MENA, NODIA C. Ph.D. Lila Uyanu: Understanding Garifuna Women's Sociohistorical Experiences Through the Ancestral Tradition of Ameinahani. (2024)
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This qualitative study uses the Ancestral Knowledge Systems framework to investigate the experiences of Garifuna women through their ancestral tradition of *añahani*. Guided by Black Feminist Theory and Decolonial Theory, the researcher explores how Garifuna women in Honduras make meaning of their ancestral traditions and the profound impact these traditions have on their sense of identity and belonging. The researcher's engagement with the community is evident in the collection of stories from eleven Garifuna women who make *ereba* in two villages in Honduras, as well as in the two pláticas and participatory observations during *ereba*-making.

After a thorough analysis of the data, this study's results reveal three significant reasons why Garifuna women maintain their tradition of *ereba*-making: *Ereba*-Making as Symbols of Garifuna Identity and Cultural Affirmation; Garifuna Women Confront Precarious Socioeconomic Conditions; Systemic Disruptions to the Intergenerational Transmission of Ancestral Knowledge. These findings underscore the importance of understanding and preserving ancestral traditions in the face of socioeconomic challenges and systemic disruptions.

LILA UYANU: UNDERSTANDING GARIFUNA WOMEN'S SOCIOHISTORICAL

EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE ANCESTRAL

TRADITION OF AMEINAHANI

by

Nodia C. Mena

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Approved by

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DEDICATION

To my grandmother, Presenta Dolmo, you are the reason why I decided to delve deeper into what I saw that brought you joy. I am sorry you did not get to see me go through this process. To my parents, Valentina and Fredy Mena, thank you for your unconditional support. To my beloved children, Margie Sanchez, Gerson J. Sanchez Jr., and Brayan Guevara, for cheering me on, never letting me give up, and for being the kindest humans any parent could ever ask for. To my dear sisters Doris Ramirez and Dania Mena, for encouraging me and for always seeing the best in me. Mi familia, los amo con todo mi corazón.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Garifuna people live along the coasts of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua; they share a common origin, language, music, and ancestral placation system. They are genetically and culturally mixed with St. Vincent's Amerindians (the Carib, Arawak, and Taino peoples in the Lesser Antilles) and West Africans (believed to be of Yoruba, Ibo, and Ashanti descent) who were brought to the new world to be enslaved in 1635 (Greene, 1998, p. 168). The women in this community have safeguarded their ancestral traditions for over three centuries. They practice unique ancestral traditions essential to their social values, thus acting as knowledge producers who are culturally and spiritually engaged in their communities. In other words, Garifuna women are teachers. My grandmother was a teacher who taught me about my Garifuna culture because I was not learning it in school.

When I was a child, my Garifuna grandmother intentionally took me to traditional community celebrations so that I would learn my Garifuna history. I used to look forward to going to the farm because it was a family affair. I would wake up at four in the morning to drink a cup of *bachati* (tea) coffee with bread my grandmother made. A few minutes later, my grandmother's friends and grandchildren would knock on our small kitchen door and yell their arrival: "Macu macu!" After we ate *queque* (coconut bread) and cheese, humble delicacies, we were equipped for the 45-minute walk along the shore to my grandmother's farm. Along with the rakes, hoes, and machetes we carried, we toted big smiles as we headed toward an exhilarating adventure.

I still remember the very soothing sound of the calm sea. My cousins and the other kids would try to tally all the stars in the early-morning dark sky, and we would laugh at the impossibility of that self-imposed task. My grandma and her friends would be talking among

themselves. They spoke in the Garifuna language while the other kids and I were engaged in our own banters.

I have seen my grandmother and other Garifuna women year after year involved in organizing community events where they perform *fedu* (traditional Garifuna celebration), *añahani* (ereba-making), *dugü* (religious ceremony), *arani* (medicinal, home-made remedies), and *atirajani* (a theatrical representation of the battle between moors and Christians in Spain). The continuity of these reenactments has helped preserve and disseminate the native Garifuna language, a sense of cultural identity, and an understanding of shared community values. For example, *fedu* and *añahani*, their most salient community-making customs, have been essential in preserving ancestral ways of knowing. During *fedu*, Garifuna lead singers—*gayusas*—sing in the Garifuna language while swaying their bodies to the rhythm of the *garawo*n (drums). Likewise, during *añahani*, Garifuna women sing songs composed by the *Gayusas*. Through these community-making customs, ancestral ways of knowing to preserve survival stories and collective memories of displacement are embedded in those lyrics. Therefore, through songs, Garifuna women have immortalized encoded messages about the Garifuna people's experiences with spirituality, inter-collective work, resistance, and resilience. Furthermore, the songs reveal how the Garifuna people sought protection from colonizers' predatory practices on the Island of Saint Vincent.

Through those memories, I realized what it meant to be Garifuna, and that realization has inspired my work. Therefore, as I engage in the dissertation writing process, I repeatedly ask what motivates me to write. As I try to answer this question, Walker (1983) comes to mind. She says, "I write the things I should have been able to read" (p. 13). To this point, I write about the ancestral knowledge passed down to Garifuna women because I value their courage in

preserving their traditions. I also write to bring attention to the beauty, richness, and authenticity of this community's ancestral ways of knowing and cultural happenings.

Therefore, I conducted a critical qualitative study with Garifuna women to understand their ancestral ideas and ways of knowing through the time-honored tradition of *añahani*, participatory observations, and semi-structured *pláticas*—one of my data collection methods. I wanted to learn how Garifuna women have continued to practice their ancestral traditions despite the Ladinos (mixed Spaniard and Ameri-Indian) elite's efforts to erase their identities and exclude their ways of knowing as legitimate knowledge in Honduras. Also, through "formal" documentation, I wanted to preserve their traditional knowledge and the mother-love I experienced at their gatherings.

Research Questions

I wanted to understand how Garifuna women make meaning of their ancestral traditions. Specifically, my research questions are:

1. Why and how do Honduran Garifuna women maintain their ancestral traditions?
2. How does the ancestral practice of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) impact Garifuna women's sense of identity and belonging?

Statement of Research Problem

After being forcibly exiled from Saint Vincent to Honduras in 1797, Garifuna people dispersed throughout Central America, where they settled in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (Bonner, 2001; Cortés, 2016; Davidson, 1980; England, 1999; Euraque, 2003; Mack, 2011; Moberg, 1992, 2003). According to many Garifuna scholars, elite literary works, media portrayals, and systems of government in the region excluded the Garifuna people's sociohistorical perspective. England (1999), Euraque (2003), and Moberg (2003), for example,

have documented how such exclusions generated fragmentation of citizenship and identity among Garifuna people. After 227 years in this region, the Garifuna's cultural traditions, for instance, are not part of national traditions in the Central American region, just as native Americans in the United States. Additionally, during the twentieth century, nationalists, and elites such as Froylan Turcios, Augusto Calderón Sandino, General Triburcio Carías, Dr. Miguel Paz Barahona, and Ramón E. Cruz utilized public media to spread anti-black rhetoric.

For instance, a salient hegemonic project that contributed to excluding blackness from Honduran national identity was the state's decision to change the name of the country's currency from "*el peso*" to "*Lempira*." According to Moberg (1992) and Euraque (2003), this change was motivated by the United Fruit Company's decision to employ "peoples of predominantly African descent" (Euraque, 2003, p. 231) who lived in the Northern region of Honduras. The Ladino population, including the intellectuals, "viewed the blackness of some of this laboring population as a threat to the 'mestizo' nation" (p. 231), which caused nationwide racial tensions. These racial tensions, generated by a company's decision to employ mainly Afro descendants as their primary workforce, prompted the Ladinos to seek support from the Honduran Congress. The Ladinos claimed that giving Black people employment preference represented "an immediate racial threat" (Euraque, 2003, p. 243).

In response, the state of Honduras sided with the Ladinos by naming the country's currency "Lempira" in honor of "an indigenous chieftain who died fighting the Spaniards in the 1530s" (Euraque, 2003, p. 229). Notably, the decision to choose the name and image of an Ameri-Indian to constitute the nation's identity demonstrated a local "rejection of blackness" (Euraque, 2003, p. 243). Consequently, many Garifuna men and women lost their jobs. The labor struggles through racial quarrels at the banana plantations galvanized a racialized nationalism

that deprived the Garifuna people of resources, which negatively impacted the Garifuna people's socioeconomic conditions.

Purpose of the Study

My grandmother's response to her culture prompted me to investigate Garifuna women's understanding of the world around them. This investigation delved into my understanding of their experiences with the ancestral tradition of *añahani*. At the same time, it considered the understanding that sociohistorical perspectives in the Central American region alienated the Garifuna people's worldviews. For that reason, my interest went beyond what has been seen or perceived by non-Garifuna scholars such as Coelho (1955), Gonzales (1983, 1986), Greene (1998, 2002), Hall (2014, 2017), and Oro (2016, 2022), all of whom have written extensively about different aspects of Garifuna culture. They have written about Garifuna's history, dance, music, community, spirituality, and survival. However, their scholarship has not centered on Garifuna women's experiences. Therefore, I engaged in work that aims to include these women's stories. Gathering these stories served to embrace the Garifuna people's ways of being and knowing. This kind of research served to reveal their experiences with invisibility and marginalization.

Epistemic Discussion

As a Garifuna woman engaged in social justice education, I challenge traditional research that dismisses indigenous researchers' critical reflections and experiences with internalized colonization. Therefore, I turn to the *Ancestral Knowledge System* (AKS) as a conceptual framework to guide my inquiry process. "AKS go beyond ecological knowledge towards a process of inquiry that unearths Indigenous social constructions of observing, understanding, being, and participating in the world from an ancestral homeland, dynamically flowing from one

generation to another" (Sandoval et al., 2016, p. 20). Utilizing AKS as a conceptual framework makes this a non-traditional investigation. As such, it acknowledged indigenous ways of knowing as meaningful contributions to education in any learning environment. As a critically reflective framework, AKS requires researchers to analyze collective memory to understand community members' experiences and joint efforts in preserving indigenous cultures. In other words, if researchers and community members advocate for preserving the Garifuna legacy, its culture will thrive.

For my theoretical frameworks, I have selected Black feminist theory, decolonial theory, and Black diaspora feminism. These theories guided my focus when analyzing and interpreting the data. First, identifying as a Black feminist researcher allows me to make visible how Black women experience oppression. "When qualitative research and Black feminist theory come together, we see a methodological practice that works to increase the level of understanding among researchers and participants" (Clemons, 2019, p. 2). As a Black feminist, I am part of a community of investigators who discern and reveal the beliefs and practices that limit access to freedom, justice, and democracy. Feminist epistemology is essential to my work because it attempts to preserve ancestral knowledge before it was lost, not only to practice but even to memory. Second, I identify decolonial theory because, in my quest for countering European supremacy, I must pay close attention to the paradigm that frames my understanding of systems of oppression. According to Mignolo (2021),

> [C]olonial and imperial differences are strategies of domination projected onto two distinct types of human beings and onto the regions of the imaginary Christian world (Europe, Africa, Asia, New World/America) they inhabit. Both are decolonial concepts to

> disclose what is hidden under the rhetoric of modernity, progress, development and happiness for all. (p. 728)

Hence, my work as a cultural foundation educator is part of an effort dedicated to exposing the different ways Western empires colonized indigenous knowledge. This work is necessary, specifically when conducting research because investigators are in positions of power. Overlooking such positionality could mean that the researchers report their findings in ways that perpetuate knowledge hierarchies. These hierarchies present Western knowledge in positions that supersede indigenous knowledge. By using decolonial theory as a lens I emphasize the importance of centering the voices and experiences of marginalized and non-westernized individuals. Third, Black diaspora feminism also forms part of my theoretical framework. Hua (2013) states,

> Black diaspora women have theorized and practiced feminism within the Black and African Diaspora in various ways: critiquing patriarchy; resisting repression; questioning racism, classism, and ethnocentrism within Western feminism; initiating the discussion about intersectionality and diversity within the women's movement; and challenging sexism and homophobia within and outside their particular ethnic and diasporic communities. (p. 31)

For example, this study's participants are Black women from the diaspora. They understand their need for representation, visibility, and economic development. This study illuminates how these women utilize their ancestral traditions of *ameinahani* as the language to describe how they resist oppression. They also use their ancestral knowledge to describe their social locations, reclaim communal experiences and memories, and tell stories emanating from their different geographical locations.

Paradigmatic Discussion

As a researcher, I do not want to comprehend the world from only a logical context. I want to know the world from a "wider context of social, political, economic, cultural, technological, and environmental trends of which that intellectual situation is a part" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 10). Correspondingly, since a paradigm, as noted by Guba and Lincoln (1994), is the entire belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (p. 105), my dissertation sought to understand the perspectives of groups of people in our society. This understanding has helped me to realize that "inquiry and research always occur within a historical and social context" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 10). Some forms of internalized subjugation, for instance, have included indigenous people's assimilation to European ways of making meaning of the world. These assimilations have served as forms of European control to subjugate indigenous populations. Europeans dismissed indigenous knowledge and engaged in a cultural hegemony engendered by systematic power preserved through colonialism.

As I engaged in knowledge creation for social justice, this dissertation countered racist narratives and acknowledged Garifuna women's ways of being as valuable knowledge. Inquiries that counter racist narratives are vital because academic researchers should engage in generative, inspiring, and stimulating research that resists notions of dominant forms of knowledge creation. As Bernal (1998) has noted, the academy should embrace diverse ontological and epistemological theories in a way that indigenous researchers can "use their cultural intuition" to make ancestral knowledge "and their intersection with scholarly literature meaningful" (as cited in Sandoval et al., 2016, p. 25). As a Garifuna researcher, utilizing my cultural background in

tandem with Black feminist theory, decolonial theory, and Black diaspora feminism in this investigation allows me to be fully present in my research.

As I find myself affirmed by the possibility of a holistic kind of investigation, I have critically reflected on how imperialism and colonialism impacted my community. Imperialism and colonialism, two systems of power that have supported racist research practices, have served to privilege European control (Lugones, 2010; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Some modern states, for example, have designed policies that perpetuated European supremacy, such as imposing the colonizer's language and worship systems. Such practices have forced Indigenous peoples into disconnecting from their intricate relationship with nature, their linguistic expressivity, their "knowledges, senses of space, longings, practices, institutions, and forms of government" (Lugones, 2010, p. 748). Forcing Indigenous peoples to alter their worldview follows a research tradition of adhering to an ideology influenced by the notion of Enlightenment. This notion moves imperialism to become "an integral part of the development of the modern state, of science, of ideas, and of the 'modern human person'" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, p. 62). For many Garifuna peoples, for example, the transmission of their Garifuna ancestral language has been denigrated because of mandatory rules in schools where Spanish is the dominant language. Schools in Honduras do not teach about the history of the Garifuna people or their cultural traditions.

Additionally, many Garifuna people in Honduras have forcefully practiced rituals dictated by the dominant culture, such as Christianity and Catholicism. Privileging Eurocentric worldviews have rendered Garifuna ancestral knowledge insignificant. Many Garifuna I know prefer to identify with Christianity rather than with the Garifuna religion of Dugü, claiming that

the latter is associated with satanic rituals. Such statements are not based on facts because a Dugü ceremony is practiced by Garifuna to commemorate their ancestors who have passed on.

Consequently, systematic rules in school, which are based on colonial ideologies, have obstructed a smooth intergenerational transition of Garifuna's ancestral language and cultural traditions. Such obstructions generate internalized colonization, affecting how newer Garifuna generations understand and value their identity. Unfortunately, issues of identity impact younger Garifuna's sense of belonging. Growing up under such conditions has interfered with their desire to learn from their ancestors. This investigation revealed how younger generations of Garifuna have a more complex way of relating to their elders, each other, and the land.

Hence, this study includes a decolonial lens to construct a new understanding. Through an expansive literature review, I learned how many scholars' narratives have adhered to the imperialist paradigm. Some scholars have criticized rather than analyzed the Garifuna people's worldview. These scholars have reported based on their observations and not necessarily from their participant's perspectives. Such investigations include what has been written about the Garifuna people, from life in Saint Vincent (Coelho, 1955; Gonzalez, 1979; Gonzalez, 1983a) to Garifuna people's trajectory in Central America (Gonzalez, 1983b; Gonzalez, 1986). These researchers have subjectively reported findings. For instance, my close readings of the literature confirmed that Gonzalez (1983) was a crucial, foundational scholar in the anthropological study of the Garifuna people. During fieldwork in Guatemala and Honduras, she reported disparagingly about Garifuna women's approach to family relationships by stating that "a strictly monogamous mating system would have posed tremendous strains on couples" (p. 204). Gonzalez alluded that Garifuna women changed mates "as often as she deemed it necessary or desirable" (p. 204). This statement represented a generalization about Garifuna women's

character that Gonzalez's form of inquiry and analysis had dismissed. Therefore, not only was her analysis dismissive of how people are immersed and shaped by historical, social, economic, political, and cultural structures and constraints, but she demonstrated that her research practices were racist. Additionally, Gonzalez's study showed indifference to how indigenous people are dominated and oppressed. In this context, when researchers use the master's tools, they are perpetuating normalized ways of knowing, thus preserving the "racist patriarchy" (Lorde, 1979, p. 98).

Omitting Garifuna women's experiences from mainstream conversations leaves a severe gap in understanding the value that ancestral worldviews bring to knowledge creation, which is meaningful for future generations of Garifuna. For that matter, my goal was to listen to how Garifuna women make meaning of their traditions and to understand what those traditions reflected about their views on Garifuna life, culture, and community. Knowledge gained through lived experience, stories, and cultural practices are legitimate and essential sources of knowledge creation and sharing. Therefore, this inquiry into Garifuna women's experiences with their ancestral traditions was an opportunity to dive deeper into those lived practices.

***Añahani—Ereba*-making as Tradition and Site Specificity**

For this research project, the *añahani* process—*ereba*-making—is the site-specific space for my study. Making *ereba*, as part of my data collection method, allowed for knowledge production that countered marginalization and exclusionary research practices. By illuminating their way of knowing in this dissertation, I elevate how Garifuna women in my community lived and made decisions informed by their indigenous worldview. At the same time, I considered it was essential to include my memories, for example, about events that helped to shape my understanding of ancestral knowledge. These memories included the practice of farming and

harvesting yuga (cassava) for *ereba*-making. This tradition takes center stage in my memories because it brought families in the community together. Coming together in this way was how Garifuna women engaged in community-making that allowed for teaching opportunities and ways of generating income.

This critical qualitative study occurred in Honduras, Central America, in the summer of 2023. I visited two Garifuna villages and learned from Garifuna women by collecting data while making *ereba*, completing field and participatory observations, and documenting the trajectory of intragenerational knowledge production. My method of investigation included participatory observation (Glesne, 2016) while actively engaging in *ameinahani.* I conducted *pláticas*, "a more culturally appropriate form of engaging with the Latin@ population…" (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 102). This data collection method was appropriate because our interaction flowed naturally as a casual conversation instead of an academic interview. I crafted semi-structured questions to understand the experiences of women who identified as Garifuna. Working with Garifuna women in this manner helped to build rapport and trust because I interacted with participants rather than just sitting on the sidelines and watching. This study allowed me to listen to my participants and understand their worldviews. Analyzing each village's data helped me to delve into the participants' narratives based on their location. I reported the findings based on thematic analysis. I also used some data to create a photo essay book with the women's stories, which allowed the Garifuna people to more readily access academic analysis. This representation is essential in helping community members see themselves as knowledge creators. Lastly, this engagement opened possibilities for my participants and me to develop learning spaces beyond the scope of my project.

Conclusion

As I have noted, this dissertation began with a historical overview of Garifuna women's origin and how they have preserved their ancestral legacy. As I bonded my personal experiences and reflections from communing with some of these women and further research into the literature, I re-imagined the research methodology. Motivated by the Ancestral Knowledge System framework (AKS), Black feminist theory, decolonial theory, Black diaspora feminism, and the Garifuna ancestral tradition of *añahani*, I reframed knowledge fragmented through colonization, then *re*-presented this knowledge in new and valuable ways to reclaim and reframe Garifuna women's ways of knowing (Smith, 2019).

Overview of Research Chapters

This dissertation contains six chapters. In chapter one, I introduced my research questions and provided context for why this research is valuable. In Chapter II, I conduct a literature review that explored some of the research that theorists, ethnographers, feminists, anthropologists, musicologists, Caribbean studies, and ethnic studies scholars have reported about the Garifuna people's history and culture. I engaged in this work to understand why Garifuna women have maintained their ancestral language, traditional food production, religious beliefs, and authentic traditional dance forms. Chapter III provides an overview of my research methodology, and I explain how I conducted this research. In Chapter IV, I describe my experience traveling to the two villages, which were so remotely located that I considered it relevant to document that trajectory. My observations throughout my journey to both villages helped me develop a critical view of the 11 Garifuna women participants' social environment and socioeconomic conditions. In Chapter Five, I analyzed the data-generating themes across the two villages. I described why these 11 Garifuna women maintained their ancestral traditions of

añahani (*ereba*-making) and its impact on their sense of identity and belonging. Below, I present the three significant assertions that resulted from this study:

- *Ereba*-making as symbol of Garifuna identity and cultural affirmation.
- Garifuna women confront precarious socioeconomic conditions.
- Systemic disruptions to the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I presented the conclusions of the study, summarized the key findings, and offered implications for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

> In the case of the Garifuna, the ethnic group came close to dying out altogether when it was deported from St. Vincent. The few who remained there have all but lost their identity; the language and ancient rituals have been entirely forgotten. What gave the Central American Garifuna their vitality—the ability to expand from the 2,000 who landed on Roatan to the perhaps more than quarter million alive today? In my own opinion, it was the ability to be flexible, to adopt what was needed from any source whatever, and to incorporate it into their world view, their design for living, or what anthropologists usually call simply the cultural pattern. (Gonzalez, 1986, p. 21)

Indigenous people's cultural patterns encompass their knowledge systems and traditions. Lugones (2010) notes that in the Americas and the Caribbean, colonizers met "complex cultural, political, economic, and religious beings" (p. 747). These were people in an intricate relationship with nature and with other beings whose "linguistic expressivity, whose knowledges, senses of space, longings, practices, institutions, and forms of government were not to be simply replaced but met and understood" (Lugones, 2010, p. 748). However, European colonizers failed to acknowledge the rights of indigenous peoples and engaged in a series of atrocities against their humanity. Garifuna people, for example, were expelled from their homeland, the island of Saint Vincent, to Central America in the Sixteenth Century. Since then, they have been exposed to different projects of "erasure" in Honduras and around Central America (Lopez-Oro, 2021, p. 250). The dominant society, the Ladinos, excluded the Garifuna people's histories and identities, disposed of their lands, and marginalized their systems of production. Their exposure to such violent acts created what Kearney (2013) calls "collective consciousness." It is this collectivity, which added to memory and "mesh with self-identification to shape a sense of belonging" (p.

132), that Garifuna people draw the desire to maintain a sense of community. I have experienced this sense of community coupled with joy from a young age when surrounded by older Garifuna women. Embodying these emotions and traditions is essential to my identity and scholarly inquiry.

This literature review explores some of the research that theorists, ethnographers, feminists, anthropologists, musicologists, Caribbean studies, and ethnic studies scholars have shared regarding the different ancestral traditions among the Garifuna people. I investigated the ancestral traditions Garifuna women have consciously tried to maintain. I wanted to understand how these traditions are maintained and transmitted and the purpose for which Garifuna women preserve ancestral traditions. I engaged in this kind of work because I consider Garifuna women's way of knowing a form of resistance to systemic efforts of invisibility. I see resistance in how these women have maintained their ancestral language, traditional food production, religious beliefs, and authentic traditional dance forms.

I divided this review into four topic areas related to my study. The first is the history of the Garifuna. Understanding their origin and how they have maintained a rich culture is essential. Through my investigations, I have learned that "Indigenous peoples are expected to fit into models that do not work and are not designed with them in mind" (Neeganagwedgin, 2013, p. 323). These models are designed by those who are part of the dominant culture. These designs privilege historical narratives that perpetuate European supremacy. Therefore, as I locate myself in the scholarly tradition of transformative learning for educational justice, I rely on well-documented research conducted about Garifuna's history from life in Saint Vincent (Coelho, 1955; Gonzalez, 1979, 1983a) to the life of the Garifuna people in Central America (Gonzalez, 1983b, 1986).

Next, I delved into understanding the Garifuna people's trajectory during the colonial period throughout Central America. Studying this information was critical in helping us understand how colonialism impacted them during that period. To better comprehend this path, I reviewed literature from scholars such as Davidson (1980), Bonner (2001), Euraque (2003), Moberg (1992, 2003), Mack (2011), and Cortés (2016), all of whom have documented Garifuna people's geographical movements with accounts dating from the early 1800s.

Then, I explored Garifuna's sense of community. It was critical to investigate this because, despite their displacement from the Island of Saint Vincent, the Garifuna people have maintained a bonded spirit regardless of their subsequent geographical location. Through that emotional connection, Garifuna people have carried and continued to transmit a sense of authentic identity. I included McMillan and Chavis's (1986) definition of a sense of community in this study. Hall (2017) also provided a compelling study about Garifuna women's capabilities in a Honduran village. Lopez-Oro (2016), Bateman (1990), and Matthei & Smith (2008) presented a study of the Garifuna people's relationship between community and identity.

Finally, I discussed Garifuna's ancestral traditions. Delving into this provided a window into understanding why ancestral traditions were the Garifuna people's way of making sense of their existence in their homeland, the Island of Saint Vincent, and in Central America. Finding themselves forced by the British colonizers to "surrender unconditionally … meant the loss of their entire homeland" (Gonzales, 1986, p. 11). Dispossessed from their homeplace and in a foreign region made them vulnerable to acculturation projects. Such projects, designed by missionaries and many governments, "restricted Indigenous cultural ceremonies teaching and practices, seeing them as 'evil'" (Neeganagwedgin, 2013, p. 325). Persistent restrictions in this manner have contributed to eroding the Garifuna language.

Therefore, I reviewed research conducted on Garifuna traditions, such as *Punta* and *Punta* Rock dance and music forms (Greene, 2002; Hadel, 1976). I also analyzed investigations on traditional ceremonies conducted by Greene (1998). Additionally, Cohen (1984) conducted studies on ethnomedicine, research on conventional food production was conducted by Hall (2014), and Gonzalez (1986) conducted investigations into the historical perspective of Garifuna cultural traditions. Through these examinations, I revealed different ways in which some historical narratives about the Garifuna people erased their experiences and perpetuated white supremacy.

Historical Overview of Garifuna People's Origin

The history of the Garifuna, formerly known as the Black Carib, has been well documented by missionaries, travelers, and West Indian Historians "in the English documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Coelho, 1955, p. 8). "They are descendants of runaway slaves from wrecked ships and from plantations on the nearby islands, who were given shelter by the Carib Indians" (Coelho, 1955, p. 23). Their origin story, development, and way of life have been turbulent and eventful throughout three and a half centuries (Coelho, 1955). Accounts about the Garifuna people, documented by de la Borde (1704), Bryan Edwards (1818) and (1819); Labat (1704); du Tertre (1654, 1667, 1671), and Sir William Young (1795), have been expanded by ethnographers and anthropologists such as Coelho (1955), Gonzalez (1979), and Foster (1987), who have concurred that this ethnic group originated in Saint Vincent, one of the lesser Antilles (refer to Appendix A for images).

Coelho (1955) conducted an anthropological study noting that before the discovery [sic], there was a population of Ameri-Indian Arawak in the Greater Antilles and the Carib in the Lesser Antilles Caribbean Islands. However, about twenty years after that eventful encounter, the

British colonials invaded the Caribbean islands, “and the struggles for the West Indies began between the Spaniards, the British, the French, and the Dutch” (Coelho, 1955, p. 24). Such struggles turned into wars centered around colonization through land acquisition and control over natural resources. As per Coelho (1955), these occupations marked the island with “carnage and wholesale massacre” (p. 24). Since the islands of Dominica and Saint Vincent were not yet the territory of any colonizers in 1660, the French, English, and Ameri-Indian delegates signed a treaty recognizing these two islands as the territory of the Ameri-Indian Carib. Therefore, these two where the only spaces Indians could occupy without constant European harassment (Coelho, 1955). Their goal was to take control of their island; however, they met with Carib resistance (Coelho, 1955).

As per Foster (1987), “Garifuna as a society had its roots within the sixteenth-century community of the Island Carib” (p. 75). Coelho (1955) and Foster (1987) concur that Ameri-Indian Carib sheltered a group of maroon Africans who had escaped from two Spanish slave ships back in 1635. These two ships had been “wrecked or stranded off the coast of St. Vincent and the Negroes [sic] escaped ashore, after having purportedly killed all the surviving members of the crew” (Coelho, 1955, pp. 28–29). These accounts help further explain why this group of enslaved Africans showed steadfast resistance to captivity. An explanation for their resistance includes British officials rejecting the terms of the treaty of 1660 and promoting the extermination of the Ameri-Indian Carib.

First, the relationship between the maroons and the Carib was not necessarily friendly at first; however, they found ways of establishing common ground. Coelho (1955) notes that Ameri-Indian Carib did not want their daughters to marry the African Maroon. Nevertheless, Foster (1987) reports that the maroons “assimilated the bulk of Island Carib culture” (p. 76), and

"Afro-Carib marriages were seen as an essentially protective strategy" against the colonizer's projects of enslavement (p. 76). His reports were based on an apparent allyship between the French and the "Afro-Carib." They ceased mutual attacks, formed communities, and "refer[ed] to themselves as Garifuna—an African modification of Karifuna, which was the Island Carib term for themselves" (Foster, 1987, p. 76). As interracial unions became common between West Africans and Native Carib, they formed communities and adopted a common Ameri-Indian language. Additionally, the British colonizers recognized that union's offspring as Black Carib. Furthermore, through that union, the Island Carib and the Afro-Carib "soon became powerful allies in their wars against the white man" (Coelho, 1955, p. 30).

Secondly, beginning in 1668 and throughout 1797, unbalanced power dynamics on the part of British colonizers generated a period of war as the Black Carib refused to subjugate to the system of slavery. "The Negro [sic] community, whose numbers had been constantly augmented by fugitives from Barbados, came to be the dominant group" (Coelho, 1955, p. 31). Being in the majority, the Black Carib became independent, worked their land, and gained prosperity, which is why "the very existence of a warlike and well-organized body of free Negroes [sic] on the island" was considered a threat to the system of slavery by European governments (Coelho, 1955, p. 32). This British paranoia prompted the British crown to take over the Island of St. Vincent by signing the Treaty of Paris in 1763, which "established the jurisdiction of England over the Island of St. Vincent" (Coelho, 1955, p. 34). This decision drove the Island Caribs and Black Caribs to rebel against the colonizers. This contention forced the British to reach another peace treaty in 1773 (Coelho, 1955). For the following ten years after signing this treaty, the Black Carib enjoyed what they called "their paradise." Their land was fertile, and "their skill which was part of the cultural inheritance of both their African and American Indian forebearers,

enabled them to maintain a lively trade" (Coelho, 1955, p. 36). Gonzalez (1979) noted that the Carib's "prowess on the seas in their native dugouts was both known and respected" (p. 256). This covenant presented an opportunity for the Black Carib to prosper and to participate in a "commercial boom in the tropical countries by the end of the eighteenth century" (Gonzalez, 1979, p. 36).

The colonizers did not view such prosperity well and disagreed with the Black Carib enjoying a life of luxuries with their wives and having reasons for feeling proud of themselves. A man who enjoyed such prosperity was Chief Joseph Chatoyé, the supreme authority of the Black Carib. The British's disdain for rich Carib who owned plantations made them feel "a pity that this country yet belongs to the savage Charaibes!" (as cited in Coelho, 1955, p. 37). Chatoyé, aware of the ill intentions of the British, joined forces with the French during the French Revolution and participated in the destruction of English plantations (Coelho, 1955, p. 38). Unfortunately, some enslaved people helped their masters in the way against the Black Caribs, and that contributed to the defeat of Chief Joseph Chatoyé. About 5000 Caribs surrender (Coelho, 1955). They were captured as prisoners of war and sent first to the small and deserted island of Balliceaux in the Lesser Antilles. As per Gonzalez (1986), 2400 died of a mysterious 'malignant fever' (pp. 11–12). There were about 2,248 remaining, and they were deported to the island of Roatan in Honduras, out of which only 2,026 arrived (Gonzalez, 1986). Gonzales (1983) notes that the Spaniards, who had been intermittently at war with the British, had colonized the island of Roatan then. They did not know what to do other than to utilize the Garifuna people as soldiers "in their struggle for control of Honduras" (p. 150).

Next, reports about the Garifuna people's life in Honduras are reported by Gonzalez (1986), who notes that the Spaniards were desperate for food and labor because "they had been

inept in agriculture and generally unsuccessful in coping with the climate" (p. 13). The Black Carib, now the *Garifuna*, cultivated the land for the Spaniards and were encouraged to plant provisions of all kinds, from which the Garifuna had enough to sustain themselves (p. 14). As per Gonzalez (1986), although not enslaved to the Spaniards, the Garifuna people were forced to enlist in the army to defend them against British attacks and work on their wheat fields. Dissatisfied with Spaniard's abusive conduct, the Garifuna people began to seek a more sustainable life elsewhere. Consequently, they spread throughout the coast of Central America (p. 15). Foster (1987) and Bateman (1990) explain that expanding as subgroups and establishing villages in different geographical locations were learned behaviors on the island of Saint Vincent. Foster (1987) explains that this subdivision turned into a "highly complex process of expansion, formation of kinship and marriage systems, and differentiation into sub-groups (polities)" (p. 78). Bateman (1990) also adds that "the residents of a community were bound to one another by complex ties of kinship" due to the practice of polygyny. This practice had been prevalent among Garifuna since their time on the island of Saint Vincent (p. 16).

Garifuna people's history, as described above, mirrors the many histories of colonial settlers who have violently enslaved and displaced native peoples from their homelands. Colonial violence and displacements are intimately related to a ubiquitous division of humanity in the Americas, where humans are categorized to be tracked and governed under the normalcy of liberty and supremacy based on "race, geography, nation, caste, religion, gender, sexuality and other social differences" (Lowe, 2015, p. 7). Interestingly, the research methods utilized by Coelho (1955), Gonzalez (1979, 1983a, 1983b, 1986), and Foster (1987) did not capture these divisions. Instead, these scholars based their analyses on mere observations. Throughout the texts

reviewed, there was no clear evidence of the intentional effort to describe the experiences of Garifuna peoples' accounts in confronting colonialism.

Colonial Period in Central America

Several researchers have documented the trajectory of the Garifuna people throughout Central America since they arrived in 1797. These studies have centered on the Garifuna people's migration around the region, their inclusion within national identity, the effects of neoliberal practices between the state and foreign corporations, and how they have navigated their new social position as Black Indigenous experiencing exile.

As Garifuna expanded throughout Central America, they established villages in different locations and relied mainly on wage work because employment was scarce. According to Davidson (1980), Garifuna men had a reputation for being great boatmen and excellent "mahogany cutters" (p. 34) on the island of Saint Vincent. As such, they worked seasonal jobs throughout Central America and returned "to their families in Honduras" (p. 34). Their trajectory throughout Nicaragua, for example, was documented by Davidson (1980). This scholar reported that "all movement from Honduras into Nicaragua ceased" (Davison, 1980, p. 38) because of a border dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua. As migration to Nicaragua from Honduras stopped, Garifuna people lost contact with their families. Those left in Nicaragua lost their Garifuna language. Additionally, "increased pressures of foreign ways around the lagoon [and] marriages outside the Garifuna communities" (Davison, 1980, pp. 43–44) eroded the culture in that community. Many disconnected from their traditions and contributed to the possible demise of Garifuna culture in the few Garifuna towns founded by their ancestors in Nicaragua. Davison (1980) relied on reports from travelers in the area, government records, old maps, and oral histories to provide information about several Garifuna settlements. Through these sources,

he reported that the first Garifuna settlement, Pearl Lagoon on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, was established in 1892 and the second village of Orinoco in 1912 (p. 34). These findings helped illustrate the importance of oral history among the Garifuna people. For example, (Davison, 1980) notes that Sambola, a Garifuna man, "brought the few Garifuna workers into a little hamlet under his leadership. [Although] Felipe Lopez and Isidor Zenon, other Honduran Garifuna were with him … informants emphasized the role of Sambola as a leader" (Davidson, 1980, p. 36). I include oral reports on this literature to support historical stories that include people whose voices have been marginalized from scholarly projects.

Additionally, including oral history in work for social justice acknowledges the importance of reclaiming the oral history of the Garifuna people. In this literature, Davison (1980) counters the notion that only scientifically verified archival sources can serve as evidence in a study. Another scholar, Moberg (1992), illuminates fundamental aspects that help us understand the presence of the Garifuna people in Belize since 1802. According to this scholar, Belize was an enclave for the shipment of lumber to European markets; however, this country "was a slave society distinct from the plantation economies of the British West Indies" (Moberg, 1992, p. 2). A significant difference between Belize and other countries in Central America was the lack of autonomy among the labor force in Belize. According to Bolland (1988), British enslavers considered West Indies enslaved people "benign." Whereas in the timber camps in the colony of Belize, enslaved people showed more resistance. They experienced "periodic slave rebellions and continual attempts by slaves to escape to the neighboring Spanish colonies" (as cited in Moberg, 1992, pp. 2–3), which threaten productivity. With tensions between Spain and Britain around world domination, British colonizers could not afford to lose their workforce to the Spaniards.

The British feared the Garifuna people in Honduras. Burdon (1931) notes that “British settlers feared that the Garifuna would foment rebellion among slaves if they were employed alongside them … considering them ‘a most Dangerous People’” (as cited in Moberg 1992, p. 4). However, after the British Empire abolished slavery in 1838 and Belize’s timber industry experienced a labor shortage, the Garifuna people were recognized as a “potential source of labor in the sparsely populated settlement” (Moberg, 1992, p. 4). Employing Garifuna people in the timber industry generated ethnic prejudice and stereotypes. Since then, the Garifuna people in Belize have experienced “exclusion from nationalist discourse and positions of power” (Bonner, 2001, p. 85). Additionally, despite Garinagu—plural for Garifuna peoples—being the founders of Dangriga in 1802 and being its main inhabitants (Bonner, 2001, p. 83), Garinagu are, in many respects, second-class citizens in Belize. By speaking the English language, they reflect proximity to European identity, which in some instances elevates their social status (pp. 83-84). Garifuna people also migrated to Guatemala and settled in the village of Labuga—known today as Livingston—(Cortés, 2016). Despite written and oral accounts about who founded Labuga, Guatemalan government refuses to name Marcos Sánchez Díaz, a Garifuna man, as this town’s founder in 1821. According to Cortés (2016), the state of Guatemala rejects the notion that a Garifuna man “*sea un héroe*” *y* “*un espíritu protector que ocupa un lugar privilegiado en su panteon*” (p. 38). Cortéz (2016) adds that, as per Guatemalan state, “*era muy importante manterner a [los caribes] donde fueran útiles, pero a la vez esperando que estos se mantuvieran marginados de los centros de la población hispánica y de la civilización*” (p. 38). Guatemalans considered important to maintain [the caribs] where they were useful; however, they were not allowed near the Spaniards and from the civilization (Cortéz, 2016, p. 38). This statement reflects the systematic efforts of distancing Garifuna peoples, including their histories, from

integrating the societies where they were surviving rather than thriving. Consequently, colonial times in Central America represented a period of invisibility and issues of identity erasure for Garifuna people. Such issues obstructed their socioeconomic progress.

Additionally, racial tensions escalated as the United Fruit Company became the primary employer in the Central American region. This company employed mainly Afro descendants of "predominantly African descent … West Indian blacks imported by the banana companies from the English-speaking Caribbean and the Garifuna …" (Euraque, 2003, p. 231). The mestizos, Ameri-Indians mixed with Spaniards, protested this decision. Consequently, what started as a labor struggle on the banana plantations turned into a racialized nationalism. A critical moment took place in 1928, when Dr. Precentación Centeno, then the minister of public education and a fervent patriot (Iraheta, 1952), commissioned a painting of a "valiant representative portrait of Lempira" (as cited in Euraque, 2003, p. 230). Another painter in 1929 fulfilled a commission for a second official painting of Lempira. In this case, male members of the Lenca peoples from Intibuca posed for this effort (Castro, 1929). Euraque (2003) noted that the Honduran congress named the country's currency Lempira in honor of "an indigenous chieftain who died fighting the Spaniards in the 1530s" (p. 229). This congressional decree, signed in 1926, made Lempira the emblem of the national currency. Thus, Lempira's image was available to less affluent Hondurans. In 1935, a national holiday was declared in Lempira's name (Zuniga & Zuniga Reyes, 1993, p. 122).

Honduran elite intellectuals fashioned his national representation without evidence of Lempira's historical existence. Accordingly, Lempira's image was selected to symbolize national identity. Therefore, "Lempira's racialization, as an element of Hispanic mestizaje, should be understood as an effort to exclude the Garifuna, as well as West Indian labor, from real and

potential economic power" (Euraque, 2003, p. 238). This decision deprived the Garifuna peoples of resources such as land and commercial opportunities in Honduras. Such deprivations exposed the "local racism that drew a post-independence rejection of blackness, and especially a rejection of Garifuna blackness as a more local and immediate racial threat" (Euraque, 2003, p. 243). A contradicting point worth mentioning is how anti-imperialist elite authors and politicians embraced nationalist attitudes against foreign Afro-descendant labor workers. Nevertheless, these same elites and policymakers engaged in political and economic transactions with foreign corporations. Nationalist and anti-black rhetoric inundated elite's narratives in the works of Froylan Turcios and Sandino, along with politicians such as General Triburcio Carías, Dr. Miguel Paz Barahona, supreme court justice and later president of Honduras from 1971-1972, Ramón E. Cruz, all of whom "opposed black migration labor on the north coast" (p. 243). Euraque (2003) noted that these elites "denounced the 'black race' on the North Coast … stating that 'the compensation received from black labor could not be compared to the incalculable damage done to our species'" (p. 243). However, there were no derogatory nationalist sentiments extended to the United Fruit Company, a multinational corporation controlled by North American white men who leveraged state policymakers to "systematically exclude all competition from its area of operation" (Moberg, 2003, p. 146). By privileging foreign corporations, the Honduran government allowed this company to gain control of vast territories and transportation networks in Central America. This blatant abuse of power earned this region the epithet of "banana republic," as the state enabled this corporation to exert "political and economic domination" in designated geographical areas (Moberg, 2003, p. 146).

Adversely**,** having experienced historical displacements, exile, and multiple communities, the Garifuna people had difficulty integrating into Central American society. According to

England (1999), the Garifuna people have a complex relationship with the diaspora. They had yet to fully integrate into their societies and experienced issues of fragmented citizenship. This fragmentation is visible as Garifuna leaders grapple with defining this community as a "single ethnic 'nation'" (England, 1999, p. 190). Moreover, despite being coalesced by "their common language, culture, and origin in St. Vincent," Garifuna people are geographically dispersed (England, 1999, p. 190). They simultaneously pay homage to "three homelands—Africa, St. Vincent, and Central America—each of which [carry] different connotations of racial identity, national identity, and political alliances" (p. 190). England (1999) stated that some members of the Garifuna community identify with blackness as a global racial identity, [some others] with Afro-Latinos as a transnational, hemispheric identity, [others] as citizens of a particular nation-state; [others] as ethnic/autochthonous nations within these nation-states, and most interestingly, as one ethnic nation that transcends the borders of individual nation-states (p. 190). Defining their identity in that manner is a complexity connected to efforts of rights and belonging prompted by how Central American states promote a primary mestizo national identity.

What has surfaced through this literature is that the colonial era in Central America served to establish a clear racial distance between Afro-descendants and the mestizos. Interestingly, the state in these countries favored an idealistic national identity that distanced blackness. This distance has generated complex layers of identity formations worth investigating further through my research question: How does the preservation and enactment of Garifuna ancestral traditions impact Garifuna women's sense of identity and belonging?

Sense of Community Among the Garifuna

Accounts about the survival of the Garifuna people, despite the precarity of their physical and emotional condition, prompted Gonzalez (1986) to ask the question: "What gave the Central

American Garifuna their vitality—the ability to expand from the 2,000 who landed on Roatan to the perhaps more than quarter million alive today?" (p. 21). I consider this an important question to explore. By reviewing some of the investigations that researchers such as Coelho (1955), Gonzalez (1979), Gonzalez (1986), Foster (1987), Gonzalez (1983a), Gonzalez (1983b), Hall (2017), Bateman (1990), and Matthei and Smith (2008) have produced in the last century, I hope to gain more clarity. As Coelho (1955) explained earlier, the Garifuna people formed a community with the Ameri-Indian Carib for two reasons. First, to escape enslavement at the hands of British colonizers. Second, to join forces against their common enemy, the British settlers. Nevertheless, overpowered by the British, they lost their land and were forcibly exiled to Central America. After reviewing this literature, I understood how this former community of maroons on the island of Saint Vincent has transformed into a transnational community that maintains ancestral cultural authenticity.

McMillan and Chavis's (1986) definition of community is based on a "Sense of Community Scale (SCS) to probe communicative behaviors and attitudes at the community or neighborhood level of social organization" (p. 6), to expand on Garifuna people's sense of community, it is appropriate to include the following four elements: membership, influence, integration, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

Membership, as the first element of a sense of community, includes a feeling of belonging and boundaries that provide members with emotional safety (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Based on the earlier history of the Garifuna, the marron Africans sought protection among Ameri-Indian Arawak and Taino. As their bond shifted from seeking protection to emotional safety, they intermarried. Their intermarriages, then, became the primary reason for

establishing communities. After deportation and migrations throughout Central America, they maintained a sense of community that provided safety. Additionally, Matthei and Smith (2008) acknowledged how Garifuna people delineated emotional boundaries, noting that "[Though the Garifuna] continued to practice their traditional ancestor rituals, those practices were carefully hidden from outsiders" (p. 224).

The next element of a sense of community is influence, demonstrated in how group members "acknowledge the other's values, needs, and opinions" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 10). The authors acknowledge that in establishing cohesiveness, group members may fall under the pressure to conform and lose their freedom and individuality (p. 11). However, they argue that there is a balance between cohesiveness and conformity (p. 11). Collective action, for example, causes the environment to be more responsive to the needs of the individual and the small collective (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Thus, participation in voluntary associations or government programs yields a sharing of power that leads to greater 'ownership' of the community by participants, greater satisfaction, and greater cohesion (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 12). I connected their reports to Bateman's (1990), who noted that "retaining ethnic distinctiveness largely depends on its members' ability to maintain ties to one another and to their communities and thus to preserve a sense of group identity that transcends even geographic dislocations" (p. 13). Garifuna communities, for example, "whether in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, or Nicaragua, is separate and autonomous from every other community" (Bateman, 1990, p. 13), making a birthplace the same as "home" and the one they connected with a sense of "social identity" (p. 13). Commonly, Garifuna women take the task of tying families together in the absence of husbands and fathers, and this has contributed to maintaining cultural identity through "continued local expression of traditional forms of kinship, generosity, and general

cultural patterns" (p. 17). These women have taken on these roles in the absence of Garifuna men. Gonzalez (1979) reported that, because of the nature of the jobs these men held, "women who were left alone for long periods of time formed domestic bonds with other women, primarily their mothers and sisters, or with consanguineally related males" (p. 256). Consequently, these women designed their meaning of a sense of community with bondedness as the primary element. These are also the ancestral values these women maintain through rituals for ancestral placation, which I explain later.

Next, according to McMillan and Chavis (1986), integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection are elements of a sense of community. They define these as maintaining a "positive sense of togetherness" (p. 12). Although the authors acknowledged that it is difficult to determine what keeps a community together, they emphasized the importance of "coming together and fostering the belief that in joining together they" might satisfy their needs and obtain the reinforcement they seek (p. 13). For example, the Garifuna assimilated "Island Carib culture" (Foster, 1987, p. 77) and adapted Ameri-Indian characteristics (Coelho, 1955). Their language and shared history serve them to "be perceived and to express themselves as a group" (Coelho, 1955, p. 78). While sharing the same history helps in strengthening the group's identity, McMillan and Chavis (1986) explained that integrating and fulfilling the group's needs does not necessitate sharing the same history, "but they must identify with it" (p. 13). For example, Garifuna people do not share history with other Spanish-speaking Central Americans or with African Americans. However, Bateman (1990) reported on existing resentments between these groups because Garifuna people are "inferior and culturally distinct," which has caused a social distance between them (Bateman, 1990, p. 7).

Nevertheless, McMillan and Chavis (1986) explain that group members who interact often, focus on positive experiences together, pay attention to completing community tasks, share happiness and crisis, spend a reasonable amount of interpersonal emotional risk, understand the effect of honor and humiliation of each community member, and share a spiritual bond. The more they practice bondedness among group members, the easier they can share the emotional connection (p. 14). Consequently, as Garifuna people have migrated transnationally, especially to suburban cities in the United States, they have formed "small community clusters in the Bronx, Spanish Harlem, Brooklyn," and other major cities (Gonzalez, 1979, p. 255).

So far, Coelho (1955), Gonzalez (1979), Gonzalez (1986), Foster (1987), Gonzalez (1983a), Gonzalez (1983b), and Bateman (1990) have provided an overview of what a sense of community have meant for Garifuna people since their ethnogenesis in the island of Saint Vincent and through their years of survival in Central America. Additionally, they illuminated how the Garifuna matrifocal community resulted from the absence of men seeking jobs in other countries. Migration, then, has factored into the Garifuna people's need to create transnational communities. Therefore, Matthei and Smith (2008) provided a critical lens for understanding the Garifuna people as a transnational community. These scholars explained that the Garifuna people "have engaged in various forms of labor migration for decades if not centuries" (Matthei & Smith, 2008, pp. 217–218). Economic restructuring in the US and the liberalization of US immigration laws opened the doors for a mass Garifuna exodus from Belize. By the mid-1960s, both men and women eagerly sought opportunities in the United States of the kind long denied to them in Belize (225). Migrating for survival, noted Matthei & Smith (2008), resulted from the different variations of 'global neoliberalism' that implicitly influenced marginalized people to generate "counterhegemonic consciousness that is developed and elaborated in everyday life" (p.

216). Racial tensions at the Banana Fruit Company and the exclusion of Blackness from the Central American identity exemplify global neoliberalist exclusionary practices. Such exclusionary practices have disenfranchised the Garifuna people in that region. Therefore, this community's survival has constituted an anti-systemic success. According to Matthei & Smith (2008), [their] story strongly suggests that they [Garifuna people], after at least 350 years of transformations at the hands of global capitalism, probably view the changes of recent decades as more characterized by continuity than abrupt change. They have been living migrant and 'transnational' lives for some time. The idea of transnational communities may be relatively new to sociologists, but it has been part of Garifuna's lived experience for a long time (p. 222).

Furthermore, Garifuna people have maintained community through shared emotional connection. After experiencing decimation, genocide, discrimination, and marginalization, they have maintained some collective actions of shared values transmitted from generation to generation. Additionally, Garifuna people have been transnational for so long that the idea of being a transnational community may be seen now as a continuity rather than something new. Some Garifuna have organized as voluntary associations in the United States. They focus on instilling ethnic pride among Garifuna youth by teaching them the Garifuna history, language, traditional songs, dances, and drumming. The Garifuna people have shown continuity by upholding an authentic sense of community and maintaining their indigenous language and cultural traditions to resist "normative" ways of knowing.

Garifuna Ancestral Traditions

Thus far, this literature review has illuminated how the British colonials forcibly exiled Garifuna people from their homeland, forced to learn a new way of life and a new language in a foreign land, and, from the margins, they have struggled with unemployment, racism, and having

to formulate a unique identity in the Central American region. As Gonzalez (1986) asked through her anthropological study, how could they survive and multiply? She believes "it was the ability to be flexible, to adopt what was needed from any source whatever, and to incorporate it into their world view, their design for living, or what anthropologists usually call simply the cultural pattern" (p. 21). The Garifuna people have designed their new system of existence by incorporating their ancestral cultural traditions. Therefore, examining existing literature that expands understanding of how the Garifuna people have maintained these traditions for over three centuries is appropriate.

First, some consider that traditions are disconnected from modernity because "the concept offends contemporary sensibilities" (Scares, 1999, p. 9). This notion is a disconnection from reality because many communities maintain specific traditions. The Garifuna people, for example, maintain ancestral traditions. Additionally, practicing traditions is not associated with being antiquated or unrelated to notions of progress. Scares (1999) also reports that some researchers may reject traditions because they perceive it as "ancestor worship unworthy of rational and secular cosmopolitan" (p. 9). Consequently, Scares (1999) introduced a meaning of tradition as a cultural resource that patterns communities' responses to contemporary challenges. Additionally, a living social tradition requires a distinct social group with a shared identity derived from an interpretation of its past, whose collective memories have some objective expression in the material environment, and whose activities are guided by a spirit of continuity (Scares, 1999, p. 16).

Some ways Garifuna people have responded to challenges, for example, included designing medicine for what they considered "Garifuna illness" and incorporating rituals to reinforce their society's traditional norms and values through music and spirit possession. They

have added subsistence farming for *ereba* production, aligning with the above definition of tradition. Moreover, Garifuna people have distinguished themselves for displaying identity traits derived from a shared past in Saint Vincent. They express their collective ancestral memory through rituals, language, and oral histories – all embodied histories of knowledge production – guided by a spirit of continuity from one generation to the next.

Utilizing a Black feminist and decolonial feminist approach to inform my choice of literature, I included the work of Hadel (1976) and Greene (1998, 2002) to expand on understanding *punta* dance and its derivative parranda and *punta rock.* Additionally, I discussed the *dugü* ceremony and its ceremonial costumes through Greene's (1998) perspective. I also included information about the ethnomedicine of the Garifuna. But first, I explored Garifuna's traditional subsistence farming for *ereba* production, a traditional form of food production among Garifuna women.

Garifuna Traditional Subsistence Farming for *Ereba* Production

Through this investigation, I have found that just as traditional medicine is a form of subsistence, so are traditional food production practices in Garifuna communities. Gonzales (1986) noted that "regardless of the length of time a tradition has been in existence, it is the belief that it is old which gives it authority" (p. 20). Farming for subsistence, for example, is a tradition of the Garifuna that is also part of their identity. Gonzalez (1986) strongly believes that it was "the ability of the Garifuna to be flexible, to adopt what was needed from any source whatever, and to incorporate it into their world view and their design for living" (p. 20) that gave them the ability to multiply.

Scholars such as K. Melchor Quick Hall, PhD, the author of *Naming a Transnational Black Feminist Framework: Writing in Darkness* (2019), describes *Ereba* making as a traditional food-production process in the Garifuna community. She added that,

> Ereba, with its deep cultural roots, is one of the most powerful symbols of the grassroots collaborative work among rural Garifuna women. It also connects rural and urban communities, since Garifuna people who have migrated to the cities do not have the land or resources to cultivate cassava and make *ereba* (Hall, 2019, p. 36).

This food product, made from cassava, was created by Garifuna and Ameri-Indian peoples. Even though men participate in planting the yuca (cassava) to make *ereba*, this product is considered a unique production practiced by women. Hall (2014) explains that historically, women would get in a large circle bent over wooden boards with small pebbles embedded in them (*egui*) while singing as they grounded the cassava in rhythm to the song (p. 91). One of my memories about this process includes how I joyfully used to help my grandmother and her friends make *ereba*. She would give me some *yuca* to peel off as she checked to ensure I did not cut my fingers. Then, the grown-ups would finish the process by cutting the edges of the already grilled *ereba* to give it its round shape; at this point, I would be anxiously waiting for my favorite part, eating those edges, or *aru-aru,* as we used to call them. Ah, memories!

In her article, Hall (2014) discusses the "capabilities approach to development" (p. 82), explaining that Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum pioneered this approach to help understand development in terms of "opportunities that individuals have to be able and do what they value" (Hall, 2014, p. 81). Her interest in the "transnational dialogue about Black female experiences" (Hall, 2014, p. 82) was generated as Hall (2014) found Irma McClaurin's Black feminist anthropological theory and Patricia Hill Collins's Black women's standpoint theory inspiring.

Moreover, as a Fulbright scholar, Hall immersed herself "in village life with Garifuna women" and participated in planting, harvesting, grinding, straining *yuca*, and baking *ereba* (Hall, 2014, p. 83). This scholar noted that *ereba* is both a link to Garifuna's ancestral heritage and a form of generating income for the education of children in the community. Historically, the *ereba* process was a space of empowerment for women, one that had community status and power. The production of *ereba* is critically essential in achieving all other development goals in the villages. Not only are women the individuals responsible for grilling the *ereba*, but they also typically sell this product. In this way, "*ereba* is intimately linked to the economic capabilities of community women" (Hall, 2014, p. 88).

Unfortunately, "this space appears to be shrinking within the Garifuna community" (Hall, 2014, p. 94) mainly because of the patriarchal ideology that obstructs opportunities for women empowerment in Honduras, especially the empowerment of Black-Ameri-Indian women. In this national cultural context, "Garifuna women are losing important ground" (Hall, 2014, p. 94). Some concerns have surfaced lately because of intrusions and the modernization of the north coast economy, areas populated by the Garifuna. MacNeill (2020) notes that modernization may have severely reduced traditional subsistence practices in many areas (p. 1545). Hall (2014) states that the *ereba* production process is modernized by mechanizing *ereba* grinding and straining. The "designation of *ereba* making as women's work product is [being] challenged by increased participation of men in the production process" (Hall, 2014, p. 90). Excluding women is partly motivated by men who are now taking over the mechanized grinding part of this process. As crucial as communal culture is for Garifuna women, maintaining this space that offers women empowerment is just as important. This is being "threatened by increasingly hierarchical gender structures because of globalization" (Hall, 2014, p. 86). Today, colonialism is

present as the Garifuna people lose coastal land disguised as a tourism industry, the globalization of the economy in the form of international fast-food restaurants, and the shift from a rural economy to a mechanized market-based one. All these elements jeopardize the valuable position Garifuna women have struggled to maintain in their communities.

Dugü Ceremony and its Ceremonial Costumes

Although this dissertation is about the understanding Garifuna women's experiences through the ancestral tradition of *ereba*-making, I considered it important to discuss other traditions that also impact these women's worldview. Those traditions include the religious ceremony called *dugü*, ethnomedicine, *punta* dance, *punta*-rock, and *parranda.* Dugü is a ceremony family members perform as an ancestor request, and it is officiated by the *buyei* (shaman). The primary purpose of this ritual is to heal family members of physical ailments and emotional strife while promoting solidarity. Valentine (1993) defines *dugü* as a ritual that centers around the native Garifuna belief that "departed relations [ancestors] were secret spectators of their [the Island Carib's] conduct; that they still sympathized in their suffering and participated in their welfare" (as cited in Greene, 1998, p. 169). Perdomo (2022) and Greene (1998) agree that many West African cultures believe in spiritual possession and base their ancestral ritual venerations on this principle. They both agree that spirit possessions occur as the dead undertake the bodies of their living descendants. Once the living descendant is possessed, "kin request religious" gears, traditional Garifuna food, and drinks; ancestors also reminisce about their homeland, the island of Saint Vincent (Perdomo, 2022, p. 49). Garifuna participants of *the dugü* ceremony believe that "whatever befalls them is a result of an evil they have committed" (Greene, 1998, p. 169). Therefore, some believe that performing this ceremony is a way of mending broken family relationships, suspected to be the reason for illnesses, bad luck, and even

death in the family. Thus, their ancestors must be honored because “when there is a rupture in the family relationship, its effects are felt throughout the family structure, even to *Seiri*—the home of the dead and the seat of God” (Greene, 1998, p. 169).

However, Perdomo’s (2022) definition of dugü differs from Greene’s (1998) as her study intends to omit metaphysical speculations and focuses on reporting facts. She defines dugü as:

an initiatory possession cult practiced by the Garifuna, an Afro-Amerindian community that originated in the Caribbean Island of Saint Vincent during the seventeenth century. It venerates the spirits of the ancestors, and its origins derive from a confluence of Amerindian, African, and European antecedents (Perdomo, 2022, p. 48).

This scholar’s definition differs from the one reported by Greene (1998), a Garifuna scholar whose reports focused on the significance of *dugü* for the Garifuna people. Perdomo (2022), however, addresses a more circumscribed domain of experience—namely, “the psychophysical sensations and techniques through which people feel they come in touch with the past” (p. 50). Contextualizing *dugü* in this manner frames this ancestral tradition around a scientific definition that dismisses the Garifuna people’s worldviews. Moreover, Perdomo’s (2022) report emphasizes observable facts. Such reports pursue the attention of a Western audience seeking to understand the world from a positivist paradigm.

As Perdomo (2022) continues reporting on dugü, she rationalizes this ancestral commemoration as a traumatic experience of displacements engraved in this ritual, which emerges “among individual’s somatic experiences and ritual performance” (p. 49). She further explains that the “sea *(barana)* is impregnated with historical symbolism for the Garifuna people” (p. 64). Indeed, the sea symbolizes a repository of memories for the Garifuna people, as it evokes an embodied response to the excruciating 31-day voyage Garifuna ancestors endured

when exiled from Saint Vincent in the 18th century. After this violent displacement, 2,000 Garifuna made it to the shore of Roatan Island in Honduras; however, about 200 of them perished on that journey. Consequently, the sea is significant in this ceremony because "the sea contains the dichotomous symbolism of death and survival, becoming in this way an essential scenario for *dugü's* ritual apparatus" (Perdomo, 2022, p. 64). Therefore, I was appalled at this scholar's reports containing assumptions and scientific representations of an ancestral tradition. I was particularly stunned when Perdomo (2022) explained *dugü* from a psychophysical perspective. She claimed this ritual "could be seen as an ensemble of therapeutic tools" (p. 65) with symbolic healing. I am troubled by such an argument because it shifts the focus from how Garifuna people understand the world to a more universal worldview. Although Perdomo reports about the healing properties of this ceremony, dugü is also performed by the descendants to mend broken relationships. My trouble with this scholar's findings is how she dishonors Garifuna knowledge that is "anchored in the experiences of resistance of [Garifuna people who] have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy" (de Sousa Santos, 2015, p. 1). Moreover, she seeks to contextualize *dugü* utilizing a positivist paradigm that aims at rationalizing and justifying her findings.

Therefore, as I juxtapose Perdomo's (2022) views with Lugones's (2010), I see how Lugones's report educates positivist researchers about how previous and modern ways of "coloniality permeates every aspect of indigenous people's life through complex power dynamics" (p. 754). Lugones's assertion serves to inform Perdomo (2022) that her view of *dugü* as a "cult" with no "professional clergy or theologians" (p. 55) implies that indigenous peoples must follow a logic of knowledge capital based on Western ways of knowing. Lugones (2010) highlights how colonial projects have rejected the authenticity of indigenous people's spiritual

practices. Unfortunately, some Garifuna people, for example, have adapted Western logics of knowledge capital and logics and have distanced themselves from understanding the value *dugü* holds in their community. Perdomo (2022) reports on this disconnect, noting that in Honduras, for example, *dugü* has a poor reputation among some Garifuna and the non-Garifuna population, many of whom are opposed to this religion (p. 53).

Correspondingly, Neeganagwedin (2013) notes that the ubiquity of the Christian colonization of Indigenous people continues to this day and presents dilemmas for those who try to reclaim their "indigenous traditions and spirituality" (p. 328). Despite the skepticism, *buyeis* (shamans) have found a way to maintain the tradition of *dugü* by emphasizing the importance of this cultural religion and faith. Additionally, Cohen (1984) describes the *buyei* as the community leader of the Garifuna, and they are the only ones to be able to explain specific ailments in supernatural terms. In Honduras, this mission opposes the efforts of the evangelicals. Still, according to Johnson (2017), *buyeis* must work against not only evangelicals but also the risk of assimilation in the United States.

Among the reasons for maintaining these Garifuna traditions is the danger of denials and wanting to appear more Western. Johnson (2017) says *dugü* practitioners living in New York City have positioned themselves at the top of the knowledge ranking compared to those in their homelands. They talk about Cuban Santeria and deities as if they were superior to the ones in their Central American villages. When these *buyeis* travel to Central America, they display an elitist status and criticize the villagers' knowledge of *dugü* as being rooted in a "dusty past" (p. 144); they also say that their village rituals "can compare, all they know is the Garifuna way… they have been doing the same thing forever" (Johnson, 2017, p. 144). In contrast, their knowledge from the United States combines more dynamic African diasporic religions, "whose

space in New York City aesthetically conveys sound and action" (Johnson, 2017, p. 144). Johnson (2017) shows that *buyeis* in the United States want to disassociate themselves from *dugu* through religious acculturation. For example, Johnson (2017) quoted one participant stating that Garifuna spirits "are more of the jungle." She is trying to change that by "trying to help our people get educated a little, and they're accepting it little by little" (Johnson, 2017, p. 129). By associating being more "educated" with learning and practicing different African diasporic religions in New York City, she exemplifies her perception of Garifuna *dugü* as an antiquated practice needing modernization.

Ethnomedicine of the Garifuna

Like *dugü*, ethnomedicine is another Garifuna cultural tradition that encompasses survival methods. Gonzalez's (1986) notes about this community coming close to extinction when deported from St. Vincent significantly impacted my interest. Her report motivated me to delve into how they resisted coloniality, patriarchy, and other systems of domination. As Cohen (1984) has noted, Garifuna people's understanding of their bodies as containers of history and culture has gotten them to refer to several culturally defined conditions as "Garifuna illnesses" (p. 24). Additionally, Taylor (1951) noted that the Caribs in Belize have attributed some illnesses to the neglect of the ancestral dead, which could mean that the family member is not complying with some postmortem rituals, such as the nine-night wake. Another cause could be the spirits' anger because of disobedience and "sorcery, poisoning, and purely physical causes" (Taylor, 1951, p. 17). These illnesses are unfamiliar to medical doctors; only Garifuna healers know how to diagnose these conditions. Cohen (1984) added that Garifuna's lack of confidence in modern medicine causes them to rely on their indigenous remedies. They trust these remedies and their Garifuna *curanderos* (village healers), who are knowledgeable about illnesses unknown to

modern doctors. Some treatments these healers recommend include massage and herbs. "For 'unusual' conditions, rituals are required to effect a cure" (Cohen, 1984, p. 20). These are the illnesses and healing modes that Cohen (1984) recorded in his study:

1. *Caida de paletilla and empacho*: massage is the most critical treatment because it relieves the pain. *Sovador* (massager) is the most essential treatment in remote villages.
2. Wounds, headaches, and fever: herbal therapy, which includes rosemary, cassia occidental, and coconut oil. Purging the system is also a necessary treatment, and one recipe employed includes balsam of the copaiba tree, sweetgum, *aceite* castor (castor oil), vinegar, and rum.
3. Spiritual illness: ritual healing; the *buyei* (shaman) is consulted, and on some occasions, a special communal ceremony (*dugü)* is called for (Cohen, 1984, pp. 17-21).

Garifuna people's access to modern medicine and ways of survival are described by Cohen (1984) as an alternative to the lack of health care in remote Garifuna villages. To visit a physician or the nearest government-operated clinic, people from these villages must travel at least a three-hour trip by sea; no land access exists. Trips from outlying areas into town are not regularly scheduled but are taken when a boat's owner decides to travel to transact some business, such as to pick up provisions. Therefore, while modern facilities exist, they are inaccessible to the Garifuna living remotely.

Although Garifuna people have continued viewing certain conditions, illnesses, or supernatural illnesses as beyond the scope of modern medicine, most have shifted their view of modern medicine. For example, many who live in Livingston, Guatemala, "have faith in modern

medicine and are eager for better health services" (as quoted in Cohen, 1984, p. 18). This assessment applies to the Garifuna of Rio Tinto [a remote Garifuna village in Honduras], who expressed interest in pills and injections. In 1982, for example, they responded enthusiastically when the Ministry of Health dispatched two health workers to the town for one day to inoculate children against smallpox, diphtheria, and measles. Cohen (1984) concludes by noting that most Garifuna people from this study believe in traditional medicine but accept aspects of modern medicine that they consider effective and compatible.

Punta* Dance, *Punta* Rock, and *Paranda

As Gonzalez (1986) has noted previously, the few Garifuna people left on the Island of Saint Vincent lost their identity; the British colonials erased their language and ancient rituals from their customs. This loss of Garifuna identity resulted from "imposed British supremacy" (Prescod & Fraser, 2008, p. 108). For example, the Garifuna left in Saint Vincent lost their language and only speak English (p. 105). As stated before, the Garifuna people in Central America have also had to grapple with issues of identity resulting from systematic efforts in that region to represent Indo-Hispanic nationhood. England (1999) noted that "ethnicity [in the Central America region] is hegemonically understood as more than racial, cultural, and linguistic difference from mestizo national subject" (p. 196).

Furthermore, claiming ethnicity and autochthony in the Latin American states is a form of challenging those in positions of power "to confer special rights on indigenous peoples with primordial ties to the national territory and cultural and racial difference that seriously challenges assimilationist models of *mestizaje*" (England, 1999, p. 196). Consequently, Garifuna has found ways to challenge hegemonic definitions of their ethnic identity. For example, Greene (1998) noted that ethnic identity is recognized by idiosyncrasies and attributed to a group of people.

Their self-expression and experiences, essential factors, cannot be ignored. Therefore, "Garifunaness," he adds, "involves the unique collective expression of the African and Amerindian thoughts, structures, and practices that have been maintained for hundreds of years" (p. 203). As a result, ways of knowing in the form of music that is made from artisanal instruments and electrifying dance forms transmitted from previous generations subconsciously become central to how Garifuna people express their identity.

Accordingly, Hadel (1976) and Greene (2002) noted that the *punta* dance is the most popular Garifuna song genre. For example, I find the sound of *garawon* (drums), a heartbeat-like drumming percussion that can transport my mind to joyous childhood memories. Therefore, I concur with Greene's (2002) definition of *punta* dance as an inviting Garifuna rhythm. He adds that *punta* is a category of song customarily composed by Garifuna women, and it is also a dance that compels anyone to shake their hips while constantly moving their feet and shaking the buttocks as in many African diaspora dances (p. 193).

As far as the lyrics in *punta* songs, Greene (2002) reported that they are composed by women, and they contain social commentary, which becomes a vehicle through which they express their anxieties, work conditions, and heartaches. The malleability of *the punta* dance gives anyone a chance to change it depending on the space and social context. Greene (2002) notes that this dance is "first an expression of identity through sound and movement" (p. 193). Correspondingly, Greene 2002) and Hadel (1976) noted that what makes this dance form traditional is its accessibility because it can be performed at social gatherings and events associated with Garifuna rituals such as *belurias* "(nine-night wakes, the first of several Garifuna postmortem rituals)" (Greene, 2002, p. 197), and during brief celebrations that follow ancestral ceremonies, such as *dugü*. More recently, I have noticed how *punta* has transcended from

traditional ceremonial spaces, such as community celebrations, to being performed in discotheques, *quinceañeras* (sweet fifteen parties), and weddings.

Another music genre, which is derived from *punta*, is paranda. This genre of music is performed traditionally as solo vocal music, and it "shows the influence of traditional Latin-American music" (Greene, 2002, p. 194). Based on my observations, DJs did not play Garifuna songs on mainstream radio during the 1970s and 1980s. During that period, most of the sound consumed from that medium was a mix of Mexican *rancheras*, Colombian *cumbia*, Caribbean *salsa, merengue*, and reggae. This gap in exposure explains why some *parranda* performers innovatively extracted the sounds and adapted instruments such as the guitar, the maracas, and the *güira*, among others, to accompany their Garifuna lyrics in *paranda.*

Subsequently, Greene (2002) emphasized the importance Garifuna people give to retaining their Garifuna language, and he believes that they created *punta* rock for that purpose. *Punta* rock, a music genre that men "arrange, compose, and perform" (p. 196), is a derivative of indigenous *punta* songs, a genre of music in the "1970s and early 1980s, a period in which Belizean radio station programming placed more emphasis on famous American and Caribbean music" (Greene, 2002, p. 196). Of course, I remember the 80s and how much I used to dance to hip-hop and reggae. These were the rhythms young generations used to dance the most because, despite being English songs, the intensity of its tempo was compelling enough to make us want to stay at the club from dusk to dawn. Greene's (2002) work made me realize that, in trying to imitate the English language and American culture, younger generations were turning away from speaking our native Garifuna language. Therefore, using the Garifuna language in *punta, punta rock*, and *paranda* was identified as vital for the Garifuna people to maintain ethnic identity and "cultural retention" (Greene, 2002, p. 212).

Conclusion

After exploring the above investigations, I realized how these scholars' differing perspectives and approaches expanded my understanding of the Garifuna people's origin, knowledge system, and survival strategies. Additionally, all this information produced a sense of how an entire population on the verge of extinction found the source of strength needed to redesign a new way of living. I have also realized that dividing this literature review into four topics, historical perspective, the colonial period in Central America, sense of community, and cultural traditions of the Garifuna peoples, gave me a window into what I consider Garifuna people's "blueprint of survival" developed in the island of Saint Vincent, which they have adopted as a continuous cultural pattern.

Therefore, drawing from a Black feminist and decolonial feminist theory approach, studying this literature was essential as I pursued a deeper understanding of Garifuna women's experiences with the ancestral tradition of *ameinahani* for *añahani*. The ways these theories have informed my work served to select literature that expands on Indigenous people's historical perspective, sense of community, and cultural traditions. This information has encouraged me to move away from the traditional metaphor of research as a recipe to fix some problems. Thus, the way I see my work is centered around reciprocity and the relationship between me as the investigator and my participants as co-creators of knowledge.

At the same time, it was clear that, notwithstanding the growing number of studies about the Garifuna people's history, sense of community, and ancestral traditions, more research should focus on Garifuna women's experience with their ancestral traditions. In the study of music and dance, for example, Hadel (1976) and Greene (2002) briefly note that Garifuna women have an

essential role in transmitting certain ancestral traditions. However, there needs to be an indication of a dedicated study about such women's perspectives on their own experiences with this subject. Lastly, out of all the investigations I reviewed, Bateman (1990) and Hall (2014) provided the closest description of Garifuna women's vital role in tying families together and how their role has been pivotal in maintaining cultural identity. I was particularly concerned with finding out how patriarchal ideology has influenced some ancestral traditions, especially how men are attempting to take over some of Garifuna women's forms of production. Additionally, these women need to be recognized more for being the main contributors to preserving the Garifuna people's culture and identity. Consequently, my study contributed to the literature by focusing on how Garifuna women have continued to create spaces to transmit their ancestral traditions and how this shapes their sense of identity and belonging.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

> *Tu quieres que otros sepan de nosotros desde el punto de vista de una mujer Garifuna, no de la perspectiva de la gente que no son Garifuna y que vienen a nuestras comunidades a observar como vivimos y despues se ponen a narrar nuestra historia a partir de su punto de vista. Y ellos no saben. Ellos solo lo ven asi. Ellos no saben como siente un Garifuna. No saben todo lo que hemos pasado…*– Alina
>
> (You want other people to know about us from a Garifuna woman's point of view and not from the perspective of non-Garifuna people who come to our communities to observe how we live and then narrate our stories from their point of view. Moreover, they do not know. They only see it that way. They do not know how a Garifuna feels. They do not know everything we have been through … – Alina).

My Garifuna Lens

I am part of a community of Garifuna women who have inherited ancestral cultural legacy. This legacy includes an ancestral Garifuna language, many ancestral traditions, and a sense of collective identity. One childhood memory I hold on to is *ameinahani* (*ereba*-making), which includes engaging in collective work with my grandmother and other Garifuna women. *Ereba* is a food product made from *yuga* or cassava; it was a primary food offering to Garifuna ancestors during ancestral ceremonies. Garifuna women planting *yuga* to make *ereba* have been part of what it culturally means to be Garifuna.

During my childhood*,* making *ereba* exemplified Garifuna women's collective work. I fondly remember Garifuna women singing in the Garifuna language as they created this food. A group of women peeled and cleaned the soiled *yuga*—a starchy root vegetable or tuber, also known as *yuca*. Another group ground the *yuga* on the *egui* (grinder), and others strained the

yuga paste using the *ruguma* (strainer) and sifted and grilled the dried paste on the hibise (sifter) and the *budari* (griddle). I also remember that, although it was hard to see these women's faces because of so much smoke from the *budari*—an improvised grill made from clay and iron- I could see their smiles through that fog. This collectivity motivated them to engage in the two-day process that produced the *ereba*. I realize how fundamental this ancestral tradition was for Garifuna women who preserved their Garifuna language, values, beliefs, and sense of identity. Since memories of my grandmother and her friends engaging in *añahani* bring me endless joy, I focused my inquiry projects on seeking a deeper understanding of Garifuna women's experiences with *añahani*.

My dissertation project was a well-prepared journey. Before starting my investigation, I conducted a pilot study that served as a compass, guiding me toward meaningful relationships with my participants in Honduras. This preliminary investigation not only solidified the research questions that would shape my dissertation but also opened a window into the profound importance of historical lineage and tradition through migration and multiple generations.
I spent thirty days in New York City in the summer of 2022. I chose New York City because it is home to a large population of Garifuna. Martinez (2023) estimates that over 200,000 Garifuna live in the five boroughs. I identified 36 participants through mutual acquaintances who provided me with their phone numbers. After contacting them, we set up a date and time to complete four focus groups, five individual interviews, and six participatory observations. I conducted the first focus group at a cultural center that a Garifuna woman leader reserved. These were a group of women who organized events and collected funds to help their communities back in Honduras. The following two focus groups were with a Garifuna dance group at a different cultural center. This group had been actively promoting Garifuna dancing and drumming for over 30 years. And

the last one was in a church basement. This last group selected the basement for the meeting because, as church members, they practiced Garifuna cultural events in that space. Also, this last group conducted mass in the Garifuna language once a month. I started the inquiry process after obtaining signed consent from 36 Garifuna women older than eighteen. I asked them about their identity, belonging, and experiences practicing ancestral traditions. I designed the individual interview questions to understand feelings and emotions about their identity. Some of my findings included participants' struggles with the lack of representation among those in positions of power. They also expressed concerns about losing the Garifuna language, resulting from normalized practices of privileging English and Spanish in mainstream society. At the same time, participants expressed that their sense of community stemmed from enacting Garifuna ancestral traditions whenever possible. Also, my participatory observations consisted of engaging in community gatherings such as two *fedus* (community event), three *lemesi* (religious event), and one *malli* (ancestral placation).

In preparation for the interviews in New York City and to generate trust and connection, I used one of my acquaintances' kitchens to prepare some traditional Garifuna food: *queque* and *dabledu*. Once at the investigation site, I welcomed participants, informed them about the topic of conversation, and offered the food I had prepared for them. I informed them that the dialogue was being recorded and that we were there to learn from each other. I completed this pilot study because I wanted to learn about Garifuna women's understanding of what their ancestors passed down to them. Many of these women shared their memories of *ereba*-making. They said it required collaborative work, collective memory, knowledge transmission, and ancestral traditions. As we conversed in Spanish and the Garifuna language, these women reminded me of the women in my grandmother's kitchen from my childhood because of their willingness to

collaborate. Some of them adjusted their work schedules to be present during the focus groups and shared their childhood experiences with ancestral traditions.

Theoretical Framework

For this project, I selected three main theories to draw from as theoretical frames: decolonial theory, Black feminist theory, and Black diaspora feminism. These theories informed my approach and allowed me to analyze data more thoughtfully. Decolonial theory, for example, helped me understand how Indigenous peoples have been impacted by normalized Eurocentric worldviews while reiterating the ongoing work required to unlearn such perspectives. Black feminist theory enabled me to make the experiences and concerns of Black and racialized Garifuna women in Honduras more visible. Black diaspora feminism helped me to write as a United States naturalized citizen with roots in Honduras and cultural ancestry on the Island of Saint Vincent.

Decolonial Theory

The decolonial theory acknowledges a linkage between colonialism, racism, and other forms of dehumanization. This theory unmasks how scientific observations of Western ways of knowledge creation, for example, are based on imperialist research methods that work to normalize white supremacist views of indigenous people. Such researchers have included Sir William Young, who conducted investigations on Saint Vincent Island in the 16th century. Young (1795) communicated his assessments to the English monarchy. His reports to the British Kingdom encompassed derogatory narratives about the subjugated and enslaved native Indians and Africans in the West Indies. Narratives of this sort have contributed to stereotypes attached to Afro-Indigenous peoples. (Du Tertre, 1654, 1667, 1671; Edwards, 1818, 1819; La Borde,

1704; Labat, 1704; Young, 1795). Discovering this history helped me understand how my Garifuna participants have internalized oppressive colonial and imperialist beliefs.

Decolonial scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai-Smith and Gloria Anzaldúa have written extensively about embracing Eurocentric ways of being in the world. For example, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's (1998) groundbreaking book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, critiques the power dynamic between dominant institutional research procedures and Indigenous knowledge systems. I included this resource to reclaim ancestral worldviews as valid knowledge because traditional academic research has privileged Western knowledge. Similarly, I have included Gloria Anzaldúa's work. She was a Chicana cultural theory, feminist theory, and queer theory scholar. Anzaldúa co-edited the groundbreaking book *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* with Cherríe Moraga (1981). In this book, they confronted the racism and classism within late 20th-century feminist thinking. Such confrontation was considered pivotal in feminist studies as it helped to develop Third World Feminism. Anzaldúa's work also guided my investigation of ancestral knowledge as inquiry. Investigative works like Tuhiwai-Smith and Anzaldúa create unconventional spaces for knowledge production based on non-western epistemic logic. According to Harding (2017), Anzaldúa's (1987) "borderlands thinking" "directs researchers to start off thought from their everyday lives—from where they stand on the borders between modern and nonmodern assumptions and practices" (p. 631). As such, these scholars were my thought partners as I conducted data analysis.

Black Feminist Theory

Black feminist theory*,* which affirms Black women as knowledge producers, is a philosophy that asserts that race, gender, and class discrimination are aspects of the same

hierarchy. Scholars such as Patricia Hill-Collins and Audre Lorde have contributed to the understanding that Black women are inherently valuable. Patricia Hill-Collins's (1999) work argues that the knowledge of African American women has been "gained at the intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender," which has provided the stimulus for "crafting and passing on [their] subjugated knowledge" (pp. 8–9). She also notes that Black feminist thought considers a transnational context by acknowledging Black women's oppression beyond U.S. borders and "struggle to understand new forms of injustice" (p. 9). Collins adds that these women deal with new forms of subjugation as they struggle to understand new meanings of ethnicity, citizenship status, and religion. These forms of subjugation also apply to the Garifuna people, as they have been forcibly *relocated* from their original home (St. Vincent) to Honduras and continually endure ongoing distorted representations of their heritage.

Black feminist author Audre Lorde's work also centers on the importance of the struggle for liberation among oppressed peoples and of organizing in coalition across differences of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability. She was a prominent member of the women's and LGBTQ rights movement. Audre Lorde worked tirelessly to emphasize the intricate nature of identity and how people with different life experiences could grow stronger together. Audre Lorde's most salient works include *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* and *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1982). She called *Zami* a "biomythography" because she combined history, biography, and myth elements to tell her journey of self-discovery and acceptance as a Black lesbian. On *Sister Outsider*, Lorde wrote what many consider a canonical essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In this piece, Lorde (1984) noted that "unacknowledged class differences rob women of each other's energy and creative insight" (p. 116). Her goal was to encourage feminists to utilize the many differences among women as a

source of power instead of division. Lorde's work is particularly salient to me given my experiences as a Garifuna, Black-Indigenous woman. I cannot categorize my experiences as solely indigenous, Black, or Latina. I resonate deeply with Audre Lorde's emphasis on harnessing the power of difference.

It is essential to uncover the differences that dominant narratives have hidden. Although specific to Garifuna people, this project joins the work of exposing how racist, patriarchal, heteronormative, and Eurocentric narratives have negatively impacted marginalized people and how those people have resisted.

Black Diaspora Feminism

Black diaspora feminism is relevant to my work because, as an Afro-descendant woman, I navigate multiple identities and homeland nostalgia. Though I racially identify as Black, my ethnicity and cultural background include experiences as a Latin American immigrant in the United States. Gilroy (1993) states that "[i]n the Black diaspora, identity is understood as subjectivities shaped by routes/movements rather than roots/rootedness, because of the history of transatlantic slavery and various waves of migration of Black population" (as cited in Hua, 2013, p. 32). Writing with an understanding of Black diaspora, then, allows me the opportunity to utilize a unique language to describe my social location. For this investigation, *ereba*-making served as a "language" through which to articulate a form of survival and resistance among Garifuna women, who are Afro descendants. Scholars such as Hua (2013) notes that Black diaspora feminist writers "deploy storytelling, critical theorizing, and remembrance practices to comprehend, resist, transform, and heal from patriarchy, racism, colonization, and the history of slavery, to explore uncharted journeys" (p. 30). Black diaspora feminists are concerned with "how memories of those who are marginalized are elided or displaced by dominant discourses—

women's memories, ethnic memories, colonized memories—and that memories and histories are, at times, inscribed onto women's bodies" (p. 35). In other words, Black diaspora feminism acknowledges the diversity within the Black community and works to incorporate the experiences of Black women from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Additionally, Ochy Curiel, an Afro-Dominican lesbian, feminist, anti-racist, decolonial, singer, and scholar-activist, is one of the founding leaders in the contemporary Afrolatinx feminist movement in Latin America. She currently teaches at the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia,* where she leads the program on Gender Studies. Curiel (2016) notes that one crucial contribution made by Afro descendant Latin American and Caribbean feminists has been their work exposing the effects of mestizaje's nationalist ideology. As such, mestizaje carried with it a project of homogenization that resulted from colonialism and Eurocentrism and implied the invisibilization, stereotyping, and violation of racialized women and their bodies (p.48).

My research, for example, revealed the experiences of Garifuna women with Ladinos who benefit from policies based on colonial and Eurocentric imaginaries. The Ladinos, seen as the actual mestizos, represent the dominant culture in the Central American region. In a time of economic, political, social, and human crises, "there is extreme poverty and social insecurity, through the lenses of biopolitics, territorial control, and extractivism on behalf of multinational corporations complicit with the state" (Curiel, 2016, p. 47). Such crises are reasons for which there is an urgency for political creativity that acknowledges everyone's humanity, especially racialized and poor women.

Decolonial theory, Black feminist theory, and Black diaspora feminism provided a lens through which I examined power dynamics that conspire against Garifuna women's liberation from internalized colonization. As a Black-Indigenous woman, I consider it essential to point out

that Black women embrace distinct cultural heritages. Differences matter. Engaging in this creative and critical research allowed these Garifuna women to nurture their Black and indigenous epistemologies. My research explored the nuances weaved within those experiences. In the next section, I explain the conceptual framework for this project.

Conceptual Framing

Since this project sought to understand the perspectives of Garifuna people in their society, I have situated my work in decolonial theory, Black feminist theory, and Black diaspora feminism. These theories honor Garifuna's historically and systematically marginalized ways of knowing. My framework stems from an already existing Garifuna ancestral tradition that connects indigenous worldviews. Therefore, I relied on a conceptual framing that offered a lens to see the ways of knowledge production that counter the Eurocentric perpetuation of white supremacy and cultural domination.

Conceptual Map

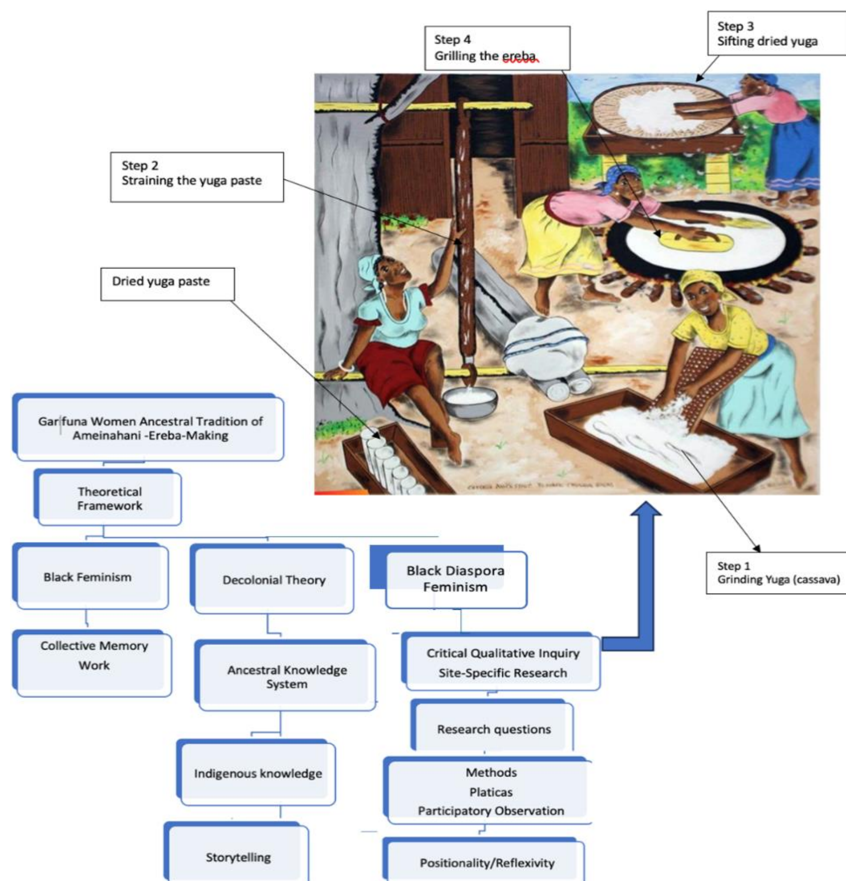
My conceptual framing includes the following concepts: Ancestral Knowledge Systems (AKS), Indigenous ways of knowing, storytelling, and collective memory work. The following section discusses the ancestral knowledge system and how it connects to my work. Combining my choices for theoretical frames and methodological approaches, a personal embodiment of self- and- communal accountability, I turned to AKS as a lens to guide my personal, professional, and academic journey (Sandoval et al., 2016).

As I brainstormed about designing my conceptual framework for this investigation, I utilized notes from a living repository that my dissertation chair, Dr. Villaverde, had invited me to work on. I had laid out my thinking process regarding a topic of study. As I further delved into Black feminist theory, I realized that Black women discussed empowerment and freedom for all.

The decolonial theory was also part of my interest in study. Informing myself about works from Smith, Anzaldua, and Lugones helped unlearn colonizer's universalities. Both theories helped expand my critical consciousness. Later, as I analyzed the data, I searched for more information regarding the social condition of Black women in Latin America. Through that search, I discovered Black diaspora feminism, which acknowledges the cultural diversity within the Black community.

As I critically analyzed the literature, I considered it appropriate to select these theories as lenses to analyze the data. For that reason, I presented an image of Garifuna women making *ereba* (see Figure 1). As this tradition has informed my practice, this image represents my thought process before, during, and after I completed this project.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Ancestral Knowledge System

The ancestral practice of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) is an indigenous way of knowing that Garifuna women transmitted intergenerationally. Since my work sought to engage in knowledge-production techniques representing a multiplicity of knowledge systems, I utilized the Ancestral Knowledge System (AKS) as one part of the conceptual framework. Sandoval, Lagunas, Montelongo, and Diaz (2016) collectively call for the study of ancestral knowledge as a new pattern in research methodologies. Deloria and Wildcat (2001) noted that the ways research has been and continues to be practiced still include "… colonial practices based only on dominant Western Eurocentric views" (as cited in Sandoval et al., 2016, p. 19). They argue that AKS is committed to deconstruction through a Decolonial approach. This process of decolonization could be a path to the liberation of colonized groups from imposed methods of inquiry. These scholars developed AKS to counter how researchers engage in what Kuhn (1996) calls "strenuous and devoted attempts to force nature into conceptual boxes supplied by professional education" (as cited in Deloria et al., 2016, p. 19). As a Garifuna scholar, I consider it my responsibility to share my way of life and to include my ancestor's wisdom as part of my academic work.

Through a more critical understanding of decolonization, I no longer feel fragmented. Embracing an ancestral knowledge system framework represented in *ameinahani* is my way of allowing my authentic self to be present in my research. I take this responsibility seriously. AKS as my conceptual framework aligned with Garifuna's ways of knowing and my chosen methodology for this study. Framing my analysis in this manner allowed me to create the conditions through which I explored "the nuances of the stories of our elders" (Sandoval, 2016,

p. 20). It also allowed me to understand the colonial practices that have affected their lives while affording me the skills to represent the research data meaningfully.

Additionally, I brought my whole self into this work by acknowledging my African and Ameri-Indian ancestors as part of my scholarship. Furthermore, this project has been personally transformational because I blended my scholar and Garifuna souls to design ways of engaging in social justice work. In the next section, I discuss indigenous ways of knowing.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

As part of a community of investigators who seek to detect and unmask the ideologies and practices that limit access to freedom, justice, and democracy for all, I want my work to honor indigenous ways of knowing. According to Joey De La Torre (2004), "Indigenous knowledge [is the] established knowledge of Indigenous nations, their worldviews, and the customs and traditions that direct them" (as cited in Hart, 2010, p. 3). For example, the Garifuna people's cultural traditions are fundamentally evocative and provocative art forms on which they have relied as forms of resistance to colonizing practices. Their language, most of their dances, songs, and culinary art are linked to a complex Afro-Indigenous ancestral legacy that has been cherished and maintained for over two centuries. Moreover, Castellano (2000) characterized Indigenous knowledge as "personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language" (as cited in Hart, 2010, p. 3). For example, the ancestral practice of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) is a creative way of incorporating cassava (yuga), a toxic root vegetable, into a staple food that symbolizes Garifuna culture and identity. Although manioc or cassava "contains high concentrations of cyanogenic glucosides, principally linamarin, which break down to release toxic cyanide when crushed or chewed" (as cited in McKey et al., 2010, p. 110), Garifuna people have maintained the tradition of transforming this highly toxic tuber vegetable,

into an edible food product. The *añahatiñu* (*ereba*-makers) have embodied the skills of making ereba. These women make *Ereba* using artisanal instruments such as the *ruguma* (strainer), the *hibise* (sieve), the *egui* (grinder), the *gararu* (turner), the *baisawa* (small broom), and the *budari* (grill), which are all made by members of the Garifuna community.

Given these points above, creating *ereba*, for instance, includes a conglomerate of ancestral indigenous ways of knowing embodied by the practitioners and other community members who manufacture the tools. Some men and women in the Garifuna community elaborate ancestral tools needed to make *ereba*. Using seagrass, they weave the *ruguma* into a snake-shaped basket and the *hibise* into an oblong-shaped sieve. These two instruments require understanding a complex weaving pattern that allows the extraction of highly toxic fluids from the yuga paste and pulverizing the dried paste, respectively. *These artisanal workers* also created the *egui*, a rectangular wooden board with encrusted miniature pebbles. The elaboration of this tool requires knowledge of the most precise pattern that will generate the expected texture on the final product. Finally, they created the *budari*, a grill made from clay and iron to grill the *ereba*. At the same time, these tools require engaging several artistic elements such as color, texture, and pattern.

Storytelling

During *ameinahani and añahani*, women tell stories through songs, comments, anecdotes, and jokes. Thus, based on the nature of my study, I considered it appropriate to honor their voices and their experiences as a way of countering "deficit-informed research methods that silence and distort the experiences of people of color" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). Many of the stories told by the women included their experiences with their ancestors. For example, how they learned to make ereba, their childhood, and adulthood in their villages. According to

Obiechina (1993), storytelling "is a primary form of the oral tradition … [used] as a mode of conveying culture, experience, and values and as a means of transmitting knowledge, wisdom, feelings, and attitudes in oral societies" (as cited in Osei-Tutu, 2022, p. 4). When the women sang during *ereba*-making, for example, they told stories about their relationships with each other and their loved ones. These were moments at which they established deeper connections, settled disagreements, or just decided to part ways as friends. Additionally, Datta (2018) has noted that "storytelling as an emerging research method is timely, accurate, appropriate, and culturally relevant …" (p. 35). Storytelling, a body of knowledge that originated in the traditional lives of indigenous peoples, relies on elders as sources of knowledge based on the principles of community-making and inter-collaborating.

Acknowledging the voices of Black women has also been a way of capturing their experiences with the world around them. To this point, Hill-Collins (2003) has noted that Black women have constantly engaged in self-definition efforts for which they have utilized "traditional sites of knowledge production" such as music, literature, daily conversation, and everyday interactions (p. 48). For Garifuna women, telling stories through songs and other oral forms while making *ereba* has been an alternative way of articulating how they make meaning of their environment.

Collective Memory Work

Scholars such as Johnson et al. (2018) have reported that "the theoretical foundation of collective memory work rests on the idea that the effects of ideology and discourses (the metaphorical point where culture and language converge) position us to a variety of social forces; they *subject* us" (p. 4). Specifically, engaging in conversations during the *ereba*-making process enabled the shaping of the concept of identity. These conversations also encouraged and

assisted in making sense of how internalized beliefs around social and ideological dimensions of gender, race, sexual orientation, and other social categories manifest during research.

Traditionally, during *añahani* and *ameinahani*, it was customary to sing and converse. At this point, collective memory work could have allowed *ameinahatiñu* (*ereba*-makers) to examine and interpret songs. Unfortunately, the participants did not engage in singing during the investigation. They explained that the work is less arduous and faster with the mechanization of two of the steps in this production system. They no longer felt motivated to sing while working. Therefore, our collective memory work consisted of remembering while grilling the *ereba*. In the next section, I will discuss my practice in reflexivity and how it influenced my research experience and study.

Methodology and Method

My Garifuna identity influenced my work in education and racial equity. My worldview includes learning in community settings with community members in Honduras and being an immigrant in a higher education setting in the United States. As such, I conducted a critical qualitative study to understand the experiences of Garifuna women with their ancestral tradition of *añahani* in Honduras. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) described a critical qualitative researcher as one who is "concerned about power relations, views facts as value-laden, recognizes the fluid relationship between signifier and signified, addresses the complexities of oppression and privilege, and acknowledges mainstream research as implicated in the reproduction of oppression" (Denzin, 2017, p. 9). My commitment is to uncover power imbalances and make the need to challenge inequality visible by valuing and centering non-Western knowledge. Therefore, my responsibility throughout the inquiry process is to center Garifuna women's experiences with different cultural and social dynamics in their society.

Additionally, Cannella and Lincoln (2015) noted that the ethical imperative for critical qualitative inquiry is to “plumb the archeology of taken-for-granted perspectives to understand how unjust and oppressive social conditions came to be reified as historical ‘givens’” (as cited in Koro-Ljungberg & Cannella, 2017, p. 330). Thus, this project investigated Garifuna’s traditional cultural practices, knowledge systems, and ways of being in the world “to understand how power and ideology operate through and across systems of discourse, cultural commodities, and cultural texts” (Denzin, 2017, p. 12). As such, I critiqued the forms of inequality and discrimination in these women’s daily lives.

Furthermore, this study responded to past and current racist social constructs around Garifuna women’s identities. Correspondingly, Koro-Ljungberg and Cannella (2017) noted that,

> [C]ritical qualitative inquiry is also a moral epistemological project to think about knowledge, truth, and human relations with/to their environments differently. Many scholars who engage in these epistemological projects are morally committed to social critique, posthuman inter-and intra-actions, ecological, and beyond anthropocentric relations in the world. (p. 330)

To that point, as a critical Garifuna-identified scholar, I was mindful not only of the well-being of the Garifuna women I worked with but also of the natural resources around them. I considered it essential to understand their relationship with the land and other living organisms, which is essential to their survival. In that vein, treating their ecosystem with dignity and respect was one of my priorities. Through conversations with the participants, I learned how to contribute to preserving their sources of water and food free from contamination. In this manner, my critical actions in these communities were part of a direct scholarly movement toward justice that integrated inquiry with activism on the ground.

Research Questions

This process was my grounding for this research inquiry, not only because of the memories it evoked but also because I wanted to embrace a process of inquiry that brings visibility to Indigenous social construction, being, and participating in the world from an ancestral worldview.

To that end, the following research questions guided this study:

1. Why and how do Honduran Garifuna women maintain their ancestral traditions?
2. How does the ancestral tradition of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) impact Garifuna women's sense of identity and belonging?

Data Collection

This study expanded my understanding of these women's experiences with their ancestral traditions. It was also an opportunity to critique and expose the inequities and discriminatory practices against the Garifuna community in Honduras. As a researcher, I concur with Denzin (2016), who noted that "[as] global citizens, we are no longer called just to interpret the world, which was the mandate of traditional qualitative inquiry" (p. 9). Instead, researchers must contribute to a more inclusive and democratic society by acknowledging and making visible the contributions of Indigenous peoples and their ways of being in the world. This critical qualitative study also responded to a "call for inquiry that addresses inequities in the economy, education, employment, the environment, health, housing, food, and water, inquiry that embraces the global cry for peace and justice" (Denzin, 2016, p. 8). My concern with social inequities toward racialized and poor women in Honduras, I traveled to Honduras to make *ereaba* with the *añahatiñu,* a population of Afro descendants in that region. Correspondingly, looking into

añahani as a site-specific investigation exposed how these women understood inequities and systemic inequalities.

Añahani is a form of production practiced by Garifuna women living in rural and remote areas in Central America. Conducting research in rural areas makes me a site-specific researcher. As such, I am concerned with "the cultural, historical, ethnic, linguistic, political, and mythological dimensions of a site" (Peña & Kelley, 1989, as cited in Fox, 1994, p. 63). *Ereba*, as a food product subject to exportation, can be distributed for mass national and international consumption. However, the spatial conditions between production and consumption are located disproportionally between disenfranchisement and privilege. Those who produce the ereba experience scarcity in the rural areas. Contrastingly, many who consume *ereba* in the cities benefit from resources such as electricity, water, and bridges that are accessible to everyone. Also, many Garifuna who have migrated to the United States don't make *ereba* in this country. Yet, many Garifuna living abroad commission large quantities of this food product for consumption and reselling. Gómez-Peña (1989) notes that "border culture" is a dominant culture today; therefore, site-specific work that's produced outside of the US border but consumed in the US makes those who have never crossed the border "border crossers" (as cited in Fox, 1994, p. 64). Consequently, this site-specific study permits *añahani* and *ameinahani* to reach people who have lost connection to the land where *ereba* is produced.

I conducted this investigation using two forms of data collection:

- *Pláticas* generated through semi-structured questions.
- *Añahani,* making *ereba*, as my participatory observation method.

Wayanuha (Let's Talk): Pláticas

I identified pláticas as a method for data collection. Morales et al. (2023) argue that "Chicana/Latina feminista pláticas are a methodological disruption, meaning they are embedded in feminista practices that can be used to heal from and resist research approaches rooted in whiteness, colonial logics, and white supremacy" (p. 1633). Valle and Mendoza (1978*)* add that*,* "*la plática* is a more culturally appropriate form of engaging with the Latin@ population … [it] emerged because of researchers believing that traditional models of research, particularly ethnographies, and surveys, did not work well with 'Hispanic' participants" (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 102). This method allowed me to engage in cultural responsiveness during conversations with participants and collect data. Additionally, "Chicana/Latina feminist scholars have also taken up *pláticas* as [a] research process stemming from unique epistemological dimensions of Chicana/Latina scholars" (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 108).

Before arriving at the first village, Tibiniriba, I was still under the impression that the *añahatiñu* process would take two days. However, during conversations I held with participants over the phone on WhatsApp video calls, they surprised me with new information about this process. They no longer used the *egui* to grind the yuga nor the *ruguma* to strain the yuga paste. These two steps of the process were mechanized. The mechanization of these two steps has reduced *añahani* from a two-day production process to one. Consequently, I completed the data collection through pláticas and *ereba*-making in one day.

This organic connection through conversations helps form better interview questions connected to observed behavior and interactions. As an insider researcher, I wanted to be mindful of possible assumptions I could make about my participants. Although I did ask follow-up questions that expanded and clarified answers, I was mindful of asking for information that could

have embarrassed them. For that reason, I created a WhatsApp group chat to ensure the accuracy of my data analysis. This chat made it easy to contact the participants individually for further clarifications. These individual calls also helped share information they might not have felt comfortable sharing during the pláticas. This data collection method generated a cohesive relationship with my participants. It also helped reduce tensions associated with the formalities of a traditional interview. I also noticed how participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences during face-to-face conversations. Hence, the semi-structured questions I prepared to engage in the pláticas helped the Garifuna women I interviewed to answer my broader research questions. (See Appendix C for the semi-structured questions.)

Wañahaña (We Are Making *Ereba*): Participatory Observation

The process of making *ereba* is participatory. My research by design and philosophy required the involvement of Garifuna women, with whom I actively participated in the *añahani* process. According to Glesne (2016), "participatory observation as a research method different from interviewing," is a continuum (p. 65). She adds that researchers alternate between observation and participation "during data production" (Glesne, 2016, p. 65). During my inquiry process, I participated by peeling yuga while also engaging in pláticas. Also, I collected data through pláticas while making *ereba.* This interaction helped to generate organic rapport and trust as we built relationships and shared our stories. Sharing our stories about *ereba*-making evoked childhood memories in my grandmother's kitchen. As we continued our organic conversations, the participants became curious about life in the United States.

I shared some of my stories in the United States, and they also felt comfortable talking about their stories. Their comfort in sharing about themselves indicated that we were making meaningful connections. This data collection method of making *ereba, also my participatory*

observation, was a meaningful way of gaining the participants' trust and understanding of how they make sense of the world. The participants and I collaborated to create this food product. They shared memories of engaging in this activity while we worked through grinding, sifting, and grilling.

As planned, I spent 2 days in each village. I used this time to familiarize myself with the participants and their environment. I remember *añahani* was a 2-day process. However, as mentioned above, we completed the process in one day. To my surprise, women in Tibiniriba no longer practiced *ameinahani* (yuga harvesting for ereba making). Instead, they purchased the yuga from the Ladinos, the dominant culture in Honduras. In Dugubati, however, *añahatinu* still practice *ameinahani*. Also, I was surprised to see *añahatiñu* using machinery to grind and strain the yuga. I remember these steps of *ereba*-making as the opportunity for women to sing and share stories in the Garifuna language. That is how I remember them maintaining and transmitting the language. In Dubugati, however, the participants did not have access to electricity, and they operated the grinder machine with gasoline.

The next surprise was that both sites used the hydraulic jack to strain the yuga. The process consisted of inserting the yuga paste into a sac and placing the sac into a perforated plastic container. Then, this sac was pressed with the jack to extract the fluid, which ran out through the perforations on the container until the paste was dry. Once dried, I noticed a difference in sifting the dried paste, known as *sibiba.* In Dubugati, once the paste was dried, we sifted it using the ancestral sifter called *hibise; in* Tibiniriba, we used a commercial sifter and the ancestral *hibise*. I noticed that, even though it took longer to sift with the *hibise*, the sibiba was of a finer texture than the one sifted with the commercial tool. Right after sifting, we grilled the *ereba* on the *budari*, an ancestral grill made from clay and iron.

I recorded my observations in my field journal as part of my data collection tools and methods. I used a video camera and a photo camera to record *ereba*-making. Additionally, I stayed in Honduras much longer after completing the study. I used this time to conduct two members' checks. Finally, my participatory observation was an appropriate method "to better understand the research setting, its participants, and their behavior" (Glesne, 2016, p. 67). I learned the meanings, norms, and patterns that Garifuna women engaged in during the *añahani* process.

Data Analysis: Making Meaning from the Data

The last step of *pláticas* and participatory observation is analyzing the data. As per Bhattacharya (2017), "data analysis involves creating processes that would allow for deep insights that reflect how the researcher integrated theoretical and analytical frameworks, previous understanding of literature, and the focus of the research purpose and questions" (pp. 149–150). I started the coding process by capturing the participants' experiences. Then, I named categories based on patterns in harmony with a constructivist paradigm. I followed this process to honor my participants' voices. Lastly, I identified the themes that aligned with the research questions and this project's critical nature.

First, I extracted meaning from our *pláticas* by listening to the recording and using an appropriate coding method. I selected Values coding to stay true to the Garifuna people's language and traditions and to ensure that my work reflected a reverence for the complexities embedded in their cultural patterns. Saldaña (2013) defines Values coding as "the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflects a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldviews" (p. 110). Through a reflective process, I was open to finding any patterns that would emerge through my data analysis process. This reflective process

helped me see how *Values* coding clarified the subjective nature and the experiences of Garifuna women from Tibiniriba and Dubugati.

Correspondingly, I followed an inductive analysis. As per Bhattacharya (2017), this analysis consists of grouping all the raw data into codes for further analysis and then grouping similar codes and labeling them as categories. Finally, I identified salient themes after looking within and across categories (p. 150). With intentional alignment in mind, I identified themes by paying attention to this project's critical nature and understanding of Garifuna women's cultural patterns, ways of being, and ways of knowing throughout the entire inquiry process. This intentionality also helped uncover structural issues of power dynamics that affected Garifuna women in Honduras. Thus, to maintain alignment between my selected paradigm, conceptual framework, and overall methodology, I selected an analysis process that assisted in answering this project's research questions.

Representation of the Data

To stay true to my indigenous cultural background, my plan for representing my findings includes considering an accessible form of analysis. For that matter, my participants and I created a photo archive that participants can keep for themselves. This photo archive (in the form of a book) was my giving back to my research participants. I have chosen this as one of my methods of data representation because taking photos of the data collection process provides the opportunity for capturing, documenting, and preserving the data in ways that more thoroughly maintain authenticity. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommend "considering the audience" and "preparing to write my final report deciding whom the report is for" (p. 268).

Therefore, I presented my findings in an accessible format for Garifuna women readers. By introducing the investigation process to my participants in an accessible format, I would

agree with Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) ideas of "audience conjuring." This idea conveys that determining an audience influences how to write a final report because it helps connect and engage an audience commonly excluded from accessing academic information.

Additionally, as part of a community of investigators that seek to detect and unmask the ideologies and practices that limit access to freedom, justice, and democracy for every human being, this investigation honors Indigenous ways of knowing and their contributions to their societies. For this reason, I reported my findings as a thematic analysis that weaved through the storytelling of making ***ereba*** in each village. Analyzing each village's data helped delve into the participants' narratives and uncover their experiences based on location. My decision to engage in this form of analysis aligns with how Castellano (2000) characterized Indigenous ways of knowing as "personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language" (as cited in Hart, 2010, p. 3), which allows for a more intentional engagement with their stories through the meaning-making process. Furthermore, I engaged in the kind of inquiry and analysis that allows for meaningful data representation.

Participants and Recruitment: *Añahatiñu* (*Ereba*-Makers)

In keeping with the qualitative commitment to be site-specific (Fox, 1994), I conducted this study at two Garifuna villages in Honduras. I did purposeful sampling, "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 97). I recruited 11 participants for this study. One of them identified as Black but not as Garifuna. However, she made *ereba* and wanted to be part of a discussion about identity. Participants were *ereba*-makers older than 18.

I utilized the purposeful sampling *snowball* because I located a few key participants who readily met the criteria I established for participation in the study. Since I kept in contact with friends and family in Honduras and New York City, I asked for recommendations regarding *ereba*-making in Honduras. Notably, one of these friends was Dr. Kia Hall, a Fulbright scholar who has written extensively about her experiences with *ereba*-makers in Dubugati. I referenced Dr. Hall's work throughout my literature review because of its significance, reverence, and respect demonstrated to members of this community. I also posted a recruitment flyer on Facebook, which many of my Facebook friends shared. Someone in Honduras responded, and they recommended other *ereba*-makers, and that's how I established my first connections with the participants.

Then, I traveled to Honduras and visited two *añahani* sites, Tibiniriba and Dubugati. Tibiniriba's location is in the northern part of Honduras in the province of Colón, and it is one and a half hours away by bus from La Ceiba, an industrial city in the region. Dubugati's location is also in the province of Colón. However, this village is on the opposite side of Tibiniriba and is about a 4-hour ride by private car from La Ceiba, the nearest industrial city in the area. The women already had an organization of 30 *añahatiñu* in each village. They organized to collect funds to collaboratively modernize their *ereba*-making tools. Through their initial effort, the women in Dubugati collected funds to purchase their first set of gas-operated mechanical grinders and oil-operated hydraulic jacks. In Tibiniriba, FUNDER (Foundation for Rural Business Development) donated an electric grinder and an oil-operated jack. This study revealed that the women at both sites no longer worked as a unit. In Dubugati, the *ereba*-makers paid a small fee to grind and dry the yuga. The organization's president oversees the funds to upkeep the equipment as needed. The women in Tibiniriba shared they were restructuring their

organization because of the lack of electricity in their warehouse. Neither organization engages in negotiations with yuga sellers nor with *ereba* buyers. Nevertheless, through conversations over conference calls with two members, I explained the purpose of my study and asked them to refer me to Garifuna *ereba*-makers who wished to participate. I did not select all the 60 *ereba*-makers to conduct this study because of my limited funds to compensate for their work.

Most of the planning happened through five conversations over the phone with the participants before arriving at the site. There were five participants at Tibiniriba and six participants at Dubugati. At the sites, I presented a consent form. After signing the consent form, participants and I decided how to acquire the materials needed to make *ereba* and who would be responsible for obtaining them. Preparing for and making the *ereba* took two days at each village. On the first day, we engaged in a more detailed conversation about planning the process. On the second day, I conducted *pláticas*, and we all made the *ereba*. Afterward, I left the villages and stayed in a different region in Honduras for another 41 days. I took that opportunity to journal about current events in the country.

Additionally, I conducted three member checks over the phone with the participants. During the first member check, I contacted them individually. I showed them the photo book I created with images from the *ereba* process and some they had shared with me. I read their stories back to them and asked for their feedback. The second member check was a conference call with the members at Tibiniriba and then the ones in Dubugati. I informed them about my findings and the themes. They agreed with the themes and suggested I discuss their need for a market to sell their *ereba*. The third member check was also a conference call where I informed them about a law in Honduras that permits them to catch marine turtles for subsistence exploitation.

Meet the Participants

Eloisa Melendez

Eloisa is a 62-year-old Garifuna woman who is proud of her Garifuna heritage. She started making *ereba* with her mother at the age of 14 and she passed down this way of knowing to two of her eight children and one granddaughter. Eloisa used to engage in *ameinahani* (harvesting yuga to make *ereba*) with her mother; however, since the Ladinos took over her mother's land, she now purchases yuga from them.

Eva Murillo

Eva is a 73-year-old Garifuna woman. She first learned to make *ereba* with her mother at the age of twelve. Eva also used to engage in *ameinahani;* however, the Ladinos also took over her land. She has four children, but neither one of them practices *añahani.* Eva feels that being Garifuna is in her blood.

Francisca Barcelona

Francisca is a 61-year-old Garifuna woman. She learned to make *ereba* with her mother when she was 12 years old. Francisca used to engage in *ameinahani*; however, she doesn't anymore since the Ladinos took over her land. She has nine children, and neither one of them makes *ereba*. Francisca misses making *ereba* the way she learned from her mother. She says things are not the same anymore.

Griselda Ramirez

Griselda is a 40-year-old Garifuna woman. She first made *ereba* at the age of nineteen after learning from friends and neighbors. Griselda never engaged in *ameinahani* because her mother did not own a yuga farm or make *ereba*. Even though Griselda's mother never made

ereba, she used to sell it. Then, she migrated to the United States. Griselda has one daughter who does not practice *añahan*i.

Gloria Boden

Gloria is a 45-year-old Afro-descendant from Roatan Island. She has lived in Tibiniriba for over 20 years and learned to make *ereba* with the women in this community. Gloria has four children, and neither one makes *ereba*. She has never engaged in *ameinahani*. Even though Gloria is of Afro descent and does not speak Garifuna, she finds a sense of belonging in this community.

Rosy Castillo

Rosy is a 48-year-old Garifuna woman. She learned to make *ereba* with her mother and other women in the community when she was fifteen years old. Rosy has five children but none of them make *ereba*. Rosy's mother used to tell her that life was not possible without making *ereba.*

Eduarda Ramos

Eduarda is a 69-year-old Garifuna woman. She learned to make *ereba* with her mother and women in the community when she was twelve years old. Eduarda used to engage in *ameinahani*; however, her children are now harvesting the yuga. She has five children, all of whom make *ereba.*

Fermina Castillo

Fermina is a 63-year-old Garifuna woman. She learned to make *ereba* with her mother and other women in the community when she was fourteen years old. Fermina still engages in *ameinahani;* however, neither of her eight children makes *ereba*. Also, all her children have migrated from the village.

Emma Rodriguez

Emma is a 37-year-old Garifuna woman. Her mother taught her how to make *ereba* when she was nine years old. Emma engages in *ameinahani* and takes her children with her to the yuga farm. Emma has five children and has taught them how to make *ereba*. She patiently teaches her children the same way her mother did with her.

Oneida Thomas

Oneida is a 55-year-old Garifuna woman who is proud of her Garifuna heritage. She was nineteen when her sister taught her how to make *ereba*. Oneida still practices *ameinahani*. She has four children, but none of them make *ereba*; they have all migrated to other countries.

Nelli Castillo

Nelli is a 63-year-old Garifuna woman. She does not remember her first time making *ereba*. However, she remembers being young and surrounded by family members and friends. Nelli also has a *yuga* farm and practices *ameinahani.* She has two children, both of whom did not learn to make *ereba* and migrated from the village.

Table 1. Participants in Tibiniriba

Name	Age now	Number of children	Age you first made ereba	Did you engage in Ameinahani?	How did you learn to make ereba?	Have your children learned to make ereba?
Eloisa	62	8	14	Yes, but not anymore	My mother taught me	Yes, two daughters and one of her granddaughters make *ereba*
Eva	73	4	12	Yes, not anymore	My mother taught me	No
Francisca	61	9	12	Yes, not anymore	My mother taught me	No
Griselda	40	1	19	No	I learned watching women in the community	No
Gloria	45	4	21	No	I learned watching women in the community	No

Table 2. Participants in Dubugati

Name	Age now	Number of children	Age you first made ereba	Did you engage in Ameinahani?	How did you learn to make ereba?	Have your children learned to make ereba?
Rosy	48	5	15	Yes	My mother and women in the community taught me	No
Eduarda	69	5	12	yes	I learned with my mother and women in the community	Yes
Fermina	63	8	14	yes	I learned with my mother and women in the community	No
Emma	37	5	9	yes	I learned with my mother and women in the community	Yes, every one of her children make ereba. their ages are 20, 19, 16, 13, 11
Oneida	55	4	19	yes	My sister taught me	No
Nelli	63	2	Does not remember	yes	Watching women in the community	No

Subjectivity Statement/Positionality Statement

I consider myself a Black-Indigenous woman who claims Garifuna ethnicity. I am conscious of my Black and Indigenous ancestry. I am also aware that I am an able-bodied, heterosexual woman with higher education privilege, an immigrant, and a naturalized citizen of the United States. Nevertheless, before migrating to the United States when I was 19 years old, I used to spend countless hours making food using fresh *yuga* (cassava), *baruru* (plantain), and *faluma* (coconuts). My grandmother and her friends planted these fruits and vegetables on their farms, and I helped them in the ancestral tradition of *ameinahani, yuga* harvesting for *añahani.*

I remember *añahan*i as embodying *aura buni, amurü nuni*, or "I for you, you for me," comparable to the ubuntu philosophy "I am because you are." The central point of "*aura buni,*

amurü nuni" in the Garifuna community is that collaborative work is more socially sustainable and productive than individualistic practices. *Ameinahani* takes center stage in my memories because it brought family and the community together. Walking along Arabiya (seashore) was Garifuna women's most accessible way of getting to their farms. Through this activity, women in my community engaged in teaching moments while generating income. Although I was too young to participate in making *ereba*, I remember the lessons I learned from them and how they protected the other kids and me at the farm. I learned about yuga planting and weeding around the plants. Thus, my first experience watching *añahani* as a child imprinted an unforgettable memory. Watching these women collaborating for a common purpose represented an additional life lesson for me. I realize now that *añahani* was a socially, financially, and culturally sustaining community enterprise.

Unfortunately, my grandmother and her friends' mother-love could not prevent the disruptions generated by neoliberal ideologies. Corrupt government officials allowed foreign investors to build resorts and privatize the seashores *(larubeya).* Many Garifuna women lost their land through such corrupt transactions. Those who kept their land could not access it through *larubeya.* Moreover, many women need vehicles to access their farms through the mountains. Sadly, those who do not own cars abandoned their farms.

Such corrupt transactions described above contributed to disenfranchising the Garifuna people. For example, since 2014, Canadian-owned tourism and real estate have obstructed *larubeya.* They built projects such as New Palm Beach, the Banana Beach Resort, Njoi Trujillo, Corozalta, Campo del Mar, Campa Vista, and the Tranquility Bay Beach Resort. These obstructions have interrupted the experience of walking along *larubeya* and have made it difficult for Garifuna people to get to their farms. A Canadian, Randy Jorgensen, primary owner

and president of Grande Trujillo, a tourist project in that city, has displaced Garifuna families who plant their *yuga, baruru*, and *faluma* crops for self-sustenance. Jorgensen's rationale was that the Garifuna people do not have a purpose for these lands. He ignored the value of the Garifuna indigenous practice of rotational farming. These rotations represent Garifuna's dedication to agriculture. They rotate between areas to allow the soil to recuperate for periods between crops. This practice benefits the environment and optimizes expenses since it helps to reduce pesticide usage, retain water in the soil, and protect the farm's ecosystem. Therefore, during these rotation practices, some lands may seem vacant. Eventually, many Garifuna have lost their land through deplorable preferential business deals in the Central American region. Notwithstanding Garifuna's long history of involvement in the economy through the production of bananas, plantain labor, shipping, North Coast industries, services, teaching, and nursing, the nation-state of Honduras does not protect them against abusive neoliberal practices. Instead, Ladinos and foreigners dehumanize them through stereotypes such as boisterous blacks who only dance *punta* (a Garifuna traditional dance) and drink too much alcohol. Those in positions of power reference such stereotypes when justifying excluding Garifuna from economic projects in the state, except for entertainment.

Moreover, literature, such as *Memin Pingüin*, portrays racialized stereotypes in Central America. *Memin Pingüin, el negrito* (the little black kid), is depicted in this literature as a lovable mischief-maker character –drawn in the image of an old cartoon version of a little Black pickaninny with an exaggerated big-lip and buck-eyed grimace. His mother was drawn as a Black Mammy figure. This literature circulated among the mestizo mainstream in Central America and emphasized the narrative about Afro-descendants in Latin America as loud and

uncultured, lazy, and violent. Devastatingly, narratives of this nature have contributed to racist attacks and economic onslaught in many Garifuna communities.

As a Garifuna woman who understands how our worldviews have been suppressed and marginalized through disenfranchisement, I am taking an "active role in political and social power and public cultural and intellectual dialogue" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 18), which has previously excluded many indigenous ways of knowing (including Garifuna ways of learning). Considering such exclusions, I am not looking to rely on Western scientific approaches in research that objectify Indigenous peoples as mere science specimens. Conversely, my work decenters racist research practices that perpetuate white supremacy and maintain cultural domination.

Consequently, I embraced Black feminist thought as articulated by Audre Lorde and Patricia Hill-Collins, as well as decolonial epistemologies highlighted in the work of Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, Chela Sandoval, and Gloria Anzaldúa. Their work motivated me to participate in research that proposes "models of knowledge that reflect the situation of the group" and that contests "scientific and research traditions that reflect the worldview, biases, and emotions of White European and American men" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 2). This dissertation includes Garifuna women and their social backgrounds. It aligns with Bentz and Shapiro's (1998) call for "creative research work: new fields of study, new things about which to inquire, new methods of inquiry, new ways of combining knowledge of different fields, new ways to incorporate" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 3) our whole selves in our studies. Thus, my work captured how Garifuna people interpreted and made meaning of artifacts, events, actions, and perceptions of self. Also, it captured how they understood the hybridity of their cultural makeup in tandem with their historical origin. Therefore, I selected the combination of Black Feminist thought and decolonial

epistemologies as lenses through which to view this critical Garifuna knowledge and legacy preservation work. These theories centered on marginalized perspectives as necessary and valuable.

Reflexivity

Just as Savin-Baden and Major (2010) noted, to achieve a more nuanced understanding of reality, researchers must "acknowledge that truths are complex and fragile and need to be seen as places where issues or power, consent, and negotiation are mediated by our own values and biographies" (p. 28). As a researcher, I begin to confront my truth through reflexivity. I am Garifuna, a Black-Indigenous person, and I have conducted research in my community. As I engaged in this process, I hadn't thought about how my positionality, in relation to many people in my community, has changed. I realized that my participants viewed me as an insider because of my identity. However, they also saw me as an outsider because I was a researcher.
During the research project, I listened to my participants and remembered to question my assumptions and my experience of being a Garifuna woman. My experience and definitions cannot cloud theirs. It was significant for me that my participants felt in control of their inquiry process. "Feminist scholars have proposed reflexivity as an essential methodological strategy because it enables us to examine how our values, identities, and positionality affect our research and particularly our relationships with participants" (as cited in Brown & Strega, 2015, p. 8). Through conversations with my participants, they had the agency to voice their current condition in Honduran society and what their culture meant to them. My commitment to research my Garifuna culture had to do with what I want to understand about it, why I want to understand it, and why it matters that future generations have access to information about Garifuna women's experiences with their ancestral traditions.

As researchers, "we must participate in the research process with our subjects to ensure we produce knowledge that reflects their reality" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 103). This project will illuminate the ancestral stories and traditions of marginalized voices who have been forgotten, erased, or ignored by the violence of colonialism. Therefore, this study allowed my participants and me to co-create a social reality from which Garifuna women can see their cultural knowledge represented as part of general knowledge regardless of their geographical location.

Additionally, as I equipped myself with insights from feminist and decolonial researchers, I acknowledged the differences in our lived experiences. I worked through power imbalances that arose during the research process. I understood what it meant to work across differences and recognized when I needed to listen more and talk less. Ultimately, my interpretivist frame required humility. I would not have been comfortable proposing a project based on a positivist paradigm.

Therefore, to stay true to myself and my research goals, I relied on the ancestral knowledge of the *añahatiñu,* rooted in the *aurabuni, amuru nuni* philosophy, which is fundamental in Garifuna women's ancestral knowledge system. The *aura buni, amuru nuni* paradigm acknowledges Indigenous elders' wisdom and embraces a spirit of solidarity and interdependence that they have transmitted intergenerationally. Since it was essential to establish that participants had "control over their involvement in the inquiry" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 159), I relied on what feminist scholars such as Campbell and Wasco (2000), Oakley (1981), and Reinharz (1992) noted about reflexivity. As an essential methodological strategy, "reflexivity enables us to examine how our values, identities, and positionality affect our research and particularly our relationships with participants" (as cited in Brown & Strega, 2015, p. 8). I

clarified that my commitment to research within my Garifuna culture concerned bringing visibility to historically marginalized knowledge.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

My commitment to this research was to accurately reflect the reality of my participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that “validity criteria is associated with empirical research,” and this term is “inappropriate for interpretive inquiry” (p. 152). Therefore, I designed this research to acknowledge multiple realities and perspectives. While conducting this investigation, I listened attentively to my participants. I diligently noted observations in my fieldnote journal and asked follow-up questions. These strategies helped to avoid conflations between participant’s experiences and mine. I wanted this research process to be one where we all learned through questioning our assumptions. Thus, it was significant that they felt in control of their inquiry process.

This work illuminated the ancestral stories and traditions that the violence of colonialism marginalized, forgot, erased, and ignored. Accordingly, interviewing Garifuna women aligned with the critical research goal to “reveal and critique distorting ideologies … [and] situate the experiences and perspectives of the oppressed group in a social, historical context, revealing how conditions served certain groups and not others” (Glesne, 2016, p. 11). Therefore, this study allowed my participants and me to co-create dignified knowledge that accurately represented the Garifuna people.

Language

During my pilot study, I realized that the participants and I could use multiple languages. I have a native speaker level of fluency in Spanish and a proficient level in Garifuna and English. Therefore, I conducted the study in Spanish and Garifuna. I assured the participants they could

speak the language that made them feel most comfortable. As such, I spoke Garifuna and Spanish during our pláticas. I also spoke both languages during recruitment. Keeping accessibility in mind, I translated my representation of the findings for non-Spanish readers. To accomplish this, I identified a person who served as the Garifuna translator on an as-needed basis for fidelity. I presented participants with information in their language with subtitles in English to allow for much wider accessibility.

Reciprocity

Just as for the pilot study I conducted in New York City in the summer of 2022, participants in Honduras generously provided their time and insight about their experiences. Therefore, I was sure to show reciprocity. As a qualitative researcher, I struggled to quantify my participants' time and willingness to collaborate with me on this project. Moreover, as Glesne (2016) has noted, ways of reciprocating the time that participants dedicate to a researcher's project could have a variety of forms (p. 167). I created a photo archive with images from the data collection process to show my participant's reciprocity. I see this action in alignment with my decolonial research practice because participants can see themselves as part of knowledge creation. Additionally, this action of reciprocity served to counter Western research practices of extracting and exploiting members of the Garifuna community.

Limitations of the Study

Conducting this qualitative research revealed my strengths and missed opportunities as a researcher. One of my strengths in this process was my genuine connection with my participants. Genuinely connecting was possible because we could communicate in their preferred language, Garifuna or Spanish. Another strength was being mindful when conducting grounding exercises and sharing personal stories before data collection generated harmonious interactions.

Missed opportunities as a researcher included not asking follow-up questions. I am an insider researcher, which made participants unwilling to share because they thought I knew the answers. Some of them held valuable information for my study. Moreover, I became aware of their varying degrees of literacy. Gratefully, I reassured participants that my goal was to honor and respect their experiences and vulnerabilities.

Lastly, I conducted pláticas in Spanish and the Garifuna language. It took me about 48 hours to transcribe my selected quotes into English. Fortunately, translating from one language to another was not an issue. I appreciate that when it comes to social justice work, we must present our participants' experiences word for word as they tell them.

Conclusion

Since my experience as a Garifuna-identified woman included watching Garifuna women making *ereba*, I saw this food product as a symbol of Garifuna culture and identity. *Añahani* has been part of the Garifuna people's culture since life in Saint Vincent, Taylor (2012). Gonzalez (1969) noted that Garifuna women planted yuga; however, their "responsibility did not end with harvest – [they] also processed the foods produced and converted them into edible form" (as cited in Hall, 2019, p. 35). Thus, *ereba* has a profound cultural root in the Garifuna community. Growing up, it symbolized grassroots collaborative work among women. This research process, however, opened opportunities for valuable lessons. I learned through this process that I did not know everything about *ereba*-making or the *ereba*-makers. This understanding motivated me to ask follow-up questions as appropriate. Inquiring in this manner enriched my data analysis.

Also, proper coding with proper themes expedited the analysis process. I wanted to ensure that my work represented social justice work. Therefore, this project appreciated and considered everything the participants said in the spirit of collaborative work. Their voices were

valued. This qualitative inquiry process answered my research questions. It also created a space where participants told stories that exposed their experiences with ancestral traditions. With that in mind, this process helped enhance my ability to perform qualitative research by continually educating myself about the complexities of engaged research.

CHAPTER IV: ARABU (THE FARM)—TRAVELING TO THE VILLAGES

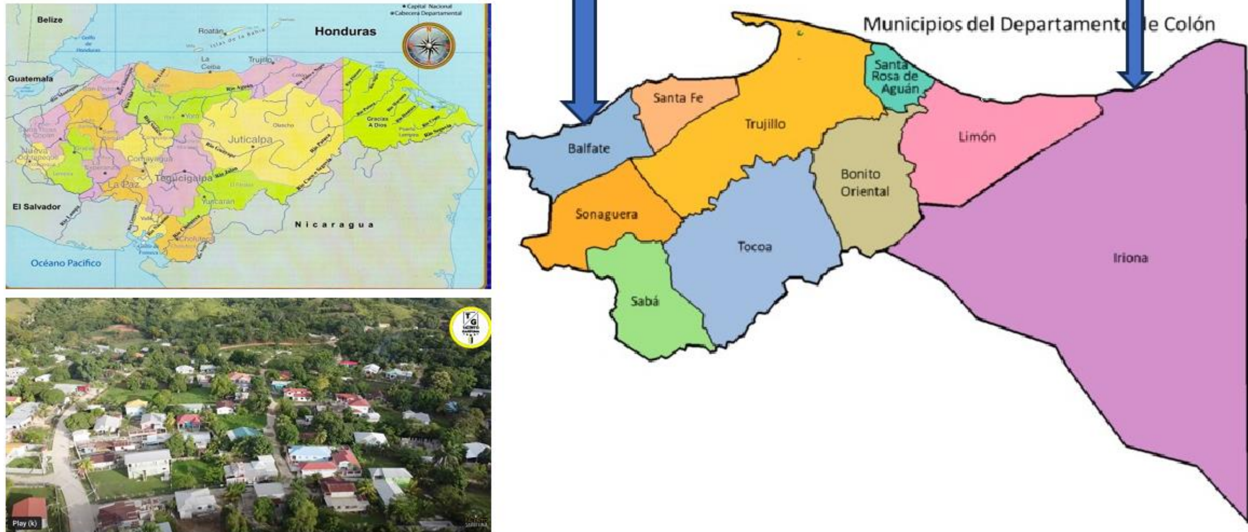
The premise of this study is that *ereba*-makers, as ancestral knowledge holders, can provide valuable understanding concerning the experiences of Garifuna women with their ancestral traditions in Honduras. As a participant observer, I traveled to two villages in that country and grounded myself in the context of making *ereba*. In this chapter, I review the geographical context of my journey. Next, I discuss my experience in getting there. Lastly, I present the context of the investigation process in each village.

Weibuga Arabu **(On Our Way to the Farm)**

It is essential to visually represent the path I followed to reach the two sites. I present an image of the Honduran map (see Figure 2) because it provides geographic information about where I conducted the investigation.

I migrated from Honduras 32 years ago and did not visit too often, hence my unfamiliarity with that region's roads and driving rules. Another reason is I cannot afford to rent a car when I travel there because they are expensive. Therefore, I spend most of my time with my family, who provide me with the necessary transportation. For this investigation, for example, my two sisters and their families helped to transport me to the two villages. Thus, I am digging out these women's stories and experiences through this inquiry, such as how we dug out yuga at the farm.

Figure 2. Map of Honduras, the Municipality of Colón, and the Village of Tibiniriba



In addition to the map, it is important to tell the story of my experience in Honduras as a Garifuna researcher making *ereba*. I needed to provide context for the work at each village and what it took for me to get to each of them. Since I had initially relied on memories, my observations were important to setting the stage for understanding current conditions, the pláticas, further observations, and *ereba*-making. Below is a recount of my experience at both sites. The first site is the Garifuna village of Tibiniriba.

Tibiniriba (Rio Esteban)

After riding for 4 hours on paved roads through relatively industrialized towns and crossing two one-lane bridges that served two-way traffic, we arrived at one side of Tibiniriba called "Colonia Margarita." Garifuna and Ladinos populated this side of town, and I was surprised to see many enormous modern houses. Our host mother explained that many of the

Garifuna who lived on that side of town had migrated to the United States and had sent money to build their homes.

After driving for 5 more minutes, we reached a river dividing one side of town. Since all the participants for this investigation lived on the other side of town, called “Rio Esteban Viejo,” we had to cross that bridgeless river. I remember getting out of the car to check the river’s depth to gauge the level of safety before my brother-in-law drove through that river. After trying three times, we made it to the other side. I first noticed a small community of Ladinos (mixed Indian and Spanish descent) whose homes were surrounded by many different crops in the middle of their fields. I was shocked. I had understood that Tibiniriba was a village populated only by Garifuna people.

Then, after riding for about 10 more minutes, we arrived at our hostess’s home. She lived in Rio Esteban Viejo, which was closer to the beach and mainly populated by Garifuna people. I was appalled at the contrast between the houses owned by Garifuna, who had migrated to other countries, including the United States, and the houses of Garifuna, who remained. The houses belonging to the migrants on this side of town were enormous and well equipped with air conditioners, manicured lawns, iron fences, and signs on the front gates that read “*mantenganse fuera*” (keep out). Then, when I visited each of the women who had committed to participate in this study, they did not have crops planted in their backyards; their houses were small, fenceless, but welcoming. There were no signs telling anyone to stay out. To my surprise, none of these women planted yuga, and when I asked why, they said, “*lo compramos con los indios*” (we purchase it from the Ladinos). I was shocked but even more surprised when one of the women retracted her participation in the study, stating that she needed money and was too busy making *ereba* for someone else. She also stated her disinterest in joining a collective because that would

waste her time. Her 21-year-old daughter was present during our conversation, and when I asked if she wanted to take her mother's spot, she accepted. However, the daughter did not show up to be part of the study. I was disappointed and thought her behavior did not represent what I had experienced around Garifuna women during my childhood. At the same time, I understood that these women were experiencing the economic disparities I had just observed and that it was important for them to focus on generating their income. This behavior also meant that collectivity was eroding; the shifting economics was also impacting a central part of what I remembered meant to be Garifuna.

The following day, participants arrived at Eloisa's house at 7:30 in the morning, ready to engage in *añahani*. Some women had not had breakfast yet; therefore, I purchased some *semita* (sweet bread), and the ladies asked for some Coca-Cola from the corner store across the street. As we started our pláticas, the woman who had rescinded her participation showed up to tell us that she did not believe we would finish that day and would probably return later that night. We did not pay too much attention to what she said because it sounded like she wanted to stir something up. Therefore, we continued with the investigation process.

Before my arrival, I had checked in three times with the participants planning this investigation process. Additionally, I provided the funds necessary to purchase the yuga and the firewood to grill the *ereba*. I was conscious that making *ereba* was their occupation. Therefore, I wanted to ensure they would not incur any expenses for this inquiry process. However, I noticed the women were uncomfortable even though we had previously talked via WhatsApp video and conference call. One of them, Eloisa, was rushing us, stating that she needed to tend to other businesses. Indeed, during our check-ins, I had communicated that their participation was voluntary and that they would receive compensation for their time. I also explained how this

investigation could generate new knowledge regarding a much deeper understanding of each other's memories of making *ereba*. Hence, after noticing their behaviors around their perceptions of this commitment being a waste of time, I realized that engaging in pláticas before making *ereba* would be a more generative interaction.

I started the investigation with pláticas through semi-structured questions. I made this decision because I realized there was a need for more conversation before making *ereba*. When I proposed this study, I stated that making *ereba* would be the first data collection method. However, after noticing how some of them thought that engaging in a study of this nature interfered with generating income, I felt compelled to change the order of the data collection process. I re-introduced myself and the details of the study to the women. After all, finding out about these *ereba*-makers' experiences in Tibiniriba helped me situate their stories within the ancestral knowledge system. At the same time, their stories served as a window into the conditions under which they learned, maintained, and transmitted this knowledge.

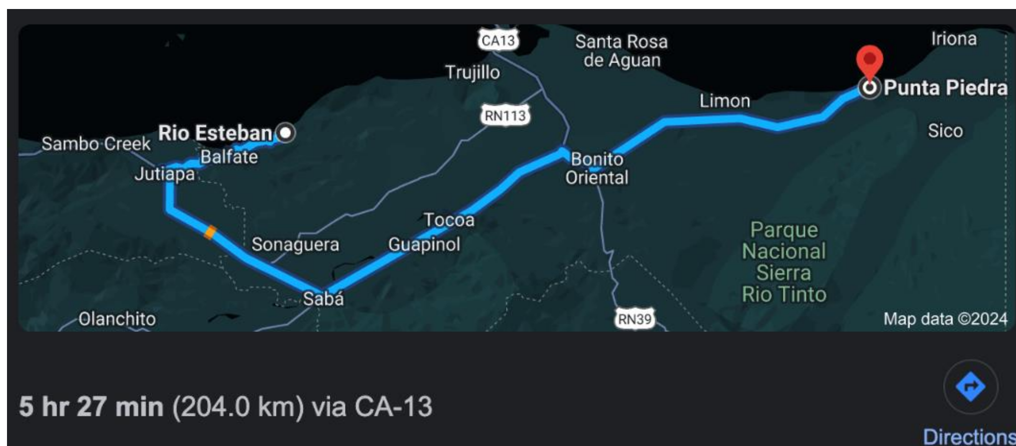
During our pláticas, I could not ignore the smell of swine mixed with raw yuga. We gathered between what Eloisa considered the "formal" house and the small adobe kitchen. This space felt nostalgic because it reminded me of my grandmother's space, minus the swine. We were sitting in a circle facing each other. The weather was hot; however, there was a pleasant breeze from the nearby beach.

As I proceeded with the second data collection method, *ereba*-making, I witnessed these women's familiarities with their ancestral ways of knowing and forms of production. The process reminded me of how women came to my grandmother's kitchen to help with each step of this food process. My grandmother and her friends were all vested in helping each other in this

production system. Each one was skilled in using artisanal tools made by community members specifically for this process.

However, my experience in this village showed that much has changed regarding community work. Although I understood the precarious economic condition of the women in Tibiniriba, I was not expecting it would impact the community-making element embedded in *ereba*-making. For example, two steps in making *ereba*—grinding the yuga and straining the yuga paste—were mechanized. The *egui* and the *ruguma* were substituted by an electric grinder and the hydraulic jack. Such substitution meant that each *ereba*-maker who participated in this study owned a mechanical yuga grinder and a "jack" machine to strain the yuga paste in this village. Also, mechanizing these steps has shifted the focus from helping one another to monetizing part of the process. For example, some women in this community offered their services of sifting the dried yuga paste for a fee. As a result, *ereba*-makers now must pay those who assist with peeling the yuga and sifting the yuga paste. No longer work collectively to peel the yuga. Accordingly, some elements of their African legacy were evident through my observations and our *pláticas* during *añahani*. We left Tibiniriba, and my family helped transport me to Dubugati (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. A Map Showing the Distance between Tibiniriba and Dubugati



Dubugati (Punta Piedra)

After leaving Tibiniriba, we drove for about 6 hours before arriving at the next village of Dubugati. For the first 4-hour ride, we were on paved roads. Notably, most inhabitants near these routes were Ladino. However, for the last 2 hours, we drove on dirt roads straight to Dubugati, mainly inhabited by Garifuna. I was nervous about anything happening to the car on those desolate roads. No wonder our hostess kept calling on the phone every thirty minutes, saying she was monitoring me and ensuring we were okay.

We finally arrived in Dubugati. This trip was my first in this village. We drove on the main road between the mountains and the beach, an awe-inspiring sight. I also noticed there were unwired electric poles. When I mentioned that to my family members in the car, we all said in unison, "No hay luz aqui" (there is no electricity here). I had not asked the participants about access to electricity because I thought access to such an essential utility was ubiquitous in the 21st century. I started worrying about how we would recharge recording equipment and how that might disrupt data collection for the investigation process.

My family and I arrived at our hostess's home, where we stayed during the investigation. She was waiting for us outside the house with several women. Then, soon after unpacking, she informed us that to charge any electronics, we would have to take it to the nearest grocery store because the store owner had access to a power plant generator. We paid 10 Lempiras, equivalent to fifty cents on a dollar, to fully charge each piece of equipment. I was relieved because I was able to charge my phone, laptop, camera, and iPad.

Finding out about the lack of electricity in Dubugati distracted me from noticing the homes' structures and demographic composition. I walked around the village and noticed that most houses were made of adobe. Twenty percent of the houses had solar panels large enough to

support powering televisions and refrigerators. The owners of these homes had either migrated to the United States or were family members of those who had migrated. The other 40% owned small solar panels, just enough to illuminate the house. Unfortunately, the smallest solar panels did not support power sockets. Then, about 1% of the population owned power generators. They belonged to business owners like the corner store where we powered our equipment. The remaining 39% of the population did not have access to electricity. They illuminated their homes with candles or lamps.

After charging our equipment, I returned to the hostess's home, who had prepared dinner for us. The aroma from the kitchen piqued my curiosity, and I was even more curious because of my unfamiliarity with the meat she was frying. She said it was a sea turtle the men in town caught to sell for an equivalent of one dollar per pound. She served it with some *ereba,* and I must say that it was unexpectedly delicious. As the evening rolled in, I noticed that our hostess home was powered with electricity, and she explained that those who could afford it owned solar panels. Hers was a small one and could not support power sockets. Hence, she did not own a television, a refrigerator, or a radio. I asked her how she preserved her food without a refrigerator, and she said she paid the store owner to keep any leftover meat in his refrigerator to prevent spoilage. She also said they usually would fry the meat because it lasted longer without refrigeration.

Shortly after dinner, I met with the six women who had agreed to participate in the study. Even though we had held two pláticas through conference call before my arrival, they seemed nervous and curious simultaneously. Our conversation that evening included re-introducing ourselves in person, sharing some personal details about ourselves, and explaining my reasoning for engaging in the study of *ereba*. After an hour-long conversation, we set up a time to meet in

the morning and planned how to make *ereba*. They left smiling and seemed eager to engage in the study.

When they arrived at about seven the following day, I thought it would be best to start with our *pláticas* because they had shared so much the night before that I did not want to miss the opportunity to capture valuable information. However, Emma, one of the participants, had gone to her yuga garden early that morning and showed up with a half-full sack of the yuga. She asked us to wait for her as she went home to change before starting our pláticas; Emma was covered in dirt from head to toe after kneeling in the mud to dig out yuga (*ameinahani*). I told her I wanted to go to the yuga garden; however, our host mother said it would be dangerous for me to climb those hills because I did not have the experience the other ladies had. So, I stayed home to wait for the participants. As soon as Emma returned, we started the pláticas.

As we started our pláticas, I once again witnessed another group of Garifuna women expressing with words and actions how they understood the world around them and what they considered had been transmitted to them from their ancestors. This was represented by how they all brought knives to peel the yuga. Also, we all sat in a space between the house and the street; although not structurally designed as a porch, it allowed us to still interact with members of the community who were passing by, which had also happened at the site in Tibiniriba. They also showed how their mothers and grandmothers had told them to wash the yuga two times and to add salt to the water the second time. They had learned that the salt "added some flavor." Adding salt to the yuga before grinding was new information for me. My grandmother made *ereba* without any ingredient other than *yuga*. The women in Tibiniriba did not add anything to the *yuga* either.

Next, we continued with the second data collection method, my participatory observation of the *añahani* process in Dubugati. In this village, the *ereba*-makers had also mechanized the grinding and straining steps of the *añahani* process. A clear contrast, however, was that there was an active *galpón casabero* (*ereba*-making warehouse), and the machines were operated by gasoline. I noticed there were two grinders and two jacks. Unfortunately, only one of each was in operation at the service of the entire community. The second set of machines had been donated by a grassroots organization, the Black Fraternal Organization in Honduras (OFRANEH). However, this organization did not provide the motor to operate the machine. Therefore, there were about 30 *ereba*-makers in the village using only one machine.

As we finished grinding and straining, these participants also showed what had been passed from their ancestors. During *ereba*-making, they were more collaborative than the women in Tibiniriba. They each brought some firewood to have enough for the entire process. I also noticed that during grilling, they relied on each other to ensure the grill was set adequately at the right temperature to guarantee getting what they considered was the best quality of *ereba*.

Conclusion

Highlighting my experience in both villages was necessary because it helped develop a multilayered understanding of Garifuna women's knowledge about the ancestral tradition of ereba-making. Also, based on my observations through my path for getting to both villages, I have a more critical view of how their social environment has impacted their socioeconomic conditions. My experience traveling to these two villages and the investigation process revealed not only their cultural memories but also fundamental differences and similarities among the *ereba*-makers and the quality of their *ereba*.

On the one hand, the *ereba* makers in Tibiniriba did not own their yuga farms. They purchased the *yuga* from the Ladinos. This *yuga* was of great quality, and the *ereba* had excellent taste, texture, and consistency. Also, the *galpón casabero* was inactive, and each *ereba*-maker participant in this study owned a mechanical grinder and strainer. Even though the women agreed to work together for this study, they no longer practiced the ancestral community-making element embedded in this food-making process.

On the other hand, the *ereba*-makers' socioeconomic conditions in Dubugati were negatively impacted even more than the women in Tibiniriba. Dubugati was remotely located from industrialized cities in the region, which impacted these women's accessibility to food, electricity, and health care. For that reason, there were many differences between the two villages. The participants in this village harvested their yuga, which we used for this project. Unfortunately, the quality, regarding size, texture, and taste, was less than that of Tibiniriba. Also, the women in Dubugati only had access to one grinder and strainer at the service of about thirty *ereba*-makers, which impacted their productivity.

CHAPTER V: AMEINAHANI/ASEIHANI—HARVESTING AND SIFTING MEANING

The premise of this study is that *ereba*-makers, as ancestral knowledge holders, provide valuable understanding concerning the experiences of Garifuna women and their ancestral traditions in Honduras. Through *Añahani* (*ereba*-making*),* the Garifuna ancestral knowledge of transforming cassava into one of its edible forms, these women shared their stories of learning, maintaining, and transmitting this indigenous way of knowing. This form of inquiry also brought visibility to indigenous ways of being in the world. Hence, the participants provided a window into their worldviews, how they learned this tradition, how this knowledge impacted their lives, and the significance of their Garifuna identity.

As a counter-story that makes Indigenous wisdom, cultures, experiences, and knowledge systems visible, the following research questions guided this study:

1. Why and how do Honduran Garifuna women maintain their ancestral traditions?
2. How does the ancestral tradition of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) impact Garifuna women's sense of identity and belonging?

Accordingly, this chapter presents the findings from my data collection methods: pláticas, participatory observation through *ereba*-making, and my field notes in the villages of Tibiniriba and Dubugati. Pláticas, as a research method, was essential in creating a linguistic disruptive space so that participants would feel comfortable speaking in Spanish and the Garifuna language. I then captured their experiences in their most authentic forms (Morales et al., 2023, p. 1637). *Ereba*-making, as my participatory observation method, served as a space for the participants to see themselves as co-producers of knowledge. My field notes helped capture our emotions and memories as we engaged in *ereba*-making. My analysis was situated within Black feminist theory, Decolonial theory, and Ancestral Knowledge System (AKS) methodological framework.

AKS was central as I explored the participants' stories about how they learned this ancestral tradition. As I reflected on this process, I was inspired to see and recognize the *ameinahani* process (*yuga* harvesting) as an analogy for my data analysis process and, consequentially, the *aseihani* process (sifting the dried yuga paste) as an analogy to discuss my thematic analysis. Below, I further discuss both.

***Nameinahaña* (I am Harvesting Yuga/Data)**

Ameinahani consists of harvesting yuga to make *ereba*. Garifuna women dedicated to this occupation utilized specific tools. These tools removed the dirt covering the plant's roots to extract the roots from underground. My memory of this process includes helping my grandmother and the other women select and peel the yuga most suitable for the *ereba*. Then, we washed and peeled the *yuga* before grinding, sifting, and grilling the final product. Just as *Ameinahani* requires journeying to go *to arabu* (the farm), in Chapter IV, I represented this process through my travels to two Garifuna villages in Honduras. Once I sat with the data (yuga) gathered, how I uncovered and extracted the root (each woman's narrative and then corresponding codes) resembled *ameinahani*. As I started my inductive coding process, I realized it was important for me to honor the *ereba*-maker's embodied way of processing knowledge. My tools weren't the same, but the cameras, recorders, and notes/laptop allowed for the gathering of the data; the engagement with this surfaced clear patterns and codes, and my theoretical and conceptual frameworks guided the sifting toward the final thematic analysis.

Aseihani (Sifting the Yuga Paste/Themes)

In this section, I present the themes that describe the experiences of *ereba*-makers with their ancestral tradition of *añahani*. The 11 participants in this study—Eloisa, Eva, Francisca, Griselda, Gloria, Rosy, Eduarda, Fermina, Emma, Oneida, and Nelli—were purposely selected

because they have maintained this ancestral knowledge. I selected the two villages, Tibiniriba and Dubugati, based on family and friends' recommendations of the best places for *ereba*-making. Through the data analysis process, I identified the following three themes:

- *Ereba*-making as a symbol of Garifuna identity and cultural affirmation.
- Garifuna women confront precarious socioeconomic conditions.
- Systemic disruptions to the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge.

Next, I delve into each theme and offer critical insight in preparation for answering the research questions in the final chapter.

Ereba-Making as a Symbol of Garifuna Identity and Cultural Affirmation

Through the analysis of the pláticas and my participatory observation, the participants' expression of pride for their identity and culture was evident. They made it clear that making *ereba* was part of who they were as a people. In my review of the literature, the Garifuna culture is referenced as the mixture of maroon Africans and Ameri Indian Arawak and Taino. They are also a community that adopted ways of survival from the Ameri Indians. Skills such as agriculture, fishing, and seamanship prowess were transmitted to their offspring on the Island of Saint Vincent. After their deportation to the Central American region at the end of the 18th century (Coelho, 1955), Garifuna became a transnational community. They established residence throughout four countries: Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Belize. In Honduras, the Ladinos -the dominant culture in this country- have marginalized the Garifuna people through various erasure projects (Bonner, 2001; Cortés, 2016; Davidson, 1980; England, 1999; Euraque, 2003; Mack, 2011; Moberg, 1992, 2003). Furthermore, *ereba*-makers, seen as valuable contributors within their Garifuna society, are marginalized from the national production system by Ladinos in positions of power. These exclusions have contributed to generating fragmented

identities (England (1999). Despite identity fragmentation being a reality for the Garifuna people, participants in this study considered *ereba*-making a symbol of their identity, as Garifuna ancestral legacy, and a space that affirmed them culturally.

Through remembering collectively during *ereba*-making, these women unpacked memories about *añahani*. They shared how this activity was one of their ancestral community-making practices representing their Garifuna identity. In Tibiniriba, for example, Eva, a 73-year-old woman, expressed how,

> *aprendí que ese trabajo no se puede hacer solitario tiene que estar mancomunado tenemos que trabajar por conjunto con amistades familiares jóvenes y ancianos; el trabajo lo podemos hacer todos. Yo no puedo esperar de una india que haga casave.* (I learned that this work cannot be done alone it has to be in community, we have to work as a unit with friends, family, the young and the old. We can all do the work. I do not expect an India – Ladina- to know how to make *ereba*).

Ereba-making, as a site of learning, helped Eva understand how she experienced her identity as a Garifuna woman. Her understanding centered around the notion of "we" when discussing the unit creating this food product. There were moments while making *ereba* that Eva assumed I was skillful at creating this food. Then, she would catch herself telling me that I was there to learn from them. Moments like this one helped me to realize that my participants saw me as an insider because of a shared identity. However, Eva's assessment of Ladinas indicated a cultural disconnect between Garifuna women and the latter. Ultimately, her assessment unveiled how the Ladinas were not expected to be part of the unit that Eva considered needed to engage in *ereba*-making.

Two other participants in Dubugati, Nelli and Fermina, both 63 years old, concurred with Eva's notions about whose identity was represented through the ability to make *ereba*. These two women asserted they had learned from a Garifuna ancestor, but Ladinos did not share such ancestry. Nelli, for example, stated the following about *ereba* being part of Garifiuna identity**,**

> *los indios ya quiere vivir de nuestra cultura pero que yo digo que no van a poder como ya hay un método para hornear para hacer casabe. Si, la yuca lo hacen, lo siembran pero para hornear el casabe no lo van a poder, (Fermina yells out 'nunca')*
>
> (Ladinos now want to live a life that reflects our [Garifuna] culture, but what I say that they won't be able to. Since there is a method to bake ereba. Yes, they will be able to get the yuga, they plant the yuga but to grill the ereba they will never be able to [Fermina yells out 'never']).

Eva, Nelli, and Fermina undoubtedly considered engaging in this ancestral tradition, not only a fundamental part of their identity, but also a culturally affirming space. Nelli saw a demarcated difference between Ladinos and Garifuna. She alluded to a historical exclusion by pointing out that *now* Ladinos will never be able to live a life that reflected Garifuna's life, especially if Ladinos did not know how to make *ereba*. To Nelli's point, I did not see, nor have I heard of an *ereba*-making site operated by Ladinos. I have seen on the internet how some Ladinos attempted to make *ereba*. However, they have always been under the direction of a Garifuna person. Also, there are songs, cultural groups, and cultural centers named "*ereba*" and they all indicate a strong Garifuna presence.

Some Ladinos perceive Garifuna identity as a skin color or a specific garment. Eloisa, a 62-year-old woman in Tibiniriba, expressed that "*en la ciudad, los indios [ladinos] nos reconocen por nuestro vestuario y dicen 'ella es Garifuna' y eso a mi me encanta*" (In the City,

the Indios (Ladinos) associate our garments with our identity and they say 'she is Garifuna' [example of this is the Valeria, typical Garifuna dress women use to dance at ancestral celebrations] and that I love). Eloisa smiled proudly. However, Eva did not seem to share Eloisa's statement with the same enthusiasm. Eva smirked and then looked serious, as if wanting to shift the conversation. I thought she would address Eloisa; instead, Eva said, "*la comunidad de garífuna tiene que vivir con la vivencia del grifuna y es el medio de vivir de nosotros de lo poquito que nosotros ganamos en el casabe porque no se gana mucho*" (the community of Garifuna must live with the objective reality as Garifuna and that is our way of life, from the little bit that we make from making *ereba* because we don't make a lot of money). I realized Eva had taken the responsibility of speaking for the other participants. Then she added "*hay gente que se avergüenzan de ser garifuna porque nosotros hemos vivido en el olvido todo el tiempo y en la pobreza*." (There are people embarrassed of being identified as Garifuna because we have been forgotten about the whole time and live in poverty). We were all silent for a few seconds. For a moment, I wondered if anyone else shared Eva's experience.

Eva's contribution to the pláticas showed a critical understanding that she experienced a sense of hopelessness as a member of the Garifuna community. Her statement helped bring to the surface how there was more to identity than a garment. She saw the collective of Garifuna women who made *ereba* as not having had a chance to mobilize from where their ancestors left off. Therefore, though Eloisa's statement showed pride in her ethnicity being recognized by a garment, Eva saw more. She saw how some only have a surface-level knowledge about Garifuna's identity. Such superficial understanding mainly targets vulnerable populations and excludes them from participating in mainstream society. Consequently, Eva's understanding of the state of Garifuna as a people makes visible how identifying members of this indigenous

community only by a garment is not enough. It also essentializes and reduces a culture based on a dress. Therefore, more should be done to understand, recognize, or even acknowledge the complexities of their identity and experiences to avoid stereotypes.

After a few moments in silence, Francisca, a 61-year-old woman, stated *"pero nos identificamos como garifuna porque temenos cultura*. *Tenemos que hacer valer nuestra cultura*." (However, we identify as Garifuna because we have culture, we must enhance the value of our culture.) Francisca's assertiveness reflected a more liberated understanding of who she was as a Garifuna woman. Correspondingly, in Dubugati, Eduarda, a 69-year-old woman concurred with Francisca's statement and shared that "*nuestra raza es Garifuna y cuando nos preguntan nuestra raza siempre vamos a decir que somos Garifuna y ademas que eso, que no perdamos nuestra lengua hay que hablar la lengua maternal*" (our race is Garifuna and when they ask us our race we will always say that we are Garifuna and in addition, we should not lose our language, we should speak our mother language). Eduarda's demeanor as she spoke was passionate and firm. Her tone of voice was loud, and her hand gestures demanded undivided attention to her words. Interestingly, Eduarda was referring to Garifuna as a *race* rather than an ethnicity. As I reviewed the literature, I learned that the Garifuna people have a "complex relationship with the diaspora" (England 1999, p. 190); however, Eduarda offered a new understanding of the Garifuna identity. Her understanding of race was represented not only by her skin color but also by her language. "Though frequently overlooked in Latin American history texts, the history of the Garifuna Nation and its language is one of resistance and adaptation" (Ramsdell, 2020, p. 449). Hence, a language spoken only by the Garifuna people is a significant identity marker. This language is mostly Indigenous in origin, with an Arawak substrate and overlays of Spanish, French, and

English (Ramsdell, 2020). As she shared, Eduarda located her understanding of identity based on her Garifuna language, which she passionately believed was worth preserving.

The participants showed their experiences, values, and ways of understanding the world while making *ereba*. In Tibiniriba, for example, they made it clear that identifying as Garifuna was a shared consciousness for Afro-descendants in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and many Garifuna-identified people who have migrated to the United States. Francisca, a 61-year-old, for example, shared her sense of pride as a Garifuna-identified woman living among non-Garifuna people, specifically about the Ladinos. "*sí tenemos cultura más que ellos sí aunque yo no discrimino sí pero en realidad no tiene cultura*" (yes, we have more culture than them, yes. Even though I do not discriminate, yes, but in reality, they do not have culture).

Similarly, in Dubugati, Rosy, a 48-year-old woman, for example, expressed the *añahani* site being "our roots": "*porque hamuga, aba wasaminara Garifuna wama, afeitina ha la adugabey hamuga hadaguien ha uritiñu. Afiñetina mama la harutiñu. Aba ti hama key waguia. Wagucha ti*" (because we the Garifuna people think the same way, I think those who make ereba are the Black people. I don't believe that any white person makes it. Therefore, all Black people are the same as us [Garifuna]. It [ereba] is our roots). Rosy was alluding to how she saw herself represented not only through a Garifuna identity but through Blackness. For her, everyone who was Black was "the same." Notably, since everyone who made *ereba* around her was Garifuna, the *añahani* site affirmed her. I also observed during pláticas that, even though I had emphasized they could speak the language they felt most comfortable with, the women made an extra effort to speak Spanish to me. However, during *añahani*, they only spoke in the Garifuna language. In Dubugati, for example, the women brought up how their "maternal language," as they called their Garifuna language, was part of their identity. Fermina, for example, expressed that how "*yo*

me siento orgullosa de ser Garifuna y estoy orgullosa de mi lengua materna no lo voy a olvidar" (I am proud of being Garifuna and I am proud of my maternal language, I won't forget about it). I realized it was important for Fermina and the other participants at the Dubugati site to feel comfortable speaking their Garifuna language. As an insider researcher, the advantage of understanding my participants' language also allowed me to share experiences through which we built trust. For instance, I shared that my grandmother and her friends made *ereba*. However, I never learned to make this food product because my parents wanted me to focus more on schoolwork. When I was old enough to decide independently, my grandmother was too old to teach me, and no one else had practiced this tradition in my community.

Altogether, the participants enhanced my understanding of how making *ereba* impacted their sense of identity. These women saw themselves as part of a unit with specific abilities their ancestors had passed down. Ereba-making was one of those skills. Even though the Ladinos perceived these women's identities based on a garment, they understood there was much more to their stories than what those in the dominant culture perceived about them. Furthermore, the participants held on to their understanding of their identity based on what they considered *ereba*-making meant to them. For instance, they considered this tradition their ancestral legacy because they learned from a relative or community member who has passed on. These women described themselves as ancestral knowledge holders and expressed pride and empowerment. For example, Oneida, a 55-year-old woman in Dubugati, called herself "*la maestra del ereba*" (*the ereba teacher*). At both *ereba* sites, participants expressed pride about who they were and what had been passed down. In Tibiniriba, Eloisa expressed "*me siento orgullosa de ser Garifuna; soy Garifuna al cien por ciento*" (I am proud of being Garifuna; I am one hundred percent Garifuna).

As Garifuna-identified, that sentiment of pride was important factor in maintaining a strong sense of belonging.

I noticed the women took this opportunity to share memories of gatherings in the community where their mothers and grandmothers inter-collaborated—shared each other's load—during the *ameinahani* and the *añahani* process. Eloisa in Tibiniriba shared, "*mi mama me dio mis primeros instruments para hacer ereba*" (My mother gave me my first tools to make ereba). Eloisa's excitement in her voice and body language were visible, especially when she talked about the artisanal tools Garifuna women used to make *ereba*. She added that, since that first experience, her life dedication has been to make this product because "*liguia nafisietibey*" (that is my occupation). That is what she knows; that's her occupation, which she learned from a Garifuna woman, and making *ereba* was a way in which she strongly felt Garifuna. In fact, Eva, also from Tibiniriba, added that, *"a los 12 años ya hacia casabe perfectamente bien y desde siempre recuerdo que habian muchas mujeres en mi casa haciendo casabe, todas Garifuna*" (at twelve, I was already making ereba perfectly well and since always I remember there were many women in my house making ereba, all of them Garifuna). All their stories embodied *Garifunaness,* "the sum total of Garifuna values and beliefs" (as cited in Greene, 2014, p. 104). At the same time, it is what many Garifuna women considered fundamental for maintaining *ameinahani and añahani* as valuable culturally affirming practices.

In addition to expressing how they collectively experienced the world, the data showed how these women experienced a sense of affirmation of their full humanity through engaging in this tradition. During the *ereba*-making process, the participants demonstrated how this mode of production, as their ancestral legacy, was a source of cultural affirmation. They shared that as *ereba*-makers, these women have found their ways of knowing ostracized from mainstream

knowledge production in their societies. Therefore, they have relied on this production site as one through which they acknowledged each other's full humanity.

Notably, throughout this investigation process, my data collection method, *ereba*-making, was one at which they seemed most comfortable. They were more engaged and only spoke to me and themselves in the Garifuna language. Rosy, for example, stated that "*el hacer ereba se relaciona con ser Garifuna porque es la cultura del Garifuna, liguia waficetebey*" (Making *ereba* is related to being Garifuna because that is the culture of the Garifuna, that's our occupation). Then, I observed these women seemed empowered. I saw them confidently moving through an embodied way of knowing as they grilled the *ereba*. They followed a step-by-step process with precision and passion. As they worked, they told stories about going *arabu* (to the farm) with their mothers. They felt comfortable expressing their feelings about who they were, and I could see they loved engaging their bodies, minds, and spirits in this process.

When I asked during pláticas about the importance of maintaining this form of food production Eva, in Tibiniriba, said "*por el amor por el amor y lo que somos nosotros por su identidad no podemos perder nuestra identidad*." (For love, for love and what we are, for identity, we cannot lose our identity). Unknowingly, Nelly, at the Dubugati site, concurred with Eva answering the same question saying "*porque en todos lados donde llegamos valemos. Porque ahorita yo estoy viendo que raza india ya quieren llevar la vida de los Garifuna. Antes decian que 'Garifuna comian pescado,' 'Garifuna come coco' y ya quieren ser Garifuna*" (because we are worthy everywhere we go. I see right now that the Indian race [the ladinos] want to live our lives. They used to say, 'Garifuna fish-eater,' and 'Garifuna coconut-eater,' but now they want to be Garifuna). As these women shared, I observed how the *ereba*-making space was culturally sustaining for these women. They collectively shared their memories and reflected on

how their bodies remembered. Their legacy of *ereba*-making, a site where these women learn the Garifuna language, community values, and self-sustainability, legitimized their full humanity.

As described in this section, participants in this study considered the ancestral tradition of *ereba*-making part of a unity among those who shared the same Garifuna identity. These women understood this tradition as their ancestral legacy because they learned it from Garifuna women who have passed on. Additionally, *ereba*-making, as a production site intentionally passed down to them, represented a space where they belonged.

Next, I describe how *ereba*-makers face socioeconomic challenges because of limited access to resources and employment opportunities.

***Ereba*-Makers Confront Precarious Socioeconomic Conditions**

Just as when deported from Saint Vincent in 1797 (Coelho, 1955), the Garifuna people were "faced with the imperative of adapting to new conditions or dying out" (Pollard, 2014, p. 136). Challenged with a new set of circumstances, some Garifuna women resorted to what they had learned from their ancestors: *ereba*-making. They utilized their specialized tools and technologies to design their way of confronting precarious socioeconomic conditions. The women in this study explained how their mothers and grandmothers created *ereba* micro-enterprises for self-sustenance and trade in their local villages. They sold *ereba* once a week or traveled to other villages once a month. Therefore, through my data analysis, it became clear that these women have relied on this ancestral form of production to navigate a society that has conditioned them to endure generational economic precarity.

Such a precarious condition originated as the Honduran state decided to select Lempira, "an indigenous chieftain who died fighting the Spaniards in the 1530s" (Euraque, 2003, p. 229), to symbolize mestizo identity in the region. This decision strengthened the Honduran state's

desired detachment from blackness. Such detachment generated notions of Hispanic mestizaje that further disenfranchised Garifuna people in this country. Once marginalized and excluded from actual and potential economic power (Euraque, 2003, p. 238), they were deprived of social and financial mobility in Honduras. These exclusions generated socioeconomic decline in the Garifuna community. Food insecurity, unemployment, and inexistent governmental assistance pervaded their villages, and *ereba*-making was their primary source of sustenance.

In Tibiniriba, these women's socioeconomic conditions were affected by poor infrastructure. They shared how the lack of governmental assistance obstructed their opportunities for social mobility in this country. Eva, for example, discussed how those in positions of power "*no nos toman en cuenta, hermana, ellos no saben cuales son nuestras nesecidades. Los governantes no entienden nuestra cultura, fijese*" (They do not take us in consideration, my sister, they do not know our needs. The government does not understand our culture, you know). Then, she shared her experience of receiving financial assistance from a governmental entity. This entity, Fundación para el Desarrollo Empresarial Rural, FUNDER (Foundation for Rural Business Development), built the *galpón casabero* (*ereba* warehouse) and provided these women with equipment. This *galpón* was in Colonia Margarita; but was inaccessible to the women in Rio Esteban Viejo because a bridgeless river separated them. Based on my observations, Colonia Margarita was more accessible to the city. Hence, visitors and potential clients could access the *galpón* without the inconvenience of crossing to Rio Esteban Viejo. Unfortunately, the location of the *galpón* represented an inconvenience for the women who lived on the other side of town because it was extremely difficult to transport their products. Such overlooked obstruction contradicted FUNDER's mission statement to:

> Promote participatory processes of rural business development, through efficient and effective training services, technical assistance and financing for the training and strengthening of rural saving banks, micro-enterprises, agribusiness and renewable energy initiatives, which would improve the quality of life of thousands of rural families in a sustainable way. (Ingeniero Miguel Ángel Bonilla, Director. https://funder.org.hn/)

Sadly, the promises of "rural business development" were negligibly and minimally afforded to the Garifuna people. During *ereba*-making, Eva showed a video in which she was surrounded by FUNDER's executives while she was interviewed by a national media outlet. This was the opening of *el galpón casabero* in Tibiniriba. She shared that a group of approximately 30 women worked at *el galpón*. They used electricity to operate the yuga grinder and did not receive an electricity bill. Shockingly, after two years of operation, they received their first electricity bill. Eva shared her reaction during pláticas, saying,

> *Los governantes son Indios (Ladinos) y ellos no entienden nuestros problemas, ellos no saben que necesitamos. Aqui en Tibiniriba necesitamos un puente para crusar el rio a la Colonia Margarita. Tambien necesitamos pagar la luz para poder trabajar en el galpón y no temenos ayuda. Mientras tanto tenemos que continuar haciendo casabe cada quien en su casa.*
>
> (Those in the government—local and state-wide—are Ladinos and they don't understand our problems. They don't know what we need. Here in Tibiniriba we need a bridge to cross the river and get to Colonia Margarita. We also need to pay the electric bill [approximately $2,400 that was accumulated in a span of two years] to be able to work in our *galpón*—Ereba manufacturing warehouse—and we don't have help. Meanwhile, each one must continue to make *ereba* at our home).

Eva's statement was connected to a historical lack of representation in positions of power. The invisibility of the Garifuna experience in the national discourse, primarily through the historical perspective of representing indigenous mestizos as the only ones capable of heroism (Cortés, 2016), had resulted in cultural gaps. Ladinos in positions of power ignore the needs of the Garifuna people, who are remotely located from industrialized cities in this region. There were several oversights by the donating organization. There was the inaccessibility to the *galpón* because of the lack of a bridge to get across the river. Then, their electricity service was interrupted, which forced them to close their warehouse. Even though Eva understood the urgency of reactivating the *galpón*, she assumed herself to be politically disadvantaged. Seeing herself in that position kept her from voicing her needs outside her *ereba*-making space.

In Dubugati, the lack of electricity also affected the socioeconomic conditions of the *ereba*-makers. They shared that the government had installed utility poles; however, the poles were unwired. Some of them shared that they purchased solar panels with the money made from selling *ereba* and asking family members to contribute with money. Nelli, for example, owned a small panel for which she paid an equivalent of $720.00—having access to this power source allowed for illuminating her home. Unfortunately, a small panel could not power up electronics and kitchen appliances. Thus, she did not own a refrigerator and had to pay someone else who owned a power plant to refrigerate her food.

Additionally, not having access to electricity in Dubugati represented an obstacle in these women's efforts to improve their production systems. Their *galpón*, for example, was active and equipped with two grinders and two hydraulic jacks. The grinders were motorized and operated with gasoline. One of the grinders had been donated by a grassroots organization, Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH). However, this organization did not provide a motor to

operate this equipment. Therefore, the ereba-makers in that village only had access to one grinder, and if there was no gasoline available in the area, they could not grind their *yuga*. Furthermore, these women showed concern about how, in Dubugati, besides fishing for consumption, the only other industry was *ereba*-making. However, the uncertainty of yuga production reduces access to a steady income stream. Eduarda continually expresses her fear about her grandchildren's uncertain future,

> *tal como le digo ahora no hay recurso de trabajo si había recurso de trabajo van a trabajar de ahí saca sus necesidades por una parte compra lo que quiere pero tal como le digo si tiene un palo de yuca tiene una necesidad ya pueden ir arrancar esto ya lo saca la necesidad más adelante ya vamos es parte de la cultura y también es parte de las necesidades que tenemos, hasta ayi no puedo mas.*
>
> (just as I said, there aren't any sources of employment. If there were sources of employment, they would go to work and they would cover their needs to buy what they want. But as I tell them, if they have a yuca tree and they have a need, they can go and dig out their yuga later (to make *ereba*). There we go, it is part of the culture and it is also part of the needs that we have, that's it, I can't no more.)

Eduarda's concerns about her grandchildren's uncertain future were disheartening. What struck me was that, despite Dubugati's location in the northern part of the country with access to the Caribbean Sea, inhabitants struggled with food insecurity issues. Fishermen, for example, lacked the necessary equipment and financial support to industrialize their production system. During the *añahani* process, I remember asking the women about the sea turtle we ate the day before. Nelli, said that "*las tortugas son por temporada, no lo pescan todos los dias. Aparte, el govierno viene aca y dice que no podemos pescar mas tortugas porque hay que conservarlo. Y nosotros*

preguntamos ¿y nosotros, que vamos a comer?" (The sea turtles are seasonal; they [the men in the village] do not catch them every day. Besides, [people from] the government have come here and prohibited us from catching more sea turtles as they must be preserved. And we ask, what about us, what are we going to eat?) Nelli's questions repeatedly echoed in my mind, and I agreed with her. People have needs and they must eat.

Questions around food scarcity are issues that must be recognized as the kinds of dependencies that political subjects "endure as a result of the cultural and political processes produced by capitalism and western modernity" (Curiel, 2016, p. 50). Preservation policies, for example, have issued prohibitions without alternative solutions, perpetuating food insecurity in this area. Yes, the Garifuna people in Dubugati should contribute to preserving marine turtles, at the same time, they should be made aware of existing laws that grant exceptions under certain circumstances. The Honduran government, for example, provides "legal exceptions through a permit process intended to support bona fide indigenous or cultural processes that rely on 'traditional' or 'subsistence' exploitation" (Eckert & Eckert, 2019, p. 5). This means that people living in these areas shouldn't be penalized for consuming marine turtles. I provided this information to my participants during a third member check.

Food insecurity was an issue that the people in Dubugati had been dealing with through multiple generations. As Indigenous peoples who relied on traditional forms of subsistence, Garifuna people have depended on *ameinahani* and *añahani* to represent their indigenous ways of transforming "spaces into places (embedded with meaning and sense of belonging)" through which they exert power (Tovar-Restrepo & Irazábal, 2014, p. 42). Thus, the relation between Garifunas and their land is expressed by a specific form of agency through *yuga* harvesting for *ereba*-making. For example, Emma, a 37-year-old woman in Dubugati, explained how she was

introduced into the *ereba*-making tradition. She said "*yo aprendí a hacer casabe cuando tenía nueve años. Mi mama me dijo 'mamita usted tiene que aprender a hacer casabe porque hoy estamos y mañana no estamos'*" (My mother said to me 'my dear, you must learn to make *ereba* because we are here today and tomorrow, we might not be'). Emma's mother understood her social position and accessed knowledge of survival that had been transmitted to her. By initiating Emma in the process of making *ereba*, her mother was exerting a sense of agency to counter issues with poverty and unequal opportunities.

> *Yo me senti bien y hasta ahorita sigo horneando casabe. He mantenido a mis hijos con la venta del casabe y he comprado la ropa de mis hijos. Antes horneaba agachada pero ahora ya hay hornos que puedo usar mientras estoy parada. Cuando mi mama hacia casabe usaba los instrumentos ancestrales como el egi, budari, beisawa, boulu, ruguma, y hibise.*
>
> (I felt good while learning and to this day I continue making ereba. I have supported my children by selling ereba and I have purchased my children's clothes. I used to bend down to grill the *ereba*, but now the grills are shaped in ways that I can stand while grilling. When my mother used to make ereba, she used the ancestral tools like the grinder, grill, small broom, bowl, strainer, and the sifter).

As Indigenous Garifuna, Emma's mother had access to knowledge of well-being and balance that her ancestors had transmitted and that she accessed to mitigate issues with food insecurity. Indigenous knowledge is "a network of knowledges, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time" (Bruchac, 2014, p. 3814). Hence, by accessing this knowledge, Emma's mother contributed to maintaining their well-being. At the same time, Emma learned to apply her sense of agency by

utilizing the *ameinahani* and *añahani* traditions to sustain her family financially. In that manner, this food production helped Emma's ancestors, and now it is helping her to maintain a connection with its deeply inter-relational and land-based nature.

The women in Tibiniriba also demonstrated their sense of agency in confronting precarious socioeconomic conditions. The participants shared how they started making *ereba* from a very early age. These women also learned this process from watching their mothers, grandmothers, and other community members around them. Eloisa, for example, used to go *arabu* with her mother, who taught her everything about *ereba*.

> *Yo desde mi niñez con mi mamá cuando mi mamá iba a trabajar me daba un espacio donde yo tenía que tener mi propio yo siembro de yuca. Ella tenía siempre la parcela más grande y a mí me daba mi parcelita pequeña. Ella me consiguió mi rallador me consiguió mi comal me consiguió mi boulu para trabajar porque nosotros trabajabamos con el rallador de madera y con el baul boulu. Pues entonces yo desde mi niñez aprendí a hacer casabe, desde temprana edad. No me avergüenzo de los 14 años fracase con mi esposo [got pregnant] y desde entonces todavía estoy con el. Mi mamá siempre me decía 'de mis hijas la que más me gusta cómo hace casabe es Eloisa,' ella siempre decía eso (smiling as if enjoying this recently extracted memory). Ella me daba el como se dice?El honor!*
>
> (Since childhood, when my mother went to work, she would give me a space where I had my yuga garden. She had the biggest plant, and I had the smallest one. She gifted me a wooden grinder and a budari to work with because we used to grind yuga on the wooden grinder back then. Therefore, I learned to make *ereba* from a very early age. I am not embarrassed to say that I got pregnant when I was 14, and since then, I have been with

the same man. My mother always said, 'out of all my daughters, the one who makes the best *ereba* is Eloisa,' she always used to say that. She gave me that, how do you say it? The honor!)

Eloisa understood her capacity as an excellent *ereba*-maker. Also, she connected her cultural and physical survival to her mother's kin sense of agency. Eloisa's mother not only transmitted traditional knowledge to her but also the ability to sustain and manage natural resources. Her ancestral tools, for example, represented ancestral knowledge and self-determination. These tools were created by Garifuna, who understood their ecology. They relied "upon local resources and careful observations of the interactions between living beings and natural processes within an ecosystem (any ecosystem) to ensure human survival" (Bruchac, 2014, p. 3815). This survival necessitated a response to modernity and keeping up with financial challenges.

Not everyone welcomed modernity among these women. Francisca, in Tibiniriba, understood her social location as a Garifuna with some nostalgia about times when making *ereba* looked different than today. She said:

Yo trabajo haciendo casabe desde que tenia 12 años. Desde ese entonces, yo veo que ese trabajo es mejor en unidad. Yo trabajaba con mi hermana, mi tia y las amistades que vivian cerca de mi casa. Mire, en ese tiempo cuando alguien se daba cuenta que alguna mujer tenía yuca para hacer casabe, cada quien llegaba con su cuchillo a esa casa para ayudar. Aparte de eso, tambien nos poniamos a cantar porque con música se hacía el trabajo mas rápido.

(I work making *ereba* since I was twelve. Since then, I see this work is best as a unit. I used to work with my sister, my aunt and friends who used to live near my house. Look, during that time whenever anyone found out that a woman had yuga to make *ereba*, each

one would arrive with their knife to that house to help. Besides that, we also used to sing because with music we worked faster).

I realized that, although earlier during our pláticas, Eva described the collective experience of the Garifuna people through the language of poverty, Francisca was focused on community-making experiences as strengths. Her memories about collective consciousness included how *añahani* represented a culturally affirming space shown through collective work. Thus, Francisca made visible how coming together to help peel the yuga countered these women's assumed powerlessness. Moreover, She pointed out that singing while working made this arduous work feel effortless, which dismissed assumptions about them being voiceless.

However, during the añahani process for this investigation, the women shared that they no longer sing while working. Gloria, a 45-year-old woman in Tibiniriba, shared that, "*ahora usamos el molino y el jack, ya la gente no tiene que rallar y esprimir a mano. Antes cantaban durante ese proceso porque tomaba mucho tiempo. Ahora todo es mas rápido.*" (we now use the grinder [mechanical, some require electricity or gasoline] and we also use the jack [presser to strain the yuga paste]. They used to sing before because the process was lengthy. Now everything is faster.) Gloria's revelation in Tibiniriba made me think even more about what Francisca shared regarding a nostalgic past when *ereba*-makers relied on each other rather than machines. This change has increased their productivity because they can produce *ereba* in one day rather than the prior two-day process.

Despite this knowledge, the Garifuna are ostracized from mainstream production systems in Honduras. As the participants shared during pláticas, this reality has created a marginalized existence for them, specifically around the lack of representation in that country. During one of our members check, Emma shared that, "*yo tengo que viajar a otros pueblos para poder vender*

mi casabe. El problema es que el bus me cobra pasaje a mi y también tengo que pagar por la carga. Es demasiado caro pero lo tengo que hacer." (I must travel to other villages to sell my *ereba*. The problem is that I must pay my fare and for the load of *ereba*. It is too expensive, but I must do it). Unfortunately, without a methodical market for their product, *ereba*-makers such as Emma must spend part of the revenue on transportation, reducing their social mobility opportunities.

In this section, I described how women who make *ereba* in Honduras endure socioeconomic challenges engendered through colonialism and neoliberal logics. As they were systemically marginalized, these women used their ancestral skills to confront food insecurity, unemployment, and lack of access to basic infrastructure. In the next section, I will delve into how these systemic exclusions impact current and future generations of Garifuna.

Systemic Disruptions to the Intergenerational Transmission of Ancestral Knowledge

The Honduran state's exclusions of Garifuna people's systems of production generated socioeconomic decline in their communities. In Tibiniriba, for example, the women no longer planted yuga because the Ladinos were displacing them from their land. Such displacements had resulted from notions that "mestizo colonos (settlers) [also known as the Ladinos, were] more apt to use the land productively and thus legitimizes their continued presence and spatial dominance over black" (Loperena, 2017, p. 802). Privileging the mestizo in this manner resulted in Garifuna women relying on the Ladinos for this product**.** Issues of unemployment and food insecurity were forcing younger generations of Garifuna to migrate to other cities in Honduras and to the United States.

The participants in this study shared their experiences with land displacement as a direct result of "underutilization" imaginaries because corporation owners or just Ladino invaders

believed that these participants' lands were abandoned. Some of the women shared how there were times when they did not plant anything on their plots because they wanted to let the soil "rest" before planting the next crop. Some others shared that Ladinos invaded these women's territories making them feel helpless and incapable of doing anything about it.

> Indeed, the notion of "idle" or "underutilized" land has served as a central justification for the usurpation of lands in areas populated by indigenous and black peoples and which have been folded into the agrarian reform policies adopted by the state, beginning with the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962. Because indigenous and black peoples' lands were often classified as underutilized, they were subject to expropriation for agricultural development. (Loperena, 2017, p. 802)

Through storytelling, while making *ereba*, Eva, in Tibiniriba, expressed that the ereba-makers had received a donation of aproximatelly 20 acres of land to plant their *yuga*. She said that the ereba-makers have a document certifying ownership of the land. However, a group of Ladinos came from a different province in Honduras and forced these women out of their land. Eva added that in the past, every *ereb*a-maker had their land to plant their yuga,

> *y eso era lo que nosotros antes así hacíamos cada quien tenía su parcela ajá de mala suerte entraron los ganaderos a la comunidad y uno de pobre no podía comprar un alambre para alambrar su terreno y entonces el ganado del fulano se metía y empezaban a comerse el producto de la gente empezaron a más bien a vender sus parcelitas de tierra para los mismos ganaderos porque por eso será que lo hicieron y se quedó que nos quedamos sin siembra si acabamos sin Tierra.*
>
> (and that's what we used to do, we each had our plot of land, yes, then because of our bad luck the cow-breeders started invading our lands and, as we are poor and could not afford

to purchase barb wire to protect our property, the cows would roam around and would eat everyone's crop. We had no choice but to start selling our land to the cow-breeders, which may had been their intention when they let the cows free to roam around our crop. And what happened was that we ended up without crop and without land).

Thus, the loss of land in Tibiniriba caused every *ereba*-maker to purchase their yuga from the Ladinos, who are now the landowners. These Ladinos do not pay for the land; they just take it as their own. I witnessed how every *ereba*-maker I visited had bought their yuga from the Ladinos. Often, these yuga merchants took advantage of *ereba*-makers through price-gauging practices, without caring for these women's socioeconomic condition. Eloisa, for example, stated that

> *Muchos son unos ladrones, a veces nos venden el saco de yuca por un precio y despues por otro precio mas alto. Tambien a veces nos dicen que son cien libras pero no sale la misma cantidad de casabe (ereba). Nosotros sabemos que nos estan mintiendo, nos estan robando pero no Podemos decir nada porque necesitamos la yuca para poder hacer casabe.*
>
> (Many of them are thieves, sometimes they give us one price and the next time they charge a higher price for a sack of yuga. Also, sometimes they tell us that the sack contains 100 pounds of yuga, but we don't get the same amount of *ereba* from that sack of yuga. We know they are stealing from us, but we can't say anything because we need the yuga to be able to make our *ereba*).

Through these experiences, these women understood that they were being taken advantage of; however, their fear of losing the raw material from which they made a living frightened them. Unfortunately, even though Tibiniriba is increasingly becoming demographically mixed, Eva and Griselda pointed out a cultural disconnect between Garifuna

and Ladinos**.** Land displacements perpetrated by the Ladinos in Tibiniriba contributed to excluding Garifuna *ereba*-makers from the production system. Francisca also stated while making *ereba* that she did not want to vote anymore, not only because the government doesn't help but also because of what the Ladinos do when they come to sell the yuca. I asked her if people from the government sold yuga "*No, los del govierno no venden yuga pero son la misma gente*" (No, those in the government don't sell yuga but they are the same people).

Through telling their stories, the women looked nostalgic. They lamented not being able to engage in *ameinahani* (*yuga* harvesting). As we continued making ereba, Eva said,

> *tambien sueño con conseguir una tierra para poder sembrar nuestra propia yuca para no estar comprando, no estar dependiendo de los que lo quieren poner hoy barato mañana lo tienen caro. Pero para eso necesitamos ayuda de las organizaciones negras, nosotros somos negros y nosotros necesitamos su apoyo.*
>
> (I also dream with finding land to be able to plant our own yuga and not have to purchase, not depending on those who want to put it (sell it) cheap today and expensive the next day. But for that, we need help from the Black organizations, we are black and we need their help).

Hearing Eva's dream about "finding" land is disheartening because the Garifuna people in Tibiniriba had their land before the Ladinos' invasions. "In the summer of 2004 the Honduran legislature passed a property law intended to regularize and modernize property ownership" (Anderson, 2007, p. 384). Unfortunately, the Honduran government does not comply with the "ratified international legal conventions on the territorial rights of indigenous and tribal peoples"; instead, "the state has aggressively pursued development projects that directly violate these rights" (Loperena, 2017, p. 802). As a result, many community members are expropriated from

their land, even when they possess legal documentation (Loperena, 2017). What makes it even worse for these women is that many grassroots organizations, put in place to advocate against abuses of this nature, are not paying attention to the disenfranchisement of these *ereba* producers. For that reason, Eva is pleading for assistance from organizations that have committed to provide such relief.

These ongoing displacements, combined with a lack of financial support, were noticeable in the village of Tibiniriba. Although land displacement was not a known issue among the *ereba*-makers in Dubugati, they were not exempt from social inequities. During *ereba*-making, Oneida shared that 30 *ereba*-makers were part of a collective in this village. They all had their plots of land and were not experiencing land displacement. However, these women were in dire need of financial support to improve the quality of their crops. They could only harvest once every quarter, and their yuga gardens flooded during heavy rains. Hence, they need to purchase yuga from Ladinos from time to time.

Despite them not experiencing land displacement issues, the participants in Dubugati did not have access to funding for properly maintaining their crop. The women needed fertilizer and assistance with market development. I asked the women if they had heard of FUNDER (Foundation for Rural Business Development). I explained how this development agency had assisted the women in Tibiniriba; however, as I suspected, these women shared during my second member check that they had never heard about that organization. It became clear to me that although in Dubugati, the women maintained the ancestral tradition of *ameinahani*—planting and harvesting yuga—they were excluded from the opportunity of accessing a more sustainable form of production.

As a result of the many different forms of exclusion from the production system by the Ladinos, generations of *ereba*-makers have designed their way of confronting precarious economic conditions. By understanding their social position in their localities, they expanded on how food insecurity, unemployment, and the lack of access to social services were continually present in their villages and that *ereba*-making was their primary source of sustenance. During pláticas, I asked them how *ereba* helped confront their economic condition. Rosy said:

> *si vamos a estar en esa pregunta hablando de la vida de los Garinagu hay muchas que a veces que nunca se podía recordar pero como es vida de nosotros eso no se olvida se queda como experiencia me acuerdo la vez y mi mamá y mi papá fueron a planes a comprar maíz en la mañana temprano, iban en la mañana regresaban como a las 9 de a 10 para cocinar el maíz. Despues de preparar todo, comíamos a las dos*
>
> (If we are going to be on this question talking about the life of Garinagu [Garifuna in plural] there is a lot that sometimes we can never forget but since it is our live we can never forget about it, it stays as an experience. I remember the time my mother and my father went to Planes to purchase corn early in the morning. They left early in the morning and returned at around 9 or 10 in the morning to cook the corn. After cooking the corn, we would eat at about 2 pm those days).

Rosy was referring to a painful memory of dealing with food scarcity. The town she mentioned, Planes, is a majority Ladino town located approximately 50 miles away, and because of the dirt roads, it could take about two hours to get there by car from Dubugati. However, Rosy remembers her parents had to walk half the way there and catch a car in the nearest town to buy food. Although she refers to a time when her parents had to travel out from the village for food, the only difference between her parent's experience and hers is that the Ladinos now drive once

or twice a week to these small Garifuna villages to sell their produce. Rosy's experience connects with Eduarda's experience with her grandchildren regarding the importance of planting their yuga and learning how to make *ereba*. That is what they should do, or they will not survive. I thought about this connection as I noticed Educarda and Rosy's expressions and demeanor filled with frustration and hopelessness.

Despite their frustrations, these women continued to rely on *ereba*-making as a way of countering social inequities. According to the women in Dubugati, they make an average of one hundred *erebas* per week. When this product is commissioned from them, they immediately receive their payment. However, the orders are infrequent, which means that sometimes it takes them longer to sell their product. Emma shared that when she does not sell in the village, she travels to other villages, and transporting the *ereba* from one village to another is costly. Unfortunately, if she does not extend herself that way, she does not sell her product.

Overall, it became clear that these women have relied on this ancestral form of production to navigate a society that has conditioned them to endure generational economic precarity. Oneida, a 55-year-old woman who hadn't been saying much, asked to share her experience. We all listened attentively about how uncomfortable she had been in a village without jobs other than making *ereba*. She shared during pláticas that at some point, she contemplated migrating to a city in Honduras,

> *si la verdad es que a raíz de todo como mis hijos están pequeñas pensaba ir a la ciudad a buscar una a buscar trabajo y dejarlo a mi mamá pero al mismo tiempo si hay siento que no es no es no no es igual dejar a mis hijos a mi mamá y al ir a buscar trabajo entonces senté con ellos y hacer mi trabajo en casa. hay veces que hago hasta 100 casabe ahorita sólo. a porque antes hacía 500 libras de yuca. ahorita de 200 para abajo porque perdí la*

> *fuerza perdi la fuerza ya no es como antes. Pero ahora mis hijos me mandan algo de dinero.*
>
> (the truth is that based on everything with my kids [she was unemployed when she had her children] they were very little and I had thought about migrating to the city to look for a job and to leave the children with my mother. But at the same time I felt that was not the same, to leave my children with my mother to go look for a job. Therefore, I sat down with them and to do my job at home [making *ereba*]. Sometimes I make one hundred every other day because I used to grind up to 500 pounds of yuga. But now I only grind about 200 pounds because I have lost my strength, it is not the same anymore. But my children send me some money.)

Oneida's experience is loaded with the realities of how being an ancestral knowledge holder has helped her to care for her family financially. Possessing these skills also kept her from migrating elsewhere and separating from her children. Her hard work and dedication helped to provide for her children education until their adulthood. However, she did not transmit this ancestral knowledge to her children. Instead, she contributed with her work from *ereba*-making for them to seek employment elsewhere. Now her children send money to help support her. She shared how her level of productivity has declined because she does not feel strong enough to produce the same amount as before. When I asked Oneida why she did not transmit this knowledge to her children, she said "*no hay mercado, a veces no vendo y me quedo con el casabe por mucho tiempo. Nececitamos un mercado.*" (there is no [*ereba*] market, sometimes I keep the *ereba* for long. We need a market [for their product]). Issues with unemployment and food scarcity forced people to migrate from the villages to the city and out of the country. Even Oneida, who considers herself "la maestra del casabe" (the *ereba* teacher) feels the uncertainty and has not

transmitted that teaching to her children. Instead, she has raised her children to find a "better future" somewhere else.

In the like manner, the lack of social support in Dubugati and Tibiniriba was shown through the absence of sources of employment, which exacerbated these women's anxiety and affected their health. During pláticas, the participants shared that they all fried the meat more often than they would like because then they don't have to pay someone else to keep it refrigerated. Well, Rosy, Fermina, and Edwarda were complaining about different ailments. Fermina, for example, shared that,

> *desde la edad de 14 años yo ya horneaba casabe pero tuve el problema para no seguir más porque me daba dolor de cabeza entonces cuando amanecía yo tenia los ojos inchados y rojo en la vista, entonces deje de hornear casabe ese casabe no he lideado mucho pero me ha dado buena respuesta, tal como dijo Rosy crié a mis hijos, fueron a estudiar todavía ahorita veo la manera como pagar a mis gentes para que me haga mi casabe pero aun todavia lo sigo practicando gracias a nuestros ancestros que eso nunca lo vamos a olvidar*
>
> (I have been making ereba since I was 14 years old. I had the issue of not being able to continue because I would get headaches and then [after making *ereba*] the next day my eyes were red, then I stopped grilling. I have not dealt with grilling the *ereba* much but I have had great response, just as Rosy said, I raised my children and they when to school [outside of Dugubati] I still see the way of paying my people for them to grill my *ereba* [because of her issues with the fumes] but I am still practicing [peeling, grinding and sifting] thanks to our ancestors that we will never forget.)

For this reason, Fermina did not come close to the grill the day we made *ereba*; however, she did peel yuga, strain, and sift the *sibiba* (dry yuga paste). The other women complained about the inconvenience of traveling 20 to 25 miles to the nearest healthcare facility.

These women's health was important to them, and they were trying their best to stay healthy for themselves and their families. The issue was that they were not receiving proper attention from local government and grassroots organizations. For this reason, I was surprised during *ereba*-making as I noticed that the women were highly intrigued about life in the United States. Nelli in Dubugati, for example, expressed that she wanted the *ereba*-maker's business to flourish. She mentioned that a man heading an organization in their village had promised to help them. However, they had been waiting to hear from him for a long time. Frustrated about the lack of attention to the needs of *ereba*-makers, she expressed,

> *El mercado hay que buscar un mercado en los estados. Hay que buscar esos mercados. Un hombre nos dijo que nos iba a buscar un mercado pero no lo hemos encontrado. Tenemos que decirle a Baiden (US president) [all the women laughed out loudly]*
> (The market, we have to find a market in the states [The United States]. We must look for those markets. A man told us he would look for a market but we have not heard from him. We have to tell Biden [US President]).

Also, Eva in Tibiniriba had similar hopes as Nelli, "*la cantidad de casabe que se hace aquí, es bastante, no digamos ahora que vamos a contar con usted que va a hablar con ONECA y que tenemos un grupo y que quieren vender casabe para Estados Unidos.*" (the amount of *ereba* we make here, is a lot, considering that now we will count on you [meaning me, Nodia] who will talk to ONECA and that we have a group who wants to sell *ereba* to the United States). What

Eva said took me by surprise and I told Eva I was not part of that organization. Eva continued and said,

> *--- por la organización la organización fraternal negra de Honduras en Estados Unidos pero usted va a ser enlace de nosotros para que vayamos a ONECA o hablemos con ONECA podemos hacer notas de aquí mandar porque he puesto que son organizaciones OK de la fraternidad negra y nosotros somos negros y nosotros necesitamos de ella OK (*I told Eva I was not a member of ONECA). (Eva—because of the organization fraternal black of Honduras in the United States, but you [me, Nodia] will serve as our link so that we can go to ONECA and talk to them to be able to do more. We can make notes from here and will send because they are organizations OK of the fraternity was of ours, we are Black, and we need of her [the president of ONECA].)

These two women, Nelli and Eva were nurturing hopes based on ideas that aid will come from outside Honduras. They hoped that people in the United States were the only ones who could help them move forward with their enterprises. The organization Eva referred to, for example, operates from the United States. I committed to contacting the president of ONECA and advocating to help improve their *galpón casabero*. Also, Nelli's appeal to President Biden for help showed distrust in the local government in resolving their immediate needs.

What I described above regarding the challenges these women were experiencing, helped contextualize how they have relied on their skills learned from their ancestors. They have resorted to those skills when confronting the lack of employment and governmental assistance in their villages. They also shared that not having a market for their product in their villages forced them to pay for transportation to sell them elsewhere, which reduced their revenues. All of these resulted in a conflicting dilemma because they wanted to preserve this tradition. However, they

also wanted a better future for their children. The issue was that a better future was not in their villages.

During our pláticas and *ereba*-making process, these women brought up how younger generations of Garifuna were disconnected from ancestral values. I asked participants whether they knew what younger generation of Garifuna thought about *ereba*-making. Griselda responded by saying, "*no no lo entienden sabes por qué porque ya solo tienen que llamar y ya la clave ya vino*" (no, they don't understand it, you know why? Because they just call [call a family member in the United States or one of the industrial cities in the country] and they get the passcode to claim their remittances). Gloria, a 45-year-old Black-identified who made *ereba* and who had actively participated in the *ereba*-making process, shared during pláticas:

> *un error grandísimo de lo de los parientes que se van para Estados Unidos porque vuelven inútiles que no sirven ni para ellos mismos uno que aquí pasa trabajando se me arruina un teléfono pasa días meses para conseguir un teléfono y los que solo piden andan en el último modelo y el que pasa (makes hands movements signaling how arduous she works) no puedo no puedo eso lo que sí muchos parientes lo hacen para cubrir el afecto que no le dan pero solo los echan a perder porque el ser humano es de pequeño y que enseñarle a ganarse las cosas para que valoren.*
>
> (A huge mistake what the family members that migrate to the United States because they turn [their offspring's] useless who are not able to fend for themselves. One must work hard. If my phone breaks, I have to go days and even months to get a new one, whereas those who just beg [for one] gets the last model. But the one who is [makes hands movements signaling how arduous she works] I can't, I can't. What's happening is that many family members do that to compensate for lost affection. But they don't understand

that they are spoiling them [younger generations of Garifuna] because human beings must be taught from early on to earn things so that they value them.)

Based on Griselda's and Gloria's observations, parents who have migrated to the United States or other countries were not instilling specific values in the younger generations of Garifuna. These two women valued the work ethic learned through *ereba*-making. Griselda even shared that she has invited some younger women to come to her house to learn how to make *ereba*. They have not accepted Griselda's invitation because the young ladies "do not want to burn their hands" grilling *ereba*. Neither of these participants, in Tibiniriba and Dubugati, shared to have ever burned their hands while making *ereba*.

During *ereba*-making, I continued asking the other participants to share their thoughts about younger generation's engagement with this ancestral knowledge. Eva said this about the youth in Tibiniriba "*disculpen yo miro sinceramente el estilo de nuestras jóvenes de hoy ella ella ya no son unas jóvenes que se arriesgan jóvenes a que se tira nosotros en aquel entonces ...*" (excuse me, I see honestly the style of our younger generation (of Garifuna women) they are no longer the kind of young women that take risk, they don't dare. We, back then …). I asked Eva what she meant by "ya no se tiran" … "*explícame un poquito eso que se tira.*" Eva continued, saying,

> *como se explica eso, de que la persona decide 'yo me voy a ir para donde ellas para aprender para que me enseñe mi tía locha,' ya no existe eso. En aquel tiempo si uno no quería con su mamá porque no había confianza se iban donde la abuela se iban donde la vecina para aprender.Ahora ya no está esto nuestras hijas están un poquito ya más cómodas y tranquilas.*

(how do I explain, the person decides ‘I will go seek those who will teach me to learn with my aunt Locha,’ that does not happen anymore. Back then, if we did not want to learn with our mothers because we did not feel comfortable, we would go to our grandmother’s or the neighbor to learn, that is no longer what is happening. Our daughters are a little bit more comfortable and relaxed.)

There was so much to unpack from Eva’s statement regarding younger generations of Garifuna’s view of *ereba*-making. Eva’s point was that, on the one hand, through practicing this tradition she had learned to take risks, recognize inner strength, see other Garifuna women as her support system, and to go and get what was needed. On the other hand, Eva understood there was a need for continuity of the teaching elements embedded in this indigenous knowledge. Her dream was to activate “*el galpón casavero*” and in that way entice the youth to come and learn from them. Eva added,

> *—es lo que tenemos que hacer con las muchachas de la Colonia (colonia Margarita) con las muchachas de la colonia ya habían empezado aquí la nieta de Viá y ahí iva a hornear a la fábrica, la hija de Marta (Grieldas yells out “Yensi”) sí, ya hacia casabe, ya iba a hornear. La hija de Elvira, sí ahí ahí en la fabrica. Por eso yo estaba diciendo que ya cuando nuestra fábrica esté funcionando correctamente y sólo van a empezar a hacer el casbe en este budari. La otra en el otro y la otra en el otro y van a estar seguidoras. Ellas van a hacer la parte más suave y ella van a ir aprendiendo hasta que le demos corrido al trabajo. Porque nosotros estamos viendo que la que hace el casabe solo ella lo hace, y en la fábrica unos hacen bolsas, otros hacen el ruedo y todo. En cambio con el casabe vamos a hacerlo lo mismo, Gris va a girar un casabe Gloria a pesar de que le da*

> *alergia le va a palmotear y le va a dar vuelta y continuamos que vamos a tener varios budaris para que trabajen varia gente y van a tener su plata.*
>
> (That's what we need to do with the young women from Colonia Margarita [the side of town where el *galpón casabero* was built]. They had already shown interest and had started learning. Viá's grandaughter had started grilling [*ereba*] at the factory, Marta's daughter [Griselda yells out 'Yensi' Yes, she was making *ereba*, she used to come and grill *ereba*. Elvira's daughter, yes, right there in our factory. That is why I was saying that when our factory [*galpón casabero*] starts operating correctly, they are going to start making *ereba* in the *budari.* The other women in another [*budari*], and the other one in another and they will be following. They will do the easiest part of the work as they learn until we get all the work done. Because we are seeing that there is only one [person] in charge of the grilling, whereas in our factory, one will be in charge of packaging, someone else will cut the edges, and so on. With the *ereba*, we will do the same thing, Gris will turn over the *ereba*, Gloria, although she has allergies, will ensure the *ereba* has its round shape and we will continue with having several budaries so that many could work at the same time and they will have their own money.)

Eva dreamed of reactivating the *galpón casabero* to include younger generations in becoming part of this process. What she shared included not only a vision to benefit herself. Eva was invoking the very values of community-making she had learned from her ancestors. She wanted to engage the youth in a communal form of productivity that she had seen before but was no longer part of the ways her society operated at this moment. Eva was hopeful because she had seen how a few of these youth had started to engage during the time the *galpón* was operating. Unfortunately, this was interrupted because of the issues with lack of access to electricity. In the

end, although the intention was there to include the youth in maintaining this ancestral form of production, there were neoliberal projects obstructing a generative transmission of indigenous ways of knowing.

Consequently, they were not teaching their children about *ereba*-making. Instead, they were helping their children in adapting to modernity. Additionally, issues of unemployment and food insecurity were forcing younger generations of Garifuna to migrate to other cities in Honduras and to the United States. The sum of all these issues represented interruption in the transmission of ancestral knowledge, which was eroding *ereba*-making and its teaching elements.

Chapter Summary

I began this chapter by providing an overview of the purpose of the study. Next, I introduced an overview of the meaning of *añahani* and how I utilized it as a metaphor to my data analysis process. Finally, I presented the three overarching themes of the study:

- *Ereba*-making as symbols of Garifuna identity and cultural affirmation.
- Garifuna women confront precarious socioeconomic conditions.
- Systemic disruptions to the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge.

Ancestral Knowledge System (AKS) as my conceptual framework for this study, in addition to decolonial theory, Black feminist thought, Black diaspora feminism, and my unique positionality, influenced the understanding of the data. As a Garifuna-identified woman from Honduras, I know firsthand that Garifuna women have valued this ancestral tradition of *ereba*-making. For this reason, I was explicitly careful to engage in an analysis that represented these women in their most accurate form.

I delved into all three themes for this study and offered insight towards answering the research questions and sharing recommendations for future research in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

Conclusions

The women in the Garifuna community have been making *ereba* since life on the Island of Saint Vincent. After being forcibly expelled from their land to Honduras by the British colonizers in the 18th century, this community was forced to learn a new language, adapt to a new environment, navigate a colonial system, and grapple with complex layers of identity formation. Through their struggles confronting marginalization and projects of identity erasure in the Central American region, they have maintained their intergenerational ancestral traditions, including making *ereba*. To that point, community cultural commemorations have served Garifuna women to process memories of knowledge passed down to them. Additionally, the participants in this study see *añahani* (*ereba*-making) as one of the few culturally affirming spaces for them in Honduras.

As an insider Garifuna woman, I remember how the fundamental characteristic of *añahani* was to serve as a space for learning Garifuna's ancestral values of community-making, language preservation, and inter-collaboration. As a Garifuna researcher, I realized those teaching elements are no longer part of this practice.

Through this investigation, I sought to answer these two primary research questions:

1. Why and how do Honduran Garifuna women maintain their ancestral traditions?
2. How does the ancestral tradition of *añahani* (*ereba*-making) impact Garifuna women's sense of identity and belonging?

I conducted a critical qualitative study using a conceptual framework based on the Ancestral Knowledge System. In qualitative research, we rely on interpretive data analysis more

than presenting absolute truths. To that point, my interpretation of the data revealed the understandings that answered my research questions.

This study revealed three significant themes: *ereba*-making as a symbol of Garifuna identity and cultural affirmation; *ereba*-makers confront precarious socioeconomic conditions; systemic disruptions to the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge. Below I present how this qualitative inquiry answered my research questions.

Why and How Do Honduran Garifuna Women Maintain Their Ancestral Traditions?

Participants shared how their ancestral traditions served to remember their ancestral heritage collectively. They were proud of thinking of themselves as people with culture. This pride included the understanding that, as *ereba*-makers, their narratives were intellectual and political tools for claiming a sense of identity. In that vein, *añahani* allowed them to channel their ancestral memories and affirm their humanity. As they continually referred to the past with *añahani* as a site of resistance that represented life in Saint Vincent, these women displayed an embodied level of expertise that exemplified their Garifuna legacy. Through a Black feminist lens, I saw *ereba*-making as an encouraging space that permitted them to view themselves and their world as empowered ancestral knowledge holders. Unfortunately, neoliberal intrusions disrupted the intergenerational transmission of this tradition to future generations, threatening and eroding this ancestral knowledge.

These women's stories conveyed how the knowledge about the *añahani* process was passed down to them by relatives who have passed on. Their collective memories included experiencing a support system provided by neighbors and family members. For that reason, these traditional sites represented appropriate locations for articulating their full humanity in ways that were meaningful to them. They saw *ereba*-making sites as spaces that allowed them to define

themselves. As traditional sites of knowledge production, participants loudly expressed how *añahani* had been part of the Garifuna people's lives through many generations. They also made it clear that this ancestral tradition symbolized their culture in a state that denied them dignified representation through the different systems of power.

Moreover, the participants shared that making *ereba* affirmed them culturally because only Garifuna women knew how to make this product in Honduras. This study revealed that there is a cultural disconnect between Ladinos and Garifuna. Such cultural disconnect has resulted from sociohistorical exclusions of the Garifuna people in the Central American region. With the invisibility of their experiences, the Ladinos tend to identify Garifuna by a garment or their low socioeconomic condition and neither by their full humanity nor by what they contributed to their society. For that reason, the *ereba*-making site served as a space in which they were affirmed and celebrated. These affirmations showed in many forms, from valuing their Garifuna language to embracing their indigenous knowledge. Whereas their Garifuna language is a marker for Ladinos to identify Garifuna women's social locations, their Garifuna language was a celebration of their Garifuna culture. Such celebration encompassed naming every *ereba*-making tool in the Garifuna language. Also, everyone involved in making this product started at a young age; they considered it their occupation. With so many years of experience, they had acquired a level of expertise that seemed difficult for Ladinas to achieve. Therefore, this space represented a space of support for these participants.

The source of support generated through the *añahani* collective has maintained these women focused on their capabilities. Although singing, telling stories, and dreaming about a better future while working together were no longer part of their practice, they shared how that contributed to creating community. Some participants even shared that engaging in that manner

while making *ereba* made the work feel less arduous. They added that working as a collective (when possible) forced them to focus on countering perceived voicelessness and invisibility from those outside the Garifuna community. Thus, their final product, the *ereba,* made Garifuna's ancestral wisdom visible.

Unfortunately, this study also revealed that these women reminisced about *ereba*-making as a community-making and learning space. However, they were no longer transmitting ancestral knowledge to newer generations of Garifuna because the women were no longer teaching. One reason was that these women were no longer making this product together. Many of them were no longer interested in the inter-collaborative aspect of this process. What surfaced through the data was that neoliberal encroachment had corroded this process. For example, some women offered their services of peeling yuga and sifting the *sibiba* for a fee. Others thought working as a collective was a waste of time and money. Another reason was that some women preferred the mechanization of some of the tools instead of the traditional ones. The inter-collaboration nature of making *ereba* was not there anymore because now, each woman worked independently. Making *ereba* together was no longer necessary, and these women maintained some aspects of the *añahani* tradition while others were lost.

Consequently, the past they constantly dreamed about, which included a vision of egalitarian possibilities, was no longer a reality. Colonialism in the Honduran state had undervalued and excluded the knowledge production capacity embedded in *ereba*-making. That exclusion obstructed these women's opportunities to be recognized as valued contributions in that society. Being met with rejections of their knowledge, devaluation of their efforts, and ostracization exacerbated their invisibility. For that reason, these women lived a dichotomy of believing in the importance of maintaining this ancestral tradition but were not active agents in

the maintenance of its legacy. Much of what was lost was reflected in how some women still practiced *ameinahani*. However, some others had conformed to helplessly purchasing it from the Ladinos. Those who bought their yuga allowed their level of productivity to depend on the availability, accessibility, and quality of yuga from the Ladinos. Ultimately, these women have continually utilized their ancestral traditions to survive while trying to develop markets for which they do not receive the necessary social assistance.

How Does the Ancestral Tradition of *Añahani* (*Ereba*-Making) Impact Garifuna Women's Sense of Identity and Belonging?

Forced with the imperative of adapting to a new condition or dying out, the Garifuna people resorted to practicing survival mechanisms learned from their ancestors. Along with having inherited the ancestral tradition of *añahani*, the participants in this study inherited generational economic precarity. Data from this study analyzed through a Black feminist lens, contributed to identifying that Garifuna women who made *ereba* were experiencing racism in Honduras. This was visible through the different inequities between the Garifuna and Ladinos. These inequities were systemically rooted and normalized in ways that national production systems inherently excluded the participants' products from being included in a broader market for that region. Despite their needs, neither the government nor the local grassroots organizations provided the necessary financial assistance to achieve that level of marketability. Indeed, the exclusion of their systems of production, marginalization of their ways of knowing, under-representation through the systems of power, and the lack of socioeconomic support factored into the disenfranchisement of women who made *ereba* in Honduras.

The participants stated on several occasions how they felt forgotten about by their government. They shared during pláticas and while making *ereba* that those in positions of

power were the Ladinos and they did not understand the Garifuna culture. That cultural distance between these groups was reflected in the different policies that privileged the Ladinos. The women in this study repeatedly referred to a visible unequal access to resources. For example, many Garifuna villages lacked access to electricity, bridges, and accessible roads. This inequality was understood by the participants as being racially discriminated against. This discrimination excluded them from potential economic power. Their exclusion made them vulnerable to land displacement, unemployment, food scarcity, and the erosion of their ancestral knowledges.

In one of the villages, the women shared that they no longer engaged in *ameinahani* (yuga harvesting) as their ancestors did. This was because the Ladinos had displaced them from their land through land invasions. These displacements related to power imbalances that played a significant role in disenfranchising Garifuna women whose livelihood depended in *ereba*-making. Ladinos invaded Garifuna yuga farms without penalizations from the state. Participants in Tibiniriba shared not wanting to confront the Ladinos for fear of retaliation and losing their lives. As a result, land invasion was the reason they no longer went *arabu* and forcibly purchased yuga from the Ladinos.

In the other village, women owned their yuga gardens and worked tirelessly in sustaining their crop. Unfortunately, they also experienced unequal treatment from those in positions of power in the form of a fragile infrastructure and lack of financial assistance to improve the quality of their product. The dirt roads leading to this village, for example, represented a major difficulty traveling to the city to access food and medical attention as needed. The lack of electricity represented a health hazard as they had to figure out how to preserve their food. Some recurred to frying their food as a preservation method, which increased the likelihood of contracting harmful medical conditions. Additionally, the lack of financial assistance to properly

sustain their yuga crop made them vulnerable to natural disasters such as occasional floods. These issues factored into constant poverty in this village. Difficulties of this nature kept *ereba*-makers in this village from competing within the food industries nationally.

Being remotely located from access to modernity excluded the participants from potential economic power. Clearly, there was a lack of sources of employment in the area and their exclusion from national systems of production exacerbated these women's socioeconomic precarity. They shared needing some form of advocacy from local and international Garifuna grassroots organizations. Their plea for support was to receive funds to cover a host of needs ranging from needing to reactivate their *galpón casabero* (the *ereba*-making warehouse in Tibiniriba) to hiring the workforce needed to maintain the production equipment at both sites. They all agreed it was necessary to integrate mechanical tools that helped to speed up the production process. Hence, maintaining this tradition as a cultural resource for sustenance and to making a living, necessitated responding to these women's contemporary challenges. Consequently, by adapting to modern equipment, even if that represents additional expenses, they experience less strenuous labor and the possibility of increasing profits.

Finally, in a not-too-distant past, the participants' mothers had a role of transmitting knowledge to their offspring in the Garifuna community. In that manner, the *ereba* sites served to educate young women about their identity, culture, community values, sense of empowerment and a sense of belonging through making *ereba*. Unfortunately, in present times, systemic obstructions interrupted the participants from engaging in the inter-collaborative nature of *ereba*-making. This obstruction prevented teaching future generations how to heal from racism and the history of slavery to resist assimilation and the erasure of self.

Implications

I designed this study to reveal the nuances inherent to Garifuna women's experiences with the ancestral tradition of *añahani* (*ereba*-making). The Garifuna women who willingly participated in this study and many others who make *ereba* have safeguarded this ancient tradition. The significance of *ereba*-making extends beyond Garifuna women in Honduras. Many Afro-descendants and Afro-Indigenous women produce this food in fifteen other countries worldwide. For example, women in Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Dominica, Belize, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Uganda produce *ereba* engaging ancestral knowledge.

Investigating Garifuna women's experiences revealed sociohistorical and socioeconomic inequities in Honduras. Such inequities factored into these women's uncertainty about their future and that of their children. For these women, their concerns were no longer just not having access to economic opportunities, but it was also the reality of their invisibility through all the different national decision-making processes in their country. This uncertainty was also impacting the intergenerational transmission of Garifuna language, culture, community values, and traditions.

I consider that this issue is related to a desire to disconnect from an ancestral system of production that is undervalued in settings other than the Garifuna community. Younger generations of Garifuna did not want to engage in the production of this food. As a result, without a market and laborers from other family members for their product and the ways systems of power dismiss the wealth of knowledge included in *ereba*-making, their concerns about passing down the ancestral knowledge are curtailed by aspirations of their children leaving to the city, getting out of the hardship of the rural areas. What many of them are more concerned about

is finding ways of helping their children leave the rural areas to get "better" jobs. Unfortunately, the notion of better job results in assimilating to Westernized ways of knowing that, for many Garifuna, ends up acculturating and distancing themselves from seeking a deeper and more nuanced understanding of their inherited indigenous cosmologies.

Indeed, through the adoption of mestizaje as the regional identity by decision-makers in Latin America, specifically in Honduras, governmental actors have maintained "colonial realities" (Harding, 2017, p. 196) as governing policies continue to reflect exclusionary practices of omitting Garifuna socio-historical representation. Such oversight raises questions and implications for various stakeholders. In the following section, I elaborate on these implications and associated recommendations.

Recommendations

I will use information from this study to mobilize Grassroots organizations such as OFRANEH (Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña), an international Garifuna-grassroots organization in New York City, and community-engaged researchers to connect *ereba*-makers with resources. These organizations, whose mission is to improve the Garifuna people's livelihood, can access the findings captured herein and use them to strategize their advocacy efforts. Their strategies should focus primarily on obtaining funds to modernize the *ereba*-maker's tools for a more industrialized form of production. Additionally, mobilization efforts will include developing learning spaces beyond traditional educational settings to help improve these women's economic condition and to prevent the erosion of *ereba*-making as one of Garifuna's cultural heritages.

Grassroots Mobilization

This qualitative study provided insight into how socio-economic systems in Honduras have impacted the livelihood of the 11 participants. Although they have formed an *ereba*-makers organization with 49 other women, they need well-structured financial planning with specific financial goals and a plan to achieve them. To this point, this study exposed the need for organizing and mobilizing at the local level to build a strategic plan of action that addresses current *ereba*-makers' organizational needs at both sites.

A strategic action plan is necessary as it helps to have a vision for an end goal. Such a plan should include a clear ask, a timeline to achieve the goal, and identifying who will support organizational efforts from the ground up. The goal is to create an effective social and political change by directly engaging local and international organizations such as OFRANEH, ODECO, and Casa Yurumein in New York City, respectively, with the *ereba*-makers. Through intentional dialogues with said organizations, the *ereba*-makers can voice their ideas and perspectives, which could lead to mutual understanding and more innovative solutions. This engagement is necessary as it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability in the *ereba*-makers' decision-making processes. As an insider community-engaged researcher, I am committed to liaising between the *ereba*-makers and the local and international grassroots organizations. My commitment is to talk to people and emphasize these women's needs for resources. As a liaison, I plan to create a website as a space through which these women's needs are visible. Also, I will organize community events, and utilize social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, and an Instagram page to connect people who have migrated to the United States. Through these efforts, I hope to generate a network of support that will connect *ereba*-makers with the resources they need.

Intergenerational Learning Centers for Social Justice Education

On a broader level, grassroots organizations in the United States could utilize this study within a framework of critical community place-making. As per Gruenwald (2003b), places shape our identity as much as our interactions shape our places: "As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and possibilities are shaped" (p. 162, as cited in Sommervile, p. 68, Critical Qualitative Reader). Since many Garifuna youth have migrated from Honduras to the United States, these learning centers could serve as vehicles to reconnect them with their Garifuna heritage. Within this frame, the information from this study could be used to create grassroots heritage centers for social justice. In such centers, ancestral tradition holders actively engage Garifuna youth who have migrated from Honduras to learn about the different ancestral values transmitted intergenerationally.

Additionally, through information learned in this space, younger generations from any ethnicity could learn how Garifuna women have maintained the ancestral traditions passed down through generations. This space could be materialized as *El Galpón del Ereba* (Ereba's warehouse). Here, learners would receive instruction about culturally affirming pedagogical material—Heritage Curriculum—in the form of modules, webinars, seminars, lesson plans for co-teaching—students, community members, and grassroots activists—culturally relevant textbooks, afro-futuristic children's books that are accessible enough for everyone in the community.

An Equity-Minded K-12 Curriculum

The experiences of the eleven participants in this study support the assertion that Garifuna's Afro-Indigenous sociohistorical perspectives should be included in general knowledge of Afro-Indigenous history and culture. For example, the women in Tibiniriba

recommended that for *ereba*-making to be valued by the younger Garifuna and future generations, it would require re-activating their *galpón casabero* (*ereba*-making warehouse). Two of the women, one in Tibiniriba and one in Dubugati, said during pláticas that they wanted to partner with schoolteachers for them to bring students and engage in learning about these women's ancestral memories, in learning the different steps of making era and even co-teach about financial literacy and sustainability.

Consequently, through this study, I want to call on grassroots organizations and teachers to engage in efforts to understand the nuances within the experiences of Afro-Indigenous Garifuna people. I urge these stakeholders to pay attention to what Ramsdell (2020) has noted about the importance of the work of scholars who center on a battle of language retention in the face of external forces that portray the 'heritage language' as backward, antimodern, and parochial … [they] should be supported [by] expanding its functions first in the community where it is spoken and then in public institutions and the work world (p. 448).

Importantly, Garifuna women's resistance to the displacement and replacement of the Garifuna language should be underscored. They have instilled the importance of speaking the language at home while engaging in ancestral traditions passed down to them, including *añahani.* This resilience should serve as a guiding principle for educational efforts, which should focus on highlighting the significance of preserving ancestral heritage as Afro-indigenous people's cultural capital, a form of decolonizing education. Moreover, the cultural capital generated through the practice and preservation of ancestral heritages, rather than participating in a culture of power, contributes to a culture of empowerment.

Limitations

Although this study adds to the literature on Garifuna women's experiences through the lens of the Ancestral Knowledge System, it is not without limitations. The current study involved understanding the experiences of Garifuna women in two rural areas in Honduras. Additionally, while this study provides a rich data set, it only represents the experiences of 11 Garifuna women who make *ereba* at two Garifuna villages in Honduras.

It is essential to point out that I am Garifuna, Afro-Indigenous, who migrated and became a naturalized citizen of the United States. I was now conducting research in my community. As I prepared to engage in this process, I had not thought about how my positionality had changed in relation to many people in my community. Although I was an insider, and that helped me develop a trusting relationship with the participants, I was also an outsider, and there is always a concern that participants might think they must say what the researcher wants to hear. Accordingly, to account for various human interpretations and reflections and ensure proper triangulation of data, I engaged in reflexivity to confront my own truth. I followed up and conducted three member-checks separately via phone calls with each participant.

Additionally, this study was conducted in two rural areas in Honduras. However, there are other regions in Central America, such as Guatemala and Belize, where *ereba* is made as well. Hence, my recommendation for future research includes investigating the experiences of Garifuna women with this ancestral tradition in those regions. Investigators should try to understand how *ereba*-making looks similar to or different from that in Honduras and how it does or does not preserve the legacy of the Garifuna people. Also, much research focuses on improving industrialized areas rather than providing social assistance to community members who maintain and transmit ancestral production systems. A recommendation for future research

includes increasing funding for research that seeks to improve and include ancestral production systems. Although there has yet to be systematic information about the number of *ereba*-makers in the country, I learned about approximately sixty additional Garifuna women in both villages who engage in this form of food production.

The purpose of this critical qualitative research was to understand the experiences of Garifuna women in Honduras who have maintained the ancestral tradition of *ameinahani* for *añahani.* This study filled the gap regarding a missing socio-historical reality of Garifuna women from the local curriculum in Honduras. I urge national and international Grassroots organizations and educators to incorporate Garifuna Afro-Indigenous ancestral knowledge for a more equitable cultural and racial representation of the Central American region. By incorporating the experiences of Garifuna women in critical conversations about race, class, and gender, educators will be contributing to social justice in educational spaces.

Final Thoughts

Garifuna women who are ancestral knowledge-holders, are relied upon to facilitate understanding of the connection between culture and identity formation. Hence, this critical qualitative research and analysis was designed to expose and trouble marginalization and exclusionary practices in qualitative inquiry. Throughout my formative years, the only way for me and many of my acquaintances to learn about who we were as a people was through our grandmothers. In fact, my grandmother was the only one who spoke to me in the Garifuna language and she, just as the other grandmothers in our community were the only ones making *ereba*. I thank them for events like *fedu, ereba*-making*,* and the spirit of solidarity that me and those from my generation experienced. I am grateful because without this experience, I would had been utilizing my scholarly skills in maintaining the status quo rather than working on

finding ways of deconstructing hegemonic, patriarchal, capitalist ideologies that have normalized Garifuna women's invisibility. By embracing my Garifuna consciousness, not only have I expanded my own understanding of the places where the study took place, but I have sought to contribute to shifting research paradigms into generative, inspiring, and stimulating practices of thinking that resist notions of dominant forms of knowledge creation.

My investigation was designed in ways that challenged traditional research that has historically dismissed Indigenous researchers' critical reflections and experiences with internalized colonization. I centered *ameinahani* and *añahani* as indigenous ways of knowing that add value and contribute to knowledge creation in and out of the academic setting. I appreciate how Black women, non-Garifuna researchers such as Dr. K. Melchor Hall (2014, 2017) and Dr. Krishauna Hines-Gaither (2015), have also worked to produce scholarship through which they have articulated the ways of knowing of Garifuna women as "sustaining, empowering, and catalytic."

On the other hand, engaging in this study allowed me to discover the messy temporality of my participant's worldviews as I witnessed the ways in which they navigated the historical realities of displacement, exile, and migration. Additionally, I saw what it meant to be socially excluded from the mainstream production system in Central American societies. As I witnessed how this partial integration in the societies where Garifuna people have been compelled to migrate, I saw how it had generated a complex relationship with the diaspora, shown in an evident Garifuna people's social disconnect from non-Garifuna afro descendants in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, as well as a social disconnect from African Americans in the US. Therefore, through this investigation, I have realized that *ameinahani,* as an ancestral way of knowing that has been transmitted intergenerationally, is more than the physical act of digging

out a root vegetable. This ancestral form of production has also served as a space and time to share and collectively embrace each other's unique understanding of what it means to embody a unique Afro-indigenous Garifuna identity and sense of belonging. Henceforth, the emerging themes from this investigation helped carve a small window into these participants' understanding of their localities.

Finally, my parents only spoke to my siblings and me in Spanish. At the same time, our instruction in school was in Spanish. Unfortunately, when my grandmother grew too old and couldn't take my siblings to Garifuna events in the community, it interrupted the opportunity to enhance my siblings' understanding of the nuances of our culture and our identity as Afro-Indigenous Garifuna. This interruption created an intergenerational knowledge gap between my siblings and me about the language and Garifuna ancestral traditions. Therefore, anchoring my study on the understanding of *ameinahani* for a*ñahani* had a lot to do with not wanting to lose my authenticity and what it means to be Garifuna for me. In fact, at some point, I thought that learning to write academically would obstruct my ability to write about *mama (my grandmother)*, *ereba*, *garawon*, *fedu*, *Dugü*, and everything that has sustained my Garifuna identity. This examination has allowed space to engage my choice of theoretical framework and methodological approach that extended the opportunity to embody self and communal accountability.

And just as the root of the *yuga* plant, I consider *ereba* as part of a profound cultural root in the Garifuna community because it symbolizes grassroots collaborative work among women. Through this research study, I retained a critical hold on my insider knowledge and was open to the valuable lessons learned. I worked on following up on my participants' answers when appropriate. This was important because it helped enrich my data analysis. Proper coding with

proper themes helped me to expedite the analysis process. I wanted to ensure that my work accurately represented social justice work. Therefore, in the spirit of collaborative work, I hope this project shows my appreciation to everything the participants shared during our time together.

Drums of My Ancestors!

They are calling for us, Garifuna women, to use our voices to the rhythms of the *garawon* (drums). We are the Gayusas (lead singers)! We are being called to sing, to speak, and to write. Regrettably, after writing the findings chapter, I experienced the same helplessness the *ereba*-makers confront around land displacement, poor infrastructure, and cultural erosion. Like them, I felt powerless and considered their needs impossible to resolve. The sense of powerlessness overtook my vision for the future, creativity, and conflict-resolution skills. I had to sit down and reflect on my role as an engaged researcher who reports findings and strategizes about impactful social and cultural changes in the communities where we conduct research. I had to address these women's needs. I mobilized first in my mind by starting to connect the dots. I gathered information about the different Garifuna grassroots organizations and contacted them. In that manner, I started connecting people on the ground. The goal is to strategize how to connect *ereba*-makers with the resources they need.

I write about the future we want.

Ase.

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APPENDIX A: TRAJECTORY FROM SAINT VINCENT TO HONDURAS

APPENDIX B: DEFINING TERMS

Yuga: a starchy root vegetable or tuber

Egui, Boulu- a grinder and a receptacle are the ones utilized to process the *yuga*

Ruguma- The *ruguma* is the instrument utilized to extract the fluid from the yuca paste. At the same time, it serves to extract high levels of toxicity found in raw yuga.

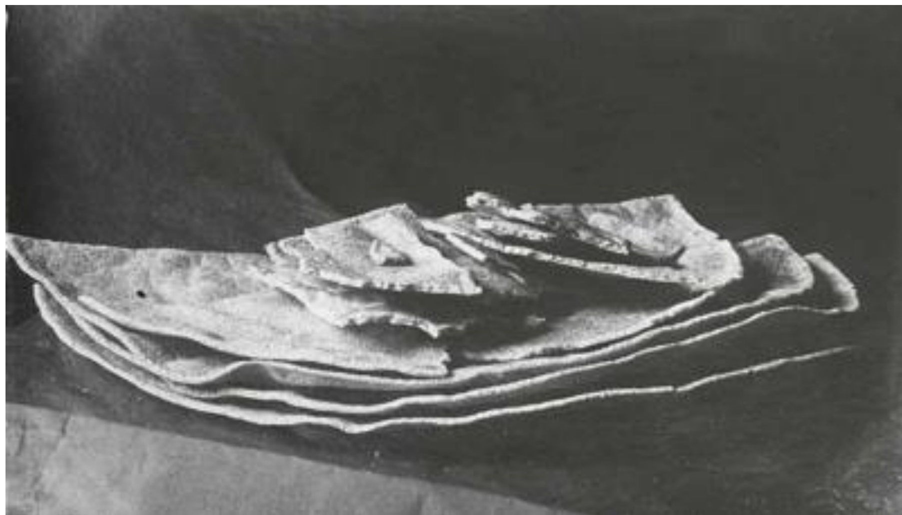
Hibise- This instrument is utilized to sift the dried yuca paste.

Budari - an improvised grill used to grill the *ereba*

Baisawa - This is a small broom used to eliminate non-integrated yuca particles.

Gararu – A wooden instrument used to turn the *ereba* on the grill to ensure is fully cooked on both sides.

Ereba - Finalized product- fully made from dried yuca paste. It is a carbohydrate that is crunchy to the taste.



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APPENDIX C: PLÁTICAS

First *Pláticas* Questions

Let's have a conversation about what it means to be a Garifuna woman

1 When people ask you about your racial or ethnic background, how do you answer?

- What does it mean to you to identify as Garifuna?
- When people don't know what Garifuna is, how do you describe it?
- How do you feel about being Garifuna?
- What are some parts about your Garifuna culture that you love?

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your experience making ereba.

2 Tell me in as many details as you can about your first experience making ereba?

- Probes: age, people around you, space, etc.

3 Tell me about the reason for which you engaged in making ereba? Who taught it? What's most memorable about that time?

Second *Pláticas* Questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your feelings around making ereba.

4 How is making ereba related to you being Garifuna? What makes you feel that way?

5 Is making ereba related to being Honduran?

6 Tell me in as many details as you can how you see that making ereba is or is not part of the identity of Honduras.

7 Please give examples of the emotions you feel through participating in the tradition of making ereba.

- How do you envision that these traditions will continue to be maintained?

8 To conclude, given that I am interested in the experiences of Garifuna women making ereba, is there anything you would like to add that I might not have thought to ask?

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

Are you a Garifuna Woman who makes ereba?

You are invited:

To participate in a two-day qualitative study designed to learn about Garifuna women's understanding of what has been passed down to them from their ancestors

Day 1

- **Process of peeling, grating, and straining the yuga**
- **Then, we will engage in pláticas (conversation) for 45 minutes to an hour**

Day 2

- **We will engage in sifting the dry yuga paste and grilling the ereba. Then we will answer the last four questions, which may take 45 minutes to one hour**

With your permission, the conversation will be recorded, and I will write this conversation word for word. This research is being done as part of my program as a doctoral student at the university of UNC-Greensboro

The Benefit to you of doing this study are:

1. You might learn some new things about yourself.
2. You might enjoy sharing with other Garifuna women how meaningful these traditions are in your life.
3. .You might learn about their understanding on this topic as well.
4. In addition, your participation in this study may help me and others better understand how ancestral traditions are preserved and why.

For more information, please contact:
Nodia C. Mena; ncmena@uncg.edu;
cell - 646-298-4229
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APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

UNIVERSIDAD DE CAROLINA DEL NORTE – GREENSBORO
CONSENTIMIENTO DE PARTICIPANTE HUMANO

Título del proyecto: *Ameinahani*: Solidaridad, arte y tradiciones ancestrales entre mujeres Garífuna

Investigadores principales y asesores: : Nodia Mena; Dr. Leila Villaverde

Nombre del participante:

¿Cuáles son algunas cosas generales que usted debe saber acerca de este estudio?

Le estamos pidiendo que participe en un estudio de investigación. Su participación en el estudio es voluntaria. Puede optar por no unirse o puede retirar su consentimiento para participar en el estudio por cualquier motivo sin penalización.

Los estudios de investigación están diseñados para obtener nuevos conocimientos. Esta nueva información puede ayudar a las personas en el futuro. Es posible que no haya ningún beneficio directo para usted por participar en el estudio de investigación. También puede haber riesgos por participar en estudios de investigación. Si elige no participar en el estudio o abandonar el estudio antes de que finalice, no afectará su relación con el investigador o la Universidad de Carolina del Norte en Greensboro. Los detalles sobre este estudio se discuten en este formulario de consentimiento. Es importante que comprenda esta información para que pueda tomar una decisión informada sobre su participación en este estudio de investigación.

Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio en cualquier momento, debe consultar a los investigadores mencionados en este formulario de consentimiento. Su información de contacto se encuentra a continuación.

¿Sobre qué es el estudio?
Este es un proyecto de investigación. Su participación es voluntaria.
El propósito de este estudio es:
A Contestar las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Por Qué y cómo las mujeres Garífuna hondureñas mantienen sus tradiciones ancestrales?

2. ¿Cómo la práctica ancestral tradicional de ameinahani impacta el sentido de identidad y de pertenencia en las mujeres Garífuna?

B	Usted está invitado a participar en este estudio cualitativo completando una entrevista de 45 minutos a una hora en la que hablaremos sobre la práctica ancestral de elaborar ereba y que es lo que les ayuda a lograr. Con su permiso, su voz será grabada lo cual me ayudará a transcribir la entrevista.

Si se ofrece como voluntario para participar en este estudio, se le invitara a participar en una entrevista individual y le tomaré fotos. Es importante recordar que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas a las preguntas que le hago. Puedo hacer algunas preguntas de aclaración solo para asegurarme de que entiendo su respuesta.

El motivo de seleccionarle como participante es porque usted es una mujer Garífuna mayor de 18 años.
"Debido a que su voz será potencialmente identificable por cualquier persona que escuche la grabación, no se puede garantizar la confidencialidad de las cosas que diga en la grabación, aunque el investigador intentará limitar el acceso a la grabación como se describe a continuación"
Debe saber que puede decidir no participar en este estudio o dejar de hacerlo en cualquier momento después de haberlo comenzado sin ninguna consecuencia negativa.

________ Deseo participar en la investigación descrita anteriormente y he leído este formulario de consentimiento. Elijo permanecer en el anonimato. Utilice este nombre como seudónimo ________________________

________ Deseo participar en la investigación descrita anteriormente y he leído este formulario de consentimiento. Elijo usar mi nombre real para entrevistas y cualquier material publicado.

Si usted tiene preguntas, quiere mas informacion o tiene sugerencias, por favor contacte a Nodia C. Mena at 646-298-4229, ncmena@uncg.edu and Leila Villaverde levillav@uncg.edu

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.
"Toda la información obtenida en este estudio es estrictamente confidencial a menos que la ley exija su divulgación"

Al firmar este documento de consentimiento (utilizada para una renuncia de firma aprobada por el IRB), usted acepta que leyó, o que se le ha leído, y comprende completamente el contenido de este documento y está abiertamente dispuesto a dar su consentimiento para participar en este estudio. Todas sus preguntas sobre este estudio han sido respondidas. Al firmar este documento, acepta que tiene 18 años de edad o más y acepta participar en este estudio que le describí anteriormente. _____.

Signature: ________________________ Date: ________________