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Garífuna Resilience: Navigating Resistance Amidst Tourism, Neoliberalism, and Colonial Legacy in Honduras [1]

Resiliencia Garífuna: navegando la resistencia en medio del turismo, neoliberalismo y legado colonial en Honduras.

Giada Ferrucci [2]

Resumen

En la costa norte de Honduras, el grupo indígena afrodescendiente Garífunas, o Garínagu, lucha por mantener el acceso a sus tierras. La narrativa de desarrollo poscolonial del Estado hondureño criminaliza a los activistas garífunas y los presiona para que vendan sus tierras para que puedan usarse para proyectos turísticos. En Honduras, los mecanismos de un modelo económico neoliberal contribuyen a racializar a los garífunas, pintándolos como no "ciudadanos plenos". Considero los centros turísticos de la costa norte de Honduras como ejemplos de heterotopías, espacios establecidos como las instituciones mismas de una sociedad donde todas las demás facetas de una cultura se reflejan y desafían simultáneamente. Además, estos centros turísticos brindan un ejemplo del complejo exhibicionista de las relaciones raciales en Honduras, ya que estos espacios impiden que los garífunas accedan a sus tierras ancestrales mientras mercantilizan su herencia y cultura con fines de lucro en los destinos turísticos de Honduras. Utilizando el caso de la Comunidad Triunfo de la Cruz, la Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras (OFRANEH) destaca la cuestión del acaparamiento de tierras, afirmando que los garífunas ocupan un espacio liminal en Honduras. La inclusión y exclusión simultánea de los garífunas dentro de los imaginarios estatales de desarrollo nacional contrasta con la capacidad de la OFRANEH para navegar hábilmente en esta coyuntura crítica, particularmente dentro de la industria del turismo.

Palabras clave: Estudios de Medios, Garífunas, Honduras, Memoria, Desplazamiento.

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Abstract

On the north coast of Honduras, the Afro-descendant Indigenous group Garífunas, or Garínagu, struggles to maintain access to their lands. The Honduran state's postcolonial development narrative criminalizes Garífunas activists and pressures them to sell their lands so that they can be used for tourism projects. In Honduras, the mechanisms of a neoliberal economic model contribute to racializing Garífunas, painting them as not "full citizens." I consider the tourist resorts on the north coast of Honduras as examples of heterotopias, spaces established as the very institutions of a society where all other facets of a culture are simultaneously reflected and challenged. Furthermore, these resorts provide an example of the exhibitionary complex of racial relations in Honduras as these spaces prevent Garífunas from accessing their ancestral lands while commodifying their heritage and culture for profit in Honduras' tourist destinations. Using the Triunfo de la Cruz Community case, the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras, OFRANEH) highlights the land-grabbing issue, asserting that Garífunas occupy a liminal space in Honduras. The simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Garífunas within state imaginaries of national development is contrasted by OFRANEH's ability to adeptly navigate this critical juncture, particularly within the tourism industry.

Keywords: Media Studies, Garífunas, Honduras, Memory, Displacement.

Introducción

> "As always, [it is] an invasion of our habitat by the gringo; this time, maybe they [tourism investors] aren't coming armed with rifles, but they are with their devaluation of our ancestral heritage, our culture and our national being"
>
> (ODECO, 1999, translation by Mollett, 2014, p.36)[3].

On May 28, 2023, Martín Morales Martínez, human rights defender and leader in Triunfo de la Cruz, a community located in the Department of Atlántida on the north coast of Honduras, was found dead. After a few days, when Morales Martínez's family had reported his disappearance, his corpse was discovered in the River Gama, near Secundino Torres, a territory collectively owned by the Garífunas people. Garífunas are an Afro-Indigenous group of descendants of escaped enslaved Africans and Carib and

[3] The translation by Sharlene Mollett can be found in her article "A Modern Paradise: Garifuna Land, Labor, and Displacement-in-Place" (2014). The quote is from the Organization for the Development of Ethnic Communities (ODECO, Organización de Desarrollo Etnico Comunitario). ODECO's founders adopt a distinct perspective on Garífunas in development initiatives and land disputes compared to OFRANEH. ODECO prioritizes inclusion and integration into development planning and programs (Brondo, 2006).

Arawakan Indians that have been living on the Honduran mainland since the early 1800s.

The Triunfo de la Cruz community had recently recaptured this territory from land grabbers. The systematic violence against the Garífuna people, with the killing of Morales Martínez as one of the last cases, continues to manifest itself in violence with racist motives. Tourism development projects, supported by Honduras' administrations, are spreading in the coveted lands on the country's north coast. As Sharlene Mollett (2014) argues, "while the municipality and the state ignore, obscure, and erase Garifuna ancestral rights in the name of national development, ladino and gringo residents on the coast employ local Garifuna ancestral connections to the land as a basis for their own claims to Afro-indigenous space" (p.39).

In this article, I begin by analyzing the trajectory of tourism plans in the Honduran legislation, which supports a neoliberal vision of development entangled with a racialized vision of the Garífunas. Researching the Honduran legislation, the displacement of the Garífuna community is a result of state-driven development visions, particularly in agrarian and environmental policies. These visions categorize Garífunas as "inferior," whose only value lies in supporting tourism-related endeavors through their labor and folkloric practices tailored for tourist consumption. The Honduran state's preference for the needs of foreign tourists and private investors calls attention to state legislative reforms that continue to erase Garífunas' status and deny them both currently inhabited and historically accessible land (Brondo, 2006, p.188).

Next, I outline the impacts of the Honduran legislation on Garífuna livelihoods and the broader material practices that tourism development authorizes, specifically forms of violence and dispossession. I articulate my analysis through the lenses offered by the postcolonial political ecology scholarship (Le Billon, 2001; Robbins, 2004) as it underscores the power dynamics connecting development to social aspects (Mollett, 2014). The results indicate that an extended colonial legacy marked by slavery, oppression, exploitation, and the influence of neoliberal economic factors (Bellamy et al., 2023) is molding the legal structure permitting developers to displace the Garífunas from their ancestral lands and build luxurious resorts. As such, this article maps the conflicts surrounding Garífunas dispossession onto measures of difference, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic class. Drawing upon Michel Foucault's (1988) concept of heterotopias, I analyze luxurious resorts on Garífunas lands as "other" spaces that serve as fundamental institutions where all other facets of a culture are simultaneously reflected and challenged.

In this analysis, it is crucial to describe some of the Garífunas' resistance tactics under the banner of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras, OFRANEH) to fight for housing, land, and territorial justice against the Honduran government's violation of collective property rights. Formally established and acknowledged in 1980 as an advocacy group championing the rights of Black workers in Honduras, OFRANEH transitioned its emphasis from labor to concerns regarding land rights and autonomy in the 1990s. Thanks to the support of this

organization, Garífunas are working to defend communal territory, resources, and culture from mega-projects, especially tourism-related ones (Loperena, 2016a).

With a particular focus on the case of Triunfo de la Cruz, I examine and connect this analysis to the lack of judicial remedies for these communities as an emblematic case of dispossession affecting the Garífunas. In particular, I focus on the constitutional challenges faced by this group and the impact of foreign investment and tourism industries on displacing Garífuna individuals from their ancestral lands. In analyzing the complexities defining the Garífunas place in Honduras, I highlight the observation that in Latin America, government allocation of collective property rights has typically favored Indigenous communities' land tenure systems over those of Afro-descendants (Hooker, 2005; Walsh, 2012).

Addressing the diverse spectrum of activist and mobilization endeavors undertaken by the Garífunas as they advocate for land rights and autonomy is equally crucial. By actively monitoring Honduran media outlets such as ConexiHon and Contracorriente, as well as closely following OFRANEH's website and Twitter account, I immerse myself in diaspora studies, drawing inspiration from scholars like Paul Joseph Oro (2021a, 2021b) and Saidiya Hartman (2007). This scholarship allows me to emphasize that the inherent cultural hybridity within Garifuna identity stands as a prized cultural characteristic and political asset (MacNeill, 2020). It serves as a tool to advance their assertions and bring visibility to their struggle, constituting a pivotal argument in my research.

The Garífunas' cultural heritage, integral to the spatial imaginary of tourism development, is strategically manipulated by the Honduran State, serving a dual role. On one hand, they are marginalized in development discourses, often characterized as "backward" and not full citizens (Mollet, 2014)[4]. Conversely, their presence is tolerated, and their culture is incorporated to allure more visitors (Loperena, 2016a). Meanwhile, upon examining the Triunfo de la Cruz case, OFRANEH navigates a critical juncture within Honduras' prevailing neoliberal development model, particularly within its tourism industry. Beyond merely denouncing their challenges with displacement and dispossession in forums such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Garífuna activists emphasize the significance of concurrently recognizing their Black and Indigenous identity. This dual identity is a source of inspiration for similar land struggles across the Latin American region. Through a narrative that challenges perceptions of racial purity and embraces their mixed heritage, the Garífunas position their struggle within the context of ethnic autochthony as an Afro-Indigenous group (Palmer, 2019).

Historical Context and Garífunas' Positionality

[4] Article 346 of the Honduran Constitution mandates the government to safeguard the rights of Indigenous communities and the territories they inhabit.

Stop the Assassination of our Garífuna Leaders!!!

Stop the Genocide against the Garífuna People!!!

Stop the delay of justice and continuation of impunity!!! [5]

The African and Indigenous identity of Garífunas is complex (MacNeill, 2020, p.1541)[6]. Descendants of escaped enslaved Africans, Carib, and Arawakan Indians from St. Vincent in the British West Indies, they arrived on the British-controlled island of Roatan on April 12, 1797. Rooted in their Carib-Arawakan heritage, Garífunas have traditionally built their culture and economy on locally focused subsistence fishing and agriculture practices (González, 1988). In the early 1800s, they migrated from Roatan to the Honduran mainland, settling in the Department of Cortés to Gracias a Díos before Honduras gained independence from Spain in 1821 (Mollett, 2014, p.28). They discovered a sparsely inhabited new country when they arrived on the north shore (England, 2006, p.38). From there, they built coastal villages in areas while keeping alive their ancestors' traditional customs[7]. In Garífuna culture, the focal point of life is matrifocal, where women assume dual roles as household leaders and central figures in organizing and governing family structures. This dynamic extends beyond biological relationships (Brondo, 2007).

To preserve their cultural history, it was crucial to establish communal domains in beachfront communities since they provided some measure of independence from the dominant society (Brondo, 2018, p.186). Continuing the Garífuna language, religious practices, and family systems are also crucial examples of intergenerational transmission of distinctive ways of life[8]. Today, Garífuna activists, frequently in collaboration with OFRANEH, emphasize the significance of their Indigenous culture. This stands in opposition to the national government's efforts to downplay the Indigenous aspect of

[5] These three lines represent the concluding remarks from the call to action organized by OFRANEH after the discovery of bodies of Garifuna land defenders dumped in the Gama River (Rights Action, 2023).

[6] Besides Garífunas, the largest Indigenous groups in Honduras include Lenca (453,672), Miskito (80,007), Maya Ch'ortí (33,256), Tolupán (19,033), and Bay Creoles (12,337) (Minority Rights Group, 2018). Currently, there are approximately forty-eight Garífuna communities located in the departments of Cortés, Atlántida, Colón, and Gracias a Díos, as well as on the bay islands along the North Coast of Honduras (Pinto, 2002).

[7] The memorial discourses of Garífunas about the feat of their dispersion and territorialization concentrate in the history of the leaders directing migratory processes (Agudelo, 2011:6). Today these leaders are the object of a memorial cult as heroes of the Garífuna genesis and founders of towns in Belize, Guatemala, and Nicaragua where Garifuna communities are also present (Agudelo, 2011, p.6).

[8] In 2001, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Legacy designated Garifuna cultural practices, including community land ownership, the punta dance, subsistence farming, artisanal fishing, and language, as Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The Convention asserts that the preservation of cultural identity is intricately linked to one's environment; Indigenous culture evolves through historical connections to the environment.

their identity, labeling Garífuna solely as "Afro-descendant" in official statistics (MacNeill, 2020)[9].

Garífunas' historical presence in Honduras is tied to their active participation in the struggles for Independence, their work for global banana conglomerates in the town of Tela (England 1999, 2006), their dynamism within political parties, and their role in the armed conflict with El Salvador in 1969 (Agudelo, 2011, p.92)[10]. Yet many Hondurans mark Garífunas as outsiders (Loperena, 2016b). Historically and presently, Paul Joseph Oro (2021b) argues that Garífunas are simultaneously part of the African diaspora (enslaved in the Middle Passage and marooned in the Americas), the Caribbean diaspora (St. Vincent is collectively articulated as homeland), and the Central American diaspora (waves of migration from south of the United States border dating back to the 1880s and up to the present).

It is crucial to mention the influence of Mestizaje, an ideology that promotes indo-Hispanic racial mixing as the genesis of the modern Honduran country (Anderson, 2009, pp.78-82), is used to portray Indigenous components of Honduran culture as mythological, monolithic, and relics of the past. Yet the tourism industry takes advantage of the vulnerability of those it displaces, who often lack the means to resist its growth (Loperena, 2017). This neoliberal development model enables capital accumulation through land exploitation while subjecting dispossessed individuals to exploitative labor conditions (Loperena, 2017). Garífunas presence and ancestral memory in the Honduran territory threaten the mestizaje's national culture and project exclusive of blackness (Loperena, 2016a). As they continue to occupy a liminal space, an in-between position, in the Central American imaginary (Oro, 2016; Loperena, 2022), Garífunas' claims of national belonging contrast this marginalization and legitimize their demands. This state of liminality can be attributed to several factors, one of which is the distinctive cultural heritage of the Garífunas. The intricacies of their unique language, traditions, and historical experiences contribute to a complex identity that defies easy categorization within prevalent narratives about the region. Through a discourse oriented toward origins and the historical presence of Garífunas in the Honduran territory, for example, in Triunfo de la Cruz, geography and space inform how Garífuna ancestral memory is performed. Organizations such as OFRANEH defend it.

Contrasting the pillage of Indigenous and Black territories promoted by the Honduran State, OFRANEH's mission is to eradicate historical injustices and the loss of the Garífuna peoples' patrimony and recover and strengthen their ancestral cultural identity

[9] It was not until the 1930 census that the state of Honduras denied an official ethno-racial variety while in 1910 it still recognized even "mulattoes" (PNUD, 2021, p.26).

[10] According to the Garífuna intellectual and choreographer Armando Crisanto Meléndez, the Honduran army used some soldiers and Garífuna officers to issue secret military codes in the Garífuna language so that they would not be decoded by the Salvadoran secret services (Savaranga & Crisanto, 1997). Honduras still lost the war due to the corruption and bad organization that had prevailed since the 1963 coup.

and spirituality[11]. Through OFRANEH, Garífunas meticulously emphasize the significance of their Indigenous and Black identity and culture. OFRANEH´s key strategy is the "recuperation" of Garífuna ancestral land to denote the importance of pre-existing land rights and titles, save them from land grabs and dispossession, and contrast attempts by the Honduran State to erase the historical presence of Garífunas[12]. Through a language of discovery steeped in colonialism frames, the Honduran state´s rhetorical dispossession (West, 2016) frames the country's northern coast as an uncharted, uninhabited frontier ripe for tourism development projects. Through the strategic use of a narrative to evict and deprive others of their land, labour, or resources (West, 2016), new locations for capital accumulation can be found. Garífunas' long-standing presence and ancestral memory are erased (Mollett, 2013). To counteract this narrative, when conducting a "recuperation," OFRANEH's double strategy entails providing community members with copies of their collective land titles while preparing legal counsel and land defenders, given that their claims face challenges or are contested (MacNeill, 2020), as I will show in my analysis of the Triunfo de la Cruz case. Community members resisting on the ground enter their target land, sing ancestral songs, wave the Garífuna and Honduran flags, and then present any "third persons" on the land their title claims to make intentions known (MacNeill, 2020). Despite being a non-violent method, this practice is often met with aggression (Palmer, 2019)[13].

OFRANEH´s activism allows us to delve into the problems of the Garífunas communities. Based on the changing configurations that make up identity referents, ideological frameworks, and political strategies, OFRANEH, on behalf of Garífunas communities, emphasizes a Black and Indigenous identity (Cuisset, 2014) as "always-already diasporic in its conjuring, reenactments, and articulations" (Oro, 2021b, p.66).

Exploration

Through a comprehensive methodology, I analyze the consequences of tourism development on the Garífuna community in Honduras. Amid my ongoing research on mining conflicts in Honduras, particularly those affecting the Guapinol and San Pedro

[11] OFRANEH´s activism goes beyond the notion that development, dynamic and forward-moving, and culture, static and conservative, are potentially antagonistic forces at opposite spectrum extremes.
[12] In the 2021 PNUD report, Honduran historian Dario Euraque notes that by 1992, subsequent generations of Garífunas, inspired by OFRANEH but also diverging from its approach, established ODECO. The organization's name itself reflects a shift to a new ethno-racial language that de-emphasizes the "Afro" identity in the Honduran context, contrary to the national political climate and international tourism preferences (PNUD, 2021:20). ODECO engages in "lobbying and political advocacy" while also participating in transnational networks like ONECA (Central American Black Organization) and the "Strategic Alliance of Afro-descendant Populations."
[13] OFRANEH successfully aided in reclaiming Vallecito village, initially seized by palm oil tycoon Miguel Facussé for plantations (Gies, 2018). Backed by OFRANEH, a Garifuna group mobilized for land defense, engaging in a prolonged struggle that included petitioning state agencies, legal proceedings in Honduran courts, and direct action with approximately 200 Garifuna families. Ultimately, the state agrarian authority affirmed their legitimate land rights (Palmer, 2019:92).

communities in the Department of Colón, I integrate diverse sources to participate in what Gustavo Ribeiro (1998) terms "witnessing at a distance" (p.325). This concept encapsulates the dynamics of transnational flows of political information and the practice of "witnessing and political activism at a distance" (Ribeiro, 1998).

Building on this engagement and "act of witnessing at a distance," the examination begins by scrutinizing the evolution of tourism plans within Honduran legislation, revealing their alignment with a neoliberal development vision intertwined with racialized perceptions of the Garífunas. The historical timeline encompasses the evolution of legislative reforms in the broader socio-political Honduran context.

The research explores the formation of institutional practices by using Dorothy Smith and Susan Marie Turner's (2014) approach to textual analysis and institutional ethnography. This involves examining the legal apparatus supporting the diffusion of luxurious resorts, or heterotopias, in Honduras. Texts are viewed here as occurring in specific settings of people's everyday lives (Smith & Turner, 2014, p.5).

Transitioning to the Garífunas' resistance, the study delves into the strategies employed by OFRANEH, particularly on social media platforms, to advocate for housing, land, and territorial justice against the Honduran government's violation of collective property rights. A key methodological observation is the need to shift our focus from obvious power centers to the margins of everyday life, where such infelicities become observable (Das, 2006, p.163). According to Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004), "margins are a necessary entailment of the state" (4). Das and Poole suggest focusing more on describing how "state practices" run through everyday life on the margins.

Turning attention to diaspora studies, the research recognizes the tension between international and national legal frameworks in addressing questions of land access within Garífunas and Afro-Indigenous groups. Finally, I emphasize Garífunas' resistance toward the state and multilateral institutions, a compelling object of study, to singular identity categorizations as either Black or Indigenous, thanks to the ethnic activism of OFRANEH. Mark Anderson (2009) argues that through participation, activists fight the politics of the aforementioned institutions (410).

Legislation

> We will exploit [the coast] as a way to realize the dream that we have always had: to develop Tela Bay as they did in Cancún. We are going to transform ourselves into the Cancún of Central America!"
>
> (Minister of Tourism Nelly Jerez, quoted in Trucchi, 2010, p.3).[14]

[14] Citation from Mollett's (2014) article.

The surge in Central American tourism, a facet of economic transformation since the 1970s, has supplanted agriculture as the primary capital source in the region (Caada, 2010). Over the last two decades, Honduras has witnessed exponential growth in its tourism industry (Bellamy et al., 2023, p.9). Indeed, the living legacy of colonialism is particularly evident in the Honduran state's imperial agenda from the late 1990s into the early 2000s, as it surveyed and mapped the territory for tourist resorts (República de Honduras, 2011, quoted in Mollett, 2014)[15]. As I delineate, the historical process of land titling and dispossession has significantly influenced the political identity of the Garífunas.

During the early 1990s, under former Honduran president Carlos Roberto Reina (1994–198), the government implemented multiethnic legal reforms and programs[16]. Unlike other 9 countries in the region, the shift towards "neoliberal multiculturalism" (Hale, 2005) and the acknowledgment of ethnic rights in Honduras did not entail constitutional reforms or the enactment of comprehensive laws specifically addressing Indigenous peoples or ethnic minorities. Multicultural reforms in Honduras, according to Anderson (2007), embody “a patchwork of initiatives shaped by pressures and enticements within and beyond Honduras and subject to continued negotiation and struggle” (p.395).

Analyzing pertinent articles on Honduran neoliberal agrarian legislation in the context of tourism reveals the marginalization, poverty, and violence plaguing Garífunas (Loperena, 2016a). Although the Honduran constitution safeguards community land rights for "ethnic" groups (República de Honduras, 1982: Art. 346), the government has failed to protect these rights, partly due to the disputed legal status of Garífuna citizenship (Bellamy et al., 2023, p.7). Even though communal titleholders can purchase and transfer improvements on the land, the government maintains ownership, restricting sales to individuals outside the Garífuna community. Land usage rights depend on factors such as inheritance, residency, and ethnic identity (Mollett, 2014). Although these titles did not recognize ancestral territories, they improved land security, albeit often deceiving Garífuna communities into ceding larger areas for such titles.

Despite an international legal framework ostensibly safeguarding Garífuna's collective territorial rights, the last 30 years have seen massive privatization through "irregular processes," according to Garifuna campaigners (Brondo, 2007, p.101). In 1992, Honduras enacted the Law for the Modernization and Development of the Agricultural

[15] A few days after the aftermath of the destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the Honduran Congress, in a true disaster capitalism fashion (Klein, 2007), pushed for neoliberal initiatives disregarding and impeding Garífunas' ability to remain in their original coastal lands and continue a subsistence lifestyle (Brondo, 2013). The exclusion of Black identity in the shaping of the mestizaje myth, however, predates considerably, tracing back to the 1930s, when Honduras enacted laws to forbid the immigration of Black individuals (Mendoza, 2006, p.189).

[16] Among the notable initiatives were the official acknowledgment of Honduras as a "multi-ethnic nation," the promotion of bilingual/intercultural education and the establishment of a government office named La Fiscalía de las Etnias y Patrimonio Cultural (Prosecutor for Ethnic Groups and Cultural Patrimony) to offer legal defense for ethnic communities, and the introduction of collective land titling among others (Anderson, 2007).

Sector (LMDSA), allowing Indigenous communities to collectively title lands. However, the law also facilitated investor encroachment on privatized, often Indigenous, lands. The government exploited a loophole, asserting that the law granted Garífuna "full control" titles, excluding lands used for fishing, subsistence, rituals, and spiritual practices (Bellamy et al., 2023, p.481). These limitations rendered it impossible for the Garifuna to retain ancestral lands, leading foreign investors to swiftly claim untitled areas (Agudelo, 2019).

The agricultural law enacted in the 1990s aligned with the characteristics identified by Carmen Diana Deere and Magdalena Leon (2001) as indicative of nation-states embracing neoliberalism. Indigenous peoples can hold communally named lands under this law (República de Honduras, 1992), yet it excludes areas used for fishing, subsistence farming, ceremonies, or spiritual practices. The LMDSA paved the way for investors seeking privatized Indigenous lands. The 1999 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach further catalyzed these changes, necessitating World Bank and IMF board approval for countries to shape their development strategies (Ruckert, 2010, p.114). In this context, neoliberal agendas strongly advocate for framing tourism as "pro-poor" growth, proposing that Indigenous and rural communities can benefit from ecological and adventure/cultural tourism (Ruckert, 2010, p.124).

During a similar timeframe, the government introduced additional neoliberal reforms, including the Congressional Decree 90–90[17]. This decree reversed Article 107 of the Honduran Constitution provision that had previously prohibited foreigners from acquiring coastal and beachfront lands. Initially restricted to Hondurans, this privilege is particularly significant for the Garífunas, given that much of their land is in coveted beachfront areas. This development drive has subjected Garífunas to severe displacement threats, including eviction, violence, bribery, and land invasions (Minority Rights, 2018; MacNeill, 2020). Furthermore, the decree, coupled with the titling program and other development initiatives, paved the way for the current surge in housing, industrial development, and investments in coastal tourism within Garifuna lands (Brondo, 2018, 2013; Thorne, 2007). Encroachment, coercion, deceit, outright robbery at gunpoint to take over territory, and pressurized sales (Brondo, 2007, p.101) are used to circumvent the content of Article 107:

> Republic, municipal, communal, and private properties located in the border areas with neighboring states and within 40 kilometers inland from both oceans, including islands, cays, reefs, cliffs, and sand banks, can only be owned and held by individuals born in Honduras, corporations consisting solely of Honduran stockholders, and state institutions. Violation of this provision is subject to the nullification of the corresponding title or contract. [18]

[17] Congressional Decree 90/90 strengthens this by permitting foreign ownership of urban land, thereby opening the land market to non-citizens (República de Honduras 1982, 1990, 1996).

[18] Los terrenos del Estado, ejidales, comunales o de propiedad privada situados en la zona limítrofe a los estados vecinos, o en el litoral de ambos mares, en una extensión de (40) cuarenta kilómetros hacia el interior del país, y los de las islas, cayos, arrecifes, escolladeros, peñones, sirtes y bancos de arena, solo

On November 8, 1999, then-president of the Honduran National Congress, Rafael Pineda Ponce, proposed the legalization of foreign ownership of beachfront property by introducing specific language in Article 107, allowing the declaration of beachfront land as a "tourism priority" (Mollett, 2014, p.36). While property laws officially acknowledge Indigenous rights to ancestral lands and respect communal land tenure systems (República de Honduras, 2004: Arts. 93, 94), criticism arises due to perceived lenient concessions to outsiders in Indigenous ancestral territories[19]. OFRANEH argues that these concessions neglect ancestral rights and Indigenous cosmovisions. The Property Law sanctions the dissolution of communal tenure systems. It authorizes the leasing of lands to third parties (World Bank, 2007, p.57). This modification, under the guise of promoting ecotourism and sustainable development, exacerbated racial tensions between Garífunas and the mestizo elite.

This reform was complemented by a subsequent initiative in 2004 when the government introduced the Land Administration Process of Honduras (Proyecto de Administración de Tierras de Honduras, PATH). This initiative included a provision formalizing the sale of collective property lands belonging to Indigenous groups and the Garifuna (Agudelo, 2019). The legislation dedicates a specific chapter to addressing Indigenous and Afro-Honduran communities, embodying what Charles Hale (2005) describes as "neoliberal multiculturalism." The problem with this approach is that it combines limited recognition of cultural differences with ethnic rights within the framework of neoliberal principles, restricting opportunities for the Garífunas to sustain their subsistence livelihood in their ancestral territories (Brondo, 2013)[20].

In this context, adopting legal instruments such as the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO 169) in 1995 and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 are important results[21]. Connecting this fight with Indigenous peoples´ demands worldwide is crucial (Taylor, 2012). Yet, Honduras never enacted legislation ensuring the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) to the Garífunas and other Indigenous peoples, nor did it respect their capacity to weigh in on territorial development initiatives (MacNeill, 2020; Bellamy et al., 2023)[22]. The mestizo majority still considers Black and

podrán ser adquiridos o poseídos o tenidos a cualquier título por hondureños de nacimiento, por sociedades integradas en su totalidad por socios hondureños y por las instituciones del Estado, bajo pena de nulidad del respectivo acto o contrato (República de Honduras, 2011).

[19] In October 25 and 26, 2003, OFRANEH organized community consultation with the Garífunas in relation to the Property Law, in the Garífuna community of Durugubuty (San Juan, Tela).

[20] Juliet Hooker (2005) highlights that linking ethnicity and cultural differences to Indigeneity, and associating race and racism with Blackness, marginalizes Afro-Latinos in terms of collective identity rights (22).

[21] According to article 14 from ILO 169, "Governments shall take steps as necessary to identify the lands which the peoples concerned traditionally occupy, and to guarantee effective protection of their rights of ownership and possession." Article 15 is also crucial as it states "The rights of the peoples concerned to the natural resources pertaining to their lands shall be specially safeguarded."

[22] Besides encroachment from the tourism industry, OFRANEH´s activists denounce rights abuses against Garífunas from the palm oil industry (Méndez, 2020). The latter industry has ravaged coconut plantations, a crop on which the Garifuna subsisted and which was culturally significant for generations

Indigenous dispossession as necessary for economic and social progress (Loperena, 2016a). The tourist goal entangles with racist development fantasies in which black lands serve as borders of progress for the mestizo majority (Loperena, 2016a).

The many layers of displacing Garífunas

> "The first [exile] was in San Vicente, where we emerged as a town. The second occurred with the San Juan Tela massacre[23]. And the third is the massive migration of people who are expelled from their communities."
>
> (Miriam Miranda, quoted in Torres Funes, n.d.).

Contemporary disputes over land rights are becoming more prevalent (Sassen, 2014). In Honduras, the battle for land rights is inherently intertwined with racial dynamics (Mollett, 2006; Thorne, 2007). In Honduras, this racialized dispossession suggests that Garífunas´ blackness "is simultaneously an asset and a liability for the state" (Loperena, 2016a, p.189). Similarly, Arturo Escobar's (2003) concept of "spatial cultural projects" describes Afro-Colombian positionality is helpful in this context. Guided by a "rational logocentric order," displacement in the name of development (p.158) appears necessary for these projects, such as tourist resorts, to exist. Resisting this "order" from the margins represents a strategy for Garífunas to identify the role of government institutions, legislation, and state security actors working to dispossess them of their resources while commodifying Garífunas´ heritage for tourism initiatives (Loperena, 2017).

OFRANEH denounces the foreignization of the Honduran North Coast as the erasure of their presence and access to ancestral lands by the state's development plans (Mollet, 2014, p.29). The situation has worsened after the military coup that ousted the democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya in 2009, President-elect Porfirio Lobo Sosa's legislation (2010-2014) proclaims that Honduras is "open for business" (HOB), not only pledging economic revival but also aspiring to mold Honduras into a "world-class" tourist destination (República de Honduras, 2011), HOB policies, according to Garífuna activists, further concentrates power in the hands of a privileged few. In response, on April 1, 2011, a coalition of Garífuna organizations united in opposition to Lobo Sosa's administration, specifically protesting the imminent inauguration of the

(Gies, 2018). Palm oil is grown through deforestation, and this water-intensive product inhibits other crops from growing nearby, causing soil acidity and pollution and irreversible harm to wetlands and mangroves on the Northern Coast (Gies, 2018). These detrimental impacts exacerbate climate change effects, which already impact disproportionally Indigenous peoples and minority communities (Iqbal, 2020).

[23] In 1937, under the ruling military dictatorship in Honduras, the Garífunas of San Juan were accused of plotting in alliance with the liberal party and, as a lesson, all the men in the village were shot (Agudelo, 2011). Among Garífuna intellectuals and leaders, the 1937 massacre is an important event in the Garífunas' memory and history (Agudelo, 2011).

Indura Beach and Golf Resort in the Department of Atlántida while chanting, "The Dispossession of Lands Is Racism: Territory to the Garífuna People!" (Anderson, 2012).

As HOB policies and programs were implemented, in 2013, Honduras enacted legislation to establish "employment and economic development zones" (ZEDEs, Zonas Especiales de Desarrollo y Empleo), which would act as independent jurisdictions and limited application of national laws would, to attract capital. Along with the approval of this law, the National Investment Promotion Programme (2010-2014) committed to extensive institutional and legal changes aimed at positioning Honduras as the most appealing investment destination in Latin America. The emphasis on tourist development inevitably evolved into a land titling policy claiming to provide land security to Indigenous peoples and give foreign capital easy land access (Anderson, 2009). HOB development and policies continue to extend Garífuna displacement and dispossession as the Caribbean North Coast of Honduras was identified as a development priority in the state's investment strategy (República de Honduras, 2011). The argument that the North Coast is deserted is a typical conquest myth to legitimize intrusion by denying Garífunas' presence and cultural practices (Mollett, 2014). As a result, ZEDEs expose Garífunas to the immediate risk of expulsion from the northern coast of Honduras.

Heterotopias

> "There is constant harassment of social leaders who oppose the installation in our territory of the Playa Escondida Beach Club resort, which has prevented access to the Garifuna cemetery."
>
> OFRANEH (TeleSur, 2023).

The establishment and existence of tourism projects and development plans on the north coast of Honduras contribute to undermining Garífunas´ rights to their ancestral lands while simultaneously commodifying their culture. In this regard, Garífunas' cultural performances in resorts are analogous to Michel Foucault's concept of a heterotopia. Heterotopias are locations deliberately integrated into the fabric of society where all other spaces within a culture are simultaneously reflected and contradicted. According to Foucault and Jay Miskowiec (1986), every culture and civilization likely possesses actual places that function as countersites, effectively realized utopias where the authentic sites found throughout the culture are concurrently depicted, contested, and reversed (p.24). In the case of resorts on the north coast of Honduras, these sites play a key role in perpetuating racial hierarchies that exalt whiteness and denigrate blackness (Mollett, 2014, p.40).

Tourism resorts in Honduras, similar to hospitals, prisons, and schools, exemplify structural power in the built environment. They also function as a method for institutionalizing the cultural narrative of the nation's representation. Therefore, the presentation and enactment of "heritage" in tourism resorts create "an analytic term and a tool of governance." This underscores the power dynamics inherent in the selective

recognition of identity, mediated by material form (Geismar, 2015, p.72). The interplay of dispossession, marginalization, and violence affecting Garífunas life and maintaining these resorts provides an example of the exhibitionary complex of racial relations in Honduras.

The concept of the exhibitionary complex, normally used to describe museums as sites of power and reproduction of knowledge, is conducive to this analysis. This concept offers a top-down view of power, which is crucial to interpret resorts as a part of the relations between state and society embedded in the notion of the disciplinary society theorized by Foucault (1988). Far from aligning resorts and tourist sites with the institutions comprising Foucault's "carceral archipelago" (for example, the asylum, the prison, and the monitorial school), in these tourist sites we can still witness the reproduction of particular kinds of power/knowledge relations (Bennett, 2013). These relations are brought to bear on those who stay and "experience" the Garifuna culture and heritage and those contained within them[24]. These institutions serve as sites for displaying and examining individuals, not necessarily through physical punishment but through surveillance, normalization, and classification. The exhibitionary complex involves institutionalizing practices that make individuals constantly visible and subject to examination (Bennett, 2013).

As discussed in this article, Garífuna's tangible or intangible heritage, cultural or natural, emerges as a major resource for the tourism industry, with the Honduran government heavily relying on commodifying Garífunas´ identity and cultural practices as key assets. Displacement shapes tourist landscapes and related projects, forcing Garífuna communities to abandon their subsistence activities[25]. Divers, deep-sea fishermen, and souvenir store workers are examples of Garifuna job prospects. They are frequently underpaid and labor in hazardous situations. Tilman G. Freitag's (1996) analysis of tourism development in the Dominican Republic argues that this type of all-inclusive leisure site has limited "trickle-down" economic impacts. The resorts' luxury amenities are inaccessible to Garífunas, and local communities do not experience noticeable economic benefits in terms of employment or spillover from visiting guests.

Triunfo de la Cruz Community

[24] Several conflicting narratives and tensions exist, encompassing distinct expectations and perceptions of the Garífuna heritage canon among various groups such as Saint Vincent Grenadine Garífuna, diasporic Garífuna, and other Vincentians (Finneran & Welch, 2019).

[25] Increasing tourism has led to ocean pollution and restricted access to diverse water bodies, including rivers (Green Grants, 2005), thus jeopardizing their overall income and food resources.

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> "Every so often we have to be going to court because comrades who are community directors and leaders in the defense of the territories have been arrested or are being charged, that has us totally exhausted."[26]
>
> (Miriam Miranda, La Prensa Latina, 18 July 2023).

In 2003, OFRANEH petitioned the IACHR on many occasions over Triunfo de la Cruz and Punta Piedra, two Garifuna villages, seeking more protection owing to ongoing abuses of their human rights (Brondo, 2006). As Garífunas occupy a precarious position in Honduras, as almost citizens who contribute to forming a nation that also criminalizes them, they understand that their recognition as citizens and respect for their demands necessarily start outside of Honduras.[27] The IACHR has been involved in numerous court disputes involving Garífuna communities, including the *Garifuna Triunfo de la Cruz Community and its Members v. Honduras* case, as it demonstrates the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Garífunas within state imaginaries of national development.

In the case of *Garífuna Triunfo de la Cruz Community and its Members v. Honduras,* Loperena (2016a) indicates that this resort has extensively utilized the cultural distinctiveness of the Garifuna for branding objectives (190) even though it did not involve Garífunas in the design project. The dispossession experienced by the Garífunas, which highlights the contradiction between conservation and access to property, represents an ongoing problem for the environmental justice demands of OFRANEH.

The IACHR set criteria for assessing the collective property rights of the Triunfo de la Cruz community under Article 21 of the American Convention on Human Rights.[28] It specifically addressed the Honduran Government's failure, during President Ricardo Maduro's tenure (2002-2006), to safeguard the community's right to use and enjoy their lands against encroachment by Macerica S. de R.L. (Macerica) and Inversiones y Desarrollos El Triunfo S.A. de C.V. (Idetrisa) (Hairapetian, 2020, p.1247). The IACHR asserts that the link between Indigenous communities and the land transcends mere ownership and productivity. It includes a material and spiritual element crucial for safeguarding and transmitting their cultural heritage to succeeding generations. This argument references both the Honduran Constitution of 1982 and ILO 169 (Hairapetian, 2020). The Triunfo de la Cruz community continues to protest the State's continuing disobedience eight years after the sentencing and over the deadline for compliance.[29]

[26] While the IACHR possesses a comprehensive terminology to address the property rights of Indigenous peoples, it does not specifically address the right to collective property concerning the right to equal protection and freedom from discrimination as outlined in Article 24 of the IACHR.

[27] This perspective makes Garífunas less likely to see justice for crimes committed against them due to poor access to public services and a lack of representation in the government (Bellamy et al., 2023).

[28] In 2001, the community requested the expansion of the lands for which they held absolute ownership titles, in accordance with the provisions of Article 19(a) of ILO 169.

[29] During the legal proceedings, the Honduran government legal representatives went so far as to argue that the Garifuna did not qualify as an Indigenous people. Instead, they contended that the original

OFRANEH underscores at this juncture that the absence of collaboration is closely tied to the State's act of marginalizing the Garifuna. This is substantiated by referring to the State official who questioned the Indigenous status of the Garifuna during the hearing (Hairapetian, 2020, p.1256).

In the *Garifuna Triunfo de la Cruz Community and its Members v. Honduras* case, the IACHR explicitly tied the petitioners' claim to property to their Indigenous identity. The IACHR ruling determined that Honduras neglected to consult the community on two tourism developments (Hairapetian, 2020; OFRANEH, 2023). The Court ordered the State to take the required steps to correctly demarcate the lands, award the petitioners ownership, and compensate them for infringement of their collective property rights (Belfi & DeLuca, 2020).[30]

A member of the Land Committee of the community and the Commission for Monitoring and Compliance with the IACHR ruling, Morales Martínez requested protective measures from the National Secretary of Human Rights in December 2022 and reported death threats to national authorities. On July 18, 2020, Alberth Sneider Centeno, president of the Triunfo de la Cruz Garifuna Community Patronato; Junior Rafael Juárez Mejía, Suamy Aparicio Mejía García, and Milton Joel Martínez Álvarez were all abducted by men posing as police officers who were eventually recognized as part of the Honduran Investigative Police Agency (Conexihon, 21 July 2020; SOA Watch, 2021). Only one individual has been detained concerning the kidnappings, and whether the four men are still alive is unknown. These abductions sparked massive protests, with Garífuna activists taking to the streets of Tegucigalpa, Sambo Creek, and Triunfo de la Cruz, and solidarity from international supporters and the Honduran Garifuna community of New York enacted a peaceful protest to demand their return (Conexihon, 21 July 2020). OFRANEH continues to demand an investigation to determine what happened to the men who disappeared in Triunfo de la Cruz and to identify the material and intellectual authors, implement the opportune actions to guarantee the safety of Garífunas communities and prevent the repetition of events as described, and finally ensure effective compliance with what was ordered by the IACHR in the Judgment of the Triunfo de la Cruz case.

Despite implementing the Tourism Incentives Law in 2017 and offering substantial tax breaks for tourism projects, the situation for the Garífunas in Honduras has not improved. Recently, the Central American Black Organization (ONECA) issued a collective statement emphasizing the dire circumstances faced by the Garífunas. They highlighted that migration appears to be the only recourse for the community, citing

inhabitants of the territories were the Hicaque tribe, who, according to historical accounts, were displaced to the mountains by the Spanish during the Conquest (Expediente Público, 2022).

[30] "The Court directed the State to take the necessary steps to demarcate the lands properly, grant title to the petitioners, and compensate them for violations of their collective property rights" (Triunfo de la Cruz, (ser. C) No. 304 SS 48, 101.11. Id. S 167.12. Id. S 283). Nonetheless, one of the tourism projects in question, Playa Escondida, is still open nearly eight years after the IACHR decision. This land where this tourism project is built had belonged to the community since 1993 when the members received the title as absolute owners (Hairapetian, 2020).

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increased police violence, racial profiling, arbitrary detentions, threats, and murders (ISHR, 3 April 2023). The harsh reality of displacement compels many Garífunas to seek asylum in the United States, as staying in Honduras is not a viable option (Hairapetian, 2020, p.1230). Despite campaign promises by President Xiomara Castro, elected in 2022 under the Libertad and Refundación party, to protect the Garífunas, her government has failed to take any meaningful action. Backed by the tourist and palm oil industries, the Honduran State is actively erasing the historical rights of the Garífunas to their territory, pushing them towards dispossession and land loss.

Tensions and Dualities

> "We want to continue maintaining our culture, our worldview, our dance and beliefs, our values and ethics."
>
> (Edgardo Benith, Contracorriente, 2 August 2020).[31]

According to research, the main causes of challenged land ownership rights among the Garifuna are not only neoliberal economic forces but also a much longer history of colonial slavery, oppression, and exploitation that is still alive. Since being deported to modern-day Honduras, Garífunas have faced significant racial-cultural persecution and social marginalization, yet they have maintained their traditional identity and legacy (Brondo, 2018, p.186). Already in 2011, OFRANEH's activists framed the evictions from Triunfo de la Cruz as a second expulsion of Garífunas from their territory, drawing parallels with their expulsion from St. Vincent by the British in 1797 (Hairapetian, 2020, p.1264).

Territorial dispossession of Garífunas includes development practices that limit communities' presence, an example of what Mollett (2013) defines as "displacement-in-place," which is a type of dispossession in which people are not physically relocated from their land but rather have their livelihoods and cultural practices restricted, resulting in "displaced futures" (p.4). Social oppression causes a slew of problems for Garífunas' political mobilization which articulates a discourse of inclusion in Honduras to protest the lack of representation in their government, their limited access to public services, and the lack of justice for crimes and rights violations committed against them (Bellamy et al., 2023, p.5).

While proclaiming their status as Honduran citizens, Garífunas also acknowledge their transnational identity as members of the Afro-descendant diaspora of the Americas (Mollet, 2014).[32] This distinctiveness distinguishes them from other ethno-racial identity claims processes in the Americas. In instances where Afro-descendant groups have

[31] Edgardo Benedith was the president of the board of trustees in El Triunfo de la Cruz during the filing of the international lawsuit in 2003.

[32] The largest Garífuna population in Central America is in Honduras, yet the first Garifuna Settlement Day was celebrated in Dangriga, Belize (Oro, 2021b, p.141).

effectively asserted their land claims, explanations often attribute their success to the strategic utilization of "Indigenous-like" narratives and tactics (Anderson, 2005; Hooker, 2005; Ngweno, 2007). However, officially designating the Garifuna as "Indigenous-like" in the constitution does not alter the racialized perceptions that depict them, despite their existence predating the establishment of the nation-state, and their acceptance on the North Coast is frequently contingent on their perceived ability to contribute labor to the cause of national development. The hybrid subjectivities characterizing Garífunas, embracing both Indigenous and Black identities, are constantly challenged, contrasted, and erased by the experience of dispossession and eviction implemented by the Honduran government.

Saidiya Hartman's compelling definition of diaspora characterizes it as “both an existent territory with objective coordinates and the figurative realm of an imagined past,” emphasizing both ideological and material components of this complex category (2007, p.9). On the value of reappropriating the Atlantic as a site of diasporic memory and kinship, Hartman (2007) argues that the ramifications of the Atlantic Slave Trade’s dispersal keep defining enslaved peoples’ descendants as “the perpetual outcast, the coerced migrant, the foreigner” (p.5). The cultural hybridity defining the Garífuna identity fuels the political activism of a community that has never experienced enslavement and remains steadfast in resisting it (MacNeill, 2020, p.1541). Still, it is treated as a lesser subject by the Honduran State. Simultaneously, Loperena (2016b) argues that the racial aspirations propagated by Honduras' national tourism industry seek to strip the black body of its subjectivity and agency. Within the heterotopias embodied by luxurious resorts, Garifuna individuals are often assigned roles as objects of desire, sources of cultural entertainment, or marginalized service workers (Loperena, 2016b).

While for diasporic groups, the cause of dispersal might vary, this concept helps describe “the struggles undertaken to uphold cultural affinities with a homeland (real or imagined) and to maintain narratives of dislocation from that homeland” (Wofford, 2016, p.75). Since diasporic groups and identities center on difference, Garífunas in Honduras fight to maintain their distinctiveness via diverse acts of recollection and through the conservation of their heritage. While most studies on the Garífunas diaspora concentrate on their journey and permanence to the United States (England, 1999, 2006; Oro, 2016, 2021a, 2021b; Wofford, 2016), diaspora also helps to explain the situation of the Garífunas in Honduras. Diaspora is more than a historical fact; it is also acted, played with, and appropriated.

The events narrated in this article occurred in the backdrop of Honduras' continuous threats, killings, and attacks against the Garífunas. The systematic violence against the Garífuna people continues to manifest itself in violence with racist motives focused on the extermination of the peoples of their ancestral territories, which are continuously invaded by third parties and displaced by businessmen and businesswomen. OFRANEH’s “No al Exterminio contra el Pueblo Garífuna” campaign ignited action by raising awareness about both the case of the abductions of the five Garífuna men in July 2020 and the general struggle of the Garífuna through hashtags on social media such as

#LasVidasGarifunasTambienImportan, #VivosLosQueremos, #TuLuchaEsMiLucha, #TodosSomosGarifunas, and #CuidemosNuestrasCulturas (Conexihon, 21 July, 2020; SOA Watch, 2021). OFRANEH is attempting to build a broad-based social movement in Honduras by forming alliances and collaborating with local, national, and international players against displacement and dispossession. OFRANEH is also pushing the establishment of a network of community radio stations that will operate in five villages and cover 40% of the Garífuna region. The network's goal is to preserve Garífuna culture against mass media infiltration and cultural standardization, to defend Garífuna land, and to serve as a source of empowerment for the women and young people who run broadcasting.

A significant portion of Garífunas activism revolves around affirming their identity as both Black and Indigenous Hondurans, asserting tenure rights over a substantial part of the north coast. Despite facing systemic marginalization and being portrayed as outsiders in the Honduran national consciousness, this assertion signifies to the Garífunas that they possess a rightful claim to the territory of Honduras' north coast and underscores their determination not to relinquish it.

Conclusion

> "We do not accept that the murders of the Garifuna people are left unpunished."
>
> (Miriam Miranda, La Prensa Latina, 18 July 2023).

Honduras is regarded as one of the most dangerous nations in the world for Indigenous peoples, minorities, the media, and activists, with cases of violence, kidnapping, and murders increasing substantially in Garífuna villages (Bellamy et al., 2023, pp.6-14). As Timothy MacNeill (2020) highlights, “in a nation with a corrupt judiciary, opaque and overlapping land titling, and economic demands on prime beach property, this ethnic ambiguity can be used to undermine territorial rights” (p.1542). An analysis of resorts, as examples of heterotopias, can help understand how Garífunas are fixed into place as folkloric representatives of a mythical past, which results in the appropriation of Garífunas racial and cultural differences and ancestral memory for touristic consumption. Faced with an unfavorable correlation of forces before the State, the economic powers, and the interests they face, the Garífunas continue to affirm their identities as a mechanism to achieve social inclusion and in the spirit of visibility toward their land struggles. This article, referring to the Garífuna Triunfo de la Cruz Community and its Members v. Honduras case, demonstrates the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Garifuna within state imaginaries of national development. Garífunas activists, often collaborating with OFRANEH, assert the importance of their Black and Indigenous culture. Garífuna cultural distinctiveness, as discussed by Loperena (2016b), is a formidable force in the face of the state's tourism development agenda.

Finally, my exploration sheds light on the dynamic interplay between Garífuna's cultural distinctiveness, strategic activism, and the challenges the state's tourism development agenda poses. Garífunas strategically employs the markers of their uniqueness to resist the encroachment on their lands despite the inherent risks involved in defending their cultural heritage. This proactive stance allows them to retain control over their narrative, fostering a sense of empowerment within the community. Despite potential repercussions, the Garífuna community safeguards their ancestral lands, viewing them as physical territories and repositories of their unique identity and history.

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