

THE DEPLOYMENT OF DIFFERENCE: THE SPACE OF  
POSSIBILITY AND GARIFUNA RESISTANCE TO  
DISPOSSESSION IN HONDURAS

KIMBERLY J. PALMER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
YORK UNIVERSITY  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

September 2019

© Kimberly Palmer, 2019

## Abstract

This dissertation focusses on Garifuna struggles against dispossession from their territories in Honduras. My work focusses on two organizations and their affiliates in the present and is based on an ethnographic analysis of their activities in two locations in Honduras. “The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras” (OFRANEH) supports a growing Garifuna land defense movement that engages tactics of land occupation or recuperation in the Bay of Trujillo. “The Ethnic Community Development Organization” (ODECO) focuses on Garifuna inclusion in the nation state in order to re-claim Garifuna place in the Honduran city of La Ceiba. I analyze these organizations and sites to argue that Garifuna attempts to make and defend place in Honduras are rooted in opposition to ideas and practices underpinning racial capitalism since Conquest. Garifuna claims to place in Honduras depend upon a (re)making of a discursive space between races, which I name the “space of possibility.” The Garifuna exist across numerous national borders and increasingly traverse multiple shifting discourses of racial formation. Garifuna organizations navigate these complex and overlapping social contexts in a multitude of ways, so as to advance their struggle for land and place in Honduras. In the case of OFRANEH, Garifuna migration to the United States (U.S.) and return to Honduras has allowed for a number of points of solidarity. This signals to the possibility of challenging the racialized dynamics of dispossession in Honduras, along the lines of Indigeneity. In the case of ODECO, Garifuna migration to urban centers in Honduras and the U.S. has fostered the organization’s links to regional activist networks centered on Afro-descent. This supports Garifuna claims to place in the Honduran city of La Ceiba. While these two organizations and their affiliates engage divergent routings of the space of possibility in their defenses of rural and urban Garifuna place,

I conclude this dissertation by arguing that this twin-pronged approach is essential to maintaining the discursive space between races that the Garinagu so skilfully occupy.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the late Dr. Earle Kirby and to the late Honduran Garifuna land defender “Raky.” I was lucky to be around Dr. Kirby as a child. He shared his passion for Vincentian and Garifuna history with me and influenced my life trajectory immensely. “Raky” was a friend from Honduras. I met him while conducting fieldwork in the Bay of Trujillo, and was very privileged to witness his dedication to the contemporary Garifuna land defense cause.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation really is the result of a sustained collective effort. I could not have researched and written it without the contributions of *a whole set ah people*. I would first like to acknowledge and thank the many wonderful persons I was so privileged to share time with on the north coast of Honduras. I was made me feel at home in La Ceiba and Trujillo over the span of several years there and I appreciate that more than mere words can express. *Seremein* and *gracias* to those who opened their homes and hearts to me – to Lisia Miranda Velasquez Alvarez and doña Berta Avila Romero and their families in particular. *Seremein* to the organizations OFRANEH and ODECO (“The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras” and “The Ethnic Community Development Organization”) and their *Junta Directivas*, members and affiliates for the welcome extended to me. *Seremein* to the *buyei* society *Hondarubuyeinu Luliligan Sugabiyu*, especially to their coordinator Edna Delicia Norales Chimilio and member Darla Miranda Sabio. Thank you to the Garifuna land defenders who *nunca se rinde. La lucha sigue!* To those who granted me interviews – as you are anonymous in the write up I will not name you individually. But you know who you are and I can’t tell you enough how much I appreciate all that you have shared with me. And, thank you to The Garifuna Heritage Foundation and Zoila Ellis Browne and David Williams in St. Vincent for setting me on the path to this work.

My deepest gratitude to my parents – Marnie and Jonathan Palmer – for their continued support over the course of this academic journey. My grandmother, Jeanne Palmer, has also been a constant source of inspiration. She has provided me with an example of graceful fortitude that has helped me to overcome the various obstacles faced in my lifetime and over the course of this

PhD in particular. Thank you to my sisters Kristina and Karen, who have celebrated and beared with me during the ups and downs of my graduate education.

Many thanks are owed to my dissertation committee, especially my supervisor Dr. Honor Ford-Smith. Dr. Ford-Smith has exerted tremendous influence on my development as an academic over the past decade. From her, I have learnt that we can imagine a different sort of world and work towards it. I also appreciate her patience with me because, as we might say in St. Vincent, *me nuh easy fi go wid*. My sincerest thanks also go to Dr. Kamala Kempadoo and Dr. Anna Zalik. Their insights and recommendations, and their careful attention to the later drafts of this dissertation, helped me to produce the final version you are reading today.

To my friends Amy, Caitlin, Nevin, Rebecca, Vimala and Zaheen. Your presence in my life made the long and lonely days spent writing in libraries and cafes around Toronto much easier. I could not have finished this dissertation without your constant support and encouragement – thank you! Many thanks are also owed to my friends more recently made in the context of a PhD reading group organized by Honor. Camille, Mila, Morgan, Rachel, Ronak and Sarah, when we first met as a group I feared that finishing my dissertation was an impossible task. You helped me be open to possibility in more ways than one. I appreciate you reading and commenting on various chapter drafts, and for the thoughtful ways in which you did so.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Garifuna resistance to dispossession.....	2
The Honduran Context: Colonialism, Imperialism and Racial Neoliberalism .....	6
U.S. and Canadian Imperialism and Honduras .....	8
Challenges of Methodology .....	12
Methods.....	18
Participant Observation.....	18
Interviews.....	19
Chapter Map.....	24
<b>CHAPTER 2: FORGING THE SPACE OF POSSIBILITY: THE EMERGENCE OF THE ETHNIC GARÍFUNA IN HONDURAS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
From “Black Caribs” to “Caribes”: Struggles for St. Vincent and the Exile to Honduras .....	28
From “Morenos” to “Negros”: Garinagu Struggles in 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Honduras .....	34
The Banana Enclave Economy and Mestizaje Nationalism .....	34
The Decline of the Banana Enclave and the Persistence of Blanquiamiento .....	41
Garifuna Migration and Global Blackness .....	42
Ethnic Garifunas on the Global Stage.....	45
Multicultural Reform in Latin America.....	45
Multicultural Honduras and the (De)territorialisation of the Garinagu .....	49
Conclusion .....	51
<b>CHAPTER 3: THEORIES OF RACE, SPACE AND PLACE</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Race, Space and Place.....	53
Geographies of Domination: White Supremacy and Racialized (Dis)placement.....	57
Spatial Imaginaries “Struck Through With Race” .....	61
Resistance as Place-Making in a Global Context .....	63
The Art of Resistance: Garifuna Struggles and Scott’s “Hidden Transcripts” .....	67
The Art of Resistance: The Space of Possibility as Critique of Mestizaje .....	69
Conclusion .....	72
<b>CHAPTER 4: UNMAPPING THE HONDURAN NORTH COAST: THE GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF GARIFUNA PLACE</b> .....	<b>77</b>
The Persisting Plantation: Garifuna Dispossession from Vallecito .....	78
From El Porvenir to the Aguán Valley .....	78
From the Aguán Valley to Limón and Vallecito .....	82

Garifuna Indigeneity and the Global Defense of Place: The Case of Vallecito .....	91
Banana Barons and the Banana Coast: Garifuna Dispossession from the Bay of Trujillo .....	93
La Ceiba: From Garifuna Community to Company Town and the Distraught “Girlfriend” of Honduras .....	105
Conclusion .....	112
<b>CHAPTER 5: TRAVERSING THE SPACE OF POSSIBILITY: OFRANEH, ODECO AND THE ETHNIC <i>GARÍFUNA</i>.....</b>	<b>114</b>
OFRANEH: “Black, Indigenous and Garifuna at the Same Time” .....	114
The Garifuna Land Defense Movement: Invasions and Recuperations .....	117
Conducting Land Recuperations in Neoliberal Honduras .....	119
ODECO: “Garifuna-Afrodescendientes” .....	122
ODECO and the Struggle for Garifuna Inclusion.....	123
Tensions in the Space of Possibility: Diverging Views on a Politics of Afro-descent.....	125
Conclusion .....	128
<b>CHAPTER 6: A GEOGRAPHY OF RESISTANCE AND RECUPERATION: A GLOBAL DEFENSE OF GARIFUNA PLACE .....</b>	<b>132</b>
Staying on the Land .....	134
Dispossession and the Returned – Returnee Garifuna Migrants and the Garifuna Land Struggle.....	137
“Retornados” and “Garifuna Futures:” Transnational Circuits of Meaning and Knowledge in Place.....	141
Narratives of Displacement, Pain and Entangled Roots/Routes: Retornados, Ladinos and the Space of Possibility .....	144
A Place of Possibility: Ladino (Dis)placement, the Rejection of Blanquiamiento and Cross-Cutting Alliances at Wani Leè .....	151
Conclusion .....	156
<b>CHAPTER 7: GEOGRAPHIES OF RESISTANCE AND PERFORMANCES OF PRESENCE: CITY STREETS AND A GLOBAL DEFENSE OF BLACK PLACE .....</b>	<b>159</b>
ODECO’s Albergue Walumugu: A Garifuna-Afrodescendiente Place.....	161
Taxi Travels in the Honduran City: Garifuna Routes/Roots and Re-imaginings .....	164
The 2018 ODECO Yurumein: Rememberings and Inscriptions of Garifuna and Black Geographies in La Ceiba.....	167
Challenging Racial and Spatial Hierarchies in Honduras by Way of Afrodescendencia: Tensions, Possibilities, Future Solidarities? .....	174
Conclusion .....	179
<b>CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>189</b>



## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1</i> Miriam Miranda speaking to Garifuna land defenders at Vallecito land recuperation.....	6
<i>Figure 2</i> Map of Honduras Showing Three Principal Research Sites .....	22
<i>Figure 3</i> “It’s Important To Be Good But It’s Much Better To Be Just”, Radio Waruguma.....	23
<i>Figure 4</i> Map of La Ceiba 1 .....	74
<i>Figure 5</i> Map of Bay of Trujillo 1 .....	75
<i>Figure 6</i> Map of Bay of Vallecito/Faya 1.....	76
<i>Figure 7</i> Standard Fruit’s Fenced Residential Compound Abuts Onto Recuperation Laru Beya in Barrio San Martín .....	103
<i>Figure 8</i> Banana Enclave Imagery At Banana Beach, As Seen From Wani Leè.....	104
<i>Figure 9</i> Standard Fruit’s Compound In Distrito Mazapán.....	110
<i>Figure 10</i> Remnants Of Railroad Tracks In Barrio Ingles On The North-Eastern edge Of Standard Fruit’s Compound.....	111
<i>Figure 11</i> Map of Bay of Vallecito/Faya 2.....	130
<i>Figure 12</i> Map of Bay of Trujillo 2 .....	131
<i>Figure 13</i> Vallecito/Faya: OFRANEH-Affiliated Land Defenders Continue To “Stay On The Land” And Resist Dispossession .....	133
<i>Figure 14</i> Garifuna Women Participate In Lenca Ceremony At The Berta Vive March In April 2016, Much As They Did During The December Event At Vallecito .....	139
<i>Figure 15</i> A House And Garifuna Crops And Medicines At The Wani Leè Land Recuperation .....	140
<i>Figure 16</i> Map of La Ceiba 2 .....	158
<i>Figure 17</i> The Albergue Walumugu.....	161
<i>Figure 18</i> The 2018 Yurumein In La Ceiba: Participants Enter The Cathedral San Isidro.....	171

## INTRODUCTION

*Honduran environmentalist and indigenous Lenca leader Berta Cáceres was assassinated in her home on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, and the story gained the world's attention. Cáceres and the group she had co-founded, The Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) had been leading a successful campaign against the construction of a hydroelectric project by Desarrollos Energéticos S.A.(DESA) on the Rio Guacarque in the heart of Lenca territory. I was in my apartment in Trujillo, Honduras when the news broke, and my Facebook newsfeed soon filled with posts and articles shared by people across the globe. I did have some idea that Cáceres was well known outside of Honduras, but I was still amazed at the sheer number and diversity of folks who picked up and circulated the story via social media. I paused for a moment and sent a quick message of sympathy to a friend, an affiliate of The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) who had worked closely with COPINH in the land defense struggle. It was this same friend who had invited me to the Vallecito land recuperation a few months earlier, where Cáceres and COPINH participated in ceremony with OFRANEH activists. There, they gave thanks to the Creator for the successful recuperation of Vallecito and renewed their commitment to working together to defend the land from future invasion. A few days after hearing about Cáceres' assassination, and being unable to attend in person, I again followed along on social media as a huge outpouring of activists filled the streets of Cáceres' hometown of La Esperanza in Western Honduras. One of the most impactful pieces of media that was shared was a video of an impromptu, impassioned speech by OFRANEH coordinator Miriam Miranda. In the video, Miranda addresses a mainly Garifuna crowd from a street corner. Although the clip is only several minutes long, her message is clear: maintain presence on the land – don't leave. She tells the crowd that she knows in Honduras, "todo mundo quiere*

*irse*” (“everybody wants to leave”), but “*no nos vamos a ir*” (“we are not going to go.”) “Don’t give the “*mafia*” the *gusto* (“pleasure”) of seeing you go,” she pleads. Stay on the land, we won’t give up ...” *la lucha sigue!*” (“the struggle continues;” a refrain commonly chanted at the events and marches that continue to demand justice for Cáceres).

### **Garifuna resistance to dispossession**

I wrote this vignette while studying resistance to dispossession from their land in Honduras. The impromptu, impassioned speech by Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda in La Esperanza sets the stage for my analysis of Garifuna struggles in post-coup neoliberal Honduras. The story of Indigenous activist Cáceres references the state-sanctioned violence inflicted on Indigenous, Black and *campesino* (“peasant”) land defenders there, and speaks to the importance of networks of solidarity between and across these groups – networks which are necessary if they are to hold onto their land. The *Garinagu*<sup>1</sup> are an essential part of this network. They comprise a transnational community residing in parts of Central and North America, as well as in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Accounts of their ethnogenesis are usually reliant on colonial accounts, which contend that the Garinagu emerged on St. Vincent was the result of contact between Africans and Indigenous Kalinago peoples in the late 17th century (Kirby and Martin, 1972; Pollard, 2014; Taylor, 2012). In 1797 they were exiled from St. Vincent by the British to Central America, where they established communities across the Caribbean coasts of Honduras,

---

<sup>1</sup>Garinagu is the plural form of the singular Garifuna, and the latter is also used as an adjective – as in the Garifuna culture. While I was in Honduras, however, it was fairly common to hear “Garifunas” being used in place of Garinagu, and this is reflected by my using both Garinagu and Garifunas. At times I use the italicized Spanish language form *Garifuna* to denote the Garinagu’s designation as an “official” ethnic group in multicultural Honduras.

Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua. There, they find commonality in the Garifuna language, a distinct set of cultural practices, and shared origins on St. Vincent island or *Yurumein* (Gonzalez, 1988: 8-9; Gullick, 1979; Taylor, 1951). Their group identity, says Garifuna anthropologist Joseph Palacio, pivots on their “collective memory of genocide, exile, and loss of their island homeland,” and their struggles to establish a land base since (Palacio, 2005, p.120).

This dissertation is an analysis of the cultural politics of race on the north coast of Honduras, and focuses on Garifuna resistance to dispossession from the lands they have occupied for 222 years. My study of a cultural politics of race focuses on the perpetuation and subversion of Garifuna dispossession Honduras, and relies upon a critical ethnographic analysis of two contemporary organizations and their activities in two locations. The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) supports a growing Garifuna land defense movement that engages tactics of land occupation or recuperation in the Bay of Trujillo. The Ethnic Community Development Organization (ODECO) fosters regional activist networks centered on Afro-descent so as to assert Garifuna claims to place in the Honduran city of La Ceiba. Ultimately, I am interested in how members and affiliates of two Honduran Garifuna organizations perceive, perform and challenge colonial racial meanings in particular moments and in particular places, in effort to create and navigate multi-scalar alliances that fortify Garifuna resistance to dispossession.

I take up the term dispossession as a complex and “ongoing process” of removal of populations from the lands they occupy, towards the concentration of the land and resources in the hands of the elite (Hart, 2006). Dispossession is a multilayered process occurring at the level of law *and* culture and involving physical and structural violence. It entails the compliant collusion and active and passive resistance of a variety of social actors. I do not specifically

attend to systems of land tenure or regimes of property and the law as related to both dispossession and resistance to dispossession in the Honduran Caribbean. I do pay attention to the ways in which neoliberal policies and legal shifts prove central to the process of Garifuna dispossession towards capitalist accumulation (Harvey, 2005). But, my research ultimately seeks to understand the racialized logics that underpin this process, and focusses on the strategies that are enlisted by stakeholders in their contests over place. My work thus offers critical insight into the ways in which racial meanings and materialities are struggled over and transformed vis-à-vis the forging of conditions of possibility.

The question of Garifuna dispossession in Honduras is best understood through a framework that accounts for the fact that their contemporary displacement is a continuation of the racial and spatial project of colonization. I argue that OFRANEH and ODECO's attempts to make and defend place in Honduras are rooted in opposition to discourses underpinning racial capitalism since Conquest. Since Conquest in 1492, those who are dispossessed in the Americas are usually racialized, with this dispossession being one of the formative processes of racialization - dispossession is justified by racialization and racialization is confirmed by dispossession. Historically, as colonial capitalism incorporated the Caribbean region, the racialized dispossession of the Garinagu from St. Vincent was justified by discourse centered on their inability to make the land productive by European standards. European ownership was justified by complementary discourse that espoused their propensity for market-oriented productivity. I argue that this same logic is apparent in Honduras today. Throughout this dissertation I discuss contemporary examples of dispossession in Honduras that also rely on racial projects, and which are couched in discourse around appropriate/inappropriate land use practices.

Racial and spatial hierarchies central to capitalism can only be unmade by struggles over race and space, it follows, and my dissertation charts contemporary organized Garifuna attempts at doing so. My central thesis is that centuries of Garifuna struggles over race and space – that is, historical Garifuna struggles over racial and spatial meanings that have lived and material consequences – have enabled the Garinagu to forge a “space of possibility” within, between and across colonial categories of race. The term the space of possibility is meant to convey the discursive space between race that the Garinagu actively and repeatedly create, which permits them some fluidity in relation to colonial racial schema. It is this discursive space that facilitates contemporary Garifuna land struggles in Honduras, by enabling the establishment of cross-cutting alliances by members and affiliates of Garifuna organizations involved in defending place. In later chapters of this dissertation, I consider *how* members and affiliates of OFRANEH and ODECO traverse the space within, between and across colonial categories of race towards multi-scalar coalition building. In focussing on these organizations and their work across rural and urban realms, I show how they challenge the dominant meanings of race, space and place on the Caribbean/north coast of Honduras. At specific moments at these particular sites, members and affiliates of these organizations challenge the racial and spatial hierarchies central to capital, and offer a glimpse into a hopeful collective future.



***Figure 1* Miriam Miranda Speaking to Garifuna Land Defenders at Vallecito Land Recuperation**

Photograph by Hector Zapata, 2017. Reprinted with Permission.

### **The Honduran Context: Colonialism, Imperialism and Racial Neoliberalism**

Landlessness, material poverty and migration increasingly define the experience of the Honduran Garinagu, in ways which are a continuation of the colonial project. At the same time, several decades of neoliberalization of the economy have exacerbated the legacies of colonization in particular ways. Before going further, it is important to sketch some of the specific terms of neoliberalism in Honduras as they affect dispossession in the present. A Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was imposed on Honduras by the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) in 1990 (Shipley, 2017). 1990's SAP formed part of a larger restructuring of the global economic order after the Cold War, the goal of which was to expedite the flow of capital beyond and between borders and reconstitute the power of the global elite (Harvey, 2005, p.66). In Honduras, neoliberal reform paved the way for the consolidation of a powerful class of "agro-oligarchs" in the 1990s and early 2000s (Kerssen, 2013), who seized control of the state during the 2009 coup d'état (Shipley, 2017). Today, the landed elite continues to dominate Honduras by way of the Hernandez dictatorship, ensuring that Honduras remains pried open to "ever-increasing degrees of foreign investment" that benefit the ruling class (Ibid).

Neoliberalism relies on racial hierarchy much as earlier stages of capitalist expansion did, but some scholars argue that it proves unique in its deployment of a rhetoric of individualism to mask the relevance of the raced subject (Giroux, 2008; Goldberg, 2009; Roberts and Mahtani, 2010, p.253). What differentiates neoliberalism from earlier forms of racialized global capital then, is the particular way that rhetoric centered on "the individual" serves to ideologically prime populations for the increasing freedom of capital and competition while distorting the primacy of the raced subject to the project (Goldberg, 2009, p.334). Writing from North America, Goldberg (2009) posits that this relegation of racism to the realm of the individual enables the manufacture of a veneer of "race neutrality" that legitimizes the state and its claim of being the defender of both freedom and equality (p.335).

Charles Hale's (2005, 2011) research on neoliberalism explores how the contemporary Latin American nation-state shrouds its reliance on racial hierarchy in a discourse of ethnicity. His work highlights how this delineation of "official" ethnic groups has been integral to the project of denying the primacy of racial hierarchy to the capitalist project. His work also calls our attention to how selective deployment of notions of the collective might further the



incorporation of the margins. In effect, he underscores and complicates Goldberg's (2009) assertion that neoliberalism depends upon a masking of the importance of racial exclusion to global capital, but argues that this might be achieved through granting collective rights to specific groups. This makes Latin America a fairly unique and interesting case, where notions of the collective (and not just the individual, as Goldberg surmises) provide the scaffolding for an incorporation of the margins by global capital. I look to *how* racial and spatial hierarchies are retooled in neoliberal multicultural Latin America. To do so I focus on the logics that underpin them and the emancipatory struggles that seek to disassemble them by referencing, reworking and transforming these same logics.

### **U.S. and Canadian Imperialism and Honduras**

*It was about 5:30 AM on October 14th, 2014 and I had just started my usual morning jog on the defunct Trujillo airstrip. While looking for more permanent accommodation in Trujillo I had rented a room in a popular hotel near Rio Negro, directly across the river from the newly-completed Banana Coast cruise ship terminal. The terminal was one of a number of tourism schemes in the Bay of Trujillo helmed by Canadians. It had displaced the vast majority of the area's Garifuna residents, and brought to shore potential "investors" intent on purchasing lots in a number of residential tourism enclaves springing up on stolen Garifuna land. On my brief walk over to the airstrip that morning, I had seen the lights of the inaugural cruise ship twinkling in the distance, and I could now see the hulking vessel anchoring offshore. Perhaps it was in the very same spot that Columbus had attempted to drop anchor centuries before, prompting the name Honduras ("the depths"). I imagined the various pirate ships that might have also occupied that exact same watery space after Columbus had set sail. I had recently spent a few*

*hours at the small museum in the Santa Barbara fortress in Trujillo, reading about the frequency of pirate raids. Trujillo was touted as the site of the “largest pirate gathering in history.”*

*As I completed my run and headed back to my room, the first of the tenders was making its way towards the terminal. The deep Bay of Trujillo is ringed by much shallower shores that extend outwards from the beach for hundreds of meters: in the days of the banana enclave economy, the Garinagu provided important labour as stevedores, ferrying bananas from the railroad terminus through the shallow waters and out to the awaiting ships. I later made my way walking to the center of town, where small stalls selling handicrafts and souvenirs were mostly helmed by middle-class ladinos from further inland. They attempted to sell their wares to the few cruise tourists who had forgone the Banana Coast Tours options and were walking around on their own. Down the hill in Cristales, the Garifuna Community was holding a festival called La “Conquista del Caribe” (The Conquest of the Caribbean). For a small fee, tourists - if they wandered down to that end of the beach - could enter the grounds and watch groups dance the “punta” and “wanaragua,” and purchase food items and crafts. I spent some time watching the dynamic of the festival unfold. After noting that there were only a couple of foreigners in attendance, I returned to the stalls of the central square. There, I sat for a while at one of the only stands manned by a Garifuna artisan, an OFRANEH affiliate who silk-screens t-shirts with “typical” village scenes and Garifuna phrases. This vendor was one of the few Garifunas who had managed to acquire a municipal license to sell his art – most of the Garifunas in downtown Trujillo were on the peripheries of the square, dancing punta in groups of three or four and stopping intermittently to put down a bucket in hopes of being given a “propina” (“tip”).*

Using the device of the “big ships” in the Bay of Trujillo, I use this vignette to draw attention to how the dispossession of the Garinagu from neoliberal Honduras entrenches patterns

of global domination emanating from Conquest and colonization (Escobar, 2003). In this section, I hone in on the ongoing history of U.S. imperialism in Central America, while beginning to make the case that a recognition of Canadian imperialism – and perhaps even Canadian colonialism - is analytically useful and contextually significant as well. Ultimately, I cannot discuss contemporary Garifuna dispossession from Honduras without considering how the racial and spatial hierarchies central to capitalism are re-constituted within Honduras, and mapping how they are related to earlier and ongoing projects of global conquest and control.

The restructuring of Honduras' economy that began with 1990s SAP has taken place in the context of the U.S.'s increasing domination of global affairs. The economic and political dominance of the U.S. in Latin America and elsewhere has largely depended upon an “aggressive, interventionist foreign policy” that protects U.S. business interests (Marable, 2008, p.5). What Said (1994) very compellingly draws our focus to in *Culture and Imperialism*, is the way in which culture – or certain ideological formations (p. 12) – props-up and normalizes the notions of domination and expansion that are fundamental to the imperial and colonial project. Said (1994) implores us to think through how “struggles over geography” (p. 7) depend upon both “images and imaginings” (Ibid) that render places empty and uninhabited. These images and imaginings reference and employ racial meanings and representations towards geographies of domination and oppression.

The shadow cast by U.S. imperialism in Honduras is certainly a long one (Acker 1988; Euraque 1996). U.S. imperialism has, for nearly two centuries, provided the conditions for U.S. business interests to thrive, from the days of the banana enclave economy to today's neoliberal policies and manufacturing *maquiladoras* (Shiple, 2017). As Alison Acker (1988) has noted, this project of domination-towards-accumulation has increasingly depended upon U.S. military

presence in Honduras. The military authority of the U.S. in Honduras has been steadily mounting in the post-Cold War period, particularly during and after the 2009 coup d'état (Shiple, 2017). Today, U.S. military occupation is under the auspices of the U.S. "war on drugs" or what Paley (2014) calls the "drug war." U.S. military presence, and interference in Honduras via institutions such as the World Bank, contextualizes the dramatic "reconfiguration of class power" in Honduras that has seen the global integration of local "agro-oligarchs" (Kerssen, 2013, p.40) and the fusing of their interests with those of American capitalists (p. 33). The reconcentration of Honduran land by local elites in the context of U.S. imperialism has seen the Honduran Garinagu increasingly dispossessed of their ancestral lands.

While U.S. imperialism in Central America has long been the subject of scholarly analysis, it is only recently that academics have begun to make more direct pronouncements of Canada's imperial role in Honduras (Shiple, 2017). In order to bolster his claims, Shiple (2017) uses the examples of Canada's support of the 2009 coup alongside the implementation of the Canada-Honduras Free Trade agreement, which have permitted for and protected vast Canadian investments in the areas of mining, manufacturing and tourism, including "residential tourism" on the Caribbean coast (Mollett, 2015, p.424; Shiple, 2017 p.116). Canada's proposed role in what are commonly known as "Charter Cities" (Kerssen, 2013, p.82) – which would be land grants to businesses that would possess "virtual city statehood" (Shiple, 2017, p.116), and be placed on so-called "unused land" (p. 117), with "the Canadian government potentially governing the enclave" (Kerssen, 2013, p.82) - are another major concern for those battling dispossession on the ground, particularly the Garinagu. The combination of Canadian residential tourism and ongoing-propositions of "Charter Cities" sees Garifuna land activists in Honduras

increasingly defining their struggle as one against *colonialismo Canadiense* or “Canadian colonialism” (Kerssen, 2013, p.82).

### **Challenges of Methodology**

This study of a cultural politics of race and Garifuna dispossession in Honduras emerged over the course of a decade spent between the Global North and South. In early 2006, having completed my MA Sociology Major Research Paper (MRP) on Garifuna resistance to dispossession in St. Vincent (where I am from), I travelled to the Caribbean coast of Honduras for a celebratory three-week holiday. My visit coincided with widespread protest against the appropriation of Garifuna lands in Tela Bay for the Los Micos hotel complex (Thorne, 2004). My trip had the effect of prompting me to think more deeply about my studies (and travels!), rather than taking my mind off them. I decided to return to university in Canada in 2008 to conduct scholarly research on the Garifuna experience in Central America. My decision was further cemented by my participation in a series of conferences, workshops and community events organized by The Garifuna Heritage Foundation in St. Vincent starting in 2009. Assisting with the organization of these events meant that I was working within the context of a Garifuna cultural revitalization movement in St. Vincent, and making contacts with Garinagu from Central America and the U.S. who were often in attendance. I began to forge relationships with visiting representatives of various Garifuna organizations, while gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Garifuna displacement on the Isthmus. Closely reading relevant literature helped to identify two glaring gaps that I wanted to address - namely, a limited interpretation of ODECO that did little to locate their activism beyond co-optation by, and complicity with, the neoliberal project; and a tendency to depict OFRANEH and ODECO’s differing approaches through a lens of conflict. Based on this growing familiarity with Garifuna social movements and literature

concerned with them, I devised my principle research question. It asks: *how do members and affiliates of the Honduran Garifuna organizations OFRANEH and ODECO struggle over the meanings of race and space in the context of Garifuna dispossession, and what possibilities does this engender?*

I have so far sketched some significant features of the overarching context of my research, and described my own journey towards delineating my central research question. I now turn to a discussion of why I approached a study of Garifuna dispossession in the way that I did. As I have earlier alluded to, this dissertation is ultimately concerned with meaning-making processes as related to racial formations and struggles over place. I chose critical ethnography as my methodology because it provides a suitable framework for deciphering meaning-making processes and the ways in which they are infused with power. Importantly, critical ethnography provides a lens for recognizing how research itself is replete with power dynamics. Many of the theorists I use to discuss my methodological choices draw upon the thought of Michel Foucault (2003). His work provides scholars with a set of intellectual tools that help us to understand how power shapes the production of knowledge, and how it is that knowledge about an object is produced as “truth.” Attention to the way power works means making more explicit the processes involved in my own production of knowledge and “truth” about the research – that is, to be aware of my own bias and the impact of that on the material realities of those in the field.

Critical ethnographers maintain that attention to *positionality* and *reflexivity* better allows us to attend to the political implications of research (Dutta, 2017, p.4; Hopkins, 2007, p.387; Sultana, 2007, p.375; Sultana, 2017, p.1). Reflecting on our social location or position ensures that we as researchers analyze how we are “situated within interrelated matrices of power relations” in the research setting (Mukharjee, 2017, p. 291-292). It also asks us to consider how

our own social locations impact the research (Mills and Birks, 2017, p.3). “*Where one speaks from*” not only affects the meaning and “truth” of what one says, but it can also make speaking for Others “discursively dangerous” (Alcoff, 1996, p.3). Without simultaneous attention to research dynamics between researcher and participants and the workings of power in the research setting, researchers run the risk of reinforcing social hierarchies. This is especially true if the researcher holds more social power than the participants (Sultana, 2017). This is a crucial consideration for researchers if we aim to contribute to social justice struggles in substantive ways. Research should not just aim to critique social hierarchies vis-à-vis attention to power – it should aim to disassemble them as well (Madison, 2005).

In later chapters, I expound upon the notion of the space of possibility as related to struggles over the meanings of race and space in Honduras. But, as an analytic device, the space of possibility can be extrapolated to other situations and settings: at its core, it is *a space forged between social categories by active social agents*. Enlisting the space of possibility to reflect upon my own positionality in the research setting makes entrenched power dynamics legible. Just as importantly, it makes apparent the everyday resistances of social actors (researchers included) as they move through situationally-shifting power matrices in the field. Going forward, I speak to how I myself tried to forge and maintain channels between and across social categories *as a research strategy*. This was primarily done in the realm of my nationality - I am a white-bodied Vincentian, born to a Vincentian father and Canadian mother, and holding dual citizenship. It is my hope that these ruminations might inform discussions of research, power, truth and knowledge, towards a disassembling of social hierarchies as opposed to their re-inscription.

While conducting research in Honduras, I represented myself as a Vincentian. This is certainly how I self-identify, but there were a number of complications given my white-bodiedness and my Canadian connections. As Beverly Mullings (1999) points out, there are “meanings attached to a researcher’s body, regardless of how he/she chooses to represent it” (p.347). These meanings are “read and interpreted by the research participants,” and impinge upon the researcher’s own attempts to represent themselves (Hopkins, 2007, p.387). Regardless of my own actions and desires, then, I existed in the power-infused web of matrices that Mukharjee (2017) describes. While there were dominant meanings attached to my body, there were also participants’ own processes of meaning-making to contend with. Their interpretations of the significance of my body sometimes differed from those dominant meanings, and sometimes reinforced them. These meaning-making processes also interacted with my own attempts to resist the latter. This meant that my own project of self-representation was often in vain, or was impinged upon by the interpretations of others. For example, there were numerous moments when I felt that participants’ interpretations of who I “was” pushed me towards one end of the spectrum or the other, and imposed a related set of restrictions. At other times I felt that participants’ interpretations of me were along the lines of my own, despite the dominant meanings that circulated in the research setting. Research participants and I exercised our own agency to some extent, in ways that colluded with or resisted the dominant meanings attached to my body.

Existing in my own sort of “in-between” – and purposefully attempting to navigate that space - influenced what I *could or could not know* in two major ways. In the first case, purposefully moving through the space of possibility was an attempt to bridge gaps between researcher and participants. This was in effort to create what Mullings (1999) calls a “positional



space.” This is a space “where the situated knowledges of both parties” produces a level of trust and cooperation conducive to research (p.340). This, in short, was in effort to build rapport and trust and, ultimately, to facilitate access and gather relevant data. But, my negotiation of my own space of possibility also allowed for a different sort of “knowing” (or not), as related to interpretation. Moving between my nationalities and lived experiences in St. Vincent and in Canada allowed me to bring different perspectives to different situations as they arose in the field. Sometimes I approached events from a more Global Northern perspective in order to gain understanding or insight, and at other times I read events through a distinctly Caribbean or Vincentian lens. Sometimes I was able to engage both perspectives at once when analysing social phenomenon.

Power thus shifts and moves according to situations that arise in the field. However, there are overarching and power-infused structures and systems that ensconce these interactions. So while I have acknowledged these “micro” and everyday demonstrations of agency in the paragraphs above, I do maintain that I am ultimately a powerful outsider in the context of Garifuna land struggles. As a critical ethnographer, this admission means I must think deeply about the potential impacts of my research in the lived domain. How do I attend to the fact that, in writing about Garifuna resistance to dispossession from my subject position, I might be re-making oppressive social hierarchies rather than dismantling them? Fully disengaging from exchange, or falsely assuming that one can only “speak for oneself” is not an option, as it only serves to strengthen hierarchies of difference and disparity (Alcoff, 1996). While Linda Alcoff (1996) stresses the importance of creating conditions for *dialogue* between researcher and participant – for “speaking with” participants (p.17) – I draw upon the work of Shawn Wilson (2008) for further instruction on how to do so. In his book *Research is ceremony*, Wilson states

that relationships are a key facet of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. It is by placing importance on relationships and accountability that I try to foster the sort of ongoing dialogue that Alcoff refers to.

Although I maintained contact with a number of research participants after I initially exited the field in 2016, I felt it necessary to return to Honduras in 2018 and present preliminary research findings in person. I was able to meet with the majority of my research participants and describe how the data would be used in the dissertation, get feedback and input, and answer questions. My return to Wani Leè led to an impromptu community meeting. Recuperation members who lived full-time on site were joined by Santa Feños who supported the recuperation in numerous ways but lived in the residential area of the village. Their attendance meant I had a chance explain my research to the wider Santa Fé land defense community, as well as become attuned to their thoughts and concerns. Community radio is an important element of *campesino* and Garifuna land struggles in Honduras, and I was invited by Garifuna land defenders to summarize my research findings during on a lunch-time news segment on OFRANEH's *Radio Waruguma* in Cristales and Rio Negro on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2018. I have continued continue to follow up with participants remotely and plan on returning to Honduras to present the final version of the dissertation.

How does cultivating and maintaining these relationships, and being committed to ongoing dialogue with participants, resonate with the central tenets of critical ethnography? Does my work empower the communities and organizations embroiled in the land struggle and the struggle for inclusion in Honduras? I believe that my research will prove useful the organizations and struggles that it focusses on, by way of ongoing conversations with OFRANEH and ODECO affiliates and members. Returning to St. Vincent to strengthen my relationship with The Garifuna

Heritage Foundation might be one way that my work can contribute to Garifuna land struggles more broadly. There is increasing mobilization in St. Vincent and the Grenadines around the pending sale of the island of Balliceaux, a former concentration camp where over 4000 Garifunas were detained after the Second Carib War in 1795 until their exile in 1797. Over half of those imprisoned died (Gonzalez, 1969; Middleton, 2014). The island remains a sacred site for the descendants of those who survived the exile to Central America, as well as for the St. Vincent Garifuna community. Wilson (2008) asserts that existing relationships become the platform upon which new relationships are formed, and that we must maintain accountability within a growing web of interconnection (p.86). Could my research support the efforts of the Garinagu to resist and respond to dispossession across time and space, and provide some sense of what accountability within a complex web of interconnection might look like?

## **Methods**

My critical ethnography of a cultural politics of race as related to Garifuna resistance to dispossession relied upon the following methods:

### **Participant Observation**

When I established contact with OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders in the Bay of Trujillo, I attended a number of events related to land defense across Honduras. The first was an OFRANEH-organized gathering of Garifuna land defenders at the Vallecito land recuperation in December 2015. Several months later, I accompanied OFRANEH affiliates to two marches on the capital. The marches were to demand justice for Berta Cáceres in the wake of her assassination. They were organized and attended by a number of Black, Indigenous and popular organizations from Honduras and beyond. Attending these events was pivotal in my becoming

familiar with the reality that land defenders face in post-coup Honduras. It also allowed me to witness OFRANEH's solidarity with a broad spectrum of activist organizations - including Cáceres' Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). In addition to these events, I conducted participant observation at several OFRANEH-affiliated land recuperations in the Bay of Trujillo: Wani Leè in Santa Fé, and Julio Lino and Laru Beya in Cristales and Rio Negro.

Living in La Ceiba for six months fostered a deeper understanding of the racial and spatial dynamics of that city. It also meant I could observe the way that ODECO's headquarters - the *Albergue Walumugu* - transformed these dynamics. Participant observation at ODECO events entailed attending art and photography exhibits, social gatherings and celebrations at the organization's headquarters. This fostered a deeper understanding of the services that ODECO provided to the Garifuna community in La Ceiba. It also meant that I was able familiarize myself with the way that the organization locates the Garinagu within an emerging discourse of Afro-descent. Additionally, I participated in ODECO-led events related to Honduras' *Mes de la Herencia Afrodescendiente* ("African Heritage Month"), including Garifuna Settlement Day (*Yurumein*) celebrations. I also participated in a three-day conference and workshop series in celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Cumbre Mundial de los y las Afrodescendientes* ("World Summit of Afro-descendants") at ODECO, which served as the inauguration of the United Nation's *International Decade for People of African Descent* in 2016.

## **Interviews**

I conducted semi-structured interviews to supplement my participant observation. I initially defined my population for the interviews as *all affiliates and members of ODECO and*

*OFRANEH*. I employed snowball sampling methods across both organizations in order to garner informants. I had little interest in exploring the perspectives of the Canadians illegally acquiring Garifuna land, or in formally surveying the opinions of *ladinos*. My interviews were designed to tease out how members and affiliates of ODECO and OFRANEH *interpreted* their organization's representations of the Garinagu in relation to colonial categories of race, in the context of contemporary land conflicts. Snowball sampling methods are a particularly good fit for at-risk participants, as well as those difficult to access for any other reason (Dutta, 2017, p.10). However, it bears noting that at Wani Leè land recuperation, there were ladino recuperation members, two of whom I conducted interviews with.

Altogether, I conducted nineteen semi-structured interviews with thirteen respondents, eight men and five women. Seven respondents were affiliated with OFRANEH, and five with ODECO. I also interviewed the President of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro. The first round of interviewing took place between 2015-2016, with a total of nine interviews conducted across eight organizational affiliates and the President of Cristales and Rio Negro. I returned to the field in 2018 to conduct follow-up interviews with five of the original respondents – two from ODECO and three from OFRANEH. During that trip, I also conducted additional interviews with a member of ODECO's Directive; three land defenders associated with OFRANEH; and one member of their *Junta Directiva*.

I conducted nearly all of these interviews in Spanish – only two were in my native language of English. While conducting research on the north coast, I also attended a number of Garifuna language classes at ODECO headquarters in La Ceiba. As a result, I am able to have a very basic conversation in Garifuna, but have certainly not achieved the fluency necessary to conduct interviews. I view this as a significant shortcoming of the research. There are

worldviews and concepts in the Garifuna language which do not translate into European languages. A firm grasp of Garifuna would have undoubtedly afforded deeper insight into the Garinagu's relationships with both land and sea, and the social movements centered on these relationships.

# Honduras, Research Sites



**Figure 2** Map of Honduras Showing Three Principal Research Sites

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.



**Figure 3** “It’s Important To Be Good But It’s Much Better To Be Just”, Radio Waruguma

Photograph by Author, 2018.



## Chapter Map

In order to explore organized Garifuna resistance to racialized dispossession via the space of possibility and with reference to a series of particular moments in particular place-making projects, I structure my dissertation over eight chapters. I begin the next chapter by further explaining and exploring the notion of the space of possibility that I here began to broach. I then review a body of academic work that focusses on the Garinagu, teasing out discussions that focus on dominant designations of the Garinagu over two centuries and two distinct nationalist projects in Honduras. I use this historiography to argue that shifting descriptors of the Garinagu have much to tell us about the struggles over the meaning of race and space between dominant powers and the Garinagu. I maintain that each descriptor represents a key moment in the formation of an allegorical archive of racial meanings that is simultaneously referenced, routed and maintained in the present.

In Chapter 3 I attend to relevant theoretical matters and debates. I take up theories of race, space and place and discuss the notion of resistance that I employ throughout this thesis. After describing the dialectics of race and space, I make clear the connections between global capital, white supremacy and racialized dispossession and erasure in Honduras. I then suggest that resistance to dominant racial and spatial meanings and hierarchies in Honduras entails a multi-scalar struggle over these meanings, which allow for a taking, making or defending of places (Brondo 2013; Escobar, 2003; Lipsitz, 2007). I relay this to my ruminations on the space of possibility, creating a solid foundation for a critical analysis of my research findings.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the two organizations that my research focuses on - OFRANEH and ODECO. I first detail their formation and their politics of representation. I then discuss how

these two organizations' differently route the space of possibility to represent the Garinagu as either Black Indigenous peoples or Garifuna-Afrodescendants. Importantly, this chapter outlines how these organizations' navigation of different global discourses of race has produced tensions that demand further investigation.

In Chapter 5, I chart the Honduran north coast and my research sites. I read the landscape through the lens of a geography of power and domination – what Razack (2002) had described as an “unmapping.” I follow this with a geography of resistance and recuperation in Chapters 6 and 7, focussing on the activism of OFRANEH and ODECO members and affiliates in the vicinity of Limón and the Bay of Trujillo, and the city of La Ceiba. Through a detailed analysis of my research findings, I show how the space of possibility is routed by members and affiliates of both organizations, in effort to form strategic coalitions and strengthen claims to place. The final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 8, further theorizes the space of possibility by way of Sarah Nuttal's (2009) work on “entanglement.”

I conclude the dissertation by suggesting that what are often represented as tensions between OFRANEH and ODECO might be instead be approached as generative; as an act of *maintaining* the space of possibility. It is by adopting this approach that the two major gaps in the literature that I identified earlier are addressed. My major contributions to this body of literature emerge from my nuanced reading of both organizations together. This reading signals towards the importance of researching and understanding the interwoven effects of dispossession and migration from Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the dynamics that emerge because of increasing return, especially *forced return*. As well, understanding how the space of possibility works to resist white supremacy and notions of mixture informed by it provides a

space for a recognition and discussion of how we might work across difference and radically transform our world.

## CHAPTER 2: FORGING THE SPACE OF POSSIBILITY: THE EMERGENCE OF THE ETHNIC GARÍFUNA IN HONDURAS

I use this chapter to chronicle the formation of the space of possibility, a discursive space that the Garinagu have forged between and across colonial categories of race. I do this by tracking the shifting descriptors of the Honduran Garinagu – as the newly-arrived *Caribes*; as the *Morenos* in the first century of the Republic of Honduras' existence; as *Negros* in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century; and as the *Garífuna* in multicultural Honduras. I read these designations as indicators and sites of struggle over racial and spatial meanings in the context of Garifuna resistance to their dispossession, erasure and exclusion by global capital.

Named the Black Caribs and largely expelled from their homeland of St. Vincent by the British in 1797, the Garinagu were represented by dominant powers as an “exceptional” Black population in effort to exploit their labour upon arrival to the Central American Isthmus (Anderson, 1997). The Honduran Garinagu negotiated this “difference” towards acquiring a land base, but have faced a long and steady incursion by capital, having been dispossessed of most of their ancestral lands over the past century and a half. Edward Said (1979, 1994) writes that projects of representation are key tools in struggles over geography, and struggles over racial meanings have indeed been crucial to the Garinagu’s claims to land. And while racial meanings change over time and are largely context dependent (Neely and Samura, 2011), I am more concerned with how racial meanings in a given milieu might persist through time; how they might incorporate racial meanings from other social realms and spatial scales; and how there might be divergent ways in which groups take up meaning across contexts. The space of possibility becomes an important conceptual tool that furthers my understanding of how

Garifuna organizations reference, re-invoke and remodel racial meanings from their various historical and social contexts in the current moment, in different ways, and towards strategic defenses of particular places.

### **From “Black Caribs” to “Caribes”: Struggles for St. Vincent and the Exile to Honduras**

I suggest that the Garinagu’s early resistance to dispossession from St. Vincent marked the commencement of the space of possibility. While much of the relevant scholarship contends that the British racialized the Garinagu as Black in effort to justify their dispossession, there exist accounts that posit the group advanced this name themselves (Johnson, 2007). For my purposes of this dissertation, I take up the colonial moniker *Black Carib* as signalling to both Blackness and Indigeneity, and as having emerged from the struggles over racial meaning that characterized the centuries-long contest over St. Vincent between the Garinagu and colonial powers. In this way, I set the stage for an understanding of the Garinagu as active agents in the process of carving-out some “wiggle-room” between colonial categories of race in order to resist dispossession. As I show, this has proven to be essential strategy in Garifuna struggles ever since.

The Garinagu emerged as a distinct culture with African and Kalinago<sup>2</sup> roots on the island of Yurumein or St. Vincent in the West Indies (Gonzalez 1969, 1988). Garifuna oral transcripts sometimes tracing their African ancestry to pre-Columbian African presence in the Americas (Berger and Leland, 1998). But most scholarly work describes the Garinagu’s African ancestors as survivors of two slave ships shipwrecked off the coast of St. Vincent in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century

---

<sup>2</sup> In colonial accounts, the Kalinago were described as the Caribs, Island Caribs or Red/Yellow Caribs.

(Fraser, 2002; Hulme, 1992, 2000; Kirby and Martin, 1972). This free African population was later augmented by Africans escaping slavery on nearby islands, some of whom were brought to St. Vincent by the Kalinago as captives from raids on plantations on nearby islands (Fraser, 2002, 2014; Kirby and Martin, 1972). While early anthropological texts reference colonial accounts and surmise that the Afro-indigenous “Black” Caribs eventually dominated and marginalized the original “Red/Yellow” Carib inhabitants (see Foster, 1987; Gullick, 1995; Gonzalez, 1969), there is evidence to suggest that the residents of the island did not differentiate amongst themselves on the basis of phenotype (Anderson, 1997), and instead forged a group identity rooted in resistance to slavery (Johnson, 2007, p.66).

Claimed by both Britain and France but not controlled by either, St. Vincent was eventually and formally ceded to the British by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The Garinagu faced increasing military assaults by the British, and were eventually forced onto a 4 000-acre reserve in the northern half of the island (Matthei and Smith, 2008, p.223). For a few decades, employment and trade relationships developed between the British and the Garinagu, with Garifuna men ferrying goods to British ships through the treacherous waves of the Windward coast (Ibid), and Garifuna women selling excess produce at market (Jenkins, 1998). The British, however, were not content with sharing St. Vincent, and tried to gain control of Garifuna lands by way of encroachment and settlement coupled with heightened military presence and attack.

To repudiate these attempts at incorporating St. Vincent into the plantocracy, the Garinagu united under Paramount Chief Joseph Chatoyer. Highlighting their Indigeneity to refute British claims that they were Black invaders, they waged a victorious battle in defense of land and liberty known as the First Carib War (1769-1773) (Kirby and Martin, 1972). But two decades afterwards, as the 18<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, the British again attempted to dominate St.

Vincent. Garifuna oral tradition highlights the role of Chatoyer's wife Barauda, who is said to have been an immense inspiration and impetus for a reinvigorated stand against the British (Cayetano in Greene, 2006). After being challenged by his wife to defend Yurumein (Ibid), Chatoyer organized Garinagu troops and formed strategic coalitions with French republican forces – free Black, mulatto and white soldiers known as “Brigands” (Gonzalez, 1990, p.33; Sweeney, 2007, p.26) – in order to strengthen their defense of Yurumein. This was known as the Second Carib War or the “Brigand War.” Soon after the war began in 1795, however, Chatoyer was ambushed and murdered by British troops near Kingstown.

The Garinagu continued to struggle against the British after Chatoyer's death, but eventually surrendered in 1796 (Gonzalez, 1988). After surrender, some Garinagu were able to escape British persecution and hide in the mountainous interior and northern section of the island (Taylor, 2012). These survivors founded the Garifuna communities that exist in St. Vincent presently; communities which are actively reclaiming, reinvigorating and celebrating Garifuna heritage and identity and establishing links with Garifuna organizations in Central America and the U.S. But, around 4000 Garinagu – the “Black Caribs” - were captured by the British and transported to what amounted to an open-air concentration camp, the arid island of Balliceaux in the Grenadines (Gonzalez, 1969). Nancie Gonzalez (1988) provides us with several figures regarding the demographics of those prisoners transported to Balliceaux in July of 1796: 1004 men, 1779 women and 1555 children were exiled from St. Vincent. At Balliceaux the captives were detained for nearly a year, suffering dreadful losses of life - approximately half of them dying from what is thought to be Yellow Fever (Gonzalez, 1969; Middleton, 2014). In 1797, the survivors of Balliceaux were exiled to Roatán in the Bay Islands off of the north coast of present-day Honduras (then Spanish Honduras) (Foster, 1987; Gonzalez, 1969, 1988; Gullick, 1985;

Palacio, 2005). 722 men, 806 women and 702 children were listed as embarking a convoy headed by the *HMS Experiment*, disembarking at Roatán on April 12<sup>th</sup> of that year (Gonzalez, 1988). There, the record ceases to differentiate between women and children - 64 men and 1361 women and children are detailed as landing at Roatán.

The attempted genocide and exile of the Garinagu from Yurumein illustrates Howard Winant's (2002) point that land theft and spatial control depended upon racialization. But while the expansion of the plantation economy hinged upon racializing the Garinagu as Black, the Garinagu also engaged in tactical struggles over racial meaning as part of a sustained effort to combat colonial incursion. Although eventually suffering defeat in the Second Carib War, these Garifuna struggles over representation eventually became critical to the establishment of a new home in Central America by the survivors of the exile. Gonzalez (1990) and Tompson (2004) tell us that the British chose to exile the Garinagu to the Bay Islands in hopes of consolidating territory on the Spanish Main. Spanish sentries in Roatán certainly assumed the arriving Garifunas were British allies, and surrendered the island without a single shot fired (Gonzalez, 1990, p.33; Tompson, 2004, p.21). After declaring themselves enemies of the British, the Garinagu were quickly invited to settle the port of Trujillo on the mainland. In September of 1797, Gonzalez (1988) reports that 496 men, 547 women and 422 children arrived to the Bay of Trujillo from Roatán. They then founded of the first Garinagu community on mainland Central America, Cristales and Rio Negro (Coelho, 1955).

Trujillo was in the midst of near-constant battles over territory between Spain and Britain when the Garinagu arrived. The nearby Bay Islands lay between Spanish and British Honduras



and were a site of contestation, and the British-allied Afro-Indigenous Miskito Kingdom<sup>3</sup> was in close proximity as well (Tompson, 2004, p.21). Several other Black populations existed in Honduras, including enslaved Africans who worked in gold and silver mines in the department of Olancho and the surrounds of Tegucigalpa (Interviews with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 & 3 December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015). As well, enslaved Africans and their descendants (referred to as *esclavos del Rey* or “the King’s slaves”) were present in the small portion of Caribbean coastline over which the Spanish did exert control, as well as free Black populations comprised of formerly enslaved persons who had gained freedom through military service or conversion to Catholicism (Tompson, 2012). There were also the “*Negros Franceses*,” a group of 307 exiled revolutionaries from Saint Domingue affiliated with Jean-Francois Pepeece, who were settled in Trujillo as free men in 1796 (Forbes, 2011, p.115-118). The Garinagu’s arrival to Trujillo at this particularly tense time – as a French-speaking, Afro-Indigenous revolutionary group from the Antilles who had fought alongside “Brigand” forces in St. Vincent (Gonzalez, 1990) – might thus have been of particular concern to the Spanish (Tompson, 2004). Spain was, at best, maintaining the most tenuous of toeholds on the Caribbean coast, and if the Garinagu were convinced to join forces with them, they presented “at least a partial solution to the longstanding problem of Spain’s inability to occupy and defend its territorial claims on Central America’s Atlantic Coast effectively” (Tompson, 2004, p.22).

It is in this context of Spain’s efforts to entrench their power in the Central American Caribbean that earlier Garifuna struggles over race were invoked in contests over space anew. Spain had a vested interest in differentiating and distancing the Garinagu from other Black and

---

<sup>3</sup> The Miskito are a distinct people of mixed Indigenous, African and European heritage whose territory spans much of the Caribbean coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua. They allied with the British for an extended period of time starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Pineda, 2006, p.43-44).

Afro-Indigenous populations in the area who might have undermined their attempts at securing the coast. But the Garinagu also had an interest in re-establishing a land base, and ensuring their freedom in a colony where slavery existed. Given the complex social context into which the Garinagu were thrust, how might we interpret the disappearance of the racial signifier “Black” from official historical records of the Garinagu shortly after their arrival to Spanish Honduras? What does it mean that the Black Caribs or *Caribes Negros* become the *Caribes* when the Spanish granted land to the Garinagu on the edges of Trujillo in 1797?

Anderson (1997) argues that there were numerous indications that the Garinagu were certainly “read” through colonial eyes as “Black.” The moniker *Caribe* represented not so much a racial discourse of Indigeneity, but rather, a way of discursively differentiating the Garinagu from other Black and Afro-indigenous populations along the coast. Anderson (1997) ultimately underscores Tompson’s (2004) claim that the name *Caribe* was advanced by the Spanish to foment their territorial control during a precarious time. But, he extends that argument to explicitly consider the value of the Garinagu’s labour power to the Spanish: the Garinagu’s arrival had coincided with Spanish attempts at re-building Trujillo, after it had been sacked and burned to the ground by pirates (Coelho, 1955). For Anderson (1997), then, representations of the Garinagu as *Caribes* sought to incorporate the Garinagu into a work force comprised of free and enslaved Blacks at Trujillo, while ostensibly stymying alliances that would threaten Spain’s position on the coast. The name *Caribe* conveyed notions of industriousness that were incompatible with the meaning of Blackness at the time (Anderson, 1997).

Other scholars highlight the ways in which the Garinagu actively forged representations of themselves as the *Caribes* – as in St. Vincent, colonial powers engaged race in their struggles over space, but so too did the Garinagu. Coelho (1955) maintains that the Garinagu represented

themselves as *Caribes* in order to differentiate themselves from enslaved Africans in Trujillo and maintain their free status. The work of linguistics scholar Michelle Forbes (2011) suggests that, during this period, free Black populations in and around Trujillo organized to defend their freedom, a project furthered by a strategic adaptation of the Garifuna language. Thus, the term *Caribe* might instead represent a countering of Spanish attempts at differentiation between free Black populations. Nancie Gonzalez (1969, 1988) takes a different tack, and asserts that in order to strengthen claims to land on the Isthmus, the Garifunas continued to distance themselves from Blackness and emphasize their Indigeneity (as *Caribes*), much as they had done in St. Vincent. I consider these different approaches and surmise that the Garinagu built upon earlier struggles over racial meaning, colluding and transforming the Spanish project of interpolation to represent themselves as the *Caribes* in such a way as to forge alliances and stake claims to freedom, land, and wage-work. In doing so, they entered into the realm of Black “exceptionality” in such a way as to continue to hold some space open between the colonial racial categories of *lo indio* and *lo negro*, not distancing themselves from either one as Gonzalez (1969, 1988) suggests.

## **From “Morenos” to “Negros”: Garinagu Struggles in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Honduras**

### **The Banana Enclave Economy and Mestizaje Nationalism**

The twin-logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness have undergirded the expansion of capitalism from Conquest and colonialism to neoliberalism. Garifuna dispossession – whether from 18<sup>th</sup> century St. Vincent or from multicultural Honduras - has always been intrinsically linked to white supremacy. My work pays close attention to the way white supremacy works in the Honduran context, particularly its “spatiality” and co-constitution by way of Garifuna dispossession. This is theorized in detail in Chapter 3, and I primarily rely upon North American

scholarship in order to do so<sup>4</sup>. White supremacy might seem to be a crude tool to employ in an complex analysis of a social context where racial formations differ substantially from the rigid binaries of the Global North. Despite the nuances of racial formation in Latin America, I maintain that engaging theories on racial formation and white supremacy from North America allows me to advance an analysis that is at once relevant and insightful. To begin with, there is a strong argument to be made that U.S. models of racial formation are being globalized (Safa, 2005). A focus on white supremacy allows us to decipher the links between past and present projects of dispossession and displacement - and to see them as related to the expansion of capital from Conquest into the present moment of U.S. and Canadian imperialism. It also permits for an understanding of how a diverse body of stakeholders are mobilized into place in relation to projects of dispossession. It is a focus on white supremacy, for instance, that makes legible the logics that have guided the *settlement* of Garifuna lands in the Honduran Caribbean. A critical assessment of how the multilayered and complex process of dispossession works in relation to the (re)making of racial hierarchies is necessary in order to situate the Garinagu's resistance to it.

In the following pages, I track the transference in representations of the Garinagu from *Caribes* to *Morenos* and then to *Negros* during the rise and decline of the banana enclave economy and *mestizaje* nationalism in Honduras. How and why does this project of (re)naming persist, and how is it related to Garifuna struggles to make and defend place in the newly birthed Republic of Honduras? To this end, I propose that Garifuna struggles over the meanings of race in the coalescing context of the banana enclave and *mestizaje* nationalism allowed the Garinagu carve out a nascent “discursive space” between races. Following from Anderson (1997), I argue

---

<sup>4</sup> I will incorporate regional works on the processes of racial formation in Latin America – in particular, scholarly writings in Spanish and Portuguese language – into future research on land struggles in Central America.

that this space was continually forged in the context of near-constant contests over land between the Garinagu and dominant powers.

After Honduran independence, the Caribbean coast was largely outside the reach and interest of a newly formed and relatively fragile state (Euraque, 1996). American schooners began arriving from New Orleans in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to buy bananas from Garifuna women along the coast, in what came to be known as the *poquitero* trade (Gonzalez, 1969; Kerns, 1997; Soluri, 2003, 2005). These purchasers soon began to seek greater control of the industry, setting their sights on production as well as transportation and distribution (Ibid). The Honduran *Criollo* (“Creole”) elite, comprising the smallest and weakest oligarchy in Central America (Euraque, 2003), eventually began conceding land – much of which was land traditionally used by the Garinagu - to the banana companies in return for assistance in building much-needed state infrastructure (Euraque, 1996, 2003; Soluri, 2005). And while the Americans certainly built an extensive railroad network in exchange for land, they saw to it that it only served their coastal plantations. Thus began an exponential increase in their power, enabling them to wrest control of the state from the national elite and drastically expand their land holdings along the coast (Ibid).

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, vast tracts of land on the Honduran Caribbean were controlled by the American transnationals. Johnson (2007) points to a lingering narrative of the banana enclave economy as the “golden age,” memorialized by some Garifunas as a time of plentiful employment close to home. But although Garifuna men certainly became a consistent and valued source of labour in the enclave (Euraque, 2003; Gonzalez, 1969, 1988), it was Garifuna women who lost both their land and their position as merchants (Soluri, 2005, p.22). The rise of the banana enclave, then, depended upon the displacement of Garifuna women from the land and their concurrent placement into the domestic sphere. This was a dramatic curtailing

of the economic power and freedom that Garifuna women exercised in their new home. Writings on the Garinagu in St. Vincent do not explicitly focus on the role that gender played in their racialized dispossession. But Garifunas in Honduras maintain that their gendered system of labour – women as farmers and merchants, and men as soldiers and sea-farers – was well established in Yurumein. The advent of American imperialism in Central America, then, marked the continuation of the curtailing of Garifuna women’s mobility that the expansion of the plantocracy into St. Vincent had begun a century earlier.

Honduran historian Dario Euraque (1996, 2003) contends that it was Indo-Hispanic<sup>5</sup> *mestizaje* nationalism that emerged as the most formidable weapon in the arsenal of the Honduran oligarchy in their battles against the fruit transnationals. The *mestizaje* nationalist model was certainly not unique to Honduras, and prevailed across Latin America in the guise of encouraging national unity and racial harmony in the burgeoning Republics. As was the case across the region, *mestizaje* nationalism reformulated racial discourse in Honduras, centering a legitimate, masculine national subject of Indigenous and Spanish heritage that was informed by notions of racial “betterment” extending from the Spanish *casta* system and the ideology of *blanquiamiento* (“whitening”) (Mendoza, 2006). This was also a gendered project. As Mendoza (2006) tells it, the Spanish *casta* system from which the dominant notion of the “mestizo” emanates has origins in sexual violence against Indigenous women by Spanish men. Despite being cloaked in a discourse of unity, then, the “mestizo” monolith of *mestizaje* and all it entailed

---

<sup>5</sup> Since my research is located in the Circum-Caribbean, I find it important to further clarify the meaning of “Indo-Hispanic” when used with reference to Honduras. In discussions of nation-building projects and dominant notions of “mixture” or *mestizaje* there, “Indo-Hispanic” refers to the mixture of Indigenous Americans and Europeans. Honduran historian Dario Euraque (1996) uses the term “Indo-Hispanic *mestizaje*” to signal to the purposeful negation of Blackness from notions of racial mixture that informs belonging in Honduras.

had a single purpose – “to separate, segregate and discriminate” towards the increased power of the landed elite (Mendoza, 2006, p.189). And, in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Honduras, the national elite’s consolidation of power entailed wresting control of the north coast from the *gringos*.

While the erasure of Blackness became a foundational feature of *mestizaje* nationalism across Central and South America, anti-Blackness became particularly salient in early nation building projects in Honduras. This was because of the role Black West Indian and Garifuna labour played in the banana enclave economy (Euraque, 2003; Mendoza, 2006). The national elite sought to destabilize the fruit transnationals’ labour base and thus their power by representing both West Indians and Garinagu as Black Other to the *mestizo* or *ladino*<sup>6</sup> national subject (Anderson, 2009, p.81). In response to the elite’s attempts at destabilizing the enclave, American fruit companies reinvigorated the narrative of exceptionalism that had previously cemented Garifuna belonging in Honduras, and which has its origins in struggles over land and representation in St. Vincent. Company documents reveal that the fruit companies specifically differentiated the Garinagu from Black West Indian labourers, initially referring to the former as *Honduran Caribs* and then more frequently as *Morenos* (Anderson, 2009). This, say scholars, was in effort to bypass hiring restrictions that the Honduran elite managed to impose by way of their intermittent control of the state. Demanding a greater representation of “Honduran” workers in American plantations was effectively a way to cement or increase their power (Ibid). Sarah England (2010) argues that this was most certainly the case, and that by designating the Garinagu

---

<sup>6</sup> In Latin America, *ladino* originally signified a person born in the Americas, and one who had been assimilated to dominant, European cultural norms. *Mestizo* later became synonymous with a specifically Indigenous/European racial “mixture” and assimilation to European cultural norms. Today in Honduras, however, *ladino* has become conflated with, and largely replaces, the term *mestizo*.

as “members of Honduran society in opposition to *negros* who at that time were seen as decidedly foreign,” the Americans could guarantee a stable workforce and thwart the local elite (England, 2010, p. 202). According to her reading, the fruit giants’ rendering of the Garinagu as *Morenos* conveyed their cultural “mixed-ness,” which - while not the Indigenous and European mixture associated with the *mestizo* subject – signaled to belonging in the *mestizo* nation.

In 1901, the *Morenos* of Cristales and Rio Negro were granted definitive collective title to 9 000 hectares of land in the Bay of Trujillo by President Manuel Bonilla (Garcia, 2014, p.221; Interview with Cristales and Rio Negro April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). A “Community” is medieval Spanish form of social organization which has been all but abandoned in Central America except by the Garinagu of Honduras (Coelho, 1955, p.54), and it is the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro that still holds the only collective land title granted to the Garinagu prior to the multicultural turn (Interview with Cristales and Rio Negro April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Why would President Manuel Bonilla, a President associated with advancing the interests of the Americans who backed his rise to power (Acker, 1988; Soluri, 2003, 2005), grant such extensive acreage to this Community of *Morenos*?

One theory is that a land grant to the *Morenos* might have facilitated American control of north coast lands during a terse political time. A decade after the land grant - in 1913 and at the height of the banana enclave - the United Fruit Company gained large land concessions in the Honduran Caribbean, forming the Truxillo Railroad company and exercising great control over the Bay of Trujillo (Johnson, 2007, p.87). Nancie Gonzalez (1988) lends credibility to this hypothesis, telling us that the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro rented out most of their land to the fruit giant (but for a “trifling sum”) (p. 137). Puerto Castilla - across the Bay from Cristales and Rio Negro - is one such example of Bonilla-title lands that were rented to the



United Fruit Company. The Garinagu rented land to the Company, and Puerto Castilla became a “small city” and the center of their operations in this region (Coelho, 1955). Having Garifuna “native-ness” cemented by way of land title would have also guaranteed the presence and proximity of what was an increasingly important labour force (Euraque, 2003).

But the emergence of the descriptor *Moreno*, and the definitive property rights extended to the *Morenos* of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, undoubtedly owed much to Garinagu agency and their own desire to re-establish territory post-exile. Obtaining legal title to their subsistence lands would have become increasingly important during first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the midst of accelerating dispossession by the enclave economy underscored by nationalist attempts at rendering them foreigners in their new home. It also, as the enclave grew and the Garinagu’s untitled territory diminished, might have been a way to secure work and a source of income – and thus material survival. Indeed, members of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro maintain an oral historical record that identifies Garifuna organization and protest as key factors in securing their land title (Interview with Vallecito 1 April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016; Interview with Cristales & Rio Negro April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). One land defender shared his family’s oral tradition with me, telling me that a group of “*Morenos* of Cristales and Rio Negro” that included his great-great-grandfather journeyed by foot to Tegucigalpa, marching on the streets of the capital city in effort to secure a meeting with the President Manuel Bonilla. Eventually obtaining an audience with him, the Garinagu expressed their desire to securely title their land, with the then-President eventually conceding to their demands (Interview with Vallecito April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

## **The Decline of the Banana Enclave and the Persistence of Blanquiamiento**

Going forward, I show how *mestizaje* nationalism's undergirding ideology of *blanquiamiento* or "whitening" continued to structure Garifuna dispossession from the coast after the banana enclave economy declined. At this particular historical conjuncture, the north coast remained discursively construed as a Black frontier to be incorporated into an Indo-Hispanic *mestizo* Honduras. Garifuna lands – including those that were untitled, individually titled, or collectively titled in the case of the Bonilla title - were usurped by wealthy ladinos with the help of the state, and was largely justified by state-sanctioned discourses of inadequate and ineffective land use deployed in the theft of Indigenous lands since Conquest (St. Denis, 2007, p.1071-1072). The rental of land by the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro to the United Fruit Company lubricated the pathways by which state-sanctioned grabs of land by wealthy ladinos could be achieved. Community members who I spoke with maintained that not all the land rented out to the United Fruit Company was returned to the Community. Some lands that were returned were later expropriated by the state, during the military dictatorships of the 1950s and 1980s. This was the case with Puerto Castilla, where an imposing port complex still dominates the landscape (Gonzalez, 1988).

In this period, justifications to appropriate or otherwise grab Garifuna lands by the political and economic elite were, as Mark Anderson (2009) points out, reliant upon racial meaning-making projects that were also gendered. In order to undermine Garifuna claims to land in the post-enclave, Garinagu were rendered idle, lazy and unproductive; a stereotype that depended upon on a pathologization of the Garinagu's gendered division of labour. In particular, women's agricultural work in locations that were decidedly outside of the domestic sphere were used to

prop-up notions of un-respectable Garifuna women and lazy Garifuna men that underpinned these notions of “ineffective” land use (p. 84-85).

While Garifuna lands once occupied by the fruit giants were subject to grabs by local elite, they were also subject to grabs by ladino peasants and unemployed workers (Anderson, 2009, p.85; Brondo, 2013, p.66). After the widespread layoffs linked to the general strike of 1954, the large unemployed ladino population on the north coast (Acker, 1988, p.67) - “imbued with a heightened political consciousness from plantation struggles” - emerged as prominent actors in the struggle for former plantation lands that were cast as “empty” (Edelman and Leon, 2013, p.1704). But, Honduran elites were able to take full advantage of this situation, increasing their control of the north coast by mobilizing the politicized ladino peasantry/proletariat onto lands once occupied by the Standard Fruit Company. The mass displacement of a landless and unemployed peasantry/proletariat onto “empty” coastal lands proved to satiate ladino labour and peasant movements along the coast, as well as in the interior of the country. These “colonization” programs thus formed part of an attempt to quell left-wing insurgency in Honduras, while most of Central America erupted into revolutionary uprising (Brondo, 2013, p.37; Kerssen, 2013). They also solidified the elite’s growing control of the coast by way of (dis)placements of “whitened” national subjects. This brought a “Black” and “Other” place into the fringes of the nation-state.

### **Garifuna Migration and Global Blackness**

Following the decline of the enclave, Garifuna men on the north coast struggled to find wage work that would supplement subsistence activities. This marked the beginning of the Garifunas’ increasing outward migration to the U.S. and a resulting “transnationalization” of

racial meaning in the Garifuna diaspora ((Gonzalez, 1988; England, 1999, 2000, 2006, 2010; Johnson, 2007). It was during this time that Honduran Garifunas increasingly began to self-represent and organize as *Negros*. Nancie Gonzalez (1988) argues that Garifuna migration to the U.S. brought them into contact with the Civil Rights movement, sparking this reversal of a Garifuna tendency to self-represent as “Indian” and to distance themselves from Blackness (Ibid). Sarah England’s (2010) work similarly maps the connections between the Garinagu’s shifting “politics of identity” and a “politics of globalization” (p.5), and she speaks to the Honduran Garinagu’s increasing identification with a global Blackness in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (p.9). Paul Johnson (2007) maintains that Garifuna migration to the U.S. had profound effects on how Garifunas identified across the diaspora. He argues that it was connections with African and Afro-Caribbean migrants in New York City that prompted an eventual adoption of Africa as a third “diasporic horizon” beyond Honduras and St. Vincent. In turn, this effected an increasing interaction with a political, global Blackness.

Mark Anderson (2009) revises both England’s (2010) and Gonzalez’ (1988) theses that the tendency for Garifuna organizations to represent themselves as Black emerged in the Garifuna diaspora, while indirectly challenging Johnsons (2007) thesis of Afro-centrism by bringing the focus back to Honduras. Anderson maintains that the shift towards Garifuna representation as *Negro* had much more to do with the shifting meaning of race *within* the political and economic context of Honduras. Anderson (2009) maintains that Garifuna organizations’ tendencies to self-identify as Black or *Negro* “did not necessarily imply an affirmation (or even recognition) of African origins or solidarity with other blacks” (p.72). Discourses of race in Honduras had come to portray Blackness as outside of nation, but also as “primitive” and “backwards” in much the same way as Indian-ness (p.73). This might have extended from earlier struggles over racial

meaning as related to contests over land, but did not necessarily “tie [Blackness] to Africa or to slavery” (Ibid).

I read Anderson’s, England’s, Gonzalez’ and Johnson’s theses together to posit that the meaning of Blackness ensconced in representations of the Garinagu as *Negro* was one that fused racial meanings specific to Honduras with those more global in scope. And while this rhetorical shift was related to Garinagu struggles over geography, it was also increasingly related to antiracist struggles in the realms of labour and the city across borders. As the land base of the Garinagu was increasingly reduced by the expansion of the banana enclave economy, Garifunas increasingly depended upon wage work. However, they continued to face racist barriers to employment in Honduras. Thus, as the enclave waned, Garifuna increasingly migrated to the U.S. in search of employment. There, they faced racist exclusion as well. Organizing as *Negros* permitted the Garinagu to negotiate multiple positionalities across a broad range of (interconnected) socio-political and economic contexts, in effort to resist dispossession and social exclusion.

It was as the banana enclave faded that the Abraham Lincoln Society was founded in La Ceiba. The Abraham Lincoln Society was a formative national-level Garifuna organization that fought against anti-Black racism in the labour movement and in Honduran coastal cities more generally (England, 2000). It was eventually disbanded as military dictatorships gained power in 1970s Honduras, but gave rise to the two Garifuna organizations that my doctoral research focusses on. OFRANEH was formed in 1977 in Puerto Cortes. In 1992, an ex-OFRANEH member and labour leader formed ODECO in 1992 (Anderson, 2009, p.392). These organizations have primarily operated at the scale of the nation-state. However, they increasingly

insert Honduran Garifuna struggles into global decolonial and anti-racist movements and networks.

### **Ethnic Garifunas on the Global Stage**

In this section, I sharpen my focus on organized Garifuna struggles over racial and spatial meanings during the shift from *mestizaje* to multicultural nationalism in the early 1990s. The shift from *mestizaje* to multiculturalism in Honduras necessarily entailed some rupture from previous regimes, including a limited admission of ethnic diversity and belonging. However, there were also profound continuities – namely, the persistence of the ideology of *blanquiamiento* (Mollett, 2016). The twin-logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness thus undergird and unify Honduran nationalist projects past and present, and continue to structure Garifuna dispossession.

Central to my analysis of contemporary Garifuna resistance to dispossession in Honduras is an understanding of how the Garinagu’s historical struggles over race and space were translated into the official designation *Garifuna* in multicultural Honduras. Honduras’ version of multiculturalism is one of only several in the region where Blackness and Indigeneity are conflated, and this has largely been a result of Garinagu organizing. In this context, the Garinagu emerged a Black “autochthonous ethnic group” in possession of an “indigenous-like” culture and associated collective property rights (Anderson, 2007; Hooker in Garcia, 2014, p.28).

### **Multicultural Reform in Latin America**

There are several theories as to why Latin American states transitioned from *mestizaje* models to multicultural nationalist projects and corresponding models of citizenship. Deborah

Yashar's (1999) work describes how "new" neoliberal citizenship regimes gained foothold in Latin America alongside widespread ethnic movements (p.77). The latter is understood by Yashar as being an "unintended consequence" of the move away from earlier, "corporatist" citizenship regimes that sought to remodel society along class lines (p.81). The limited reach of the state in Latin America meant that ethnic identities had persisted in spite of earlier, class-based configurations. These ethnic identities gained saliency as the disparity associated with neoliberal policies became increasingly pronounced, and eventually became central to organized political protest.

For Van Cott (2000), the constitutional changes associated with the multicultural turn of the 1990s formed part of a regional trend towards national consolidation (Ibid). They represented elite attempts at legitimating the nation-state in the wake of the right wing autocracies, civil wars and political upheaval that had deeply affected many countries in the region (Yashar, 1999, p.77; Van Cott, 2000, p.42, Hooker, 2005, p.285). Van Cott does not directly relate the shift to multiculturalism to ethnic activism. However, they do speculate that the particular form that these legitimizing measures took, and the particular language they employed, *was* somewhat related to Indigenous protest and mobilization. During the 1970s and 80s, Indigenous groups in Latin America began to organize - both locally and transnationally - around issues related to dignity, identity and material circumstances (Van Cott, 2000, p.43), as well as around demands for autonomy (p.49). Multi-scalar activism on the part of Latin American Indigenous groups thus influenced international discourse on human rights; a discourse which gained saliency in the last few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and provided the "new global conditions" (p.51) within which Latin American states had to locate themselves (Ibid).

Charles Hale (2005) offers another reading of Latin America's official adoption of multicultural discourse and policy. Hale posits that a limited recognition of ethnic difference and granting of collective property rights form core components of neoliberal governance in the region. For him, what he coins "neoliberal multiculturalism" ensures capital's unhindered expansion by "extending the grid of intelligibility, defining legitimate (and underserving) subjects of rights, and re-making racial hierarchy" (p.13). In this way, Hale's work differently articulates the hegemony described by Van Cott et al, by on the ways in which capitalist expansion diffuses radicalism by recognizing collective ethnic difference and rights.

Juliet Hooker (2005, 2008, 2012) offers some insight into *how* racial hierarchies are re-made through ethnic discourse and rights in multicultural Latin America. She argues that "Black exclusion" typifies the regional turn. Although proponents of constitutional reform articulated their major aim as "*addressing the historic and ongoing social exclusion faced by racialized groups*" (Hooker, 2005: 300, my emphasis), Black populations in multicultural Latin America have largely been denied redress. Hooker (2005) proposes that, while multicultural reform centers "ethnic" rights in its supposed attempt to address the lived effects of persistent racial exclusion, the different ways in which Indigenous and Black groups have been racialized influences the ways in which these "ethnic" rights are distributed today. Black populations in Latin America have not been represented as possessing a distinctive culture of the type rewarded by constitutional shifts (p.291), while Indigenous peoples have been. This means that the latter have been more readily accepted as culturally "different" from the *mestizo* or ladino majority, and as such, as "legitimate" ethnic groups. The erasure of Blackness thus extends from earlier nation-building myths is thus extended into the multicultural moment (p.301).



Across Latin America, then, *lo indio* was retooled along the lines of ethnic difference in the 1990s, referencing historical racial discourse that represented “Indian” subjects as being in possession of distinct cultures; making these groups the ‘legitimate’ subjects of collective rights despite official rhetoric around righting the wrongs of historical and ongoing social exclusion faced by *all* racialized groups (Van Cott, 2000). In some cases, Black exclusion from multicultural regimes was challenged, and there exists a handful of Latin American states where Afro-descended groups have gained recognition and collective property rights. This, however, has been largely achieved by way of demonstrating a history of marronage and the precedence of colonial-era treaties or kinship with Indigenous communities (p.49) – by demonstrating a “likeness” to Indigeneity (Anderson, 2007) by way of engaging with and contesting contemporary racial meaning-making processes that recapitulate colonial racial schema.

Honduras offers one of the few cases of a state multiculturalism that blurs distinctions between colonial notions of *lo indio* and *lo negro*. In Honduras, Black and Indigenous populations hold similar legal status and rights as autochthonous ethnic groups (Anderson, 2007). Together, the ethnic groups recognized in this rubric represent 7.2% of the entire Honduran populace, with the Garífuna population numbered at around 50 000 (Ibid)<sup>7</sup>. It was Garífuna struggles over imagined and physical geographies in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Honduras, say scholars, that resulted in the trope of the Garinagu’s “folkloric” culture being associated with ethnic “difference” in the multicultural rubric (Anderson, 2009). But, the Garinagu’s “ethnic” rights are increasingly eroded in practice.

---

<sup>7</sup> These groups are the Garífuna; *los Afrodescendientes de Habla Inglesa* (English-speaking Creoles); the *Miskito*; the *Tolipanes*; the *Pech*; the *Maya Chortí*; the *Tawakah*; and the *Lenca*. The category of *otro* or “other” refers to the “unmarked” ladino majority (Anderson, 2007).

## **Multicultural Honduras and the (De)territorialisation of the Garinagu**

Garifuna organizations have, over the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, struggled towards “relational” notions of territory that construct place as a set of relationships integral to particular ways of seeing and existing in the world. Capital, together with state and global governing bodies, has responded to these nuanced and multi-faceted territorial demands with the implementation of hegemonic notions of “ethnic” territory written into law (Bryan, 2012, p.219). During the “multicultural turn” of the 1990’s, “many of Honduras’ coastal Garifuna communities received fee-simple titles for the lands they occupied” (Loperena, 2012, p.61). Titles were granted to communities and not to individuals, but much the Garinagu’s “functional habitat” outside of the residential cores of the communities were excluded. By signing the International Labour Organization’s Convention 169 (ILO 169), the Honduran state recognized the “inalienability” of Garifuna collective titles. However, state promises to address the shortcomings of these titles have yielded little action (Ibid).

The state’s inaction has been accompanied by a series of legal shifts that effectively undermine the collective property rights of the Garinagu. These include the ratification of the Municipality Law; numerous attempts to by-pass article 107 of the Honduran Constitution; and the passing of the Property Law. The ratification of the Municipality Law in 1992 extended the reach and power of local governments in effort to reduce the power of the Garifuna communities (Loperena, 2012, p.50). Then, in 1998, the government of Honduras met to repeal Article 107 of the Honduran constitution, which specifically prohibits the sale of coastal lands to foreigners (Brondo, 2007, 2013; Garcia, 2014). A category 5 Hurricane Mitch had just made landfall two days prior, but Garifuna organizations were able to mobilize and halt the process (Mollett, 2014, p.29). The subsequent passing of Law 90/90, however, effectively implemented what a repeal of

Article 107 would have achieved. Under 90/90, coastal land sales to foreigners are allowed as long as said lands are within the bounds of recently- extended “urban zones” (Mollett, 2014, p.36).

The Property Law was passed in 2004 as part of the *Proyecto de Administracion de Tierras de Honduras* or “PATH,” a land administration project implemented by the World Bank (Loperena, 2012, p.55). Ostensibly, PATH aimed to address land tenure insecurity in Garifuna communities (p.57). However, Loperena (2012) argues that the World Bank ultimately intended to “create a property rights regime wherein individuals have a right to ‘choose’ their own path” (p.58). The Property Law contained articles that essentially granted Garifuna communities the power to dissolve collective titles (Mollett, 2013, p.1232; Mollett, 2014, p.37; Mollett, 2016, p.423). But, deeply ingrained and racialized power dynamics in Honduras means that the Garinagu exist in a social context whereby the “choice” to dissolve collective titles might not represent much of a choice at all (Caine and Krogman, 2010, p.83). Articles 96 and 99 of the Property Law also provide the for the permanence of “outsiders” or third parties who had acquired the land through illegal means prior to its ratification.

Supra-national organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations effectively oversaw the territorial turn vis-à-vis state ratification of key conventions such as the ILO Convention 169 (Bryan, 2012, p.219). Thus, while the neoliberal state became the guarantor of legal territorial rights (p.218), Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations were produced as objects of both the state and global governing bodies. My doctoral research considers how the space of possibility is navigated by OFRANEH and ODECO today, and across spatial scales. A key question to consider here is, how are the ethnic autochthonous

*Garifunas* represented on the global stage by either organization, towards resisting accelerating dispossession, displacement and social exclusion in Honduras?

### **Conclusion**

I have used this chapter to review relevant scholarship on the Garinagu alongside selected works from the fields of history, geography and sociology that focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. I organized this literature review chronologically and with specific intent – beyond charting the main debates and trends in academic studies of the Garinagu, I perused the literature for discussions of the Garinagu’s rich history of struggle over representation and land. In mapping the Garinagu’s resistance to ongoing displacement structured by white supremacy, I traced the formation of a “space of possibility” between colonial racial categories, reading official designations of the Garinagu in Honduras - from *Caribes* to *Morenos* to *Negros* and finally as *Garífuna* – as emerging from as well as being central to struggle over land, but also over labour. The eventual advent of the autochthonous ethnic identity *Garífuna* in multicultural Honduras, I argued, invokes and extends a long history of Garifuna struggles to be positioned as “native” Blacks (Anderson, 2009). But, as Mark Anderson (1997) also reminds us, the “significance” or meaning of racial discourse also “varies in different political and economic contexts” (p.31), and the Garifunas’ increasing movement through multiple and overlapping political and economic contexts has seen their activism influenced by contests over racial meaning in increasingly varied sites (Gordon and Anderson, 1999; England, 2000). This is highly relevant to my research, which builds upon the idea that multi-sited and multi-scalar struggles over racial and spatial hierarchies over time have created a sort of archive of meaning that can be accessed and re-purposed to particular, localized sites of struggle.

In later findings chapter I speak more directly to the ways in which OFRANEH and ODECO navigate this space of possibility to excavate racial meanings useful to contemporary Garifuna struggles on the north coast of Honduras. These two organizations increasingly represent the ethnic autochthonous *Garifuna* as Black Indigenous people and ethnically-distinct Afro-descendants on the global stage, in order to traverse local, national and international legislation, law, and networks that bolster Garifuna claims to particular places in a context of accelerating racialized dispossession, displacement and erasure. This chapter has thus attempted to map how the ethnic identity *Garifuna* emerges from and provides access to an allegorical archive of racial meaning, which is alternatively routed by two organizations in order to access two increasingly differentiated global subjectivities and resist dispossession. These alternative routings of racial meanings reference earlier and myriad struggles over racial meaning that brought notions of a “native” Garifuna Blackness in conversations with transnational or global Blackness, signifying as well as producing an interesting set of tensions that is understudied in the literature.

## **CHAPTER 3: THEORIES OF RACE, SPACE AND PLACE**

I now want unpack the concepts of race, space and place that I enlist throughout the dissertation. I do this by first advancing a theory of race, racial formation and racial hierarchy which is also gendered, explaining why we cannot understand racial hierarchy in the post-Conquest Americas without an understanding of how it is made through space and “calcified” through (dis)placement (McKittrick, 2013). I then detail how this process of racial formation is also the process by which white supremacy is constituted as an ubiquitous social force – even in settings where it is invisible and perhaps unexpected. As the scholars whose work I reference demonstrate, white supremacy is consolidated by displacing racialized groups and fixing itself in place by way of maintaining a toehold on respectability and privilege. While these theories of race and space clearly explain how and why dispossession occurs, what they do not do is explicate how this process is achieved differentially in certain locations, nor do not describe the possibilities it entails nor the terms on which resistance takes place. Here I suggest that the creation and maintenance of colonial racial and spatial hierarchies creates the terms of their own undoing: the Garifuna, like other impoverished racialized groups, must struggle against dispossession by struggling over racial and spatial meanings, and over time these struggles enable possibility.

### **Race, Space and Place**

Throughout this dissertation I draw on a definition of race as an essentially meaning-making process. Stuart Hall explains this in a language of “representation,” describing how bodily difference becomes a “signifier” for meaning (Hall, Evans and Nixon, 2013, p.216). Similarly, Omi and Winant (1994) posit that race references biological characteristics, stressing

that their meaning or significance shifts and moves across social and historical locations. In each distinct site, however, there are “racial projects” that do the ideological work of creating the meanings attributed to bodily difference. And, while racial meanings shift and change, they are always hierarchically organized and form the foundations for the social order (Ibid). Race here is best understood as a durable social concept that demonstrates high levels of instability – a persistent yet variable set of social meanings crucial to the replication of social hierarchies. Importantly for this dissertation too, however, is the idea that that racial meanings are “constantly being transformed by political struggle” (p.55). Inasmuch as there are attempts at fixing racial meaning through discourses and “naturalizing” practices such as the circulation of stereotypes (Hall, Evans and Nixon, 2013, p.238), or through grounded material practices such as (dis)placement (McKittrick, 2013; Razack, 2002), racial meaning never achieves permanence across shifting historical and social contexts and is always a site of struggle.

Space exhibits remarkably similar characteristics to race (Neely and Sumatra, 2011). Akin to the ways in which Omi and Winant (1994) describe racial formation, space too is “contested,” “fluid and historical,” “relational and interactional,” and employed in projects centered on “difference and inequality” (Neely and Samura, 2011, p.1940). Differently said, race and space are both political meaning-making projects that shift over time and across location. They are *processes* that are always in motion and never complete (Springer, 2009, p.140), and are “played out in structures of dominance and inequality” (Neely and Samura, 2011, p.1940). The extension of the dominant social and political order thus depends upon racial and spatial meaning-making projects that exist in a dialectic, and which are always subject to contestation (Neely and Samura, 2011, p.1934). Analyzing race and space together – paying attention to the “racialization of space and the spatialization of race” or the dialectics of race and space (Lipsitz, 2007) - is thus

crucial to understanding things about both domination and resistance that we might not be able to know otherwise. Combining this insight with that of Doreen Massey (1994) and Katherine McKittrick (2006, 2011, 2013) makes clear how racial difference and hierarchy - so pivotal to the project of capitalist expansion - are co-constituted and justified by the production of space and the (dis)placement of simultaneously racialized and gendered bodies. The ordering of racial difference depends upon the simultaneous creation of a gendered subjectivity which is also classed, and confirmed by (dis)placement. It is thus the (dis)placement of racialized and gendered bodies that constitutes the grounds upon which capitalist society is constructed in the Americas.

Guyanese scholar Alissa Trotz's (2003) critique of the Guyanese post-independence nationalist project provides a good starting point for understanding how racialized, gendered difference is "fixed" in place along the lines of ethnic "difference," and how this relies upon the fabrication of dominant notions of the family. Here, a Eurocentric prescription of the nuclear family is normalized, while racialized families and their gender roles are pathologized. Trotz's (2003) demonstrates her argument by way of an analysis of the representation of Afro-Guyanese woman by colonial and state powers (tropes, she cautions us, that are recapitulated in academic work from the region). Dominant representations of Afro-Guyanese women center on their roles in the family; *racialized* families that "deviate" from the Eurocentric nuclear norm and which are ethnically differentiated from other racialized populaces. Construing Afro-Guyanese women's place as contiguous with the domestic realm – being heads of "matrifocal" households where men are transient or largely absent – is key to the rendering of difference between "Afro-Guyanese" and "Indo-Guyanese," for example. Representations of racialized, gendered bodies-in-place, as Razack (1998) so richly describes in her article *Race, space, and prostitution: the*



*making of the bourgeois subject*, are key to the production of respectable peoples and places – part of the process of creating an “Other” through time and space, in order to further entrench the dominant relations of power that secure the globalization of capital.

Doreen Massey’s (1994) conceptualization of place furthers this understanding of race, space, gender and (dis)placement by drawing attention to place’s relationship with mobilities and “places beyond” (9). For her, place is always outward looking as opposed to insular; it is a particular intersection in multiple social relations stretched over space; a certain snapshot or moment in this matrix, a “meeting place” (p.7) within a series of mobilities and flows that are cut through with power. Differently said, place is a “particular and unique point” at the intersection of multiple flows of information, ideas and bodies that exhibit a “power geometry.” To consider mobility when talking about place is not simply discerning who can move and communicate freely and who cannot; rather, it entails asking deeper questions about the “degree of control and initiation” that social groups or individuals can or cannot exercise (Massey, 1994, p.4). To look at mobilities, then, means to recognize differential control over movement as related to racialized and gendered subjects in the context of global capital (Ibid).

Reflecting on the writing of Massey (1994), I ask how an analysis of the co-constitution of gendered, racialized (and classed) Other in space/place might be enriched by paying attention to spatial scale. If place is a “particular locus” in a web of social relations stretched across space and cut through with power, it is also a particular combination of “wider and more local social relations” (Ibid). Deborah Martin (2003) confirms that place indeed entails “a dialectical relationship between the global and the local, in which both dynamics shape peoples’ daily lives” (730). But in describing place as a “spatialized moment” of global flows of labour, goods and capital exchange” that is simultaneously “a setting for and situated in the operation of social and

economic processes” (Ibid), Martin describes place as providing a “grounding” for “everyday life and experiences” that becomes a way for collectivities and coalitions to chart across difference (732). While her work focusses on place-based movements in cities in the U.S. Escobar’s (2003) work in rural, Pacific Colombia also stresses the porousness and grounded-ness of place. For him, these places are sites of unique worldviews that emerge from relationships with the physical geography, but which are increasingly defened across spatial scales. These ways of thinking about place are useful for my dissertation and I explore them more as the chapter proceeds – place as bounded and porous, as a matrix of wider and more local social relations, and as having a physicality that grounds collective experience, struggle and possibility in complex ways.

### **Geographies of Domination: White Supremacy and Racialized (Dis)placement**

In this section of the chapter, I mostly consider North American writings on racialized dispossession, (dis)placement and white supremacy in order to further set the foundations of an understanding of struggles over racial and spatial meanings in the context of domination, and of resistance. As the chapter proceeds, I put them into conversation with works from the Global South in order to garner regional perspectives that augment and nuance my conceptual tools. My choice of North American theory is not accidental: Honduras, with its long history of U.S. Imperialism, is a place upon which racial meanings from the U.S. have coalesced with those in Honduras. Segregationist policies were enacted in the context of the banana enclave economy, and they continue to contour the racial and spatial landscapes of neoliberal Honduras. An increasing flow of Honduran Garifunas northwards to the U.S., as well as their increasing forced return, makes a perspective on racial formation in the U.S. pertinent as well. The transnationalization of racial meanings and their impacts on Garifuna social movements has been

well documented (see: England 2000, 2006, 2010), but there has been little focus on the significance of forced return of racial meanings to Honduras.

The writing of bell hooks (1995) clearly outlines the connections between white supremacy and racialized dispossession and attempted erasure. In naming white supremacy, hooks focuses on racism as *structure*. This has is in opposition to neoliberal racial discourse that relegates racism to the individual or private realm (Goldberg, 2009; Pulido, 2000). An identification of the materiality of white supremacy also attends to how non-white groups become invested in securing racist structures. For hooks, this is key, especially if we seek to disassemble capitalism by way of the racial hierarchies that it depends upon. Engaging an analysis of white supremacy ensures that struggles for emancipation are directed towards the abolishment of a system that constantly seeks to incorporate us into its mechanism (195).

George Lipsitz (1995, 1998, 2007, 2011) also describes white supremacy as a structure of material advantage and disadvantage, although he chooses to name it whiteness. Whiteness is “the structural advantages that accrue to whites because of past and present discrimination,” and is dependent upon racialized displacement, destruction and disadvantage (Lipstiz, 2007, p.12). Capitalism is a racist social system that works to the material benefit of whites, and is spatially expressed in and reinforced by unjust geographies (Lipsitz, 2007, p.13). Lipsitz also acknowledges that whiteness has a deeply discursive aspect –stating that whiteness is everywhere but largely invisible, exceedingly difficult to see because of its status as “the unmarked category against which difference in constructed” (Lipsitz, 1995, p.369).

McKittrick’s (2011, 2013), Nelson (2008) and Woods’ (2002) work on (dis)placement augments that of Lipsitz. Their writings describe attempts at moving, confining and destroying

racialized bodies in space as continuations of earlier projects of domination, dispossession and (dis)placement. These scholars describe how a series of co-constitutive processes make the meanings of both race and space more concrete over time, from Conquest and colonization into the “now.” While place is indeed a site of constant struggle, racial/spatial meanings can become fixed “in place” - however momentarily - and “calcified” by way of attempted destructions of racialized place over time (McKittrick 2011, 2013). Focussing on racial space in the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S., Woods (2002) argues that the ongoing and systematic destruction of urban and rural African American communities serves to re-invigorate and extend old regimes of dependency, desperation and servitude into the present day (p.62-63). Nelson’s (2008) work focusses on the re-making of racial hierarchies through the movement and containment of racialized populations in Halifax, Canada. Broadening the scope to slave and post-slave geographies across the Americas, McKittrick (2011) also surmises that racial/spatial hierarchies are the result of continued and deliberate “attempts to destroy a black sense of place” (p.947).

What this body of work makes clear is how the expansion of capital relies upon attempts at destroying Black place – which is at once co-constitutive of white supremacy. Racial meanings are subject to political struggle, are constantly in flux, and differ across time and space. But, there are attempts to make them concrete by way of Black (dis)placement and attempted erasure over time. Understanding how space amasses the “sediment” of previous formations means that contemporary landscapes and urbanscapes might be considered “artefacts of past and present racism” (Pulido, 2000, p.16). White supremacy is constantly (re)constituted from past racial formations, destructions and exclusions that are at once spatial formations, destructions and exclusions (Lipsitz, 2007, p.19). Previous assaults on Black place are thus re-invigorated, referenced and recapitulated towards remaking the materiality of white supremacy.

The theory I engage with largely emanates from northern settler colonial societies like Canada and the U.S., and is concerned with urban space. However, I also incorporate the work of Colombian scholar Arturo Escobar (2003). In taking up the thought of Aníbal Quijano, Escobar theorizes racialized dispossession and displacement in the post-WWII Global South, particularly in rural zones (p.157). Escobar's emphasis is on colonialism, Eurocentric modernity, and race; and how the "discourse of development"

serves to justify the displacement of racialized populations in Latin America by global capital. He articulates the connections between contemporary patterns of global domination and contemporary destructions of Black place in Latin America. On Colombia's Pacific coast, Afro-descended populations are being directly displaced by development initiatives; or by violence and conflict that local stakeholders see as being in service of these initiatives (p.160).

Sean Mitchell's (2017) research focusses on Brazil and the globalization of U.S. system of racial formation. His work extends puts discussions on the "coloniality of power" into conversation with those on U.S. imperialism and ethnoracial modes of citizenship. The turn towards multiculturalism, he proposes, brings Latin American systems of racial classification closer to those of the U.S. The exportation of binary systems of racial classification based on notions of "purity" could potentially limit the ability of those in Latin America (and the Caribbean) to "position themselves strategically depending on context" (p.122). This becomes useful for thinking through my research findings in later chapters of the dissertation, because this exploration is in *process* - it is not complete. In what creative ways are those on the ground in Latin America seizing a sort of "in-between" moment filled with ambiguity and flux, where systems of racial formation from North America are becoming entangled with those of Latin America in multiple ways?

I have so far put scholarship on race, space and place that focusses on urban geographies of the U.S., into conversation with writing on racial formation, dispossession and (dis)placement in Latin America. Before turning to the next section of this chapter, I close this one by drawing readers' attention to the critical attention role of the law in moving, containing and fixing racial and spatial meanings in place over time and towards attempted destruction. In particular sections of the dissertation, this interpretation of the law as a social construct that is spatially constituted becomes useful, especially when we approach it as a tool crucial to the (re)making of social hierarchies central to capitalism. Sherene Razack reminds us that *terra nullius* was a legal doctrine (p.3). Her work speaks to the role of the law in creating "empty" lands and development by enforcing racialization in the present. This is particularly significant when trying to understand how and why Garifuna dispossession from Honduras has accelerated since the early 1990s – the neoliberalization of Honduras entailed a massive restructuring of land administration programs, which has proven a critical facet of re-tooling racial hierarchy. In following Razack's (2002) advice to "unmap" and uncover the ideologies and systems of conquest and domination as they mark the landscape over time, I later touch upon the law's role in ensuring that *place becomes race* by way of "fixing" racial meanings in place towards future attempts at destruction (p.1).

### **Spatial Imaginaries "Struck Through With Race"**

While the law proves central in making race and place together towards the movement and containments of bodies and the recapitulation of social hierarchies, George Lipsitz (1995, 2007,

2011) offers us a consideration of how this depends upon how people *imagine* space. Lipsitz (2011) maintains that dominant spatial imaginaries in the U.S. are invisibly “struck through with race,” and are also rooted in the colonial Conquest of the Americas and the notion of pure homogenous space that was manufactured by *Terra Nullius* (Lipsitz, 2011, p.29). *Terra Nullius* is a legal doctrine like Razack (2002) states, but it is also a powerful imaginary that has persisted through time. This – what Lipsitz refers to as the “white spatial imaginary” - ensures the expansion of capitalism by conscripting diverse social actors and agents into white supremacist structure through the common-sense imaginations of space that, in essence, run counter to their class interests. The white spatial imaginary, says Lipsitz, is what encourages, promotes and guarantees exclusivity, private property, order, and augmented exchange value at the expense and destruction of racialized space and place (p.28), granting and denying opportunities along racial lines, and (re)tooling social hierarchies over time (Ibid) by mobilizing a wide swathe of social agents into remaking the hierarchies of capitalism.

The writing of Sharlene Mollett (2010, 2014, 2016) connects Lipsitz’s (2011) ruminations on the white spatial imaginary to nationalist projects in Honduras, and offers us a way to understand the mechanisms by which the “coloniality of power” (Quijano in Escobar, 2003) operates through the neoliberal, Latin American nation-state. As I previously asserted, attention to spatial scale is critical, and Mollett’s work excellently describes how the ideology of *blanquiamiento* (“whitening”) persists from colonial schemes of racial classification through *mestizaje* and into multicultural Honduras, replicating earlier projects of global domination by way of national-level hierarchies that are founded on destructions of Black and Indigenous spaces and places. National imaginaries in Honduras might thus be read as white spatial imaginaries, holding within them a logics of white supremacy, which idealizes and exalts “white

phenotype and concomitant cultural practices” (Ibid). Thus, in Honduras, whiteness “presents as an inconspicuous classification against which difference is fashioned” (Ibid), informing ladino citizenship and belonging from *mestizaje* to multiculturalism by way of a Black and Indigenous Other. Importantly for a project concerned with Garifuna dispossession and (dis)placement in Honduras, Mollett’s work reminds us that racial hierarchies are construed alongside dominant environmental and land use practices (Mollett, 2010, p.47), with dominant discourse around inadequate/adequate land use serving to structure and justify racialized dispossession. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, this discourse of inadequate/adequate land use relies upon a pathologization of Garifuna gender roles and family structure in the manner that Trotz (2003) describes in her discussion of race, ethnicity and gender in Guyana.

### **Resistance as Place-Making in a Global Context**

I have so far established that race and space are meaning-making projects that exist in a dialectical relationship. Being subject to momentary fixity but ultimately fluid and shifting, white supremacy is co-constituted through racialized displacement that is also gendered, towards the extension of earlier regimes of domination and the expansion of capital. The material practices of racialized dispossession depend upon imaginaries “struck through by race,” and are to be found unexpected locations around the globe, including in neoliberal multicultural Honduras. Having laid these foundations, I now turn to a more detailed discussion of place as related to projects of resistance.

Katherine McKittrick (2011, 2013) builds upon the work of George Beckford and Sylvia Wynter to theorize how social hierarchies extend from the past into the present through (dis)placement and attempts at destroying Black places and senses of place. But, very



importantly for this section of the chapter, McKittrick also issues scholars a warning that by deciphering plantation-pasts-in-the-present, we run the risk of setting into motion a future in which “no one moves,” and where Black death becomes the only logical end (McKittrick, 2011, p.955). In interrogating the persistent plantation system through time and space, then, we must be mindful of the ways it is at once composed of “interlocking workings of dispossession and resistance” (McKittrick, 2013, p.5). It is by paying attention to complexity, McKittrick says, that we can might find the key to actually destroying plantation logics and *not* Black place in our scholarly work and activism. In raising these concerns, McKittrick also presses us to consider the radical potential in focussing on what she calls “geographies of encounter” (p.949). She implores us to read past “neat dichotomies” of racialized space to search out “hidden histories” of resistance that allow us to really interrogate *how we think of humanness*, ensuring that our emancipatory projects to not center a white, wealthy subject as a point of reference (McKittrick, 2011, p.9). Urging us to pay attention to oppositional place-making projects and the “useful anti-colonial practices and narratives” (p.955) held within them, she locates a persistent Black sense of place predicated upon struggle, survival and sense of community that holds immense possibility for – or perhaps even the key to – our decolonial futures.

Brazilian scholar Jaime Amparo Alvez (2013) takes McKittrick’s (2006, 2011, 2013) ruminations on the ways in which Black subjectivity “has been shaped by the intersection of space and gender” (Ibid) to the streets of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Honing in on racialized displacement and women-led resistance movements there, Amparo Alvez asks “how do black women overcome their place-less location in the anti-Black city” (p.331)? In response to this question, he maintains that placeless-ness or displacement becomes a locus from which to challenge, reconfigure and reclaim public space in a socio-political context that offers very few channels to

denounce the nation as anti-Black (p.332). His nuanced explanation of the processes of racialized and gendered displacement complements Trotz' (2003) assertion that the pathologization of gender roles in the racialized family is key to the maintenance of social hierarchies. To this end, Amparo Alvez clearly maps the ways in which a pathologized motherhood can also become a site of reclamation and contestation. He does so by way of a deep reading of contemporary Black Brazilian social movements; in particular, protests by the mothers of murdered and missing Black men that challenge the logics of "whitening" in the Latin American city.

Arturo Escobar's (2003, 2010) work complements that of these scholars, as he focusses on Black defenses of place – or radical place making projects rooted in a Black sense of place - outside of North America *and* outside of the context of the city. His work lends us an understanding of how rural Afro-Colombian emancipatory projects construct place-based identities that are simultaneously embedded in transnational networks (Escobar, 2003, p.153), and which allow for the "jumping" from one spatial scale to another in political mobilizations that contest capital (p.163). These place-making projects aim to reconfigure the global so that particular, relational interpretations of the world may continue to exist and perhaps even thrive (p.168). Oslender's (2016) work on Afro-Colombian "riverine" social movements also focuses on the multi-scalar defense of a "particular construction of place" (p.35) that enables the continuation of dynamic world-views or "relational ontologies" (Escobar, 2010, p.4). Relational ontologies are deeply interwoven with particular physical geographies and offer us "a different way of imagining life" (Ibid).

The research of Keri Brondo (2007, 2013) returns my focus to Honduras, and to how Garifuna place-making projects are engaged in the fight against massive dispossession by global capital. She describes the concept of place-making in more detail, deferring to Medina's (1998)

assertion that it is a process that establishes rights to territory by producing “both people and place simultaneously” (Medina, 1998, p.126, in Brondo, 2013). This process involves rooting a people’s identity to a history-in-place and demonstrating that certain cultural practices are intimately tied to a “given geographic space” (Brondo, 2013, p.118). While her work recalls Escobar’s descriptions of Afro-Colombian resistance movements in the Colombian Pacific (2001, 2003, 2010), Brondo directs her attention to the role that women play in global defenses of place. Brondo’s research thus offers further insight into how placeless-ness becomes a platform from which to resist dispossession in the vein of Alvaro Ampez. Women have been the traditional stewards of the land in Garifuna society, and Garifuna organizations involved in land defense in contemporary Honduras are mostly led by women.

By focussing on the women-led Garifuna land defense movement in Honduras, Brondo points to the importance of multi-scalar networks to the project of resisting racialized and gendered dispossession and displacement. Ultimately, Brondo argues that Garifuna struggles over place are concurrently multi-scalar struggles over racial meanings. Garifuna organizations must simultaneously “jump” across spatial scales (Garcia, 2014) in order to resist colonial racial schema and make claims to place – a complex production of people and place over time and space. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Garinagu’s successful campaign to augment definitions of Indigeneity in the Americas to include phenotypic-Black groups. It is this campaign that has provided the Garinagu with a platform for land claims in Honduras. My findings chapters focus on Garifuna place-making projects on the north coast of Honduras, and I approach these projects as sites of struggle over racial and spatial meanings. But, following from the thinking of Katherine McKittrick and Arturo Escobar, I also approach them as places that hold radical visions of life that we might gain hope, inspiration and instruction from.

## **The Art of Resistance: Garifuna Struggles and Scott's "Hidden Transcripts"**

In this section, I advance a theory of resistance that provides a lens for interpreting Garifuna land struggles in Honduras. I use as my point of departure James C. Scott's (1990) *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. Scott advances a multi-faceted notion of resistance that enriches my analysis of two prominent Garifuna organizations and their place-making projects in Honduras. His scholarship provides a template to understand how their divergent tactics might be read together. It also provides a lens to "see" these place-making projects for what they are: glimpses of hopeful futures that are sometimes hidden in plain sight.

Scott's work focusses on daily, subtle acts of resistance within the context of disparate social power. However, I find his work compelling and pertinent to my analysis of organized Garifuna resistance to dispossession for a two main reasons. Firstly, in Honduras, all Garifuna organizations are working within the confines of white supremacist neoliberal capital. Challenging its order and power demands multi-pronged strategies that span the spectrum between compliant collusion and direct confrontation. Contemporary Garifuna organizations must sometimes push ahead by superficially colluding with the structures and schema of capital in order to survive and advance the struggle. Secondly, my research focusses on the meaning-making processes of organizational affiliates "on the ground." Scott's *Hidden transcripts* makes room for an understanding how these affiliates creatively negotiate official organizational tactics in order to situationally build alliances and challenge established power dynamics.

Scott (1990) uses a language of "public" and "hidden" transcripts to convey the ways in which elaborate and dialectical discourses and performances are circulated and enacted within structures of power and domination. Referring to Goffman's (1956) theories of "onstage" and

“offstage” presentations of self, Scott tells us that both the relatively-powerful and the relatively-powerless engage in public performances that correspond to their positions within a hierarchical social structure. These performances might include, for instance, acts of “humility and deference” by the subordinated, and acts of “haughtiness and mastery” by those that dominate (p.11). But there are corresponding, private or semi-private discourses and practices that deviate from those prescribed or expected, and which are only shared amongst members of powerful or disempowered groups – here, a “hidden” transcript is therefore only really hidden from “certain, specified others” (p.14) in the context of hierarchical social relations.

There is thus similarity and connection between the public and hidden transcripts of the socially disempowered and empowered. Both groups have their onstage and offstage sets of speech and practice that are shared with, or guarded from, those outside their particular realm. These public and hidden transcripts exist in a complex dialectical relationship. Put simply, practices of domination create a “hidden transcript” that then impinges upon the public one by way of power relations in the “offstage” space that ensure its continuity and maintenance (p.28). But there are marked differences between the public and private transcripts of the dominant and of the subordinated. Firstly, subordinates risk violence if the private transcript becomes revealed in the public realm, especially in the presence of those who are dominating. The elite, by contrast, solely face repercussions of ridicule if their hidden transcripts are made public. A second marked difference is that the dominant’s posing comes from a need to legitimize their position, and not from a place of survival as in the case of the subordinate (p.11).

How does Scott’s textured notion of resistance inform my reading of Honduran Garifuna organizations’ responses to dispossession and erasure vis-à-vis the space of possibility? Before elaborating on this point, I must lay out the “four varieties of political discourse among

subordinate groups” that Scott speaks about (p.18). Firstly, there is “the safest and most public form of political discourse ... that which takes as its basis the flattering self-image of elites” (Ibid). This might be thought of as the way in which subordinate groups collude with the public transcript of the dominant in order to advance their own interests. Secondly, is “the hidden transcript itself” (Ibid), the discourse that circulates when the less-powerful group is “offstage.” Thirdly, is a realm that “lies strategically between the first two” (p.18-19), and might be thought of as instances of disguise and double meaning, where “a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups” (p.19). Lastly, are the “explosive” ruptures of the boundary between the hidden and public transcript – a direct speaking of truth to power (Ibid).

In discussing Garifuna strategies of resistance to their dispossession, and the organizational tactics that are being enlisted in *la lucha*, I do not intend to expose the particular details of the hidden transcript of the oppressed. Indeed, to do so might reinforce the very structures of power that they are struggling against. Rather, my research seeks to interpret the hidden transcript of the Garinagu via a discussion of its “partially sanitized” and public manifestations, in order to further theorize what I am calling the space of possibility. I thus primarily approach the activism of OFRANEH and ODECO through Scott’s third variety of political discourse (p. 18-19).

### **The Art of Resistance: The Space of Possibility as Critique of Mestizaje**

Scott’s work provides a certain perspective on Garifuna resistance, which informs my notion of the particular sort of racial “in-between-ness” in which the Garifuna exist. What I set out to do in this section then, is to set my work apart from the bulk of scholarship concerned with the Garinagu’s “hybridity.” Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) does not write about the Garinagu

specifically, but her notion of “the borderlands” is a useful starting point for approaching theorizations of hybridity and *mestizaje* in order to delimit my particular approach. Anzaldúa advances a definition of *mestizaje* (“mixture”) that is primarily cultural, and critiques of Anzaldúa’s work point to how such discourse re-makes colonial racial categories and meanings in the present. Andrea Smith (2011), for example, assesses how Anzaldúa’s romanticizing of *mestizaje* relegates Indigenous peoples to the past, or concedes that they exist in the present but with a static and unmoving culture that opposes the fluidity and dynamism associated with the “modern” *mestiza*.

Shalini Puri (2004) surveys discourses of racial mixture across the Caribbean and Latin America in *The Caribbean postcolonial*. She maintains that dominant notions of *mestizaje* have long deviated from Jose Martí’s early imaginings of a regional identity that countered U.S. Imperialism through a rejection of racial segregation (p.54). Instead, Puri says, *mestizaje* in contemporary Latin America remakes historical patterns of racist exclusion and domination via a conflation of racial “betterment” with European admixture and modernity. This version of *mestizaje* – as a “hegemonic cultural construct” (p.58) – is undergirded by a logics of white supremacy that rely upon an Othering and erasure of Blackness. As such, its attractiveness to the bourgeois nationalist project (p.58) lay in what Mendoza (2006) says is its ability to delineate and separate while professing to unite. I have earlier identified the persistence of *blanquiamiento* in Honduras, and have also given some indication as to how it structures Garifuna dispossession. Returning to these ideas lets me further the notion that hegemonic notions of racial mixture in Latin America are organized along lines of racial “betterment” informed by white supremacy, a project that is also gendered.

Baring these critiques of Anzaldúa's work in mind, *Borderlands/La frontera* offers us some pertinent insight into how the production of a *mestizo* subject relies on the production, subjugation and invisibilization of the *mestiza*. Indeed, as Mendoza (2006) outlines in his work on Honduran nationalisms, the production of the *mestizo* (or ladino) national subject relied upon a gendered story of national origins. In this national myth, white male *conquistadores* are construed as the fathers of the modern Republics, and Indigenous women the mothers. These tales of the birthing of the nation are sanitized of the racial violence and exploitation that characterized Spanish colonization of the Isthmus, and provide the basis for national claims to territories via stories that construe *mestizos* as having a historical connection to the land. This simultaneously relegates Indigenous (and Black) Hondurans to the past and/or to the margins. Today the modern *mestiza* is mother to Honduras, a nation-state resting on notions of racial "betterment."

Anthropological studies of the Garinagu have engaged with these debates around the significance of racial and cultural mixture in the Americas. These early works largely attempted to demarcate and order the Garinagu's mixed race-ness by debating which aspects of Garifuna culture descended from their African or Kalinago lineages (see, for example Coelho, 1955; Douglas, 1951; Foster, 1987; Gonzalez, 1988). Recent anthropological work on the Garinagu strays from this course, relying on notions of cultural hybridity to conduct a more nuanced reading of the Garinagu's Afro-Indigeneity. The scholarship of Mark Anderson (2009) and Sarah England (1999, 2000, 2006, 2010), for instance, is generally preoccupied with reading the Garinagu's Afro-Indigenous culture as a straddling of myriad spatial and temporal realms vis-à-vis identity, and towards challenging established relations of power.



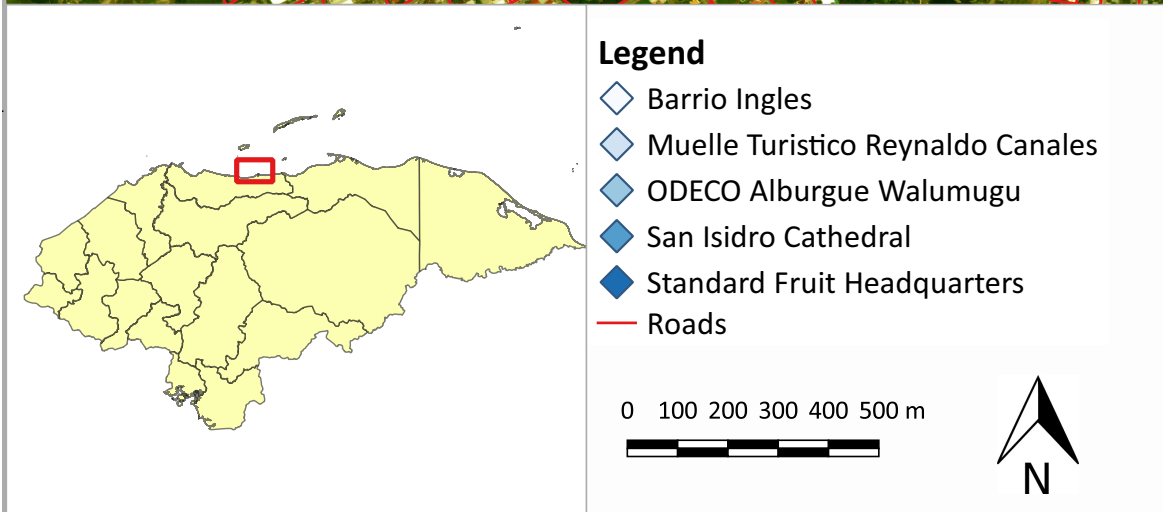
These interpretations of the significance of the racial and cultural “mix” of the Garinagu in relation to modernity do stress that Garifuna hybridity (as an “Afro-indigenous” people) deviates from dominant discourses of *mestizaje* that depend upon a trajectory of “whitening.” This sort of “mixture” provides a platform for multi-faceted resistance to dispossession structured by white supremacy (Gordon and Anderson, 1999, p. 293; England, 2010, p.200). Building on this body of work, I understand the Garifuna’s ability to navigate “multiple identities” (Ibid) as being the result of a long history of strategy and struggle, whereby colonial categories of race are colluded with and contested *in place* via a routing of multi-sited racial meaning and discourse. By choosing to approach Garifuna activism in Honduras from this particular angle, I also offer some insight into how the Garinagu might be rekindling the vestiges of Martí’s notion of *mestizaje* in the present. As my findings chapters will go on to explore in more detail, the Garinagu’s navigation of the space of possibility might well be a way to resist white supremacist *mestizaje* and the globalization of models of racial formation from the U.S.

### **Conclusion**

Some scholars follow Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) trialectic model of spatial analysis, maintaining that space is *produced*. They also emphasize the distinction between the visualization and administration of space and its materialization (Springer, 2009). I, however, describe materialized or “representational” space (Ibid) as *place*. Pivotal to my work is Martin’s (2003), Massey’s (1994) and Escobar’s (2001, 2003, 2010) theorization of place as produced through power-infused processes, which span the ideological and the material across multiple and overlapping spatial-scales with a level of “grounded-ness.” I embellished these scholars’ contributions by way of reading them alongside literature concerned with political struggle over racial and spatial meanings. These practices and strategies of struggle allow for some movement

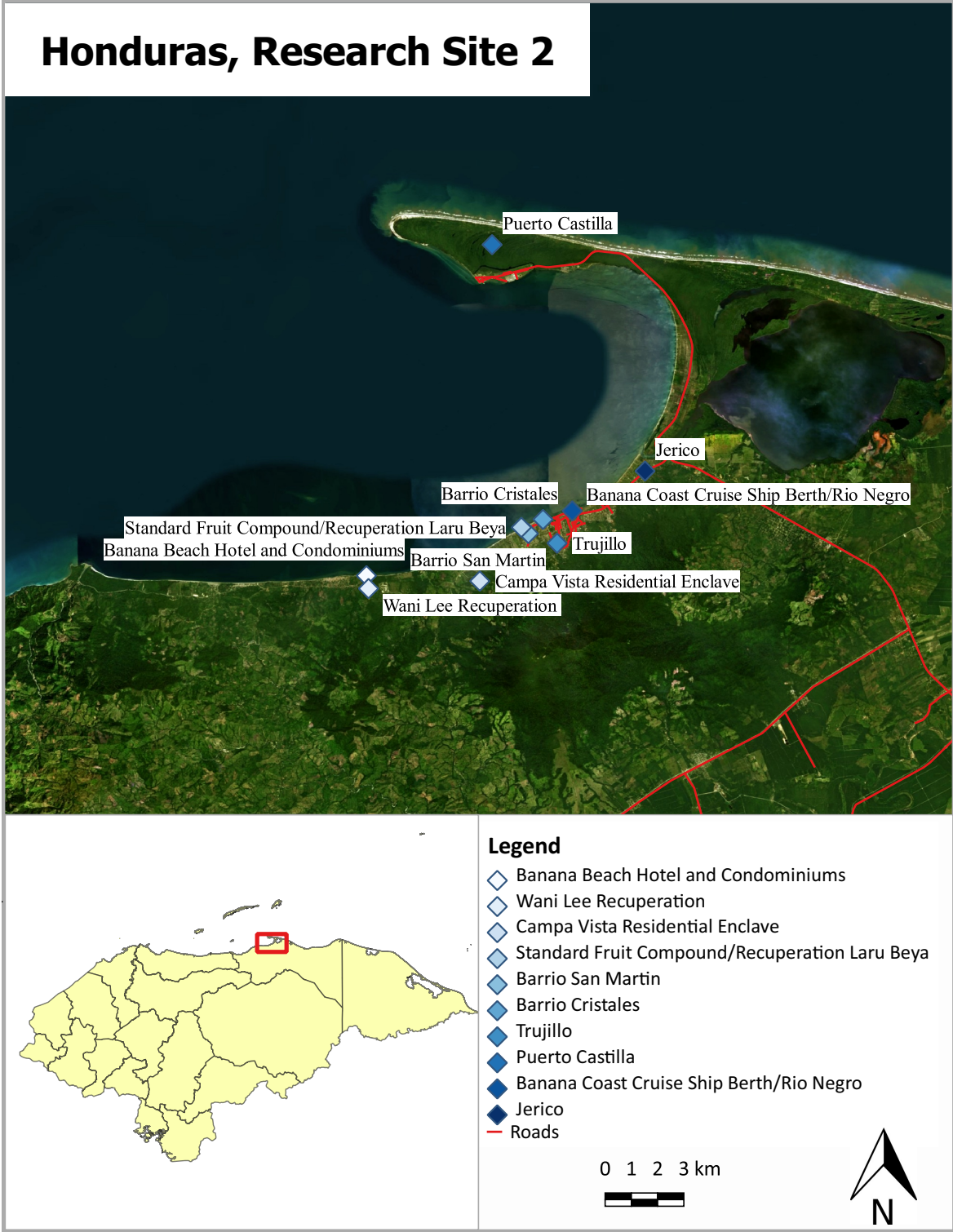
between and across racial categories, in effort to challenge the co-constitutive hierarchies that capitalism rests upon. Struggles over race and space have a gendered element – hierarchies of race depend upon spatial production and (dis)placement, but they also depend upon and are co-constitutive of hierarchies of gender. For example, it might be said that multiculturalism in Honduras relies upon the (dis)placement of Indigenous and Black women towards the (re)production of the unmarked category of the ladino as national subject. Resistance to this project, as is apparent in Honduras, is primarily led by the most affected – Black and Indigenous women. Scott’s (1990) theorization of resistance provides a vantage point from which to recognize multiple modes of flouting, ducking, dodging and directly challenging power. While his work is really about daily and covert political struggles in the context of structures of dominance and subordination, I have found it useful to think through the ways in which it might be applied to Garifuna organizations in Honduras.

# Honduras, Research Site 1



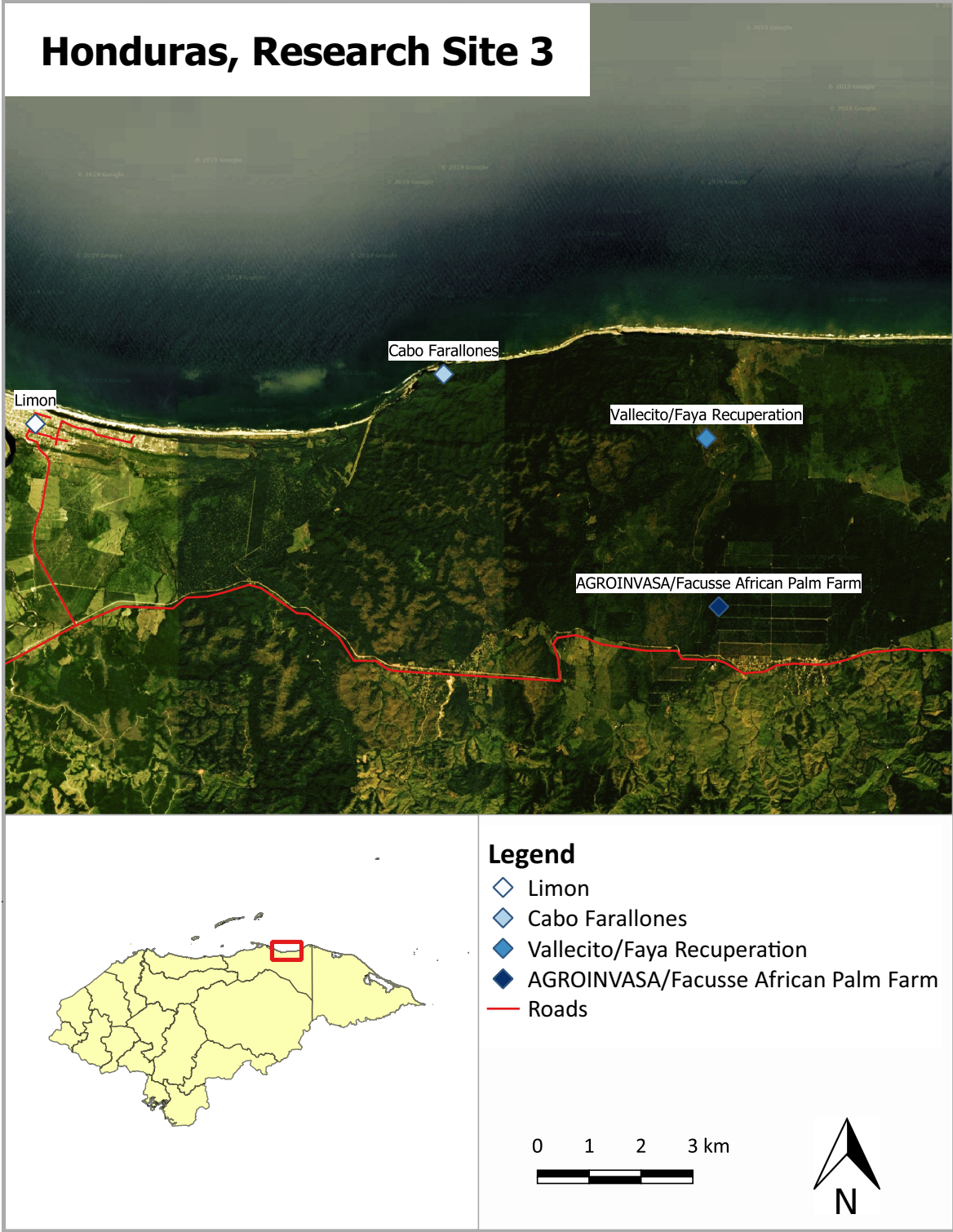
**Figure 4** Map of La Ceiba 1

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.



**Figure 5 Map of Bay of Trujillo 1**

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.



**Figure 6** Map of Bay of Vallecito/Faya 1

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.

## **CHAPTER 4: UNMAPPING THE HONDURAN NORTH COAST: THE GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF GARIFUNA PLACE**

This chapter is an “unmapping” of a section of the Honduran north coast between La Ceiba and Limón. “Unmapping” entails a peeling away of the visual veneer of the landscape, revealing the “ideologies and practices of conquest and domination” that have produced and marked lands and populations over time (Razack, 2002, p.5). “To unmap” says Sherene Razack, “means to historicize, to denaturalize, to ask what is being projected onto particular spaces and bodies” (p.128). In perusing the geography of the north coast with a history of domination and dispossession in mind, I pay particular attention to the recapitulation of racial and spatial hierarchies central to capital. I focus on reading their formation and maintenance in place, considering how the logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness contour uneven geographies in Honduras over time and are guaranteed by racialized dispossession and displacement. I recognize that the recapitulation of racial and spatial hierarchies in Honduras takes place within a historical context characterized by colonialism, U.S. and Canadian imperialism, and the expansion of global capital. I pay significant attention to the ways in which neoliberal reconfigurations of Honduras reference and extend the intertwined legacies of Conquest, colonization, and the American banana enclave economy.

My own travels across and in-between research sites and places in northern Honduras has influenced the way I organize this chapter. I use the north coast’s main thoroughfare (the Central America 13 or CA-13) as a way through the landscape of the littoral, recalling my journeys by collective taxis in the cities and towns of the Honduran Caribbean, and by buses in-between

them. Over the course of hours of travel within and across research locations, my eyes would peer through vehicle windows while conversing with drivers, *cobradores* (“fare collectors”) and fellow passengers. The stories they told were often about places on the other side of the tempered glass; the changes or continuities they had perceived over their lifetimes; and how one place we passed was connected to another somewhere else. In taking a methodological cue from these journeys but attending more directly to issues of race, space, place and power, I now begin my unmapping of the north coast.

### **The Persisting Plantation: Garifuna Dispossession from Vallecito**

#### **From El Porvenir to the Aguán Valley**

La Ceiba is an easily found spot on most maps of the Honduras, including the one at the front end of this dissertation. If you are looking at that map, let your eyes drift a half-a-millimetre or so to the left of La Ceiba - it is there that a small community named El Porvenir lies. I start here, at the turnoff to El Porvenir on the CA-13. Winding my way east along the north coasts’ central artery, through the Aguán Valley, I take us to Limón, and then back towards Trujillo, Santa Fé and eventually to La Ceiba, Honduras’ third-largest city.

The view from the highway at El Porvenir is composed of almost every shade of green imaginable. The north coast of Honduras is always verdant, even at times of year when the Pacific coast turns to shades of rust and ochre. A strip of flat, fertile land forms a fringe known as the Caribbean coastal plain, a geographic feature of Central America that extends from Belize down to Panama. Although the highway is only several kilometers wide at this point, the lay of the land does not permit a view of the sea. But the mountains to the south/right of the CA-13 are certainly visible, they are tall and seem to virtually explode into the sky. As our eyes sweep over

the coastal plain towards these defined peaks, we are looking over the traditional territory of the *Xicaque* peoples. The Xicaque are an Indigenous group dispossessed and displaced much further inland by the Spanish (England, 2000), who formally gained land in the interior of the mountainous Yoro department by way of treaty with the government of Honduras in 1860. Today, the Xicaques comprise one of Honduras' nine "autochthonous ethnic groups," named the *Tolipanes* in official multicultural discourse (Phillips, 2015).

In the years after the Xicaque were displaced from the coast, another dispossessed Indigenous peoples arrived to these shores – the Garinagu of St. Vincent and the Grenadines or Yurumein, who are also included in the official multicultural rubric. As Honduras' fertile Caribbean alluvial plain became increasingly incorporated into the global economy by way of large-scale fruit production run by a handful of American capitalists, the Garinagu were dispossessed of much of their subsistence lands. Garifuna men became an invaluable source labour for the plantations, migrating along the coast in the process (Euraque, 2003). While some Garifuna men would return to their home communities after seasonal work, others became founding members of newly established Garifuna communities. Today, there are 46 communities along Honduras' northern shore, from the Guatemalan border in the west to the country's eastern-most reaches in the department of Gracias a Dios (Garcia, 2014, p.218).

The coastal plain narrows as the highway approaches La Ceiba, and the mountains that form the *Nombre de Dios* or "Name of God" range become more sharply defined against the sky. The view of the peaks is captivating, and the lush land that spans the distance between the highway and its foothills is textured by the striping of parallel lines - the geometry of extensive cultivation. A sign on the side of the road that indicates vast acreage belongs to Dole. The inescapable presence of Dole on the western edge of La Ceiba is both a remnant and reminder of



its current subsidiary Standard Fruit Honduras S.A., one of the fruit multinationals that conceded vast swaths of this coast in the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Johnson, 2007). Dole purchased the Standard Fruit Company in 1964 after the decline of the banana enclave economy, but holds only a fraction of the land relative to what Standard Fruit once did. But, if you - like me - have eaten pineapple from Honduras sold in North America, there is a high chance that it came from this Montecristo plantation, which extends over 24.2 square kilometers and employs approximately 1053 workers (Dole).

As Razack (2002) instructs her readers to do, I have started from space: taking the view of Dole's vast Montecristo plantation and its mountainous backdrop as a starting point, I began to uncover the interlocking and overlapping histories of domination and oppression that are written onto the land. Beginning with the displacement of the Xicaque by Spanish colonial powers, and then turning to the dispossession and displacement of the Garinagu to and across these shores, the Montecristo plantation has become a site from which to examine the "spatial continuities" (McKittrick, 2013, p.2) that bridge the past with the present.

The landscape continues to tell us much more as we chart the CA-13 Highway across the coast. It reveals the interconnections between various phases of capitalist expansion into Honduras, and the persistent logics that underpin them. The forested mountain range that rises above the pineapples - the *Nombre del Dios* range - forms the backbone of Honduras' Pico Bonito National Park. This national park is one of a network that spans the coast called the Honduras Caribbean Biological Corridor (HCBC) (Loperena, 2016, p.186), housed within the much larger Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC) that extends along the entire Central American isthmus (Ibid). The MBC was established in 1997 with funding from the World Bank, part of a larger trend described as "green neoliberalism" by some scholars (Brondo, 2013;

Loperena, 2016). Lands that once fell within the banana enclave have now been cordoned off and enclosed as national “protected” areas, which are overseen by a combination of state agencies, private interests and environmental NGOs (Loperena, 2016, p.186).

“Green neoliberalism” or “neoliberal conservation” in Honduras has violently displaced – and continues to threaten - Garifuna communities that are located on or near lands slated for simultaneous commodification and “protection” (Brondo, 2013; Loperena, 2016, p.186). Much of the land ensconced in the HCBC traditionally sustained the Garifuna culture even during the days of the enclave, but is now off-limits to the Garinagu who still reside on its peripheries (Ibid). Many, if not all, of these protected zones have become tourist attractions for both national and international tourists. As Keri Brondo’s (2013) research attests to, Garifunas have been written out of their traditional subsistence grounds. Their lands have been turned into sites of pleasure, leisure and profit for white foreigners and local ladino elites by neoliberal policies. The various parks that make up the HCBC are also nearly always “contiguous with some of the most fertile and productive agricultural lands in Honduras” (Loperena, 2016), and the HBC’s administration by (mostly) private entities raises a growing concern that they may be eventually auctioned off to agro-industry. Looking across Doles’ huge plantation to the lofty peaks above seems to confirm those fears, and invites a thinking through of the ways in which lands are ideologically constructed as empty, in order to be claimed and conquered over time.

About 20 kilometres outside of La Ceiba, the highway passes the Garifuna villages of Corozal and Sambo Creek. The *Nombre de Dios* mountain range continues to rise from the rich alluvial plain, but at Sambo Creek the Pico Bonito National Park ends and the Nombre de Dios National Park begins. It is here, too, that we find an illustrative example of how this interconnected corridor of national parks forms a critical part of the region’s ecotourism draw,

and how the enclosure of “protected” areas are critical to the production of tourism zones on adjacent lands that serve to further dispossess the Garinagu (Brondo, 2013; Loperena, 2016). Tourism was introduced as a national development strategy in neoliberal Honduras (Mollett, 2014), and large tracts of the Garinagu’s traditional territory that lie in the shadow of the Honduran Caribbean Biological Corridor (HCBC) have been auctioned off to Canadian and American hoteliers (Brondo, 2013). Sambo Creek Garinagu have lost access to much of their untitled and titled ancestral lands as a result of tourism “development” that hinges on its proximity to national parks and beaches. Increasingly too, are incursions by transnational companies looking to construct hydroelectric dams on the Cuyamel river that courses through the village. Garifunas along the coast are fighting against their continued and accelerating despatialization, and land defenders such as Sambo Creek’s Omar Suazo or “Babakle” have suffered violent attacks and imprisonment for taking a stand against steadily increasing encroachments onto Garifuna territory (GarifunaWeb May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

### **From the Aguán Valley to Limón and Vallecito**

East of Sambo Creek the highway passes through the small town of Jutiapa, and the mountain range that spans the coast splits into two arms. One arm extends inland (*Cordillera La Esperanza*) and one reaches towards the sea (*Nombre de Dios*, where the Honduran Caribbean Biological Corridor continues). The CA-13 Highway follows the route inland, and eventually emerges into an enormous, flat expanse that stretches into the distance. This is the Aguán Valley and the mountains of the Honduran Caribbean Biological Corridor (HCBC) are far off to the north now, descending into the curvature of the Bay of Trujillo and the string of Garifuna communities that line its shores. Much of this valley was conceded to the Standard Fruit Company in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the vast majority of it was designated state land after

the decline of the enclave. Standard's former banana plantations have now been sewn with African Palm, and thousands of hectares of frond-topped trees extend in all directions. Standard Fruit brought the African Palm to this part of the world in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and they continue to have some hand in the industry as a subsidiary of Dole (Kerrsens, 2013).

To understand why there is so much African Palm on the Honduran north coast, it is useful to delve into the scholarship on the "global land grab." Early academic work on this topic points to global concerns around food security and climate change as being driving factors, resulting in a rise in demand for land for large-scale food production and biofuel. But, following from White and Dasgupta (2010), a more recent body of work posits that land grabbing is really "control grabbing" related to the expansion of capital. This literature engages Marxian concepts of primitive accumulation and/or Harvey's (2005) notion of "accumulation by dispossession" in their analyses (Hall, 2013). It also highlights the various mechanisms by which land grabs take place, and makes the case for smaller land acquisitions to be considered as land grabs as well (2013). Borras et al (2012) bring this discussion to the specifically Latin American context, focussing on the predominance of large-scale "flex crop" cultivation there. Here, the authors identify two core trends - the noted role played by domestic capital or "(Trans)Latina Companies" (Ibid), and the central function of the state in these large-scale land acquisitions.

Attending to the role that the neoliberal state plays in global grabs of land in Latin American by way of an analysis of Colombia, Roosbelinda Cárdenas (2012) describes "green grabs" that are intimately related to the multicultural territorial turn. For Cárdenas, "green multiculturalism" refers to the delimitation of Black ethnic territory in ways that foster their erosion and the reestablishment of the plantation model of agricultural production in the Colombian Pacific (p.315). In her article "The power to plunder," Sharlene Mollett (2016) makes

the key point that land grabs in Honduras - both large *and* small scale (“macro” and “micro” grabs) - rest upon a remaking of racial hierarchy as well, and as translated into a discourse of appropriate and inappropriate land use. This, in turn, is intricately wound into recapitulations of *terra nullius* that bolster the project of dispossession, something I have spoken to in earlier parts of this dissertation. Going forward, I use Mollett’s (2016) keen observations as a base from which to more clearly articulate how white supremacy persists into the multicultural now from the banana enclave and *mestizaje* nationalism, describing how it has structured the reformulation of the Honduran elite via racialized dispossession, land grabs and reconcentration.

The principal beneficiary of the world’s increasing demand for biofuel in Honduras is the corporation Dinant, founded by the now-deceased Palestinian-Honduran capitalist Miguel Facussé. The reconstitution of the Central American oligarchic class and the prominence of Arab Hondurans is here my focus - how did Miguel Facussé rise to power in Honduras, and what does it tell us about global capital and the way it remakes and extends earlier projects of domination? While *mestizaje* nationalism relied upon the rendering of a Black Other to constitute a *mestizo* or ladino national subject, all “foreign” non-European immigrants – including various waves of predominantly-male Arab immigrants who arrived to Honduras fleeing persecution in their own homelands (Euraque, 1996, p.32) – were perceived as threatening to the cohesiveness of a burgeoning Honduras and the power of the local landed elite. This, says Mendoza (2006), was related to the role that non-Black immigrant labour played in the banana enclave; male Arab immigrants formed an indispensable part of the workforce of the fruit giants, but they faced barriers to belonging in Honduran society (Ibid). But, as I show, the particularities of the racial and spatial organization of the enclave eventually provided the routes and channels by which these Arab immigrants and their descendants could integrate into the Honduran oligarchic class

and the global elite. So while the enclave's racial and spatial organization generally reflected the American segregationist policies of the time, there were exceptions and complications that placed Arab immigrants into privileged positions. While the latter were "non-European" and would have not been included in the category of "white" in the U.S., they were nonetheless recruited into the higher-paying managerial ranks of the three major fruit companies alongside Europeans and white Americans (Mendoza, 2006).

It was the particular racial and spatial organization of an enclave economy and nationalist project structured by white supremacy, then, that created the conditions for "foreign domination of elite urban commerce" in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Honduras (Mendoza, 2006. p.31). Arab immigrants were usually male and single – and thus highly mobile within the enclave economy - and were able to translate their financial gains and connections in the enclave into tremendous social mobility in the wider Honduran society, despite the objections of the *criollo* elite (Mendoza, 2006). Indeed, by the 1940s, Arab immigrants (including the Facussés) had leveraged their positions in the enclave and transformed San Pedro Sula into a manufacturing center, where they were largely invested in the production of textiles and clothing (p.33). The social mobility that Arab immigrants and their descendants gained saw their further empowerment by way of acceptance into – and eventual marriage with members of - the oligarchic class (Euraque, 1996). This exponential increase in their social power and that of their descendants, however, was largely in contrast to, and at the expense of, other groups of enclave workers deemed Other to the *mestizo* or ladino national subject – specifically, those groups racialized as Black (Mendoza, 2006, p.192).

Travelling east from Corocito is a seemingly endless expanse of African Palm reaching towards the horizon. About half an hour after passing the turnoff to Limón, there is an unmarked

and barely distinguishable track that leads through a dense stand of trees. At the end of this track the plantation suddenly peters out, and there appears a wide, open field that extends for nearly two kilometers northwards to the Caribbean Sea. This is the site of the Vallecito land recuperation (or *Faya* in the Garifuna language).

I first arrived to Vallecito in 2015 with a contingent of OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders. The palm plantation we drove through held great significance to my *compañeros* (“companions”) on the bus, as it belonged to the infamous Facussé. Vallecito forms a part of the ancestral territory of the Limón Garinagu, and is where generations of those community members farmed, fished and gathered materials for food, medicine and cultural practices. In the 1970s, vast swaths of untitled Garifuna ancestral lands here were rented to a conglomeration of military officers by the state-agency INA, and an African Palm plantation called “Agroindustrial Vallecito S.A. (AGROINVASA)” established (England, 2000, p.49). In the mid-1990s, Facussé’s reign of terror and dispossession extended from the Aguán into the areas surrounding Limón, as he set his sights on expanding and co-joining existing palm plantations and planting new ones. Using his political connections and influence, and taking further advantage of the overhaul of land tenure in neoliberal Honduras, Facussé was able to purchase Garifuna lands in the vicinity of Cabo Farallones near Vallecito in a highly contested transaction. He then used this as a base to encroach onto nearby lands, including the AGROINVASA palm plantation (England, 2000).

Facussé’s increasing economic power dramatically influenced what lands were included and excluded from Garifuna collective titles during this dramatic shift in land tenure. Sarah England (2000), conducting her own doctoral research in the region in the 1990s, describes how Facussé began to mobilize poor and landless ladinos onto lands that were still under state-

control, hiring them as labourers to clear forested land so it could be claimed as “worked” and purchased from the INA (Pg. 49). In response to these orchestrated land invasions, a group of Limoneño Garifunas formed a land defense group called *Iseri Lidameri* (“New Dawn”) to make the claims that much of these lands were ancestral Garifuna lands, and should be included in their collective titles.

While the Limón community’s collective title was never amplified to include the lands at Vallecito, OFRANEH supported this grassroots initiative in collectively titling 2 700 hectares of land there as 6 “agricultural associative businesses” or peasant cooperatives through the INA in 1997 (OFRANEH, 2012). After these cooperatives were established, Limón land defenders had grounds to petition the state agency to have Facussé’s *colonos* (“colonists,” those employed in clearing, working and settling land in order for Facussé to claim it) evicted before Facussé could lay claim to it. Afterwards, the Limon Garinagu – and particularly the women of the community - began to farm their tracts of land in the shadow of the surrounding palm plantations.

Just one year later, in 1998, Facussé attempted to invade the Vallecito cooperatives again, planting 100 hectares of African Palm within their bounds (Honduras Accompaniment Project, 2012). OFRANEH and the Limón Garinagu took their case to the Honduran courts, and a 1999 Supreme Court of Justice ruling confirmed the Garifunas’ ownership of the land in question (Ibid). In 2004, community members noticed a steady stream of new ladino encroachments and enclosures of the Vallecito cooperatives (OFRANEH, 2012).

Existing scholarship points to how state-sanctioned ladino *colono* (“colonist”) invasions of Black and Indigenous space in Honduras are rooted in national spatial imaginaries informed by white supremacy, and justified by discourse around “suitable” and “unsuitable” land-use



practices that echo *Terra Nullius* (Mollett 2009, 2015). Facussé's orchestrated ladino invasions of Vallecito were guided by a persistent ideology of *blanquiamiento* that sees landless and culturally "whitened" ladino national-subjects (dis)placed to transform lands in accordance with the dominant, Eurocentric norms of land use that inform Honduran agrarian policy. This only served to bolster his family's wealth and power – which had been accumulated as a result of white supremacist logics undergirding the enclave and Honduran society. As George Lipsitz (2007, 2011) points out, the increasing disparity in material advantage and disadvantage is intricately bound up with the dialectics of race and space. White supremacy, as a structure of material advantage, depends upon the material disadvantage of Black peoples and communities. As Garifuna land struggles attest to, Facussé's control of vast areas of the north coast (and eventually the state of Honduras) hinged upon his attempted destructions of Black place.

It is at this point in the chapter that I recall my arrival to Vallecito with OFRANEH land defenders in 2015 – our OFRANEH bus emerging from the dense palms into that wide-open expanse. It is there, on the edge of disparate landscapes, that we might further understand how white supremacy and anti-Blackness is interwoven with contemporary American imperialism in Honduras, and what that means for the Garinagu. It is on that same cusp that the story of Facussé intersects with that of Reinaldo Villalobos, a now-deceased resident of a ladino village called Icoteas near Limón. Reinaldo Villalobos was initially employed as a labourer on Facussé's African Palm plantation in Vallecito, but rapidly rose in ranks to become one of the latter's primary "*testaferos*."<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to establish the precise details of how the Honduran political and economic elite became increasingly enmeshed with the cocaine cartels of Colombia and

---

<sup>8</sup> In Honduras, a *testafero* refers to a third-person whose name appears on a land title in lieu of the actual owner, in order to by-pass restrictions on the amount of land held by any one person or corporation, or to conceal the actual owner of illegally-gained lands (Bird, 2013).

Mexico, but what is known is that Villalobos the *testafero* went on to become a powerful local *narco* who unleashed a reign of terror on the coast in effort to secure 1000 hectares of land at Vallecito adjacent to Facussé's plantation (OFRANEH, 2012; Bird, 2013). These lands – those that Garifuna land defenders noted were being invaded in 2004 - encompassed a significant portion of the Limón Garinagu's peasant cooperatives, and became the location of a clandestine runway or “*narcopista*” used for the transfer of cocaine northwards. This is clearly etched into the landscape today - the wide open field that our OFRANEH bus emerged into that night in December 2015 being precisely where it was located.

In an exchange published by WikiLeaks, the U.S. State Department professed their knowledge of cocaine-laden planes flying in and out of Facussé's property (Kerssen, 2013, p.44). But American military and DEA stationed in Honduras – as well as the Honduran forces that worked alongside them - seemed unwilling to do anything about it. After the 2009 American and Canadian-backed coup d'état, Villalobos continued to be prominent figure in the “second level of power” that had emerged in Honduras, a burgeoning local *narco* class that was protected by the economic and political elite (Right Action Human Rights Report 2013, p.7). In turn, the *narcos* of Colón allowed oligarchs like Facussé to continue to terrorize those who might not want to part with their land. *Sicarios* or assassins working for Villalobos joined forces with Dinant's private security to increasingly threaten, harass and intimidate Garifunas in the vicinity of Limón. Honduran state forces, newly empowered by the War on Drugs (Paley, 2014) came under the control of Facussé as well, supplementing his and Villalobos' paramilitary and tightening his grip on the coast. This is indicative of a trend noted across the north coast in post-coup Honduras, where state forces increasingly and violently enforce processes of racialized

dispossession by capital (Loperena, 2016, pg.186), processes that increasingly depend upon the juxtaposition of informal and formal economies as witnessed by the landscape in Vallecito.

A Garifuna lawyer I interviewed in 2015 stated that the ever-tightening entanglement of the elite, the Honduran state and the cartels after the 2009 coup d'état presents a very serious obstacle to Garifuna land struggles in the region:

“I see it clearly, because I am a lawyer, and I have been working on this – I have lived my life in relation to this topic; land, territories, territoriality, titling. In one way, I see it as being so easy, so simple. But when it comes to fighting for Garifuna rights to territory, the way is full of obstacles. Thorns. Rocks. And guns. And ultimately – drugs. Very difficult. And that’s without even mentioning the easily manipulated and malleable officials that you’ll find in the justice system, who should be, in principle, aligned with the fight for justice. Without us having representatives in the system, it’s a bit difficult. Actually, it’s impossible” (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3rd, 2015).

It was in these “impossible” circumstances that OFRANEH joined Limón land defenders in repeatedly approaching the INA to make the case for the eviction of Villalobos and Facussé (OFRANEH, 2012). In 2010, OFRANEH signed an agreement with the INA stating that the boundaries of the cooperatives would be resurveyed (Honduran Accompaniment Project, 2012). Predictably perhaps, the state agency was unwilling or unable to access the site and make good on their obligation to re-survey the land and confirm ownership (Ibid). In response to this, OFRANEH mobilized hundreds of Garifuna families onto the land at Vallecito, gaining critical international attention and support for their cause (Ibid). Finally, in 2012, the land was re-surveyed, and the Honduran military were sent in to remove Villalobos’ and Facussé’s fence and

destroy the *narcopista*. The recuperation remains ongoing, and forms the basis for a later chapter that focusses on the Garifuna land defense movement in the Bay of Trujillo.

### **Garifuna Indigeneity and the Global Defense of Place: The Case of Vallecito**

The discourse of Indigeneity proved immensely valuable to the recuperation of Vallecito from the invasion of Miguel Facussé and Reinaldo Villalobos. Garifuna Indigeneity provides a conduit to the ILO Convention 169, ratified by Honduras in 1995 as result of protest and pressure from Garifuna and other ethnic autochthonous organizations (Brondo, 2013). By positioning the Garinagu as autochthonous and Indigenous on the national/global stage and pushing for the ratification of 169, OFRANEH helped to create “a legal mechanism through which the Garifuna could make claims to territory both currently and traditionally occupied,” while “declaring the state’s role in securing land rights for the Garifuna and ensuring that traditional law and rights be protected” (p.44). Although OFRANEH did not end up petitioning the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) in the case of the invasion of Vallecito, their ability to negotiate multiple spatial scales and legal frameworks undoubtedly helped procure the 2012 INA survey that re-confirmed Garinagu cooperative ownership of the land. But, besides providing the channels through which to claim and exercise land rights in Honduras, Garifuna Indigeneity also facilitated a platform from which to forge coalitions and “raise a voice out there in the world” (Interview with Vallecito 1 April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Forging and negotiating multi-scalar networks centered on Indigenous land rights became increasingly important to the Limón land defenders after the 2009 coup d’état, when the collusion of the Honduran elite with the drug cartels made it increasingly difficult to rid the Garifuna cooperatives of invaders. Indeed, it was only after OFRANEH and *Iseri Lidamari*

mounted an international campaign to raise awareness of the Honduran Garinagu's land plight that the Director of the INA declared his commitment to re-survey the cooperatives in 2010 (Russo, 2012). And, in 2012, in light of INA's previous failure to fulfil their obligations, OFRANEH mobilized 200 Garifuna families and a network of allies and delegates onto the Vallecito lands, vowing to stay until the survey was completed (Honduras Accompaniment Project, 2012). Surviving attacks by the armed paramilitary forces of Facussé, threats from heavily-armed drug traffickers, and constant harassment from the Honduran military and state police, Vallecito counted as one of the first OFRANEH-supported "recuperations" of ancestral Garifuna lands that engaged support from local, national and international networks (Russo, 2012).

Vallecito was evacuated by Villalobos and Facussé after the INA surveyed the land in 2012 - the impossible had been surmounted by the land defenders and their allies, but only momentarily. OFRANEH and the Limón Garinagu continue to ready themselves for another invasion, whether in the form of a Charter City on the "uninhabited" lands in eastern Colón where Vallecito is located (OFRANEH), or through small-scale *colono* ("colonist") incursions that will later be consolidated by the wealthy. Past experiences at Vallecito have been very instructive. In order to ensure that Vallecito remains a Garifuna place, OFRANEH and the land defenders must continue to stage the recuperation. As I describe in more detail in Chapter 5, "staying on the land" is key to Garifuna land recuperation efforts. Garifunas must enact land use in ways that both collude with and contest dominant spatial/racial imaginaries and practices.

## **Banana Barons and the Banana Coast: Garifuna Dispossession from the Bay of Trujillo**

Leaving Vallecito and returning to the west past Limón, it is only a few hours until the dirt road becomes paved and tapers into the CA-13. At Corocito, the highway charts its way northwards to the Bay of Trujillo, where it eventually finds its end. About an hour north of Corocito, there appears the tiny hamlet of Silín, where one can continue straight ahead to Puerto Castilla on the slim northern arm of the Bay of Trujillo, or turn left and into Trujillo on its southern shores. Significant portions of the land around this large Bay – between Silín and Puerto Castilla, and then back around towards Trujillo and further west towards Santa Fé – comprise the ancestral territory of the Garinagu, and much of that falls within the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro’s Bonilla title that I discussed in Chapter 2. For further illustration of research site 2, readers can return to Figure 1 at the front end of this dissertation, as well as to Figure 7 which immediately follows Chapter 7.

Today, Dole (Standard Fruit Honduras S.A.) and Facussé continue to benefit from instances of state-sanctioned theft of Bonilla lands that I describe in Chapter 2. Dole produce from the Aguán region is stored at and shipped from here (Interview with Vallecito 2 January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018), and Facussé’s Dinant maintains a port storage facility as well (CAO Investment Report – Complaints against IFC’s investment in Dinant 2017). In the same compound, there is also a Honduran naval base, where the American military and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) operates a “forward base” linked to the War on Drugs (Shanker, 2015). While living across the Bay in 2016 it was common to see American helicopters rise above Puerto Castilla and fly towards La Moskitia, or fly south and hover ominously over Trujillo before heading east.

Winding along the coast towards Trujillo from Silín, the CA-13 passes through a village

called Jerico. The story of Jerico was a commonly recounted one in the Community, and it became a sort of stock answer to my questions about the erosion of the Bonilla title over the past century. In a number of stories recounted by community members, Jerico was emblematic of the incompatibility of the Garinagu's ancestral values with dominant Honduran society and with ladino peasant world-views and practices in particular. Jerico, according to Garifuna friends and acquaintances, was Garifuna land as outlined by the Bonilla title but which had been lent to a number of ladino peasants seeking refuge and hope on the coast in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As one ODECO-affiliate who had lived in Trujillo for quite some time recounted, land that was lent to ladinos in this manner was never returned: "well, it starts with a humble *campesino* – let us call him Juan. Juan has nothing and is searching for some land to plant his *milpa* ("corn field"). Of course we let him use our land – our ancestors taught us to share. But soon enough, Juan has one cow, then two, then three - and then he builds a fence around the land. Then he gets a gun, and becomes *don Juan*" (Interview with ODECO 3 December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015).

As with more recently granted collective titles along the coast then, the Bonilla title has been repeatedly "invaded" by internally displaced ladino peasants, some of whom – as in the case of Jerico - are described as recipients of invitations to settle Garifuna lands, as tied to Garifuna ancestral values. These sorts of invasions have not necessarily been orchestrated in the fashion of Vallecito; rather, they seem to be connected to movements of ladinos to the coast that began with the advent of *mestizaje* nationalism. As evident in the quote above, ladino possession of dominant spatial imaginaries and practices is still cited as the crux of the problem, as invaded lands are eventually fenced-off and sold (something that Mollett, 2016 describes as "micro" land grabs). The threat of violence, too, is there lurking in the subtext. Many stories told by Garifuna community members mirrored this one, resting upon heavily-circulated stereotypes of

“inherently” violent ladinos (Brondo, 2010). I not only encountered some version of this stereotype when the topic of land loss came up, I was often privy to the reasoning behind why this was “so.” One land defender, for instance, described ladinos or *indios* as culturally uprooted and “lost,” not knowing “who they are” and having the blood of the *conquistadores* and Columbus circulating in their veins. As such, they were predisposed to the violent ways of their European forbearers, something reinforced by their loss of the culture of their Indigenous ancestors (Interview with Vallecito 1 April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

As Mark Anderson (2005) observes, the stereotype of the violent ladino “articulates a sense of racial terror afflicting community members” (p.107). Garifuna stereotypes of “violent” ladinos might thus be said to relate to the persistence of anti-Blackness and white supremacy in Honduras, which form the very foundations of global capital and inform Honduran nationalist projects past and present. Stories of ladinos’ violent theft of Garifuna lands then, also allude to the structural conditions that contextualize Garifuna dispossession – the ways in which white supremacy is made spatial and ensures the expansion of the market. And, while stereotypes of the violent ladino circulate in Garifuna territory, there are a similar set of tales passed around in ladino spaces about the “nature” of the Garinagu. While conducting research, some ladinos in the field quickly shared anecdotes that pivoted on stereotypes of the Garifuna – including those that stressed their supposedly *tranquilo* (“calm”) dispositions. The trope of the “peaceful” Garifuna has existed for decades across the coast: reading Anderson’s (2005) article written over a decade ago, I was astonished that so many of the stories circulated in and around La Ceiba and Trujillo followed the forms he describes. While this might seem to be a somewhat “positive” stereotype at first glance, Anderson notes that Garifuna “peacefulness” is taken up as a “refusal to fight,” which ultimately “becomes rendered as a form of cowardice” (p.108).



Stories about the destruction of Garifuna place in the Bay of Trujillo – specifically, about the erosion of the Bonilla title – might thus be said to be stories about the spatial processes of *blanquiamiento* and anti-Blackness, which sees tacit, state-sanctioned and violent ladino invasions of Garifuna land continue into the multicultural era. The trope of peacefulness and “refusal to fight” or cowardice too, “pulls” ladinos to the coast today, alongside older notions of the Honduran “frontier” that were crafted during the heyday of *mestizaje* nationalism. Reforms connected to neoliberal multiculturalism - especially The Property Law and its articles 96 and 99 (Mollett, 2014) – have effectively regularized many of the racialized “invasions” that have eroded the Bonilla title over the past century (Interview with Cristales and Rio Negro April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016). But, a recent shift in the law has also strengthened the ability of capitalists from the Global North to grab Garifuna lands in this area. The Law of the Municipalities has ceded greater powers of the Municipality of Trujillo, expanded its boundaries and, in effect, created exceptions to Article 107’s preclusion of foreign ownership along the coast (Garcia, 2014). Although the Community of Rio Negro and Cristales remains independent of the state and holds collective title to lands around the Bay, the two main residential *barrios* or neighbourhoods of Cristales and Rio Negro have been incorporated into Trujillo’s widened *casco urbano* (“urban area”). The incorporation of Garifuna residential lands into Trujillo’s official delimitations has, effectively, placed the community’s residential lands under state control. This has had devastating consequences for the Garinagu in the Bay of Trujillo, especially for the *barrio* of Rio Negro, which is just west of Jerico and on the eastern edges of Trujillo’s downtown.

The Canadian real estate speculator Randy Jorgenson – together with his business partner in LifeVision holdings and brother of ex-President of Honduras Porfirio Lobo, Ramón Lobo (Rights Action Canada August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016) – has been one of the prime beneficiaries of the Law

of Municipalities and the amendments to Article 107. It was Jorgenson who was purportedly the driving force behind the Municipality of Trujillo's resurrection of an outdated law of expropriation in 2012, which allowed a significant percentage of Rio Negro to be expropriated from the Garinagu and acquired by him (Kerssen, 2013). Destroying much of Rio Negro for his "Banana Coast" cruise ship berth, Jorgenson reportedly used intimidation and violence to acquire Bonilla-titled lands from Community members for the development of tourism and residential enclaves (Rights Action Canada August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

I was in Trujillo for the grand opening of the Banana Coast cruise ship berth, an experience I describe in Chapter 1. Canadian tourism schemes such as the Banana Coast represent "the largest source of income in the industry in Honduras" (Shiple, 2017, p. 110). But as my experiences that day attested to, this industry is built upon the "stark inequality and exploitation" that is suffered by Indigenous, Black, peasant and working Hondurans (Ibid). Garifuna scholar Doris Garcia (2014) notes that Jorgenson's Banana Coast project deploys images of an imperial fantasy rooted in Eurocentric narrative of the "heyday" of the banana enclave economy. This imagery represents Trujillo as a booming banana town where one might procure a fast fortune, invisibilizing the exploitation of racialized labour that formed the backbone of the industry, and re-inscribing "imaginative geographies" (Said, 1994) that depict the land as empty, undeveloped, under-used and "ripe" for investment. Garifuna lands here are construed as the next development frontier, an easy way for Canadians and Americans to turn a quick coin by investing in lands that might soon become the "next Costa Rica." Although many Garifunas I spoke to in the Bay of Trujillo were initially excited when they heard of tourism development and job prospects, very few Garifunas are employed in any of the tourism ventures. Indeed, several land defenders I interviewed in the Bay of Trujillo in 2016 had joined the movement after deciding that there was

no real benefit for the community: there was “no more space,” and racist hiring practices meant that there were no jobs for Garifunas either (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Rounding a bend in the road and driving for 500 metres along the beach between what remains of Rio Negro and Cristales, one notices the deteriorated or non-existent infrastructure - a sign of neglect by the Municipality that was frequently commented on by Garifuna residents of both *barrios*. Crossing the Rio Cristales from which the *barrio* gets its name, the road soon passes over the Rio San Martín and into *Barrio San Martín*. San Martín is a Garifuna neighbourhood on the outskirts of Cristales, built on land belonging to the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro and included in the Bonilla title. An older woman in San Martín recounted how this land had been rented to the United Fruit Company (UFC) by the Community - it had been returned intact when she was a young girl. As the Garifuna population of Cristales and Rio Negro grew, San Martín soon became a residential neighbourhood, and she had been one of the first to construct a house there. Today, San Martín is densely populated, and there are both Garifuna residents and non-Garifuna residents living in tight quarters. Many of the residents of San Martín, whether Garifuna or not, hold *Dominio Útil* titles to their lots; that is, persons have been granted permission to occupy community lands - to “utilize” it – by the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, who maintains the collective, *Dominio Pleno* (“freehold”) title. However, land invasions by ladinos fleeing violence in Honduran cities are increasing, and have prompted at least two OFRANEH-affiliated land recuperations of Garifuna land in San Martín, Laru Beya (“by the sea shore” in Garifuna) and “Julio Lino” (named after the land defender who was shot when leading the recuperation group onto Garifuna land usurped by the wealthy local ladino family Crespo).

Driving from Cristales to and through San Martín, the pavement gives way to clay that in the rainy season, is often flooded and difficult to navigate. In the months of summer, the parched earth is stirred into giant, invasive dust clouds by the buses that take Banana Coast cruise ship passengers on tours to a number of sites in the Bay, or by the heavy trucks and machinery that make their way back and forth between the Canadian residential enclaves still under construction. The “rocky mountain” style homes of Jorgenson’s Campa Vista project (LifeVision Properties) just past San Martín are also close to another residential enclave called NJOI Santa Fé, owned by a recently deceased Canadian real estate speculator named Patrick Forseth. These enclaves are all on land that has been acquired through highly contested means – land that community land defenders repeatedly insist falls inside the bounds of the Bonilla title, or inside the “buffer zone” of the *Capiro and Calentura* national park, which forms a part of the Honduran Caribbean Basin Corridor (HCBC) that has enclosed and cordoned off ancestral Garifuna subsistence lands (Brondo, 2013). Violence and intimidation on the part of the Canadians was cited by a number of OFRANEH-affiliates in the field, and Jorgenson and Forseth were also described as having corrupted the Municipality and even the Community at several points in recent history, dividing the Garinagu and sowing discord to facilitate illegal land sales.

As one proceeds westward again to the village of Santa Fé, the view to the beach continues to be marred by tall concrete walls and razor-wire topped fences – as is the case closer to Trujillo, the coastline is comprised of a string of residential enclaves that one veteran Garifuna activist, talking to Tyler Shipley (2017), described as the “new Apartheid” (p.113). A number of these gated enclaves are owned by Jorgenson and Forseth, but there are other ladino and foreign-owned beachfront hotels, and a residential compound for Standard Fruit (Dole) workers who work in Puerto Castilla, depicted in Figure 3. As in Rio Negro, Cristales and San Martín,

Garifuna land defenders in Santa Fé described how difficult it was to find a place to live, to farm, or to gather medicinal plants and edible fruits and plants. At the Wani Leè land recuperation, one woman said that: “our main goal here, in first place is – well, we don’t have any place to build our houses. The people of the community, we now have no place to live.” She threw her arms up into the air, visibly frustrated, and continued: “we don’t have – we don’t even have a plot where we can plant to be able to survive! We are poor people. We are poor people, without any resources! So, as people without resources, we need our land ... right?! To plant our plantains, our beans, that’s what we plant around here, and that’s what we are looking out for!” (Interview with Wani Leè 2 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

The unpaved road that charts through the southern span the Bay is hard to traverse on foot – the thick mud or dust, and the heavy machinery and vehicular traffic linked to Canadian tourism schemes makes it a highly uncomfortable undertaking. Many Garinagu in the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro and nearby villages do not own cars, and while collective taxis within the municipal bounds of Trujillo are relatively affordable at around 25 Lempiras or 1 dollar USD, the 15-minute route between Trujillo and the community Santa Fé costs nearly 120 Lempiras or about 5 USD. To put this in perspective, 120 Lempiras was a significant percentage (roughly 80%) of the minimum daily wage at the time of research. Alternatively, there is a bus route between Trujillo, San Martín, Santa Fe, San Antonio and Guadalupe villages that costs around 23 Lempiras, but the schedule is intermittent. The long beach that spans this coast *was* a traditional route between Garifuna villages, and offers a much more pleasant walking experience than the unpaved road. As its various access-points have been progressively cordoned-off by tourism developments, long-time residents of the Bay spoke about the increasing restrictions on their mobility. One informant said that “now, they are even selling our beaches. Now the beaches

are impassable. The foreigners have bought right up to the edge of the beaches, and they have guard dogs so people can't walk along the beaches. There are armed people, guards, and that's a problem for us here in this area. We don't think it's fair. It's not fair because in the past I remember the people went walking on the beach, they went and they came without problem, but not anymore. This is a problem we have in our community" (Interview with Wani Leè 2 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

The privatization of ancestral Garifuna land in the Bay of Trujillo clearly has tremendous impacts on the Garinagu's ability to house and feed their families, as well as move around in and between their communities. As women are the traditional stewards of the land in Garifuna culture (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015), they have been some of the most heavily impacted by dispossession (Brondo, 2013). But Garifuna women also do much of the work associated with spirituality and healing in their communities and in the OFRANEH-affiliated land defense movement. This is usually paid work, and as such represents an important practice of gendered resource distribution (Jenkinson, 1998; Johnson, 2007). Garifuna spiritual practice is already threatened by deepening material poverty in the communities, as less money in circulation often signifies insufficient funds for elaborate rituals like the *dügü*, as well as for the individual consultations that are an important source of income for *buyeis*. Increasingly-restricted access to the beaches and sea along the coast only adds another barrier to women's spiritual practice and material survival, which in turn threatens the continuation of the Garinagu's unique world view.

The effects of dispossession on women spiritual workers became most apparent in the days leading up to the *Berta Vive* march in Tegucigalpa with OFRANEH in 2016. The *buyei* society I am friendly with was frequently hired by OFRANEH to conduct rituals that form a vital and

highly-visual component of the organization's public protests. Before embarking on our journey to "Tegus," the *buyeis* needed to conduct a cleansing and protective preparatory ritual, described as necessary for their safety and well-being, but also for the that of those attending the march on the capital – if the *buyeis* can't work safely, they cannot ensure the safety of the land defenders by way of invoking ancestral protection. The beach, and the sea water, were integral to the rites that the society needed to conduct in preparation for the march, but it was very difficult to find a suitable and accessible stretch of sand. Starting out from my friend's house in San Martín one early morning, it soon became apparent that much of what lay eastwards was inapt, being fronted by a string of popular restaurants and not offering an appropriate level of seclusion. The quieter beach west of the *barrio* was all but inaccessible as well, having a number of fenced-and-walled-in structures right along the shore. Skirting around Standard Fruit's (Dole) residential compound, we were finally able to access a small piece of beachfront in an area that Community land defenders had recently recuperated (recuperation *Laru Beya* or "by the sea-shore" in Garifuna). Several hundred meters west from this recuperation, the land immediately fronting the beach was again cordoned off into the small residential enclave *Tres Conchas* ("three shells") where wealthy ladinos and white foreigners had homes.



***Figure 7* Standard Fruit's Fenced Residential Compound Abuts Onto Recuperation Laru Beya in Barrio San Martín**

Photograph by Author, 2018.





***Figure 8*** Banana Enclave Imagery At Banana Beach, As Seen From Wani Leè

Photograph by Author, 2016.

## **La Ceiba: From Garifuna Community to Company Town and the Distraught “Girlfriend” of Honduras**

Returning to La Ceiba where I started my unmapping of the north coast, I now turn my focus to the spatial organization of that city. This is in effort to assess how racial segregation during and after Standard Fruit’s rein informs and marks the contemporary urbanscape today. Attention to these persistent geographies of exclusion in La Ceiba situates the activism of ODECO that I discuss in later chapters.

“Modern American segregation, or the geographical separation of people as a way of making and fixing absolute racial difference, offers the preeminent example of the interdependence of race and place” (Hoelscher, 2003, p.659). While La Ceiba is in Honduras and not in the U.S., the city was transformed during the reign of the enclave, and racial difference was made and fixed “in place.” Important for this dissertation is a consideration of the ways in which white supremacy became spatially constituted in the “company town,” and vis-à-vis a containment and erasure of Blackness. This process of racial formation both borrowed from and deviated from American racial formations – as I mentioned earlier, Arab immigrants were included with whites in the bureaucratic ranks of the enclave. As has become clear in the example of Vallecito, this particularity of the enclave’s racial and spatial organization created structural conditions by which Arab immigrants were able to control commerce and eventually become the new agro-oligarchic class.

La Ceiba began as a Garifuna village at the mouth of the Cangrejal river that demarcates its eastern bounds (Interview with Vallecito 2 January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018). The Vaccarro Brothers Fruit Company began to incorporate sections of the coast into their banana plantations in the mid

1800s, and eventually emerged as the Standard Fruit Company, who controlled large sections of the coast and made La Ceiba their “company town” (Euraque 1996, 2003). The Standard Fruit Company “enforced forms of segregation in living and social arrangements among whites, mestizos, and Blacks” (Centeno Garcia, 1997, in Anderson, 2005). Arab immigrants to Honduras were incorporated into the bureaucratic ranks of the company along with whites (Mendoza, 2006), but Black immigrants and the Garinagu were limited to strenuous labour in the plantations and on the docks, and housed in the “company town” in a *barrio* reserved for Black workers called *Barrio Ingles*. Although largely erased from their participation in the labour force, Dario Euraque (2003) writes that the Garinagu might have constituted up to 1/3 of the labourers in the enclave. While Garifunas across the coast – especially those seeking land in the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro at Trujillo – tended to self-represent/be represented as “native” *Morenos*, the racial and spatial configurations of the company town did not differentiate the Garinagu from other Black populations (Euraque, 1996).

After the decline of the Standard Fruit Company in the mid-1950s, La Ceiba quickly grew into Honduras’ third-largest city. No longer considered a Garifuna place (Anderson, 2009), it is today largely imagined as distinctly “Honduran” and “mixed.” These notions of “mixed-ness” and “Honduran-ness” – as informed by the white supremacist logics of *blanquiamiento* and anti-Blackness that undergirded the *mestizaje* nationalism – were layered on top of the legacies of U.S.-style racial segregation that had defined the company town for half a century. In post-enclave La Ceiba, “municipal officials and local elites perpetuated racist practices” (Centeno Garcia 1997, in Anderson 2005), and Garifunas and other populations racialized as “Black” were not permitted entry to many restaurants, casinos, hotels and drinking establishments, and were even prohibited from making use of public parks (Ibid). Garifuna friends in the city, as well as

ODECO informants, described how Garifunas had to sit in the back of the Catholic Cathedral when attending service, right up until the 1970s (Interviews with ODECO 4 & 5 April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

Racial stereotypes emanating from *mestizaje* nationalism are apparent in the dominant representations of the city today. La Ceiba is still associated with a “tropical lasciviousness” and the body, and is popularly known as the “girlfriend of Honduras” and lauded for its nightlife, easy-going lifestyle and carnival (Anderson, 2009). The San Isidro Carnival takes place every May, with the main parade making its way up the Avenue of the same name, honouring the Patron Saint of the city, *San Isidro Labrador* (“Saint Isidore the Laborer”). The parade’s origins and association with “Garifuna protest” against racism (Interviews with ODECO 4 & 5 April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018) have been completely omitted from dominant representations of the carnival today, as well from its current practice. The contemporary San Isidro carnival becomes a contemporary performance of erasure that entrenches *blanquiamiento* by way of representation. Garifuna and Black geographies are erased, and a “mixed” ladino and Honduran identity informed by the logics of “whitening” is “put into place” along the parade’s central route.

The shift from *mestizaje* to multicultural nationalism has blurred the distinct contours of racial and spatial segregation that structured Standard Fruit’s company town and the city that emerged from its remnants. But these contours are still very much apparent when we consider how Garifuna communities in the city remain marginalized and invisibilized. The city is not collectively remembered as being a Garifuna *or* Black place, although there exists a significant Garifuna community there to this day, as well as a large population of *Afrodescendientes de Habla Ingles* (“English-speaking Afro-descendants” or Bay Islander Creoles). Many of the city’s ladino residents, one ODECO informant maintained, also have Black heritage (with their

ancestors being Garinagu, Creole, or descending from enslaved and free African populations) – although they do not identify with it. The election of La Ceiba’s first Black or Garifuna mayor – Dr. Jerry Sabio – in 2018 signaled some hope to many Garifunas across the city, one of whom described his victory as a symptom of slowly changing, individual attitudes towards their own African heritage as well as that of others. Dr. Sabio had won the majority share of votes even in *barrios* and *colonias* of the city that were predominantly ladino (Interview with ODECO 5 April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018). These changes are, however, occurring in a social context where “racism” is generally thought of as being non-existent. Ultimately, this stymies the possibility of disassembling the racism-as-structure that underpins spatial injustice in the city.

Like many Honduran cities, La Ceiba has seen a tremendous upsurge in violence since the 1990s, a trend that corresponds with the neoliberal restructuring of its economy (Gutierrez Rivera, 2013, p.3). This violence positively exploding in the years following the 2009 coup d’état in which the elite seized control of the state (Shipley, 2017). Returning to La Ceiba after 8 years away in 2014/2015, my everyday conversations with Ceibeños were dominated by discussion of crimes committed in public spaces. It was a drastic change from my last visit pre-coup, and at one point, I remember thinking that my daily social exchanges had become a sort of collective lamentation of the death of the *novia* (“girlfriend”). The fear of violence, and people’s preoccupation with avoiding violence, also meant that I was repeatedly and firmly given advice about how to move around a city I had once walked around quite confidently. The *dueña* (“owner”) of the house I lived in was now adamant that I use shared taxis when I left the premises, an order that was normally book-ended by stories of family members and friends who had been victims of *delincuencia* (“delinquency” – a commonly-used term for robberies and

assaults in public places) while traversing the city on foot. La Ceiba's taxi drivers thus became a main means of transportation and also, of gathering information about the city en-route.

But while Blackness is invisibilized and neoliberal violence contours the urban geography and residents' senses of place, Standard Fruit's/Dole's gated, high-security headquarters still takes up the lush district that was known as "*la zona American*" ("the American zone") in the days of the enclave economy, and as the *Distrito Mazapán* today ("Breadfruit district"). I certainly was never allowed inside the compound depicted in Figure 8, but a member of the household that I called home for some months worked as a telephone operator on the front desk. Looking at the space on Google Maps, it is a serene tree-filled oasis in a dense, "dangerous" and concrete downtown core that many foreign, white Dole workers call home. Outside of the compound, visitors like myself could take in a small modicum of the calm in Swinford Park, which serves to convey idealized memories of Standard's heyday, displaying a train car used for transportation at the height of the enclave. The car of course, was not used by the racialized and impoverished workers who worked in abject conditions, it was the comfortable means of transport used by the manager in plantation inspections. Today it sits on the edge of the Dole compound, while the abandoned train tracks in *Barrio Ingles* (depicted in Figure 9) are used by ordinary Ceibeños as a place to eke out a living selling fruit and *baleadas* (a typical street food of a folded flour tortilla with a variety of fillings).



***Figure 9*** Standard Fruit's Compound In Distrito Mazapán

Photograph by Author, 2018.



***Figure 10*** Remnants Of Railroad Tracks In Barrio Ingles On The North-Eastern edge Of Standard Fruit's Compound

Photograph by Author, 2018.



## Conclusion

As this chapter makes clear, Miguel Facussé and Randy Jorgenson's (as well as other Honduran elites and foreign real estate speculators) acquisition of Garifuna lands in the vicinity of Limón and the Bay of Trujillo extends a long legacy of racialized dispossession and displacement on the north coast. As I have demonstrated, white supremacy undergirds dominant spatial imaginaries in Honduras and beyond, and is co-constituted through the (attempted) destruction of Black space. To put this process into historical perspective, I have focussed on how the erosion of Garifuna territory is primarily achieved by (dis)placements of impoverished and landless ladinos. Whether contemporary ladino "invasions" of Garifuna territory have been orchestrated or not, they follow the contours of racialized nationalist imaginaries and imagined geographies that undergirded the banana enclave and reactionary nationalisms. These imagined geographies have recapitulated the legacy of *terra nullius*, by way of dispossession that depends upon ideological correlations of racialized coastal space with notions of "emptiness."

Neoliberal violence in Honduras extends these racialized spatial imaginaries and (dis)placements into the multicultural now: ladinos flee violence in central and southern Honduras and find their way to a coast imagined as "peaceful" – a peacefulness-for-some which, on the ground, depends upon state-sanctioned anti-Black violence. The accelerating dispossession of the Garinagu from neoliberal multicultural Honduras is increasingly entrenched by the movement of white Canadian and American bodies into Garifuna place, movements also guided by notions of "empty" land and fast fortunes that have long enticed "investors" to the region. This then, remains a transnational process dependent on the power matrix of which Massey (1994) speaks, where the containment, dispossession, displacement and destruction of racialized bodies in space is achieved by the movement of white or whitened bodies within and

across national boundaries and borders. These movements of “whitened” and white bodies onto Garifuna land, then, are indicative of increasing partnerships between the reconfigured Honduran ruling class with foreign capitalists. White privilege, the “white spatial imaginary” and *blanquiamiento* coalesce to here to move materially poor, peasant and working-class bodies onto Garifuna lands to benefit the global elite. While I have largely paid attention to the issues the Garinagu face in regards to land, I have also demonstrated how racialized displacement is central to neoliberal productions of city space in the city of La Ceiba. There – much as in Limón and the Bay of Trujillo – logics of white supremacy and Black erasure persist from the enclave and *mestizaje* into the multicultural “now,” contouring the urbanscape in ways that continue to erase Garifuna and Black presence and place.

## CHAPTER 5: TRAVERSING THE SPACE OF POSSIBILITY: OFRANEH, ODECO AND THE ETHNIC *GARÍFUNA*

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation I charted the emergence of the ethnic identity *Garifuna* in Honduras over 222 years and two nationalist projects. In doing so, I chronicled shifting official descriptors of the Garinagu, and read them as artefacts of Garifuna struggles over land, labour and representation in the context of capitalist expansion. Garifuna struggles against racialized dispossession and destruction from Conquest into the present moment, I argued, has created an allegorical archive of racial meanings that is routed by Garifuna organizations ODECO and OFRANEH in their contemporary contests over place – what I have termed the “space of possibility.” Going forward, I show how each of these organizations negotiates and navigates the space of possibility, leveraging the ethnic *Garifuna* to forge cross-cutting alliances across multiple spatial scales. This sets the stage for later findings chapters, where I unpack each organization’s grounded practices and performances in the context of the racialized dispossession and social exclusion I described in the previous chapter. These sites of resistance are “places of possibility” dependent on, and generative of, the space of possibility itself.

### **OFRANEH: “Black, Indigenous and Garifuna at the Same Time<sup>9</sup>”**

Established in the Honduran port town of Puerto Cortes in 1977 and officially recognized in 1980, OFRANEH’s formative years saw the organization focus on the rights of Black workers in urban centers during the decline of the banana enclave economy (Anderson, 2009, p.118;

---

<sup>9</sup> This quotation is taken from an interview I conducted with an OFRANEH-affiliate active at Vallecito. Here, the interviewee describes OFRANEH’s politics of representation (Interview with Vallecito 3 April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

Brondo, 2013, p.95-96). While the organization's name and early activism indicates their concern with the rights of all Black Hondurans in the context of labour, it is today an organization that primarily represents the Garinagu (Ibid). Close to a decade after the organization's formation, OFRANEH began to forge alliances with other ethnic groups in Honduras, and shifted its focus from labour to land issues and struggles for autonomy (Anderson, 2009; Brondo, 2013, p.95). OFRANEH is the organization most active in the Garifuna land defense movement in rural north coast Honduras (Anderson, 2009, 2012; Brondo, 2013; England 2010).

OFRANEH's increasing attention to Garifuna land defense has coincided with a shift in the way the organization represents the Garinagu: allying with ethnic groups in Honduras legitimized OFRANEH's participation in global activist networks centered on Indigeneity (Anderson, 2009, p.119), enabling the organization to successfully petition regional definitions of Indigeneity to include Black groups such as the Garinagu. As a Black Indigenous organization, OFRANEH was then able to push for the Garinagu's inclusion in the Honduran multicultural rubric as autochthonous ethnic group with collective property rights (Anderson 2007, 2009). OFRANEH thus participated in a series of processes that resulted in Honduras being one of very few states in the region to "conflate blackness with indigeneity" (Anderson 2007, 2009; Hale 2005, 2011), which further bolsters the Garinagu's ability to traverse the global stage as Indigenous.

As I describe in earlier chapters, OFRANEH's positioning of the Garinagu as a simultaneously Black and Indigenous group has emerged out of centuries of contests over land and representation from St. Vincent to Honduras. Garifuna struggles over race and space saw the Honduran Garifunas being represented by Crown, state and capitalist powers as an "exceptional"

Black population with an “indigenous-like” culture and distanced from the Transatlantic slave trade, which has informed their status as an autochthonous ethnic group (Anderson 1997, 2007, 2009). OFRANEH’s contemporary activism negotiates and navigates the Garinagu’s autochthonous ethnic status to insert the Garinagu into a global discourse of Indigeneity (Brondo, 2013), while also forging solidarity with Black movements like Black Lives Matter (OFRANEH). By routing the space of possibility, then, OFRANEH has been able to excavate racial meanings and representations of the Garifuna that strengthen contemporary land claims by providing greater access to potentially fruitful allies and networks.

In the Garifuna culture, land has traditionally been the domain of women (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015) and OFRANEH’s leadership has certainly reflected this (Brondo, 2013, p.95). The current *Coordinadora General* (“General Coordinator”) of the organization is Miriam Miranda, born and raised in the Garifuna village of Santa Fé to parents working in the enclave economy (Globalfundforwomen). Miranda has stated in interviews that her political consciousness was developed after leaving the coast to take up a position as a social worker in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa. Working with women in the most marginalized areas of the city, she says, made her realize that something “was not right” with the system (Globalfundforwomen). Eventually, Miranda returned from the capital to the coast, and began working as an activist with OFRANEH (Ibid). In 2005, the then-General Coordinator of OFRANEH, Gregoria Flores, was shot and wounded while on her way to collect evidence for a case being taken to the Inter-American Human Rights Court (Global Greengrants Fund, 2005). When Flores left Honduras and went into hiding, Miriam Miranda was elected to her current position. Miranda has since suffered physical attacks, detainment, and intimidation by state and state-sanctioned forces for her prominent role in the Garifuna land defense movement.

## The Garifuna Land Defense Movement: Invasions and Recuperations

Land occupations have emerged a key strategy in OFRANEH's organized resistance to Garifuna dispossession. OFRANEH has long forged alliances with ladino *campesino* organizations in Honduras<sup>10</sup>, and the organization's employment of this non-violent, direct action tactic might be read as part of the "grab land back" movement in neoliberal Latin America (Kerssen, 2013, p.9; Vergara-Camus, 2014, p.28). In Brazil, organizations such as the MST conduct occupations of vast properties held by powerful land owners. Their claims to subsistence lands are rooted in the Lockian logic of "land for those who work it" that undergirds applicable agrarian law (Wolford, 2005, p.553). In Honduras, *campesino* ("peasant") and Garifuna land occupations depend upon similar logics and legal frameworks. Akin to Brazil, land claims by the dispossessed depend upon understandings of land being in disuse or underuse, and as being able to be better used by small-holders (Corr, 1999).

OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders eschew a language of "occupation." Instead, they employ a terminology of land "recuperations" and "invasions." This semantic distinction is an important one, as made clear by a member of the Directive of the Garifuna Community of Cristales and Rio Negro in 2016:

"An invasion is when really you're not the owner of the land. If the land has an owner. So if you go in and invade a piece of land that has an owner, you've become an invader, because it's not

---

<sup>10</sup> In Chapter 6, I focus on OFRANEH affiliates in "the field," and their experiences with racial formation "on the ground." There, I take up how Garifuna land defenders engage with "informal" ladino invasions of collectively-titled lands, how white supremacy and anti-Blackness continue to structure those invasions, and how Garifunas and ladinos attempt to forge solidarities that invert or challenge racial hierarchies in place. While it remains outside the scope of this dissertation, I hope to conduct further research on OFRANEH's organizational relationship with *campesino* (peasant) and landless worker movements across the region.

your land, you've invaded it. When we speak about a recuperation, now, that's our land, except it has been abandoned, it's not being used, it's not being used in an adequate manner. So, we come and we form a group, and we recuperate it. Because it is ours, so we are not invading – we are recuperating what has been abandoned. We recuperate – and here's what happens – we recuperate, we make lots, we give a piece of land to each group member, and then that same person, starts to abandon the land again. And now comes along another person who is going to make use of it and is going to invade it. Right? And so it goes, because we abandon the land. Because we really don't value our land" (Interview with Cristales and Rio Negro April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

In this excerpt, the interviewee correlates the term “recuperation” with *pre-existing* land rights. “Invasion,” on the other hand, connotes a lack of pre-existing rights to the land in question. In the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, the Garinagu's rights to land are largely defined by legal title - by the Manuel Bonilla land grant. However – and very importantly for this dissertation – the words of the speaker reveal a tacit justification of “invasions,” even when they fall within the bounds of the Community's title. It is implied that Garifunas must protect their lands from invasions not just by titling their land – they must also perform *land use* in line with the Eurocentric logics that underpin *terra nullius*. When Garifunas don't “use” their collectively-titled land in an “adequate” manner, they are not placing “value” the land, inviting invasions by those who will “make (adequate) use” of it. As I delve into more detail in later chapters, land recuperations must also be conducted in accordance to racialized discourses of “appropriate” and “inappropriate” land use practices that extend from Conquest into the present (Mollett 2009, 2010, 2012).

## Conducting Land Recuperations in Neoliberal Honduras

After speaking with the leadership of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, I met with a member of OFRANEH's *Junta Directiva* ("Committee of Directors") to discuss the land recuperation process from the perspective of *la oficina*<sup>11</sup> ("the office"). A contact in ODECO had connected us via telephone, and we had arranged to meet in La Ceiba's *Parque Central*. It was a hot and humid mid-April day in 2018 when we met, smiling as we recognized each other from a series of OFRANEH events and marches that I had attended in 2015 and 2016.

A few minutes into our three-hour interview, I raised the topic of land recuperations. My informant immediately clarified that OFRANEH doesn't instigate or lead land recuperations - they nurture existing land defense movements within Garifuna communities and foment relationships between them. In effort to connect, link and strengthen land defense initiatives in the 46 Garifuna communities along the coast, OFRANEH organizes the communities into 7 Regions that strategize and act collectively. My research focusses on land recuperations in Regions 5 and 6 – Region 5 or Colón 1 (where the Wani Leè recuperation is found) and Region 6 or Colón 2 (where the Vallecito/*Faya* recuperation is located). These are regions where tourism, agri-business and drug trafficking pose the biggest threats to Garifuna territoriality (Interview with OFRANEH 1 April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

---

<sup>11</sup> I make reference here to an interview I conducted with an OFRANEH-affiliated land defender in the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, who described a dialectic key to organizing and conducting a recuperation. There was the work of community members in *la oficina* ("the office"), as well as those in *el campo* (roughly, "in the field"). Broadly speaking, the former involves navigating relevant national and supra-national legislation and policy, as well as transnational activist networks, in order to represent the Garinagu as Indigenous (Interview with OFRANEH 2, April 18<sup>th</sup> 2018). The latter involves staying on the land being recuperated. As this chapter shows, they both depend upon the other, and might be said to resonate with Lipsitz's (2007) ruminations on the "dialectics of race and space:" racial meanings are discursively struggled over, and are contested/confirmed in space or place.



I asked the respondent to elucidate the course of action taken to tackle invasions of Garifuna lands that were titled –whether as agricultural co-operatives as in the case of Vallecito or those that fall within the bounds of a Garifuna community’s collective title like Wani Leè. The informant replied that when attempting to recuperate titled land, there are a number of questions that must first be answered. Is the invasion an individual or “informal” one, by ladino third-persons looking to claim lands under agrarian laws? If so, are they aware that collectively-titled “ethnic” lands cannot be squatted? It is also important to ascertain whether there has been a financial transaction in regards to the land. If there has been - who was the seller, and who was the buyer? Was there state complicity in the process – such as when the *Instituto de la Propiedad* (“Property Institute”) registers an illicit sale and purchase?

After the preliminary investigation of the invasion has been conducted, OFRANEH’s “office” assists community land defenders with a number of details. They make sure that local land defense groups acquire a copy of the community’s collective title, for example. They also prepare land defenders for the process of petitioning the National Agrarian Institute (INA) if Garifuna claims to the land are contested - OFRANEH provides access to legal advice and lawyers and details of the land claims process in these cases. When a recuperation is underway, they also provide the basic necessities and support that allow land defenders to stay on the land.

While this scaffolding is being put into place by the “office,” the community land defense group organizes the persons who will be recuperating the land. These recuperation groups are generally composed of local Garinagu in need of land for housing or farming (Interviews with OFRANEH 1 April 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 & OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup> 2018). A member of the Land Defense Committee of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro, who assists land defenders across Region 5 with “field” details, described how the prospective recuperation is shared amongst

those who will be conducting it. Sometimes, a *croquis* (literally translated as “sketch,” here referring to a survey map) of the collectively-titled lands is used to delineate potential lots on the land in question before the recuperation takes place, and lots are numbered and distributed amongst members via a random draw or lottery. In other cases, recuperation members decide amongst themselves how they will share the land once on-site (Interview with OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

Copy of land title in hand, the land defenders make their claim in the hours before daybreak – “*siempre entramos en la madrugada*” (“we always enter in the early morning”). Singing traditional Garifuna songs and drumming ancestral rhythms, waving both Garifuna and Honduran flags and outfitted with cultivation tools, land defenders enter the recuperation site and present any *terceros* (“third persons”) with evidence of title, making their intentions known (Interview with Wani Leè 3 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). These initial moments of laying claim to the land were described as generally joyful and jubilant, and as being quickly followed by the collective construction of shelters, a central meeting area and a common kitchen to facilitate staying on-site (Interviews with Wani Leè 3 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

But land defenders in the Bay of Trujillo also described how their non-violent direct action tactics are frequently met with aggression (Interview with OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016). While in Cristales in 2018, I met the namesake of a land recuperation conducted within the bounds of the Bonilla title. He had been shot by a member of the wealthy Crespo family of Trujillo in the first moments of a land recuperation claim a number of years prior. In 2015, another land defender from the Community survived an assassination attempt outside his home, purportedly for his role in the Garifuna land defense movement. Rumours abounded that the hit had been put out by “the Canadians.”

## ODECO: “Garifuna-Afrodescendientes”<sup>12</sup>

ODECO, the second major Garifuna organization that my research focusses on, was founded in 1992 by Celeo Alvarez (Brondo, 2013, p.95). Alvarez was a former OFRANEH member who rose to fame in the 1980s as one of Honduras’ youngest and most prominent labour leaders (Garcia 2014). Immediately following their formation in 1992, ODECO organized the peaceful “March of Resistance” in response to national celebrations of Columbus Day or *Dia de la Raza* (“Day of the Race”) as it is known in Latin America (p.97). In the years following, ODECO continued to forge alliances with other autochthonous ethnic groups in Honduras, playing a prominent role in the collective titling of *Garifuna* lands along the coast together with OFRANEH (Safa, 2005; World Bank Inspection Panel: Investigation Report 2007, xvi). In 1997, ODECO and OFRANEH organized the bicentennial commemoration of the arrival of the Garinagu to Honduras (Garcia, 2014, p.97), and April 12<sup>th</sup> was recognized as “Garifuna Settlement Day” by the Honduran state (p.94).

ODECO drifted away from direct participation in land struggles just as OFRANEH further gravitated towards them. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ODECO was increasingly inserting their demands for social inclusion, full-citizenship in the nation-state, and equal access to development initiatives (Brondo, 2013, p.96, p.104-105) into the global networks and non-hierarchical “meshworks” that were coalescing around the notion of Afro-descent (Davis, Paschel and Morrisson, 2012, p.31; Escobar, 2008, in Harrison, 2012, p.6). After participating in the 2001 United Nations (U.N.) World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination,

---

<sup>12</sup> This quote is from an interview with a member of ODECO’s *Junta Directiva*, who corrected my use of the term “Afro-indigenous” and stated that ODECO interpolates the Garinagu as a distinct ethnic group within a framework of Afro-descent – as *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes* (Interview with ODECO 1 December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015).

Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, ODECO hosted a World Summit of Afro-descendants in La Ceiba in April 2005 to celebrate the U.N.'s declaration of the "Year of Persons of African Descent" (ODECO). The organization then pressed the Honduran government to declare April "African Heritage Month," within which Garifuna Settlement Day now falls. Thus while they remain focussed on the *Garifuna* ethnic group in practice, the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have seen ODECO increasingly delimit itself as an organization dedicated to the development of all Afro-Honduran peoples and communities, *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes* included.

In 2016, there were two prominent changes in the organization's orientation and leadership that warrant mentioning here. The first was a public declaration of ODECO's severance of ties with the illegitimate government of Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH) (2014-present). This followed from the organization becoming increasingly vocal in their critique of the JOH regime. The second is that ODECO is no longer an organization driven by founder Celeo Alvarez, following from his death in 2016. At the time of writing, the former Vice-President Zulma Valencia had been elected to position of President.

### **ODECO and the Struggle for Garifuna Inclusion**

Scholars of contemporary Indigenous and Afro-descendant social movements in Latin America have paid significant attention to ODECO's activism. Some of this literature tends to highlight the organization's role in the production of intertwined, "legitimate" development and multicultural subjects (Anderson 2007, 2009, 2012; Brondo, 2013). Jean Matuba Rahier (2012), however, implores us to think past co-optation and attend to the complexities of Black and Afro-descended social movements in multicultural Latin America. I thus approach ODECO as an

organization actively engaging with the formation of an emerging global subjectivity and related discourse, and in effort to fortify their struggles against racial and spatial injustice. They have, in the words of Leith Mullings (2008), participated in “racialization from below,” leveraging the ethnic autochthonous *Garifuna* by way of the space of possibility to join a global movement centered on Afro-descendancy.

ODECO-affiliates spoke to the importance of a politics of Afro-descent to overcoming the historical and ongoing injustice suffered by the Garinagu in Honduras. Linking Garifuna dispossession with persistent social exclusion, these interviewees identified the neglect of the Garinagu by the Honduran state as the primary reason for deepening material poverty and the land crisis. For them, decades-long denials of basic services and chronic unemployment in rural villages was the source of increasing out-migration. Community members, they told me, colluded with land-seeking outsiders and corrupt state officials, selling collectively-titled land in desperate bids to come up with the cash to solicit the services of a *coyote* (a term to describe the network of smugglers who assist Central American migrants in reaching the U.S.) (Interviews with ODECO 1 December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 & 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015). Even if migrants did not fund their arduous journeys northwards by way of illicit land transactions, the mass exodus of Garifunas from Honduras left what remained of their land unguarded, “abandoned,” and easily grabbed by outsiders.

ODECO informants maintain that while the Garinagu can discursively construe a “like-ness” to Indigeneity in multicultural Honduras, in practice they are omitted from that category. One woman lamented that phenotypic Black groups like the Garifuna will never be seen as the “real” Indigenous people of Honduras:

“Politically, yes we are recognized as Indigenous. Politically speaking. Why? Because the laws state that we were here before the arrival of independence and the processes of independence, and as such are considered autochthonous to the country - since the country had not been formed yet. But you know, before us there were other people here, that are understood as the real Indigenous people of the country. So while we are apparently Indigenous, and appear on the list of the Indigenous, when the aid comes, the people *understood* as Indigenous receive more than those who are not!” (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015).

As Mark Anderson (2007) notes, the global subject position “Indigenous” has become synonymous with “*lo indio*” in the Americas. For ODECO, making Garinagu territoriality “a reality” was conveyed as inextricable from the Garinagu struggle for full-citizenship, which was intricately bound with the naming and dismantling of the anti-Blackness that informs (un)belonging in Honduras. A discourse of Indigeneity proved useful at certain junctures, but did not allow for a dismantling of the structures that informed Garifuna material poverty and dispossession.

### **Tensions in the Space of Possibility: Diverging Views on a Politics of Afro-descent**

I first heard the refrain *yo no soy Afrodescendiente, soy Garifuna* (“I am not Afro-descendant, I am Garifuna”) voiced by Garifuna activists in La Ceiba in 2014. It was mid-April, and I had met up with my friend Zoila Ellis-Browne, founder of The Garifuna Heritage Foundation (TGHF) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We had attended several events together with ODECO’s *Junta Directiva* (“Committee of Directors”), spreading word about a conference and workshop series that TGHF was organizing in St. Vincent later that year. It was one of Zoila’s last days in Honduras, and she had been invited onto *Radio ODECO* to speak about the

events in St. Vincent. The telephone lines were opened and several calls answered by the host, but few of the callers had much interest in speaking about Garifuna issues in St. Vincent. Instead, most folks seemed to be calling in to voice their concerns around ODECO's adoption of a politics of Afro-descent. This resulted in a heated debate between the host and callers about whether "Garifuna" and "Afro-descendant" were mutually exclusive identities.

I continued to hear versions of these terse exchanges, not paying them significant attention until two years later at the *Berta Vive* march on the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa in 2016. OFRANEH's activism depends upon spiritual work of numerous *buyeis* (Garifuna shamans), and I was there by way of invitation from a *buyei* society from Trujillo. This society formed part of the front-lines of the march. In matching *uniformes* ("uniforms," the coordinated outfits that groups of women would wear to designate their membership in various societies), dancing and singing in the Garifuna language, this group of women was the first to be approached by the national press. As I stood next to her, one prominent *buyei* began her interview by staring directly into the camera and proclaiming "*yo no soy Afrodescendiente, soy Garifuna.*" Clearly, this was a point of contention that continued to hold deep significance for those in the land defense movement.

After the *Berta Vive* march, I conducted an informal interview with a OFRANEH-affiliated land defender whom I met at Vallecito in 2015. I began the interview by asking for his interpretation of OFRANEH's politics of Black Indigeneity. Although I had not mentioned Afro-descendancy at any point prior, the conversation quickly turned towards the aforementioned debate:

“We are not Afro-descended. We are Garífunas. The root of that term is *them not wanting us in the country*. Like I told you, we are located in parts of the country desired by many people ... by many investors. So they’re looking for us to believe something, something that will see us deported from the country. We’re talking about, umm I’m talking about like 15-20 years ago there was a President that did try to do that, deport us Black people from the country. That’s how we came into this class of the Indigenous. Firstly, because, we are not ... firstly, the word Indigenous refers to culture, so, because we have our cultures, we speak our own languages, so ... that where that word comes from. That is why we are called Indigenous” (Interview with Vallecito 1 April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Here, the interviewee equates a platform of Afro-descent with a state-sanctioned project of dispossession, describing it as part of an endeavor to “deport” the Garinagu from their desired coastal lands. This sentiment was echoed in an interview I conducted with a second OFRANEH affiliate, who I specifically asked about the debates around *lo Afrodescendiente*. Echoing the response of the first informant, he implied that discursively re-making Black Indigenous peoples into Afro-descendants held enormous implications for the land defense movement. For him, reconfiguring *Garífunas* as Afro-descendant was another attempt by the state to “make it seem that we are foreigners in Honduras and that we don’t have any rights to the land” (Interview with Vallecito 2 January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Differently to ODECO respondents, then, those involved in the land defense movement surmised that *lo Afrodescendiente* was no position from which to struggle against Garifuna de-territorialization or displacement, but rather one that guaranteed it.



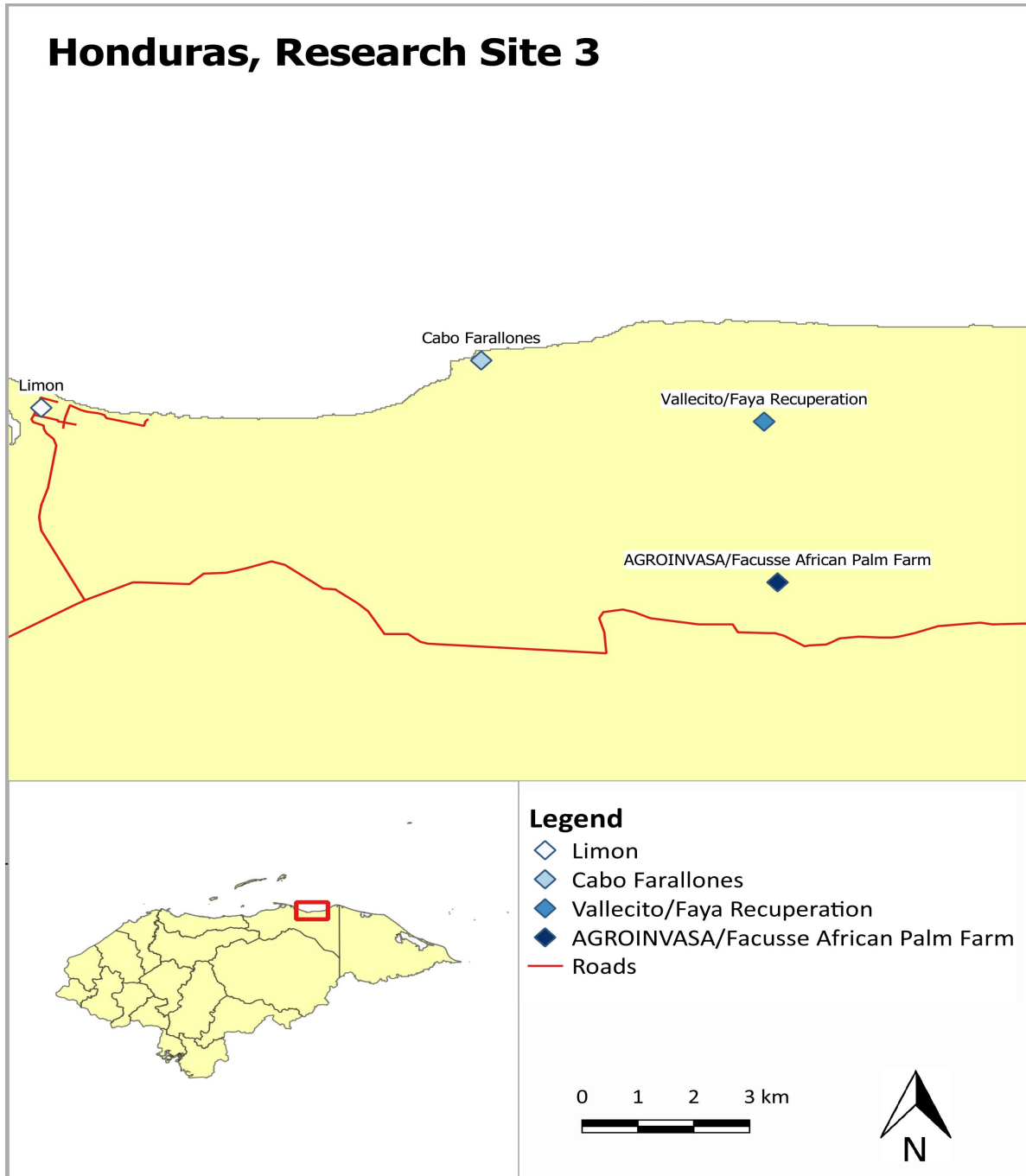
## Conclusion

This chapter has offered significant insight into the two national-level Honduran Garifuna organizations that my doctoral research focusses on. OFRANEH, the organization most active in the land struggle, engages non-violent and direct-action tactics to confront “invasions” of Garifuna territory in the form of land “recuperations.” Conducting land recuperations in neoliberal Honduras depends upon representations of the *Garifuna* as Black Indigenous peoples. Black Indigeneity in Honduras emerged from long history of Garifuna struggles over racial and spatial meanings, which gave rise to tropes of Garifuna “exceptional” Blackness. ODECO’s work, on the other hand, focuses on social inclusion and the “development” of *Garifuna* communities, and addresses the transnational urban realities of a dispossessed and disenfranchised Black population. Their approach has largely relied on the negotiation of networks and policies connected to an emerging framework of Afro-descent, which extends from a history of Garifuna transnational organizing, and engages with meanings of Blackness more global in scope.

How might these divergent organizational tactics and routings be read through Scott’s theory of the “hidden transcript” (1990), in order to better attend to the complexity of Garifuna resistance to dispossession? While these theories admittedly focus on daily acts of resistance and not organized political struggle, I have earlier made the case for their relevance here. OFRANEH’s land recuperation techniques might seem to be an instance of the rupture between the hidden and public transcripts of the dispossessed (Scott, 1990), but they nonetheless involve disguise in the form of the land occupation: OFRANEH, in negotiating a position of Black Indigeneity, performs a complex set of relationships with the land that arguably include conforming to dominant, racialized notions of land use in effort to make claims. At the same

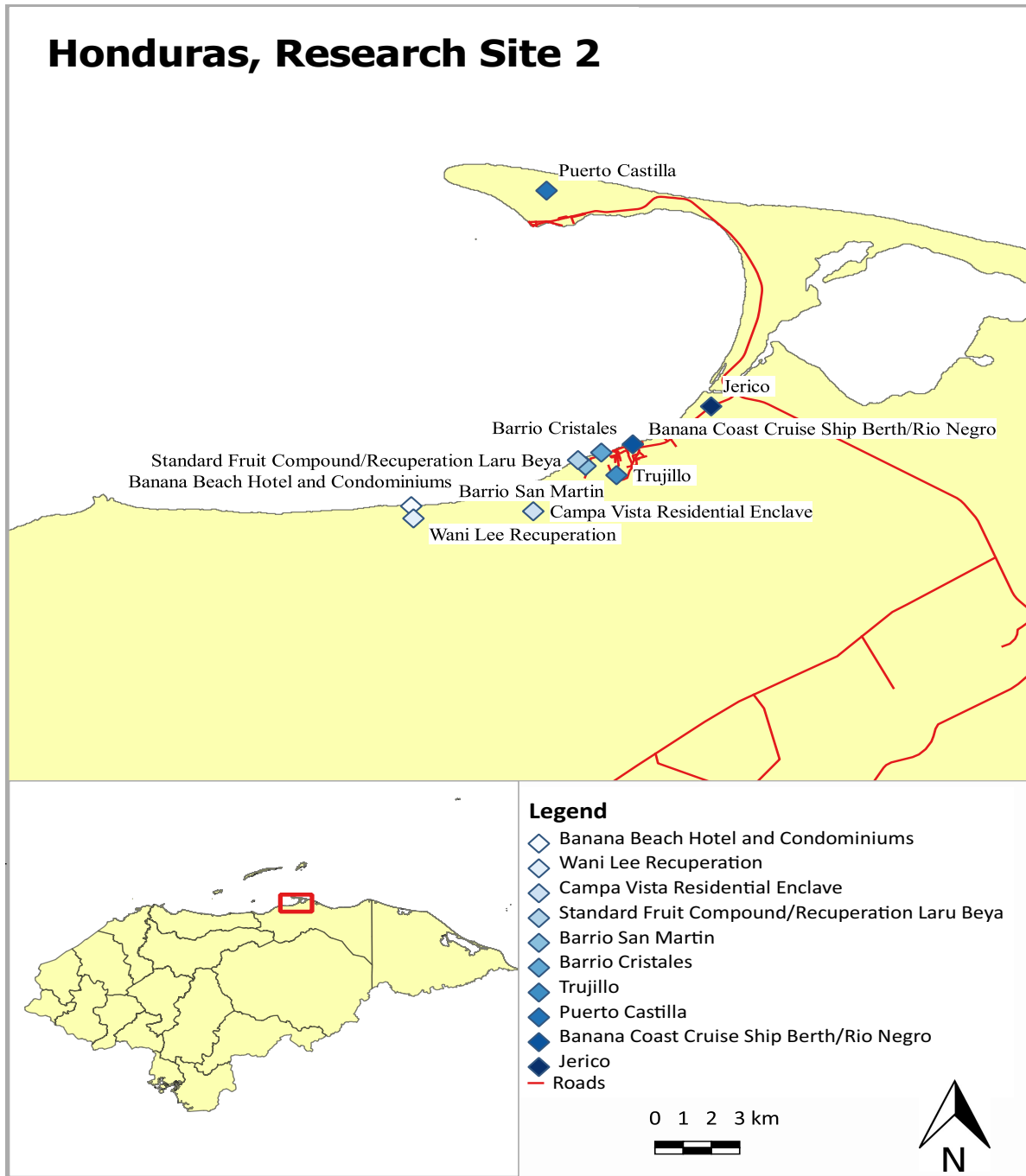
time, however, these land recuperations enact the intricate and important connection between cultural survival and the continuance of a land base that bolsters claims to Indigeneity.

ODECO's bids for social inclusion is much more of the sort of "flattery" that Scott (Ibid) describes as a political discourse of the disempowered, which depends upon the hidden transcript remaining truly off-stage. This permits for spatial interventions that challenge the status-quo and makes place for Garifunas in the city.



**Figure 11** Map of Bay of Vallecito/Faya 2

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.



**Figure 12** Map of Bay of Trujillo 2

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.

## CHAPTER 6: A GEOGRAPHY OF RESISTANCE AND RECUPERATION: A GLOBAL DEFENSE OF GARIFUNA PLACE

In this chapter I concentrate on the Garifuna land defense movement affiliated with the organization OFRANEH. I focus on two land recuperations on the north coast of Honduras: Vallecito (or *Faya* in Garifuna) in Limón and Wani Leè in the Bay of Trujillo. As I have earlier demonstrated, Garifuna struggles over land, labour and representation have been translated into the Garinagu's emergence as the autochthonous ethnic *Garífuna* in multicultural Honduras, a position which OFRANEH uses to move across multiple spatial scales, inserting the *Garífuna* into global discourses and circuits of Indigeneity in a “global defense of place” (Escobar, 2003). I use this chapter to theorize how OFRANEH secures access to these networks and spaces and the many ramifications for land defense that they hold.

In order to elaborate upon Garifuna Indigeneity as navigated-in-place, I focus on the role of OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders at the aforementioned land recuperation. In particular, I focus on land defenders who are Garifuna migrants forcibly returned from the U.S, arguing that the “space between races” that the OFRANEH “office” maintains is negotiated by *retornados* (“returnees”) in the movement. I pay attention to how recuperation members traverse the organization's representations of the Garinagu while invoking historical and contemporary racial meanings born of Garifuna struggles across locations. This, I propose, enables bonds of solidarity to be forged with other marginalized groups in the struggle against unjust geographies on the Honduran north coast.

Going forward, I also extend the “unmapping” of the north coast landscape that I conducted in the chapter proceeding. In particular, I look to how land defenders at Vallecito and

Wani Leè mark upon the landscape themselves a script that both colludes with, as well as runs counter to, the logics and racial/spatial hierarchies of capitalist expansion. Conducting land recuperations in conformity with Eurocentric notions of “adequate” land use, Garifuna land defenders are also making place by using cultivation to convey the Garinagu’s unique relationships with the land. This ultimately contests dominant meanings of space/place in neoliberal Honduras, reconfirming the Garinagu’s Black Indigeneity and securing their material survival in the process.



***Figure 13*** Vallecito/Faya: OFRANEH-Affiliated Land Defenders Continue To “Stay On The Land” And Resist Dispossession

Photograph by Author, 2016.

## Staying on the Land

In December 2015, I attended a three-day land defense event at Vallecito in the company of a society of OFRANEH-affiliated spiritual workers, an experience that I recount in part in Chapter 4. My relationship with this *buyei* society had begun earlier that year, when I sought out the services of a *buyei* for treatment of a recurring bout of illness that I could not seem to shake. After visiting a number of western medical practitioners as well as an esteemed Honduran herbalist, a friend from ODECO recommended that I go visit a relative of his in Trujillo, who happened to be a famous healer. She and I eventually developed a friendship, and I began to spend time with her and her protégé, as well as with other members of the *buyei* society to which they belonged. Several months after we first met, I was invited to accompany the *buyei* society to an event in Vallecito.

Not much information was shared with when I enquired about what or where Vallecito was. I was simply told it was a place near Limón where I could witness “real” Garifuna culture and live in “the way of the ancestors” for a few days. Very familiar with academic researchers, the *comuneros* (members of the Community of Cristales and Rio Negro) frequently directed me and my research to the more “authentic” Garifuna villages that lay between Limón and Plaplaya – the Garifuna heartland. I thought this might be another instance of that. A few weeks after our pleasant backyard chat, I hailed a *colectivo* taxi outside of my apartment and headed to meet my friends in barrio San Martín. There, I was told that we were waiting for our OFRANEH-chartered bus to arrive.

The bus pulled up soon after, filled with nearly 30 people from the nearby villages of Santa Fé, San Antonio and Guadalupe. After we boarded, we stopped in Cristales and Rio Negro to

gather more attendees, including a pair of documentary film-makers from Puerto Rico and Mexico. As we journeyed east towards Limón, there were numerous setbacks, including two break-downs, a replacement bus being sent from Trujillo to Bonito Oriental where we were stranded, and three nerve-racking military stop-and-searches. Military check-points excluded, the breaks in the journey were memorable and thoroughly enjoyable. When we stopped at a mechanic's shop in Jericho, I congregated with the other passengers taking in the cool evening breeze on the side of the *cafeteria*. I spent the most time talking with a small group of men and women from the Garifuna community of Santa Fé. Machetes strapped to their waists and rubber boots on feet, they were well prepared to assist with agricultural tasks out at Vallecito.

It was nearly 9 hours after our departure when eventually threaded our way through an immense African Palm plantation outside of Limón. A young man across the aisle knocked my elbow gently, lowered his voice and said in English: *this all belongs to Facussé*. Eventually emerging from the palms, our bus was greeted by a large gathering of people, who made it clear that we were the long-awaited last contingent to arrive. We disembarked in a wide open space lit by spotlights here and there, and I was introduced to people from almost every Garifuna community along the coast. Each community group had arrived on an OFRANEH-chartered bus as we did, and the energy was vibrant and celebratory. As I was a guest of the Trujillo *buyeis*, I accompanied them to sling their hammocks in the *gulei* or alter room of the permanent *dabuyaba* ("temple") that is at the very heart of Vallecito. I had not brought my own hammock, but foam mattresses or *colchones* and reusable plates, cups and cutlery were distributed to attendees who needed them. I slept soundly on the floor of the *gulei*, awakening at dawn to the sounds of the *buyeis* starting their day.



It was later that morning, and outside the temple in Vallecito's central area, when several Garifuna men in their late 30s or early 40s approached me. Eager to speak English, they wanted to know what part of "the States" I was from. Replying that I was from St. Vincent in the West Indies, we ended up talking for the better part of an hour about Garifuna history and culture. The three men had all lived most of their lives in the U.S., and were eager to share their perspectives on Vallecito. One pronounced Vallecito a "Garifuna promise land" that he was helping to nurture and grow. A second described the recuperation as a place to connect with Garifuna culture: "we are going to have it real traditional here – the one place in Honduras where you won't be able to find any Coca-Cola!" The third interjected to say that this where he had acquired the land-based skills that connected him with his ancestors. Like the group of Santa Feño farmers on the bus with me, he was also lending a hand – but with some electrical wiring and the construction of some new buildings closer to the beach. "The type of work I used to do in the states."

Later that afternoon, several *microbuses* arrived to Vallecito. Word quickly spread that Berta Cáceres and COPINH had finally arrived. Cáceres was a famed Lenca environmental activist and the coordinator of COPINH. COPINH has been a long-standing ally of OFRANEH's, and played a critical role in the Garinagu organizing as an autochthonous group (Jung, 2011). After their arrival but well before dinner, a Lenca ceremony was held, fireworks bursting into the sky. Then, a Lenca alter was constructed in the *dabuyaba*. My Trujillano companions clarified that this was in anticipation of an important ritual that would take place the next day.

As the sun began to rise overhead the following morning, the energy in the central area kept building - the air was practically crackling. Those working in the communal kitchen were busy preparing vast quantities of food, and small groups of people waited around in the central

meeting are. Close to noon, we were all summoned into the temple to participate in a modified *dügü* (appeasing the ancestors), which was later followed by a *chugu* (feasting the ancestors). The *dügü* proceeded with drumming and singing of ancestral songs. We were soon joined by Garifuna ancestors who arrived from St. Vincent through the temple's eastern door. About an hour into the ritual, a young man from Cristales and Rio Negro's Land Defense Committee suddenly entered the temple – he had recently survived an assassination attempt linked to his role in the land defense movement there. Hit with numerous bullets about his body, he had gone into hiding when released from the hospital. This was his first revelation, and perhaps accounted for some of the secrecy about what the event would entail. Deeply moving was the arrival of Joseph Chatoyer from St. Vincent just after the land defender's appearance: one land defender from *Yurumein* talking through time and space to another in Honduras, thanking and praising him for his work, and encouraging all Garinagu to stay strong in the land struggle as their ancestors had done before them.

### **Dispossession and the Returned – Returnee Garifuna Migrants and the Garifuna Land Struggle**

Several months after returning from Vallecito, I found myself on the bus from Trujillo to Santa Fé. I was finally making good on a promise to visit the Santa Feños that I had met at the OFRANEH event. Arriving to the outskirts of the community, I located a landmark that had been my acquaintance had described over the phone. I looked around, but didn't see any signs of habitation in the vicinity. Suddenly, a man on horseback arrived and made his way through a gap in the trees that flanked the northern edge of the road. I followed behind, and entered into a small clearing in the midst of dense tropical vegetation. Looking up a gentle slope that rose to my left, I saw the man on horseback speaking with a second person who was now waving – it was one of

my acquaintances from the OFRANEH event. Making my way towards them, I was welcomed to what turned out to be a burgeoning land recuperation.

Wani Leè - or “this is ours” in Garifuna – is a 100-acre parcel of land that falls within the bounds of the Santa Fé community’s collective title. An American couple had acquired it more than a decade ago, but had not been seen in years. There had been no structures built on the land, barring a small caretaker’s cottage. The caretakers still lived there, but had not been paid in years. They had welcomed the recuperation group with open arms. Now, a series of small dwellings dotted the central clearing that I had earlier walked into, and a communal kitchen provided a place for congregation and sharing. I followed several members up the slopes further, taking in the view from a number of cleared acres where bananas, plantains and yucca had been planted. The idea was, one of the recuperation members told me, for Wani Leè to eventually be self-sufficient. Together, members could produce the food they needed at the recuperation, and perhaps even generate income for the recuperation’s upkeep through the sale of extra produce.

I ended up spending several days out at Wani Leè during my first visit. I attended an OFRANEH strategizing meeting held on-site, assisted with various tasks, and passed the afternoons socializing with the recuperation members. I soon found out that the recuperation had been initiated by three Garifuna men who had been returned to Honduras after years of living in the U.S. As many returnees do, they had attempted to return to the “north” after arriving in Honduras. This was in effort to be reunited with partners and children who still resided there (Interviews with Wani Leè 4 & 5 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018). One man stated that he thought it better to risk the arduous journey through Guatemala and Mexico by foot and “*la bestia*”<sup>13</sup> than suggest

---

<sup>13</sup> “The beast” is a common term for the network of trains that Central American migrants hitch rides on in their journey through Mexico to the U.S. border.

that his family give up their lives in the U.S. and join him. It was after being forcibly returned from the U.S. a second time, he said, that he became resigned to the fact that staying in Honduras was the “only option” (Interview with Wani Leè 5 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018). The two other *retornados* also cited their joining of the land defense movement as a response to their eventual resignation to staying in Honduras. In Garifuna communities that were suffering high levels of unemployment and land loss, the land defense movement provided a form of survival.



**Figure 14** Garifuna Women Participate In Lenca Ceremony At The Berta Vive March In April 2016, Much As They Did During The December Event At Vallecito

Photograph by Author, 2016.



***Figure 15*** A House And Garifuna Crops And Medicines At The Wani Leè Land Recuperation

Photograph by Author, 2016.

## **“Retornados” and “Garifuna Futures:” Transnational Circuits of Meaning and Knowledge in Place**

As the Wani Leè land defenders I spoke to told me, returnees often have little choice but to “stay on the land.” But, what other possibilities might the return of Garifuna men to Honduras, and their involvement in these global defenses of Garifuna place, engender? I posed this question to one land activist involved with the Vallecito project. He responded by asking if I had become familiar with a certain “problem” in the Garifuna communities of Sambo Creek and Corozal, located just to the east of La Ceiba. What he was referring to, he went on to say, was the increasing material poverty suffered by the communities. It was, he said, a poverty obscured by the large concrete houses that peppered certain barrios of both communities. These were houses largely built with remittance money over the past several decades. So while these homes still conveyed a sense of class mobility and success, their occupants were increasingly struggling to make ends meet. This situation, the respondent said, made apparent the lack of food security in Garifuna territory in Honduras.

In this interviewee’s opinion, food insecurity in Garifuna villages in Honduras was largely an effect of declining remittances – many of those who used to send money back home were now back home themselves. This was underscored by dramatically diminished residential and subsistence lands, sparse local employment opportunities, an increasing dependence on store-bought food, and elevated costs of living. Together, this meant that Garifunas who had never left their communities, as well as those recently returning, struggled with meeting their daily needs in an unprecedented fashion (Interview with Vallecito 3 February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018). When mobilized into the land defense movement, however, returnee men became critical to the cause, not just “staying on the land” but cultivating it as well. At land recuperations across the coast,

cultivation becomes a way to “use” land in line with dominant spatial imaginaries and prevent another invasion - but it also becomes a very real means of material survival for Garifunas struggling against food security.

Another *compañero* I conducted an interview with was a child of Garifuna immigrants to the U.S. who still lives in New York City. A graduate student in his mid-40s, he makes occasional trips to his natal village in the Bay of Trujillo, and forms part of a group of Garifunas in NYC who are vocal in their support of the OFRANEH land defense movement in Honduras. He dreams of retiring at Vallecito, that Garifuna promised land: “I already found my spot, right there by the beach” he said via Skype after his last visit to the recuperation. While not a returnee himself, he thought Garifunas in the diaspora could offer – as could the returnees - the wisdom gained from years of living and working in the urban sectors of the U.S. The biggest lesson he had learned in all those years away from “home” was “to value our land.” The experience of living in a “concrete jungle” in the Global North, he said, meant that having a land base and one’s own place to cultivate food had become increasingly of value to him. It sometimes astonished him, he said, that he already had what everyone seemed to be working towards: access to a plot of green with a gorgeous vista of the Caribbean. To understand that this was under threat was understandably upsetting and had prompted his interest in land defense.

For both of these participants, Vallecito and Wani Leè provided hopeful solutions for the urgent situation that the Honduran Garinagu face today. Unprecedented levels of material poverty in Garifuna communities called for innovative solutions. Both interviewees, as well as several other returnee men I spoke to at the recuperations, proposed that reclaiming and working the land could eventually lead to a coastal network of food producing recuperations. They could provide food to communities struggling with land issues and food security across Garifuna

territory. Recuperations like Vallecito – with its vast acreage - could produce food for Garifuna communities inside of Honduras, but also those in the Global North. One participant voiced his desire to see Garifuna agricultural production become a transnational enterprise, with exports of typical and traditional Garifuna crops and ingredients directed towards Garifunas in the diaspora. For him as well as the first informant, recuperations could turn into “Garifuna development zones” (Interview with Vallecito 3 April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018) that would promote community businesses and create employment opportunities for Garifunas at home and abroad (Interview with Vallecito 2 January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Produce sales could then provide capital for investments in a diverse set of ventures, including but not limited to agriculture. This would facilitate Garifuna material survival, while at once ensuring the continuation of ancestral land-based practices (Interview with Vallecito 3 April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

While speaking to an OFRANEH member active in *la oficina*, the topic of returnees, remittance and farming was broached. What was “the office” view of the returnees in the land defense movement? The informant immediately raised the topic of dispossession, limited jobs, and perceived reductions in the *remesa* (“remittance”). For him, these both propelled as well as resulted from the constant outflux and return of Garifuna migrants. He offered a critique of remittance culture and its effects on the wider Garifuna community over the long-term – remittances facilitated dependency on cash, and made the Garinagu vulnerable. The dependence on remittance also hastened the decline in Honduran Garifuna youth’s interest in traditional farming and fishing methods. Farming and fishing were still largely perceived as “backwards” and shameful undertakings by the younger generations. As a result, many youths did not value the ancestral lands that remained. Instead, they dreamed of going to the U.S. and making a “better” life for themselves. *Retornados*, he proffered, offered honest testimonials about how



hard life was in the U.S. – they ruptured the dangerous and pervasive mythology of the American dream. When youth witnessed *Merigana* (“American” in Garifuna) Garifunas in the land defense movement, rekindling traditional relationships to the land and sea, youth often shed the stigma associated with farming and fishing and placed importance on the land and the land struggle. In his closing remarks, this participant voiced what I had heard in conversations with Wani Leè recuperation members and Garifuna diaspora members active in the land defense movement themselves – that farming provided a myriad of options for Garifuna youth, including the possibility of self-employment - growing and selling produce in the local and global markets, and to members of the Garifuna diaspora who remained in the U.S. (Interview with OFRANEH 1 April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

### **Narratives of Displacement, Pain and Entangled Roots/Routes: Retornados, Ladinos and the Space of Possibility**

Visiting Vallecito and Wani Leè sharpened my focus on returnees’ role in Garifuna land defense. But it was at Wani Leè that I encountered a significant number of ladino land defenders alongside the returnees. On my third day at the recuperation in 2016, I sat together with two ladina women amongst the banana trees and cassava shrubs that spread up the hillside and away from the thatched dwellings of the recuperation members. One woman from southern Honduras began to tear up as she told the story of her arrival to Santa Fé. She described the “bad feelings” she had run from, and the “good ones” she had found here on the coast. In essence, she was providing a back story to the oft-repeated narrative that I heard when I asked Garifunas about land loss in their communities – that of the “invading” ladino, seeking land and peace at the expense of Garifuna territoriality.

This respondent's story resonated with many stories recounted by Garinagu in the Bay of Trujillo. In the year prior I had heard countless tales of limited opportunities and options; of landlessness and migration to cities here and far away; of violence committed by state forces or hired killers; of being killed by one side or another for seeming to be on one side or the other. This woman's brother had been killed years ago – he was a transit officer in the Honduran capital murdered by “delinquents” who had little tolerance of state forces in their territory. There were other cases she knew of that were the other way around: in big cities like Tegus and San Pedro Sula, state forces routinely murder young men, whether they are involved in *la delincuencia* or not. Much like Paley's (2014) "spectre of the narco," the spectre of the violent delinquent or gang member is used as an excuse to execute. After the respondent's brother was killed, their mother died of a broken heart – and then she decided she had to leave. She left that south to come to this north, a Garifuna community that she associates with the tranquil feeling of home. At the land recuperation, her compañeros include many Garifunas who had also been pushed and pulled by neoliberal violence - having left one “home” to find another, only to be forcibly returned to the first.

Keri Brondo (2013) has written about the inclusion of long-term ladino residents of Garifuna communities in community initiatives and land recuperations in Sambo Creek. I build upon this work and ask what other factors might underpin ladino participation in Garifuna land recuperations in the Bay of Trujillo. Important to a nuanced interpretation of my research findings is the scholarship of Sarah England (2000, 2010), who writes the Garinagu's already-complex cultural identity becomes even more so with their sometimes-positioning as Afro-Latinos in New York City. It is the move “from ladino to Latino” and “from Garifuna to Afro-Latino” in the Global North, I propose, that provides the foundations for the forging of Garinagu-

ladino solidarities at Wani Leè. These entanglements become even more tightly woven through the practice of struggle in and over place. Place becomes, as Martin (2003) reminds us, literal grounds for coalition building across difference.

What are some Garifuna experiences in the diaspora, particularly in New York City, that might foster solidarity between Garifunas and ladinos in the recuperation movement in Honduras? Academic writing on racial formation in the U.S. provides a useful starting point to think through the ways in which racial meanings travel through time and space and impact social movements focussed on “taking places” (Lipstiz, 2011). Garifuna social movements in Honduras reference the Civil Rights struggles of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as anthropologists have long suggested (Gonzalez, 1969, 1988) – but they might also reference Honduran Garifuna experiences as racialized, Spanish-speaking immigrants in particular urban spaces in the Global North. Returning to Honduras from boroughs such as the Bronx, and becoming involved in the recuperation of ancestral land, Garifuna returnees at Wani Leè approached daily life through their experiences abroad, particularly their struggles in the “concrete jungle” alongside other working class, racialized immigrant groups.

On the ground at Wani Leè, ladinos were described by Garifuna returnees as potential allies in struggles over place and construed as *compañeros* (“companions,” a common way to address peers and friends engaged in social movements in Honduras) suffering from racial and spatial injustice in an increasingly disparate Honduras. In one telling example, an interviewee described his ladino recuperation *compañeros* as “Latins” instead of as “ladinos,” “indios” or *chumagünu* – which are far more common on the north coast. In the following excerpt, “Latins” are grouped together with “tribal” peoples (which I interpret as a reference to Indigeneity via the language of ILO Convention 169):

“Here in Honduras we have a thing - that one person, that one person, who’s not from Honduras, owns half of Honduras. How is that fair? How come we still have Latin people, people from other tribes, from other races, suffering for land? We have people living in the road in Honduras. In fucking boxes and shit like that ... It’s not fair! Where’s the Government? And we have people here who own 50 000 acres of land, 30 000 acres of land! How come?” (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Interpolating ladinos as a marginalized and impoverished group who share a common experience with other “tribal” groups de-stabilizes the hierarchies of race and space that structure and guarantee capitalist expansion in Honduras. Indeed, what is particularly prominent in the excerpt above is the way in which “Latin” and “tribal” groups (as well as those “from other races”) are rhetorically brought together by a reference to a mutual “suffering for land” that is the result of land concentration by the elite. This begins to challenge the complex ways in which white supremacy and the “white spatial imaginary” (Lipsitz, 2011) work in Honduras, where class divides among the non-ethnic, unmarked majority are bridged by the “whitening” legacies of *mestizaje* via the destruction of Black and Indigenous place for capitalist accumulation.

Hinting at how *blanquiamiento* structures Garifuna land loss in contemporary Honduras, the informant went on to specifically decry the ways in which immigrants from Europe and the Middle East become “naturalized quickly” as “Hondurans.” Here he refers to a citizenship rooted in white supremacy and concurrent spatial imaginaries and practices inherent to capitalist expansion - citizenship that the Garifuna have been denied for over two centuries despite their presence in Honduras prior to the formation of the Republic, and their participation in Central American Independence struggles. This racialized citizenship – this belonging in the imagined

geographies and communities of nation - also determines land rights in the context of the neoliberal nation state:

“It’s racism - it has a lot to do with that. We have people that are not Garifuna, that are Europeans, or are from the Middle East, living in Honduras, that have Honduran identity and more privilege than the Garifuna people who were here before Honduras was Honduras”

(Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

In speaking to the ways white supremacy structures belonging and various forms of “privilege,” this recuperation member draws our attention to the racial and spatial hierarchies that inform belonging, land rights and material conditions in Honduras. Lived experiences in particular spaces in the Global North - which I have argued premises solidarity with the disenfranchised, and racialized “Latins” who *suffer* the same fate as the Garifuna and “other tribes” – are then brought back to Honduras via forced return or deportation, and cemented in struggles over place that are described as emanating from land concentration in the hands of ultra-wealthy middle eastern and European “foreigners.” At the same time as these new “agro-oligarchs” (Kerssen, 2013) are described as foreigners, it is tacitly acknowledged that it is they who are given Honduran “identity” at the expense of groups such as the Garinagu and the poor “Latins.” In this reading, impoverished, racialized and “tribal” groups all find similarity in their “suffering for land” and as such, struggle together at the recuperation. Indeed, the narrative of “suffering for land” was so prominent as to have informed an interpretation of the meaning of *Garifuna* by the recuperation leader:

Respondent: This is ... I am going to put it like this ... the meaning of Garifuna is ... “ripe pain.”

Interviewer: What do you mean?

R: *Dolor Maduro!* (“Ripe Pain”)

I: Really!

R: Of course! Gari – Funa.

I: Ok, well ...

R: Well ... that means is that our pain is just the beginning. So we knew that this (displacement) was going to happen.

I: So like that’s part of the ...

R: GARI means Gari, dolor, it means pain. FUNA, ripe! Yeah! So ... Our pain is ripe. Just the name ... of our tribe.

I: Speaks to difficulty.

R: It speaks for itself. It speaks for itself.

What does the popularity and durability of this narrative of pain or sufferation – a pain that has long been planted and is now *ripening* - signify when thinking through Garinagu struggles over hierarchical and co-constitutive formations of racial and spatial meaning in the context of land struggles? In my reading, deploying a narrative of “pain” and “suffering for land” functions to highlight the similarities - rather than differences – between the Garinagu and landless ladinos. This space of shared experience was further amplified by a discourse of mixed-ness: as Sarah England (2010) writes it, historical narratives of *mestizaje* continue to exist alongside multicultural discourse in Honduras. So while Garifuna organizations such as OFRANEH and ODECO represent the Garifuna as a racially “pure” group to fit within the framework of ethnic

autochthony, there are still moments when the Garinagu's "mixed" heritage becomes politically salient. Those on the ground or "in the field" at Wani Leè, for example, tended to construct their "Garifuna-ness" in ways that wove together notions of racial singularity, plurality and fluidity.

One recuperation member stressed the Garinagu's ethnic autochthony (as *Garífunas*) over the course of our interview, consistently deploying the language of ILO Convention 169. He used the term "tribe" and "tribal" while speaking to racial and spatial injustice in Honduras, very much in line with the politics of Black Indigeneity espoused by OFRANEH's "office." In the excerpt below, Blackness is also conflated with Afro-descendancy, but distanced from its "foreign" connotations by a referral to Indigenous heritage and mixture. The participant's words make this an Indigeneity with roots in Honduras. The Garinagu's Arawakan heritage is referenced, but by way of their ties to the Mesoamerican Maya and Lenca. Finally, this "mixed-ness" is infused with a reference to Spanish heritage, a heritage privileged in dominant notions of Indo-Hispanic *mestizaje* but which is also the language of commonality and communication between Garifunas and ladinos / "Latins:"

"We are Africans, *Afrodescendientes* BUT ... there's a difference, because we were mixed. Right? Being that were mixed ... with the Indians that were here, with the Mayas, and the Lencas, we came *Arawako*, which is the two mixtures ... of Black and Spanish and Indian ... and that's what makes a Garifuna ... you know?" (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.)

## **A Place of Possibility: Ladino (Dis)placement, the Rejection of Blanquiamiento and Cross-Cutting Alliances at Wani Leè**

I have so far argued that Garifuna-returnee recuperation members navigate the space of possibility and their own lived experiences to forge coalitions with landless ladinos in the Garifuna land defense movement. I now turn to two interviews conducted with ladina recuperation members at Wani Leè, in effort to consider how non-Garifuna recuperation members represent themselves in relation to dominant discourses around race and belonging in Honduras. This is in effort to further tease out how bonds of solidarity between Garinagu and ladinos are at the recuperation. I propose that ladino recuperation members make place themselves – both in the Santa Fé Garifuna community on north coast Honduras, and at the Wani Leè land recuperation specifically – by way destabilizing established discourses of *mestizaje* informed by *blanquiamiento*.

In her study of land recuperations in Sambo Creek, Keri Brondo (2010, 2013) writes about “indios<sup>14</sup>” invoking racialized narratives of mixed-ness and belonging in effort to *contest* a growing number of Garifuna land recuperations in that community. From her perspective, ladino invocations of Indo-Hispanic *mestizaje* are attempts to challenge Garifuna rights to north coast land, making their own claims to place in ways that reinforce social hierarchies premised on a negation or Othering of Blackness (Brondo, 2013, p.15). But I heard quite a different story in

---

<sup>14</sup> *Indio* is a term frequently used by Honduran Garifunas to describe poor *ladinos* when speaking in Spanish. Middle-class or wealthy *ladinos*, in contrast, are often referred to as *blancos*. From what I understood in the field, “indio” is a pejorative term to “remind” *ladinos* that they too have indigenous roots – to “dress down *ladino* claims to superiority” (Mollett, 2013, p.1235). Alternatively, Brondo (2013) suggests that *ladinos* use the designation *indio* to highlight their land rights vis-à-vis mestizo citizenry. When speaking in Garifuna, ladinos of all class backgrounds are designated *chumagünü* which roughly translates into “outsider.”



Santa Fé and at Wani Leè, where ladina community members were active and valued members of the recuperation, and devised claims to the land in ways that up-ended established racial discourse informed by *blanquiamiento*.

As an example, one respondent started her interview by laughingly pointing to her *ojos sarcos* (light-coloured eyes), stating that she had some European heritage – Spanish and Italian to be exact. While it was not uncommon to hear comments on light eyes and hair and their relation to European heritage and Eurocentric standards of beauty while in Honduras, this informant used her “European” features to talk about her how her “*chele*<sup>15</sup>” looks belied her *sangre negra* or *sangre Garifuna* (“Black blood,” later specified as Garifuna blood). This I interpreted as a bid for belonging to place couched in a history of racial space in Honduras. It was a narrative of mixed-ness or *mestizaje* that visibilized rather than invisibilized Blackness, and referenced historical tropes of the north coast being a Black place outside of nation. As seen in the excerpt below, the informant discusses her European phenotype as related to European heritage and another time and place in Honduras - but then begins to talk about a Black/Garifuna ancestor:

“I love Santa Fé, I love it so much. Very much. But I don’t have family here, like I told you. I’m mixed, I am Spanish and Italian. My grandfather was Spanish, and my grandmother was Italian. That was back when people like that came to Honduras. But I have also, Garifuna blood. My maternal grandmother, she was mixed. She had Black blood ... Garifuna blood. But we didn’t

---

<sup>15</sup> A colloquialism used to describe a person with light skin, light eyes or light hair, or any combination of features generally considered European or “white.”

come out Black, we look white because of that other blood they gave us” (Interview with Wani Leè 3 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Speaking about her Black and Garifuna ancestry was also used to segue into proclamations of how much the informant “loved my Black people, my Garifuna people.” This was pronounced in a voice distinctly louder in volume than that of the rest of the interview.

A second ladina respondent shared her life history and described how she had arrived to Santa Fé from La Moskitia when she was 6 years old. She was now in her mid 30s. Our discussion was replete with references to her ethnic and racial background – while identifying as ladina, she was also careful to construct a relationship with the “tribal” peoples of Honduras. After declaring that she considered herself “india” (ladina), she lowered her voice and firmly stated that she also had “Sambo” blood, clarifying that Sambos were a *rama* or branch of the Miskitos (another Afro-Indigenous group on the Caribbean coast of Honduras and Nicaragua). Like the first woman I interviewed that day, she was adamant that her participation in the recuperation was born of great necessity. Like *everyone* in the community, she proclaimed, she was suffering for land.

Both women discursively constructed their right to place around the types of relationships they had with the land (Interviews with Wani Leè 2 and 3 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Beyond the sufferation of land scarcity, both described what they could do with land once they had access to it. For the first, securing access to land meant planting and preparing “typical” Garifuna food. The second woman listed, in detail, all the typical Garifuna foods she could and did plant, harvest and prepare when she had access to land. They both expressed that the land they now farmed at Wani Leè “could never be sold.” This might signal to ladino adoption of Garifuna

*cosmovisión* (“cosmovision” or world-view), and a divestment from dominant spatial imaginaries “struck through with race” (Lipsitz, 2011). However, there were measures taken at Wani Leè to enforce Garifuna worldviews, and ensure that ladino recuperation members did not sell the lands they occupied.

For instance, at Wani Leè – differently from some other land recuperations in the Bay, like Laru Beya (“by the sea shore” in Garifuna) – there was a strict policy of absolutely no fencing allowed, minus the makeshift fence that had existed along the road-side of the recuperations since before it was initiated (Interviews with Wani Leè 5 and 6 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Not only was this the traditional way the Garinagu existed with each other and with the land – “there is no ‘mine’ in our culture, there is only ‘ours’” (Interview with Wani Leè 5 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018) – it also proved way to symbolically deconstruct any notions of individual or “private” ownership that might encourage land sales. So while overall, Garinagu engaged in the work of *el campo* (“the field”) must abide by Eurocentric notions of “appropriate” land use that sees the Lockian logic of “land for those who work it” (Wolford, 2005) govern the way a recuperation is performed, the opposite might be said to be true in the way that land tenure was constructed on-site. There, a more distinct emphasis on Garifuna spatial imaginaries and practices was noted, which facilitated ladino participation in the project (Interviews with Wani Leè 1 April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 & 5 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

An OFRANEH affiliate engaged in the work of *el campo* (“the field”) shared a very different perspective on ladino involvement in the Garifuna land recuperation movement with me, however (Interviews with OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Interestingly enough, this was while visiting Laru Beya recuperation in Barrio San Martín, where the 30’ by 30’ fence-demarcated plot method that I describe in Chapter 5 is the norm. The land defender gestured

towards a number of *viviendas* (“houses”) at the recuperation, stating that they belonged to ladinos. Like many other recuperations in the Region, he continued, Laru Beya was organized to confront settlements or “invasions” of internally displaced and landless ladinos on Garifuna land. While not providing extensive details of the exchange that occurred when the recuperation “took place,” my contact described how the ladino families vigorously protested Garifuna claims to land. These protests were couched in proclamations of ladino rights to the land. He closed his story by saying that, in the end, several ladino families were permitted to maintain their homes and agricultural plots alongside the Garinagu. However, this agreement was reached only after the ladinos in question had acknowledged Laru Beya as the traditional territory of the Garinagu, and dropped all claims to ownership. Instead of framing what was emerging at Laru Beya as a ladino and Garifuna coalition that could destabilize dominant hierarchies and geographies of power in Honduras, he proffered that it might do just the opposite: “it might be kind of like an invasion in between the recuperation, but I don’t know” he mused as we walked amongst the cassava shrubs and plantain trees of his plot. Perhaps referencing the long history of racial violence that has ensured Garifuna dispossession in Honduras, he shook his head and said “better to include people, and not have any problems” (Interview with OFRANEH 2 April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

While we video-chatted over Skype in mid-2018, a second OFRANEH affiliate suggested that ladino participation in Garifuna land recuperations re-made rather than deconstructed or inverted racial and spatial hierarchies central to capitalism. While he did not gesture towards the anti-Black violence that sees ladinos included in Garifuna recuperations like the first respondent did, nor did he speak to how recuperation spatial organization could help or hinder the cause, he proposed that ladino participation in the Garifuna land defense movement posed a grave threat to Garifuna land claims, by way of dominant spatial imaginaries that were unlikely to change. For

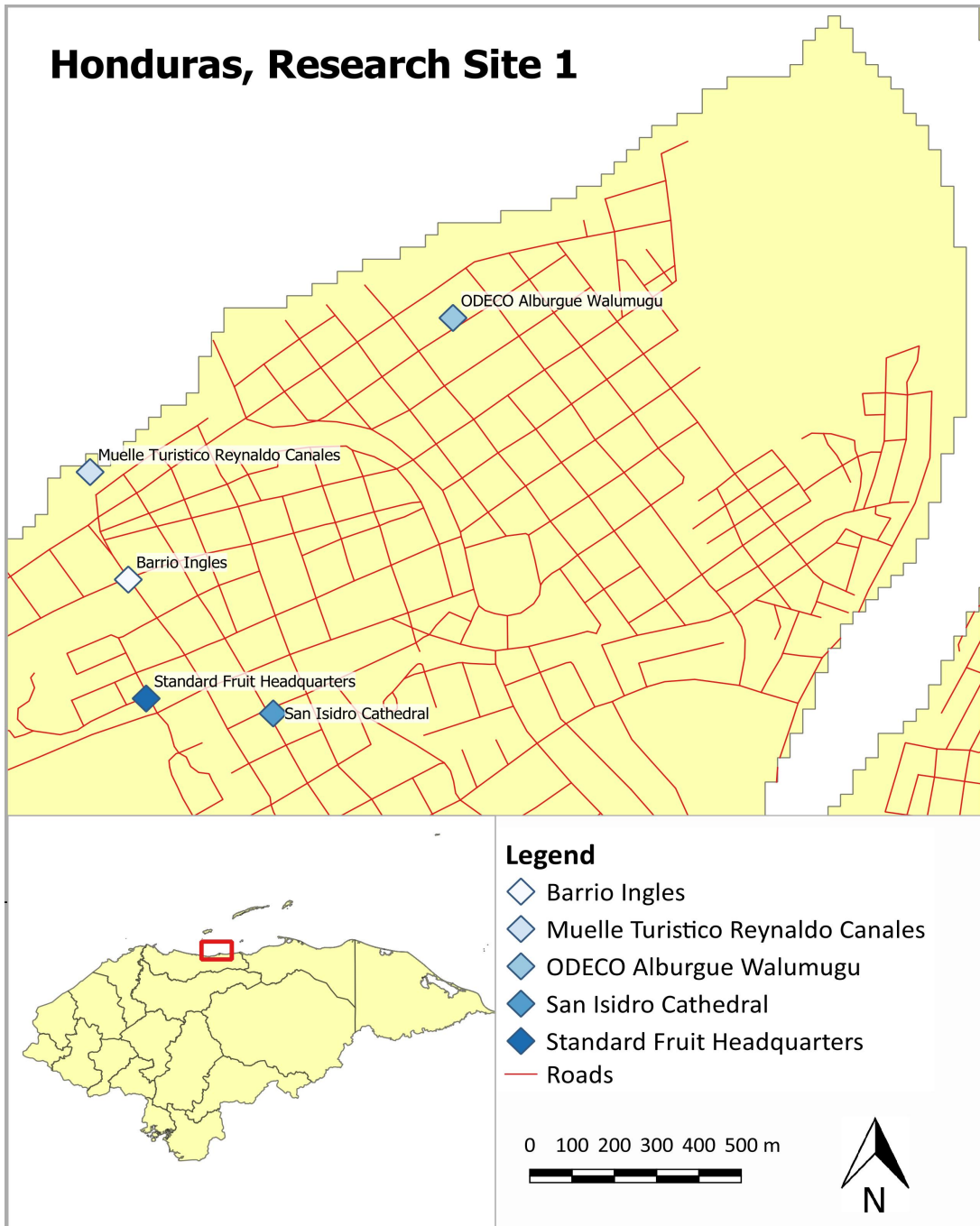
him, *chumagünu* or ladinos held a deeply-ingrained vision of land-as-commodity that was near-impossible to change. Their participation in Garifuna land defense movements would thus inevitably lead to the privatization and sale of Garifuna lands that the recuperations aimed to halt and reverse, even when agreements had been made to recognize Garifuna collective ownership (Interview with Vallecito 3 February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Alliances between landless ladinos and Garifunas like those at Wani Leè, he then proffered, could certainly be made in times of extreme crisis and need, but were useless as a long-term strategy in the struggle against Garifuna dispossession (Ibid).

### **Conclusion**

I have approached Vallecito and Wani Leè as sites where ancestral struggles over land and representation are translated into the present via multi-scalar exchanges and flows in place. Historical struggles over racial and spatial meanings held in the space of possibility are invoked at the recuperations, making them *places* of possibility that depend upon – as well as facilitate - a network of relationships that foments the Garifuna land struggle in Honduras. My research shows how recuperation members are able to occupy ancestral lands with the help of OFRANEH’s representative politics and legal and material assistance – differently said, with the support of the “office.” But it also demonstrates how Garifuna recuperation members on the ground or in the “field” further negotiate a history of multi-scalar struggles over racial and spatial meanings to form partnerships with landless ladinos. As Wani Leè land defenders maintained, ladino-Garifuna coalitions were critical to defying violent grabs of the Santa Fé Garinagu’s lands, enabling the recuperation to continue while under significant pressure. This ability to work across significant difference and a deep historical rift might be traced to the influential presence of Garifuna *retornados* (“returnees”) in the land defense movement. These

men bring racial meanings and experiences from the Global North with them when they return to Honduras, as well as they return to a set of circumstances that begets their participation in global defenses of place. So while Vallecito becomes a place to learn, exchange and practice the skills necessary to live on the land at recuperations across the coast, life in – and expulsion from - New York City provides the template for their interpretation of landless ladinos as potential allies in the struggle against racialized displacement.

Attention to the gendered dynamics of dispossession turn our attention to a set of contradictions and possibilities that emerge from Garifuna dispossession, migration and return. What does the increasing return of Garifuna men from the U.S., and their involvement in the land defense movement, have on Garifuna women, for example? Garifuna women have traditionally been the stewards of the land, and at Wani Leè I initially encountered a high percentage of women who were members that lived on site (both Garifuna women and ladinas). No women were living at the recuperation when I returned in 2018, however. This was the aftermath of a period of prolonged intimidation by the Mayor of Santa Fé, which had cumulated in an attack on the recuperation by state forces. Friends at the recuperation recounted how their dwellings had recently been burnt to the ground by the police after a series of threats were made to them by members of the Municipal government. Women and children had been moved off of the recuperation due to safety concerns. They only returned to the site for short visits during daylight hours to work agricultural plots or to attend meetings such as the one we were having. Garifuna women's control of land at Wani Leè has thus been significantly curtailed by state-sanctioned violence, and has intersected with the increasing return of male Garifunas from the U.S.



**Figure 16** Map of La Ceiba 2

Map by Aditi Gupta, 2019. Reprinted with Permission.

## CHAPTER 7: GEOGRAPHIES OF RESISTANCE AND PERFORMANCES OF PRESENCE: CITY STREETS AND A GLOBAL DEFENSE OF BLACK PLACE

In the previous chapter, I focused on OFRANEH- affiliated land recuperations, showing how those in both “the office” and “in the field” negotiate the space of possibility to build coalitions and strengthen Garifuna claims to land. Going forward, I turn to the organization ODECO and their struggles against social exclusion, as witnessed by a series of spatial practices in the city of La Ceiba. As I surmised in Chapter 4, urban space in La Ceiba has been (re)produced and organized along the lines of U.S.-style racial segregation and nationalist projects informed by “whitening” - racial and spatial projects central to the expansion of capitalism in Honduras. By claiming and challenging dominant arrangements of urban space in La Ceiba, I propose, ODECO transforms city space and performs their claims to Honduran modernity and citizenship. This might be read as complementary to the work of Garifuna land defenders along the coast as I have earlier suggested, since ODECO’s activism challenges the logics of white supremacy that undergird the formation of the modern Honduran nation-state *and* Garifuna dispossession.

In order to illustrate my argument, I begin by focusing on ODECO’s headquarters (the *Albergue Walumugu*). This building is the site where the Garinagu are rendered the *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes*, part of a project of (re)inscribing Garifuna and Black geographies onto the urbanscape. I call attention to the simultaneous “bounded-ness” and “porous-ness” of the *Albergue Walumugu* (Escobar, 2001). Grounded in a particular physical geography, it is where ODECO navigates the space of possibility to insert Garifuna struggles into global circuits and



flows centered on *lo Afrodescendiente*. Central to this section of the chapter is an understanding of how the transnational meanings of Blackness taken up in Garifuna anti-racist and labour movements in 1950s Honduras are re-invoked by the organization. These meanings provide the grounds for ODECO's global defense of Garifuna and Black place in the city.

I then turn to a reading of ODECO's 2018 *Yurumein*<sup>16</sup> celebration, interpreting this ritual celebration of survival and presence as a "performative intervention" into urban space. The work that the *Yurumein* does, I propose, both relies upon and extends the meaning made by the architectural intervention of *Albergue Walumugu*. What I attempt to show in this analysis as well, is that the rendering of the Garinagu as *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes* towards transformative spatial practice is also gendered. I conclude this chapter by re-asserting that, in purposefully moving gendered *Garifuna-Afrodescendiente* bodies from the *Albergue Walumugu* through the urbanscape in effort to challenge racialized "spatial injustice" (Dikeç, 2000) ODECO troubles the established boundaries of racial meanings in Honduras. Their work might thus be interpreted as destabilizing co-constituted racial and spatial hierarchies informed by "whitening" and anti-Blackness from multiple locations, creating a set of interesting tensions that also signal to further solidarities and possibilities.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Yurumein* is the Garifuna name for St. Vincent, and directly translates into "settlement." ODECO hosts an annual *Yurumein* celebration (which I italicize as a way to distinguish it from *Yurumein* the place) that commemorates Garifuna arrival and survival in that takes place on Garifuna Settlement Day on April 12<sup>th</sup>. I understand the ODECO *Yurumein* as a state-sanctioned performance of multiculturalism, which ODECO negotiates to resist Garinagu dispossession and displacement.



**Figure 17** The Albergue Walumugu

Photograph by ODECO, 2016. Reprinted with Permission.

### **ODECO's Albergue Walumugu: A Garífuna-Afrodescendiente Place**

The *Albergue Walumugu* is where ODECO navigates the space of possibility, traversing a rich history of Garífuna struggles over race and space to (re)insert contemporary defenses of Garífuna urban place into circuits of Global Blackness. As ODECO affiliates explained, engaging with transnational meanings of Blackness by way of *Afrodescendencia* is key to fortifying Garífuna struggles in the city, but also those in the countryside. The dispossession, (dis)placement and erasure of the Garinagu and Garífuna place from/in *both* urban and rural Honduras is structured by the persistent and co-constitutive logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness. But, as the organization's *Junta Directiva* also made clear, representing the Garinagu

as *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes* safeguards the Garinagu's "ethnic" difference and autochthony. Maintaining simultaneous access to platforms of ethnic rights and anti-racism is important for the Garinagu, as it confirms the grounds for their collective property rights while seeking to challenge the anti-Blackness that sees the latter eroded in practice (Interviews with ODECO 1 December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 & 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015). Additionally, this strategy of representation protects channels of access to existing networks of solidarity, while expanding them to include the myriad groups organizing as Afro-descendants across the region. Going forward in this section, I tease out how ODECO's particular routing of the space of possibility is confirmed through space – something that I begin to accomplish by reading the *Albergue Walumugu* as a *place* of possibility.

Figures 12 and 15 are two maps of Research Site 1, La Ceiba. On those maps appear the *Albergue Walumugu*, set two streets back from the Caribbean Sea in a mixed-use residential and commercial neighbourhood called *Barrio La Isla*. The building itself is a large structure; three stories high, painted a bright shade of yellow and trimmed in red and green. Towering over the nearby low-rise buildings, it is here that ODECO's work to forge and include the Garinagu in networks of Afro-descent is conducted. The *Albergue* might thus be thought of as a "place" in the way Massey (1994) and Escobar (2001) describe it. A sense of "grounded-ness" is certainly witnessed by its location in a particular physical geography - near the site of the Garifuna village dispossessed by Standard Fruit's company town and within the bounds of a modern, "mixed" Honduran city. But, it also demonstrates a certain "porousness" as a site where global circuits connected to the discourse of Afro-descent both emanate from and converge. It is here, then - and by way of circuits in "place" - that the Garinagu "become" *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes*.

Approaching the front doors of the *Albergue*, those entering might gaze up to the building's name painted high above, or to a smaller set of letters spelling out the phrase *buscamos voces que acallen el silencio* ("we are seeking voices to quieten the silence") below. The name of ODECO's headquarters is important for my analysis of the building as an "architectural intervention" into city space, as it evokes *Walumugu*, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Garifuna figure described as *Juan Francisco Bulnes* in Spanish accounts or *John Bull* in those of the English (Loredo et al., 2016). In one tradition, *Walumugu* is born at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Tocamacho, Colón on the edge of La Moskitia, the son of exile-survivor Duvalle and nephew of Joseph Chatoyer. An expert military strategist, he was a lieutenant to Francisco Morazán, and played an invaluable role in securing the liberation of Central America from Spain (Ibid).

In another tradition recounted by a key ODECO informant, *Walumugu* remains the son of Duvalle and a vital part of Central American Independence struggles, but was born in St. Vincent. As such, he was a survivor of the exile and indisputably Garinagu (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015). What seems to be a minor deviation in accounts – *Walumugu* being born in St. Vincent or in Honduras - is highly significant, especially when the interviewee re-casts him as one of many "Afro-Hondurans" who participated in the formation of the Republic of Central America and Honduras a few minutes later:

"Well now, even national history has discovered and told us that Afro-descendants participated in the Independence and formation of Honduras as a nation, as a country. So people can feel proud of being Afro-descended, in this case Afro-Honduran. "Afro" is what ties us to Africa, and in this case, "Honduran" refers to our country" (Interview with ODECO 2 December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015).

It is not just Garinagu but *Afro-Hondurans* who play a vital role in anticolonial struggles in the region. On one hand, then, this is a rendition of history that re-makes and advances the foundational claims to Garifuna autochthony under multiculturalism: *Walumugu* is Garifuna and remains ethnically differentiated, appearing on the Isthmus prior to independence and the formation of the nation-state of Honduras. But, on the other hand, this is also story that makes the Garinagu “Afro-Hondurans,” joining them with myriad Black populations struggling for “our country.” What ODECO’s particular memorialization of *Walumugu* does then, is safeguard Garinagu ethnic autochthony, while providing a position from which to counter the logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness that erase the Garinagu and other Black groups from national imaginaries and landscapes/urbanscapes past and present.

It is this story – this particular and highly-political representation of the Garinagu vis-à-vis ODECO’s telling of the story of *Walumugu* – that informs my reading of the ODECO headquarters as an “architectural intervention” into La Ceiba city space. This story, as told by a member of the *Junta Directiva*, is also one that challenges and confirms representations of the Garinagu, a racial meaning-making project that is literally concretized into the urbanscape. What I go on to speak to in the sections following, is how this structure acts in space – how its presence re-orientes the city and begins to challenge racial and spatial hierarchies that the organization’s activism seeks to disassemble.

### **Taxi Travels in the Honduran City: Garifuna Routes/Roots and Re-imaginings**

I have thus far advanced an analysis of ODECO’s headquarters as an “architectural intervention” into urban space - a “place” configured through multi-scalar networks of Afro-descent which makes Garifuna and Black place in the city and nation known. Over the next few

paragraphs, I continue to assess how the *Albergue Walumugu* transform the city towards the organization's goals, challenging established meanings of both Garifuna-ness and Blackness in Honduras in order to resist dispossession and displacement.

In Chapter 4, I describe my impressions of La Ceiba while travelling towards the *Albergue Walumugu* by taxi from any number of locations in the city. As a passenger in shared or *colectivo* taxis, I was usually asked a series of questions when I stated that my destination was ODECO headquarters. I was queried about who I was, what I was doing in the city, and why a non-Garifuna woman like myself would be headed to the organization's headquarters. Both drivers and passengers were inquisitive and interested in my relationship with ODECO, but I find it highly telling that I was never asked for directions to, or explanations of, the place itself. My main point is that I rarely – if ever - had to explain *where or what* the organization was.

After stating that I was conducting academic research on ODECO, my travel companions usually shared their own, clearly-formulated impressions of the organization. These were usually couched in stories of their experiences with the Garinagu, and were interspliced with tellings of Garifuna history in Honduras and La Ceiba in particular. Over the course of six months, I noticed that there were marked consistencies in my conversations with those whom I shared taxi-rides with. These consistencies were also apparent in the conversations I had with a wide variety of friends and acquaintances outside of taxis. An analysis of the subtext of these combined conversations revealed how the *Albergue Walumugu* challenged dominant representations of the Garinagu and where they “belonged.” Many middle-class city dwellers - including the family I lived with - passed a weekend-day or two at one of the nearby Garifuna villages of Corozal and Sambo Creek every month. To them, *those* villages were Garifuna places, where folkloric culture, natural surrounds and peaceful people provided a respite from the hustle, bustle and

perceived danger of the city. But even folks who had never been to Garifuna villages to the east and west of the city reproduced and relied upon the same dominant representations of the Garinagu that the former espoused. Narrative analysis reveals how the Garinagu's established "place" on the coast follows the contours of imagined geographies of nation. In popular imagination and discourse, the Garinagu exist outside of the spaces confirmed as urban, modern and distinctively "Honduran."

The Garinagu's long-standing presence in the city has largely been invisibilized and displaced to the rural landscapes that unfold somewhere in the distance. The neoliberal multicultural turn, as I have elsewhere spoken to, has relied upon a series of legal reforms that include the Law of the Municipalities - expanding municipal boundaries to include rural lands on its cusp in effort to further the expansion of capital, La Ceiba's "official" bounds lie far outside of what might recognize as the "city." Indeed, both Corozal and Sambo Creek are technically under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of La Ceiba. In multicultural Honduras, then, the Garinagu have been placed on the very literal edges of urban constitution. This threatens their continued existence in both the city and the country, mirroring the way they have been nominally included in "new" neoliberal nationalisms.

The Garinagu's associations with the rural and folkloric have certainly been negotiated towards OFRANEH's deployment of Black Indigeneity that I describe in Chapter 5, and have proven central to the land defense movement that I write about in Chapter 6. But, in routing the space of possibility and working with meanings of Blackness that are somewhat unique to Honduras in their confluences with Indigeneity, there has been a necessary silencing of one symptom of accelerating dispossession. Here I am referring to decades of Garifuna migration to cities near and far, and their marginalization in those urban spaces. The ODECO headquarters,

then, seems to be re-centering and reinserting the Garinagu into the urban fabric, challenging anti-Blackness via a routing of the space of possibility and engagement with meanings of Blackness more global in scope. This is a project that has started to change the ways in which city residents imagine and move through urban space, as related to the ways they imagine the Garinagu and Garifuna place

### **The 2018 ODECO Yurumein: Rememberings and Inscriptions of Garifuna and Black Geographies in La Ceiba**

I start this section of the chapter by describing the *Yurumein* ritual, which I later claim is in fact a place-making project. I argue that this public performance extends the work of the *Albergue Walumugu* by further re-orienting the city around the Garinagu. These performative and architectural interventions into city space ultimately challenge dominant spatial imaginaries and visibilizes Black geographies.

Joseph Palacio, a Garifuna anthropologist from Belize, interprets the *Yurumein* ritual as functioning to entrench and pass on the collective cultural memory of the Garinagu's exile from St. Vincent, an experience that is foundational to a sense of common ancestry in St. Vincent that structures Garifuna group identity (Palacio, 2005: 120). Other scholars surmise that the *Yurumein* celebrates and re-enacts arrival (Izard, 2005: 184) – Izard (2005) also approaches the event as an “identity ritual” (p.186), but as one that affirms territorial establishment and belonging in the nation-states where the Garinagu presently reside (Izard, 2005, p.186; Roesingh and Bras, 2003, p.7).

Most - if not all - Garifuna communities in Honduras conduct a *Yurumein* on April 12<sup>th</sup>, but this dissertation is primarily concerned with ODECO's “official” event in La Ceiba in 2018.



The *Yurumein* is arguably a multicultural nationalist spectacle that puts the Garifuna front and centre for a brief moment in order to extend neoliberal agendas. However, I also interpret the *Yurumein* ritual on Garifuna Settlement Day as a project of Garifuna resistance. In my reading, the ODECO *Yurumein* is very concerned with *making or taking places* in urban geographies, by way of fighting for inclusion in multicultural national imaginaries. Before expounding upon this analysis in more detail, I need to first describe the form the ritual takes. I do this by drawing on the work of Garifuna scholars, as well as on my own field notes and observations.

In 2014 I accompanied members of ODECO's Directive to the official *Yurumein* in the Garifuna community of Rio Estéban. As with arrival re-enactments that I had previously attended in Guatemala and Belize, this *Yurumein* began between night and day, and on the cusp of land and sea. Because of the ritual's early-morning timing, I had spent the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> in the house of a local family, together with my friend Zoila from TGHF in St. Vincent and our ODECO friends and contacts. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, we woke up while it was still dark, bathing and dressing and then heading down to the sea shore as a group. Traditional drum rhythms were echoing through the crisp air, and beautiful songs were being sung by groups of women in matching *uniformes*. Soon we were standing on a long stretch of beach, the ubiquitous mountains of the coastal range behind us and a view to the *Cayos Cochinos* or "Hog Islands" in front. Conch shells were blown as the sun peeked above the horizon, and we spotted several *dories* or canoes coming towards the shore from the distance. Drawing nearer in a way that I can only describe as searching – a slow, meandering approach perhaps meant to convey the idea that these shores were once unfamiliar – the boats made their way towards the waiting crowd. Eventually encountering the shallows, the arrivees were met by ritual participants and by onlookers alike,

with *buyeis* or Garifuna shamans blowing tobacco smoke to bless those making landfall (Izard, 2005, p.184).

The men and women who disembarked from the boats carried with them markers of Garifuna culture: playing the *primero* and *segundo* drums, Garifuna men in (largely) Afro-centric dress made their way into the shallows, their rhythms joining in harmony with those of the drummers who had guided them to shore. Women disembarked the boats next, carrying with them the traditional food items and utensils that have been critical to the Garinagu's cultural and material survival. Some of the women arrivees hoisted cassava shoots, coconut palm fronds, and banana suckers into the air, while others jubilantly waved the *ruguma* (the elongated, woven-reed straining device used to squeeze the poison from the grated bitter cassava in the making of *ereba*, an unleavened cassava bread) and the *hana* (a large mortar and pestle used in the preparation of the pounded-plantain dish *hudutu*) (Izard, 2005). These women also sang traditional Garifuna songs – some of which, informants told me, memorialized the exile from Yurumein – all the while dressed in the distinctive *uniformes* that are recognized throughout Honduras as markers of the ethnic *Garífuna*. Unifying on the shore, men and women, arrivees and greeters, and witnesses and attendees formed one group, and paraded through the community to the doors of the Catholic church. Inside, a Garifuna mass was conducted in the Garifuna language and with distinctive Garifuna cultural elements, to give thanks for Garinagu arrival and survival in Honduras.

ODECO's 2018's urban Yurumein started with ODECO affiliates organizing and meeting at the headquarters in *Barrio La Isla*, eventually making their way over to the waterfront. But, this "official" enactment of arrival and survival did not take place on the section of beach nearest to the *Albergue Walumugu*; rather, it began in the vicinity of the newly-constructed tourist

*muelle* (“wharf”) on the cusp of the *Barrio Ingles* (“English” neighbourhood) where Standard Fruit’s Black workforce (including Garifunas) were formerly housed. It was there that the arrivees came into sight on the horizon. In what I interpret as a symbolic act of agency and self-determination, the arriving Garifunas steered their own boats towards the future. At the shore, the arrivees or “ancestors” – the survivors of the exile - are ritually welcomed into the present by their descendants, ethnic *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes* in distinctive Afro-centric and Garifuna dress. Besides them was the *Junta Directiva* (“Committee of Directors”) of ODECO, representatives of the Municipal and National governments, and throngs of ladinos and *Afrodescendientes de Habla Inglesa* (English-speaking Afro-descendants or Bay Island “Creoles”). Parading from the ocean-side terminus of the *Avenida San Isidro* and through the centre of the city, Garifuna drummers, singers, dancers and *Yurumein* participants and witnesses seized the major thoroughfare in a way that the San Isidro carnival-as-protest once did, eventually making their way towards the city’s cathedral. There, a Garifuna mass was held a church where Garifunas had been relegated to the back pews until the 1970s (Interview with ODECO 5 April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018).



**Figure 18** The 2018 Yurumein In La Ceiba: Participants Enter The Cathedral San Isidro

Photography by Ovilson Bermudez, 2018. Reprinted with Permission.

Eugene J. McCann (1999) describes how African-American residents of Lexington, Kentucky contest racialized spatial hierarchies by creating “counter-spaces” that both make apparent the disparity of spatial organization and seek to transform it. Going forward, I take up his reading of social movements in the urban U.S. context, using his particular “unmapping” methodologies to better understand how ODECO *challenges racial and spatial hierarchies while simultaneously mapping counter-meanings onto the urban landscape*. I ask: what (attempted) erasures does ODECO’s Yurumein make visible upon closer inspection? What does this have to do with the route the ritual takes as it moves through La Ceiba? And, importantly for this

dissertation, what “counter-meanings” are being mapped onto the La Ceiba urban-scape by their performative work?

To begin, I maintain that the ODECO *Yurumein* makes apparent the history of racial segregation in La Ceiba that I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, linking it to the present by way of collective movement and a particular routing of the city’s streets. This would not be possible without first locating the Garinagu in a discourse of Afro-descendancy, a project that I earlier described and which is symbolized and concretized by the *Albergue Walumugu*. The movement of ODECO affiliates from that building to arrival of the Garifuna *dories* to the former Standard Fruit Company wharf – newly re-constructed as a tourist attraction in line with the Honduran state’s “Open for Business” mandate, but standing empty as a result of the post-coup social crisis – calls our attention to the way in which neoliberal reconfigurations of Honduras have extended and entrenched the legacies of Conquest, colonization and imperialism, via a recapitulation of the racial/spatial hierarchies that capitalism’s expansion depends upon. Indeed, the Garinagu’s procession towards the San Isidro Cathedral via San Isidro Avenue from the former Standard Fruit Company wharf draws our attention to the enclave’s history of racial segregation and the persistence of “whitening” and anti-Blackness through the reactionary discourse of *mestizaje* and into the multicultural now. By starting the procession in the shadow of the enclave, and bringing us into the contemporary downtown core, the route of the *Yurumein* makes the connections between enclave histories, Honduran nationalisms and neoliberal policies known.

But if that year’s *Yurumein* made visible the histories of racial and spatial hierarchies in the present, what “counter meanings” was ODECO simultaneously mapping onto the landscape or urban-scape that April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018? How was that performance a production of a counter-space – or differently said, how was it a place-making project? Over the next few pages, I advance the

idea that, by virtue of ODECO representing the Garinagu as *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes*, the organization's 2018 *Yurumein* became another way to re-orient La Ceiba around both Garifuneness and Blackness. The *Yurumein*, starting at the *Albergue Walumugu* and charting overlapping geographies of racialized exclusion in La Ceiba, ultimately (re)traces Garifuna and Black geographies that have been erased by racial-spatial "whitening." But, before I begin that reading, I briefly return our focus to the role of gender in Garifuna struggles in Honduras, as related to my reading of the *Yurumein* as a *Garifuna-Afrodescendiente* place making project.

As Nira Yuval-Davis reminds us, gendered bodies play central roles "as territories, markers, and reproducers of the narratives of nations and other collectivities" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 39). A gendered analysis of the *Yurumein* ritual might be useful for this section of the chapter, then, to understand not just how Garifuna collective identity is reproduced and maintained, but how specifically *Garifuna-Afrodescendiente* identities are brought into being and confirmed through space and place. While Garifuna men and women both participate in the *Yurumein*, Garifuna women's bodies become particularly symbolic – they make and carry meaning as related to identity and collectivity as Yuval-Davis suggests (1997). A gendered analysis of the *Yurumein* is necessary, I think, because of the ways in which women's bodies become central to making simultaneous and inter-related claims to Garifuneness, Afro-discordancy, the city of La Ceiba and the nation-state of Honduras.

What I am proposing is, that in effort to both make and claim place in the city/nation-state by way of countering anti-Blackness, Garifuna women play an integral to (re)making Garifuna ethnicity within the context of a representational move towards Afro-descendancy. This follows from my general idea that ODECO (like OFRANEH) has a specific way of routing the space of possibility, in order to maintain channels to both Indigeneity and Blackness. As Chatterjee (1990,

in Yuval-Davis, 1997), states, the position of women has been so central to the colonial project, that it is “there that symbolic declarations of cultural change have taken place” (p.60). While there are moves to re-locate the ethnic *Garífuna* in an emerging global discourse in order to stake claims to the nation-state and city (and vis-à-vis modernity) by way of Blackness, there is also a project ongoing that seeks to re-assert the specific collective boundaries of the Garinagu within this movement. Garifuna women become the “carriers of tradition” (p.61) – wearing distinct ethnic dress and food preparation items related to their role as stewards of the land – in a particular place making project.

### **Challenging Racial and Spatial Hierarchies in Honduras by Way of Afrodescendencia: Tensions, Possibilities, Future Solidarities?**

In this final section, I put forth the idea that in making *Garífuna-Afrodescendiente* place in La Ceiba/Honduras, ODECO has necessarily called attention to, and troubled, the foundations of social order and hierarchy in multicultural Honduras. I suggest in excavating racial meanings held in the moniker *Negro* (adopted in Garifuna social movements of the 1950s) in order to advance contemporary urban struggles, leading readers into a nuanced discussion of racial formation across the Americas that forms the basis of this dissertation’s Conclusion and Discussion chapter.

To begin with – and as I addressed in Chapter 5– ODECO’s insertion of Garifuna struggles into a hemispheric (and increasingly global) movement centered on Afro-descent has seen the organization become heavily invested in the discursive production of a third Afro-Honduran population, the “Afro-colonials.” This population, descendants of enslaved Africans on the Isthmus, are not currently recognized in multicultural discourse and policy, having been

invisibilized by the legacy of whitening. ODECO's move towards an emerging global discourse that produces "Afro-colonials" as one of several "Afro-Honduran" groups might thus be thought of as fundamentally challenging the logics of "whitening" that persist from the colonial *casta* system into Honduran nationalist projects past and present. What I want to suggest is that, by being part of a movement to delineate the invisibilized descendants of enslaved Africans, the "unmarked" category of ladino – and the "whitening" privilege it bestows – is becoming undone, causing ripples across the nation-state as a foundational pillar of its hierarchical social organization begins to tremble.

Members of ODECO's Committee of Directors certainly couched their analyses of the delineation of the Afro-colonials in language that suggested that in being rendered "ladino," persons of Afro-descents have suffered a series of losses. One informant maintained that Hondurans are still the victims of the *casta* system, never being able to acknowledge who they "really were," because of earlier systems of racial classification and "betterment" that depended upon the negation of Blackness. Another informant said that in addition to this perceived loss of identity, Afro-descendants-as-ladinos also lost any chance of organizing against the persistent discrimination they faced. Both interviewees explained how ladinos read as having African admixture were also those that lived in the most-dire of conditions. The distance from full-citizenship in Honduras is thus calculated by "farness" from whiteness. This means that, while the category of ladino seems to collapse a series of *casta* racial categories into one "mixed" category that moves towards "white," those perceived to be further away from European phenotype and cultural practice still suffer the lived and material effects of anti-Blackness. A politics of Afro-descendancy thus presents the opportunity to constitute a "new" Afro-subjectivity, *hoy en dia* ("in the present"). This would be an expanding space from which to



organize against the injustice faced by huge swaths of Honduran society, many of whom suffer the repercussions of social exclusion without the limited recourse offered by an “ethnic” subject position. By troubling this category of “ladino,” ODECO is picking away at the logics of white supremacy and anti-Blackness that underpin its constitution.

By visibilizing an Afro-colonial population vis-à-vis their adoption of a politics of Afro-descent, ODECO’s challenging of Honduran racial hierarchies challenges another historical omission or project of forgetting upon which the nation-state of Honduras is based, and which deeply troubles a long-standing narrative of Garifuna-ness. I am here referring to the erasure of colonial Spain’s and the Republic of Honduras’ participation in the Transatlantic slave trade, and the ways in which colonial powers but also the Honduran national elite have amassed fortunes off of the enslavement and genocide of Africans and their descendants in the Americas. Logics of retention and recuperation that Shane Greene (2007) describes reminds us that Blackness in Honduras has been only visibilized only when it meets the criteria of being ethnic, “indigenous-like” or in possession of a culture seen as ‘non-assimilated,’ covertly rewarding ‘successful’ resistance to colonialism, but also to slavery. If we examine this binary as a nationalist story-telling device in the context of Honduran multiculturalism, Honduras emerges as a place on the peripheries of the slave trade, as a site where slavery becomes visible, but is relegated to the distant shores of the Antilles. Honduras’ two officially-recognized Black or Afro-descended autochthonous groups, the Garinagu and the English-speaking Bay Islanders (*Afrodescendientes de Habla Inglesa*) are construed in multi-cultural discourse as having arrived to Honduras as a result of their “successful” resistance to slavery in the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, or as arriving from islands such as the Caymans after abolition there.

Thus, in making the Garinagu *Garifuna-Afrodescendientes*, ODECO is thus delineating potential allies who do not bear the markers of cultural and ethnic difference. This means that ODECO inevitably destabilizes the binary of “retention and recuperation” that Shane Greene (2007) says underlies the formal recognition of “legitimate” and “indigenous-like” Afro-descended subjects in multicultural Latin America. The recognition of certain Black populations by multicultural policy and discourse, says Greene, occurs at the expense of Black populations who do not exhibit a satisfactory ethnic ‘difference.’ The creation and reproduction of this binary, says Greene, draws our attention to the ways in which Black recognition in certain multicultural Latin American states - in being premised on demonstrating a cultural difference usually associated with the colonial racial category of “Indian” - ensures the invisibility of those Afro-descended populations in who do not demonstrate this “Indigenous-like” difference. Besides extending a problematic narrative of “successful” and “unsuccessful” resistance to slavery by privileging the “recuperation and retention” of pre-colonial cultures as a point of reference (Ibid), it also obscures the ways in which white supremacist and anti-Black logics persist into the neoliberal multicultural moment by way of *blanquiamiento*. “Ethnic” Black subjects are only recognizable at the expense of those invisibilized by social and phenotypic “whitening.”

ODECO, in beginning to insert the Garinagu into emerging networks and frameworks that are crystalizing around the ongoing social-political and economic impacts of Transatlantic slavery in the Americas, is challenging what Greene (2007) and Anderson (2009) say is a project of erasure that benefits the Latin American elite. As Garifuna anthropologist Doris Garcia (2014) understands it, the move towards Afro-descendancy is simultaneously a move towards understanding the Garifuna’s ethnogenesis as more closely tied to colonialism and slavery as

opposed to essentialized notions of resistance to it. This she says, demands that Garifuna leaders “step back and reassess their language and understanding of slavery and the Garinagu’s historical narrative” (Garcia, 2014, p.120). In this way, locating the Garifuna within a politics of Afro-descendancy pushes at the boundaries of both Blackness and ladino-ness in Honduras, while also troubling the established parameters of Garifuna-ness in ways that Black Indigeneity does not or cannot.

Locating Garifuna struggles within the discourse of Afro-descendancy might also be read as re-centering St. Vincent or Yurumein in interesting and productive ways. Doris Garcia’s (2014) work has a heavy focus on the politics of the New York Garifuna community, which permits some insight into the increasing contact between Central American Garifunas and Vincentians in the diaspora, particularly in New York City. There, Garcia notes a tendency for some Garifuna leaders in the U.S. to align with a politics of Afro-descent in hopes of aligning struggles with CARICOM and the reparations movement (Garcia, 2014). Garifuna and Vincentian coalitions in New York have also fostered increasing links forged between Garifuna cultural workers and activists and St. Vincent’s burgeoning Garifuna resurgence. This has already resulted in some interesting developments that build upon St. Vincent’s pivotal place as the Garifuna “center,” but which also marks it as “peripheral” in the sense of the island being *brought back into* the fold of the Garifuna nation. The positioning of the Garifuna as Afro-descendants affected by the Transatlantic slave trade remakes the twin diasporic horizons that Johnson (2007) sees emerging in Garifuna communities in the U.S. In particular, this might align transnational Garifuna organizations with social movements in the Antillean Caribbean, offering interesting possibilities for our collective circum-Caribbean futures.

## Conclusion

The delineation of “illegitimate” and “legitimate” subjects has been a hallmark of multiculturalisms across Latin America, whereby “activists and their ideas” have been incorporated into governance regimes to forward the march of capital (Da Costa, 2018). Scholars of the region have largely identified ODECO as a “legitimate” and state-sanctioned ethnic organization, but I have chosen to read their work through the lens of Scott’s (1990) art of resistance. I have thus used this chapter to analyze both ODECO’s headquarters and their *Yurumein* on 2018’s Garifuna Settlement Day as practices of place-making that challenge dominant racial and spatial hierarchies by way of making visible Garifuna and Black – and Garifuna-as-Black - geographies. There, I argued that ODECO’s struggles over discursive space – particularly their fight for inclusion in the “imagined geography” (Said, 2003) of nation - are intrinsically tied to struggles over place, particularly urban place (Nelson, 2008). By representing the Garinagu as *Garífuna-Afrodescendientes* and inserting their struggles into transnational alliances centered on the combatting of anti-Black racism, ODECO challenges the anti-Black and white supremacist logics of Garifuna dispossession and exclusion in Honduras via architectural and performative interventions in city space. This, I argued, represents part of an attempt to transform Standard’s segregated company town and a decidedly Honduran, Indo-Hispanic *mestizo* or ladino city into a Garifuna settlement once more - ODECO carves out a place for generations of Garifunas migrating to the city after being displaced from their ancestral lands along the Caribbean coast, including the land that La Ceiba itself is built upon.

Over the past 20-odd pages, I have also sought to illustrate the important role played by Garifuna women in ODECO’s projects of inclusion and citizenship, taking a gendered view of the organization’s interventions into public space. In particular, the *Yurumein* becomes a location

from which to understand how Garifuna women's bodies become sites of marking "Garifuneness." This is especially relevant to my argument that the organization tries to safeguard the ethnic positionality of the Garinagu while making claims to the discourse of Afro-descendancy. But because the *Afrodescendiente* subject position - as I have earlier noted - ultimately convolutes the distinctions between "successful" and "unsuccessful" resistance to colonialism and slavery (Greene, 2007) that is the basis for ethnic autochthony in Honduras, this is a fraught and precarious situation.

In sum, I suggest that in confronting the anti-Black and white supremacist underpinnings of the nation-state and capital, ODECO pushes at the established bounds of racial meanings in multicultural Honduras in ways that might benefit the material survival of urban Garinagu across borders. While this rupturing unsteadies the grounds of land-based claims, it also delimits a set of possible future alliances, at the level of the nation-state- the Afro-colonial population – as well as regionally – Garinagu and Black populations in St. Vincent – as well as globally. What does this debate over the meanings and implications of *Afrodescendencia* signal to, especially if we return to questions of racial formation across the Americas, the movement of bodies in diaspora between and across them, and the way projects of resistance advance their cause within matrices of power across a series of continually-interconnected places? In the Conclusion chapter that follows, I make an effort to extend and complicating this discussion by returning to a theorization of the notion of the space of possibility.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In mapping the Garinagu's resistance to an ongoing dispossession and displacement structured by white supremacy, this dissertation has traced their forging of a "space of possibility" between colonial racial categories. In order to chronicle the formation of this space over time, I began this dissertation by reading official designations of the Garinagu in Honduras - from *Caribes* to *Morenos* to *Negros* and finally as *Garifuna* - as emerging from, as well as being central to, organized struggles over land and labour. The eventual advent of the autochthonous ethnic identity *Garifuna* in multicultural Honduras, I there argued, invokes and extends a long history of Garifuna struggles to be positioned as a "different," "native" Black population. But, as the "significance" or meaning of racial discourse "varies in different political and economic contexts" (Anderson, 1997, p.31), the Honduran Garifunas' dispossession and movement through multiple and overlapping political and economic contexts has seen their activism increasingly influenced by contests over racial meaning across locations (Gordon and Anderson, 1999; England, 2000). Garifuna resistance to dispossession and social exclusion in Honduras has thus entailed multi-sited and multi-scalar struggles over racial and spatial hierarchies over time; and that these struggles have created a figurative archive of meaning that can be accessed and re-purposed to particular, localized sites of struggle today.

As the dissertation proceeded, I distinguished the space of possibility from certain notions of "in-between-ness" that predominate in the academy and in Latin America and the Caribbean. While Jose Martí envisioned a project of racial mixture that resisted U.S. imperialism vis-à-vis a rejection of their systems of racial formation and order; *mestizaje* nationalism was reconstituted from the colonial *casta* system as a project of separation and domination serving elite interests,

shrouded in a superficial discourse of “mixture” (Euraque, 1996; Mendoza, 2006). Today, in a Latin America still plagued by U.S. (and increasingly, Canadian) imperialism, the shift toward neoliberal multiculturalism has brought systems of racial formation much closer to those of North America (Mitchell, 2017; Safa, 2005). But, as much as American-style racial policies (Safa, 2005) are taking further hold in Latin America - lingering vestiges of *mestizaje* endure (England, 2010). What remains constant as this shift occurs however, are the underpinning logics of white supremacy / anti-Blackness – both *mestizaje* and multicultural nationalisms were/are inextricable from capital’s incorporation of the margins in Latin America and the Caribbean, as the expansion of capital depends upon this constant re-making of racial hierarchy.

The Garinagu have skillfully navigated this shifting terrain of racial formation in Honduras while invoking and referencing their struggles in places beyond, in effort to maintain some semblance of territory in the face of accelerating dispossession. This, I have shown, has entailed their collusion with, as well as resistance to, the projects of representation advanced by dominant powers seeking to exploit their land and labour. Garifuna Afro-Indigenous “mixture,” for example, was invoked during the height of the power struggle between American capitalists and Honduran elites in the era of the banana enclave economy. Cristales and Rio Negro Garifunas represented themselves as mixed *Morenos* to make claims to land, labour and belonging, colluding with Americans who sought land and a stable labour force, but also with dominant notions of “mixed-ness” deployed by the Honduran oligarchs. But even in when their interests intersected with those of the American capitalist and Honduran elite interests, their deployment of “mixture” still revoked the white supremacist logics of *mestizaje* – as I point out in Chapters 2 and 3, the meaning of “mixture” held within *Moreno* is not one oriented towards “whitening.”

As systems of racial formation in Honduras increasingly shed narratives of racial mixture and don those of racial singularity, Garifuna organizations have largely abandoned the deployments of notions of mixture altogether – including the rejection of the terminology Afro-Indigeneity that I noted in the field. What *has* become pronounced, say scholars of Garifuna social movements, is a highly political and strategic collusion with colonial racial categories as they are remade in the context of Latin American multiculturalisms (England, 2010). This has meant that, in Honduras at least, Garifuna organizations increasingly represent the ethnic *Garífuna* as either Indigenous or Afro-descendant on the global stage, forming strategic coalitions that foment their insertion into these discourses and strengthen their claims to place on the north coast. Today, the organizations that my dissertation focusses on continue to try to maintain pathways to distinct discourses; as they emerge, crystalize and are contested across multiple spatial scales. OFRANEH and ODECO might be said to navigate the space of possibility with what amount to different compasses – something that has resulted in the plethora of tensions and contradictions that I speak to throughout this dissertation: as I have shown in Chapter 5, OFRANEH land defenders interpret a platform of Afro-descendancy as undermining claims to Indigeneity, land and the ability to move between and beyond colonial categories of race as they are remade on a global scale. ODECO leadership, on the other hand, maintains that engaging a platform of Black Indigeneity cannot effectively challenge the anti-Black logics of dispossession and exclusion, and that it is possible to protect the Garinagu’s autochthonous status while adopting a global politics of Afro-descent in effort to do so.

My research, then, *does* point to the ways in which one organization’s struggles over representation and place are potentially threatening to the other’s, especially with regard to land claims. This is something that scholars have paid attention to, although many of their astute



observations coalesce around a critical analysis of Latin American multiculturalisms. These works largely rely upon theories of hegemony. ODECO thus emerges a “legitimate” state-sanctioned multicultural organization (Hale, 2005); while OFRANEH is rendered an “illegitimate” organization that suffers the violent consequences (Brondo, 2013). These studies undoubtedly offer much insight into the way multicultural regimes function, but I have earlier suggested that it might be productive to think outside of the binary of “legitimate” and “illegitimate” multicultural subjects. Instead of approaching the organizations as in a *conflict* that weakens Garifuna solidarity (Safa, 2005, p.314), then, I suggest that we read current and divergent Garifuna struggles over representation as generative of the space of possibility.

Scott’s (1990) theory of resistance complicates these sorts of divisions that scholars such as myself have been all too complicit in entrenching. As I espoused in Chapter 3, his thinking provides a unifying perspective on the divergent tactics used by either Garifuna organization that my research focusses on. While OFRANEH uses direct-action land reclamation strategies that seem to rupture the membrane between hidden and public transcripts and “speak truth to power” (p.19), they also engage elements of disguise in the ways they collude with and contest dominant notions and forms of land use. ODECO appears to condone the public transcript of the powerful and their work is often perceived as conducive to the expansion of global capital, but I made the case that there might be more than meets the eye. And while the daily practices, strategies and interventions of each of these two particular Honduran organizations might be said to exemplify this “third realm” of Scott’s (1990), their different routings of the space of possibility might be understood as yet another manifestation of that third political discourse described in *Domination and the arts of resistance*: I suggest that we read the different strategies of these organizations as *maintaining the discursive space between races* that centuries of Garifuna struggles have forged.

By each organization adopting a different routing of the space of possibility, each is making claims to the colonial racial categories of “Black” and “Indian.” This strategic division around Garifuna politics of representation is manifested in their different organizational tacks, but it is through this divergence that the space between racial categories might be recreated and navigated anew. What remains to be seen of course, is whether it is possible to hold this space of possibility open for much longer – will one claim erase the other, will inserting the Garinagu into an emerging discourse of *Afrodescendencia* allow those in power to, as one land defender expressed in Cristales, render the Garifuna as “foreigners” to be “deported” as they did in the era of the banana enclave?

We cannot know if these seemingly-divergent struggles over representation and place will maintain that productive space as time unfurls. However, I maintain that, in the interim, scholars such as myself should still seek to find the connections between OFRANEH and ODECO as opposed to highlighting their differences. I return to the ruminations on my own space of possibility in Chapter 1, where I reflected upon my positionality as related to my role as researcher and writer. What stories do I want to tell – and what responsibilities do I have as generally powerful outsider conducting research on a group vested with less social power? Reading these two organizations together, and as productive, deviates from much of the scholarship produced by outsiders like myself over the past two decades. Surmising that these two organizations are attempting to hold the space of possibility open by way of their divergent tactics, in this sense, could be thought of as a way to avoid reproducing binaries and divisions that might undermine community struggles.

As I this chapter winds to a close, I briefly speak to Sarah Nuttall’s (2009) concept of “entanglement” in effort to further the line of thinking I just espoused. While Nuttall’s (2009)

work is concerned with post-apartheid South Africa, it does find commonality with my doctoral research in its attention to hierarchies of racial/spatial formation that create and rely upon immutable categories of difference. Perhaps most useful and relevant to my reading of ODECO and OFRANEH together is her recognition of the “intimate overlaps” that characterize systems of division and difference that mark the present and the past (and the present-in-the-past) (p.1). Of particular interest are the historical, temporal and racial entanglements that she says are evident in projects intent on distancing and separating. The simplifying dualisms associated with projects of domination and control in the context of the trajectory of colonialism to global capital are here unraveled. Drawing on the examples of “center and periphery,” of “colonizer and colonized,” Nuttall re-envisions them as “circuits, layering, webs, overlapping fields and transnational networks” (p.4).

My doctoral work has already indicated towards complex entanglements within various research sites – the “places of possibility” associated with either organization that are detailed in Chapters 6 and 7. Perhaps most illustrative of this is my research conducted at Garifuna land recuperations in the Bay of Trujillo, where affiliates of the organization OFRANEH navigate the space of possibility in ways that both follow and deviate from the routes plied by the organization’s “office.” On the ground in “the field,” the entanglements between ladino “invaders” and Garifuna land defenders are made visible in the complicated ways in which the former reject dominant spatial imaginaries and practices. There we can see the space of possibility as it is made in place on what might be thought of as the micro or everyday level: while ladinos “divest” from the white spatial imaginary, Garifuna land defenders negotiate racial meanings and representations held within the virtual archive in effort to work across difference and fortify claims to place. This routing of the space between races references organizational

stances and politics of representation - but also elides, re-fuses and re-mixes them. Going forward, it will be interesting to see if the delineation of the “Afro-colonial” subject position by ODECO could foster the sort of de-stabilization of racial and spatial hierarchies that I witnessed at Wani Leè. Could those everyday entanglements occur in the context of the city? Could ODECO’s politics of representation provide a platform for complex coalition building on the ground, in unexpected ways that substantively challenge racialized spatial injustice?

Finally, I return my focus to the intersections of race, gender and space in order to specifically locate the sorts of entanglements that might challenge representations of ODECO and OFRANEH as being in conflict. In particular, I direct readers’ attention to discussions around the pathologization of racialized families and gender roles that are found in Chapter 3. There, my treatment of the work of Trotz (2003) and Amparo Alvez (2013) offers some idea of how racialized (dis)placement is highly gendered, as well as how social agents and groups seize upon placeless-ness as a location from which to organize and challenge white supremacy and anti-Blackness. As this dissertation has attended to, scholars of Garifuna social movements have taken more than a cursory glance at the way race and gender intersect in projects of dispossession and land reclamation in Honduras. As I touch upon in Chapter 2, they have generally written about the pathologization of Garifuna gender roles as justifications for dispossession (Anderson, 2009), and the predominance of Garifuna women in organizations involved in land defense (Brondo, 2010).

But what about the everyday entanglements related to the Garifunas’ forms of kinship, connection and family - forms which scholars have generally interpreted as being the result of dispossession and migration (see, for example, Gonzalez, 1969)? How are the relationships propagated by the matrifocal Garifuna family form more than mere response – how might they

not only an active rejection of the Eurocentric notion of the nuclear family, but a creative re-working of Garifuna women's displacement to the domestic sphere in ways that ensure complex entanglements? What fortitudes has this offered when it comes to Garifuna cultural survival? I suggest that this is the heart of the tangled web of roots that underlies what seems to be two distinct approaches to organizing and traversing the space of possibility today. Kinship ties weave ODECO and OFRANEH together, as seen in the everyday encounters in the streets of La Ceiba and the green expanses of the rural coastal plain as it stretches east and west of the city. On the ground in Honduras, differently to the scholarly texts on the academic shelf, there exists a space of conversation, exchange and collaboration that joins two organizations often thought of as distinct.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acker, A. (1988). *Honduras: The making of a banana republic*. Boston: South End Press.
- Alcoff, L. M. (1996). The problem of speaking for others. In J. Roof, & R. Wiegman (Eds). *Who can speak? Authority and critical identity*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Alves Amparo, J. (2013). From necropolis to Blackpolis: necropolitical governance and Black spatial praxis in São Paulo, Brazil. *Antipode*, 46(2), 323–339.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, J. M. (2012). Neoliberal dilemmas: diaspora, displacement, and development. In B. Reiter, & K. E. Simmons (Eds.), *Afrodescendants, identity, and the struggle for development in the Americas*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Anderson, M. (1997). “The significance of Blackness: Representations of Garifuna on St. Vincent and Central America, 1700-1900. *Transforming Anthropology*, 6(1/2). Pp.22-35.
- Anderson, M. (2005). Bad boys and peaceful Garifuna: Transnational encounters between racial stereotypes of Honduras and the United States (and their implications for the study of race in the Americas). In S. Oboloer, S., & A. Dzidzienyo, A (Eds.), *Neither enemies nor friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-latinos*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson, M. (2007). When afro becomes (like) indigenous: Garifuna and afro-indigenous politics in Honduras. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 12(2), 384-413.
- Anderson, M. (2009). *Black and indigenous: Garifuna activism and consumer culture in Honduras*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands=La frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Bird, A. (2013). “Rights Action: Human Rights Abuses Attributed to Military Forces in the Bajo Aguan Valley in Honduras.”  
[http://rightsaction.org/sites/default/files/Rpt\\_130220\\_Aguan\\_Final.pdf](http://rightsaction.org/sites/default/files/Rpt_130220_Aguan_Final.pdf)
- Borras, S.M Jr; Franco, J.C; Gomez, S; Cristobal, K and Spoor, M. (2012). Land grabbing in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Journal of peasant studies*, 39(3-4), 845-872.
- Brondo, K.V. (2007). Garifuna women’s land loss and activism in Honduras. *Journal of International Woman’s Studies*, 9(1), 99-116.
- Brondo, K.V. (2010). When Mestizo becomes (like) Indio - or is it Garifuna?: Multicultural rights and “making place” on Honduras’ north coast. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 15(1), 170–194.

- Brondo, K.V. (2013). *Land grab: Green neoliberalism, gender, and Garifuna resistance in Honduras*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Bryan, J. (2012). Re-thinking territory: Social justice and neoliberalism in Latin America's territorial turn. *Geography compasss*, 6(4), 215-226.
- Brysk, A. (2000). *From tribal village to global village: Indian rights and international relations in Latin America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Caine, K.J., and Krogman, N. (2010). Powerful or just plain power-full? A power analysis of impact and benefit agreements in Canada's north. *Organization and Environment*, 23, 73-98.
- Coelho, R. G. D. A. (1955). *The Black Carib of Honduras: A study in acculturation*. Ph.D. dissertation. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.
- Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO.) (February, 2017). CAO assessment report: Complaints regarding IFC's investment in Dinant (project #27250) Aguán Valley, Honduras. [www.cao-ombudsman.org](http://www.cao-ombudsman.org).
- Corr, A. (1999). Battling the banana baron: Rural Hondurans bloody Chiquita brands international. In *No trespassing: squatting, rent strikes, and land struggles worldwide*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Da Costa, A.E. (2018). The decolonial in practice, Quilombismo, and Black Brazilian politics in "postneoliberal" times. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 5(1), 27-40.
- Davis, D. J., Paschel, Tianna S., and Morrison, J. A. (2012). "Pan-Afro-Latin African Americanism revisited: Legacies and lessons for transnational alliances in the new millennium." In B. Reiter, & K. E. Simmons (Eds.), *Afrodescendants, identity, and the struggle for development in the Americas*. Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Press.
- Dikec, M. (2000). Justice and spatial imagination. *Environment and planning*, 33, 1785-1805.
- Dutta, U. (2017). Critical ethnography. In *Qualitative methodology: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Edelman, D. & Leon, A. (2013). Cycles of land grabbing in Central America: An argument for history and a case study in the Bajo Aguán, Honduras. *Third world quarterly*, 34(9), 1697-1722.
- England, S. (1999). Negotiating race and place in the Garifuna diaspora: Identity formation and transnational grassroots politics in New York City and Honduras. *Identities*, 6(1), 5-53.
- England, S. (2000). *Creating a global Garifuna nation? The transnationalization of race, class and gender politics in the Garifuna diaspora*. ProQuest Dissertations. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

- England, S. (2006). *Afro-Central Americans in New York City: Garifuna tales of transnational movements in racialized space*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- England, S. (2010) Mixed and multiracial in Trinidad and Honduras: Rethinking mixed-race identities in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(2), 195-213.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places: Reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political geography*, 20, 139-174.
- Escobar, A. (2003). *Displacement, development, and modernity in the Colombian Pacific*. UNESCO. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Escobar, A. (2010). Latin America at a crossroads: Alternative modernizations, post-liberalism or post-development? *Cultural studies*, 24(1), 1-65.
- Euraque, D.A. (1996). *Reinterpreting the banana republic: Region and state in Honduras, 1870-1972*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Euraque, D.A. (2003). The threat of blackness to the nation: Race and ethnicity in the banana economy, 1920s and 1930s. In S. Striffler and M. Moberg (Eds.), *Banana wars*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Forbes, M. (2011). *Garifuna: the birth and rise of an identity through contact language and contact culture*. PhD dissertation. Columbia: University of Missouri.
- Foster, B. (1987). Celebrating autonomy: The development of Garifuna ritual on St. Vincent. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 33(3/4), 75-83.
- Fraser, A. (2002). *Chatoyer (Chatawae): national hero of St. Vincent and the Grenadines*. St. Vincent: Galaxy Print Ltd.
- Fraser, A. (2014). Revisiting the Carib story. *Caribbean quarterly*, 60(2), 53-64.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*. New York: Picador.
- Garcia, D. (2014). *Place, race, and the politics of identity in the geography of Garinagu Baiindada*. PhD dissertation. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.
- Garifunaweb (May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017). "Honduran government, narcos and dams: Eco-activist mayor Omar Suazo arrested after surviving an assassination attempt."  
[https://www.garifunaweb.com/omar-suazo.html#Honduran\\_government](https://www.garifunaweb.com/omar-suazo.html#Honduran_government)
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.



- Giroux, H.A. (2008). Beyond the biopolitics of disposability: Rethinking neoliberalism in the New Gilded Age. *Social Identities*, 14(5), 587-620.
- Global Fund For Women. Women human rights defend-her: Miriam Miranda. <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/miriam-miranda/>
- Global Greengrants Fund. (August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). Honduras: The Garifuna fight for their way of life. <https://www.greengrants.org/2005/08/30/honduras-the-garifuna-fight-for-their-way-of-life/>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Goldberg, D.T. (2009). *The threat of race: Reflections on racial neoliberalism*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gonzalez, N. L. S. (1969). *Black Carib household structure: A study of migration and modernization*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Gonzalez, N. L. S. (1988). *Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and ethnohistory of the Garifuna*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Gonzalez, N.L.S. (1990). From cannibals to mercenaries: Carib militarism, 1600-1840 *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 46(1), 25-39.
- Gordon, E. & Anderson, M. (1999). The African Diaspora: Toward an Ethnography of Diasporic Identification. In *The Journal of American Folklore*, 112(445), 282-296.
- Greene, O.N. Jr. (2002). Ethnicity, modernity and retention in the Garifuna punta. *Black Music Research Journal*, 22(2), 189-216.
- Greene, O.N. Jr. (2007). *Play, Jankunú play - the Garifuna wanaragua ritual of Belize*. [Motion Picture]. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources.
- Greene, S. (2007). On race, roots/routes, and sovereignty in Latin America's afro-indigenous multiculturalisms. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 12(2), 329-355.
- Gullick, C. J. M. R. (1985). *Myths of a minority: The changing traditions of the Vincentian Caribs*. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Gutiérrez Rivera, L. (2013). *Territories of Violence: State, marginal youth, and public security in Honduras*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hale, C.R. (2005). Neoliberal multiculturalism: The remaking of cultural rights and racial dominance in Central America. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 28(1), 10-28.
- Hale, C.R. (2011). Resistencia para que? Territory, autonomy and neoliberal entanglements in the 'empty spaces' of Central America. *Economy and Society*, 40(2), 184-210.

- Hall, D. (2013). Primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession and the global land grab. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(9), 1582–1604.
- Hall, R., Edelman, M., Borras Jr. S.M., Scoones, I., White, B. & Wolford, W. (2015). Resistance, acquiescence or incorporation? An introduction to land grabbing and political reactions ‘ from below. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42(3-4), 467-488.
- Hall, S., Evans, J. & Nixon, S. (2013). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Harrison, F. V. (2012). Building Black diaspora networks and meshworks for knowledge, justice, peace, and human rights. In B. Reiter, & K. Eison Simmons (Eds.), *Afrodescendants, identity, and the struggle for development in the Americas*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Hart, G. (2006). Denaturalizing dispossession: critical ethnography in the age of resurgent imperialism. *Antipode*. 38(5), 977-1004.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hoelscher, S. (2003). Making place, making race: Performances of whiteness in the Jim Crow south. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, 93(3), 657-686.
- Honduras Accompaniment Project. (2012). The Garifuna people defend their land in the area of future model cities. <https://hondurasaccompanimentproject.wordpress.com/2012/10/03/the-garifuna-people-defend-their-land-in-the-area-of-future-model-cities/>
- Hooker, J. (2005). Indigenous inclusion/black exclusion: Race, ethnicity and multicultural citizenship in Latin America. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 37(2), 285-310.
- Hooker, J. (2008). Afro-descendant struggles for collective rights in Latin America: between race and culture. *SOULS: New social movements in the African diaspora*, 10(3), 279-291.
- Hooker, J. (2012). Negotiating Blackness within the multicultural state in Latin America: Creole politics and identity in Nicaragua. In B. Reiter, & K.E. Simmons (Eds.), *Afrodescendants, identity, and the struggle for development in the Americas*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- hooks, b. (1995). *Killing rage: ending racism*. New York: Holt Books.
- Hopkins, P.E. (2007). Positionalities and knowledge: negotiating ethics in practice. *ACME: an international e-journal for critical geographies*, 6(3), 386-394.
- Hulme, P. (1992). *Colonial encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Hulme, P. (2000). *Remnants of conquest: The island Caribs and their visitors, 1877-1998*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

- Jenkins, C. L. (1998). Ritual and resource flow: The Garifuna *dugu*. In N.E. Whitten, Jr., & A. Torres (Eds) *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean Vol 1*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indian University Press.
- Johnson, P.C. (2007). *Diaspora conversions: Black Carib religion and the recovery of Africa*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd.
- Jung, L. (2011). African palm and Afro-Indigenous resistance: Race and dispossession of Garifuna lands on Honduras' northern coast. *College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 84.
- Kerns, V. (1997). *Women and the ancestors: Black Carib kinship and ritual* (2nd ed.). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Kerssen, T.M. (2013). *Grabbing power: The new struggles for land, food and democracy in northern Honduras*. Oakland: Food First Books.
- Kirby, I.E., and Martin, C.I. (1972). *The rise and fall of the Black Caribs*. St. Vincent.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, U.K. and Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell.
- Leland, A. E., & Berger, K. L. (1999). *The Garifuna journey*. [Motion Picture]. Evanston, Ill.: Leland/Berger Productions.
- Lipsitz, G. (1995). The possessive investment in whiteness: Racialized social democracy and the 'white' problem in American studies. *American Quarterly*, 47(3), 369-387.
- Lipsitz, G. (2007). The racialization of space and the spatialization of race: Theorizing the hidden architecture of landscape. *Landscape journal*, 26(1), 10-23.
- Lipsitz, G. (2011). *How racism takes place*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Loperena, C.A. (2012). *A fragmented paradise: The politics of development and land use on the Honduran Caribbean*. Austin: University of Texas at Austin.
- Loperena, C.A. (2016). Conservation by racialized dispossession: The making of an eco-destination on Honduras's north coast. *Geoforum*, 69, 184-193.
- Loredo, C., Reyes, r. and Bernanadez, J. (January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016). "Walúmugu: soldado Garifuna de Francisco Morazan." *Garinet*.  
[http://www.garinet.com/main.php?module=gcms&node=gcms\\_front&action=get\\_content\\_detail&content\\_id=4660&category\\_id=92&parent\\_id=235&language=english](http://www.garinet.com/main.php?module=gcms&node=gcms_front&action=get_content_detail&content_id=4660&category_id=92&parent_id=235&language=english)
- Madison, D.S. (2005). *Critical Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

- Marable, M. (2008). Blackness beyond boundaries: Navigating the political economies of global inequality.” In M. Marable, & V. Agard-Jones (Eds.), *Transnational Blackness: navigating the global color line*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, D. G. (2003). ‘Place-framing’ as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the association of American geographer*, 93(3), 730-750.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge, U.K: Polity Press.
- Matthei, M. and Smith, D.A. (2008). Flexible ethnic identity, adaptation, survival, resistance: The Garifuna in the world-system. *Social Identities*, 14(2), 215-232.
- McCann, E. J. (1999). Race, protest and public space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. city. *Antipode*, 31(2), 163-184.
- McCurdy, P. & Uldam, J. (2014). Connecting participant observation positions: Towards a reflexive framework for studying social movements. *Field methods*, 26(1), 40-55.
- McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McKittrick, K. (2011). On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(8), 947-963.
- McKittrick, K (2013). Plantation futures. *Small axe: A Caribbean platform for criticism*, 17(3/42), 1–15
- Medina, L.K. (1998). History, culture, and place-making: ‘Native’ status and Maya identity in Belize. *Journal of Latin American anthropology*, 4(1), 133-165.
- Mendoza, B. (2006). De-mythologizing mestizaje in Honduras: A critique of recent contributions. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies (LACES)*, 1(2), 185-201.
- Meza, D. (August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). “The Honduran Judiciary tolerates Canadian ‘Porn King’s’ disobedience.” In *Pasos de animal grande*.  
<http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/1482-ministerio-publico-y-poder-judicial-toleran-la-desobediencia-del-rey-del-porno-que-no-les-hace-caso>.
- Middleton, B.R. (2014). A landscape of cultural patrimony: Opportunities for using private conservation tools to protect Balliceaux. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 60(2), 29-52.
- Mills, J. & Birks, M. (2017). Introducing qualitative research. In J. Mills, & M. Burks (Eds.), *Qualitative methodology: a practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Mitchell, S. T. (2017). Whitening and racial ambiguity: Racialization and ethnoracial citizenship in contemporary Brazil. *African and Black diaspora: An international journal*, 10(2), 114-130.

- Mollet, S. (2006). Race and natural resource conflicts in Honduras: The Miskito and Garifuna struggle for Lasa Pulan. *Latin American Research Review*, 41(1), 76-100.
- Mollett, S. (2010). Racial narratives: Miskito and *colono* land struggles in the Honduran Mosquitia. *Cultural Geographies*, 18(1), 43-62.
- Mollett, S. (2013). Mapping deception: The politics of mapping Miskito and Garifuna space in Honduras. *Annals of the association of American Geographers*, 103(5), 1227-1241.
- Mollett, S. (2015). A modern paradise: Garifuna, land, labor, and displacement-in-place. *Latin American Perspectives*, 41(6), 27-45.
- Mollett, S. (2016). The power to plunder: Rethinking land grabbing in Latin America. *Antipode*, 48 (2), 412-432.
- Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: Some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, 30, 337-350.
- Mullings, L. (2008). Race and globalization: racialization from below. In M. Marable, & V. Agard-Jones (Eds.), *Transnational Blackness: navigating the global color line*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mukherjee, S. (2017). Troubling positionality: Politics of 'studying up' in transnational contexts. *The professional geographer*, 69(2), 291-298.
- Neely, B. & Samura, M. (2011). Social geographies of race: Connecting race and space. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(11), 1933-1952.
- Nelson, J. (2008). *Razing Africville: A geography of racism*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Nuttall S. (2009). *Entanglement: Literary and cultural reflections on post-apartheid*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- OFRANEH. (2012). La defense del territorio de Vallecito, Colon. [http://www.ofraneh.org/ofraneh/informe\\_vallecito.html](http://www.ofraneh.org/ofraneh/informe_vallecito.html)
- OFRANEH (2016). Presiones territoriales en la Costa Garifuna: Fallo a favor de Barra Vieja e intento de desalojo en Santa Fe. <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2016/09/10/presiones-territoriales-en-la-costa-garifuna-fallo-a-favor-de-barra-vieja-e-intento-de-desalojo-en-santa-fe/>
- Omi, M. and Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) New York: Routledge.
- Oslender, U. (2016). *The geographies of social movements: Afro-Colombian mobilization and the aquatic space*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Palacio, J.O. (2005). *The Garifuna: A nation across borders*. Belize: Cubola Books.
- Paley, D. (2014). *Drug war capitalism*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Davis, Darién J., Paschel, Tianna S., and Morrison, Judith A. (2012). Pan-Afro-Latin African Americanism revisited: Legacies and lessons for transnational alliances in the new millennium. In B. Reiter, & K. Eison Simmons (Eds.), *Afrodescendants, identity, and the struggle for development in the Americas*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Phillips, J. (2015). Tolupan protestors put their life on the line for all Hondurans. *Cultural Survival Online*.
- Pineda, B. L. (2006). *Shipwrecked identities: navigating race on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Pollard, V. (2014). Black Carib to Garinagu: Yurumein to Roatan. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 60(2), 127-138.
- Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in southern California. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, 90(1), 12-40.
- Puri, S. (2004). *The Caribbean postcolonial: social equality, post-nationalism and cultural hybridity*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Rahier, J. M. (2012). *Black social movements in Latin America: From monocultural mestizaje to multiculturalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Razack, S. (1998). Race, space, and prostitution: The making of the bourgeois subject. 10 *Can. J. Women & L.* 338. Toronto: Osgoode Hall Law School Library.
- Razack, S. (2002). *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. (Ed.). Sherene Razack. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Roberts, D.J., and Mahtani, M. (2010). Neoliberalizing race, racing neoliberalism: Placing 'race' in neoliberal discourses. *Antipode*, 42(2), 248-257.
- Roessingh, C. and Bras, K. (2003). Garifuna settlement day: Tourism attractions, national celebration day, or manifestation of ethnic identity? *Tourism, Culture & Communication*, 4, 1-10.
- Russo, T. (September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012). Vallecito resists, Satuye lives! Garifuna resistance to Honduras' Charter Cities. *Upsidedown World*.
- Safa, H.I. (2005). Challenging mestizaje: A gender perspective on Indigenous and Afro-descendant movements in Latin America. *Critique of Anthropology*, 25(3), 307-330.
- Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Servio-Marino, B.M. (2010). *Garifunaduáú: cultural continuity, change, and resistance in the Garifuna diaspora*. PhD Dissertation. Albany: State University of New York.
- Shanker, T. (2012). Lessons from Iraq help fight a drug war in Honduras. *New York Times online*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/world/americas/us-turns-its-focus-on-drug-smuggling-in-honduras.html>
- Shiple, Tyler (2017). *Ottawa and empire: Canada and the military coup in Honduras*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Smith, A. (2011). Against the law: Indigenous feminism and the nation-state. *Affinities: a journal of radical theory, culture, and action*. 5(1).
- Soluri, J. (2003). Banana cultures: Linking the production and consumption of export bananas, 1800-1980." In S. Striffler, & M. Moberg (Eds.), *Banana wars: Power, production and history in the Americas*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Soluri, J. (2005). *Banana cultures: Agriculture, consumption and environmental change in Honduras and the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Spanne, A. (April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Why is Honduras the world's deadliest country for environmental activists? <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/07/honduras-environment-killing-human-rights-bertha-caceres-flores-murder>
- Springer, S. (2009.) Violence, democracy, and the neoliberal 'order: The contestation of public space in posttransitional Cambodia. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, 99(1), 138-162.
- St. Denis, V. (2007). Aboriginal education and anti-racist education: Building alliances across cultural and racial identity. *Canadian journal of education*, (30)4, 1068-1092.
- Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An international e-journal for critical geographies*, 6(3), 374-385.
- Sultana, F. (2017). "Reflexivity." In D. Richardson, N. Castree, M. F. Goodchild, A. Kobayashi, Weidong Liu, & A. Marston (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of geography*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Sweeney, J. L. (2007). Caribs, maroons, jacobins, brigands, and sugar barons: The last stand of the Black Caribs on St. Vincent," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*, 10(1), 1-38.
- Taylor, C. (2012). *The Black Carib wars: Freedom, survival, and the making of the Garifuna*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

- Taylor, D. M. (1951). *The Black Carib of British Honduras*. New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.
- Thorne, E. (2004). Land rights and Garifuna identity. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 38 (2), 21-25.
- Tompson, D. (2004). 'Useful laborers' and 'savage hordes:' Hispanic Central American views of Afro-Indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century. *Transforming Anthropology*, 12(1-2), 21-29.
- Tompson, D. (2012). Between freedom and slavery on the Atlantic coast of Honduras. *Slavery and Abolition*, 33(3), 403-416.
- Trotz, D.A. (2003). Behind the banner of culture? Gender, 'race,' and the family in Guyana. *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 77(1/2), 5-29.
- Van Cott, D. L. (2000). *The friendly liquidation of the past: The politics of diversity in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Vergara-Camus, L. (2014). *Land and freedom: The MST, the Zapatistas and peasant alternatives to neoliberalism*. London: Zed Books.
- White, B. & Dasgupta, A. (2010). Agrofuels capitalism: A view from political economy. *Journal of peasant studies*, 37(4), 593-607.
- Whitten, N. E., & Torres, A. (1998). *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social dynamics and cultural transformations*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood publishing.
- Winant, H. (2002). Race in the twenty-first century. *Tikkun*, 17(1), 33-40.
- Wolford, W. (2005). Agrarian moral economies and neoliberalism in Brazil: Competing worldviews and the state in the struggle for land. *Environment and planning A: economy and space*, 241-261.
- Wolford, W. (2010). *This land is ours now: Social mobilization and the meaning of land in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Woods, C. (2002). Life after death. *The professional geographer*, 54(1), 62-66.
- Wozniak, D. & Macneill, T. (2018). The economic, social, and environmental impacts of cruise tourism. *Tourism Management*, 66, 387-404.
- Yashar, D. (1999). Democracy, Indigenous Movements, and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America. *World Politics*, 52(1), 76-104.



Yuval-Davis, N. (1997). *Gender and nation*. London, Thousand Oaks and Delhi: SAGE publications.