In and Out of Africa:
Exploring Afro-Hispanic, Luso-Brazilian,
and Latin-American Connections

Edited by

Joanna Boampong
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Abstract: Musical instruments are an intrinsic and living aspect of the material culture that accompanies people in their historical development. African music has features that have survived slavery and have been transformed in the course of slavery. This music constitutes a link with living memory. In Bioko and Annobon, two traditions - one from the south of the US and Jamaica and the other from Cuba and Nigeria - have been brought together. The first element is a dance-instrument, (square drum), named kunkí by the Creoles and kunké by the Bubi in Bioko and cumbé by the Annobonese. It also named gumbé in Jamaica and Sierra Leone from where it spread to several countries in West Africa, including the island of Fernando Po (Bioko). The second element is the bonká ritual-dance, with a double African influence: coming directly from Nigeria through the Ekpé rites of the Efik and indirectly after being acculturated through the Abaká secret society in Cuba and brought to Fernando Po by deported náñigo Cubans.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to examine the trajectories of the musical culture that spread from different spaces of creolization that emerged from colonialism in Africa following the abolition of slavery. One such space is found in Freetown, from where the Krio language and culture extends throughout West Africa. Another space is generated in Equatorial Guinea where the core of the Fernandino Creoles spread out elements of their musical culture, which was adopted by other groups (Bubi, Annobonese, and Fang), and in other areas such as Ghana. This culture has been preserved, in order to balance European influence with African memory. The expansion of the Fernandino’s musical and ritual culture, results from its role as a group, wielding economic power on the island of Fernando Po, and with an important bearing on the nature of the Elizabethan town. 1

The role played in African history, not only by this group in Equatorial Guinea, but also by movements of African Americans and Africans in West and Central Africa, has not been adequately investigated due to an approach inherited from the Enlightenment with its unprogressive classification criteria, where groups considered “hybrid” have not constituted a subject of interest until recently.

In this study, we look at these societies in the manifestation of their dynamism. We try to understand the reconfiguration of the Atlantic’s culture that took place in a complex process of social relations between different peoples in the colonial context following the abolition of slavery. Taking as a point of departure the search for roots in the musical cultures of the Annoboneses and the Fernandino Creoles 2 in Equatorial Guinea, we attempt a historical reflection on the connections between different creole groupings, which occurred during the formation of such cultures. Musical instruments are an intrinsic and living part of the material culture that accompanies people in their lives and they constitute a key factor in fostering identity, which is preserved through memory. African music has features that have survived slavery and have been transformed during the process of slavery, thus constituting a link with living memory.

In Bioko and Annobon, we found two traditions with African and Afro-American influences. One originated in the south of the US and Jamaica. 3 The other is from Cuba and Calabar (Nigeria). 4 First, we

1 Santa Isabel.
2 Also called krio o crió.
3 When these influences came from the states of Virginia and Carolina in 1792, they were not yet part of the United States.
4 The peoples living in the Southeast of what is Nigeria today had had contact with Fernando Po (now Bioko), before becoming a colony and later an independent country (Efik, Ibo...). The town of Santa Isabel received Efik merchants who were Ekpé. Some members of Ekpé society visited the city: in 1828, Great Duke Ethralm, in 1861 King Eyo III and in 1874 the trader Efik Joseph Hensaw (Miller, 2009:127). Muñoz y Gaviria describes this visit (1950: 208-210). Many workers from Nigeria (mostly Calabar) arrived later along the first half of the twentieth century to the island to work on cocoa plantations.
come face-to-face with a dance-instrument (square drum), called *kunké* by the Creoles, now used by the Annobonese who call it *cumbé*. Second, we are introduced to the *bonkó* ritual-dance with a double African influence, directly from Calabar (Nigeria) through the *Ekpe* and Efik rites, and indirectly after being acculturated by the *Abakuá* secret society in Cuba, and sent to Fernando Po by deported *ñáñigo* Cubans.  

These multiple relationships in a transnational context are evident on the island of Bioko from an ethnomusicological analysis of certain elements (instruments, rituals, dances, the language of the songs, rhythms, etc.), which constitute part of the culture of the Fernandino Creoles. On the other hand, for various socio-historical reasons, some of these elements are exported from Fernando Po to Annobon, Ghana, and Rio Muni (now Continental Region).

**Connections with Sierra Leone and African-American Creole groupings in Freetown**

The City of Clarence (later Santa Isabel) and now Malabo) was founded in 1827 as the Headquarters of the Anti-Slavery Court with a small group of English and the Royal African Corps, in addition to 120 artisans from Sierra Leone. They formed the core of the city (Sundiata, 1972:59) and gave it the nascent Creole character, which was poised to develop (Lynn, 1984:258). These Sierra Leoneans constitute the core of the first Fernandino Creoles, who were joined by recaptured slaves of diverse African ethnic backgrounds. During the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, the Fernandinos constituted themselves into a group with a strong sense of identity and an important place in the social structure of the island of Fernando Po. According to Clarence-Smith, the causes of the fall of the Fernandinos are yet to be investigated even though

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5 The *ñáñigos* were members of the *Abakuá* secret religious society in Cuba and heirs to the Calabar *Ekpe* secret society. They preserved the rituals and dances brought by Carabali slaves in Cuba, thanks to the African *Cabildos de Nación* (African nations' groups). They later introduced their legacy in Fernando Po, where there are still many elements of rituals, costumes, masks, rhythms, etc., which are very similar (Aranzadi, 2009 and 2010). Currently, they are known as the *Abakuá* in Cuba. As the members of Abakú told me they reject this expression, as it is associated with an image of criminality given by Spaniards in the colony and subsequently spread through the academic medium.

6 My place of birth.

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The first fall started with Spanish immigration from the mid-1920s (1994:199). There are very few families left of this group in Malabo.

One of the connections from the beginning of the colonization of Fernando Po is the one established with Freetown and the Krio culture, which in turn arises from other African-American Creole varieties brought by slaves on their return. This connection provides an important influence, and could be considered as the core for others, which were to arrive on the island. The encounter of Creole cultures on Bioko is reflected in the music of the Fernandino Creoles and that of the Annobonese.

In researching the roots of the Annobonese *cumbé*, their dance and their square drum with legs, we discovered that the Fernandinos used a drum exactly akin to the one played by those who came from Sierra Leone, up to 1975. This leads us to Freetown, where we discover the currently used *goombay* or *gumbé*, a drum of the same shape, which came with the Jamaican Maroons in 1800 (Ricketts, 1831: 211).  

On the island of Jamaica, the Maroons (slaves who escaped to the mountains) used the *gumbé*, which is associated with the invoking of ancestors (Bilby, 2007: 15) and also to convey warning messages produced in a trance with its sound (Lewin, 2000:160). The first reference point is in the eighteenth century in Jamaica and it is mentioned again in Freetown, in early 1820 (Harrev, 2001:3). Hutchinson, consul of Fernando Po from 1855 to 1858, himself describes the *goombee* as one of the (immoral) dances of the inhabitants of Freetown (1861:112). The *gumbé* has influenced the styles of African popular music from Freetown across other African countries such as Cameroon and Ghana. Currently, it is

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7 Other reasons included the formation of corporations, and heightened social discrimination.

8 The first time that they left the island was in 1834 together with the English. Subsequently with the Baptists in 1858 (Granda, 1985) and finally from 1972 to 1976 under the government of Maías with the Nigerians being repatriated by the Nigerian government (Ndongo Bizpoy, 1977: 288). Few Fernandino families are left in Bioko, although there is a current increase in the Creole group.

9 Quoted by Flemming Harrev (2009).

10 Also in Bily (2008: 378 and 390).

11 Other terms by which this drum-dance is known in West Africa include *goombay*, *gome* (Ghana), *gube* (Mali), *kumbé* (Ivory Coast), *kumbé* (Nigeria), *maringa* or *malinga* (Congo) or terms used in Caribbean countries and southern United States, such as *gumbé*, *goombay*, *goomba*... (Bahamas, Trinidad, Jamaica...), and others such as *bench drum*, *gome*, *gombay*, *gumba*, *gumbé*, *goombay*, *goomba* (Aranzadi 2009:202).
still being used in both Jamaica and Sierra Leone, having become a dominant aspect of the Maroon culture (Bilby, 2008) and the Krio culture (Harrev, 1987:11) respectively.13

In Fernando Po, Fernandino Creoles used this square drum known as kunkí, which was carried and played by the Sierra Leoneans14 (Aranzadi, 2009:175). The Sierra Leonean origin of the Fernandino kunkí is found in the writings of a traveler in Freetown in 1830, who describes the koonking or koonken dance practiced by the settler group in Freetown (Rankin, 1836:268). According to Harrev (1987:3), there are no more references to this dance in Freetown. In Freetown, the koonking dance was female, as the kunkí in Malabo.15

The traditions of the three groups that formed the Freetown krio culture might have come to Fernando Po. The Maroons and settlers introduced the square drum to Bioko and later Annobon and the recaptured slaves brought certain ceremonies.16 This group also provided some ritual elements to the customs of the Creoles in Fernando Po (Bioko). We can find customs such as the Pulnado ceremony (Aranzadi, 2009:175). The kunkí of the Sierra Leoneans in Malabo was sung at major events such as weddings, baptisms and komodja (an old Yoruba term designating the traditional baptism or pulnado, which comes from the pidgin to pull out of the door; that is, taking - the newborn - outside the door, literally). The Pulnado continues to be the initiation ceremony for the social integration

12 The goombay or gumbé has provided an important basis for the emergence of several African styles of acculturated popular music, like the makossa from Cameroon and the Yoruba music jùjù (Collins, 2007:181).

13 They perform this dance using African attire, after the European-style celebration in the church or hall. Today it is used in Freetown to enter into a trance and predict future events such as baptisms and weddings, according to Seydu, Sierra Leonean musician and grandson of Ebenezer Calendar the Great who played the gumbé and the maringa (in personal communication 2010). Seydu listened to some recordings of the Annobon cumbé confirming that it resembles the Freetown's goombay "old style".

14 Descendants of the first Sierra Leoneans who founded the city and introduced it on the island.

15 Macías forbade the kunkí associations due to their Spanish names. The kunkí also ceased to be practiced due to the last big emigration of the Creoles in the year 1976 Diego Kínson (in personal communication 2009).

16 In Freetown, the 550 Jamaican Maroons that take the square drum joined the 1,192 settlers from Nova Scotia, who arrived in 1792 (Rankin 1836: Vol I, 108). These two groups were joined by that of the multiethnic African-origin recaptured slaves.

17 Trinidad Morgades (in personal communication 2007).

18 From the time of their arrival on the island up to 1893, the Fernandino maintained close and permanent contact with their relatives in Sierra Leone. That year passage of commercial vessels through Sierra Leone was restricted and travel decreased, although they had continued to send their children to schools during the XIX century. Today they still maintain little contact with Freetown. This year, 2012, a Fernandino Creole told me that he has used his savings for a trip to Kwama, a town near Freetown, in search of information about his ancestors. Unfortunately, because of the war, many documents have been destroyed.
The *cumbé* square drum technology and its relationship with the role played by the Creole peoples in the colonization of Africa

There is an aspect of the square drum that reflects the socio-historical circumstances in which the trajectory of this instrument can be traced. It is possible that its square shape originates from the sophisticated technology used in manufacturing the drum.  

Carpenters were needed in all the colonies to build cities and railway lines. In the Belgian Congo, 5,000 workers were hired to build the railway line connecting the sea to present day Kinshasa. In Fernando Po, among the Sierra Leoneans who accompanied Owen to found Clarence in 1827 (Malabo today), many were carpenters. The city was quickly built with wood brought from Freetown (Rios, 1844:61). In 1840 carpenters were the only craftsmen (Usera 1848:32). English carpenters, artisans from Sierra Leone and kraman labourers built the first wooden house in the city of Clarence (Martin del Molino, 1993:34). Two hundred kraman “sawyers” are said to have been found in the city of Clarence in 1846, as revealed by several documents on the time (Lynn 1984:261). The carpenters extended the use and the technique of this drum-dance throughout Africa (Collins 2007:2).

The *Bonkó* ritual-dance in Malabo. The Cuban legacy

Carpentry itself, as pointed out by Flemming Harrev (1993:6) and John Collins (2007:184), has influenced the musical style of the *gumbé*, using tools as instruments (saws, nails for striking, etc.) in several countries to which the use of the drum has been extended. In Equatorial Guinea, the saw has been used in the *kunké* of the Creoles while the Annobonese have used it to accompany songs, using a box, a *tambali* and a bottle. Even today it is played by Juan Murcia, President of the *cumbé* on the island of Annobon (Aranzadi, 2010:40).

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The *Bonkó* ritual-dance in Malabo. The Cuban legacy

The *bonkó* is performed in Malabo during the Christmas period. Preparations in the form of rehearsals start in November and the ritual-dance begins on December 24 and ends on January 7 (Aranzadi, 2009:167-174). Every day, *ñámkues*, i.e. masked people who dance in a
procession through the city accompanied by drums and a chorus of women, go onto the streets. The women sing songs in *pichi* (pidgin English derived from krio of Sierra Leone). The topics of the songs are satire, praise or lamentation, alluding to events during the year. According to oral tradition, the *bonkó* was influenced by the Cubans who were on the island.

The *bonkó* of the Fernandino Creoles was adopted through influences from Nigeria (the *Ekpe* secret society) and from Cuba (where *Ekpe* became *Abakúa*, conserving the chants, rites and instruments). The slaves *carabalies* (from Calabar in Nigeria), took a type of male solidarity characteristic of the Cross River region of south-eastern Nigeria and south-western Cameroon that reproduces itself in present day Cuba under the name of *Abakúa*.

Between 1862 and 1897, liberated Cubans were deported to Fernando Po. Esteban Montejo, a Cuban ex-slave, recalls how *ñáñigos* were sent to Fernando Po in the late nineteenth century (Barnet, 1966:90). In the Spanish press of the time, there was news of these *ñáñigos* being shipped in various vessels, as many as 180 *ñáñigos* (members of the *Abakúa* society) in one of the trips.24 The members of this society had played a rebellious role against the colony in Cuba; many of them were punished with deportation because of their resistance. Following a two-legged journey across the Atlantic they later introduced their legacy in Fernando Po. Esteban Montejo, a Cuban ex-slave, recalls how the *Abakúa* society, *ñáñigos* (members of the *Abakúa* secret society in Cuba), that carried their rite to Fernando Po. African religion with its burial ceremonies found refuge in the Cabildos (Ortiz, 1992:29) whose major feast was the Feast of Epiphany. “On the day of the Feast of Epiphany, the King's slaves, who were numerous across America, would claim from their master's representative their Christmas box and then the other cabildos would enter the yard.” (Bachiller y Morales, 1861:31).22

This custom of approaching the governor to demand bonuses during the Feast of Epiphany, a practice inherited from the tradition of troops in Cuba filing to demand such bonuses, also occurred in the early twentieth century in Fernando Po as recounted by the Fernandino Daniel Jones in his novel *Una lanza por el boabi* (1962: 247). In Luba (then San Carlos) in 1913, the *ñáñige*, after marching through the city, would visit the home of Maximilian Jones, the largest landowner on the island for whom Europeans worked, to wish him Merry Christmas. As seen in the novel *Boabi*, the most influential figure in the city, used to give them money after they had finishing singing. The Judge Moreno Moreno (1948: 84) also describes this custom in 1948 in Santa Isabel. It has continued until today in Bioko, in view of the fact that the *bonkó* procession passes through the Presidential Palace to congratulate President Obiang on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

There are accounts of six of these deportees sent to Fernando Poo. One can read about the Cuban presence in the city of Santa Isabel, and how the Cubans lived since 1862 in the neighborhood of the “Congos”. These stories also reveal the presence of *ñáñigos* on ships, describing the Sierra Leonian people and the Cuban deportees in the same “balele”; they talk about the Sundays that reminded them of the Epiphany in Havana, etc. In 1873, a document describes the Cubans as having already been assimilated to those who spoke “Ynglish” (Díaz Matarranz, 2005:118). In 1891, some Cubans were among the largest landowners on

It has been mentioned elsewhere26 that it probably was the Cuban *ñáñigos* (members of *Abakúa* secret society in Cuba), that carried their rite to Fernando Po. African religion with its burial ceremonies found refuge in the Cabildos (Ortiz, 1992:29) whose major feast was the Feast of Epiphany. “On the day of the Feast of Epiphany, the King's slaves, who were numerous across America, would claim from their master's representative their Christmas box and then the other cabildos would enter the yard.” (Bachiller y Morales, 1861:31).22

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23 Called *solem*.
24 *Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid, Noticias* (Cádiz 15), lunes 16 de noviembre de 1896.
25 As stated by John Barleycorn, Kolo Vivour, Diego Kinson and other Fernandinos. The period can be measured because, although influenced by the Cubans, the Efik of Calabar brought it and the link was through the marriage of a Kinson to an Efik dancer. It was *Elseleion* (a grade in the *Ekpe* society), a brother to the Efik women, who probably took it to Santa Isabel in the mid-nineteenth century. According to other sources, the son of the Fernandino called Daniel Nathaniel Kinson probably bought the rank *Ñáñige* in Calabar. He initiated and gave birth to the *ñáñige* society, *ñáñigo* was one of the highest ranks of the *Ekpe* leopard society in southern Calabar (Hutchinson 1858:141). Among the Efik, the great *Ekpe* (or *big Egbo*) was the *nyampke* mask, which had a hood at the back when dressed, a rank that could be purchased to obtain power (Sosa 1982:91-105).
26 *El día de Reyes los esclavos del Rey, que eran muchos en toda la América, iban a pedir a la representación de su amo el agullado y luego entraban en el patio los demás cabildos.” (Bachiller y Morales 1861:31).
27 Miranda (1903:12-16), Salvé (1930 [1892]: 144), Valdés (1898:67), LLópiz, Bravo Sentíes (1869:99,103) and Balmaseda (1869: 130 and 148).
28 The quotes are mine.
29 The quotes are mine.
the island (Sundiata, 1972:231). In Cuba, as I have noticed recently, having witnessed their dances and rituals, the memory of those who were deported to Fernando Po on account of their rebellion against the Spanish colony, is still alive among the Abakú.

Within the Fernandino Creoles group, characterized by a strong British influence, these musical forms and rituals contain an element of Africanity, which has remained after the return trip (the slaves went from Nigeria to Cuba and returned as Cuban deportees to Fernando Po). African dance and instruments have been an element of security in the wake of the uprooting of slavery in foreign lands and in the face of insecurity on being “returned” after the abolition of the slave trade.

We see the role played by music in various social encounters and other cultural expressions or rituals among the Fernandino Creoles as a group with a dual heritage (African and European). The Fernandinos’ club in Santa Isabel was a meeting place for the Fernandino Creoles and played the role of satisfying the need for social interaction and entertainment through the celebrations and festivities that took place there. It was a place for meetings, for decision-making, for demonstrating the status acquired through contact with British culture (clothing, housing, schools, travel to Sierra Leone and England, etc.). In one of Francisco Zamora’s poems entitled “Highlife”, he speaks of the Fernandino Club and “Highlife” itself, a style of urban African popular music; he refers to the habit of dancing “modern” African music in the first half of the twentieth century with an entertainment role:

“Highlife”
“[...] o simplemente rastreando
el perfumado polvo que depositaban en el aire
las saturadas alas de las mariposas
de Mamá Frida
las noches de highlife
en el Club Frida
[...]

“Highlife”
“[...] or simply tracing
the scented dust deposited in the air
by the saturated wings of the butterflies
of Mama Frida
the nights of highlife

The bonkó was also African music but played another role, a role that was ceremonial and ritual in character. It served as homage to ancestors and satisfied the need to conserve their africanity itself. The same situation pertained among the Krio in Freetown, who performed the gumbé in the African style after performing a wedding in the European style.

The sense of the sacred, the search for Africanity, the consideration and spiritual connection with the ancestors, is common to both sides of the Atlantic. A tribute is paid to the ancestors in the Sekomunin (the Abakú funeral ceremony in Cuba). The same tribute to ancestors is made, during the bonkó or sekomunin of Malabo. This homage takes place on three occasions over the Christmas period. December 24 at the cemetery, the morning of December 25 with the sekomunin called Sekomunin dressed in white and black apparel, visiting the homes of members of the society who have lost a family member during that year, and finally on December 31 when the Sekomunin goes to perform a mourning dance to the ancestors. On December 31 the sekomunin goes to cry for only fifteen minutes and he lies down at the old cemetery site, currently located under the asphalt on a street in Malabo (Aranzadi, 2010).

Expansion of the Creoles through musical culture

The position the Fernandino Creoles occupied on the Bioko Island as wielders of economic power positioned them as an influential group. This group wielded its influence among the Bubi close to the Creole zones, which was manifested in their language and part of their culture. According to Granda (1985:12), pidgin was adopted as first language by a growing contingent of “detribalized” Bubi. The influence is also evident in cultural practices including the use of kunké (a drum) and the bonkó dance during Christmas. There are several Bubi villages, in which the Bubi people perform the bonkó and use the kunké drum. These villages are near the two cities that are the main nucleus of the Creoles (Malabo and Luba). Two authors who mention a square are near the two cities that are the main nucleus of the Creoles (Malabo and Luba). Two authors who mention a square

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30 The sekomunin is performed in the north, near to Santa Isabel (now Malabo), in the following towns: Baney, Rebola and Basakato; in the southwest, close to the city of San Carlos (now Luba), in the following towns: Musola, Batete and Barrio Las Palmas. In all these towns, the bonkó is performed while the kunké drum has been used in some of them.
Fernandino Creoles also spread to the mainland, the territory in which the majority ethnic group is the Fang. In the 1920s thousands of workers left Rio Muni to work in Fernando Po (Sundia 1996:124). In some villages in the heart of the continent, people are seen today dancing the bonkó, which was brought there by the Fang when they returned from working on cocoa farms on the island. The Fang have adopted this ritual-dance and given it the name Abakuya (Aranzadi, 2010:34). On the island, they shared with those living there the Christmas display of the bonkó dance, which was performed before the colonial governor, with a representative of the city of Santa Isabel witnessing this symbol of the Creole identity. They would participate in this activity by learning the songs and the dance, and then incorporating these into their practices with adaptations in the rhythms and masks when they returned to the mainland.

In the early twentieth century the ritual-dance was also extended to the Annobon Island where it was given the name mamáhe (Aranzadi, 2009:139). The Annobon Island in the southern hemisphere, situated at 600 km to Bioko and 300 km to Gabon, has a population composed of slaves from Angola and São Tomé brought by the Portuguese to colonise it in the sixteenth century (Unzueta, 1945:210). The people are very proud of their freedom. They resisted attempts at domination by the Dutch (Caldeira, 2006), by the Portuguese (Das Neves, 1991:204,207) and by the Spaniards, with very few whites staying on the island for centuries. The Spanish presence was not effective until 1885 when a mission was established in Annobon, one hundred and eight years after the island was handed over to Spain (Unzueta, 1945:176) Contact with Fernando Po was scarce (in some periods there was only one boat a year), and irregular. Many Annobonese migrated to Santa Isabel (Malabo) in search of work, and succeeded in getting employment in the administrative and service industries, while others engaged in other activities and occupations, since the economy in Annobon was a survival economy. They preserved rituals, which they had adapted to suit the Annobonese tradition. On hearing the call of the Rolin drum, all members of the association (members of the bonkó Annobonese), must rush to the gates of the church after mass. In so doing, they are able to perform the Christian ritual brought to the Annobon Island by the Europeans and to perform rituals adopted from other creoles that have features that are more African. A punishment is meted out to whoever violates this rule. The tambalí, a small square tambourine similar to the cumbé and with the same type of construction, is the only instrument in the dadýj, an age group formed by men and women born in the same year. This group plays a major social role in weddings and deaths, where the dadýj dance is danced. It represents a further cultural element in the connection with Freetown.

The Creole influence is also seen in the introduction of the drum called gumbé in Ghana. From Freetown it got to Fernando Po and, according to research by the ethnomusicologist Hampton, was exported to Ghana from this island. In fact, according to Hampton (1979) the gome was taken to Ghana by Ga workers returning from Santa Isabel (Malabo) where they were working on cocoa farms or fishing. It was introduced via Fernando Po in the 1940s and 50s. The songs that accompanied the drum were in Pidgin English, sung by workers of multiethnic origin in Fernando Po, and were meant as entertainment on the day of rest, usually, Sunday (Hampton, 1979:5). The Ghanaian workers learned the use of the drum and the songs from the Sierra Leonean and other West African workers who were in the city of Santa Isabel. The cumbé drum from Annobón is the same as the gumbé or gome of Ghana and the gumbé of Freetown, where it still constitutes a sign of identity among the krio people.

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34 Note the striking similarity with the word Abakuya, a ndíkó secret society in Cuba.
36 The oral tradition of the Fernandinos has it that this drum was a contribution of the Cubans (Aranzadi 2009). The Efik of Nigeria provided three Fernandino drums of five drums they play now.

37 In Malabo, those who disobey the laws of the ndíkó association are punished on the bonkó sacred drums. In Annobón this punitive act is carried out after the procession through the city, by hitting violators in the soles of the feet with a swaying saw in the presence of all, in a ritual (in a festive and humorous manner), performed on the premises of the mamáhe association, a vegetable-woven hut. The drums continue to be called creole but they have also been given an Annobon name just like the ritual-dance and association itself which they call mamáhe (Aranzadi, 2009 and 2010).
38 A musician from Sierra Leone (grandson of the great musician Ebenezer Calender who played the gumbé), who listened to some recordings of the Annobon cumbé, confirmed that this resembles the "old style" of goombay music in Freetown (Aranzadi 2010:40). I was able to make comparisons between the transcriptions of the music of the Annobons (who continued to use this drum, which the native Fernandinos themselves stopped using in the 1970s) and the gome of Ghana, clearly noting the similarity between the African-American rhythmic key of both (Aranzadi 2009).
The Ekpe secret society of Calabar in Nigeria, performed in Santa Isabel (now Malabo) at the same time with the ñánkue or bonkó (which in turn is an evolution of the Ekpe rite itself, introduced in Fernando Po by Nigerians and Cuban ñáñígos going across the Atlantic and back). Those belonging to this Ekpe rite viewed the bonkó as a "folklorization" of their ritual. The perception that a borrowed rite has little value is also seen in the way the Fernandino considers the bonkó performed by the Bubi and by the Annobonese. The Creoles Fernandino or Krió (as today they are known), consider the bonkó among the Bubi as entertainment, without the ritual character that the Fernandino have preserved.

**Meanings of the musical elements in the various cultures with Creole influences**

In all the cases we are dealing with different perceptions of the bonkó by people in whose cultures it is practiced (Bubi, Fang, Annobonese). Nonetheless, a common feature is that the pidgin language, which came from Freetown, is used in every bonkó everywhere. A sociolinguistic analysis of the Fernandino Creole pidgin enables us to understand the process of expanding its musical culture on the island, at a certain period. The pidgin language (*pichingi* or *pichi* as it is called in Bioko) is a conservative and archaic variety, derived from the Sierra Leonean Krio (Granda, 1985:209). Pidgin was originally used as a Creole language for communication between groupings. Afterwards, this language was preserved and continued to be used on the island even after its colonization by the Spanish in 1858. It has served as lingua franca since the nineteenth century, as the language of the Fernandino minority and the language of a growing number of Bubi. This situation is not only due to the difficulties of comprehension among the Bubi dialects of the south and the north, but also to the dominant socioeconomic role assumed by the Fernandinos. Consequently, there are more speakers of pidgin in the Bubi villages near the two Creole towns of Malabo and Luba. In the twentieth century, the pidgin language remained an important vehicle of communication in Bioko: “only a few people spoke Spanish [in 1917]” (Bravo Carbonell, 1917:46). Later, over 120,000 workers [who used the pidgin as lingua franca], mostly Nigerian (Igbo, Ibibio and Efik) were imported from the 1940s to the mid-1960s (Sundiata 1996:181-182). As regards the Krio language, it is worth mentioning that Equatorial Guinea has its own distinctive Pidgin (Morgades, 2007:31). Currently, the role of pidgin language has changed from that of a language of communication between groupings to that of a neutral communication system. Today there are very few Fernandino families on the island. However, the linguistic and cultural legacy remains. The language survives and expands more and more in the cosmopolitan city of Malabo whose population is growing with the influx of multi-ethnic immigrants (Aixelá, 2010:6). The musical culture of the Creoles expanded for some time and still exists in other ethnic groups such as the Bubi, the Annobonese and the Fang. A part of this musical culture has been exported to countries like Ghana (where currently the Ga people...
play the square drum imported from Fernando Po by cocoa workers). The *kunkí* of the Creoles is no longer practiced, while the *bonkó* relies on the efforts of the association of the *bonkó* and its current president, Kole Vivour (descendant of William Vivour of Sierra Leone, the largest landowner on the island of Fernando Po in the 1880s).

The adoption of these elements (the square drum and the ritual-dance of the *bonkó*), together with the significance attributed to them, has been different because of the roles they play in each community. In the case of the Fernandino Creoles, musical practice and the use of objects as instruments is a reflection of a legacy or a reminder of their Sierra Leonean origins, considered as the "purest" stratum of creolity. This view stems from anthropological and socio-historical factors on account of the place that the Sierra Leoneans, as the origin and core of the Fernandino group, have occupied in their collective imagination in addition to having enjoyed a higher status in the past, exercising a respectable degree of authority, thanks to the economic power they wielded on the island. This has led to the granting of special ritual functions to them, spaces reserved for this higher "class" within the Creoles. The Sierra Leoneans (their descendants) have had access to aspects of Fernandino *bonkó* rituals, which are prohibited to those who were later incorporated into the Creole community. In performing the *bonkó*, the highly ranked native Creoles are mourned during the *crai egbo* ceremony, during which a friction drum is used (Aranzadi, 2009). Another special power is to be a *bonkó* dancer. In the words of a Fernandino descendant of the Sierra Leoneans: "Of the

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42 Creoles are currently considered as a community that is part of the other ethnic groups in Equatorial Guinea on the basis of the role they played in the country's history and the legacy that is maintained in Malabo up to the present day.

43 There have been two types of Sierra Leoneans on the island. The first group are the direct descendants of the founders of the city who came with British education and customs, including domestic services in 1827 (Sundiata 1972:49). They trained in certain jobs as subordinates to the English up to 1833, farmers, administrators and businessmen with Protestant missionaries up to 1858 and up to 1968, they constituted a major group with the Spanish in the development of the island economically, administratively and politically (Granda, 1985). The second are Sierra Leoneans who arrived later as *labores* to work on cocoa farms, and who probably do not belong to the krio group in Freetown but to other places in Sierra Leone.

44 This drum is only used in the said ceremony and at the cemetery on the night of 24th December. The friction drum, *ekwé*, is also used in Cuba (Ortiz, 1995 b), just in the same way as was done in the *Ekpe* secret society in Nigeria, from where it was taken away by Carabali slaves who formed the Abakúa secret society. The *ekwé* drum is the sacred instrument in which the voice of the divine spirit sounds.

45 These families are from the Sierra Leonean krio.

46 Teobaldo Kinson (in personal communication 2011).

47 The dictatorship of Macias Nguema from 1968 to 1979 entailed the exile or extermination of a third of the Guinean population, some 120,000 of the 350,000 inhabitants who were living in the country at that time (Donato Ndongo Bidyo, in personal communication, 2012).

48 It is also considered a symbol of the Fernandinos by the rest of the Equatorial Guineans.

49 Tourism is now almost nonexistent in the country but people coming from other countries in several continents to work in the oil plants practice it to some extent.
travel to Sierra Leone and England, etc.) was revealed. The bonkö accomplished yet another function: a ceremonial and ritualistic function, homage to the ancestors, thus fulfilling the need to discover Africanness itself. The same situation pertained among the Krio in Freetown during the XIX century.

In the case of the Annobonese, theirs is a culture that has been isolated for centuries with little contact with other people except with Fernando Po (now Bioko) and therefore with a greater degree of ethnicization (which is to say that the group has become an ethnic category). Among the manifestations of this culture, the adoption of "imported" musical instruments or practices has assumed a re-interpretative character, by adapting certain aspects such as the rhythm or the language of the songs to make them their own. The Annobonese peoples have a strong sense of identity. Regardless of where they live, their land is Annobon and their language, the fa d’ambo, is an irrefutable aspect of their culture and identity (Post, 1998:27). On the island of Annobon, contact with Fernando Po (Bioko) and the use of cultural elements imported from there, such as some pidgin terms, songs, rituals, and instruments, is nevertheless associated with a higher status. Once adopted, they form part of the Annobonese idiosyncrasy. The cumbé is known for the elegance displayed in dancing it and its cadenced and slow rhythm. In Annobon, we find the bonkö with an outfit similar to what was in Bioko decades ago, since this dance was brought there in the early twentieth century. Ton Bale, grandfather of Pepe Yao, a fifty-year-old Annobonese who is currently living in Malabo, introduced the bonkö to Annobon. The outfit is more similar to that of the näñigos in Cuba. We can see its evolution in the photographs that depict this ritual in Cuba, Nigeria, Malabo and Annobon.

50 Näñgue mask is the intermediary between the living and the ancestors, both forming part of the community (a general conception in other African cultures).
51 "...when the Krio community embraced the church and other institutions introduced by Europeans there was little room for their own culture and the gume [dance and drum] answered this need, becoming over the years the dominant musical style, serving to unite the different peoples from the Krio culture" (Harrev, 1987:9).
52 I use this term as it is defined by Jackeline Knorr (2010). The Annobonese have a clear conception of "homogeneous". In their self-representation, the elements that form part of their culture serve as an identity (such as the cumbé or the dadji) with their own unique characteristic features that distinguish them from other cultures, be they native or not. Other Guineans also hold this perception and include them among the main "ethnic" groups in the country.

Fig. 12-4 Processions

The trip to Fernando Po has traditionally been considered as a kind of "initiation" into adulthood, on account of the fact that it resolves the economic issue, resulting in social recognition and the perception of a higher status attributed to all new comers to the island. As an Annobonese, currently living in Malabo puts it:

"No Annobonese is educated unless he or she has gone to Fernando Po. [...] Since time immemorial and today as well it was a law. To get a wife (buy a bed and pay the dowry, [which is] a jug of wine, and prepare the house. [...] The only resource of Annobon was fishing. People always awaited the arrival of a ship from Fernando Po including now, although there are people who have set up their [little] business." 53

53 Desiderio Cervera Liso an Annobonese musician, told me in personal communication in 2011. Approximately 2,500 people are living in Annobon today (census dating back to colonial times indicates some 3,000 people, then living in the only town on the island, Palé, north of Annobon).
Among the Bubi, the perception of the *bonkó* as a historical legacy and a strong symbol of identity is more diluted or the *bonkó* is not considered present as such but rather as a modern and non-ancestral tradition. The *kunkí* is considered to be a musical tradition without ritual aspects (although the Bubi people have a rich culture in spiritual traditions and sound-producing objects often linked to rites). It is a tradition adopted with a festive tinge, with the ritual load of the *bonkó* higher in the Bubi villages where we still have Fernandino Creoles people referred to as "hundred percent", as is the case with the little village of Musola. As for the Fang, there is greater freedom with regard to the music and artistic expression of the masks. Fang rhythms have also been incorporated, although women groups sing the songs in pidgin. They have a hiding place for the masks from where they pop out to join the rest of the participants. The artisan Felipe Osú de Bitjábidjan, who lives near the Cameroon border, makes masks at the request of a group of the Fang *Abakuya*, and he produces them with a higher degree of creativity and freedom than is allowed among the Creoles, who are subjected to some manufacturing standards.  

**Conclusion**

Taking an analysis of aspects of ethnomusicology as point of departure, and moving on to the origins and history of elements of musical culture, we can establish multiple trajectories initiated by the migration of people on the African continent following the abolition of slavery and during the colonial era, which converge on the island of Bioko. All these influences move in different directions and in connection with the Fernandino Creoles in Fernando Po. There existed a central core of the Fernandino group whose origin was Freetown. This nucleus, on one hand, fulfilled the role of the melting pot of the Atlantic, receiving input from the Africans who "were returning" to their "homelands". On the other hand, it spread from the island of Bioko, taking shape in the city of Santa Isabel. Another example is found in the *kunkí* that was brought to Freetown by the Sierra Leoneans (where it was practiced by a group of 1,131 settlers from Virginia and Carolina), which had its own rhythm. There are still some women in Malabo who perform the *kunkí* dance and, according to Lidia Kinson who recollects these songs, the *kunkí* rhythm was introduced into the *bonkó*. Finally, the *kunkí* drum of Sierra Leone itself was also incorporated into the *maringa* of Caribbean origin, in Santa Isabel, as narrated by the Fernandinos. Through these examples, we can see the connection with the Upper Guinea Coast from a transnational perspective. People who lived in territories colonized by Portugal, Spain and England created and used cultural and musical elements that had returned through different routes (South of the United States or Jamaica to Sierra Leone and Nigeria through Cuba) and which have been brought together in cultural manifestations, representing a symbol in the new creoles that emerged in Bioko.

Through research into the nature and origin of the possible influences of musical culture on these manifestations we become living witnesses to the cultural wealth brought about by way of the inter-connection between different peoples who have come together to make this manifestation possible. Some of these influences can be attributed to the traditions of Sierra Leone, which in turn were brought there from Jamaica and Southern USA (square drum with legs, the *gumbe* and *kunkí* dance). Other traditions are European, such as Christmas, transformed in Cuba through the *cabildos* (institutions established in the colonies of Spain whose influence spreads from Cuba to Fernando Po and Annobon). Others, such as ancestral worship or certain musical elements (rhythm, the use of percussion instruments, responsorial songs, etc.) are particularly African. They probably came directly from the coasts of Africa or indirectly from the West Indies where they were preserved. However, it is not simply a

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54 Generally, they are made in the city where it is believed that the most famous Fernandino *bonkó* is found. The *ñánkue* manufactured in towns have not been favorably viewed on account of their commercial nature (they are made in exchange for money), which deprives them of their ritual value, a value they acquire when they are manufactured by the same person who will dance as member of the *ñánkue* Association.

55 The contacts I have established with the Fernandino Kinson family, since 2007, and the information provided by some of its members about their first ancestor, Daniel Nathaniel Kinson, who arrived on the island in the mid-nineteenth century from Sierra Leone, have thrown more light on the history of the Fernandino Creoles. Particularly these contacts have enriched other oral information I have collected among the Creoles about the confluence of the contributions that came to Bioko from diverse areas in the Atlantic and that have converged in their culture.
question of the mixture of two elements (the European and the African) and their possible dichotomy. There are other adjacent and border regions with common spaces, which form a complex cultural genealogy. The interconnection is complex in view of the diverse influences, with meanings attributed by those who have experienced this process in the space of creolization. It is a process that has taken place over the last two hundred years in the case of the Fernandino Creoles and since the early sixteenth century in the case of the Annobonese.

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