

## THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF AFRICAN HERITAGE IN BRAZIL IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Nadine Carole Ngon <sup>\*1</sup>

### *Abstract*

After deletion of slavery in Brazil and the granting of citizenship to Afro-descendants, their incorporation into Brazilian society was not tolerated. During the first decade of the 20th century, African mores and cultures were repressed in public spaces and excluded from the project of identity construction. Brazilian national. By the action of the Black Front (Frente Negra Brasileira) through the struggles for social and civic rights and identity claims initiated at the beginning of the 20th century and continued during the second half of this century by the movements of black intellectual lobbies and Brazilian social actors, that the question of the recognition and legitimization of African heritage in Brazil will become a national concern and the subject of debate. To this end, the Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas initiated actions that will be perpetuated by his successors for the national recognition of African values inherited from slaves.

**Key words:** *Slavery, African heritage, Brazil, Afro descendants, Multiculturalism, Africa.*

### **Introduction**

In the historical evolution of the three races that founded Brazil, that is to say the Indian, white and black race, the recognition and enhancement of African peoples and cultures has always been problematic. During slavery, blacks were subject to the assimilation system that began with the acquisition of Western names upon arrival in Brazil. After the abolition, everything that referred to African culture in Brazilian society was considered abject and banned from public space. Followers of Afro-Brazilian cults were repressed, the practice of Batuque and Capoeira were prohibited. Many demeaning racial stereotypes about the behavior and physical appearance of Afro-descendants affected their lives. Despite the actions carried out for the recognition of African heritage by successive Brazilian governments, until the 21st century, the affirmation of African identity in certain public spaces is still not accepted. This article intends to examine the actions that were carried out and the reasons that motivated during the 20th century the recognition of certain cultures inherited from black slaves, despite the unfavorable political and social context in Brazil at that time.

### **Reasons and process for recognition of African heritage in Brazil**

The process of recognition of African cultures in Brazil began in the first half of the 20th century with the joint action of the social policy of the government of Getúlio Vargas and the protest movements of blacks, the lobbies of intellectuals and Brazilian social actors. . It is following these actions that African values began to assert themselves in the Brazilian public space and to participate in the construction of the national culture.

---

<sup>1\*</sup>Senior Lecturer, PhD, Department of History, 1<sup>st</sup> section of cultural studies in Ecole Normale de Bambili at the University of Bamenda (Cameroon), Phone: + (237) , Email:[idingben@gmail.com](mailto:idingben@gmail.com)

### **“Racial Democracy” by Getúlio Vargas and the legitimization of African heritage**

Before 1930, physical interbreeding and the mixing of cultures were thought by politicians, European and even Brazilian intellectuals as a defect that will be responsible for Brazil's backwardness vis-à-vis Western nations and North America. They thought that the fusion of the black race with the white one would demean the so-called "superior" race (white) according to the theories on the mixing of the races of Gobineau in the *Essay on the inequality of the human races*, and the writings of Gustave LeBon. These French thinkers had Brazilian supporters who supported this idea; Nina Raimundo Rodrigues, Oliveira Viana, etc. These authors demonstrated that mixed races are inferior to pure races (Mauro, 1978: 265).

It took the publication of the masterpiece of the Brazilian sociologist Freyre (Freyre, 1978, 265) to take the opposite view of these evolutionist and racist ideas in force in Brazil, in order to show the positive aspect of interbreeding in the Brazilian society on the one hand, and on the other hand, to set in motion a new way of thinking about the Brazilian "nation", of solving the problem of the social integration of the popular masses in particular, the Blacks and the Indians in the construction and development of the country without running the risk of damaging the social fabric.

As such, G. Freyre was the first Brazilian scientist to recognize that: “By all their cultural, material or spiritual traits, the black slaves were in a position to contribute much better than the Indians to the economic and social formation of Brazil; sometimes even better than the Portuguese...” (Marin, 2009: 12). This vision of Freyre will allow Blacks henceforth the right to be citizens and to participate in the construction of the Brazilian nation by bringing their cultures and their knowledge to it.

Long before, the pioneering works of the German Karl Friedrich Philipp Von Martius in the 19th century already spoke in Brazil of the "Myth of the three races" which in its conception, it was necessary to give a tiny place to blacks instead of excluding them from the national construction site. It was the works of Silvio Romero that clearly showed the contribution of black civilizations in the construction of Brazil, while those of Afonso Celso: “Why am I proud of my country?” *Porque me ufano do meu país?* raised the pride of being Brazilian by combining the founding races.

These previous visions thus agree with the social project of the Brazilian sociologist G. Freyre in his perception of the construction of a Brazilian society which takes into account all ethnic and racial sensitivities. Contrary to the authors opposed to interbreeding and who supported the thesis of the “biological inferiority” of Blacks and saw in them defects, G. Freyre will affirm that: “the originality of Brazil will come from the meeting of three cultures: white, black, Indian” (Mauro, 1994: 113), he will recognize the status of culture in the “black race”. In fact, what was perceived in the past as the “biological inferiority” of black people was now seen as an exotic cultural state that needed to be valued and progressively incorporated into Brazilian society (Pereira, 2008: 94).

It is from this conception of G. Freyre of Brazilian society that the idea of the elaboration of a national identity will start; foundation of the political program of “Racial Democracy” established by Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas. The purpose of this policy was on the one hand, the constitution of an original Brazilian national identity in the eyes of the world, the affirmation of "Brazilianness" to depart from the model of

European societies, and on the other hand, it was necessary to build a country where racial segregation such as in the USA would not exist and where “a new race” would be born. This vision of a mixed national identity will develop after the First World War and will gradually impose itself to the point of becoming the official ideology of the Estado Novo dictatorship.

At that time, in addition to the praise given to Afro-Brazilians and their African heritage, concrete initiatives were taken in favor of the empowerment of African cultures, we can cite the exhortation of the Brazilian authorities to men of science so that they engage in the study of African cultures. Thus, after the publication of G. Freyre's book *Masters and Slaves*, the Negro theme invaded poetry, novels, journalism and was the subject of several scientific works. Two major Afro-Brazilian congresses were organized, the first was held in Recife in 1934 and the second in Salvador in 1937, bringing together ethnographers, psychiatrists, anthropologists, linguists, historians and sociologists.

### **Actions of scientists and black movements for the recognition of African heritage in Brazil**

From the second half of the 20th century, many researchers will study the African heritage in Brazil thanks to the questioning of President Vargas. On the occasion of the Congress of Salvador in 1937, several scientists in order to have a real knowledge of African religions went for the first time to the places of Afro-Brazilian worship, Terreiros de Candomblé or Macumba. This had the striking effect of removing the stereotypes that so-called “upper class” people had with regard to Afro-Brazilian cults. To this end, many Brazilians learned that blacks did not indulge in any indecency during their religious ceremonies. Remember that the practice of African worship was considered ostentatious and detrimental to good morals. Police repressions were frequent and the followers were hunted down, arrested, then sentenced.

Congressional, newspaper, and radio publicity for African cults helped create a climate of tolerance around the slandered religions of the colored man (Marin, 2009: 15). In addition, studies were carried out to highlight the African cultures inherited in Brazil. As Richard Marin indicates, between 1934 and 1940, the anthropologist Arthur Ramos devoted ten of the eighteen volumes of the collection he directed at the Companhia Editôra Civilização Brasileira to Afro-Brazilian culture, something unthinkable a decade earlier. In 1939, Edison Carneiro was sent by the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro to collect material on Afro-Brazilian cults and have life-size rag dolls made with the ceremonial costumes and insignia of the orixas.<sup>2</sup>

In civil society, the action of black movements and intellectual lobbies was also important in the process of legitimation and enhancement of African identity in Brazil. At the beginning of the 20th century, Manuel Querino, a black activist, self-taught ethnographer and former abolitionist, developed certain ideas about the role of black people in the formation of the Brazilian nation to awaken black consciousness. According to him, rather than being ashamed of their African origins, black Brazilians should be proud of their Africanness. For it was the Black

---

<sup>2</sup>The deities originate from West Africa more exactly from Yoruba religious traditions.

who had brought to Brazil the virtues of work, discipline, sociability, spirituality and the strength of civilization. All that the Portuguese had bequeathed to the Brazilian nation were the diseases of their civilization.

During the first decade of the 1980s, social movements challenged the ideology of the homogeneous nation-state inherited from independence and the policy of miscegenation. This is due to the racial discriminations and social tensions acquired from the “racial democracy” of Vargas. On the other hand, because they campaigned for the integration of blacks into class society, for egalitarian recognition in Brazilian society based on the universal idea; of the equal dignity of all citizens and respect for their differences. In this context, cultural concerns, material interests and racial identity were combined with the aim of challenging inequalities and demanding social integration and mobility.

From there, a model of society highlighting ethnocultural diversity will emerge, supported by members of the Black Movement Movimento Negro Unificado contra a Discriminação Racial (MNU)<sup>3</sup> and a considerable number of cultural associations such as the quilombismo of Abdias do Nascimento<sup>4</sup>. During this period of social crisis, the black lobby demanded the introduction of the study of Africa and Afro-Brazilians in school and university curricula. In addition, he refused the date of May 13 for the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and instead proposed that of November 20 as Black Consciousness Day on the anniversary of the execution of the Afro-descendant Bantu Zumbi; leader of the quilombo de Palmarès and symbol of black resistance in Brazil.

To understand the action of black movements in the struggle to legitimize African identity and racism in the education system, it is appropriate to present some of their activities. During the 80s (1980), the black movement fought in favor of “school for all blacks” and denounced the racist policy applied in the school environment. In 1987, he led the FAE (Fundação de Assistência ao Estudante) to take measures to eliminate racism in school books. Their actions contributed advantageously to the emergence of debates on races, race relations and favored significant changes on the social and educational levels.

In keeping with the spirit of the 1996 constitution, a new law on the education system determined that: “The teaching of the history of Brazil would integrate the contributions of the different ethnic groups to the formation of the Brazilian people, especially the indigenous matrices, African and European (Marin, 2009: 15)”. Thanks also to their negotiations, multiculturalism was recognized by the 1988 constitution which ratified the ethnic diversity of the nation and gave the State the duty to “protect

---

<sup>3</sup>This movement is renamed Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU) and fights against racial discrimination in Brazil. Its members are recruited from the lower and middle black bourgeoisie.

<sup>4</sup>Abdias do Nascimento, the great figure of black activism since the beginning of the 1930s, presents his theses on quilombismo. For him, it is a question of creating a movement based on the valorization of the historical experience of the “brown” slaves grouped in quilombos. Through this mobilizing reference model which allows the recovery of the memory of Afro-Brazilians, ignored or distorted by official history, he intends to exalt the spirit of resistance and the pride of blackness.

the cultural manifestations of the natives, Afro-Brazilians and their memorial heritage, vector of identity”.

Moreover, the claims initiated since the 20th century have had positive consequences at the beginning of the 21st century. The clause of the fundamental charter supplemented the presidential decree of November 2003, providing for the attribution of property titles to the heirs of the old quilombos. In addition, the state set up the Palmarès Foundation attached to the Ministry of Culture for the promotion of Afro-Brazilian culture (Marin, 2009: 15). The culmination of Law 10639 of January 9, 2003 completed and clarified the provisions by making the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture compulsory in primary and secondary schools: “The study of the history of 'Africa and Africans, the struggle of the Blacks of Brazil, the Afro-Brazilian culture and the place of the Black in the formation of the national society,

This last law recommends that the following be introduced into school curricula:

- The history of Africa and its people, the struggle of the black people in Brazil, the Afro-Brazilian culture, and the contribution of blacks in the formation of Brazilian society socially, economically and politically.
- On June 17, 2004, the National Education Council approved the national document on academic orientation entitled: “Education of Racial-Ethnic relations and the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African history and culture” which recommends that in the courses of training of integrated primary, secondary and higher education teachers; the history of Africa and its culture, the fight against racism, xenophobia, discrimination, etc.
- Several study centers for the cause of blacks were created in the states and private universities such as NEAB (Centre for Afro-Brazilian Studies). There are thus more than 130, playing a role in the training of young researchers and the publication of didactic material.
- On March 21, 2003, the Federal Government created SEPPPIR (Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção d'Igualdade Racial), the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality Responsible for implementing and promoting racial equality in Brazil.
- In 2004, he also created the SECAD/MEC, Secretaria continuada, alfabetização e diversidade (continuing department of literacy and diversity);oh *Coordenação geral de diversidade e inclusão educacional (CGDIE) General coordination of diversity and educational inclusion;*
- *Coordenação Geral de Educação escolar indígena(CGEEI) General coordination of indigenous schooling education.*
- The approval of the PNLD program (National Text book Program), so the work consisted in ensuring the absence in the school books of racism, prejudice or racial discrimination.

Positive discrimination policies inaugurated in the early 2000s made it possible to democratize access to university to a certain extent by establishing quotas. In addition to the educational aspect, on the political and historical level, the State made November

20, a day declared a public holiday, the “National Day of Negro Awareness” in schools. He proceeds to the attribution of lands to the heir groups of certain quilombos. In addition, television soap operas with large audiences on the slavery past, literary publications and cultural events also contributed to the enhancement of African identity. We can cite:

- The exhibition on “The Afro-Brazilian hand” presented in São Paulo then in Brasília, which recounted the participation of Blacks, since the Baroque, in national artistic production through nearly two hundred works;
- In Rio de Janeiro, the reconstruction of “History of the Negro in Brazil” by the National Library.

At the end of the 20th century, the lobby of Afro-Brazilian intellectuals for the enhancement of Afro-Brazilian identities developed intercontinental contacts between Afro-Brazilians and Africa. Thus, African teachers will teach in Brazilian schools the ancestral language, dances and music lost by Afro-Brazilians. It is in this perspective that Professor Martiniano do Bonfim establishes contacts with the Agudas; descendants of former slaves from Brazil who returned to West Africa in the 1840s. Although African colonization cooled the ties between Afro-Brazilians and their continent of origin in the 20th century, it was noted that the creation of the Center for Afro-Oriental Studies of the Federal University of Bahia undertook a new attempt to restore bilateral exchange links between Bahia and Africa. A new diplomatic policy was set up between Brazil and Africa and many Brazilian professors and researchers were responsible for academic and cultural missions in Africa. And their African counterparts did the same in the other direction.

At the beginning of the 21st century, scientific and cultural cooperation agreements were signed in 2002 between Brazil and certain African states. After the visit of the Brazilian Head of State Lula to Cameroon, Professor Joseph-Marie Essomba teaching in the History Department and his colleague André Ntonfo from the Department of Negro African Literature, all from the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I, undertook a mission of Teaching and conferences in the universities of Brazil in 2007. The main objective of this mission was to present the true face of the history of Africa and Cameroon, the history of men and civilizations. The concern was not only to allow Brazilian students and the public to discover and get to know their cultural roots,

Today, the African cultural heritage is recognized well beyond the only populations of color. It has become part of “Brazilianness”, that is obvious, even if in some public spaces the presence of black people is not yet tolerated. Nevertheless, the start of the rehabilitation process had several positive effects, in particular; a beginning of affirmation of African cultures in Brazilian society, their participation in the construction of a Brazilian cultural identity.

### **Recognition and incorporation of African heritage into Brazilian national culture**

In Brazil, thanks to the protest movements in favor of African cultures, a renewed consideration of the African heritage was born and amplified. The esteem for African cultures will be expressed by laudatory thoughts vis-à-vis Afro-descendants and by their

contribution to the construction of the Brazilian national identity. Actions are undertaken for the affirmation of the African heritage and several elements of the African cultural and human heritage will be legitimized and erected as a national symbol in the middle of the 20th century.

### Human legacy

In relation to human heritage, the Bantu slave "Zumbi", leader of the quilombo de Palmarès, was recognized nationally as the symbol of black resistance in Brazil. The commemoration of his death is celebrated on November 20 each year. And during these festivities, the whole nation mobilizes to pay tribute to the emblematic black figure of the 17th century. On this occasion, we issue stamps, medals bearing the image of the leader of Palmarès, his portrait is everywhere, he is the hero of the carnival of Salvador. It serves as a source of inspiration for the Nação Zumbi; one of the most prominent groups of the Brazilian music scene at the end of the 20th century (Marin, 2009: 20).

The highlight of its festivities in memory of black slaves is the speech of the Federal Head of State of Brazil. In the past, then Head of State, Fernando Henrique Cardoso said: "I came here to say that Zumbi is ours, the Brazilian people and represents the best of our people: the desire for freedom. [...] "Zumbi" has transcended its Afro-Brazilian character. Through the celebration of the icon of black resistance, "Zumbi", the entire Afro-descendant community of Brazil is celebrated and especially the warrior character of the Bantu, once obliterated by the racist and ideological prejudices of current scientists. in colonial Brazil and in the 19th century, who found Bantu slaves accommodating and devoid of any spirit of rebellion.

Moreover, in the Brazilian religious pantheon, there are illustrious African characters, deified ancestors: the *pretos velhos*<sup>5</sup>, Pai Joaquim, Pai Joao, Mae Marie Congo. These Afro-descendants in Afro-Brazilian cults are invoked by all Brazilians without distinction of race<sup>6</sup>. Although the North-East and the South-East are centers of their cult, we see their spread throughout the territory. With the recognition of Afro-Brazilian religions, priests now come from all social and racial strata: Portuguese, Spanish, white Brazilian, etc. Even high-ranking people frequently consult the *nganga* to know what the future held for them, the origin of their misfortunes or what course of action to follow. In fact, the *Terreiros de Candomblé*, from Macumba and Umbanda for example welcome the faithful who come from all walks of life.

In another human aspect, the cordiality and the joviality recognized to the Brazilian people are types of behaviors introduced in the Brazilian society by the Africans. In fact, during the period of slavery, it was commonly accepted that slaves of African origin precisely were more accommodating and assimilable. This would be explained by their permeability to Western culture and through the practice of their folklore. As slaves of the fields, the Bantu were more inclined and disposed to party; the proof is that it is their folklore that has survived in Brazil and is the matrix of African folk tradition in Brazilian culture. The folklore was the means by which they were easily established the contacts and the communication between the African communities,

---

<sup>5</sup>Appellation of deified black ancestors.

<sup>6</sup>Dona Marina Follower of Candomblé 58 years old, Deodoro-Rio de Janeiro, interview of 07-22-2014.

On the other hand, in Brazilian society, the populations of the favelado have inherited the

Africans, the way to be and to face the trials of life with joy, even when the circumstances are unfavorable while preserving a certain joy. The practice of solidarity that is significant in the favelados is another African influence rooted in the mores of Brazilians. This African reality is found in the Brazilian peripheries. For example, when you don't have bread, you can knock on the neighbor's house, or when you suddenly have a gas shortage at home, you can cook at the neighbor's house to finish preparing what you started (Neith, 2016: 7).

### Cultural heritage

Regarding the African cultural heritage in the construction of Brazilian culture, several elements of folklore and culinary art were erected as a regional and national symbol by the importance and extent of their activity in Brazilian society. . Thus the Samba which was considered as an immodest dance and music is incorporated into the national culture in 1930 under the Estado Novo of G. Vargas. It became a national dance and a musical expression par excellence of the country, even a symbol of national identity inside and outside Brazil.

During the famous carnival from Rio de Janeiro, the most anticipated event is the parade of the schools of *Samba*. *The "Samba" is inextricably a dance original African Bantu, transplanted to Brazil. It's the form of dance and music the best known and widespread in Brazil. In fact, the word "Samba" is taken from the word, "Semba" (J. Autunes, I. Leymarie, C. Pirenne; 109) in the Kimbundu language and which designates a dance step whose movement consists in rubbing the navels, better, in touching the belly of his or her partner while dancing. In the Umbundu language, the word "Samba" means to be animated, excited. Similarly, in the Ewondo language, the word "Samba" refers to enjoyment and character. festive. This is why it is common among the Ewondo or the Beti of Cameroon to hear, "my samba ne eying", to say, "I savor life" or even "I take pleasure in life" or finally, "I have fun". This frame design exactly with the spirit festive and jubilant Brazilian samba.*

With its recognition and legitimization, this dance was taken over by the white elite who transformed it into a "State Samba". From 1936, his parade became a civic ritual. Samba schools in Rio de Janeiro and the suburbs are institutionalized and obtain public funding. The carnival associations come under the control of the public power, which decrees that the schools must have a didactic and patriotic character (Marin, 2009: 16). In other words, that the Samba schools as a symbol of the culture of Brazil must during the carnival sing Samba which celebrates the history, the culture, the folklore and the natural beauties of Brazil (Guéron, 2008: 209). From a mercantilist perspective, the music industry through Samba music will reap enormous benefits through music production, while that of the show transforms the parade of Samba schools into a planetary event; the carnival. Now the carnival parades are presented in the internal and external tourism market as unique events in the world. They then attract thousands of tourists every year and allow the country to have considerable economic income through tourism. Likewise, these carnivals have become important moments of celebration and promotion of Brazilian culture, but also of the mixing of men, peoples



and cultures. They then attract thousands of tourists every year and allow the country to have considerable economic income through tourism. Likewise, these carnivals have become important moments of celebration and promotion of Brazilian culture, but also of the mixing of men, peoples and cultures. They then attract thousands of tourists every year and allow the country to have considerable economic income through tourism. Likewise, these carnivals have become important moments of celebration and promotion of Brazilian culture, but also of the mixing of men, peoples and cultures.

As for Capoeira, when President Getúlio Vargas first attended a performance in 1937, he approved of its practice and lifted its ban. It was legalized the same year before gaining the remarkable status of “National” sport in Brazil (Marin, 2009: 16). Remember that in the past, Capoeira was deemed criminal in the Penal Code of 189059 and punished by the police. Capoeiristas were constantly persecuted and hunted down. Because they were feared and considered as delinquents and thugs. After its legalization, its practice comes out of hiding to assert itself in the public space. At the beginning of the first half of the 20th century, Capoeira was transformed from street fighting into a structured system. Manuel dos Reis Machado said Mestre Bimba in his desire to make Capoeira a respectable discipline and a true martial art, he enriched it by creating the baptism ceremony during which the novice enters the family of capoeiristas and receives his initiatory name “noma de guerra”. It has the merit of having also introduced a system of graduations and throwing movements borrowed from Batuque wrestling of Bantu origin. The first Capoeira academy was opened in 1932 in the city of Salvador where the Masters, Bimba, Pastinha, Valdemar da Liberdade, Cobrinha Verde and many others regularly gave demonstrations and gave lessons. So over the years, Capoeira became a sports discipline for ambitious and middle-class youth and many schools were created throughout the territory. It was exported to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo then to other localities in the country and in the early 80s to the United States and Europe. Now globally recognized as a martial and living art, Capoeira testifies to Brazilian cultural traditions and especially to its African cultural heritage through the languages of song and body. But also seduced by its spectacular side, its musicality and its performances. Finally, Capoeira introduces practitioners to Brazilian culture and unites it with the Bantu cultural matrix. Now globally recognized as a martial and living art, Capoeira testifies to Brazilian cultural traditions and especially to its African cultural heritage through the languages of song and body. But also seduced by its spectacular side, its musicality and its performances. Finally, Capoeira introduces practitioners to Brazilian culture and unites it with the Bantu cultural matrix. Now globally recognized as a martial and living art, Capoeira testifies to Brazilian cultural traditions and especially to its African cultural heritage through the languages of song and body. But also seduced by its spectacular side, its musicality and its performances. Finally, Capoeira introduces practitioners to Brazilian culture and unites it with the Bantu cultural matrix.

As a reminder, Capoeira was both a fight and a ritual dance, it was born around Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia. It was transplanted to Brazil by slaves from Angola and would be the modern form of the *cufuinha* war dance described by the ethnographer Dias de Carvalho (Marin, 2009: 108). Another source affirms that the term Capoeira would come from the word N'golo, that is to say the dance of the zebra taught to young people during the rites of initiation among the peoples of ancient

Congo-Angola and in the island from Luanda. She was known as *bassula*. There is a form close to this art of combat, in Cameroon under the name of *mbaya* dance, in the North-West region. In Brazil, during slavery and after its abolition, the practice of *Capoeira* was prohibited. The masters saw in this activity a form of resistance and inter-ethnic communication that was dangerous for the slave society. After the abolition of slavery, anyone who practiced this art was arrested and subjected to forced labor. To maintain her practice in the cities, she mutated into an acrobatic ballet of antics.

In the same perspective, the *berimbau* musical instrument of African origin which is associated with the practice of *Capoeira* was introduced into the musical arsenal of the country. He also became a symbol of Brazilian music. And despite being the essential and official accompaniment instrument of *Capoeira*, its use has spread to other musical forms in Brazil and even in Latin America. About the contribution of African musical instruments in Brazilian classical music, *Abdias Do Nascimento* recognizes that: "The Africans also brought several musical instruments, some of which persisted and a rein use among us today [...] those instruments added to the dramatic dances and to the folk music, generated an excitement which seduced and fascinated the composers of classical music" (*Do Nascimento*, 1978: 409). In effect,

Regarding the contributions of African culinary traditions in Brazilian cuisine, nationally and regionally, the *feijoada* which yesterday was a dish of slaves was elevated to the dignity of "national dish" even if it is the culinary characteristic of Rio de Janeiro. Indeed, the Center and Southeast region of Brazil received throughout its history a large number of slaves from Africa coming mainly from Angola with culinary preparations similar to that of the Brazilian *feijoada*. In contrast the typical meal *moqueca* of the Brazilian cuisine and some food Angolan becomes one of the "flagship" dishes of the Bahian culinary system. While the *mocotó* meal made with beef legs cooked with condiments marks the culinary specialty of São Paulo.

As a mark of distinction, the *moqueca* allowed the region of Bahia to differentiate itself in the culinary arts from the rest of Brazil and became a referent of regional culinary identity. The taste, the ingredients as much as the African culinary know-how will also assert themselves through Bahian cuisine. The art of cooking fish and chicken in banana leaves, the use of okra, palm oil, peppers and plantains have become established and perpetuated in Brazilian cuisine.

Thanks to tourism, African culinary influences are popularized through the culinary press and through images. Indeed, to highlight and sell the "bianity" during popular festivals such as that of *Yemanjá* or even *Senhor de Bomfim*, the tourist discourse uses African culinary symbols to show the uniqueness, authenticity and exotic dimension of Bahia. It must be recognized that the introduction of African values into the tourism economy is the work of public authorities seeking to make the cultural capital profitable through tourist activity. But the selection of popular cultures remains arbitrary in that only those that are likely to have touristic and economic interest are retained.

The initiatives undertaken by the State and civil society for the rehabilitation of African cultures in Brazil have enabled notable advances. But the struggles of identity

---

<sup>7</sup>Brazilian goddess of the sea.

and racial claims that persist indicate that there is more to do for the affirmation of African identity in the public space in Brazil. It would be important to put in development policies, an emphasis on the enhancement of the African heritage to get it out of the folkloric and exotic framework where it is confined, but also, to respond favorably to the social demands of the Afro-Brazilian communities, since the assertion of African heritage is intertwined with identity issues.

On the other hand, when we observe today's world, culture asserts itself more and more as an element with multiple and civilizational stakes. Brazil, which has a rich multicultural heritage, could use it as a mine of opportunities and wealth. Because, everything suggests that the enhancement of the African cultural matrix can be a way out to ease tensions and alleviate racial discrimination and promote social cohesion.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can retain three main ideas: the first is that the question of the rehabilitation of African cultures in Brazil began in the first half of the 20th century and accelerated at the end of the same century in a context of democratization of country. Progress has been noted through the actions of the Federal State of Brazil and civil society in favor of the recognition of African heritage, such as: the legitimization of Afro-Brazilian religions, Capoeira, Samba, African culinary art and the teaching of history that incorporated the contributions of the African matrix in the formation of Brazilian society. It was at the beginning of the 21st century that fundamental reforms were noted with the coming to power of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The second key idea is that the recognition and effective affirmation of African heritage requires respect for differences, visibility and good representation of blacks and their culture in the Brazilian public space. And this is only possible if solutions are provided to improve the living conditions of Afro-descendant communities and their social demands. Because, everything indicates that the fact of being black considerably limits social mobility and integration into the wealthy classes, which has an impact on the social perception of the Afro-descendant and his culture. Finally, although Brazil, through its African heritage, has the assets likely to establish a dynamic of development allowing it to generate foreign exchange and impose itself on the continental and intercontinental market.

### **References**

1. Araujo Ana L. (2009) "Who is Afro-Brazilian? Ethnography of an identity debate within a virtual community" *Revue des sciences sociales*.
2. Assier A. (1867) *Contemporary Brazil. Races, customs, institutions, landscapes*, Paris, Durand and Lauriel.
3. Bastide R. (1967) *Black Americas*, Paris, Payot.
4. Bonvini E. (1996) "Afro-Brazilian dishes: cuisine of men food of the gods", *Journal des Africanistes*, t. 66, issue 1-2.
5. Capone S. (1999) *The quest for Africa in Candomblé: power and tradition in Brazil*, Paris, Karthala.
6. Castro de Araujo U. (2010), "The Atlantic connection", *The construction of black identities, between Africa and the Americas*, Paris, Karthala-Sephis.

7. Cleveland K. (2012), "Afro-Brazilian Art as a Prism: A Socio-Political History of Brazil's Artistic, Diplomatic and Economic Confluences in the Twentieth Century", Luso-Brazilian Review, University of Wisconsin Press.
8. Danion V. (2011) "The evolution of identity issues in the construction and recognition of culinary heritage State of Bahia (Brazil): 1926 to the present day" Master's thesis Foreign and regional languages and cultures of the Americas, University of Rennes 2.
9. Denis P., Brazil in the 20th Century, Paris, Armand Colin, 4th edition, 1911
10. Falgavrettes C., Leveau, Brazil, the African heritage, Paris, Dapper, 2005.
11. Florestan F., The Negro in Brazilian Society, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969
12. Freyre G., Masters and slaves, formation of Brazilian society, Paris, Gallimard, 1952.
13. Gueron R (2008). "Samba powers, samba cliches. Lines of flight and captures in Rio", Multitudes, no 33.
14. Guimarães A. (1992) "Classes and their colors in Bahia", Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, Paris, EHESS, vol. 32.
15. Lockhart Falomir N., M. Lamine Sarr (2015) "The place of cultural diplomacy in the African policy of Brazil and Venezuela", Cahiers des Amériques latines, 80, pp. 109-125.
16. Marin R. (2009) "Identity games and issues in contemporary Brazil", From one to multiple. Identity dynamics in Latin America, Presses Universitaires du Mirail.
17. Mauro, F. (1973) History of Brazil, Paris, Que-sais-je, PUF, 2nd edition, 1973.
18. Neith A. (2016), "The uses of African identities in contemporary Brazil. Manifestation of Afro-Brazilian culture in Rio de Janeiro and Curitiba through the trajectories of four young Brazilian artists", Memoir of the Institute of Political Studies of Toulouse.
19. Pereira A. (2008) Trajetória e perspectivas do movimento Negro brasileiro, Belo Horizonte: Nandyala, 2008.
20. Piault H. (1997), "Images of Africa, imaginary Africa or question of Brazilian identity?", Journal des africanistes, t.67 issue 1.
21. Ramos A. (1935) O folclore Negro do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Bibliotheca de Divulgação Científica.
22. (1946) As Culturas Negras, Rio Janeiro, Praça Anna Amelia.