

Chapter 2

La Historia de Afrodescendientes:

A Look Into the Surviving and Thriving of Afro–Descent People From Latin America

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ABSTRACT

The current chapter will explore relevant history of Afrodescendientes, its impact on their psychological wellbeing, and the research and clinical implications. Lastly, this chapter will discuss Afrodescendientes' resistance and the importance of continued liberation. This chapter is an amalgamation of interdisciplinary research, including history, sociology, and psychology, and is intended for the individual who works with Afro-Descent people of Latin America. Specifically, it is for the individual who wants to grow in their understanding of the Afrodescendiente story.

AN INTRODUCTION TO AFRO-DESCENT PEOPLE FROM LATIN AMERICA

“Las caras lindas

De mi gente negra

Son un desfile

De melaza en flor

Que cuando pasan

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La Historia de Afrodescendientes

Frente a mi se alegra

De su negrura todo el corazón

Las caras lindas

De mi raza prieta

Tienen de llanto

De pena y dolor

Son las verdades

Que la vida reta

Pero que llevan

Dentro mucho amor”- Susana Baca, Caras Negras¹

The story of *Afrodescendientes*² is one that is rooted in a history of forced extraction, displacement, colonization, and capitalism (Morer, 1967; Jimenez Roman & Flores, 2010). History has informed and maintained current-day socio-cultural norms for these people, including invisibility and anti-Blackness within the Latinx community. The consequences of a history of oppression have led to unique psychological and health disparities for Afrodescendientes. However, amidst their tragic history, many Afrodescendientes held on to their African roots and engaged in resistance. The current chapter will explore the relevant history of Afrodescendientes, its impact on their psychological wellbeing, and the research and clinical implications. Lastly, this chapter will discuss Afrodescendientes’ resistance and the importance of continued liberation. This chapter is an amalgamation of interdisciplinary research including history, sociology, and psychology, and is intended for the individual who works with Afro-Descent people of Latin America and wants to grow in their understanding of their story.

The authors of this chapter are representative of the diversity of the African diaspora. Ammy Sena is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, raised in Providence, Rhode Island. She identifies as an aspiring psychologist, researcher, *hermana grande*³, and outdoors fanatic. She grew up vacillating between American, Dominican, and the greater Latinx spaces. She identifies as a Black Latina of light skin privilege. Given the complex history of race in Latin America, precisely that of the Dominican Republic which has maintain anti-Black sentiment (Mayes, 2014), Ammy has challenged herself to grow in her Black racial identity development. This awareness has galvanized her to pursue a career that centers on the wellness and cultural strengths of Afrodescendientes.

Amanda Shannon was raised throughout most of her childhood in Montana and North Dakota, spending her adolescent and young adult years in North Carolina. Since then, she has lived in the southern region of the United States. She has also spent a significant amount of time throughout her life in Illinois, where she has close family ties. Amanda identifies as a Black Multiracial woman of African American, Indigenous Native American, and French European ancestry. The 8th and youngest child in a nuclear

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