

Afro-Peruvian History and Cultural Adaptation Analysis

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Introduction

Afro-Peruvians is a name given to the people of Peru who descended from African slaves. The slaves had been traded to the Western areas during the slavery trade end times with the conquistadors and the arrivals. Therefore, historically, it is emphasized that black Africans were now in a new world in the American continent earlier, even before the arrival of the Spanish Christopher Columbus. Peru's 2017 national census reported that 828,841 people aged 12 and over self-identified as Afro-Peruvian or Afro-descendant, representing 3.6% of that population; the claim of 10% or three million people is not supported by the census. Most of these issues were due to a lack of discerning or denial of equal access to good education, leading roles in the societies and well-paying job opportunities. However, the slaves were engaged in various activities, and thus, they ended up having Martin de Porres as the first black saint from the Catholic Church, who was by then an Afro-Peruvian wise man. This research paper is designed to discuss and evaluate the history of the Afro-Peruvian people, their cultures, and their adaptation to today's world.

Within the urban areas, Afro-Peruvians were used to work as cooks, maids, gardeners, laundresses, and handymen. However, in other instances, they worked within charitable institutions, churches, as well as hospitals. In 1587, about 377 workers of African descent began working within the Peru shipyards. This industry involved some black Africans being significantly involved in a number of activities such as kilns, some construction projects, and quarries. For instance, the work that the Spaniards were performing seemed inadequate to sustain the population's needs. Therefore, the blacks had to essentially keep the economy running by working hard (Soule, 2016).

Furthermore, the Afro-Peruvians concentrated on specializing in the fields which seemed to favor their training and extensive knowledge from skilled artisans who took high-ranked positions as they were best skilled. Most of them could work in silversmiths, swordsmiths, blacksmiths, tailoring, and carpentry. Due to their skill advantage, this group was able to enjoy and exert more freedom than those colleagues who were working on the large haciendas as well as those in households privately owned. However, the Spanish, who kept small businesses, were able to dispatch a whole team of artisan servants in order to do some jobs independently and then later return to their owners.

The African Peruvian slave who arrived first in Peru with the conquistadors was in 1521 but, however, had a permanent return in 1525. Between 1529 and 1537, the biggest African slave import took place as Francisco Pizarro was given permission to import 363 slaves to the colonials of Peru in order to be used in the construction of public road systems and bridges. However, they had to fight with the

conquistadors like armies and also work as the colony's bodyguards as well as personal servants. During 1533, "the Afro-Peruvian slaves in accompany of Spaniards moved to the conquest of Cuzco" (Hale, 2015). This meant that "there were two types of slaves who were coming to Peru; as it was a common term used in designating the blacks who were born within Africa as Gonzales, they included untrained or unskilled," while the type as those who were used to in derogatory senses. Both types of slaves were shipped directly from the southwest or West Africa, or at other times; they were transported from the Indies of Spanish or from any similar colonies in Spain. However, "the Afro-Peruvians acculturated into Spanish cultures and hence spoke Spanish thus were called Ladinos" (Silverman, 2015). Therefore, the Hispanic colonization was contributed by the people of color performing different activities, whether skilled or unskilled.

Moreover, as the prices kept rising, the black artisans induced even better treatment because sometimes they took roles in the low ranking of the employees. In other words, skilled artisans constituted some major avenues in the social progress of the colored individuals. Regarding the high skills and loyalty, the Afro-Peruvians attained prestige gain among the Spanish noblemen. This enabled them to occupy the relative social stratum which were low, however, this also had powers from the native thus they were able to get much favors in the positions which emerged for classes of mestizo. However, as the population of mestizo grew, the Afro-Peruvian's role was to act as intermediaries between the Spaniards and the Indigenous residents. During this duration, "the mestizo population increased via liaisons between the indigenous Peruvians and the Spanish" (Hale, 2015). Out of these realities, a pigmentocracy increasingly became a key importance in protecting the privileges of the Spanish overlords, as well as their mestizo youngsters. This meant that "within the system, the Africans together with the indigenous population at the bottom, the mestizos within the middle while the Spaniards were at the top of the hierarchy" (Amin, 2015). Thereafter, the Mestizos had a privilege which thereafter inherited in helping the Spanish administer the country.

Slavery Trade To Peru

Most of the slave owners from Peru had some preference for certain slaves from specific countries in Africa. Therefore, they could communicate with one another. Most of the preferences were slaves from the Senegal River and Guinea all throughout the Coast Slave. The main reason was the consideration from the Spanish as they were simple to manage. Again, they had a good market in the slavery trade. Most of them had skills in how horse backing, rare cattle, and horse training, as well as planting rice. The other preferred slaves were from Nigeria, up to eastern Ghana and finally those from Congo, Cambado, Mozambique, Mina, Angola, Madagascar, and Misanga. "At the start of the 17th century, a process of manumission began for the people of color. Possibilities of one buying their own freedom seemed to boost the emergences of free Afro-Peruvian social classes" (Díaz, 2016). But in such situations, the slaves were entailed to pay high amounts in order to purchase their freedoms. "Some classes of independent blacks were not, however, equal to the Spaniards while free people of color were able to enjoy equal privileges in certain aspects" (García, 2017).

Moreover, African people with large descent economic powers were thus owners of small private shops. This change of status impacted a challenging factor for the other Afro-Peruvians who were still in the lower class. Those Africans who had been freed and given freedom had to seek jobs as they were supposed to pay some taxes regularly. They were then requested to go and work as servicemen of the militia. By defending the state and its Holy Office, they were able to get crowned. This crowning enhanced it to raise its revenues to the black Africans who were freed. During this period, there was implementation of discrimination policies that hindered them from entering education institutions. This meant that all large schools and universities were conducted by the Catholic Church and therefore denied the non-white populations enrolling under some justifications that they were not qualified for education. However, the mulattoes enabled their way through politics, and they climbed the ladder and found themselves attaining minor official posts. Earlier on, the miners were only the Indigenous people and the Spanish, who had already begun suffering from the influence of the new disease and were unable to work in the mine shafts accordingly.

However, while more immigrants arrival increased from Spain as well as settled in Peru, the mestizos thus decided to become selfish and kept the lucrative job opportunities for themselves. This was during the early colonial periods when Afro-Peruvians, together with the Afro-Spaniards, concurrently started working with the “gold mines” because they were familiar with the techniques. This meant that gold mining, together with smithing, was all and common in the Western Africa parts since the 4th century. Nevertheless, “after the early colonial period, some of the Afro-Peruvians were able to become silversmiths or goldsmiths” (Díaz, 2016).

However, in the end, the Afro-Peruvians were, therefore, relegated to backbreaking jobs within the rice and sugarcane plantations on the northern coast and the fields of both kinds of cotton and vineyards on the southern side. Those within the rural areas were occupied in animal herding, cowboys, domestics, housekeeping, and wet-nursing, etc. Meanwhile, after the Indians became scarce in the labor force within the haciendas, “the people of color had gained some title of the anaconda a hitherto which was only assigned to the Indigenous servant status with full rights of owning a land piece as well as a day to work on it” (Fuente, 2018). In this case, the Afro-Peruvians often showed negative agency towards the slavery season, which was dominated by the Spanish through resignation to hide from the haciendas while changing the masters within their own initiative or even joining the Cimarron’s. This, therefore, “made the indigenous populations tend to work in the silver mines in which they had to have more expert knowledge and skills as compared to the West Africans or even the Spanish” (Fuente, 2018). Within the course of the slave trade, approximately over 95,000 slaves had been brought into Peru.

African Religion In Peru And Peruvian Religion (Catholic)

For several years, many scholars have believed that knowledge about the African religion present in

Peru was not enough until some scholars came up in the 1990s and introduced studies focused on the African lives and their religion in Peru. According to (Hale, 2015), Afro-Peruvians practiced their African culture through sales records, wills, dowry agreements, marriage documents, and contracts, although some activities were engaged in developing the economy of Peru throughout various areas of Peru in the 16th century as well as in the coastal highlands. In the 1980s, Africans in Peru were presented in a broader social context that noted them as a part of plebeians, which included both the free people from Africa and lower-status Spaniards and Indians together with mixed-racial ancestry. However, the African diaspora was largely influenced by the religious anthropological psychology of Peru through some internal and external economic forces that were going inland to a place called Mizque and Charcas. In the place, they had confrontations with the assaults from the indigenous Indians known as the Chiriguanos.

The Afro-Peruvian religion in Peru was brought up by Catholic priests in the early years of the 1560s who preached salvation to the Indians. Therefore, religion became another way of mental colonization and indoctrination of the local Indians. Every year, all the Afro-Peruvians practiced their Catholic religion by descending from the African slaves and going to Quebrada for the celebration of adoring the black saint. All the devotees joined in the processions for the purposes of Santa Efigenia, “in an enthusiastic manner they could sing the Afro-Peruvian songs which were interspersed with solemn of the Roman Catholic hymns as they walked through the dusty streets of the Pacific coastal town which is 138 kilometers from the South of Lima” (Silverman, 2015).

They performed this ritual in a way that a young boy stood next to the bier on a statue of Martin de Porres, who was the only venerated African saint, and while holding this, recited the verses about the slaves’ arrival in working with the religion’s sugar cane fields. “Girls dressed in bright traditional dresses from a group known as the La Carimba would perform a kind of brand burned with a hot iron within the skin of the slaves and then dance to beats which were produced by the jawbones of a donkey designed in a wooden box” (Soule, 2016). However, firework dances, cat races, as well, as nights of drinking and eating could be performed in order to commemorate and celebrate their saint. In order to enhance good Catholic religion, “a chapel was built at La Quebrada within the 18th century, and then it was dedicated to Santa Efigenia. This was because he was among the popular Spanish colonies of African slaves by then”. This Afro-Peruvian fervor for their Catholic saint ended in the years of 1994 when black activists put efforts into “honoring the Afro-Peruvian culture, which led to the festivals being held specifically for the Efigenia in La Quebrada” (Amin, 2015).

The Afro-Peruvians Anthropology Culture Of Music

Afro-Peruvian music was regarded as one of the most elusive genres around the world. In 1856, Ramon Castilla Marquezado, the president, declared the freedom of all Afro-Peruvian ethnic groups as well as abolishing slavery. He thus began a new historical stage. Therefore, the Afro-Peruvians “celebrated this landmark decision of Castilla with a popular refrain.” Their music is one of their anthropological form of culture, which they saw as one of the most elusive forms of genres in the

universe. “The music dance is practically unheard outside the Peru borders, and more so the people who were there were even unsure of the many aspects of its history,” according to (Novoa, 2015). Their music industry is dated to have started back in the year 1500s, however, after some time the Afro-Peruvian cultures together with their music faded over.

Furthermore, according to (García, 2017), “from the mid-1950s and all through the 1970s, the Peruvian labels including the El Verry, Odeon, and IEMPSA” supported the Afro-Peruvian in recording and release of the hundreds of albums. However, there is a strong influence of African culture within Peru music. This is because Chíncha in the southern parts of Peru is identified to be the center of Afro-Peruvian cultures. Their music was used as a form of passing message. This depicted their psychology and they had to be so keen in order not to fail the cultural aspects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Afro-Peruvian People can be referred to as a community that emerged from the black descendants who had been enslaved and taken to the Western Hemisphere, Peru. The Afro-Peruvian People’s unique cultural activities in dancing and singing, as well as their economic practice in private kiosks, contributed much to their search for freedom. Their actions drew many positive impacts the government thus making it possible for the government to burn slavery within the country, thus their population regained its stability although due to the color they are still criticized as racist. To date, their population counts 10% of the total population, and thus, they are privileged to enjoy some equal rights with the other citizens. Their challenges, as seen, are mostly accorded in the mean chances for them to secure job opportunities. However, this group of Peruvians faced a lot of ethnic politics, which hindered them from achieving the forces required for social movement in and outside Peru.

The Afro-Peruvian anthropological practice was recognized through their forms of music because their musicians behaved in a unique way, known as the punk rock musicians together with the artists in Lima. They wrote this song during the historical periods examined to have massive political violence among the two armed groups and the state during the 1980s and the early 1990s. This punk subculture had primarily been theorized as a symbolic form of expressing their rebellion through the first world. However, the urban youths, together with other groups, proved their music with susceptible masses of commercialization. Nevertheless, by relocating punk rock, some of the intensely unsecured contexts of Peru during the 1980s were thereby forced to contemplate the punk’s militant messages through music as something that goes beyond the subversive activities of merely symbolic forms. Therefore, Peruvian punks ultimately deliberated in both the confronted and possibilities of the inherent contradictions in which armed actions were used as a means of protesting social inequalities as well as pursuing social transformations. This was a result of the geopolitical and historical context through which the scenery of the perseverance in order to attain freedom as slaves was achieved.