

**How Did Forced Migration and Forced Displacement Change Igbo Women's and
Their African American Daughters' Environmental Identity?**

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Abstract

Environmental identity and forced migration are well-researched subjects, yet, the intergenerational effects of forced migration on environmental identity lack substantive examination. This paper explores and adds to that research by asking the question, how did forced migration and forced displacement change Igbo women's and their African American daughter's environmental identity? The Igbo women were kidnapped from Igboland (modern-day Nigeria) for sale in the transatlantic slave trade. A significant percentage of the Igbo women shipped to colonial America were taken to the Chesapeake colonies. Historians indicate that Igbo women were important in the birth of a new generation of African Americans due to the high number of their children surviving childbirth.

One facet of environmental identity is place identity, which can be an indicator of belonging. This paper investigates the creation of belonging in the midst of continued, generational disruption in the relationship to the land, or environmental identity. Historical research and an extensive literature review were the research methods. It was concluded that stating a historical environmental identity with any scientific validity is not possible. Instead, there is a reason to suggest a high level of connection between cultural identity and the environmental identity of the Igbo before colonization and enslavement by colonial Americans. Further research is necessary and recommended to understand:

1. if the behaviors exhibited in Igboland continued in colonial America,
2. if those behaviors were taught to their African American daughters,
3. and if through sustained forced migration in the United States those behaviors can be tracked to future generation and are exhibited in the present.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspective of the people who have given it meaning (Tuan, 1979).

Imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism have been the leading forces in creating the state of the modern world. The violent invasions of the New World, Africa, and Asia required a world-view of superiority and dominance that labeled the land and people as untamed and wild. “The wilds of the New World, Africa, and Asia were to be systematically explored, classified, and brought under control” (Mrozowski, 1999). The colonizer's consideration of the land and people only extended to how they advanced the colonizer's economic and political interests.

Colonization of space (Devine, 2017) and people neglect the meaning of and relationship to the land of the people living in the space and exhibit disregard of the people's self-concept. The damaged state of Earth and its inhabitants are a result of creating classifications of people and places to justify oppression and extracting their labor and resources. Disconnection from the nonhuman environment, except in relation to human needs, allows for Earth's continued degradation, and sustained exploitation and forced migration of people. This paper explores the creation of belonging in the face of the practices of extraction using the relationship to the land, or environmental identity, as the overarching concept.

Historical research and a literature review with an ecology framework are utilized to approach the research question how did forced migration and forced displacement change Igbo women's and their African American daughters' environmental identity? During the transatlantic slave trade, Igbo were kidnapped. Some were shipped to colonial America. In the New World, Igbo women had a high percentage of children who survived childbirth and lived to adulthood (Hall, 2005). It is possible to suggest that the new generation of African Americans who went on

to endure forced and voluntary migration were taught the ways of their mothers' culture and passed down behaviors showing a relationship to the land.

This paper will use ecology, forced migration and environmental identity to explore the possibility of tracking belonging through relationship to the land over geographies and time. Belonging in this context is *a social and emotional attachment to an environment*. A literature review of the Igbo in Igboland (modern-day Nigeria) before colonialism was conducted in an attempt to establish a historical environmental identity. Historical environmental identity for this paper is defined as *the relationship to the land before colonialism*.

The paper is organized thematically for a holistic picture of the Igbo, forced migration, and environmental identity. The rest of the introduction, research background and research question, offer an overview of the environmental identity concept and the themes behind the research question. *Chapter 2* defines concepts central to the thesis. *Chapter 3* is a literature review of published academic work that investigates the ways a self-concept creates belonging. The belonging review leads into an ecological view of Igbo society to create a picture of how they organized their world before colonization. After an overview of Igbo society, the next section focuses on Igbo women. Then forced migration is introduced to set up the context of Igbo women and their African American daughters in colonial America. *Chapter 4* describes and presents reasoning for the methodology. *Chapter 5* addresses the findings of the research. *Chapter 6* discusses the findings of the literature review and their practical implications. *Chapter 7* provides a brief conclusion, including limitations of the research and recommendations for further study.

Research Background

One's self-concept is a dynamic idea. It is the perception a person has of themselves as a "physical, social, and spiritual or moral being" (Gecas, 1982). Some research describes the self as centered in a network of relationships established by "shared personal characteristics, roles, and group memberships" with individuals capable of having multiple identities core to the overarching self-concept (Walton, 2017). A component of self-concept is one's relationship to land. Land, in this context, includes soils, waters, plants, and animals (Leopold, 1948).

Environmental identity is one's perceived relationship to the nonhuman environment. The relationship is formed in much the same way human attachments are formed through interactions that create emotional bonds. Productive research in this field names and defines environmental identity in diverse ways. Thomashow (2003) uses the term "ecological identity" to describe "the ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth"; Weigert (2003) writes about "environmental identity" adding up to the "experienced social understandings of who we are in relation to, and how we interact with, the natural environment as other."

Clayton (2003) defines environmental identity as:

one part of the way in which people form their self-concept: a sense of connection to some part of the nonhuman environment, based on history, emotional attachment, and/or similarity, that affects the ways in which we perceive and act toward the world; a belief that the environment is important to us and an important part of who we are. (Clayton, 2003)

Based on Gecas' (1982) definition of the self-concept as a product of the view of self as a "physical, social, and spiritual or moral being" (Gecas, 1982) and Clayton's explanation of environmental identity as "a sense of connection to some part of the nonhuman world," the

themes of spiritual practices, people and nature, and economics and nature will be used to explore Igbo society and their relationship to the land.

Research Question

Research exists on the topics of forced migration and environmental identity, however, there is a gap in the research examining intergenerational effects of forced migration on environmental identity. Forced displacement and forced migration break down self-identity and instigate its reformation or reconstruction.

One way to characterize the African and African American experience in the New World is of forced migration via the transatlantic slave trade, domestic slavery, Jim Crow, and redlining, as well as voluntary migration in the forms of escaping the plantation and the Great Migration (1910-1970). With migration (voluntary and involuntary) comes the loss of land, loss of culture, religious traditions and language, which necessitates adapting and creating new cultures and languages, reconstituting self-concept and self-identity (Bhugra and Becker, 2005), and developing a new relationship to the land and to place (De Blij, 2009).

Linking women to Earth is a belief held by many indigenous, aboriginal and First Nation people. The Mohawk know from their “traditional teachings that the waters of the earth and the waters of our bodies are the same water” (Cook, 2003). Katsi Cook, in an article for “Indian Country Today,” describes the intimate connection of women with the earth:

Women are the first environment. We are privileged to be the doorway to life. At the breast of women, the generations are nourished and sustained. From the bodies of women flow the relationship of those generations both to society and to

the natural world. In this way is the earth our mother, the old people said. In this way, we as women are earth. (Cook, 2003)

Between the 1650s and the 1860s, during the transatlantic slave trade, more than 3.5 million slaves were shipped from Nigeria to the Americas. Most of these slaves were Igbo and Yoruba, with significant concentrations of Hausa, Ibibio, and other ethnic groups (Mathews, 2002). Igbo women counted for 45 percent of the enslaved during the early slave trade decades, and 27 percent of all Africans brought to the Chesapeake (Stevenson, 2007). They were significant “in giving birth to a new generation in the Americas” (Schomburg, n.d.).

Chambers (2009) summarizes Jennifer L. Morgan’s 2006 book, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. He writes:

She argues that white male assumptions about black women and their sexuality in the construction of racism, and the reality of commercial consequences of childbirth for the slave master, as well as the centrality of slave women in actual work, and their laboring as cultural actors in the creolization of the slave population over time, all suggest that the study of slavery must *account* for women, not simply *include* them. (Chambers, 2009)

The research in this paper seeks to focus on women’s experiences. The objective was to study the behavior and beliefs of Igbo women to state their environmental identity in Igboland. The following questions were considered in the development of the research question: Can beliefs and behaviors be indicators of environmental identity? If so, do Igbo women engage in those behaviors over time and pass them down to the next generation, thereby, holding onto their sense of belonging and environmental identity? Or does the sense of self and sense of belonging change? Based on these questions, the research question for this study is, “How did forced

migration and forced displacement change Igbo women's and their African American daughters' environmental identity?"

Chapter 2: Key Concepts

Environmental identity and forced migration should be critiqued in socio-historical and political contexts. These concepts are fundamental to the theoretical base of this paper. A brief review of these concepts gives more background for the issues covered in this thesis.

Coloniality of Power

Anibal Quijano led the development of the theory of coloniality of power. The theory describes the organization of power, control, and domination developed during the era of colonialism, beginning with the occupation of the Americas through the present. Quijano (2000) defines coloniality of power as a racial classification stemming from colonization, which operates as the cornerstone of global power. In this framework, the imposition of classification on a population offers the colonizer a basis for superiority, exploitation, and Eurocentrism. As a result of this framework, classifications and identities supported systematizing the domination of colonized people, and the association of labor and wages, social roles, language, knowledge, geography and history are valued based on race (Quijano, 2000).

Since certain races were condemned as inferior, Quijano (2000) suggests that they were viewed as dull and unstable objects of study whose bodies were closer to nature. Meaning their bodies were to be tamed and dominated like nature (Quijano, 2000). Power dynamics of gender existed pre-colonialism. With the invention of race, women of color were viewed as even more

inferior for their race, and their bodies perceived as “much closer to nature or (as was the case with black slaves) directly within nature” (Quijano, 2000).

Invention of Race in the United States

This section is in no way a comprehensive review of the invention of race but gives an overview of the concept. Coloniality of power relies on racial classifications to sustain control and hierarchy. In Part II of John A. Powell’s *The Raging of American Society: Race Functioning as a Verb before Signifying as a Noun*, he describes how race was socially constructed in the United States society. He tells his reader “that race is not a single, unitary concept, but rather one that mutates and adapts across socio-historical contexts and different life-spheres” and that “‘racing’ is something we do to one another” (Powell, 1997).

The process of racing begins when the dominant group strips the “racial Other” of its self-definition through forbidding their language and culture, then ascribing characteristics the dominant group believes to be inferior to themselves (Powell, 1997). As a result of having created a racial Other, the dominant group becomes both the invisible norm and the standard-bearer to which all other groups are negatively compared (Powell, 1997). Over the course of United States’ history, the racing of Africans, and later African Americans, and the meaning ascribed to them, functioned to make them the racial Other and to maintain White, European privilege. Hay (2014) explains how the United States used ancestry in racialization and the consequences:

The United States stood apart from the rest of the Americas in making use of ancestry as the primary classificatory criteria. In the United States, you were either white or black. An individual was black, regardless of physical appearance or sociocultural status, if

there was any known biological link, no matter how distant in time or genetics, to another black person. It is this use of ancestry as the primary classificatory criteria that encouraged the development of the caste-like groups separated by a legislated segregation, that have markedly different access to goods, education and justice. (Hay, 2014)

The ideology underlying “caste-like groups and legislated segregation” allow for things like the sacrifice zones discussed in the next section.

Sacrifice Zones and Extractivism

The modern way, coloniality of power, expresses itself is through extractivism. In her 2014 book, *This Changes Everything*, Naomi Klein defines extractivism as:

a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking. It is the opposite of stewardship, which involves taking but also taking care that regeneration and future life continue...It is the reduction of life into objects for the future use of others, giving them no integrity or value of their own-turning living complex ecosystems into ‘natural resources,’ mountains into ‘overburden’...It is also the reduction of human beings either into labor to be brutally extracted, pushed beyond limits, or, alternatively, into social burden, problems to be locked out at borders and locked away in prisons or reservations. In an extractivist economy, the interconnections among these various objectified components of life are ignored: the consequences of severing them are of no concern. (Klein, 2014)

Towards the end of this section, she ties extractivism to the idea of sacrifice zones.

The term sacrifice zone is a Cold War expression created by U.S. government officials to signify areas polluted with radioactive toxins during the production of nuclear weapons (Lerner, 2010). In the book, Klein tells the story of a different type of sacrifice zone. Nauru is an island in the Pacific Ocean about 2600 miles away from Australia. Over thousands of years, bird droppings on the island developed into an agricultural fertilizer, phosphate of lime. A colonial officer discovered the phosphate, and from 1906-1970, a combination of British-German and British-Australian-New Zealand interests were strip-mining Nauru's phosphate deposits (Klein, 2014 & Britannica, n.d.). By the 1960s, the center of the island lay uninhabitable and devastated from the extraction of its resources. In

1968, Nauru gained independence and placed a sizable sum of their mining revenue into a trust fund. As a result of poor financial advice and “shady get-rich-quick schemes,” by the publishing of Klein's book in 2014, the island was



Figure 1. Inner landscape of Nauru, 2001. Source: Newsweek. Available at <https://bit.ly/2uGhB8N>

facing both economic and ecological bankruptcy (Klein, 2014).

In *Sacrifice Zones*, Lerner (2010) describes the environmental justice struggle of twelve communities in the United States from Brooklyn to Pensacola. The communities combat contamination caused by locating high-emission industrial plants and public utilities near residential areas without adequate buffer zones. The industries approved for zoning as industrial/residential include “incinerators, hazardous waste dumps, refineries, gasoline tank farms, plastic plants, steel mills, pesticide plants, cement kilns, sewage treatment plants, rubber factories, asphalt batching plants, large-scale pig and cattle feedlots, agricultural areas heavily

sprayed with pesticides, tanneries, machine shops, auto-crushing-and-shredding operations, and a host of other nasty facilities (Lerner, 2010). The heavy industry zones and high-emissions industrial plants negatively impact the health of people living in close proximity to them. The residents experience “elevated rates of respiratory disease, cancer, reproductive disorders, birth defects, learning disabilities, psychiatric disorders, eye problems, headaches, nosebleeds, skin rashes, and early death (Lerner, 2010).

Lerner concentrated his investigation on communities where the grassroots organizations were long established, and their fight for environmental justices had been in progress. From his observation, he characterized United States’ sacrifice zones as “predominantly inhabited by African American, Latino, or Native American populations, although there are plenty of others where low-income whites live (Lerner, 2010). Whether the purpose is national defense or economic advancement, the core concept of sacrifice zones is an area that is expendable. And by extension, a sacrifice zone requires the othering of people and their culture which then allows them to be viewed as expendable.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Environmental Identity

Bhugra (2002) and Clayton (2003) believe that self-concept is a product and force. For Bhugra (2002), self-concept “can be defined as the sum total of an individual’s thoughts and beliefs regarding themselves, as well as perceptions by others.” Clayton (2003) contends that environmental identity is analogous to other collective identities (e.g., national or ethnic identity), which provide a sense of connection and belonging to a group.

Identities are developed to fit each social network of relationships and roles (Stets and Biga, 2003). Stets and Biga (2003) conceptualize the environmental identity as attached to the individual, not a role or the relationships with a social structure. The characteristics of the environmental identity may represent “who they are, how they feel, and what they value” (Stets and Biga, 2003). Linneweber, Hartmuth, and Fritsche (2003) argue that environmental identity is the totality of a person’s awareness and consideration of nature and the environment, and their daily significance to that individual; that identity guides choices and personal behavior. They assert “examined across individuals; environmental identities contribute to explaining the dynamics of social systems concerning nature and environments (Linneweber, Hartmuth, and Fritsche, 2003).

Place Identity and Sense of Place

Linneweber, Hartmuth, and Fritsche (2003) acknowledge that place identity and place attachment were influential in their articulation of environmental identity, but their use of concepts differ. Place identity narrows the focus of environmental identity to a more personal geographic area, e.g., home, farm, city, place of employment. The individual nature of the place and relationship gives the place meaning and mirrors to us aspects of our self, which could be our personal values or self-worth. Holmes (2003) quotes a mountaineer from Tennessee in the 1960s talking to his son. They were facing forced displacement due to the economy:

We’re born to this land here, and it’s no good when you leave....But he knows what I’m telling him: for us it’s a choice we have, between going away or else staying here and not seeing much money at all, but working on the land, like we know how to do, living here,

where you can feel you're you, and no one else, and there isn't the next guy pushing on you and kicking you and calling you every bad name there is. (Holmes, 2003)

The mountaineer's sentiment points to a complicated relationship with the land. A powerful relationship with a place means that place can become part of one's identity. Place identity is comprised of "memories, values, thoughts, ideas and settings, and the relationship between different settings: home, neighborhood, and school" (Qazimi, 2014).

bell hooks, intellectual, feminist theorist, cultural critic, artist, and writer, relates a childhood memory of relationship with the land and connection to her family and history:

As a child I loved playing in dirt, in that rich Kentucky soil, that was a source of life. Before I understood anything about the pain and exploitation of the southern system of sharecropping, I understood that grown-up black folks loved the land. I could stand with my grandfather Daddy Jerry and look out at fields of growing vegetables, tomatoes, corn, collards, and know that this was his handiwork. I could see the look of pride on his face as I expressed wonder and awe at the magic of growing things. I knew that my grandmother Baba's backyard garden would yield beans, sweet potatoes, cabbages, and yellow squash, that she too would walk with pride among the rows and rows of growing vegetables showing us what the earth will give them when tended lovingly. (Holmes, 2003)

Places embody personal and social memories because they are connected to our personal and social roles and relationships. These relationships and connections provide people with a sense of place, which may offer a sense of belonging.

David Masumoto, a third-generation Japanese-American peach farmer, has several of his identities (personal, familial and communal) interwoven with his farmland. He reveals:

The greatest lesson I gleaned from my fields is that I cannot farm alone...When I gaze over my farm I imagine Baachan [grandmother] or Dad walking through the fields. They seem content, at home on this land. My Sun Crest peaches are now part of the history of this place I too call home. I understand where I am because I know where I came from. I am homebound, forever linked to a piece of earth and the living creatures that reside here. (Holmes, 2003)

Qazimi (2014), quoted the geographer Relph, “to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place.”

The Igbo: An Ecological Overview

The following discussion is an attempt to draw an ecological picture of the Igbo. It pulls heavily from the work of A.E. Afigbo and S.J.S. Cooley. Their papers “Prolegomena to the Study of the Culture History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria” and “An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction of Traditional Igbo Society,” respectively, are part of the anthology, *West African Culture Dynamics*. The collection of essays grew out of papers presented in the session West African Cultural Dynamics at the “IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences”.

In his essay, Afigbo (1980) indicates that, at the time of his writing, the Igbo were as interested in their history as were the growing number of Igbo historians. They were under British rule from 1800-1960. In light of Nigerian independence, the Igbo engaged in learning their origin, cultural history, and identity before colonialism. Afigbo (1980) argues Igbo relationship to their environment is essential to understanding their cultural development. Like the Igbo’s interests, this review searches for their pre-colonial identity from the earliest time

through the beginning of the slave trade using an ecological perspective: geography, cultural and political relationships, values and religion, and economy.

It is vital to briefly mention excavation sites from the late 1950s-early 1960s to give a sense of the age of Igbo society.

The earliest evidence of the Igbo in the area comes from Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa rock shelter near Afikpo and Nsukka in the same ecological environment (Aham-Okoro, 2017 and Cookey, 1980). Both sites produced stone tools and fired and unfired pottery shards whose dating indicates human habitation

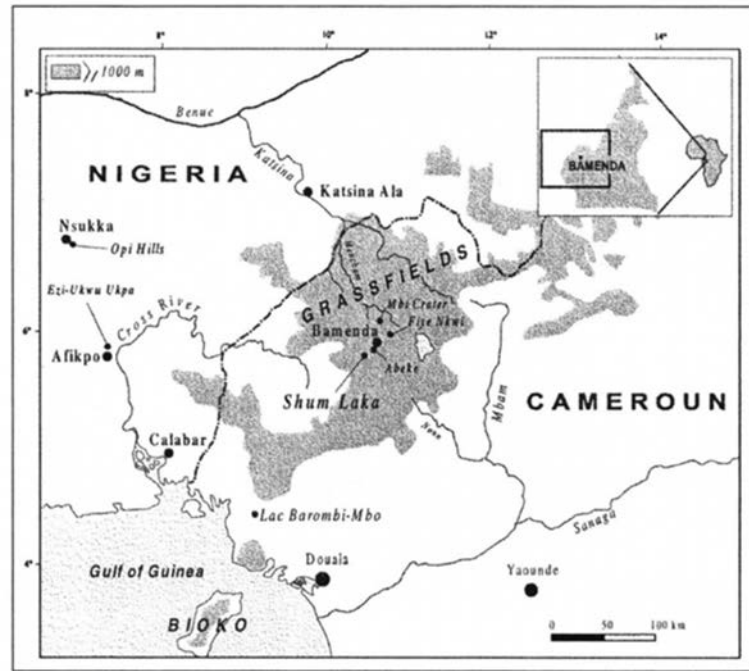


Figure 2. Map of Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa. Source: À la lisière de la forêt : 10 000 ans d'interactions entre l'homme et l'environnement dans les Grassfields (Cameroun). Available at <http://books.openedition.org/irdeditions/1497>

in Igboland since the Late Stone age. According to Cookey (1980), these findings have been accepted as early Neolithic cultures.

Bronze Age Migration

Among scholars, it is understood that the desertification of the Sahara by the Bronze Age caused people to move southward. The Saharan immigrants were hunters and pastoralists and had domesticated animals such as sheep, goats, and cattle. They may have reached the tropical forests of Nigeria. Linguistic and art traditions led historians to deduce that the Niger-Benue confluence holds importance for the early history of Igbo and their ancestors (Afigbo, 1980). The

migration of some of the Igbo from the Niger-Benue region may have been the influx of immigrants pushing them further south into the Niger forests.

While the Saharan population was hunters and pastoralists, the early Igbo were hunter and/or gatherers. It is not known when Igbo agriculture developed. Cooley (1980) suggests that if the Neolithic forest dweller survived on wild tubers, it is possible to imagine a scenario of accidental discovery. Perhaps after digging up and eating a yam, *Dioscorea cayenensis*, which is now known to be indigenous to West Africa, the Neolithic person discarded the tops, then weeks later discovered they grew back. This may have led to purposeful crop planting and harvesting (Cooley, 1980).

An agricultural society would not have been possible without the metal tools to clear trees and plants. Cooley (1980) notes the three sites that makeup Igbo-Ukwu offered fascinating discoveries. In 1959, Thurstan Shaw, an English archaeologist, and his team were invited by the antiquities department of Nigeria to explore excavation sites. Between 1959-1960 and 1964, Shaw and his team found numerous pieces of pottery “decorated with artistic detail, ivory tusks, forged iron objects, large quantities of bead ornaments, and, finally, copper and bronze objects, some produced by the lost-wax process and adorned with intricate designs” (Cooley, 1980). The bronze and copper objects caused much discussion for their creativity and distinction from the Benin and Ife bronzes unearthed west of the Niger. Adding to the interest were the carbon-14 dates acquired suggesting the culture was most likely not later than tenth century A.D. Advanced Iron Age culture remarkably early in Igboland development is cause for reconsidering the previous construction of southern Nigerian history.

Cooley (1980) states that the finds at Igbo-Ukwu raise a question, more important than dating, which is one of the nature of a society that “sustains such a sophisticated culture.” Shaw

suggested that some of the beads his team uncovered were imported, suggesting the possibility of contact with an outside world and long-distance trading networks. While the trading relationships and organization are unclear, the finds shed some light on the social and political life of the period. For example, at the Igbo Richards site, one of the three at Igbo-Ukwu, there are many signs representing the burial of a man of import, possibly with power and wealth. Additionally, there are signs of slavery, belief in an afterlife and ancestor worship represented by other humans buried with him.

Igbo believed in the “transmigration of souls” (Equiano, 2009). It is also known as rebirth or reincarnation. In the process of transmigration, before rebirth, the soul and the creator with assistance from an Igbo guardian spirit decide on one of two new options, e.g., longevity or wealth, presented by the creator. The decision of which new life path to take is based on a choice or considerations from a previous life. If the results of this choice prove to be unfavorable in the new life path, the individual is to make the best life possible knowing that they can choose a different life path during the next process. Henderson (1972) wrote:

A spiritual essence of the living self that guides and determines the course of that person’s life from birth to death. It is believed that when an individual chooses to ‘enter the world,’ he makes a pact with a particular essential being (chi), selecting his length of life and his future activities; the choices so made are marked by the chi on his hand as his akala-aka (‘marks of the hand’) or ‘destiny’. (Henderson, 1972)

Both the belief in an afterlife and ancestor worship were observed in historical times, and the state of Igbo Richards may suggest that the origins could be traced to the dawn of the Iron Age (Cookey, 1980).

As their iron technology advanced, it is possible to conclude that iron afforded the Igbo tools for migration, land cultivation, and development of their social and cultural patterns. The Igbo have two origin stories, both of which relate to the land. In one story their ancestors were sent down from heaven by Chukwu (the Igbo supreme god); the other is that they “sprang from the ground” (Afigo, 1980).

Afigo (1980) argues that interaction between Igbo and their environment is central to understanding Igbo cultural development but should not be used as a means to minimize or dismiss their development as inevitable because of their geographic location. Karmon (1966) concluded that Igbo migrants calculated ease of communication with their parent community and easy farming. They “avoided watercourses, the eroded surfaces of slopes, and clayey soils, which tended to become waterlogged” due to the difficulty of farming (Afigo, 1980).

There is not much uncertainty that social and cultural patterns of Northern Igbo traditions, especially the Nri, evolved alongside land cultivation. The part agriculture played in Igbo cultural development “is a very large issue which has not yet received the attention it deserves” (Afigo, 1980). Due to the importance of agriculture, the land became the center of Igbo way of life.

Igbo life was organized around the farming calendar. They held highly developed trade markets in a specific village on one of the four days which made up the Igbo week (Cookey, 1980). The four days of the week were established, they believed, by Chukwu who sent Eke, Orié or Oye, Afo, and Nkwo, four spirits as fishmongers. The lack of rivers and ponds in northern Igboland made fish a delicacy they could only get from the “Niger and Anamara Rivers to the west, from the Cross River to the east, or, more distant still from the Ijo of the delta” (Cookey, 1980 and Afigo, 1980). The market and trade, at least in northern Igboland, seemed to

be an exchange of goods. Afigbo (1980) views trade and marketing as an extension of the Igbo tradition of “reciprocal gift exchanges.” In the exchange, communities pass on surplus commodities for commodities in shortage. The markets acted as social and cultural affairs as well as trading posts. They were times of announcing family events, e.g. “births, deaths, weddings, to settle disputes, to celebrate happy events, and to meet relatives who could not be seen in the normal course of the week” (Cookey, 1980). At times festivals coincided their dates with specific market days.

Economic and sociopolitical factors also played themselves out in agreements between communities who lived in the same area of land. Communities who were able to work together “became ‘brothers,’ and each group of ‘brothers,’ by functioning as a landowning, land-defending, and land-seizing federation became a political unit” (Afigbo, 1980). A lineage or family owned the land, not an individual. The *okpara*, the head of the lineage, allocated the land as he saw fit. Families worked the land harvesting yams, palm fruit, cassava, cocoyams, maize, beans, plantains, okra and rice (crops listed in order of importance) (Gomez, 1998). If the village-group had no land-administering function, it would not become a political unit in the same right as other village-groups (Afigbo, 1980 and Cookey, 1980).

The land (*ala*) determined the shape of the village. The two main factors that guaranteed village members’ land use activities were not in conflict, and each member had a significant amount of land to use and defend against outside invasion (Afigbo, 1980). Most member villages within the village-group settled in a circle with their face to the group center and their backs to the farmland. Each village had limited rights to the land around its homestead and unoccupied land directly beyond the homestead. This served to maintain control of the land (Jones, 1961 and Afigbo, 1980).

While the land provided a source of food and wealth, it was also an integral part of Igbo spiritual practice. They believed their ancestors, *ndichie*, lived in the land of the spirits, *ala mmuo*, and an ancestral shrine was preserved in each village (Gomez, 1998). Prayers, sacrifices, and rituals were ways the living and dead communicated. They presupposed nature and the land were alive, and all things in the universe were connected to one another and to Chukwu and other spirits or deities. These beliefs shaped the relationships of the people to their community and to the land. Afigbo (1980) states:

The transgression of any of these rules, known as *omenala* [conduct sanctioned by the land], was promptly punished. It was distinguished from, and superior to, *iwu*, rules made by man, the transgressions of which involved no offense to *ala* and the ancestors and implied no moral lapse. *Ala* was thus the guardian of Igbo morality. (Afigbo, 1980)

Nso ala or Nso ani is an infraction against the land, which would “bring about ritual pollution” to oneself and also “expose one’s family and community to the danger of pollution” (Aguwa, 1993 and Uche, 2017). As their chief crop, stealing a yam was considered a transgression against *ala*. This *nso-ani* required cleansing of the person and the land. Their concept of justice was a restoration of the person and the community with the land; it included the concepts of “personal identity, justice, freedom, destiny, gods, ancestors, social ethic, and the nature of man’s relationship with the land” (Uche, 2017).

Igbo Women

The Igbo women were born into an economy based on agricultural, and a patrilineal society of high population density and political decentralization. In pre-colonial Igbo society, women were associated with their deity, *Ala*, the earth mother (Gomez, 1998). Care of the earth

and of reproduction was the realm of women. They were spiritual, independent warriors, who could own their labor and were “keepers of the soil” (Gomez, 1998). Olaudah Equiano was an Igbo man captured and shipped to North America at age 11. In his autobiography, he tells of women warriors in his village:

All are taught the use of these weapons; even our women are warriors, and march boldly out to fight along with the men. Our whole district is a kind of militia: on a certain signal given, such as the firing of a gun at night, they all rise in arms and rush upon their enemy. It is perhaps something remarkable, that when our people march to the field a red flag or banner is borne before them. I was once a witness to a battle in our common. We had been all at work in it one day as usual, when our people were suddenly attacked. I climbed a tree at some distance, from which I beheld the fight. There were many women as well as men on both sides; among others my mother was there, and armed with a broad sword. (Equiano, 2009)

In addition to being warriors, the women had the ability to be economically independent. While long-distance trade was the realm of men, women controlled local exchange and were able to keep their earnings. Along with trade and market work, women may have made and sold pottery, again owning the earnings (Gomez, 1998). The spiritually-driven achievement culture was not solely for individual status. A person’s climb through society connected directly to their lineage and community. Regardless of class at birth, women and men could increase economic and social status.

The women’s primary responsibility was care of earth mother, Ala. The land steward role was connected to her role of wife and mother. In marriage, she anticipated receiving “her own residence within a compound, along with clothing and land for a farm” (Gomez, 1998). If the

woman's husband was abusive, relatives would provide safety. If necessary, an Igbo woman could leave her husband for any reason. She could hold titles, and her children inherited any land she owned (which would have been given to her by her father or husband) (Gomez, 1998).

Forced Migration and Identity

Earlier in the chapter, self-concept was as defined as the perception a person has of themselves as a "physical, social, and spiritual or moral being" (Gecas, 1982), which included relationships with the environment and place. "The self-concept is a picture of the self" (Bhugra, 2002). However, with migration comes the loss of land and loss of culture, religious traditions and language, which necessitates adapting and creating new cultures and languages, reconstituting self-concept and self-identity (Bhugra and Becker, 2005), and developing a new relationship to the land and to place (De Blij, 2009).

Removal from the familiar can provoke a grief response. Forced migration causes a loss of the way a person has organized and understood themselves and their relationship to the world. The expression of grief may depend on an individual's cultural norms. John Bowlby, the architect of attachment theory, (as cited in Bhugra and Becker, 2005) illustrated four phases of mourning: shock and numbness, yearning and searching, disorganization and despair, and reorganization and recovery. A significant factor in reorganization and recovery is the type of society a person migrates from and to, and the social characteristics of the migrant, socio-centric or collectivistic versus egocentric or individualistic (Bhugra and Becker, 2005).

Oppong (2013) in his exploration of the relationship of migration and identity reconstruction includes Lee's definition (1966) which does not distinguish between forced or

voluntary, or internal or external forces. Nonetheless, through Robinson (2007), he offers much to consider regarding the challenges of reconstructing identity. Robinson (2007)

stresses that the process of identity reconstruction essentially involves a subtle balancing act of deep rooted ethnic values, cultures, modes of operating etc with often new and in most cases different norms, cultures and interests of the host country where the migrant's resettlement takes place. (Robinson, 2007)

How fully one can come back to themselves may depend on the reason for migration, whether forced or voluntary and the relationships to or with the groups in their destination.

Igbo Women: North American Diaspora

Between 1526-1867 (Emory, n.d.), the transatlantic slave trade forcibly displaced approximately 12.5 million Africans (Gilder Lehrman, 2014), though there is a debate about that number due to poor record keeping. An estimated 472,000 Africans were taken for delivery to the thirteen original British colonies and to the United States between 1619-1860. Due to disease and suicide, almost 18 percent of them died during the Middle Passage (Schomburg, n.d.), the leg of the transatlantic slave trade between Africa and the Americas.

Ninety percent of the enslaved Africans in the United States arrived from "Senegambia (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali), the Upper Guinea Coast (Sierra Leone, Guinea), the Gold Coast (Ghana), the Bight of Biafra (eastern Nigeria, Cameroon), and west-central Africa (Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon)," with approximate 65,000 originating from the Bight of Biafra (Schomburg, n.d.). The Bight of Biafra is situated in the Niger Delta and the Cross River valley, which is now southeast Nigeria. Based on ethnicity listing in the Americas, a sizable percentage of the Africans taken from the Bight of Biafra in the last half of

the eighteenth century and shrinking majority during the nineteenth century were Igbo (also as Ibo or Ebo) (Hall, 2005). Hall explains that:

If we restrict ourselves to the eighteenth century, the most important time period for the United States, Chambers, Gomez, and Walsh's assumption of large numbers of Igbo in Virginia is supported by documents created on the American side of the Atlantic, but with some caveats. *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* shows that voyages from the Bight of Biafra to Virginia took place early: 84 percent (n=89) before 1750, 16 percent between 1751 and 1775 (n=17), and none after that date. But voyages from Bonny where a high proportion of Igbo were exported began earlier than scholars previously believed (Hall, 2005).

In the Chesapeake Colonies (Virginia and Maryland), Virginia overshadowed Maryland in the slave trade. At least 25,000 Igbo were placed in Virginia between 1710s-1740s (Chambers, 2009). Through what was termed natural increase, the numbers of enslaved rose early and steadily. "The numbers of slaves in Virginia more than doubled between the 1720s and 1740 (from 26,500 to 60,000) and then doubled again (to 120,000) by 1755, and by 1760 there were over 140,000 black people in the colony" (Chambers, 2009). Igbo women constituted 45 percent of the enslaved in the early decades and 27 percent of all Africans in the colony (Stevenson, 2007).

Hall (2005) surmises that Igbo women may have been a preferred ethnic group in the Chesapeake. Their characteristics, which may have found favor with the slave-owners, were independence, willingness to intermarry and raise their children, their local and place-based identity, and the place-attachment to the land where their first child was born. In addition,

because the Igbo lived in a stateless society, Igbo women had the tools to establish new communities in places with no pre-existing hierarchy.

A new generation of children may have been a concern for African-born Igbo women. With reincarnation and transmigration of the soul as core beliefs, Chambers (2009) posits that “each birth required attending to the question of who was being (re) born. Or conversely, she would have to reckon with the possibility that the child was an ‘abomination,’ that is, something totally and utterly new.” African-born Igbo women believed their soul would return to the land of their birth and their ancestors. American-born Igbo women had no ancestors in colonial America to guide their soul through the birth process or direct them back to the ancestors when they died. Gomez (1998) points out that oral tradition references African-born people flying home, but none contain American-born people with the same power.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Usually, methodology explains or defends a data gathering process, and summarizes how it was evaluated. In this paper, methodology is a general term for a system of analysis. This section is an overview of the strategy behind the research.

The research began with one question: how did forced migration change West African and African Americans’ relationship to the land? An extensive literature review was conducted using the keywords: environmental identity, the West African slave trade, Atlantic slave trade, West African relationship to the land, black geographies, self-identity, forced migration, and sense of place. The primary literature sources were Antioch University’s library catalog, Academic Search Complete, Journal databases, and Google Scholar. Through email, phone, and in-person conversations, more information and direction were gained from Dr. Rasheeda Hawk,

Biophysicist, Epigenetics Researcher, Dr. Susan Clayton, Whitmore-Williams Professor of Psychology and chair of Environmental Studies at the College of Wooster and Black Girls Trekkin' (BGT). BGT's mission is to "help empower black women while getting outdoors" (Race & Tharpe, 2017). In the course of a hike with 10 women from Black Girls Trekkin', it was discovered that four other Black women were involved with the environment in differing ways: conservation, preservation and environmental history. During the trek, no specific story or comment sparked the memory of the importance of Igbo women in a new generation of African Americans, but recalling that information generated an idea that was exciting and interesting. The research question changed to: How did forced displacement and forced migration change Igbo women's and their African American female descendants' environmental identity? The new question refined keyword searches from West African to Igbo, Ebo, Ibo, Igboland, and Igbo women.

The overall research combined different methods: historical research, literature review and case study. Since the area of study has a limited amount of scholarship, the review sought to present existing scholarship about the Igbo, then analyze the work from the perspective of environmental identity. The material was organized from the earliest known records and stopped before colonization in the 1870s. The interest was understanding Igbo society pre-colonization.

The historical qualitative review style was Busha and Harter's method:

The conduct of historical research entails the following steps: (a) the recognition of a historical problem or the identification of a need for certain historical knowledge; (b) the gathering of as much pertinent information about the problem or topic as possible; (c) if appropriate, the forming of hypotheses that tentatively explain relationships between historical factors (variables); (d) the rigorous collection and organization of evidence, and

the verification of the authenticity and veracity of information and its sources; (e) the selection, organization, and analysis of the most pertinent collected evidence, and the drawing of conclusion; and (f) the recording of conclusions in a meaningful narrative. Historical research can be conducted most effectively with these procedures. (Busha & Harter, 1980)

While not a formal case study, I adopted the idea of Igbo women as a case study, asking, Can this study begin to establish a historical environmental identity?, and if so, can Igbo women and their African American female descendants be tracked over time to note significant changes? Using multiple methodologies proved a useful way to approach this new area of research. It gave me room to adjust as new information emerged.

Chapter 5: Findings

As with Chapter 4, this chapter is not a traditional presentation of the data analysis. For this paper, the term findings is synonymous with observations. The section offers observations from the historical research and literature reviews.

The research question of this thesis informed the direction of the content: How did forced migration and forced displacement change Igbo women's and their African American daughters' environmental identity? The building blocks of the research were environmental identity, Igbo history and culture pre-colonization, forced migration, and Igbo and African American women in the North American diaspora. The literature review was meant to explore some fundamental questions:

1. What is environmental identity?
2. What was Igbo culture pre-colonization?

3. What was Igbo women's environmental identity pre-colonization?
4. What is forced migration?
5. How does forced migration change environmental identity?
6. Can we identify behaviors establishing Igbo women's and their African American daughters' environmental identity in colonial America?

To narrow the analysis three themes were selected based on Gecas' and Clayton's definition of self-concept and environmental identity, respectively: **spiritual practices, people and nature**, and **economics and nature**. The following sections offer findings organized by the themes to ascertain how the environment featured in the lives of the Igbo.

Spirituality and the land

Igbo spirituality and the land were a multilayered connection from their origin story to afterlife. Their two origin stories are both related to the land. Chukwu, their supreme god, sent them to live in Igboland, and their people "sprang from the ground" (Afigo, 1980). It was taken for granted that the land was living, and everything in the universe including Chukwu and the other spirits or deities were connected (Afigbo, 1980). A core belief is of their ancestors, *ndichie*, living in the land of the spirits, *ala mmuo* (Gomez, 1998). Every village maintained an ancestral shrine employing prayers, sacrifices, and rituals as a way of communicating with the dead. They believed in "transmigration of souls" (Equiano, 2009). After death, they return to the land of their ancestors to be re-born (Chambers, 2009). From the dating of the Igbo Richard, it is possible to suggest that these beliefs can be traced to the beginning of the Iron Age (Cookey, 1980).

People and the land

The geography and the land factored into how Igbo migrated from northern Igboland, and their sociopolitical structure. As smaller populations separated from the parent community, two considerations were ease of communication with the parent community and farming. In order to cultivate the land, they avoided land too close to rivers and streams, areas with soil erosion or too finely grained soils (Afigbo, 1980). Those areas proved difficult to farming due to the tendency to become waterlogged.

A village-group organized as “landowning, land-defending, and land-seizing federation became a political unit” (Afigbo, 1980). No individual owned land. It belonged to the family, lineage, or subtribe of the Igbo in that region. If there were no land-administering functions, the village-group did not have the same rights as other (Afigbo, 1980 and Cooney, 1980).

The village shape, a circle, was meant to minimize conflict between village members and ensure each member had enough land to use and defend against outside invasion (Afigbo, 1980). Member villages within the village-group faced the group center with their backs to the farmland. In this way, they could control access to the land. (Jones, 1961 and Afigbo, 1980).

Their laws were based on “personal identity, justice, freedom, destiny, gods, ancestors, social ethic, and the nature of man’s relationship with the land (Uche 2017). The purpose was the restoration of the person and the community with the land. They had laws sanctioned by the land, which were superior to laws created by humans. *Ala*, goddess of the land, acted guardian of Igbo morality (Afigbo, 1980).

Economics and the land

The Igbo had an agriculture-based culture and economics. The main system food and wealth growth was through the land. The more land a village-group controlled the more crops they could plant for trade and to sustain themselves (Afigbo, 1980). The farming calendar structured Igbo life. One origin story of their four market days has Chukwu sending four spirits, Eke, Orié or Oyé, Afo, and Nkwo, to earth as fishmongers. Those are the names of their market days (Cookey, 1980). The market and trade were sources for commerce and social and cultural affairs.

Summary

The research question had two parts: historical environmental identity and intergenerational environmental identity neither of which could be comprehensively answered in this thesis. Environmental identity is an individual's relationship with the land. The literature review provided an overview of the culture and history. Since this work reviewed the history of people who have died, determining their environmental identity with scientific certainty is not possible. Yet, given the information above, there is reason to suggest a high connection between cultural identity and the environment. In order to validate that presumption and verify the transmission of cultural behaviors between generations, further study is necessary.

Chapter 6: Discussion

During the initial inquiry phase, a lack of scholarship connecting forced displacement, forced migration, and environmental identity was discovered. Dr. Susan Clayton confirmed that studies had been done on environmental identity and location, e.g., urban vs. rural identity, but

not forced displacement and environmental identity (S. Clayton, personal communication, November 8, 2017). Dr. Rasheeda Hawk, was a resource for research direction. Since we have learned through epigenetics that trauma can be passed to later generations through a change in DNA, the question was asked of her if she or anyone in her field studied the long-term effects of forced displacement and migration on people and their environmental identity. Dr. Hawk wrote, "...there is a strong association between the loss of land, emotions, and which body organ is afflicted. Besides just the land, there are ritual practices that call in the energetic entities that affect our mental, emotional, and physical well-being" (R. Hawk, personal communication, November 8, 2017). Jennifer Ito, USC Center for Immigration Studies, was asked by my program mentor, Jane Paul, about resources for information. She wrote, "Interesting research question...and very timely given the displacement issues driving immigration as well as the urban displacement issues facing predominantly African American, Latino, and immigrant communities. This is not an issue that we've explored, so there are not many people or resources I can direct her to" (J. Paul, personal communication, November 14, 2017). The complexity of the research question meant the answer would not have been found for publication of this paper. The work presented serves to offer direction for future research and how to think about forced migration, forced displacement, and environmental identity.

From the literature review, we know forced migration and forced displacement change the human-environment interaction by changing a person's self-concept. 2012's World Disasters Report by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) focused on forced migration and forced displacement. IFRC reported that "over 70 million people are forced migrants – more than one in every 100 of the world's citizens – displaced by conflict, political upheaval, violence, and disasters, but also by climate change and development projects...The

cost to the international community is at least US \$8 billion a year” (IFRC, 2012). The monetary calculation excludes the human toll. The estimate omits the cost of livelihoods, fractured communities, and the increased vulnerability of women and children.

The language of forced migration, though used throughout this paper, should be examined as well for its lack of dimension. For example, the use of “slave” versus “enslaved.” Makota Valdina, elder in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, educator, community organizer and environmental justice and human rights activist said, “I am not a descendant of slaves. I am descended from humans who were enslaved”.

Aurora Vergara-Figueroa is the director of the Afrodiasporic Studies Center at Icesi University. In her book, *Afrodescendant Resistance to Deracination in Colombia*, Vergara-Figueroa (2018) argues “that by using the term ‘forced migrant’ for people who have been abused and dispossessed, in essence, legitimizes a process of deadly land dispossession and economic exploitation. It makes us accomplices to it” (Vergara-Figueroa, 2018). Similar to the word slave, forced migration speaks to a condition, not to the humanity of the person or the actions which caused the condition.

Vergara-Figueroa (2018) offers a socio-historical analysis of the 2002 massacre in Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó in Colombia, when Paramilitary and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) fought for days. FARC fired a cylinder bomb at the paramilitary hitting the community church, which lay in the crossfire (del Carrill and Juan-Torres, 2016). Approximately 119 people were killed, and approximately 1744 families abandoned the territory to escape the violence of the bombing (Vergara-Figueroa, 2018). As a result of leaving, these people were placed in the category of forced displacement and registered in the Colombian system of Internally Displaced Populations (IDP) (Vergara-Figueroa, 2018 and del Carrill and Juan-Torres,

2016). She uses coloniality of power, Quijano's concept of describing the structure of power and control set up by European colonialism, as a tool for analysis.

Vergara-Figueroa (2018) contends that disregarding "the historical continuities and discontinuities of colonial capitalism, racialized colonialism, class, racial, sexual, gender, and generational exploitation" limits the likelihood of creating different ways of thinking and speaking about radical social mobilization and social transformation. She maintains the massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó cannot be viewed without factoring in the effects of the colonization of Latin America. Limiting the scope of analysis of forced migration allows for continued disparities in social, economic and demographic conditions, even as globalization and the number of forcibly displaced people increase.

In attempting to study the environmental identity of Igbo women and their African American daughters, our current narrow framework should do more to connect the multiple displacements involved with domestic slavery, Jim Crow laws, black codes, sharecropping, redlining, police brutality, prison industrial complex and living in sacrifice zones with the development of a relationship to the land. These are extensions of the system created by coloniality of power. Law and practices based on skin color and gender meant to, among other things, limit freedom of movement, ownership of land and homes, access to specific types of jobs or education, and control and dominate bodies through criminalization.

As discussed in the section on place identity, David Mas Masumoto, a third-generation peach farmer, had time to become "homebound, forever linked to a piece of earth and the living creatures that reside here" (Holmes, 2003). For people such as, but not limited to, African Americans or Latinos in the United States, forced displacement can disrupt place attachment. One such case is of the families of Chavez Ravine in the city of Los Angeles.

Chavez Ravine, was three neighborhoods, Palo Verde, La Loma and Bishop. They made up a close, self-sufficient Mexican community with farms, churches, grocery store and schools. Albert Elias, 80 at the time of this quote, remembered, "When there was a party in the neighborhood, nobody called the police that you were making a lot of noise because everybody was at the party" (Becerra, 2012).

Beginning in the early 1950s through 1959 (Dundon, 2017), the city of Los Angeles used eminent domain to forcefully displace 300 families from Chavez Ravine (Zinned Project, 2004

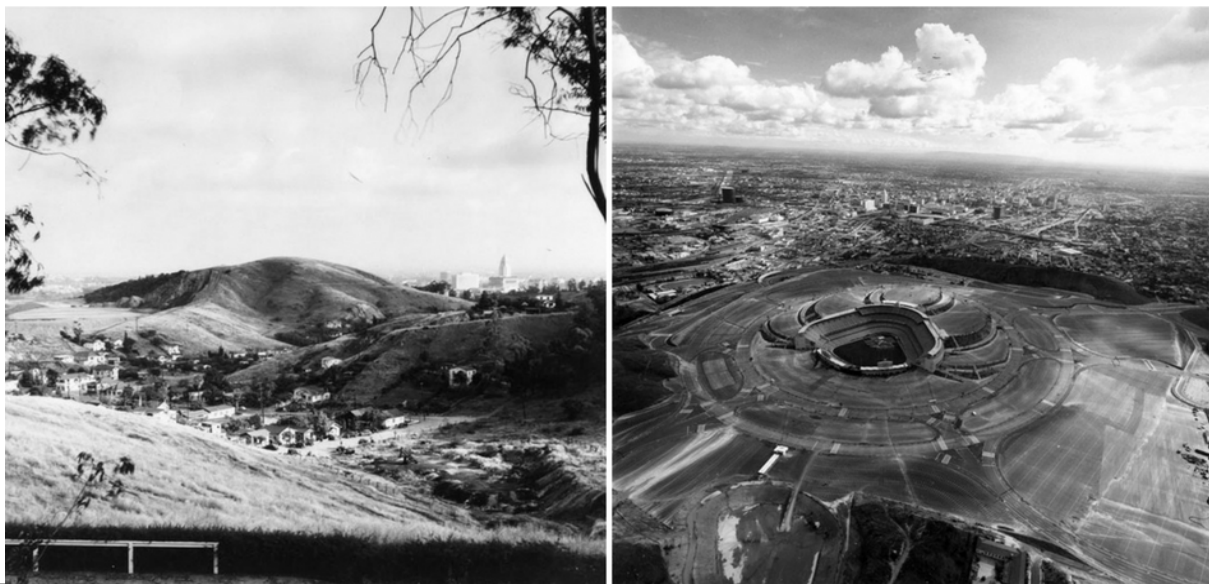


Figure 3: The picture on left is the Chavez Ravine in 1952. The image on the right is Chavez Ravine during construction of Dodger Stadium in 1960. Source: Timeline, Dundon, 2017. Available at <https://bit.ly/2gCmYMi>

and Independent Lens, n.d.). The City claimed to be developing low-income housing public housing project. The homes, churches, and schools were flattened, and the land cleared. The residents received insubstantial to no compensation for their homes (Independent Lens, n.d). Changes in the political landscape caused the land to be sold to Walter O'Malley, the Brooklyn Dodgers' owner, who built Dodger Stadium (Masters, 2012). After the stadium was erected, road signs showing Stadium Way replaced former Chavez Ravine Road signs (Masters, 2014).

Earlier in this paper, the colonization of Nauru, and the strip-mining of their land was discussed. The principles of coloniality of power were at play here, but also in the case of Chavez Ravine. While the land was not strip-mined like Nauru, the City disregarded the well-being of the long-time residents for its benefit and razed the land and community for economic gain.

In their communities, the Chavez Ravine families are called Los Desterrados, “The Uprooted” (Molina, 2012). While some of them were able to stay close to the area, others relocated to neighborhoods surrounding the Arroyo Seco Confluence such as Elysian Valley, and Glassell Park. The Arroyo Seco Confluence is part of the Los Angeles River, all of which was channelized by the Army Corp of Engineers over a 23-year period from 1936 to 1959 (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, n.d.). Paving the river destroyed the non-human ecosystem of the river to prevent home and property damage and loss of life from floods as human development encroached on the river.

Cecilia “Ceci” Dominguez moved to Elysian Valley with her husband, Rey. Rey’s family was part of the Los Desterrados who relocated to Elysian Valley after eviction from Chavez Ravine (Parra, 2013). Before his death in 2012, Rey and Ceci Dominguez fought environmental battles similar to the communities in Lerner’s *Sacrifice Zones*. Mr. Dominguez successfully prevented the City from placing a sewer exhaust facility in his community, and actively fought the rezoning of Mission Labs which was polluting the neighborhood and expanding into residential properties (Raymond, 2012). Together, they worked on “improving local education, cleaning up the river, decreasing pollution from nearby trains and businesses” (Parra, 2013).

As the area improved, the City sought to revitalize and restore the Los Angeles River. Many Los Desterrados are homeowners in Elysian Valley and received letters from real estate

developers offering to purchase their home. Los Desterrados have a collective memory of the battle for their homes and community. In an interview, Mrs. Dominguez relayed her late husband's words about the potential land developments: "[My husband] told me that when he came down here, there was talk of people greening or removing. He said that will never happen again. Ever. Those were his words. We will never let that happen again" (Samuel, 2014).

Cassandra Johnson Gaither, a research social scientist with the United States Forest Service wrote a paper titled: "A Consideration of Collective Memory in African American Attachment to Wildland Recreation Places." The definitions used in her study could apply to Los Desterrados and African Americans, including female descendants of Igbo. One way of defining collective memory is as "an image of the past within the bounds of social context, for example, meaningful events that occur in one's family, neighborhood, ethnic/racial group, or nation" (Johnson, 1998). Another is that the "memory of historical events is not restricted to individuals but shared by ethnic communities that relive collective traumas, for example the Holocaust" (Johnson, 1998). Johnson (1998) asserts that empirical or theoretical studies on wildland reaction participation preference and behavior, which generally concentrate on the effect of socioeconomics on recreation preference and behavior, should expand to other aspects of social structure, e.g., sociohistorical.

In the same way generations of Jewish men, women, and children who did not witness the Holocaust but heard stories from their elder relatives, generations of African Americans were told stories about segregation, black codes, sharecropping and lynching by older relatives who survived or witnessed these experiences (Johnson, 1998). It is possible then, Johnson (1998) maintains, that these stories transform into one part of a younger generation's collective identity in such way that histories "contribute to what it means to be black in American society; and these

memories or narratives about the land influence black Americans' choices for outdoor recreation venues." Throughout the study, Johnson (1998) suggests one cannot disconnect the violence and oppression experienced by black Americans in "unprotected wild areas" with the possibility that they are a factor, consciously or unconsciously, in African Americans' decisions about wildlands.

Johnson (1998) notes academics believe that gender and race must be considered to understand African American women's fear and their disproportionate lack of participation in wildland activities. Riley (1996) explains the relationship to nature is problematic for black women due to historical associations with animalism and sexual objectification in order to maintain ideas of racial purity. bell hooks (1991) writes, "From slavery to the present day, the Black female body has been seen in Western eyes as the quintessential symbol of a "natural" female presence that is organic, closer to nature, animalistic, primitive" (hooks & West, 1991). Riley (1998) concludes that:

Because of the historical and current treatment of Blacks in dominant Western ideology, Black womanists must confront the dilemma of whether we should strive to sever or reinforce the traditional association of Black people with nature that exists in dominant Western thought. However, what we need is not a total disassociation of people from nature, but rather a reformulation of *everyone's* relationship to nature by socially reconstruction gender, class and ethnic roles. (Riley, 1998)

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Limitations

With any research, there may be flaws in design, data, and interpretation. Studying forced migration and environmental identity is a new area of focus. As such, it was not discovered until later in the investigation phase that the research question should be broken into two areas: cultural identity and environmental identity. Cultural identity would have applied to Igbo in Igboland and colonial America. For African American women descendants who are alive and able to discuss their relationship to the land, establishing an environmental identity and connecting it to cultural identity would be the more appropriate way to approach the question.

A portion of the research period was spent fruitlessly searching for information explicitly on Igbo, Igbo women and environmental identity. The lack of data on the subject meant researching this question needed a different approach. The existing work on Igbo society should be read with an environmental identity and relationship to the land lens.

Recommendations

The research methods used for this paper could be modified based on the findings to enhance future research. Additional research would benefit from continuing to include social, economic, political and historical contexts of an individual's or community's relationship to their environment or the land. Each of the recommendations may help forward thinking and ways to research forced migration and environmental identity.

1. Further research on this specific question could include both qualitative and quantitative research. This work would be enhanced by documentation of Igbo women who were shipped to Virginia, then trace their female descendants searching for markers of

environmental identity that were displayed by Igbo women. If possible, continue to trace the female descendants to the present day to conduct a qualitative research study to understand what, if any, connection their environmental identity has to their awareness or observations of their families' and culture's historical relationship with the land.

2. Other questions to keep in mind in addition to the original research question are:
 - a. What is the relationship between sense of place and sense of location, and why?
 - b. Can cultural heritage link individuals and or groups to a geographic place?
3. This research would be informed by further investigation of populations such as Palestinians, First Nation, Native Peoples, or Indigenous Peoples. Palestinians have dealt with displacement and dispossession. Relationship to the land is an integral part of First Nation, Native Peoples, and Indigenous Peoples way of being.
4. Since forced displacement means a reorganizing of one's self-concept, a way to approach the question of the relationship between forced displacement and environmental identity is to ask: how are people making sense of their world? There may be a tendency to project one's personal point of view, assumptions or bias on another's experience. This question places the experience of the people at the center of the research.
5. This paper explored the creation of belonging through environmental identity and place identity. The culture of place could enhance the research. In her book, *Belonging: a culture of place*, bell hooks asks, "What does it mean to call a place home? Who is allowed to become a member of a community? How do we create community? When can we say that we truly belong?... She explores a geography of the heart, focusing on issues of homeplace, of land, and land stewardship, linking the issues to global environmentalism and sustainability.... And she focuses on the experience of black

farmers, past and present who celebrate local organic food production” (hooks, 2009).

The questions presented, and ideas investigated may offer more direction for inquiry.

Conclusion

Imperialism and colonialism required a worldview that branded people and places as objects to be conquered. During colonialism, a system of classification was created to express power, control, and domination of people and the land. The category of race associated skin-color with either nature or humanity. The darker the skin color, the closer a person was linked to nature. Nature was viewed as wild and needed to be tamed. Both people and land were regarded only as tools for the advancement of the colonizer.

It is under these world conditions that Igbo women were kidnapped and shipped to colonial America for enslavement. In the New World, they endured the domestic slave trade. Their children persevered through continuous forced migration and displacement. Pre-colonialism and during enslavement their cultural identity suggested a high correlation with the environment. The involvement of the land was in their spiritual beliefs, how and where they created settlements and in their economy.

The same attitude of conquering people and places has been transformed itself into the current dominant worldview of extractivism. Through studying the cultural markers of the Igbo women and the environmental identity of following generations, it may be possible to find and validate markers of belonging. Since they would have been handed down generation after generation, they may be signs of resilience. Those markers could be used to aid others who have been displaced to create resilience or, even, regeneration. More resilient people might move the worldview from extractivism to a regenerative framework which would enable:

human communities to co-evolve with the natural living systems they inhabit while continuously regenerating environments and cultures... [The framework includes] the ability of a living system to create a sense of identity and foster belonging through its culture, to support meaningful and contributory lives, and to invoke the spirit and inspiration that sustains caring. (Mang and Reed, 2013)

The forced displacement of 1 in every 100 people (IFRC, 2012) did not occur by happenstance. Acknowledging the past, its systems in existence today and the effects on people and the planet helps provide a holistic way of transforming from the dominant worldview of extractivism to regeneration. This transformation offers a chance to creatively envision the world as a place of caring for, celebrating and honoring one's community, its residents and the environment.

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