

African & African Diaspora Studies Program

School of International and Public Affairs

ROOTS/HERITAGE TOURISM IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA CASE STUDIES FOR A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

An International Conference, February 12-14, 2015 / Graham Center Ballroom



Roots/Heritage Tourism in Africa and the African Diaspora: Case Studies for a Comparative Approach

An International Conference organized by FIU's African & African Diaspora Studies Program (AADS)

Conference e-mail address to be used for all e-correspondence: 2015ht@fiu.edu

“Roots/heritage tourism” began developing in the 1980s and 1990s in West Africa following the emergence of a black middle-class in the Global North—mostly the United States and the United Kingdom—eager to spend newly acquired disposable income to “reconnect” with the land of their “ancestors.” The global success of Alex Hayley’s book and television miniseries *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* contributed to the expansion of this movement to Africa of black tourists.

Roots/heritage tourism intersects with the confluence of two different theoretical approaches to “the African diaspora”:

- 1) An approach that tends to be diachronic in orientation because based on personal, political/ideological, and analytical narratives that unfold exclusively in terms of both the conceptualization of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade as the exclusive or most important African diaspora foundational event there is, and the unidirectional traveling of African peoples and cultures from one point in continental Africa to one specific location in the Americas. Here, continental Africa symbolizes the arguably romanticized diaspora past, its source and origin.
- 2) A more recent analytic and political/ideological approach, synchronic in orientation, which conceptualizes the African diaspora in terms of multiple trans-local and transnational networks of blackness, premised on an understanding of the Middle Passage as one foundational event among others. That second theorizing better incorporates a growing number of movements in this contemporary moment of intensified global circulation of peoples, ideas, and goods in all directions. It conceptualizes the Atlantic as a site, among others, of multidirectional traveling originating and going potentially anywhere and leading to multiple encounters, articulations, and “frictions” among black people in a variety of locations globally. Here, Africa and Africans

are coeval to locations and peoples of the African diaspora, in a historically constituted global system characterized by white supremacy.

In the 1980s and 1990s, sites associated with Trans-Atlantic slavery in Ghana, Senegal, The Gambia, and Benin were transformed into roots/heritage tourist attractions. Roots/heritage tourism continued to grow in West Africa to the point of reaching high-level international notoriety (the last three U.S. presidents visited roots/heritage tourism sites in either Ghana or Senegal; President Obama visited such sites in both countries). Roots/heritage tourism locations associated with the Trans-Atlantic slave trade also emerged, more recently, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Sites associated with a number of historical events of importance for those who participate in and contribute to the African and African diaspora networks also became the focus of roots/heritage tourism, and in turn attracted black and non-black visitors from across the globe. That is how the formation of roots/heritage tourism also emerged in association with specific communities of Africa and the African diaspora, their histories of resistance against anti-black racism, and the notoriety of their cultural productions. Famous cases here include, non-exhaustively, the many visits of U.S. residents to Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, and to Northeastern cities and towns that have had some association with Afro-Brazilian cultures and history; the visits of African Americans and non-U.S. blacks to plantation sites in the U.S. South; the tours of “Black Miami,” in Florida, and “Black Paris,” in France.

Roots/heritage tourism provides a privileged lens for scholarship to engage anew the theorizing of the African diaspora in this contemporary moment of global circulations; it provides spaces wherein black individuals who have quite different trajectories within the networks of the African diaspora meet and interact in sometime complex articulations that often involve:

- Different interpretations of historical events about which tourists, tour guides and the local population have disparate emotional investments that often lead to ostensibly inevitable and profound cultural misunderstandings, and to divergent views of what is to be considered “authentic.”
- Processes of hierarchization among black subjects following, for example, inequality of financial means among the stakeholders, and between sites’ staff and tourists.

- Interactions with visitors of different origins who do not identify with the African diaspora and who might have a different interpretation of the significance of the sites they visit.

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As shown in this program, ethnographic papers about diverse sites of African and African diaspora roots/heritage tourism in continental Africa, the Americas, Europe, and elsewhere will be presented and will have a number of different, even though related, foci:

- Multilateral and international agencies, nation-state and other governmental agencies' involvement, or lack thereof, in the transformation of sites of memory into roots/heritage tourist attractions.
- Involvement of identified stakeholders in the construction of specific narratives to be served to roots/heritage tourists in specific sites; tourists' reception of the narrative; local populations' reception of the narrative; ...
- Roots/heritage tourism as a sustainable pro-poor or poverty reduction tourism initiative.
- The inclusion of roots/heritage tourism in U.S. study abroad programs.
- Ethnographic history of specific roots/heritage tourism sites.

Thursday 02-12-2015 and Friday 02-13-2015 Lobby of the FIU Graham Center Ballrooms
<i>Poster Presentation</i>
Envisioning Heritage: An Exploration of Identity, Culture, and Nationality Beth Naomi Lewis, Frederick Douglass Scholar in Art, Bloomsburg University
<i>Visual Exhibit</i>
Middle Passage to the Future Kuumba Artists Collective, Miami, Florida

Thursday 02-12-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms	
8:30am – 5:00pm	<i>Conference Registration</i>
9:30am – 9:40am	<i>Welcoming Remarks</i> John Stack, Executive Director School of International & Public Affairs, Florida International University
9:40am – 9:50am	<i>Welcoming Remarks and Conference Details</i> Jean Muteba Rahier, Director African & African Diaspora Studies Program, Florida International University
9:50am – 10:20am	<i>By Way of Introducing the Conference's Conceptual Framework</i> Roots/Heritage Tourism in Africa and the African Diaspora: Diasporic Imaginaries and the Making of Black Transnational Networks Jean Muteba Rahier, Florida International University
10:20am – 10:30am	<i>Questions and Answers</i>
10:35am – 10:40am	<i>Introduction of 8th Chris Gray Memorial lecturer</i> Hilary Jones, Florida International University
10:40am - 11:25am	<i>8th Chris Gray Memorial Lecture</i> What Happened to Us in Senegambia During the Slave Trade? Boubacar Barry, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal
11:25am – 11:50am	<i>Questions and Answers</i>
11:50am – 12:00pm	<i>Conference Announcements</i>
12:00pm – 1:30pm	<i>Lunch (Everyone on his/her own to lunch in Faculty Club or Graham Center's restaurants)</i>

Thursday 02-12-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

1:30pm – 3:00pm	<i>Session I The Expansion of the U.S. Black Middle Class and the Emergence of Roots/Heritage Tourism</i> Chair: Alexandra Cornelius, Florida International University
1:30pm – 2:00pm	<i>Invited Presentation</i> “Africa Must be Seen to be Believed:” African Americans and the Roots of Heritage Tourism in the Age of Decolonization Tiffany M. Gill, University of Delaware
2:00pm – 2:20pm	The “Horrors of Slavery Will Not Be Forgotten”: Roots/Heritage Tourism Discourse in the Black Press, 1950-2000 Kim Gallon, Purdue University
2:20pm – 2:40pm	Black Tourists and Black Tension: Ambivalence in Tourism Advertisements and Travel Editorials in Essence Magazine Randi Gil-Sadler, University of Florida
2:40pm – 3:00pm	<i>Questions and Answers</i>
3:00pm – 3:10pm	<i>Poem Declamation</i> Return to Gorée: or the Bride (for the Fulani Prince without kingdom) Chezia Thompson Strand, Maryland Institute College of Art
3:10pm – 6:25pm	<i>Session II Diasporic Memories of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Imaginations of the Homeland: Roots/Heritage Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa (I)</i> Chair: Hilary Jones, Florida International University
3:10pm – 3:40pm	<i>Invited Presentation</i> Exploring African and African Diaspora Losses to the Atlantic: Heritage Tourism and Future Imaginations in Gorée Island (Senegal) Ibrahima Thiaw, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal
3:40pm – 4:00pm	Romantic Imaginings: African American Tourists, Transatlantic Double Consciousness, and Racial Identity in the Journey to Africa Tori Arthur, Bowling Green State University
4:00pm – 4:20pm	Roots/Heritage Tourism in Juffureh and Kunta Kinteh Island, The Gambia: Experiences of U.S.-Based Study Abroad Students Jean Muteba Rahier, Florida International University
4:20pm – 4:40pm	Slave Forts or Resorts? The Changing Utility of Monuments to the Transatlantic Slave Trade Jonathan Roberts, Mount Saint Vincent University
4:40pm – 4:55pm	<i>Coffee & Tea Break</i>

Thursday 02-12-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

4:55pm – 5:15pm World Heritage Promotion versus Commoditisation in Gondar, Ethiopia

Bantalem Tadesse, University of Gondar, Ethiopia

5:15pm – 5:35pm Patrimonialization of Slavery and Heritage Tourism in a Context of Secrecy: Politics of Remembrance in Southeast Madagascar

Dominique Somda, Reed College

5:35pm – 5:55pm Constructing Memories of Slavery on Mozambique Island

Elizabeth MacGonagle, University of Kansas

5:55pm – 6:25pm *Questions & Answers*

6:30 – 8:30 pm *Opening Reception*

10:00pm – ... *Optional Activity: Hoy Como Ayer, Bar and Lounge

(Please refer to website/registration form for details)



Friday 02-13-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

9:00am – 12:00pm *Session III The Performance of Diasporic Returns: Roots/Heritage Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa (II)*

Chair: Jonathan Roberts, Mount Saint Vincent University

9:00am – 9:30am *Invited Presentation*

Travelling Gods, Ritual Memory and Slavery in Contemporary Benin

Jung Ran Forte, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

9:30am – 9:50am **The Baggage of Tourism: Unpacking the Sceptical Misadventures of Heritage Tourists in Ghana**

Jillian Powers, Brandeis University

9:50am – 10:10am **Stranger in my Homeland? Diasporic Return Visits and Contestations of Collective Slave Memories.**

Aaron Yankholmes, Institute for Tourism Studies Colina de Mong-Há, Macau SAR-China

10:10am – 10:30am **The “Rawlings Revolution” and Rediscovery of the African Diaspora in Ghana (1983-2014)**

Justin Williams, City College of New York

10:30am – 10:45am *Coffee & Tea Break*

10:45am – 11:05am **“What is Africa to Me?” Now: African American Heritage Tourism and Re-Imagining Africa**

Tyler Parry, California State University – Fullerton

11:05am – 11:55am *Questions & Answers*

11:55am – 12:00pm *Conference Announcements*

Friday 02-13-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

12:00pm – 1:30pm *Lunch in Graham Center Ballroom (Registered FIU students and faculty must purchase a \$15.00 lunch ticket)*

12:15pm – 12:45pm *Invited Presentation*
Afropolitans, Heritage Tourists, and Diaspora Returns to Africa
 Jemima Pierre, University of California, Los Angeles

12:45pm – 1:00pm *Questions & Answers*

1:30pm – 5:25pm *Session IV The Expansion of Black Transnational Networks: Roots/Heritage Tourism in the Caribbean and Latin America*
 Chair: Andrea Queeley, Florida International University

1:30pm – 2:00pm *Invited Presentation*
African American Roots Tourism in Brazil: Encounters in Sameness, Difference, Solidarity, and Inequality
 Patricia Pinho, State University of New York-Albany

2:00pm – 2:20pm **Roots of Eden: Toward Roots and Heritage Tourism in The Bahamas**
 Keisha Lynne Ellis, The College of The Bahamas, The Bahamas

2:20pm – 2:40pm **Roots/Heritage Tourism in the African Diaspora: The Jamaican Maroons and Partnerships in Development**
 Mario Nisbett, University of California- Berkeley

2:40pm – 3:00pm **One Love: Tourism and Commodification of Blackness in Jamaica**
 Traci-Ann Wint, University of Texas at Austin

3:00pm – 3:20pm **Heritage Tourism, Development Policy, and Diasporic Identification(s): A Theoretical Sketch**
 Charisse Burden-Stelly, University of California-Berkeley

3:20pm – 3:40pm **African American “Roots” Tourism to Trinidad’s “Company Villages:” Encounters in Sameness, Difference, and Equality**
 Stephen Glazier, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Friday 02-13-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

3:40pm – 4:00pm *Coffee & Tea Break*

4:00pm – 4:15pm **“...And We Were Never Slaves”:** Exploring the Routes/Roots of Black Belize Through a Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program
Kalenda Eaton, Arcadia University

4:15pm – 4:45pm *Questions & Answers*

4:50pm – 6:15pm *Session V The Tourismification of Sites of Domination and Struggles: Heritage Tourism in the U.S.*
Chair: Nicole Grégoire, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

4:50pm – 5:10pm **Looking Beyond the Big House: Dealing with Difficult Heritage in the U.S. State of Mississippi**
Jodi Skipper, The University of Mississippi

5:10pm – 5:30pm **Roots and Routes of National Heritage — Going South to Friendfield Plantation and the Michelle Obama Story and Going West to Nicodemus for 160 acres on the Kansas Plain**
Antoinette Jackson, University of South Florida

5:30pm – 5:50pm **From Civil Rights to Black Power in Mississippi: Historic Sites of Struggle at Jackson State University**
Rico Chapman, Jackson State University

5:50pm – 6:10pm *Questions & Answers*

6:10pm – 6:15pm *Conference Announcements*

Saturday 02-14-2015 FIU Graham Center Ballrooms

9:00am – 11:35pm *Session VI Roots/Heritage Tourism Development Initiatives: Case Studies from Africa and the African Diaspora*

Chair: Jean-Robert Cadély, Florida International University

9:00am – 9:20am **Sweat Equity Investment of Cotton Pickers of America**

Kathryn Green and C. Sade Turnipseed, Mississippi Valley State University

9:20am – 9:40am **African Diasporic Roots/Heritage Tourism: Interrogating and Revaluing the Tuskegee Experience/Experiment**

Shirley Toland-Dix, United Negro College Fund-Mellon Programs

9:40am – 10:00am **Destruction of an Era**

Joanne Ogiogwa, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

10:00am – 10:20am **Challenges of Ethnographic History and Heritage Tourism Management in South Gondar: The Case of Historical Sites in Debertabor Town and its Vicinities**

Nigatu Yeshambel Mulat, Gondar University, Ethiopia

10:20am – 10:45am *Coffee and Tea Break*

10:45am – 11:05am **Tourism in Ghana: Perking Up African Diaspora-Africa Relationship for Development in Africa**

Tometi Gbedema, University of California-Davis

11:05am – 11:35pm *Questions & Answers*

11:35am – 11:45am *Closing Remarks and Announcements*

1:30pm – 5:00pm **Optional Activity: Black History Tour of Miami* (Please refer to website/registration form for details)

8:00pm – 2:00am **Optional Activity: Gambian 50th Independence Celebration* (Please refer to website/registration form for details)

Conference Registration Fees

Before November 30, 2014

- If check is **postmarked** by November 30, 2014, U.S.\$120.00/person
- Free for FIU Students and Faculty with presentation of a valid I.D. (Registration required. Registered FIU students and faculty must purchase a \$15.00 lunch ticket for Friday's 02-13-2015 Invited Presentation at 12:15pm Invited Presentation)
- Non-FIU Florida students with presentation of a valid ID: U.S.\$40.00
- Non-Florida students with presentation of a valid ID: U.S.\$60.00
- All Non-FIU Faculty: U.S.\$120.00

After November 30, 2014

- If check is **postmarked** after November 30, 2014, U.S.\$150.00/person
- Free for FIU Students and Faculty with presentation of a valid I.D. (Registration required. Registered FIU students and faculty must purchase a \$15.00 lunch ticket for Friday's 02-13-2015 Invited Presentation at 12:15pm Invited Presentation)
- Non-FIU Florida students with presentation of a valid ID: U.S.\$70.00
- Non-Florida students with presentation of a valid ID: U.S.\$90.00
- All Non-FIU Faculty: U.S.\$150.00

Everyone **MUST** register, including FIU faculty and students.

(Registered FIU students and faculty must purchase a \$15.00 lunch ticket to attend the Friday 02/13/2015 Invited Presentation)

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