What brought us forward: *Ciulaku* women and their fight for land rights in Taiwan

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Abstract

Drawing on ethnographic research and oral histories, the article highlights how *Ciulaku* women play a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting collective memories of displacement. These memories, often rooted in personal and intergenerational trauma, become powerful tools of resistance, identity affirmation, and community cohesion. The findings reveal that Taiwan Indigenous People, specifically *Ciulaku* women, are not only the custodians of memory but also key agents in the struggle for justice. Their capacity to articulate the embodied and relational memory while advocating for the return and protection of lands showcases women agency in confronting state-led resettlement and navigating the legal and cultural complexities of land claims. Through community mobilization, protest actions, and intergenerational storytelling, these women cultivate a shared sense of purpose that extends beyond individual experiences of displacement. *Ciulaku* women's resilience is evident in the ways they foster solidarity, sustain cultural practices, and rebuild community ties in the face of structural marginalization. Rather than being passive victims of displacement, *Ciulaku* women emerge as central figures in shaping political discourse and strategies for land restitution. This study contributes to broader discussions on Indigenous resistance, ecofeminism, feminist political ecology and decolonial movements by centering Indigenous women's voices and experiences in land struggles. It also emphasizes the necessity of recognizing gendered dimensions within Indigenous movements as crucial to understanding the full scope of resistance against displacement.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, *Ciulaku* women, forced displacement, resilience, women bonding and agency

Résumé

S'appuyant sur des recherches ethnographiques et des récits oraux, cet article met en lumière le rôle central joué par les femmes Ciulaku dans la préservation et la transmission des mémoires collectives liées au déplacement. Ces mémoires, souvent ancrées dans des traumatismes personnels et intergénérationnels, deviennent de puissants outils de résistance, d'affirmation identitaire et de cohésion communautaire. Les résultats révèlent que les peuples autochtones de Taïwan, en particulier les femmes Ciulaku, ne sont pas seulement les gardiennes de la mémoire, mais aussi des actrices clés dans la lutte pour la justice. Leur capacité à articuler des souvenirs incarnés et relationnels tout en plaidant pour le retour et la protection des terres met en évidence le pouvoir d'action des femmes face à la réinstallation imposée par l'État et à la complexité juridique et culturelle des revendications foncières. Grâce à la mobilisation communautaire, aux actions de protestation et à la transmission intergénérationnelle des récits, ces femmes cultivent un sentiment d'appartenance commun qui dépasse les expériences individuelles de déplacement. La résilience des femmes Ciulaku est évidente dans la manière dont elles favorisent la solidarité, perpétuent les pratiques culturelles et reconstruisent les liens communautaires face à la marginalisation structurelle. Plutôt que d'être des victimes passives du déplacement, les femmes Ciulaku apparaissent comme des figures centrales dans l'élaboration du discours politique et des stratégies de restitution des terres. Cette étude contribue à élargir le débat sur la résistance autochtone, l'écoféminisme, l'écologie politique féministe et les mouvements décoloniaux en mettant l'accent sur les voix et les expériences des femmes autochtones dans les luttes foncières. Elle souligne également la nécessité de reconnaître les dimensions de genre au sein des

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mouvements autochtones comme essentielles pour comprendre toute l'étendue de la résistance contre le déplacement.
Mots-clés: Écoféminisme, femmes Ciulaku, déplacement forcé, résilience, liens entre les femmes et capacité d'action

摘要：
本研究以民族誌與口述歷史為基礎，本文強調長樂部落（Ciulaku）女性在保存與傳承遭受強迫遷移的集體記憶中扮演關鍵角色。這些記憶往往根植於個人及跨世代的創傷，成為強而有力的抵抗工具、身份認同的肯認，以及凝聚部落生存的力量。研究發現，臺灣原住民族，特別是長樂部落女性，不僅是記憶的守護者，同時也是追求正義的重要行動者。她們能夠表述身體感受與相互關係性的記憶，並同時倡議土地的返還與保護，展現了女性在面對國家主導的遷移政策以及處理土地權益相關的法律與文化複雜性時的能動性。透過部落動員、向官方提出抗議的行動以及跨世代的故事傳述，這些女性培養出超越個人流離失所經驗的集體追遷記憶。長樂部落女性的韌性展現在她們如何培養團結部落、維繫文化實踐，以及在結構性邊緣化處境中重建部落。長樂部落女性並非被動的追遷受害者，而是塑造政治論述與土地返還策略的核心人物。本研究透過強調原住民女性在土地抗爭中的聲音與經驗，對於原住民族抵抗、生態女性主義、女性政治生態學與去殖民運動的論述作出貢獻。同時，本研究亦強調在原住民族運動中談論性別面向的重要性，因其對理解當代抵抗強迫遷移有其重要性。
關鍵詞： 生態女性主義、長樂部落女性、強迫遷移、韌性、女性連結與能動性

1. Introduction

Indigenous displacement is a stark manifestation of patriarchal and colonial structures that perpetuate the marginalization of Indigenous communities (Thompson & Suzuki, 2022). Colonial legacies continue to shape land ownership and resource allocation, disproportionately benefiting dominant groups while disregarding Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. Consequently, Indigenous women face heightened vulnerability to displacement, as they are not only marginalized within patriarchal societies but also within their own communities due to intersecting forms of discrimination. Globally, Indigenous women experience displacement through various channels, including land dispossession, environmental degradation, armed conflicts, and economic exploitation. Such displacement often stems from the imposition of development projects, resource extraction initiatives, or government policies that prioritize profit over the rights and well-being of Indigenous communities (Martin *et al*., 2017).

As primary stewards of their lands and natural resources, Indigenous women bear the brunt of natural and tribal disruptions, leading to displacement from their ancestral territories and disruption of their traditional ways of life for multiple generations. The displacement of Indigenous women underscores the interconnectedness of gender oppression and colonial legacies (Grusin, 2017). Colonialism has historically subjected Indigenous women to intersecting forms of oppression, including gender-based violence, cultural erasure, and economic exploitation. These colonial dynamics persist in contemporary societies, perpetuating the marginalization and disempowerment of Indigenous women. Moreover, Indigenous women face unique challenges within feminist movements, where their voices and experiences are often overlooked. Mainstream feminism has historically been critiqued for its failure to adequately address the specific needs and struggles of Indigenous women, reinforcing the marginalization they experience within both Indigenous communities and broader society (Rose, 2013). As such, a feminist analysis of Indigenous women's displacement necessitates centering their voices and perspectives, and recognizing their agency, resilience, and leadership in advocating for their rights. This article offers to bridge that gap by examining how *Ciulaku* Indigenous women manifest resilience under forced displacement, in order to inform the overlooked complexities within ecofeminist and feminist political ecology approaches.

The displacement of Indigenous women sheds light on the need for efforts to be rooted in a framework of decolonization and intersectional feminism, acknowledging the interconnected systems of power and privilege that perpetuate their marginalization (Shiva, 2020). This entails amplifying Indigenous women's voices, supporting their leadership in grassroots movements, and advocating for policies that uphold their rights to land, resources, and self-determination. By centering the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous women, feminist discourses can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable vision of social

justice that recognizes and respects the rights and sovereignty of all women, particularly those at the intersections of multiple forms of oppression (Kwaymullina, 2018).

The Indigenous peoples of Taiwan have strived to maintain their livelihoods amidst political dislocation, racial discrimination, and social exclusion through multiple events of colonialization. The post-War implementation of the "Mountain Leveling Policy" (山地平地化) and the "Mandarin Movement"（推行國語政策）enforced by the KMT regime in Taiwan systematically dismantled the culture, society, and customs of Indigenous peoples (Sun, 2000). These policies not only disrupted traditional ways of life but also severely undermined Indigenous linguistic heritage, depriving communities of the vitality and transmission of their mother tongues across generations. Aside from direct colonial violence, forced displacement has also resulted from other factors; natural disasters, unknown diseases, and tribal conflicts with neighboring villages (Yap, 2023).[2] This article examines eight women who embody their communities' responses to forced displacement. In particular, it reveals the untold story of the *Ciulaku* community, who belong to the Paiwan people, one of 16 Indigenous groups in the south of Taiwan. Through an ecofeminist approach, this study illustrates how *Ciulaku* women lay claims to their land and ask for the truth behind past forced displacements. By analyzing the contexts of *Ciulaku* women, I aim to identify post-colonial narratives and explore how these women address these man-made disasters.

In the case of the Paiwanese *Ciulaku* community or *bùluò* (部落), the historical experience of Indigenous displacement underscores the loss of Taiwan Indigenous peoples' lands due to colonial exploitation by the Japanese empire, Han settlers, the Kuomintang (KMT) regime, and contemporary management practices of national parks (Berkes *et al*., 2021). In 1951, after independence from Japan, the Mountain Administration Reform Project led to the formation of a larger migrants' *bùluò* called *tua Qaljapan*[3] in southern Pingtung County. It was made up of displaced communities from *Tjukuvulji, Timur, Tjavatjavang* and *Kucapungane* – three northern Paiwanese villages and one Rukai village (see Figure 1).

The research methodology, described in section 3, was a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both in-depth interviews and historical document analysis. Eight *Ciulaku*[4] Indigenous Paiwanese women offered comprehensive and nuanced data regarding their experiences, perspectives, and life narratives (Hennink *et al*., 2010). Direct engagement with these *Ciulaku* women facilitated an exploration of their personal struggles, challenges, and the socio-cultural factors that manifest their resilience, guiding the community's adaptation, adjustment, and regeneration amidst the dramatic changes in their living environment. An analysis of historical documents identified some of the primary actors responsible for the forced displacement events and provides evidence to support the oral testimonies, challenging the "official" narrative by the State justifying forced displacement.

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[2] In Yap's research, one can observe both intimate and hierarchical relationships among various Paiwan and Rukai communities. These descriptions are part of the broader historical background that indirectly contributed to the formation of *tua Qaljapan*. "On December 25, 1934, a young girl from *Tjukuvulj* went missing. Due to longstanding hostilities with the neighboring *Sagaran* community, *Tjukuvulj* residents believed that the girl had been murdered by the latter. Three days later, *Tjukuvulj* individuals attacked *Sagaran*, beheading two people. This act deeply enraged the *Sagaran* community. The Japanese colonial police immediately intervened and enforced "resolution" by forcibly relocating 34 individuals including the perpetrators and their family members to Mudan (牡丹), a Paiwan settlement geographically and socially distant in southern Taiwan. A reconciliation ceremony was later held between *Tjukuvulj* and *Sagaran*. Although this event did not constitute a planned group resettlement, it reveals the Japanese colonial authorities' strategic use of forced relocation as a tool for manipulating inter-community social relations." (translated by author from Yap, 2023: 215)

[3] *tua Qaljapan* refers to the community as it existed before displacement. The term first appeared in an unpublished research article and oral history records from the *Ciulaku* Church. For further details please refer to the work cited in the references: "Indigenous History Co-Constructed by the State and Religion—The Past, Present and Future of the *Ciulaku*." Wu, C.-D. (2021). 國家與宗教共構的部落歷史—長樂部落的過去、現在和未來（The co-construction of tribal history by the state and religion: The past, present, and future of the Ciulaku (Changle) Community) (Unofficial translation, unpublished preliminary research) The *Ciulaku* community uses the name *tua Qaljapan* to refer to their former village, which is known as Dong-Hai (東海) in Mandarin Chinese.

[4] *Ciulaku* in the Paiwan language is translated as Changle (長樂) to Mandarin. I will use both names interchangeably.

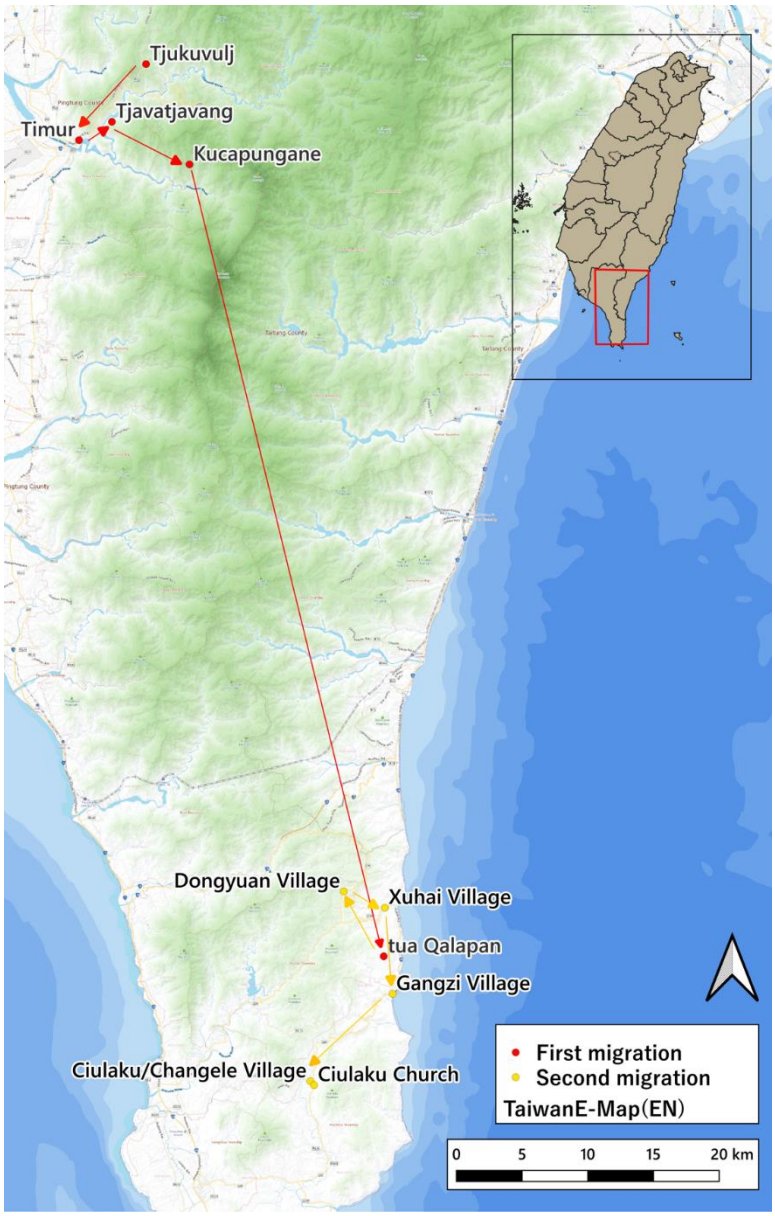

Figure 1: The first (1951) and second (1976) migrations affecting the study villages.

The Ministry of Defense established the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology (NCSIST) in 1974. The NCSIST established a military base in southern Pingtung which led to the forced expropriation and relocation of the *tua Qaljapan* in 1976. This sudden event left the villagers with only a week to evacuate their village, dispersing them to various locations in Pingtung. Some moved to Dongyuan (東源) Village and Xuhai (旭海) Village, while others settled in Gangzi (港仔) Village and Changle (長樂) Village. Those who resettled to Changle Village, the subject of this case study, rebuilt their faith center, the *Ciulaku*-Changle (長樂) Church, which became a key stakeholder in their pursuit of transitional justice. Figure 1 traces distinct migration routes taken since Japanese colonization and the military displacement period. Villagers of the *Ciulaku*-Changle *bùluò* (or *Ciulaku* in short) lost their land and faced oppression in their current location while being, at the same time, confronted by a rapidly changing society and capitalist modernization during the 1970s. The establishment of Kenting National Park in 1984 further subjected the *Ciulaku* bùluò to state violence, as they were compelled to claim their land rights, and their collective culture was denied, infringing upon their rights to cultural survival. The Kenting National Park claimed that

Ciulaku was located on national park land, and it continues to threaten another forcible displacement of the villagers even today.

Through examining the contextual frameworks surrounding *Ciulaku* women from a critical analytical perspective, this study analyzes post-colonial narratives and investigates the strategies they employed in response to forced displacement, highlighting their agency, resilience, and strategies for resistance and adaptation in the face of adversity. I focus on the resilience of these Indigenous communities through the lens of ecofeminism, post-colonialism, and the dialectics between indigenization and globalization, drawing on feminist political ecology (FPE).

2. Literature review

Centering C*iulaku* women's experiences with, and narratives about, forced displacement and their struggles means learning from their voices, and applying – and critically reflecting on – ecofeminist and feminist political ecology theory. Both approaches share a core concern with highlighting women's agency, resilience, and strategies for resistance and adaptation in the face of adversity. Combining an ecofeminist perspective with an FPE lens allows me to understand the role of Taiwan's Indigenous women in forced displacement. I will introduce the two approaches briefly and invite them into a dialogue with each other before testing their respective strengths and limitations concerning the source material in the discussion. To summarize, eco-feminism focuses on the symbolic and material links between women and nature and criticizes patriarchy's domination of both. FPE, meanwhile, focuses on the way gendered power relations shape environmental knowledge, access, and control over resources. The two perspectives thus have different emphases but should be considered as complimentary.

Eco-feminism

Ecofeminists in Taiwan critique colonialism and economic developmentalism by highlighting the patriarchal oppression stemming from the continued legacy of colonization. They emphasize the interconnected domination of Indigenous women and nature, linking them to Taiwanese environmental degradation.

Ecofeminism challenges prevailing biases that marginalize both women's struggles and environmental degradation, highlighting how these interconnected issues are often overlooked in mainstream discourse. Eco-feminist scholarship focuses on the link between the domination of women and nature and points out that the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment share the same root in dualist patriarchy (Shiva & Mies, 1993; Gnanadason, 1994; Kyung & Chung, 1993)

Mies (1993a,b) points out that ecofeminism arises out of the need to address the challenges of climate change, land degradation, species extinction and the disproportionate effects of these changes on particular communities of women and their livelihoods. The expansion of capitalism with the Industrial Revolution combines technological advancements, the subsequent changes in political economy, and the enabling of unprecedented exploitation of the natural world. According to ecofeminist critiques, global capitalism is inherently exploitative, marginalizing the "others", including women, the poor, the colonized, and the nonhuman through systems of domination and resource extraction (Grusin, 2017). Ecofeminism explores how environmental injustice is linked to social injustice, particularly gendered social injustice (Gaard, 1993). Ecofeminism, like much of feminist theory, has always been concerned with challenging and changing the oppressive structures that imbue the lives of women and men (Gaard, 2015). The escalating challenges of climate and rapid environmental change are closely related to the persistence of widespread abuse and exploitation of women all over the world (Grusin, 2017). As Salleh (2018) notes, ecofeminism is a key political framework that exposes the historical ties between neoliberal capitalism, militarism, corporate science, worker alienation, gendered violence, reproductive technologies, sex tourism, neocolonialism, Islamophobia, extractivism, nuclear weapons, industrial toxins, environmental destruction, genetic engineering, climate change, and the myth of progress.

Western-centered eco-feminists analyze the connection between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature through patriarchal authority rooted in 'dualism.' When it comes to the term 'patriarchy', Lerner (1988) stresses that patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family, and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.

The emergence of eco-feminism from the Global South has also highlighted struggles in women's lives for survival amidst globalized capitalism. Shiva and Mies (1993) assert that women continue to link human life and nature because historically, they play the role of sustenance, food, and water providers. These relationships and functions are abused for the sake of productivity in the service of capital accumulation.

Feminist political ecology

Feminist political ecology scholarship pays close attention to "gender identities and subjectivities, understanding women and men as diverse social groupings that encompass multiple identities – as spouses, co-workers, parents, siblings, members of particular ethnic groups etc. all of which operate and are negotiated in relational ways" (Mehta, 2016). From the 1960s on, Marxist feminists pointed out that classical Marxist analysis ignores dominance over women and nature. Instead, they focused on both capitalism and the patriarchal system as the causes of environmental degradation and the domination of women (Spretnak, 1990).

FPE, as an analytical framework, expands upon political ecology by incorporating gendered power dynamics across multiple levels, ranging from local contexts, intra-household and intra-community interactions to broader global structures. Its core principles emphasize how gender both shapes and is shaped by environmental knowledge, influences access to and control over resources, and plays a critical role in transformative social movements that seek to empower women in community-based struggles for resource governance and environmental justice (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996).

While FPE concurs with eco-feminism's description of the links between the domination and oppression of women and degradation of nature, it questions the essentialist tendency of this perspective, viewing gender relations as socially constructed and embedded in the social relations of production and reproduction, shaped by shifting economic and political forces (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996).

Both FPE and eco-feminism challenge dominant epistemologies and embrace the gendered nature of knowledge, embodiment, subjectivity, and political agency (Wright, 2010). The shared root of the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment is shared by both FPE and eco-feminism, and is manifested in the case of *Ciulaku*'s displacement. Ruether (1996, 1997) shows that the social structures dominating women are the same structures that dominate nature. Thus, women face a challenge to align themselves with nature in order to transform a system that devalues and potentially harms them (Ruether, 1995). The voices of the *Ciulaku* Indigenous women centered in this study speak to this reality, suggested by both theoretical perspectives.

3. Methodology

I employed an ethnographic approach to examine the experiences and agency of *Ciulaku* women in the context of forced displacement. Ethnography, as a qualitative method, allows for in-depth engagement with participants, focusing on their lived experiences and social realities to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social dynamics shaping their lives (Bertaux, 1981). Between 2022 and 2024, I made regular visits to the *Ciulaku* community, with each stay ranging from three to ten days. In May 2024, as part of a more in-depth engagement, I resided in the community for one month. During this period, I received formal community consent through a village meeting to conduct official interviews with both male and female members of 10 households, focusing on their life histories and collective memories of displacement.

To highlight the voices of Indigenous women from the *Ciulaku* bùluò during the forced relocation episode and to illuminate their experiences, a life history-oriented research approach was employed to collect narratives capturing their life trajectories. These narratives were transcribed into verbatim transcripts to preserve their authenticity and richness. Central to the ethnographic methodology are in-depth, unstructured interviews conducted with the eight *Ciulaku* women. These interviews were the primary data collection tool, allowing for the gathering of rich, qualitative insights into the women's personal narratives. Through direct engagement with the women, the study explores their struggles, challenges, and strategies for adjustment and regeneration amidst dramatic environmental and social changes. This method is particularly effective in highlighting the voices of marginalized individuals, whose stories are often overlooked in mainstream narratives. The interviews were conducted primarily in Mandarin Chinese, occasionally with assistance to clarify place names when participants recounted stories of displacement,

and translation from Paiwan in one case. After collecting the data, I transcribed the audio recordings into Chinese and translated them into English with the assistance of two master's students and later consolidated the transcripts through thematic coding for data analysis. This article uses pseudonyms (see Table 1), essential for protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality within the context of the forced displacement and state violence. By anonymizing identities, the researchers ensured that individuals could share their experiences openly without fear of retaliation or stigmatization. This practice also aligns with ethical research guidelines, fostering trust between researchers and communities.

Pseudonym	**Age**	**Place of Birth**	**Number of Children**	**Marital Status**
Qenne	68	*Kucapungan* (好茶), Wutai (霧台) Township	3 daughters	Widowed
Kelly	67	*Timur* (三地門), Sendimen (三地門) Township	2 daughters	Married
Grace	85	*Tjavatjavang* (達來), Sandimen (三地門) Township	1 daughter, 2 sons	Widowed
Moon	85	*Kucapungan* (好茶), Wutai (霧台) Township	1 daughter, 5 sons	Widowed
Nina	71	*Timur* (三地門), Sendimen (三地門) Township	2 daughters	Widowed
Fanny	62	*Tjavatjavang* (達來), Sandimen (三地門) Township	4 daughters	Widowed
Vavauni	45	*Sagaran* (口社), Sandimen (三地門) Township	Not specified	Married
Siou-Mei	58	*tua Qaljapan*, Manzhou (滿洲) Township	2 daughters	Married
Interview Details:				
• Ethnographic fieldwork period: 2022–2024 • Interview dates: May 14; May 24; May 28, 2024 • Duration of interviews: Approximately 90 minutes per interview				

Table 1: List of interviewees, and details.

In addition to the interviews, I incorporated historical documents. This involved examining Presbyterian church archival materials and other documentary sources to trace the involvement of key actors in the forced displacement of the *Ciulaku* community. Barraclough (1979) emphasizes the importance of historical analysis in revealing power dynamics and the roles of various stakeholders in shaping the experiences of displaced populations. Documentary analysis contextualizes the testimonies of the *Ciulaku* women, offering a counter-narrative to state accounts of relocation. This method also provides a historical framework within which women's contemporary experiences can be understood, linking their personal stories to broader socio-political processes.

The approach was, therefore, holistic. The integration of methods allowed for a multifaceted exploration of *Ciulaku* women's experiences, examining both personal and historical dimensions of displacement. While the interviews provided direct access to the women's lived experiences, the document analysis situated these narratives within a broader historical and political context. Together, the methods contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the resilience, agency, and resistance of *Ciulaku* women in the face of forced displacement.

I encountered several limitations. First, while most community members are bilingual in Mandarin Chinese and their mother tongue, Paiwan, linguistic nuances still posed occasional challenges. Among the eight women interviewed, seven were fluent in Mandarin and, in some cases, Taiwanese, reflecting their adaptability to the multiethnic cultures of the coastal regions. When name pronunciations or terms became unclear, I was able to seek clarification directly. For the one participant who spoke only Paiwan, her son

assisted as an interpreter, facilitating communication between Paiwan and Mandarin. However, translating names and identifying locations from state documents proved challenging, particularly when referencing places prior to displacement. This language barrier reflects the community's loss through cultural assimilation into mainstream society. To address this challenge, I drew on the support of younger family members as informal interpreters, as well as the assistance of a local church pastor who had played a key role in initiating the community's appeals for compensation and land rights. The pastor shared preliminary research with me, based primarily on minutes from Presbyterian Church meetings. This helped identify names, locations, and community members who had experienced displacement but are no longer living in the community. Secondly, one of the women I had intended to interview passed away in January 2024. While her insights in undocumented preliminary talks were informative, due to ethical considerations, formal interviews only began in May 2024 when consent was given. Thirdly, I was focused on *Ciulaku* women's experiences before and after the forced relocation from *tua Qaljapan* and not on the broader missionary history in northern Paiwan regions: Presbyterian conversion was an important aspect of colonial contact.

4. Findings

The role of the church in tua Qaljapan in pursuit of transitional justice

In 1945, following Japan's defeat in World War II, Paiwan people who had previously been converted to Shintoism began to convert to Christianity. In 1946, *Timur* Church was founded, in a community that had close everyday ties and intermarriage with nearby communities, including *Tjavatjavang*, *Tjukuvulj*, and *Kucapungane* (a Rukai village). These interconnected groups later became the primary population of the relocated *tua Qaljapan* community after 1951, and the *tua Qaljapan* community established the tua Qaljapan church until the forced relocation in 1976. Their preexisting social ties laid the foundation for the formation of a new settlement. Notably, the Paiwan people's conversion to Christianity reflected their active engagement with global modernity, demonstrating that conversion was not merely a religious shift but a conscious expression of agency and participation in broader processes of modernization.

In the 1950s and 1960s, broader Taiwanese society witnessed the classification of women's roles primarily through their male relatives, reflecting the entrenched influence of capitalism and patriarchy. These societal structures, prevalent in both public and private spheres, imposed oppressive conditions on Taiwanese women. Concurrently, Indigenous societies faced significant upheaval due to the economic division of labor, prompting mass migrations and the subsequent deconstruction of Indigenous societies. In this milieu, *tua Qaljapan* underwent rapid disintegration, transitioning from a cohesive social unit centered around the Indigenous community to fragmented family-based social structures. The NCSIST-mandated relocation initiative in 1976 catalyzed this process, leading to the dispersal of *tua Qaljapan* members within a week. Approximately thirty-six households from the *tua Qaljapan* were affected. The *Ciulaku* community, the focal point of this study, rebuilt their settlement in Manzhou Township, initially consisting of about ten households, which eventually became known as Changle Village (Figure 1). The establishment of the *Ciulaku* Church, which serves as their spiritual center, marked the beginning of the contemporary *Ciulaku* community (Wu, 2021).

The *Ciulaku* bùluò forced displacement can be understood from *Ciulaku* Church documentation, and it serves as their spiritual center. In 1976, the *Ciulaku* constructed the church, and in 2018, evangelist couple, Vavauni Ljaljegean, one of the interviewees in this research, and Tjanubak Ljaljegean were appointed by the Paiwan Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). Their primary challenge was to address the community's land issue and unearth the historical truths of their forced relocation.

In 2020, *Ciulaku* Church received a notice that its land would soon be reclaimed by the state. As I noted above, the church reconstruction in 1976 replaced a former *tua Qaljapan* Church but at that time, there were no state regulations governing the registration of religious property. As a result, *Ciulaku* Church was registered under the name of an elder who later passed away, and his children had not completed the inheritance registration. Since no one had officially claimed ownership, the government intended to take possession of the church. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Vavauni Ljaljegean and Tjanubak Ljaljegean took steps and succeeded in registering it in compliance with current state regulations for the approval and supervision of national religious foundations. Meanwhile, *Ciulaku* women advocated for legal compensation for their earlier forced displacement in 1976 and asserted their right to reclaim the

resettlement lands they had cultivated between 1951 and 1976. The *Ciulaku* bùluò sought to reconcile past traumatic experiences by engaging with the Transitional Justice Commission (TJC), Ministry of National Defense, and Jiupeng Base of the NCSIST to clarify their history, reassess residents' compensation, and initiate projects aimed at reconstructing memories of displacement. Throughout this endeavor, female voices emerged as significant narrators, offering vital oral histories of the forced relocation process and contributing to the reconstruction of untold Indigenous history.

Ciulaku women have played a key role in the transitional justice movement in Taiwan, seeking bottom-up social reform. Indigenous peoples experienced persecution as citizens during the authoritarian era (1949-1987), while their historical injustice extends further back in time, spanning multiple regimes. In March 2021, they succeeded in putting their case on the agenda of the Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee. In this case their voices were heard by the legislator, who is an Indigenous woman herself. The NCSIST pledged to form a five-member team to directly assess relevant files and assist in the transitional justice investigation, with the case's future progress testing the agency of the *Ciulaku* community, the institute's commitment, and the state's interdepartmental and legal coordination. The voices of *Ciulaku* Indigenous women help to deliver justice specific to the transitional justice processes as well as broader historical justice for Indigenous peoples. The Ciulaku case remains unresolved and has been rescheduled for consideration on the local parliamentary agenda, following the 2024 institutional downgrade of the Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee from the Presidential Office to the Council of Indigenous Peoples. Throughout, *Ciulaku* women's struggles have been based on ethnic identity, and speak the voice of decolonization.

Oral history of displacement from women's perspectives

Ciulaku women share embodied and relational memory, which carry the emotional and physical burdens of displacement through their roles as caregivers, mothers, daughters, and community nurturers. Their memories are not just personal but relational, tied to the well-being of those they care for. The local Indigenous population had been employed in the construction of the very military facilities that would lead to their displacement in 1976. The sudden requisition of land came without warning, and the residents were given only a week to vacate. Grace recalled:

> They told us to be mentally prepared and that they would come soon. And sure enough, in just a week, they arrived to move our belongings. At the time, many younger residents had already left for work in cities like Hengchun, Pingtung, and Kaohsiung, leaving behind mainly elders and children in the *tua Qaljapan* community.

Most of the middle-aged members, who had the ability to negotiate with the government, were absent. The *tua Qaljapan* also lacked electricity and telephones, making it impossible for the elders to notify their family members working elsewhere about the forced eviction. They remember the trauma of displacement not only in terms of personal loss but through their children's hunger, their elderly parents' confusion, and the breakdown of daily routines. The entire land expropriation process was completed in just one week. Faced with the military land requisition, Siou-Mei described:

> Back then, many of our elders were illiterate and did not speak Chinese. Under martial law, they feared the government and its authority. They did not fully understand the reasons behind the forced relocation, and they had no means to voice their pain.

The collective memory of the *Ciulaku* community includes the traumatic experience of being placed in and abandoned by the military in Changle Village, with no shelter from the elements. Many were forced to take refuge on the porches of local residents' homes for an extended period. Siou-Mei recalls waking up as a child in an unfamiliar place, while others who had been working elsewhere returned only to find that their families had been moved to Changle. With no permanent housing they had to rely on the goodwill of locals for temporary shelter. *Ciulaku* women are the keepers of oral histories and intergenerational narratives. During and after displacement, they took on the role of preserving and passing on memories

about the lost *tua Qalapan*, how life used to be, and about the injustices suffered. Their narrative labor is overlooked, but critical in maintaining cultural identity and collective memory.

Controversies over compensation

According to oral histories from the *Ciulaku* women, after initially taking temporary shelter, the displaced households later set up tents for themselves. The township office was responsible for contracting the construction of buildings for the relocated community. However, through oral history research, key female activist and interviewee Vavauni discovered poor building work on the houses constructed after the forced relocation of the *Ciulaku* community and negotiated with the Ministry of National Defense in 2021. The buildings were made from sea-sand concrete, leading to corrosion of the steel reinforcements and structural degradation. Each house was built with bricks and positioned closely together, separated only by a single brick wall. Qenne explained, "The church was built by the elders. They carried stones from the river and earned a little money from work to buy cement." In other words, from the perspective of local memory, the church was built by the people themselves. In contrast, the church archive noted that in 1977, the government agreed to compensate the church with its chapel and a missionary residence. By February 1978, when the government officially agreed to this compensation, the community had already begun constructing their own church and missionary residence on the land designated by the government.

According to military officials from the Ministry of National Defense, the NCSIST retains records of the original compensation agreements which military officials did not disclose, only indicating that the military had provided fixed compensation. The actual compensation received by the displaced people included a plot of farmland and the poorly constructed houses. Regarding compensation for farmland and crops, there exists a record titled "List of Compensation Payments for Crops on Indigenous Reserved Land in Xuhai Acquired" by the NCSIST in the 1970s. This document appears to reflect the assessments conducted by the local farmers' association to determine compensation for crops. However, while valuations were made, the actual compensation received was only a fraction of the assessed value. For example, Grace's acacia trees in *tua Qaljapan* were valued at US$6,000 but only 20% of this amount, US$1,120 was actually paid. The insufficient compensation severely impacted the livelihoods of the displaced people. Beyond individual compensation, the church itself was not fully compensated. From today's perspective, the payments made seem vastly inadequate.

Conflict over the relocation of ancestral graves

Beyond the issue of compensation for military land acquisition in 1976, the hasty relocation also meant that ancestral graves could not be moved in advance, leading to further conflicts between the displaced people and the government. The graves of *tua Qaljapan* people were incorporated into military land as a result of the forced displacement in 1976. According to people relocated and displaced to *Ciulaku*, the community members used to visit the military site to tend to the graves. However, three years after the relocation in 1976, according to Grace, the military declared, "This is a classified military base. You are not allowed to come here. Please relocate the graves as soon as possible." Initially, the military only offered a few dozen US dollars per grave for relocation expenses. After multiple rounds of negotiation, this amount was increased to USD$680. However, families still had to cover additional costs for rebuilding the graves outside the military zone three years after displacement in 1976. . Those who could not afford this had no choice but to leave their ancestors' graves on military land. Furthermore, in 1977, during the construction of what is now Provincial Highway 26, the Highway Bureau unearthed human remains from the community's graves but failed to notify the families. Instead, the remains were piled together to form a mass grave for unknown individuals (Wu, 2021). In the year following 1977, when the community held their ancestor veneration ceremony and learned about this, they could only symbolically collect some sand from the mass grave and place it in urns for reburial in Changle's cemetery.

The current situation of the Ciulaku community

Between 1982 and 1984, Kenting National Park was established, and *Ciulaku* community, established in 1976, was designated to be within the park's boundaries. According to Article 14 of the National Park Law, activities such as constructing or demolishing buildings and roads require permission from the national park administration. This has led to a new challenge for the *Ciulaku* community. Grace recalled:

> After being relocated from *tua Qaljapan* to Changle, we were given land by the government and built extremely poor-quality sea sand concrete houses, which are now plagued by wall cancer and structural issues. But we cannot get permission from the national park administration to rebuild them.

This situation has made it difficult for the community to renovate their homes, and many worry that they do not have official land ownership and may not be able to remain there permanently. Grace continued, "Whenever our people want to repair or rebuild their houses, the national park administration rejects the applications, saying that since this is a national park, no construction is allowed." From the community's perspective, the government first exchanged land with them as part of the relocation process, only to impose new legal restrictions on land use within just six to eight years. This situation is difficult for the community to accept. The conflict between Kenting National Park and Manzhou Township (to which Changle and *Ciulaku* communities belong) highlights a broader issue: the clash between Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples Basic Law and its National Park Law. This conflict extends to hunting rights, land rights, and access to natural resources. The *Ciulaku* community continues to struggle with the restrictions imposed by the national park, making it increasingly difficult for them to maintain their homes and livelihoods.

Resilience of Indigenous women

The tangible manifestation of resilience among *Ciulaku* women in response to these and other disruptions forms the foundation for contemporary advocacy seeking truth about their forced displacement. After the forced relocation in 1976, the women of *Ciulaku* began engaging with mainstream society as a means of survival. By navigating diverse experiences of womanhood and motherhood, their resilience emerged within intersecting social marginalization, including economic hardship, displacement, gender, and ethnicity, demonstrating enormous strength. The following analysis presents three distinct life narratives that illustrate these Indigenous women's resilience while critically challenging the state's history of forced relocation during the martial law period (1949-1987).

Motherhood and marriage

Grace, 85 years old, was born in *Tjavatjavang* village, Sandimen Township. She, as Paiwanese, moved from *Tjavatjavang* Village to *tua Qaljapan* in 1966 and has five children. Grace met and married her first husband in *tua Qaljapan* and gave birth to four children. She was forced to move to Gangzi from *tua Qaljapan,* one of the other villages of displacement aside from Changle, when she was about 40 years old. She was pregnant at the time. After moving to Gangzi, her fifth child was born. About three years after the forced displacement, her husband passed away due to illness, leaving only her and five children. Grace recounts:

> Later, my husband passed away, and the youngest was only in the first grade. Later, a mainlander[5] came to the village, and I married him. I worked hard for my children, I wanted to raise them, and I wanted to have my children to have a better education, I agreed to marry him. Later, I also went to work, and he went to work. When my first husband was still there, there was a kitchen, my first husband was hired and worked as chef at the restaurant in the military base, Jiupeng Base. Later, me and my second husband married.

After being displaced and losing her first husband, she had lost both economic and spiritual support from her community of *tua Qaljapan* but relied on structures from her native community, who were able to organize external support structures for her. As a mother of five children, she faced significant challenges, particularly during the period when a large number of Kuomintang (KMT) soldiers retreated and resettled in Taiwan. Marrying one of these Chinese soldiers became a substitute for her previous support system. Given that these soldiers held political and economic power in Taiwanese society at the time, marriage to a soldier became a means of survival for her.

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[5] 'Mainlanders' refer to a group of migrants who arrived in Taiwan from China between the Japanese surrender at the end of World War II in 1945 and the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 in the context of the Kuomintang retreat.

During the interview, it became clear that her choice of marriage to her second husband was based on ensuring the safety of her children, a stable life, and access to educational resources. In the marriage tradition of the Paiwan people, most marriages are arranged by the elders of the community. The marriage between Grace and her first husband who was Paiwanese was based on this tradition by the *tua Qaljapan* community. After the forced relocation, Grace's primary Indigenous community changed from *tua Qaljapan* to the clans of her native *Tjavatjavang* Village, Sandimen Township. After the death of her first husband, she was left to raise five children on her own. As a result, the community from *Tjavatjavang*, Sandimen, intervened and introduced someone to Grace's family. Grace described: "There was an introducer, a person from Sandimen, so we asked our relatives to discuss it with him (the second husband), and then he promised to help us, and also promised to help our children study." Grace was full of gratitude to her second husband: "I asked him to take care of my five children. The youngest was not yet in fifth grade at the time. He raised them, he worked very hard."

Mothers in the labor market

Qenne, 68 years old, was born in *Kucapungane* in Wutai Township and moved to *tua Qaljapan* with her parents when she was 2 years old. Later, she states, when they moved to *Ciulaku*, "I already had two children, when I moved to Ciulaku, at that time I was about 21 years old, and my father and the others were probably in their forties. I got married at the age of 17 because of my early marriage." When Qenne moved to *Ciulaku* and started to establish the community, her husband was always absent: "We have never had a father at home, because my husband was not at home before he passed away. He was always outside and came back occasionally." Later, Qenne's husband suffered a stroke, and she devoted herself to his care for 11 years until his passing:

> It was very hard to take care of him and our three daughters. Now that I think about it, it's really... I still insist that they (the children) study and then work, because I didn't study myself. It's very hard. My life is very hard…

When Qenne was relocated and, along with the remaining community members, reconstructed the *Ciulaku* community, she had to adapt to modern capitalist modern society. Qenne decided to move to the city and became a worker in the construction industry, while her children received a state education, different from her own experience.

Jenni, 67 years old, was also born in the *Kucapungane* in Wutai. Three of her children were born in *tua Qaljapan*, and the fourth child was born in the *Ciulaku*. Two of the children died early due to illness. The family's livelihood was mostly supported by her and her children:

> My husband was drinking every day at that time and was not working. People said he owed money to others, but I didn't know what it was until the house was sealed due to his debt, leading to the transfer to the government.

Before her husband passed away, Jenni went out to work, and Jenni's children were left alone or cared for by elders from *Ciulaku*. Jenni often traveled to various labor markets: "There is a foreman, and the foreman takes us there. Sometimes in Kaohsiung, sometimes in Lishan. ... We just go to work when someone calls us. We do everything, housekeeping, weeding..."

Qenne and Jenni were forced to enter the labor market because forced relocation disrupted Indigenous society's role as a collective community. Before the relocation, mothers had a strong community-based and holistic support system. However, displacement disrupted these communal ties, forcing the women to navigate daily survival. Many Indigenous mothers had no choice but to enter the labor force, as they could no longer rely on their traditional networks for support. Jenni often went out to work, for about 4 to 5 days at a time. Qenne mainly kept moving to different places where her children went to school. During her children's school year, they settled near the school, engaged in labor nearby, and left the *Ciulaku* for a long time. After her husband suffered a stroke, she often traveled back and forth between her children and the *Ciulaku*. At the inception of *Ciulaku*, all the women lacked community support and faced the challenge of providing education and care for their children. They opted to engage in informal

labor market activities while their children were young, thus managing dual responsibilities. Their decision to join the labor force reflects the resilience of mothers facing economic oppression alongside the constraints of motherhood.

Women bonding

After her children grew up, Jenni lived in the *Ciulaku* for a long time. After a certain time, she was unable to maintain a regular job due to overwork and illness. She took over caring for the community in the *Ciulaku*. Qenne also settled in the *Ciulaku* after her children grew up, and her eldest daughter also chose to return there to teach in the primary school and take care of her mother. After the forced displacement in 1976, they witnessed their native community in Sendimen and Wutai Township being relocated into permanent housing following the devastation caused by Typhoon Morakot, which struck Taiwan in 2009. The matter of permanent housing and associated ceremonies also provided them with a means to address the challenges related to their homes and land. This presented a pivotal opportunity for them:

> When we girls were chatting, we asked why it was so shabby when we moved here and why it was so easy for the government building houses for the relocated residents. Seeing that the typhoon of August 8, 2009, those who were relocated have better houses. The government should be very good at taking care of us. Why is ours so poor? That's not acceptable!

Due to issues regarding church land, interviewees Vavauni and Siou-Mei, both women pastors who have conducted in-depth research into the history of forced displacement of the *Ciulaku* community, emerged as key figures in the narrative around forced relocation involving the *Ciulaku* church and the *tua Qaljapan*. Siou-Mei, who was born in *Ciulaku* and was later ordained as a pastor, left *Ciulaku* during her formative years to pursue her education and pastoral training. She returned to *Ciulaku* Church as its resident pastor. These two individuals provide pastoral care to the congregation. They collaborate in the ongoing endeavor to uncover state violence regarding forced displacement, advocate for compensation in cases of forced evictions, and address land disputes.

Both Jenni and Qenne share common experiences of state-based subjugation, encompassing deep emotional and political connections among women. They united to challenge post-displacement management. Meanwhile, Vavauni and Siou-Mei develop women's mutual support networks essential in navigating land issues for the church, especially for the *Ciulaku* as a marginalized community. Their common role as female pastors, relies on historically developed extended kinship and community-based support systems as a survival strategy.

5. Discussion

This study of women's experiences of the displacement of the *Ciulaku* community reveals how systems of domination affect their life in deeply gendered ways. But their resistance is quiet and grounded, passing on memories, teaching children, forming alliances to oppose state violence and continuing the fight for their land rights. Their experiences highlight the deep interconnections between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature, offering a powerful lens for understanding women's experiences of forced displacement.

In this section, I will discuss the women's agency visible in their storytelling and knowledge-making, look at shifting support systems in the face of capitalist integration and destruction of community and, finally, emphasize their creative defiance of gendered expectations.

Preserving and challenging knowledge

Ciulaku women's agency and resistance is visible in legal activism and policy advocacy. Women have mobilized through legal battles, petitioning government agencies, and engaging in truth and reconciliation dialogues to reclaim Indigenous land rights. The agency of women has increased as their potential has been recognized in fighting for these land rights (Tuijnman *et al.*, 2020).

Women's initiatives and grassroots movements have also preserved collective memories and traditional culture practices in response to state-led resettlement. *Ciulaku* women have continued to pass down displacement memories, linguistic traditions, and religious belief, ensuring the intergenerational

continuity of their Indigenous identity. *Ciulaku* women's lived experiences are an expression of active agency, challenging hegemonic narratives that often exclude them from land restitution processes.

By narrating the memories of their displacement, *Ciulaku* women's voices challenge state history. Through their migration experiences, narratives and personal recollections, Ciulaku women have endeavored to reconstruct the historical truth surrounding forced displacement, thus asserting their agency in shaping collective memory. The history of *Ciulaku* Church's land dispute spans the Martial Law era and the period of contemporary religious legislation. Drawing on collective memories of displacement, *Ciulaku* women have challenged the limitations of the legal system, and through their leadership the dispute was resolved in November 2020, when the land was registered under the church's name rather than being appropriated by the state. Yet the struggle continues, as the designation of both church and community lands within a national park prevents necessary repairs and improvements, leading to ongoing legal contestation. Their voices advocate for a more inclusive and diverse knowledge production process. From a post-colonial perspective, *Ciulaku* women began to critically reflect on colonial tendencies and advocated for the inclusion of diverse and pluralistic perspectives to establish a "local knowledge system," challenging the universal knowledge promoted by Enlightenment science. *Ciulaku* women have actively contested the encroachment of military bases on Indigenous land, challenging both dispossession and the disruption of their territory. Drawing on oral histories and collective memories, they critique the colonial tendencies embedded in state power and militarization. Harding (1993) explains that without amplifying the voices and experiences of the marginalized, achieving a comprehensive understanding of their lived realities remains elusive.

Harding's 'standpoint theory' critically examines the underlying male-centric biases inherent in conventional scientific paradigms, advocating for a more inclusive and diverse knowledge production process and supporting marginalized groups. Her goal is to politicize the social whole and scientific knowledge through "thinking from women's life." Building upon Harding's theories, it becomes evident in *Ciulaku* women's oral histories that the discourse articulated serves as a lens through which the collective history of their community is articulated, not just personal and familial.

In the case of the *tua Qaljapan* forced displacement, the oral histories recounted by *Ciulaku* women occupy an epistemologically privileged position, offering a nuanced understanding of historical truths obscured by official narratives. As the KMT government's compulsory expropriations during the martial law era subjected both men and women in Indigenous communities to oppression, the reliance on state military documents for truth-seeking perpetuates biased interpretations favoring the colonial regime. Conversely, *Ciulaku* women's narratives provide crucial insights into the reality of forced relocations, anchoring the historical discourse within its socio-political context.

Shifting support systems

In the wake of the disintegration of the *tua Qaljapan*, the societal fabric of the community shifted towards a modern paradigm characterized by gendered divisions and the nuclear family. On the one hand, it relegated women to the domestic realm while men were expected to engage in urban pursuits driven by political and economic imperatives. At the same time as devaluing domestic work, the violent effects of (repeated) forced displacement left many women burdened with taking care of domestic and external labor with men frequently absent. The economic power of capitalism has been eroding land, lifestyles, and the personal worlds in Indigenous communities and integrated Indigenous society into the capitalist system. The expropriation imposed upon the *tua Qaljapan* during the martial law period precipitated the dissolution of their community, leaving *Ciulaku* women grappling with the loss of communal solidarity and the abrupt transformation of familial living spaces. The family unit supposed to replace the community as a social form more compatible with the capitalist state is less resilient and offers weaker support systems. The women's accounts illustrate how they navigated these double and triple burdens, and their continued resistance and renewed organization is a hopeful indication that the shift away from community is far from complete.

Challenging gender roles

Ciulaku women have not been passive recipients of institutional oppression. Instead, drawing upon traditional Paiwan gender roles, they have developed intergenerational strategies that span family, community, church and legal systems, enabling coordinated action across social, cultural, and political

contexts. In traditional Paiwan society, women not only undertake domestic and agricultural labor but also play central roles in ritual and social cohesion. During the forced relocation of the 1950s, they transformed these cultural experiences into organizational capacities, leading resistance, and sustaining collective memory within the new settlements. In more recent times, some women have entered construction sites, spaces typically marked as masculine, where they shoulder high-risk responsibilities such as coordination, communication, and crisis response. In doing so, they challenge dominant societal notions of women as caretakers.

The life and activism of *Ciulaku* women thus positions them against the deeply patriarchal and racialized structures of colonialism and settler colonialism under the KMT. Their action resonates with the postcolonial intersectionality that FPE scholars have called for, which "recognizes that patriarchy and racialization processes are tightly bound up with postcolonial genealogies, embedding ideologies of race and gender within nation-building and international development agendas" (Mollett & Faria, 2013). In doing so, *Ciulaku* women demonstrate a strategic "messing with" gender that emphasizes how race and gender are often entangled, both within the North or South and with other axes of difference and power, thereby enriching the scope of FPE (Rocheleau & Nirmal, 2015).

These Paiwan women's practices pose important challenges and insights for both ecofeminism and feminist political ecology. Their bodily experiences and labor are not only deeply connected to the land but are also entangled with state violence, colonial policies, and economic exploitation. This reveals that the link between women and nature is not essentialist or innate, but rather a historically and politically produced relationship shaped by intersecting structures of power. Thus, their narratives are not merely tragic accounts of displacement. They demonstrate how women respond to land injustice and gender oppression through historical memory, labor practices, and social participation. These experiences offer a critical perspective from the standpoint of Taiwan's Indigenous peoples, pushing ecofeminism and FPE beyond biological essentialism towards more situated, localized, and historicized understandings of gender and environmental relations.

6. Conclusion

From the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) onward, the *Ciulaku* people have experienced collective migrations in response to both external and internal disruptions. These movements were further intensified by the postwar KMT government's strategies of state governance, which led to forced relocations. *Ciulaku* members have shown great resilience, adapting to the changes in modern society while dealing with the breakdown of their traditional community-based system.

This study has examined the forced displacement of the *Ciulaku* community in 1976, during which state-driven land expropriation nearly obliterated their Indigenous identity forcing them into contact with a settlers' dominant society and culture. In the process of adaptation, displaced communities navigated tensions between individualization and collective reorganization, with some relying on traditional community ties for support, while others have redefined social networks. The *Ciulaku* community, in particular, has sought to reconstruct a new social framework. However, as a relocated "other" community within the Indigenous homeland, they lack the collective ethnic strength necessary for self-determination. Additionally, their limited demographic and material resources, particularly in terms of land, place them in an extremely precarious position.

Following their forced displacement, the loss of agricultural land not only deprived them of their primary means of subsistence but also eliminated their physical space for survival. The *Ciulaku* community's loss of land was never appropriately addressed through the legal compensation mechanisms of the time, nor could any form of reparation restore the survival space they have lost over four decades ago. The inability to exercise land control has, in effect, resulted in the loss of their autonomy and their capacity for self-sustained existence. Furthermore, in 1984, the designation of the *Ciulaku*'s current land property as part of Kenting National Park exacerbated their displacement, as even the land in their current settlement along the main road of present-day *Ciulaku* remains under contested ownership. The inability to legally expand, renovate, or modify their homes has left community members in severely deteriorated living conditions.

From the perspective of *Ciulaku* women, one can observe how settler government policies and systems, during the era of authoritarian rule, impacted the lives of Indigenous people. Given that literacy rates among the Indigenous community at the time were low and their ability to communicate directly with the government was limited, the state managed Indigenous communities under the guise of "national policy." The agency, resistance, and resilience demonstrated by *Ciulaku* women have prompted demands for land justice. They continue to collect oral histories and, through grassroots movements and legal activism, urge the state to re-evaluate the process of displacement under settler colonialism. This ongoing struggle highlights the agency of the *Ciulaku* people, as well as the intertribal, interregional, and intergenerational connections they have forged. It also reflects how this Indigenous community navigates and adapts to the complex bureaucratic policies of the modern nation-state, driven by the voices, efforts and activism of *Ciulaku* women.

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