, dancers and collaborators of the Acuarela Del Pacific folkloric dances group would receive when they accomplish their performances in Cali and Manizales. Also, when Enrique Buenaventura was the director of Instituto Popular de Cultura, Enrique Buenaventura and Delia Zapata's brother went to Buenaventura and recorded several traditional music and dances such as Alabaos, Currolao and the like from the Teófilo Potess' Acualera del Pacifico folkloric dance group. Also, when Delia Zapata worked for the Instituto Popular de Cultura as professor of dance, music and choreography, Enrique Buenaventura was the director. For which I assume, he had something to do with her hiring due to his previous relation with her brother, Manuel Zapata Olivella.

Folklorist Octavio Marulanda was another white supporter and friend of Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella. They worked together at Instituto Popular de Cultura, they also recorded Christmas songs and balsadas from the Pacific region. Finally, novel prize novelist Gabriel Garcia Marques had a close relationship with the sibling Olivella. He, Manuel and Delia Zapata went on the tour through Europe in the late 50s. In the fifties, both Gabriel Garcia Marques and Manuel Zapata Olivella defended costeño music against white intellectuals from Bogotá, Medellin and Cali (see Wade, 2000).

After occupying public position as representative of the Conservative party, Rogério Velásquez was an assistance investigator for the National Ethnological Institute and director of the Folkloric section. In the case of Teófilo Potes, as I said before, Teófilo

Potes worked for a local radio station and after he founded another group called Bahía de la Cruz, a folkloric dance group composed of musicians and dancers from the rural areas of Buenaventura and Guapi (Birenbaum, 2009), Teofilo Potes and his group were recorded in field recordings in Buenaventura by Enrique Buenaventura and Manuel Zapata Olivella when they worked for the Popular Institute of Culture. In 1960, he also was recorded by the U.S. anthropologist Norman Whitten (Birenbaum, 2009).

Finally, this was also the time when my former black intellectuals achieved to publish their folkloric work in official and whited dominated journals such *Paginas de Cultura* of Instituto Popular de Cultura and *Revista Colombiana de Folklore*. On the other hand, this was the time when Colombian folklorist such as Abadía Morales, Jacinto Jaramillo and Oscar Vahos consulted my former black political intellectuals about black cultural practices and traditions when they were compiling the Colombian folkloric expressions in the late 70s.

This proves that how black political intellectuals used the contradiction between branches of the State to promote their black culture and to network one another. One of the benefits they obtained from this contradiction refers to the institutional spaces they used to consolidate their relationship of collaboration. Delia Zapata Olivella worked for the Instituto Popular De Cultura, in Cali; TELECOM (Colombian's National phone Company) and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. In the Instituto Popular de Cultura, she participated in tour to Guapi, Pacific region, to do a fieldwork. In this trip she recorded and collected folkloric data with the collaboration of Teofilo Potes's *Acualeras del*

Pacifico folkloric dance group. Later, Delia Zapata Olivella went to other places in Colombian to perform her folkloric work and dances in local festivities and events. The first National Festival of dance held in Ibague was one of them. Rogério Velásquez was also in this festival as researcher. In 1970, she went to San Andres and Providencia in the Caribbean to learn Anglo-Creole culture and dances of the region. Later, she would found her own Institute for Colombian Folklore.

To work for State institutions implies other negotiations. Black political intellectuals were accepted as long as they do not complain overtly about racism and racial exclusion. In fact, this partial inclusion entails a symbolic exclusion of their racial identity, African roots and self-affirmation. Prescott (1996) sustains that to talk about race and racism; promotes studies about black communities in schools and universities; work on self-affirmation and racial pride were activities seen as racists that caused social division and reverse discrimination (Prescott, 1996:109-10). Also, Manuel Zapata describes this racial logic as follows:

“Then, as now, the existence of blacks and *mulatos* was ignored in some of the higher echelons of public administration. There has been no shortage of congresspeople, ministers, governors and mayors in the history of the country. However, the unspoken truth known by all is that such “emblems” of the race must stay silent about their origin, if at all they remember anything of their ancestry. They used to proclaim that they had those jobs as “Colombians,” not as representatives of their heritage. As a consequence, they did not identify with their class of origin, much less with their race.” (Zapata, 1990:178/quotation marks from the original).

Therefore, although black political intellectuals managed to occupy a position in the public sphere, their inclusions were limited and restricted by as racial structure and relation that forbade and condemned them to talk about racial issues. Indeed, it is not a coincidence, that the presence of radical black political intellectuals in State institutions was limited as Manuel Zapata suggests. On the other hand, it is not a coincidence that my former black political intellectuals had limited possibilities and resources to publish their books. While white Colombian folklorists Abadía Morales, Jacinto Jaramillo and Oscar Vahos had the resources to publish several folkloric books, Delia Zapata Olivella, who was consulted by them as Teófilo Potes, could not publish her book until 1980s. Their voices and academic projects were in place; however, they were ignored and marginalized by some white intellectuals and the Colombian State (Arboleda, 2011).

Three aspects I can suggest from these findings in terms of the black political intellectual formation within the racialized field of contestation. First, my former black political intellectuals recognized the need to demonstrate that a black culture exists in Colombia. Second, since the ideology of mestizo denied the presence of black culture in Colombia, black political intellectuals unfolded discourses and actions to change the situation of invisibility. They created and engaged in collaborative meshwork relations between black musicians, poets, writers and politicians to constitute a black counterpublic. Third, to fulfill their purposes of diffusing and of demonstrating that black culture exist in a mestizo society, black political intellectuals engaged several negotiations to formulate their oppositional interpretations, identities, interests, and needs. Thus, it seems that for black political intellectuals, negotiating power relation entailed the use of some state and

white dominated spaces, fields and discourses, although it implied some restrictions and liberties. They operated “within the same discursive and rhetorical field of national, even transnational racial politics (...), but from different subject positions and with different reasons (...)” (Hanchard, 2006: 261). They used terms such as folklore. However, they re-signified folklore as a site and form of politics as I have shown. The same happens when they used the words race and racism. Black political intellectuals re-signified the meaning of race and racism in Colombia as follows.

CHAPTER 4

Race And Racism In Black Politics Of Folklore

I present how my former black political intellectuals portrayed the racialized social structure of Colombian society. I use Lao-Montes' definition of racial politics (2010), “structurally determined and historically contingent process, a contested terrain mediated by state formation, imperial statecraft and the vast array of struggle that compose the everyday scenarios of power” (Lao-Montes, 2010:289). I found out four elements in their folkloric works that imply an idea of racial politics. They are: racial identity, the pattern of colonial relation, mestizo nation-state and black politics.

4.1 Racial Identities in Black politics of Folklore

The identification of racial identities is one of the elements that I found in the black politics of folklore. These identities are associations of bodies with racial categories, skin colors, and social positions, geographical and cultural characteristics. First of all, black political intellectuals use categories that refer explicitly to skin colors: black ('negro'), negroid (“negroide”), 'people of color' (poblaciones de colores), 'man of color' (hombre de color) and white (blanco). Then, they associate these racial categories with the term 'race': “white race” (“raza blanca”), “black race” (“raza negra”) and indigenous race (“raza indigena”). For Indigenous groups, Black political intellectuals use ethnic terms

such as 'native' and 'tribe'. Another association I found refers to these racial terms and geographical locations: African race (“raza africana”) and European race (raza Europea). Racial categories, skin color and geographies are also associated with racial terms that imply racial positions and hierarchies. Thus, speaking about the dominant race, black political intellectuals talk about Europeans (Europeos) as the new comers that colonized the “new continent” (Potes, 1975b:20); as 'colonizer' (colonizadores), 'conquerors' (conquistadores), 'colonial master' (amos coloniales), 'master' (amo), 'slave masters' (amos esclavistas), 'spanish descendants' (descendientes de los españoles), 'new master' (nuevos amos), 'creole' (criollos), 'privileged creoles' (criollos privilegiados), 'slave traders' (negrero) and 'creoles chapetones'. To refer to the subordinated race, they talk about the “black continent” (Continente Negro) as the place from where Spaniards slaved blacks. They also talk about 'black slaves' (esclavos negros), 'captive black' (los negros cautivos), 'human cattle' (ganado humano), 'black fugitive' (negros fugitivos) and 'ebony cargo' (cargamento de ebano). Particularly, Teófilo Potes and Rogério Velásquez use the term 'pariahs' (parias) to talk about blacks' statuses in both the Colony and Colombian Republic. Finally, Zapata uses 'colonial servitude' (servidumbre colonial) to talk about indigenous and blacks social positions.

These racial categories, the skin colors, geographies and racial positions are linked to standard material conditions of living. For example, the Pacific region is blacks (los negros del Pacifico) and the 'interior' and/or the 'Andean' is whites. Particularly, Rogério Velásquez uses these association to describe the racial inequalities and the type of relations between black areas and white areas: “in a (black) village without paths, in

meanders and beaches of sun, in forests without any type of industry, and in river mouth, and in muddy and bad anchorages, we found out these fables that account for the mankind to other men that fish, plant or hunt or row in curved and rough rivers; men that die so far away from the “cultured society” that did not know that they existed” (Velásquez, 1959a:8/the emphasis is mine).

Culture and terms that imply collectivization are the final association in the construction of racial identities in the black politics of folklore. As to culture, black political intellectuals talk about oral traditions, folk-dance, folk-music, religious practices and rituals, and festivities emphasizing on black communities and, Delia Zapata also, on indigenous populations. Although they differentiate black culture from white and European culture, I did not find evidence that suggests they see black cultural identities as fixed, innate, biological or natural. As I will show later in this section, my former black political intellectuals associate racial identities with power relation and cultural changes. On the other hand, black political intellectuals use terms such as people (pueblo), 'community' (comunidad) and 'peasants' (campesinos). Delia Zapata Olivella also talks about indigenous populations (Delia Zapata).

Three aspects I can suggest from these findings about the racial identities in the black politics of folklore. First, racial identities are not only about skin color. That is, based on biological assumptions. They refer to social conditions and positions, geographical and cultural characteristics. Second, while scholars and state institutions used class categories such as peasants and pueblo, and ethnic categories such as ethnic groups (Leal, 2010) to

describe the populations of Colombia, my former black political intellectuals used racial categories to describe the particularities of the human groups. Instead of denying racial distinctions, black political intellectuals use and associate racial categories with power, dominant and subordinate positions; and third, in making use of racial categories, they unfolded their critical and political thought of the racial identity and order of Colombia.

4.2 Pattern of colonial relation in the politics of Folklore

Their critical memories also reflect their understanding of the colonial pattern of relation that gave rise to the racial relation later in the Colombian Republic. This pattern refers to the power relation that came to shape black folklore and culture expressions in Colombia. Delia Zapata points out the “racial atrocities” Spaniards committed against indigenous ethnic groups, Africans and African descendants in the colony for economic reasons. First, she talks about exploitations, dispossession and seized indigenous' lands: “with the conquest there came the Spaniards. Their greed for enrichment respected no custom or belief. Natives were subjugated (...) Land ownership made them (Spaniards) lose their mind and led them to devastate (indigenous) traditions and cultures that were fully evolving. It was as though somebody stunted a growing tree with a single ax blow. Everything positive was destroyed.” (Zapata, 1965a:7).

These atrocities should be understood as one of the mechanisms Spanish colonizers deployed to destroy not only indigenous' cultural but also their worldview. The lust for enrichment, the (dis)possession and seizure of the indigenous' lands, the erasing of

indigenous populations and destruction of indigenous' culture relates to what Feagin (2006) defines as systematic racism. That is, the racial violence and land dispossession by which white descendants gained socioeconomic resources and accumulated assets in the US. Indeed, the last two sentences of the quote depict the brutality of colonization: “It was as though somebody stunted a growing tree with a single ax blow”. At the end, “defeated, decimated, the former owners of the dispossessed land, were subjected to the new master” (Zapata, 1962:192).

It is evident that for Delia Zapata Olivella the colonial period was the basis for white-indigenous and black domination; domination that started with the slaughter of multiple ethnic groups such as 'Chibcha', 'Calima', 'Arawak', 'Guajiros', 'Cunas', 'Chocoes', among many others, which “exhibited a high development of handicrafts and plastic arts (...), goldsmithing” (Zapata, 1967b): “Chibcha people, who had a social, economic and religious organization almost as highly developed as those of the Aztecs and Incas, were almost completely exterminated and the remaining tribes dispersed” (Zapata, 1967b: 91). After destroying everything, Spaniards brought about Spanish and European cultural forms that were implemented forcefully in detriment of all the richness and originality of indigenous arts (Zapata, 1965a:7).

This systematic racism includes the slave trade system whose beginning was half century before the first voyage of Christopher Columbus; slave system whose founder founders were European (Zapata, 1962). Thus, blacks were brought as enslaved Africans to American continent by 'hunting' them as if they were 'wild beasts'. Cartagena in

Colombia and Veracruz in Venezuela were the two ports from where enslaved blacks were introduced to Colombia. Delia Zapata's politics of folklore recognizes that before, those brought from "Senegal, Dahomey, Santo Tome, Cabo Verde, etc had other identity but racial. They were carabalies, Angolas, Congos, Lucumies, Mandingas" (Zapata, 1965b: 8). As the following quote suggests, Africans became a *dehumanized and commodified* bodies once they were in the colony *obliged* to work to supply slave labor at the mining places, haciendas and other economic activities: "On the other hand, history tells us profusely about the tragedy of black slaves, hunted in Africa as though they were wild beasts, transported to the Americas stacked in ships' holds. When they arrived in Cartagena, or anywhere else (...) they were sold, branded with red-hot irons, put to work in mines, or building walls, or simply bought and sold like cattle." (Zapata, 1965a:7).

Phrases such as "history tells us profusely about the tragedy of black slaves", "hunted in Africa as though they were wild beasts", "they were sold, branded with red-hot irons", ut to work in mines, or building walls, or simply bought and sold like cattle, prove that she understand the pervasiveness of the systematic racism; a racial system that subjugated blacks and indigenous to the economic benefits of the Spanish colonizers.

These black and indigenous subordinations can also be seen as the result of "segregationist practices". According to her, Spaniards separated themselves from indigenous and blacks' spaces. In describing the racial trajectory of the folk dance "Cumbia", Delia Zapata talks about a platform that was built by indigenous and black populations every year when Spanish colonizers celebrated a traditional and colonial

festivity named “la Candelaria”. Part of this festivity consisted of this platform that had two social and racial functions. One function was a mark of privilege. To get on it was a sign of being white. The second, this platform built by servants represented their separation from whites. Blacks and indigenous could neither get on nor even go around the platform. Delia Zapata describes it as follows:

“During that time, blacks and natives inhabited the same sphere within a feudal and enslaving society. For example, during the traditional Candelaria celebrations, the subjugated slaves were not allowed to stand on the platforms that they themselves had built with their suffering hands so Spanish whites and privileged *criollos* could stand tall.” (Zapata, 1962: 192).

This quote also provides information about the black politics of folklore in Delia Zapata Olivella. She places indigenous and blacks at the same level when representing them as discriminated servants. Both have to stay away from the platform. “They should keep cautious and respectful distance” from it (Zapata, 1962:192). I found that this is a different view of the racial hierarchy in Colombia. Some theorists (see Wade, 1993) describe racial hierarchy as white at the top, indigenous in the middle and blacks at the bottom. On the other hand, what explains that Delia Zapata Olivella situates indigenous and blacks in the same racial position is the result of her awareness of both her indigenous and black heritages.

In Delia Zapata's politics of folklore there is a reference to the imposition of the Christian religion over blacks. The role religion played is crucial to understand the spiritual and cultural subjugation of Africans in Colombia to Catholic religion. In this account, the

character of Saint Pedro Claver is critical to see how Africans and their descendants became Christians, and to understand why part of their folkloric and cultural expressions contains Catholic practices. Saint Pedro Claver was a Spanish Jesuit priest and missionary who took care of slave in the colony. He alleviated enslaved blacks' physical suffering, and baptized and instructed them in the Christian faith (Zapata,1965a:7). Delia Zapata seems to have a positive view of Saint Pedro Claver when she describes what he did for enslaved blacks. She states that Saint Pedro Claver dedicated lots of time in taking care of every slave that arrived in Cartagena (Zapata,1965a:7).

However, her view of Christian religion is different. She sees it as a colonial mechanism that helped maintained colonial power relations due to Christian religion converted Africans and, in turn, crushed African culture and legacies (raigambres ancestrales) as a process for the subjugation and adaptation to the new situations. For, this was also adaptation from the point of view of the enslaved blacks as she gives agency to enslaved blacks in deciding what to adapt and take. She states, “they (African slaves) held the new ideas in which they ended up looking for their spiritual and material salvation” (Zapata,1965a:7). But “those who did not become Christians received *harsher treatment*. They were sent to work in mines, building wall or were sold at auction” (Zapata, 1967b:91/emphasis mine).

For Delia Zapata this pattern of power put disgracefulness upon black culture. She seems to recognize that the destruction of culture and identity functioned as a means of asserting and maintaining power. Accordingly, Spaniards cursed African descendants and

indigenous by imposing them a scorn that disdained and devalued their cultural expressions and heritages. As she puts it, this scorn condemned indigenous and black traditions to disappear: “So, what legacy did the Spaniards leave behind? We must say that for centuries they imposed contempt upon the grassroots artistic expressions that struggled to survive in our lands: those of the natives, because they were doomed to disappear, and those of the blacks, because their spiritual prevalence was forbidden.” (Zapata, 1965a:7).

Teófilo Potes had similar account to that of Delia Zapata Ollivella. He provides some characteristics about the racial power that has subordinated blacks since the colony. However, like Rogério Velásquez, Teófilo Potes focuses more on African descendants and European-creole descendants relations without including indigenous populations. In this light, Teófilo Potes recognizes the atrocities committed against African descendants, men and women, in the colonial period when Spaniards discredited the African's peoplehood in order to make them subalterns. As Teófilo Potes puts it, African descendants had to be converted to pariahs: “It is the story of men and women that until recently inhabited the abyss of slavery, descendants of a foreign race born under the tropical sun where they were pampered by the goddess of liberty but brought to America and turned here, to their chagrin, into pariahs (...)” (Potes, 1975b:18). So, like Delia Zapata Olivella, Teófilo Potes recognized that the destruction of culture and identity functioned as a means of asserting and maintaining power.

Teófilo Potes also describes what Feagin defines as systematic racism (2006); all the violence and exploitation used against blacks to the benefits of white descendants to secure socioeconomic resources and assets. Like Delia Zapata, Teófilo Potes recognizes that Africans needed to be pariahs for Spanish colonizers to oppress and subjugate them as an inferior race suitable to be exploitable. The lust for power and goods made Spanish feel no mercy for Africans: “(...) because the slavers and their owners had no mercy towards them in their hearts; the thirst for power, the unstoppable greed, their rising social standing made them feel superior, made them lose every inkling of humane sentiment and desensitized them to the suffering of human beings that used to have not just dignity but also noble status...” (Potes, 1975b:18).

Teófilo Potes represents slavery as a terrible event that marked the history of the human race as a whole and enslaved blacks as a particular racial group. Slavery and the racial relations created in the colony have permeated every social relation: “slavery became a heartless and aggressive load that weighed on the human spirit, imparting its tenor on everything, because the whole of society was greatly affected by its spirit.” (Potes, 1975b:18). This description of slavery seems to prove that Teófilo Potes understood the instrumentality of race in the colonial political economy. First, he seems to know that race was an instrument needed to exploit subjects. That is why he emphasizes on how blacks became pariahs in the Colony. Then, he connects the idea of pariah with the accumulation of wealth for Spaniards and their descendants: “The mine: a pit of pain, men with pale faces gnawed by hunger and mercy, exhausted from the excess of work,

punishment, and inhumanity, turned into machines to satisfy the insatiable avarice of their owners.” (Potes, 1975b:18).

Rogério Velásquez's politics of folklore is similar to those of Delia Zapata and Teófilo Potes. From all of his works, it is in his article, “La esclavitud en la María de Jorge Isaac” (1957a) where Rogério Velásquez explicitly deals with the pattern of colonial relation when questioning the popularized romantic portrayal of the slavery in Colombia which, indeed, the acclaimed and awarded novel of Gorge Isaacs' “Maria” (1864) portrays¹⁸.

Maria is a costumbrista novel which was written under the romantic literary movement of the nineteenth century. In this novel, Jorge Isaacs recreates a romantic story that is developed in the hacienda “El Paraiso” in the Valle del Cauca. Velásquez uses this novel to assess the racial events that Jorge Isaacs did not pay attention to in the hacienda. In Velásquez's words, “the songster (Jorge Isaacs) that waxed idyllic in ‘The Paradise’ was not exactly an ideologue. For such an undertaking he (Jorge Isaacs) needed moral concepts, the courage to criticize the institutions of his time, the mind of a reformer.” (Velásquez, 1957a).

Rogelio Velásquez also points out that there are some descriptions in the novel usable to provide a better narrative of what really happened in the hacienda in regard to the slave system. In short, he contests or, otherwise, improves Jorge Isaacs' insights of racial relations in the 'Paraiso' hacienda, as follows: “In all, behind his fiction, his themes and

18 Similar portrayal can be found in Eustaquio Palacios' novel 'El Alferez Real' (1889).

procedures, one finds, to an immense degree, the hunger for truth, something that aligns him with the fathers of contemporary realism.” (Velásquez, 1957a: 91)

The above and the following quotes reveal also the way Rogério Velásquez situates the social and political location of Jorge Isaacs, not only in term of race but also class and ideology. For Rogério Velásquez, Jorge Isaacs does not criticize the racial relations and the slave system and, instead, reproduces a romantic and idealistic vision of it because of his social, racial and privileged position. As he puts it, “born in Chocó, his father a slave-owner of Anglo-Hebrew descent, Jorge Isaacs could say that he knew the subject of manumission in its most intimate details. When he is wrong, he is, perhaps, because it benefits his family, his race, or his party, or because he is afraid of arousing latent and confusing ideas of freedom among the populace.” (Velásquez, 1957a: 91).

There are several critiques that Velásquez made about Gorge Isaacs' “Maria” novel. These critiques include the conditions of habitations, occupations, clothes, food supplies, freedom, treatment, marriages, musical art, dance, poems, illnesses and deaths. For each of them, Rogério Velásquez contrasts, contests or improves Jorge Isaacs' descriptions. However, due to the limited space in this paper, I will talk about three of them to characterize the way Velásquez understands the pattern of colonial relation from Jorge Isaacs' novel. They are: the slave labor, freedom and racial treatment of the masters towards their enslaved blacks.

As for slave labor, Rogério Velásquez points out that enslaved blacks worked at the “expensive and beautiful factory of sugar” (Velásquez, 1957a: 94/remarks from the original), pasture and feedlot for about 14 or more hour per day which demonstrates the “sensitivity” of the landlord. Then, Rogério Velásquez quotes several pieces of Jorge Isaacs' novel by which he highlights how slave labor harms enslaved blacks as the brutality of the labor that blacks performed in the hacienda. By quoting a dialog between two characters, Rogelio Velásquez shows a conversation that describes how an enslaved got his arm harmed for putting sugar cane into the sugar mill:

“How did this young man hurt his arm so badly? I asked.
Loading cane into the trapiche (...)” (Velásquez, 1957a:94)

With quotes like this, Rogério Velásquez criticizes the popularized image that the masters obeyed the legal dispositions in the Hacienda. In contrast, Rogério Velásquez sustains that laws were constantly violated. Specially, laws which protected enslaved blacks. He gives an example about how “Spanish black code” dictates that non-black women should not be obliged to work on dangerous activities. Their assignments should be less harsh than those that men do. However, the black women's realities in haciendas were different. Black women worked on dangerous labors as feeding and taking care of horse colts. Thus, for Rogério Velásquez the political economy of the hacienda makes masters break the legal dispositions (Velásquez, 1957a).

Rogério Velásquez questions also the process by which masters supposedly manumitted enslaved blacks. He quotes a piece from Jorge Isaacs' novel in which Isaacs affirms, “my

father eased it all with money. Once the American signed the new bill of sale with all desirable formalities, my father wrote a note on it and gave Gabriela the paper so that Nay would hear her read it. In those lines he renounced any right of property he may have had over her and her son.” (La Maria quoted by Velásquez, 1957a:98).

For Velásquez this action of manumission was a fiction, an illusion, a pure fraud and a false representation of the real manumission. First, what Jorge Isaacs describes in his novel does not even meet the requirements established in the First Act, Title XXII, Part IV (First Act, Title XXII, Part IV). For manumitting an enslaved black, Rogelio Velasquez states, the act should be public, in front of a judge or friends, by a testament or letter, or in the presence of five witnesses. Then, Rogério Velásquez claims, “Were Feliciano and Juan Ángel set free, missing as they were any witnesses and the public title ordered by Law XC, Title XVIII, and Paragraph III? Let the lawyers decide the matter. As far as we are concerned, this was a con, a theft of freedom (...)” (Velásquez, 1957a:98).

Right after, Rogério Velásquez quotes another fragment from Jorge Isaacs' novel in which Isaacs sustains, “my father let Juan Ángel know that he was completely free, even if by law he would have to be in his care for a few years, and that from then on he would be considered a servant in our household.” (La Maria quoted by Velásquez, 1957a:98). For Rogelio Velásquez being a servant does not mean to be free. That is why he states, “Slave was the same as serf, vassal, freedman, servant, or lackey, said Law IX, Title VIII, Paragraph VII. In that way, Juan Ángel could be exemplarily punished, commanded, branded, harmed, tortured in trial, captured as a runaway, in which case he could be

quartered or castrated, have his tongue cut off, his eyes gouged out.” (Velásquez, 1957a:98-99).

Finally, Rogério Velásquez questions Isaacs' depiction of his father as a loving master who takes care of his obedient and passive blacks (Velásquez, 1957a:97). He affirms that what really happened is that Isaacs' father treated well enslaved blacks because of what Marixa Lasso (2007) describes as elite paranoia of the race war or “guerras de colores” (2007a:129). Thus, it was not that enslaved blacks were obedient, passive and affectionate for their masters. It was the fact that the master felt fear of the enslaved black capacities to revolt, escape, runaway and attack owners and hacendados. According to Agudelo (2005) these types of black struggles occurred often around 1830 as Rogelio Velasquez describes:

“Punishment was doled out in such a way as to prevent escapes, since runaway slaves would take with them the money spent on their purchase, and to ensure calm in the plantation. Panamá, Cartagena, Santa Marta, the Patía region, Chocó, all had experienced firsthand the rage of *Boyanos* and Mozambiques, *Biojoes* and *Lepañas*. Given these circumstances, prudence and moderation were preferable, a gentle system of correction like that used by parents on their children, to avoid the offspring from snapping as it had done in Santo Domingo, Saija, or Venezuela.” (Velásquez, 1957a:98).

Two things should be highlighted from this quote. First, Rogério Velásquez shows awareness of the racial struggle inside and outside of Colombia. He connects revolts in Colombia to those that occurred in Dominican Republic, Saija and Venezuela. Second, Rogério Velásquez recognizes that racial struggles and/or the rumors of race war have shaped the racial politics in Colombia. He remarks black agency by providing a different

account of that of Isaacs' depiction of them as passive. Like Delia Zapata and Teófilo Potes, Rogério Velásquez has a global perspective of the pattern of colonial relation in the history of Colombia. Finally, Rogério Velásquez reveals that the idea of racial harmony in Colombia was an illusion as Lasso sustains (2007). Behind the romanticized relations between white-black or master-enslaved blacks, there was a fear of race war.

The pattern of colonial relation described above is fundamental to understand the racial politics in Colombia as scholars have argued recently in other countries (Omi and Winant, 1996; Winant, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, 2006 and Lao-Montes, 2010). Although Rogério Velásquez, Delia Zapata and Teófilo Potes did not use sophisticated and contemporary theoretical frameworks and concepts, their descriptions about the racial trajectories of black folklore allow me to argue that this pattern of colonial relation contains several elements that suggest the particularities of the systemic racism in Colombia. For example, racial domination, violence, exploitation, oppression, racial conflict and segregation; concepts which also describe the legacy of the colony or coloniality of power on which 'racialized social structures' have been created (see Quijano, 1993 and Bonilla-Silva, 2006). On the other hand, black politics of folklore provides some elements to understand how and why black and indigenous population were forced to participate in the global economy by no salary labor relation: blacks as enslaved labor force and indigenous as servants.

4.3 Mestizaje and blackness in the politics of folklore

Scholars have sustained that race is a terrain of contestation (Omi and Winant, 1994, Lao-Montes, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 200, Goldberg, 1993 and 2002). I argue that so has been mestizaje in Colombia. It, as a racial ideology, is a terrain of contestation. Scholars (Wade, 1993; Winant, 2001; and De la Cadena, 2000) have documented that mestizaje celebrates racial and cultural mixture as a way of forging a unified and homogeneous national image that, at the same time, reasserts white values, epistemology and civilization by promoting blanqueamiento/whitening.

However, recent studies have also shown how subaltern, Indians and blacks, have advocated for a “radical mestizaje” that is an 'inclusive epistemological syncretism' (sincretismo epistemológico incluyente- Arboleda, 2010: 456); “mestizaje as a liberating force that breaks open colonial and neocolonial categories of ethnicity and race” (Mellon, 1996: 171); mestizaje as a black history to be told (Zapata-Cortes, 2010); or as “rare Indigenous hybridities” that contests the culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje (de la Cadena, 2006:73). I sustain that we should distinguish between mestizaje from below and from above to differentiate mestizo racial projects that advocate for racial homogeneity from mestizo racial projects that advocate for racial heterogeneity. I will present what I consider is the mestizaje from below by comparing and contrasting it with mestizaje from above. I sustain that while criticizing and denouncing mestizaje from above as racist, black intellectuals promote their own social and political construction of mestizaje and/or blackness.

The use of racial categories distinguishes my former black political intellectuals from the common practice of mestizaje in Colombia of 1960. While they used racial categories to describe social subordination, white scholars did not use them either because racial categories were not accepted in the Colombian academy (Leal, 2010) or, perhaps, because what occurred in Germany and the US. Leal (2010) suggests that the ideology of mestizaje contributed in not using racial terms in the social science in Colombia. Mestizaje from above is a racial ideology which idealizes the bi-ethnic or tri-ethnic origin, but “the image held up was always at the lighter end of the mestizo spectrum”. Then, “the future would bring, almost magically, a whitening of the population through race mixture, and this could be helped along more realistically by immigration policies attracting European immigrants and keeping out blacks” (Wade, 1993:11). Therefore, some anthropologists privileged terms such as ethnicity, pueblo, class and mestizo over racial categories. Although historians used racial categories, their usage was marginal. Few used racial categories (Leal, 2010).

In contrast, black political intellectuals advocates mestizaje by no eliminating the racialized others as blanqueamiento does. Mestizaje from below then means a permanent interactions and coexistence of different racialized groups. It means racial heterogeneity instead of racial homogeneity as Delia Zapata suggests when speaking about the folk-dance cumbia: “The origin of the *cumbia* is tied to the integration stewed in the melting pot of the new world and reaches the roots of our tri-ethnic ancestry, whose three ingredients, mixed in different proportions, synthesize the Colombian nation. The sound of the instruments that accompany *cumbia* dancing prove it: pounding drums of black

origin, flutes that whine like the natives of the Americas, attire and singing that are unmistakably Spanish (i.e., white) in style.” (Zapata, 1962:190-191).

I would argue that mestizaje in Zapata's politics of folklore is a blackening of the national identity rather than a blanqueamiento of it. I mean the fact that in contrast to the idea of mestizaje from above, for Delia Zapata, blackness and Indigeneity do not disappear from the public and national scene because of the racial mixture. For example, she always talks about “the three races that gave birth the Colombian folklore (“Las razas que dan origen al folklore colombiano”-Delia Zapata, 1965a). Arguably, the racialized others are constitutive elements of the Colombian national identity which, in turn, means putting darkness into the idea of mestizo nation from above as she implicitly suggests, “notwithstanding the strong implementation of European culture, Indian (and black) influence played an important role during this period of development of Colombia culture” (Zapata, 1967b: 91).

Blackening the mestizo nation can also be found in Velásquez' idea of 'negredumbre' (blackness) (see Velásquez, 1959a and 1961b). Rogério Velásquez did not talk about mestizaje. However, he invented a term that emphasizes on blackness. The term is 'Negredumbre'. I did not find any definition of what negredumbre means. Nevertheless, in a recent compilation of Velásquez's work, Patiño (2010) sustains that Rogério Velásquez coined this term to refer to black conglomeration that was part of his investigations. In this light, 'negredumbre' connects two meanings, black people and multitude. I will argue that this black multitude (muchedumbre) represents what Hanchard (2006) would call as

'political community' which is 'defined not only by its circle of commonality but implicitly by the negation of another community' (Hanchard, 2006:6). Then, Rogelio Velasquez's idea of 'negredumbre' represents the marginalization of the black community in relation the white “cultured” society in the Andean. Although Rogério Velásquez assumed a different approach – not embracing the idea of mestizaje as Delia Zapata's-, he thought Colombia society should be seen white as well as black.

Negredumbre “is about those qualities that blacks of the Pacific region always appear collectively and in communality, and never, or almost never as individual. It is a category that corresponds to those premodern societies in which individuality does not count but collectivities” (Patiño, 2010:12-13). Negredumbre is then what have produced the black Palenque literario (see below); black collective usage of land; and the black racial solidarity that is expressed for instance in “la minga” and religious practices, etc.: “A maracas player from Guapi or Quibdó does not transcend his status through his art. He is always a man, plain and simple, someone that makes an effort to incorporate the emotional life and the heartbeat of the black community, the earthy feelings and the life of the townsfolk, the subjective and objective motives that drive humans, the people’s urge to move forward and live on that are reflected in song.” (Rogério Velásquez: 1961b:81). Neither modernity/colonialization nor whitening could erase the presence of blackness in Colombian nation as negredumbre implies. Rogério Velásquez recognizes Colombian national identity as consisting of racial heterogeneous with a strong presence of blackness than simple racial homogeneity of whiteness.

Likewise, Teófilo Potes' politics of folklore affirms blackness in a country that pretended to deny it. In this regard, Teófilo Potes used to say, “we have to fill the World with blacks” (“Hay que llenar el Mundo de Negros”) (Castrillon, 1994:99). Then, he filled Colombia society with black music and dance. He created choreographies and dances from black culture and traditions. As Arboleda (2011) sustains, Teófilo Potes contributed to the construction of the field of the national folklore with his studies about afrocolombian ancestral wisdom and cultural practices. Two examples I will describe to support my point. First, the way he promoted a folk-dance named “Currulao”. Second, the meaning of a musical play named “la Mina”.

Accordingly, Teófilo Potes came up with the term “currulao” to differentiate bambuco played in the Pacific region from the one popularized in the Andean. Although there is not conclusive evidence that suggests Teófilo Potes created this term to make racial distinctions between them, I can suggest that it might have occurred because Teófilo Potes came up with the term, currulao, when white politicians like Jose Maria Samper began to incorporate bambuco into discourses about national identity, and “it was bambuco of the interior regions' string ensembles that took pride of place” (Wade, 1998:7) not the one popularized in the Pacific region. So, I guess, because official nationalist discourses tend to deny blackness in bambuco music, Teófilo Potes proposed the term currulao to distinguish the black bambuco that he saw in the Pacific region as Arboleda has hypothesized: “currulao was mainly, for Teófilo Potes, a choreographic and musical invention that came to be from rural tradition of the bambuco, or it is an urban product that corresponds properly to the folklore or artistic work” (Arboleda, 2011: 346).

Teófilo Potes invented a choreography called “La Mina” which I think is a living memory of the black struggle in the modern and mestizo nation. “La Mina” consists of a dramatization of the enslaved black resistance against Spanish's imposition and exploitation at the mining. While performing it, dancers portray the disobedience of enslaves to work at the mining. Also, the dancers sing a song that says the following:

- Spanish version

Manque (aunque) me amo me mate A la mina no voy
A la mina no voy
No quiero morir
De un canalon
A la mina no voy
Mi amo pegado, yo lo digo
Con justicia y con grador
A la mina no voy
Que a lo' hombres no 'e venden
Porque tienen corazón
A la mina no voy
Manque (aunque) mi amo me mate
A la mina no voy

-English Version

Although my master would kill me
I am not going to the mine
I don't want to die
In the waterway (of gold placering)
I am not going to the mine
My master punishes, I say it,
With justice and with willingness
I am not going to the mine
Don't sell the men
Because they have courage
I am not going to the mine
Although my master would kill me
I am not going to the mine (quoted by Written, 1967).

According to Teófilo Potes (1975a), “la mina” emerged from a piece of history that he found in Iscuande River, Pacific region. He was able to get access to a document that refers to enslaved blacks who escaped from the hacienda “La Macana”, in the state of Cauca. They went down through the Patia, Iscuande and Guapi looking for freedom. Then, he states, “I saw a record which says “La Mina”, letter and music of some guy. Que dios lo haya! Bien” (Potes, 1975a:17). Like Delia Zapata did with other black dances and choreographies, Teófilo Potes performed 'la Mina' in several cities and towns when he went on tour through Colombia. Their performances should be understood as re-affirmation of blackness: racialized bodies, black dancers, and experiences of black women and men from the Pacific region were shown in their performances. On the other hand, “La Mina”, as a living memory of the slavery and black resistance, is a reminder of the misery in which societies have been structured. While entertaining multiples audience, the performance of the 'Mina' portrays the atrocities of the racism in Colombia by calling attention to white-black racial exploitation and struggle: “(...) it is one of the best works that can be shown in Colombia, the reality of the Colombian people, because there has always been misery and “The Mine” is misery. Men that work day and night, with ever less food and ever more flogging, all to enrich a single man called Pedro Iragorri Díez. This is the reality of the Colombian people that is called communism when performed onstage.” (Potes, 1975b:17).

The above quote is so interesting to understand how race has operated and been constructed in Colombia. First of all, the play “La Mina” is a clear manifestation of racial conflict. But as Teófilo Potes suggests in the quote, racial conflict is seen as class

struggle; a communist manifestation. And second of all, this episode of seeing the play “La Mina” as a communist manifestation speaks us about the complexity in which class and race overlap to oppress black communities in Colombia. Authorities deny race and, instead, see class. Thus, Teófilo Potes' experience makes much complex the interpretation that Stuart Hall (1990) describes when he sustains, “Race is thus, also, the modality in which class is "lived," the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and "fought through" (Hall, 1980:55). I am not saying that what Hall sustains does not apply to Colombia. It may. What I am suggesting is that the dynamics of race and class are much complex than he describes. In a racialized field of contestation that denies the existence of race and racism, class is seen as the variable that explains inequalities and struggle while racist practices produce inequalities between whites and blacks:

I performed “The Mine” in 1961 in the Palacio de la Guerra. Dr. Alberto Lleras Camargo was the president then. I sang it in the streets of Bogotá and was put in jail. There was a huge riot. They said it was a communist work. I returned to the presidential palace to perform “The Mine” and I asked Dr. Lleras, Why did you like “The Mine”? Because it is beautiful, he said. I asked what was communist or socialist about it. Would it be when the owner slaps his black slave José Domingo, or when he says to his young child, “Son, I have to return to work, to that lethal mine,” and the child asks, “Dad, won’t the owner’s heart show mercy,” and José Domingo responds, “Son, white hearts never show mercy!”. (Potes, 1975b:18).

The quote shows that Teófilo Potes was critical about the myth of racial harmony (Lasso, 2007 and Munera, 2005). This quote shows that racial conflict between blacks and whites in Colombia was permanent despite of being denied by whites. First, the way authorities

treated Teófilo Potes for presenting a critical performance like “La Mina”; and second, the play “La Mina” itself represents a racial struggle between masters and enslaved.

The idea of racial harmony was confronted by other interpretations. Black political intellectuals describe Colombian society with racial hierarchies, inequalities, exclusions and marginalization. Delia Zapata reports that black cultural expressions have been discriminated against by acts of disgracing them:

At first, the primitive *cumbias* had no singing; they were plain melodies. With the chanting and the wardrobe, the Spanish idiosyncrasy entered the *cumbia* as a third factor that added to the tension, or better, to the harmony. This third component of our three-legged folk culture has been the cause of controversies that persist to this day, most of them consisting of racial prejudice against the African element and in favor of the Spanish one.” (Zapata, 1962:191).

This is the only reference that I found in which Delia Zapata Olivella, or any other black intellectuals, utilize the word harmony. She seems to be contradictory here. First, she says that the Hispanic idiosyncrasy comes to relate to black and indigenous cultures in discord, but then, she says in harmony. This contradiction has to do with her way of approaching black and indigenous agencies. She views individuals as agents of their own reality. Subalterns are capable of choosing what they want and what important is for them. She sees harmony in this way; in a way in which subordinate groups are able to incorporate and absorb other cultural practices and traditions:

The Spaniards brought the quadrille, danza, counterdanza, and other dances. These were adopted by the Indians and the negroes but in the assimilation each race chose what was most in accord with its own

preference in kin-esthetic expression and introduced in them elements of their won folklore, *thus creating new hybrid forms*. In some regions the mixture of all these races gave rise to a third type of folk dance, tri-ethnic in character, thus increasing the gamut of ancestral patrimony (Zapata, 1967b: 92).

Second, Delia Zapata Olivella is aware of the racial discrimination, especially the way whites have treated blacks in Colombia. When she says that this type of hybrid forms, which includes blackness, indianness and whiteness, has been subject of racist prejudice against African culture, I think she is contesting the racial expressions that had been made by white intellectuals and politicians (e.j. Jiménez López, Luis López de Mesa, Laureano Gómez and Bernal Jimenez) whose arguments against racial mixture in Colombia say that racial mixture is danger to the Colombian society. These white politicians and intellectuals sustained that the cultural and physical presence of black and indigenous in the national identity and racial composition would degenerate the national race by holding the Colombian society back in a state of barbarian and pre-modernity (see Patiño, 2010).

In Rogério Velásquez's politics of folklore, racial conflict appears, for instance, in his critiques to Jorge Isaacs' novel and the white-black courteous relations. Another example of racial conflict can be found in Velásquez's description of the "Songs of the three rivers" (Velásquez, 1960b) in the Palenque Literario (see below). Here he states,

"These verses contain racial complexes, differences of caste, the clash of cultures. The African that was starting to climb the slope that leads human dignity, and the white European Spanish civilization that tackled problems in its own way and depending on the circumstances, both produced this tension between ways of thought that, when set in

rhyme, lived on in the memory of mine workers and landowners of the defunct *Cauca Grande*, emotions that flare up from evening to evening as guides to behavior or like hooks that dig deeply and painfully under the flesh.” (Velásquez, 1960b:13).

In the Palenque literario, racial couplets and story-tales flow. These folk verses, stories and songs not only speak of whites against blacks but also of black against whites. For example, here is a verse of white against black:

Spanish version

Los blancos los hizo Dios
y a los mulatos san Pedro,
los negros lo hizo el Diablo
para tizon del infierno

English version

God made whites,
Saint Peter made mulatos,
The Devil made blacks
As embers to stoke hell. (Velásquez, 1960b:14)

Now, let's see how one verse portrays the racial tension of black against white:

Spanish version

El ser negro no es una afrenta,
ni el color le quita fama,
porque con zapatos negros
se viste la mejor dama.

English version

Being black is not an offense,
And color is not infamous,
Since even the most elegant ladies
are shod with black shoes. (Velásquez, 1960b:14)

There are hundreds of these types of folk verse, songs and stories which I define as *repertoires of Palenque literario* (see below). Some disgrace blacks and black culture,

and some other position and value positively blacks and black culture as the two previous verses show. The repertoire of the Palenque literario reflects the ways in which racial conflict has taken place in Colombia: “because those folk songs are still used by whites against blacks and by blacks against whites. They come and go like combat arrows that pierce the heart of the other and make him bleed. They are weapons.” (Velásquez, 1960b:13):

Spanish version

Los blancos huelen a rosa,
y los morenos a clavo,
y los negros, negro-negro
a gallinazo mojado

Morena tiene que ser
la tierra para ser buena;
y la mujer para el hombre
tambien debe ser morena (Velásquez, 1960b:14)

English version

Whites smell like roses,
Swarthies smell like clove,
And blacks, black blacks,
Smell like wet buzzards

Just like soil must be dark
to be fertile and good,
a man must get himself
a dark woman. (Velásquez, 1960b:14)

Racial discrimination is another element that differentiates mestizaje in the black politics of folklore from the one from above. Scholars have pointed out that the ideology of mestizaje means the absence of racial prejudice and racial discrimination as mestizaje promotes legal and social equality (Pisano, 2010 and Lasso, 2007). In contrast, black politics of folklore makes racism visible by denouncing and questioning what Goldberg

defines as the “*field of racialized discourse*” (1993), which consists of racist expressions that include “beliefs and verbal outburst -epithets, slurs, etc.-, acts and their consequences, the principles upon which racialized institutions are based” (Goldberg, 1993:41). In this light, I contend that what black politics of folklore reveals is the field of racialized discourses that legitimate the implementation of what Marisol de la Cadena (2005) describes as the *culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje* that occurred Peru. Accordingly, this culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje consists of using and implementing public policies as mechanisms to modernize, to educate and, at the end, to whiten indigenous' soul and culture: “education was the requisite to acquire citizenship” (De la Cadena, 2005: 65). Thus, this culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje led Peruvian state to let the traditional indianness die and to make modern (educated)-rural people lives (De la Cadena, 2005: 66).

In Colombia white politicians and intellectuals developed a culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje similar to that of Peru between 1930 and 1946. According to Pisano (2010), white elites and the Colombian State promoted what he calls as '*cultural approach*' (“aproximacion cultural”- Rafael Bernal Jimenez quoted by Pisano (2010:49) which is a racial project whose goals were to whiten black and indigenous populations by educating them using European morals and hygiene values. In addition, the Colombian State enacted racial policies to bring Europeans to this country and, in turn, by mixing Belgians, Polishes (who were not Jewish), Swisses, Germans of Barivia and Iberian with Colombian population, Colombia would become much whiter. In other words, the Colombian State wanted to let blackness and indianness die and make white-mestizo live.

Among other arguments that white and mestizo politicians and intellectuals made for the implementation of this culturalist bio-politics project of mestizaje are: a. the black people lack of intelligentsia and morality (hygienist Jorge Bejarano); b. blacks were lazy, sexual and barbarian (politicians Sergio Arboleda); c. blacks live in a prevailing childishness (politician Laureano Gomez); and so forth.

Black politics of folklore denounced and questioned this field of racialized discourses that denigrate and devalue blackness and Indianness to legitimate the implementation of the culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje in Colombia. For Delia Zapata Olivella, it is about those “polemic attitudes” that she defines as “merely racist prejudice” (Zapata, 1962:191) because they devalue mestizaje as a racial mixture between black, indigenous and white cultures. She does not mention anybody in particular. However, according to Pisano (2010) those who used these types of racist expressions were white politicians and academics Jiménez López, Luis López de Mesa, Laureano Gómez and Bernal Jimenez that later campaigned for bring white Europeans to Colombia. Finally, the second reference about racist expressions is when she describes how Spaniards imposed a curse (menosprecio) on black and indigenous population (see above).

In Teófilo Potes' politics of folklore, racist related expression refers to phrases such as 'repugnance' (repugnacia) and 'dismissiveness' (desprecio) used to denigrate blackness. He states, “one of the things that has caused repugnance and disgrace towards blacks in Colombia -coasts and elsewhere- from whites of all times, since the conquest until today, has been the magic practices, also called "brujería", "hechicería", "supersticiones",

"curandería", etc." (Potes, 1975b:20/quaternions marks from the original). As I see it, Teófilo Potes complains about whites who have been treating black religious and traditional practices with disgrace and repugnance, which is also a clear complaint against racist culture (Goldberg, 1993).

He also seems to be upset with the terms that are in quotation marks. I think that he rejects them and what white intellectuals have said about the causes that make black communities be in backwardness. Right after the words 'witchcraft', 'sorcery', 'superstitions', 'curanderia' and "magic", he states, "it has been said that the backwardness of the black race is because the dedication to these religious practices." (Potes, 1975b:20).

Teófilo Potes rather uses the term ethnobotanic through which he assumes these religious practices such as "voodoo" in Haiti: "There is something even greater in ethnobotany and it is this: In our region there are shamans that take part in a ritual called *magina* that is identical to Haitian voodoo." (Potes, 1975a:16). There is not explicit reference of what *magina* means or is. For the context in which he uses it, *magina* seems to be a "ritual in which only black (curandero) can get in" to treat a sick person (Potes, 1975b:16). I think that in this account, Teófilo Potes gives a different treatment of these religious practices. He values them positively. He thinks that the "curandero achieves to cure illnesses that the doctor does not" (Potes, 1975a:15). So, this is the reason why he asks, "Why hasn't medical science embraced that bountiful wellspring of knowledge possessed by the shaman (curandero)? It is part of folklore, but why hasn't medical science taken advantage of that immense sea of knowledge? It is part of folklore, but why hasn't

ethnobotany been practiced in Colombia? Why have we not agreed to put 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 together and start looking around the country? (Potes, 1975a:16).

From Teófilo Potes' point of view, the Colombian State does not do anything to learn from and preserve the cultural traditions of the black people. He also says that he does not know “To this day, how has the Colombian government benefited folklore? I have no idea. I have looked around everywhere and have yet to find anything good.” (Potes, 1975a:15). In my opinion, he criticizes the culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje that, from the state, seeks to let black curanderia and traditions die. He states, “Nobody has done anything for ethnobotany here. When a man knows the secret of an herb he is called a medicine man, a witch doctor, a weed prescriber, a wizard, a quack, even a con man, but then the herb is taken to a lab and it becomes an antibiotic that can cure not the illness that the shaman cures but another.” (Potes, 1975a:15).

There is one more final distinction between mestizaje from black politics of folklore and mestizaje from above. For the latter, “Patriot nationalism consistently gained power and cohesion by setting itself in sharp contrast to Spain (colony)” (Lasso, 2007: 49). The ideology of mestizaje therefore was built as myth in which Colombia was constructed and represented in opposition to the Colony and its racial hierarchy and distinctions (Pisano, 2010 32)¹⁹. In contrast, mestizaje in black politics of folklore does not deny the link between Colombian nation and the Colonial period. In other words, black politics of

19 Accordingly, this culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje consists of using and implementing public policies as mechanisms to modernize, to educate and, at the end, to whiten indigenous' soul and culture: “education was the requisite to acquire citizenship” (de la Cadena, 2005: 65). Thus, this culturalist bio-politics of mestizaje led Peruvian state to let the traditional indianness die and to make modern (educated)-rural people lives (de la Cadena, 2005: 66).

folklore recognize the legacies of the Coloniality of power in Colombian society (Quijano, 1993). For instance, the fact that black intellectuals track black folklore since the Colony showing the terrible and racial conditions of the enslaved blacks and indigenous groups, their use of racial categories are, arguably, clear evidence that for black political intellectuals Colombian society has inherited a lot of racial practices from the Colony.

That is why I found Teófilo Potes arguing that slave system has be a burden for all societies due to the type of racial relation established in it has constituted the basis for racial inequality today- the Mina, as a living memory of the black struggle, is another example of this legacies -. For Rogério Velásquez the material conditions of black communities have not changed much from the Colony to the Republic. Thus, he sustains, “The liberators of Colombia never thought to improve the lot of the lower classes. They fought in their own interest, for their jobs and benefits, to change a foreign dynasty for an American one.” (1957:96).

4.4 Black politics in Black politics of Folklore

Black politics refer to a plurality of black actions; actions defined as a plurality of “behaviors, ideals, and ideologies in societies where self-described African-descended populations participate and deliberate over the distribution of resources, modes of inequality, racial identity and identification, and matter of power, justice and inequality” (Hanchard, 2006:6). Accordingly, black politics also involve “deliberation over matters of self-representation, citizenship, notion of racial pride and self-hatred, gender, and

sexuality, and the antinomies of individual and collective actions” (Hanchard, 2006:6).

What I am about to describe will remind the reader that black politics in the black politics of folklore goes beyond the limits that social movement theories and theorists have established in the common understanding of social struggle.

In Delia Zapata's politics of folklore black politics refer to strategies developed by enslaved subjects, blacks and indigenous to escape and to form black or indigenous communities. In Omi and Winant's words (1996), these strategies constitute a 'racial war of maneuver'²⁰. For Delia Zapata, black communities, for instance Palenques -free settlement- or the Pacific region as whole, were fundamental to understand how enslaved blacks and, later, free blacks preserved their African legacies and culture. She remarks the role played by the emblematic figure of Benkos Biohó. A former enslaved leader who led thousands of enslaved blacks to their liberation and creation of a maroon community named 'San Basilio de Palenque', where “for the first time rebels got together in this continent to proclaim and defend their independence” (Zapata, 1962:192). Accordingly, “Such was the racial solidarity that they attained, the will to freedom that they possessed, that Spaniards never managed to make inroads there.” (Zapata, 1965a:7). She does not develop her notion of racial solidarity. In my opinion, she means by that common interests among subjugated subjects to escape and form Palenques: “The captive blacks, wall masonry fodder, had only one obsession: escape. They became runaways to shrug off slavery, and sometimes managed to fool the search hounds and attained freedom. They entered the jungle, and the ones that gathered there under the leadership of Becos-

20 It is defined as “a situation in which subordinate groups seek to preserve and extend a definite territory, to ward off violent assault, and to develop an internal society as an alternative to the repressive social system they confront” (Omi and Winant, 1996: 81).

Bihio, the black king, founded a town that to this day is still called Palenque.” (Zapata, 1962:192).

It seems that this racial solidarity was not only built within cimarrona communities. Delia Zapata also points out some moments in which racial solidarity was created between enslaved blacks and subjugated indigenous in the Colony. For example, when she talks about 'cumbia' dance and the condition in which 'cumbia' emerged in Cartagena, she states, “The continual contact between natives and blacks under colonial rule, and their common circumstance of oppression by slaveowners, had to result in the melding and fusing of their musical expressions: The melancholy *gaita* (native flute) contrasted with the gay and impetuous resonance of the African drum.” (Zapata, 1962:191). Her description of black politics is not only to remark enslaved blacks' pursuit for freedom. For example, Palenques's dynamics allowed blacks to retain cultural practices such a 'Lumbalu', which is a funeral religious rite; and for the Pacific region, they achieved to preserve 'Alabaos', 'Chigualos' and 'Arrullos', which are mixed of Catholic and African religious manifestations. For her, these communities allowed enslaved subjects to preserve, as much as possible, their cultural traditions.

Delia Zapata's politics of folklore portrays black culture as the result of the racial politics. That is, a perspective which gives agency to subaltern actors, as the subaltern studies group' famous phrase, from below, but she does not dismiss structure and power. In other words, solidarity, within and inter groups, occurred by the interaction between subjects/structure, between power-resistance: “The environment that surrounded blacks

when they arrived in Colombia helped determine their new personality. They kept some of their characteristics despite prohibition and punishment, but these were not as vigorous or rich as in Haiti, Brazil, or Cuba, where they evolved but still inspire artistic manifestations.” (Zapata, 1965a:8). As the above quote suggests, although she recognizes the African legacies in the Colombian folklore, she also recognizes that circumstances have reduced a much stronger presence of African heritage in Colombia.

This argument in Delia Zapata's politics of folklore shows two things. First of all, she is aware of a black diasporic presence in other countries. Second, her comparison between Haiti, Brasil, Cuba and Colombia in which the survival of African culture and legacies are stronger than in Colombia may speak of the possible intellectual influence from anthropologists Melville Herskovits and Thomas Price who made similar arguments at the time (see Birenbaum, 2009:14; and Wade, 1993: 268).

Rogelio Velazquez and Teófilo Potes present a collection of oral tradition and wisdom as the place for black politics. Particularly, the former uses a specific term to highlight this phenomenon. He calls it, “Palenque Literario” (literally, literary Palenque) (Velazquez, 1960b: 83). Rogelio Velásquez does not define what Palenque literario means or is. I assume Palenque literario as the symbolic “Palenque Cimarron”, where black communities have been able to develop their abilities to tell stories related to their everyday life and, in turn, preserve their black culture and tradition. Palenque literario is the ability of black people to produce local cultural art forms from their oral traditions

and experiences. It is the place where the black literature flourished as the following quotes imply:

“The rhymes that led to disorder were almost always arrogant or boastful. Sung with the deliberate aim of advancing someone’s status in the Palenque literario, or to steal a love interest that followed the harmonious challenge with gaze and intelligence, or to revive old quarrels lost in the far reaches of memory, the adventurous verses and the passionate candor (...).” (Velazquez, 1960b: 83).

“Divided the cantadores (singers who sing traditional songs to the saints to say goodbye a loved one, etc.) into two groups, each group has a spokesperson that gives or improvises news of the land and of the river, of tree, of the love, and of the death, according to the cantador opponent” (Velazquez, 1960b: 83).

They sing personal experiences; they lie to have fun; they talk about pain, desires, feeling and the landscape in the Pacific region. In the Palenque literario, everything becomes art, subject of saying and joking until violence comes (Velazquez, 1960b). In other words, what we know as oral tradition constitutes the Palenque literario for Rogelio Velásquez and, I would argue, for Teófilo Potes as well: “Just hear the richness in the voices and the turns of phrase put in a simple riddle by peasants that never attended school. With slightly archaic language, slowly, deliberately, the native of Chocó holds his audience still as he asks and responds using a simple parlance that worships the past and gives comfort for the future.” (Velásquez, 1960c:104).

Rogelio Velásquez and Teófilo Potes concur in appraising black literature and their oral tradition as vital. It is black literature what “The black African descendant from the Pacific is, just like his forebear, a good live narrator. All of his literature is oral, rich, and above all quite diverse in its deep motives, but does not go further back than the late

fifteenth century.” (Potes, 1975b). On the other hand, they also concur in remarking what have been the causes that have made Palenque literario keep on going: marginalization, state abandonment and the seeking for freedom. So, the reader can observe that they recognize a history which forms the basis for the oral tradition. As the following quote implies, what occur in the Palenque literario is history narrated by black actors who are officially invisible but not extinguished. They live and survive in the Palenque literario²¹:

“When a people has no history, it is up to the artist and his creative faculties to fill in the documentary holes. One does not know what to admire most in this work: would it be the clear, cold beauty of its style, full nonetheless of extraordinarily lively images, or the savage grandeur of its happenings, or the relentless rhythm of its plot?” (Potes, 1975b:19).

“It could not be any other way. Denied the schooling to which he is entitled because of the remoteness of the villages and the mental deficiencies of those who ruled them with arrogance and spite, he has to philosophize in his own way, without any book save for a grand one, that of nature, and without any systematic teachings except those instilled by his own pain.” (Velásquez, 1960b: 35).

Palenque literario then is a place- Pacific region- where black people have recovered their peoplehood; their humanity from the atrocities of the slave system. From their relation with the rivers, plants and animals black communities reclaim their ancestries, cultural legacies and freedom. From all of these, blacks develop their Palenque literario: “There, amid his rivers, yoked by slavery and the law, burned by inhuman and antisocial markings and by the branding iron, feeling his African heritage in the instinctive urges of his blood, he attained the state of consciousness that allowed him to know himself. As he

21 I thank Millie Thayer for this suggestion.

saw his manhood, in his fledgling effort to break free, he sang of his oneness with life and with the universe.” (Velásquez, 1948:21).

“Because black man sings to break free, to love or to hate, he sings in remembrance, in social conflict, in the superstitions of groups not yet transformed culturally, in myth and legend, in food and drink. One could say that his song is the *élan vital* that puts him in tune with the heavenly according to his traditions and his habits and his language, his art, his religion, and his destiny, which fells him and makes him rise again.” (Velásquez, 1948:22). Palenque literario means liberation. Not only physically but also spiritually and mentally. It is about becoming a human being in connection to the environment and the land; it is the place where to live and grow, “Once they had conquered the land on which to build their palm-frond huts, secured the sun and the will to move, understood the primal law—that they should let no one corner them—and found the way to express their conscience, their morals, and their philosophy, they summarized in four verses the creed of a proud people.” (Velásquez, 1948:23).

Rogério Velásquez and Teófilo Potes mention and describe multiple oral tradition genres in their works. The Palenque literario consists of a repertoire of the Palenque literature from black oral traditions. Because of the limited space I have in this paper, I will just mention them by using the next quote. So there are “LOOSE or ‘somersaulting’ RHYMES; GLOSSED RHYMES or ‘décimas’; LEGENDS, both mystical and secular, that latter due to the daily workings of a people’s fantasy; RIDDLES, either TYING (SIMPLE) RIDDLES or UNTYING (DIFFICULT) RIDDLES; MYTHS and FABLES

that have to do with real and fantastic animals, in which one can admire the sublime and the grotesque.” (Potes, 1975b:22-23/capitalized words from the original).

Black politics is represented as both war of maneuver and war of position, which in turn refer to two different strategies in the spectrum of black struggle. Radical actions for freedom and the construction of Palenques and the other less confrontational: Palenque literario. Both were the result of the racial relations in Colombia since the Colony. For black political intellectuals, both strategies allowed black preserve their cultural oral and religious traditions and practices; cultural expressions that Delia Zapata Olivella and Teófilo Potes performed in their folkloric choreographies and Rogelio Velasquez describes in his articles.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This thesis is an initial attempt to comprehend the black cultural mobilization that occurred around 1960s in Colombia. I analyzed the black politics of folklore as a site of politics to argue that black politics' trajectory include forms and sites of politics that go beyond modalities, strategies and tactics ascribed to “contentious politics” and social movements' dynamics. In doing so, I described some characteristics of the Colombian State, black counterpublic, the meaning of race and racism, and the black political intellectual. In using my findings, I will turn my attention to highlight some contributions to understand politics, race and racism, folklore and black political intellectual in Colombia.

My findings suggest that politics should be understood as a *contingent and relational ensemble of actions and discourses* through which actors in difference positions negotiate power relation. Politics are contingent and relational because actors deploy tactics and strategies in regard to “the art of the possible.” For example, from the need to define and unify Colombian nation as mestiza and the entrance of the international capital, white dominants deployed a racist culture of governmentality through which the State played a fundamental role at the national level. This racial project used folklore as its mechanism to fulfill this goal of unifying Colombia when a global consumption for the black 'primitivism’ and 'exotic' cultural forms, and the global consciousness against racism

were growing up. Thus, these structural phenomena constrained, shaped and provided possibilities seen as such by black political intellectuals who re-signified folklore to contest the meaning of race, racism and black identity embodied in the racist culture of governmentality. By the unfolding their actions and discourses, dominants and subordinates make folklore a site of politics for the meaning of Colombian racial identity. For this, folklore is not only entertainment, apolitical or essentialism. It is also a site of politics.

For this reason politics are ensemble of actions and discourses that dominants and subordinates create and combine to preserve or subvert the power relation and/or conditions of inequality. For example, I described how white and mestizo dominant groups, who possessed the control of the Colombian State, unfolded several state actions and discourses to preserve power by unifying Colombia as mestiza. Among their actions, the Colombian State promoted the Chorographic Commission, the 1886 Constitution, State institutions such as Ministry of National Education, National museums, State Journals, etc. and cultural programs such as “cultural extension”, “Cultura Aldeana” and “cultural approach” to make white and mestizo related cultural practices live and to let black related cultural practices die. To contest this racial project, black political intellectuals created a black counterpublic understood as a web of relations and spaces of collaborations between black musical groups, black folkloric dance groups, black folkloric choreographers, black poets, writers and novelists, black politicians, black diasporic relations and white allies. Black political intellectuals' actions were non-

confrontational individual and collective actions against the racist culture of governmentality.

This relational definition of politics also challenges our understanding of micro and macro politics from the subaltern point of view. Like Michel de Certeau's idea of "poaching", Robin Kelly, James Scott's idea of "infrapolitics", and Michael Hanchard's idea of "coagulate politics", black counterpublic is not a confrontational form of politics. Indeed, this perspective doesn't it contain a spectrum of politics which includes non-confrontational forms of folklore and protests like the Dia del Negro that I described at the beginning. Black counterpublic is not massive and well-structured social organization as social movement organization (SMO), social movement industry (SMI) and social movement sector (SMS) are. Also, I cannot argue that black counterpublic disrupted the public order or represented a directly threat to the relation of production in the consolidating capitalist system of Colombia. However, black counterpublic cannot be classified simply as an expression of a quotidian form of politics. It shares some elements that classify it into the macro politics type of expression. Like social movements, revolutions, strike waves, nationalism, protests, rebellions, wars, interest group politics and electoral politics, black counterpublic contested the racial state project that sought to make white and mestizo related culture live and to let black culture die. In other words, black political intellectuals' action and discourses targeted the Racial State and contested and challenged its meaning of race.

Although decentralized, self-organized, heterogeneous and multi-oriented goals meshwork, black counterpublic developed a form of politics that transcended the local and the private spaces. Black counterpublic was a web of relations and spaces that include state institutions, white dominated and autonomous black spaces. It networks the local, the national and the global. So, black counterpublic suggests that its interpretation should go beyond binary analysis that studies social phenomenon either by macro or micro analysis. For this reason I propose a working definition of politics that assumes it as contingent and relational ensemble of actions and discourses through which actors in difference positions negotiate power relation in a given society and historical context. As I showed above, these actions and discourses involve macro and micro politics type of expressions; private and public spaces; local actions and spaces with global connections and relations.

The web of relations and spaces that composes the black counterpublic suggests the presence of different types of black intellectuals. The first type refers to Mrs. Tita, who taught Leonor Gonzales Mina how to sing, dance and make musical instruments in Robles, and Leonor Gonzales Mina's uncle, who “played the violin and sang and talked about tío conejo, about tío guatín, about tía chucha” and shared all his wisdom and knowledge to Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella when they recorded black cultural traditions in Robles, Cauca. Mrs. Tita and Leonor Gonzales Mina's uncle represent a committed black intellectual whose social functions were to pass their knowledge about black culture on new generations. They were “black vernacular intellectuals” who operated within a local public realm in which they were visible and recognized as such.

So, Mrs. Tita and Leonor Gonzales Mina's uncle was black intellectual in the “micropublic sphere” that Nancy Fraser talks about (quoted by Hanchard, 2006). Thus, this also means that the black counterpublic was composed of multiple micro public spheres.

The academic intellectual (“Intelectual ilustrado”- Arboleda, 2011) is another type of black intellectual that participated in the black counterpublic. It refers to black intellectuals linked to the formal academy and education. They are well known for their production of academic texts, books, and articles. Rogelio Velasquez belongs to this type of black intellectuals whose production of knowledge was committed to make black culture visible. The traditional black political leaders (Arboleda, 2011) are the third type of black intellectual who participated in the black counterpublic. Their social function is to produce ideas that become political projects into State institutions (congress) (see Arboleda, 2011 and Pisano, 2010). This type of black intellectual is perceived as linked to the political community when it has developed works and concrete actions for the good of the communities (Arboleda, 2011). Juan Zapata Olivella, Miguel Caicedo, Arnoldo Palacios, Natanael Diaz, Diego Luis Cordoba, etc., are part of this type of black intellectual.

The final type of black intellectual refers to the cultural activists such as Teófilo Potes and Delia Zapata Olivella. As I described above, they were folklorists and choreographers committed to preserve black culture traditions and forms. Although they were not academic intellectuals, they managed to publish their cultural works in journals

and books. Their work basically was focused mainly on organizing folkloric dance groups, and cultural festivities. They take the black traditions, transform them into popular art and perform them on stages.

The presence of several types of black intellectuals suggests that black counterpublic was composed not only of multiple micropublic spheres but also of black intellectual of various hues (Hanchard, 2006). They occupied different positions in the local and national levels; inside and outside of the state institutions and white dominated spaces; and networked the local, the national and global spaces and relations. As I argued above, it is the racial logic of inclusion/exclusion that generates this type of black intellectual constructions, relations and spaces. It reflects the partial inclusion/exclusion of the black communities in Colombia.

Although these differences, my former black political intellectuals reveal a set of practices, actions and discourses that show a “critical memory” that maintains a collective record that “draws into relationship significant instance of time past and the always uprooted homeless of now” (Baker, 1995:7); vernaculization as they craft subaltern political positionalities from which black political intellectuals speak “as they address the issues of the day that directly affect their community” (Farred, 2003: 22); and radical and anti-systemic discourses and actions that go against the racial order (Valderrama, 2012; Lao-Montes, 2010 and Bagues, 2003). Their radicalism and critical memory consist of their abilities to reveal the racial contradictions of the mestizo nations. They talked about the racial identities, the pattern of colonial relations (racial domination,

violence, exploitation, oppression, and segregation) and its relation to the conditions of exclusion of the black communities; they critiqued mestizo nation-state and proposed an idea of mestizo that blackened the national identity; and recognized the racial conflict as part of the racial heterogeneity.

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