

A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
TOURIST AIR TRAVEL
IMPACT

By

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Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
December, 2008

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Graduation Date
December, 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Doctorate is dedicated to my Mother, Sadie Chaplin Futtrell, who in the early 1900s, was only allowed to complete the 3rd grade.

Many people have been involved with me in this journey and I wish to say “Thank you very much for your important contributions.”

To Dr. H. C. “Mac” McClure who cajoled, encouraged, and mentored me while earning a Master’s degree, and Dr. Mary Kutz who likewise inveigled me into the doctorate program. I thank them both for fortitude in preservation of the programs.

My appreciation to the other members of my academic committee: Dr. Steve Marks, my committee chairman; Dr. James Key for a grounding in research principles, and Dr. Fred Hansen my dissertation advisor. Major support came from team members John Direnzo, a strong voice, and especially Tweet Coleman, the motivating cheerleader who pushed, prodded, encouraged, and urged us all through/over/around the rough spots. Also thanks to Librarian Daniel Spencer who located assorted reference materials; Jane McClure, who took the time to read and provide technical accuracy; Dina Jones, with a great ear, for all verbatim transcriptions; and Verna Allen for critiquing, editing, and unfailing support in this journey.

Most importantly my deepest appreciation to historians Professor James Smalls and John Watusi Branch for their encouragement, wisdom and support. To the participants—tourists to West Africa—this project would not have been possible without their enthusiasm, time, and candor. Jeri jef (Wolof, Senegal), Me daase (Akan, Ghana), Thank you!

Finally, I thank both my parents for their strong foundation, love, and support in teaching all their children that “they could.”

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Some African American travelers who have visited the continent of Africa return with a different perspective, a deeper understanding, and greater acceptance of self and culture. Modern air transportation, although more convenient than other modes of transportation, creates a dilemma for culturalization of travelers leaving their country and visiting countries where cultural norms are vastly different. When the mode of transportation once used was by ship and then by overland means (pack animals or vehicles), a traveler was afforded the opportunity to gradually adapt to the unfamiliar culture of the country he or she was visiting. Air transportation erased all opportunities for gradual adaptation to the new culture and instead forced the traveler to adapt more quickly. Then, after just a six-to-eight hour aircraft flight back to the United States the experiences of their ancestral heritage/heredity culture affects all aspects of their daily lives.

Although much research has been done about the African American culture, none could be located that specifically addressed how trans-Atlantic air transportation has affected the African-America culture. Nelson's (1986) *Experiences of Black Tourists in Africa*, a published dissertation, directly and indirectly relates and alludes to some cultural understanding of life in America. It briefly mentions aspects of round trip traveling to West Africa, it analyzes "the sentiments expressed and...[classified these as]

major themes...: [the] reasons for visiting Africa, travelers' expectations of host, traveler's establishment of identity, [traveler's] experiences, and the concept of discrimination" (p. 141). It "investigate[d] the interest...and development of...[African Americans'] involvement in international travel, and what that travel entail[ed]" (p. 7), 22 years ago. This research enhanced and updated the cultural aspects of the Nelson (1986) study; it explored the reasons for visiting Africa, and the establishment of identity. Further, it focused on the effected of international air transportation on African American's culturalization after returning from West Africa.

The researcher, an annual leisure traveler to Africa since 1998, has visited over 11 West Africa countries and has included her personal perspectives in a separate entry. A seasoned tourist, the researcher has observed others, as a bystander, as they have discovered self and Africa. This research formalized and obtained direct input from participants which authenticated those casual observations and creates needed data for the literature.

Statement of the Problem

The aviation industry and international leisure tourist travel between the United States and West Africa has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. Experiences of previous tourists was reviewed and contrasted with the travelers of today. This study focused on changes to attitude, landscape, and customs. It captured the recent-day values and perspectives, and was needed to examine and update the data. It provided insight and possible expectations for tomorrow's aviation traveler to West Africa.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of air transportation on African American culturalization from leisure tourist travel between the United States and West Africa. It was to find how air travel has contributed to changes in the African American culture; it examined the reasons for visiting West Africa, and the end-evolving results of that journey.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to answer the primary research question: How or has air travel to West Africa affected and impacted the African American culture? The instrument questions were categorized into two areas: travel and transportation with six sub-questions about personal experiences; and stereotypes and cultural perspectives containing fifteen interrogatories concerning personal affect (altered feelings) and effect (resultant behaviors).

Assumptions

As the sole researcher who conducted all the interviews, it was assumed: (a) the introduction of unintentional bias by verbal or nonverbal behaviors did not influence participants' responses, (b) all participants were candid and responded honestly during the interview, and (c) in analysis and interpretation the researcher identified her own position suppositions.

Limitation

The researcher recognized the following limitations. The use of a small, nonprobability purposive sample of 13 limited the generalizability of the study results. The availability of purposive sample of subjects to the researcher, their willingness to be interviewed, and participation in the study limited the amount of data that could be gathered, transcribed, and analyzed. Several interviews were conducted by email with telephone follow-up which eliminated the ability to observe physical behaviors that could influence the tone, and texture of the interview. However, the experiences of the participants and their expertise provided a rich source of data to aid in overcoming the limitation and thereby a meaningful study emerged.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was restricted to African Americans who traveled as leisure tourists, rather than for education or business purposes, to West Africa after December 2004. Exposure to the experiences shared by participants' could benefit the entire African American community in enculturation and the aviation industry serving the African continent with insight for routing and scheduling. The data amassed in this study offered constructive information to make sound decisions and attested to the changed African American culture.

Definitions

The following definitions of terms are furnished to provide, as nearly as possible clear and concise meanings of terms used by the researcher in this study:

Africa – the world's second-largest continent in both area and population consists of 54 countries, 15 are in West Africa. The area of the continent is approximately 11,700,000 square miles, four times the size of the United States; three-fourths of Africa is in the tropics. There is no official language of Africa. Over 1,000 different languages are spoken. Some are on the verge of extinction and are only spoken by a few elderly people. Africa the birthplace of the human species developed about 5 million years ago (Africa, 2007); the people have more physical variations than on any other continent; it has some of the shortest and the tallest people in the world (Kigongo, n. d., para. 2, bullet 15). In 2005, the population of the African continent was estimated at 890 million people (Africa, 2007).

African – “a native or inhabitant of Africa, a person and especially a black person of African ancestry” (Africa, 2007); person native born in the continent of Africa.

African-American – “Simple identification of [descendents of] a racially based group with a common point of origin in Africa...brought into the United States mainly from the West Coast of Africa” (Naylor, 1997, p. 94); “an American of African and especially of black African descent” (African-American, 2007); a person born in American whose ancestors were born in Africa (Hattery, 2007, p. 2).

Africanism – “any cultural (material or nonmaterial) or linguistic property of African origin surviving in the New World or in the African diaspora” (Holloway and Vass, 1993, xviii).

Afrika / Afrikan (alternative spelling) – came into use in the 1960s with the Pan African Nationalist movement to connect back with the ancient Afrikan use of the letter ‘K.’ “Europeans...polluted Afrikan languages by substituting ‘C’ whenever they saw

‘K’ ...[such that when] Afrikan languages are translated (written) into English, etc., the European alphabet...[is] used” (Nantambu, 2002).

The spelling Afrika “affirm[s] a[n] Africentric politicised belief which symbolizes an ethos of self definition and self determination. 'Africa'...is not the true name of the continent. The spelling of it with a ‘k’...symbolize[s] unity with fellow diasporic Africans who share an African centered view of the world. The spelling ‘Africa’ is deemed to represent a European world view. (Etymology, 2008, Afrika)

Air/Aerial transportation – “effected by means of aircraft, aerial transportation” (Aerial transportation, 2007); a mode of moving people and cargo by an aerial vehicle (airplane, jet-powered aircraft).

Black – “a person with dark skin who comes from Africa (or whose ancestors came from Africa)” (Webster’s, 2006); “Black people are Africans in America” (Baugh, 1991, p. 135); a biased, archaic, old-fashioned term used to describe persons of African descent who are not white or of European origin. Can be ambiguous depending on context; the term is dated, and has evolved from Black to Afro-American, to African American.

Culture – “Everything having to do with human behavior and belief” (LeCompete, Preissle, & Twesch, 1993, p. 5).

“The beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior of a particular nation or people; a group of people whose shared beliefs and practices identify the particular place, class, or time to which they belong; a particular set of attitudes that characterizes a group of people” (Encarta, 2007, culture);

The beliefs and behaviors that a group of people have and hold in common, demonstrated in many ways: customs, traditions, values, worldview, style of dress, attitudes towards education; beliefs about the importance of time, celebrations, music, art; the responsibilities and roles of children, teens, and family. “In the 1970s...[as surviving] African values and cultural practices...[were recognized],...the new families,...kin relations,...values,...and...customs became the foundation of...family life and identity...[evolving into today’s] African American culture” (Battle & Wells, 2006, p.18).

Culturalization – The actions, processes, or results of culture.

- Acculturation – “a change in the cultural behavior and thinking of a person or group of people through contact with another culture; the process by which somebody absorbs the culture of a society from birth onward” (Encarta, 2007, acculturation).
- Enculturation — “the gradual acceptance by a person or group of the standards and practices of another person or culture” (Encarta, 2007, enculturation).

Identity – the distinguishing character or personality of an individual; the accents, clothing choices, characteristic expressions, presentation of self within a society, oneness with something described or asserted; the set of characteristics that somebody recognizes as belonging uniquely to himself or herself and constituting his or her individual personality for life (Encarta, 2007, identity).

Landscape – the traits, patterns, physical environment, social patterns, and structure of a specific area; general situation of activity, the general situation providing the background to a particular type of activity (Encarta, 2007, landscape).

Mindset – a mental attitude, a particular point of view, a person's frame of reference that is fixed, a fixed state of mind; it is an honest expression, a chosen point-of-view; beliefs that affect somebody's attitude, a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determine somebody's behavior and outlook (Encarta, 2007, mindset).

Stereotype – a negative, limiting, mistaken preconceived belief, a standardized mental picture, often hurtful and damaging, that many people have about a person or a culture different from their own that is applied to everyone in that group, a prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment; something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; especially : a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment; oversimplified conception: an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group (Encarta, 2007, stereotype).

Traditions – an inherited pattern of thought or action, a memorized story or custom passed down from generation to generation preserved over time with or without written records. Custom or belief, a long-established action or pattern of behavior in a community or group of people, often one that has been handed down from generation to generation, a body of long-established customs and beliefs viewed as a set of precedents; the handing down of patterns of behavior, practices, and beliefs that are valued by a culture (Encarta, 2007, traditions). An inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior, the handing down of information, beliefs, and

customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction, cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs, and institutions, characteristic manner, method, or style (Merriam-Webster's, 2007, traditions).

West Africa – consists of 15 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo (Africa, 2007).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the literature revealed a massive amount of history on Africa, the slave trade and middle passage, the institution of slavery, emancipation, and the African American culture in many disciplines. Information about domestic transportation, travel, and tourism was easily located. Data referencing transportation to and from the African continent, specifically West Africa, was almost non-existent, unless it was addressing the slave trade of years ago. That transportation method was by water versus air.

Looking Back – Reflections—Prior to 1986

Trans-Atlantic Transportation

Literature records that between 1500 and 1870 over 12 million Africans crossed the Atlantic Ocean by ships to the Americas in the slave trade. Other travels for business or pleasure are sparsely noted, except as extractions from personal/family logs and diaries.

The travel journal of Heermance (1847), a supercargo, revealed the *Montgomery*, an American cargo vessel, left New York August 21, 1846, and arrived Liberia, [West Africa] October 6th – a one-way trans-Atlantic voyage that took 47 days (Description,

para 1). Supercargo, a term in maritime law, is the person in charge of the ship's cargo and entrusted to make the voyage profitable by selling, buying and receiving goods for the owner. The barque *Isla de Cuba* left the port of New York with 56 passengers traveling to West Africa on November 7, 1853. Peterson (1854), a passenger, wrote they experienced sea-sickness, very rough heavy seas, over-cast weather, gale winds, had no meat – unable to catch any fish or turtles, and the ship sprung a leak which was pumped dry. They arrived 42 days later on December 18 (chap. iv). The return trip only took 32 days from February 4, 1854 arriving March 6th (chap. vi).

African American Exploration in West Africa gathers the daily diaries of three explorers who maintained their exploits and experiences between 1858 and 1872, in the Liberia and Guinea, West Africa, of today. It was during the American civil war, that several thousand African Americans immigrated to Liberia seeking freedom. The prosperity, beauty, language, fauna, flora and cultures of the people were depicted. The warfare and dangers were also conveyed – as one of the explorers was attacked and died, and his companion was captured and sold back into slavery again. (Fairhead, Geysbeek, Holsoe, & Leach, 2003, chap. 3, 4, 5, 6)

Black Star Line, a steamship company incorporated in June 1919, was chartered “to connect...[African American] producers and consumers around the world,...and to provide transportation for those who chose to go to Africa” (Pisano, 2006, p. 118). Arsenault (2006) states “overcome with emotion as he sails for Africa in 1923, a young and impulsive [Langston] Hughes tosses his personal library, volume by volume, into the ocean, ‘symbolically jettisoning his book- bound Western identity’” (p. 26).

Transportation to and from Africa was predominantly by water. History records the first air crossing of the Atlantic occurring in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Prior to that time one had to make a concerted effort and commit many resources including time, money, and perseverance to journey to the African Continent. However, “by 1950...the Atlantic [Ocean] had finally been conquered for the common passenger” (Beginning, n. d., para. 11) wishing to go to European countries. Travel was not affordable to the masses of African American who have a complex identity, made more perplexing by its duality—they are African by ethnicity and American by birth and citizenship; American descendents of enslaved Africans.

Stereotypes – Cultural Perspectives

Captured, chained, marched, imprisoned, branded, and shipped, enslaved Africans brought their own religious beliefs, languages, and cultural practices with them when they were forced on ships from Africa...however, slave traders and owners mounted a systematic and brutal campaign to de-Africanize them,...stripping them of their original names, languages and religious beliefs. As subjugation African languages was discourage; non-English communication was illegal, as it was for slaves to be taught to read or write. Over time, Africans in America formed a new and common identity focused on their mutual condition in America as opposed to cultural and historic ties to Africa. Anyone tainted with African ancestry was believed inherently inferior morally and intellectually, thus, subordinate. (Hoobler, 1995, chap. 1-3)

In 1903, W. E. B. DuBois (1989) described African Americans – slaves/descendants of slaves – as “a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world— a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world” (p. 5). DuBois defined it a “double-consciousness,” and wrote:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness— an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 5)

For example, in 1921, “the airplane’s first known appearance in...[an] attack on American soil” (Pisano, 2006, p. 105) was witnessed in the racially motivated invasion of Greenwood, the northeast corner of the city of Tulsa, Oklahoma, on June 1. It is mentioned here due to its significance in the cultural connotations of perspectives in aviation. According to Pisano (2006), the airplanes reputedly dropped nitroglycerin to ignite “white fire” from above (pp. 107-109). During this timeframe there were divergent thoughts. First, “the airplane could serve as the tool...dedicated to the ultimate subjection of...[African] Americans” (p. 111). The second, downplayed the airplanes’ physical threat by proposing:

The need for...[African] American to learn to fly to ready themselves for the new air age in America... touted...that...becoming able pilots, could dispel white [held] stereotypes of...incompetent, easily frightened, lacking in ambitions,

and...[unintelligence]. By learning to fly...[African Americans]...could help pave the way for true democracy in America.... [and simultaneously] impress on whites their equality. (p. 115)

A clear example of stereotypes and expectations or looking at one's self through the eyes of others!

In America, the continent of Africa has been defined/distorted by others in multi-media – print, radio, television, film, etc. Words and phrases such as savage, impoverished, corrupt, unstable, afflicted with starving children, AIDS, viruses, warring factions, ethnic cleansing, polygamy, and a primitive lifestyle, etc., have been used to characterize Africa and the people. Negative stereotyping disguised as entertainment in productions like *Tarzan and Jungle Jim*, and some western nomenclature tends to perpetuate and limit perspectives. For example, Rich (1976) describes jungle, tribe, hut, third world, and Dark Continent as “words that often...put down the 350 million” (p. 14) people who live in Africa, in the following manner:

Actual rain forest—better known as jungle—covers only about five percent of the continent. Yet, the term is used so much that many—if not most— [Americans]...grow up thinking that 90 percent of Africa is jungle.

“Tribe” is a word coined by Europeans to describe the organization of groups of people sharing a common language....But it is no longer used to describe Europeans. It is almost always used to describe Third World people and it implies a “put down.” Tribal warfare was waged in Nigeria. But a civil war persists in Northern Ireland. There are no tribes in New York City—only New

Yorkers, or more specifically, Italians, Jews and so forth. Why not Africans in Africa? Or more specifically, Masai, Kuba and Berbers?

As for “hut”? [sic] The idea in the West often is that Africans live in crude or temporary shelters.... But few Africans see their homes as crude or temporary. Some African homes are poor, but many are not. (p.14)

“Third World” is a term which is negatively defined. Merriam-Webster’s (2007) definition is: nations “not aligned with...communist or the non-communist” [countries] (definition 1), or not developed implying not a part of the global economic system, not industrialized, not technologically advanced, “in debt to Western banks and governments...[and] depend on international aid to...meet basic needs” (ICONS Project, 2004, Third World). According to Merriam-Webster (2007) the Dark Continent is Africa (definition 1). “Anything dark implies something bad or evil; therefore, ‘Dark Continent’ is verbally commensurate with ‘Dark Ages’” (Kern-Foxworth, 1985, pp. 158-159). It is pejorative to say Africa is backwards lacking literature, contemporariness, and cultural achievements, etc. This type of verbiage used by mass media communicators has effected perceptions.

Many Americans experience tunnel vision when formulating perceptions about Africa. Hero (1969) recorded “in 1957...only one percent of...[African-America], contrasted with six percent of...[white Americans], could name as many as five countries, colonies, or other territories on the African continent” (p. 223). In 1985, Kern-Foxworth proposed “many...[African]-American...hold an intense fascination with Africa...while there are also many...[others] who know little about Africa” (p. 156). Many African Americans held derogatory savage views of Africa and Africans.

For “over...450 years, it is estimated that more than 11 million Africans...[up to] 40 million were taken from their homeland—the largest forcible movement of people in history. The majority were shipped to the New World” (Hoobler, 1995, p. 19). This enormous indeterminate number of native Africans were stolen from many countries but “the first shipments of slaves from Africa came from West Africa” (Clarke, 1993, p. xv). That means, “in West Africa...[is where] the ancestors of the majority of African Americans were born” (Hoobler, 1995, p. 9).

Enduring the atrocities and annihilation of their personal history, language, religion, family, culture, and country, African American are left without knowledge of their fore-parents (ancestors) or an African county to call home. Ninety-nine point nine percent of the decedents in the last century have lived through generations of vacillating racist identity conferred by others. “Any person of identifiable African descent, no matter the degree of ‘white’ ancestry, was classified as” (Legacies in America, n. d., para. 4) negroid, mulatto, colored, negro, black-Africans, American negro, mixed, biracial, multiracial, quadroon, octoroon, and other terms. These classifications created “a racial caste system...[with] racialized attitudes. [This] racism became an inherent and lasting part of North American culture” (Legacies in America, n. d., para. 4). Given the wavering of identity terms, the derogatory views of Africa, and the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade how could African descendants removed to America be expected to have an understanding of, an appreciation for, or pride in Africa?

In America, prior to the 1950s-1960s, for a person of African descent to be called an African was a most egregious serious insult. However, “as African nations struggled against colonialism and eventually gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s,

many...[African] Americans began to take pride in contemporary Africa and realized that Africans had much to teach them” (Romano, 2003, p. 1602). “Many important things were happening to African people in the United States [and] Africa...during the 60’s....Major changes were taking place....[The] African soul was starting to grow and develop...[before] the energy of the times...[made] it explode” (Branch, J., 1999, p. 4). Through involvement, education, and research the naming of self has evolved from Black to Afro-American, to today, proudly—African American. An emerging mindset to travel, trans-Atlantic travel, and explore the African continent was increasing within the population.

Yesterday—1986-2005

Trans-Atlantic Transportation

During 1986 – 2005 several airline companies provided direct non-stop service from the United States to West Africa. Their ability to maintain safe, stable air carrier operations status has been extremely challenging.

To enhance safety, in 1992, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) implemented the International Aviation Safety Assessments (IASA) program to “ensure that all foreign air carriers that operate to or from the United States are properly licensed and with safety oversight provided by a competent Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards” (Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] International Aviation Safety Assessments [IASA] Program, 2007, Overview).

The Department of Transportation (DOT) “notifies the FAA of the [country’s] application and requests the FAA’s evaluation of the...[country’s] CAA’s capability for providing safety certification and continuing oversight for its international carriers” (FAA IASA Process, 2007, para. 2). “The FAA Flight Standards Service will...schedule...FAA assessment [teams to] visit...the CAA of the applicant’s country” (FAA IASA Process, 2007, para. 3). All inclusive “checklists...are used by [the] FAA teams during the performance of the in-country portion of...the assessment” (FAA IASA Assessment, 2007). The two results possible after the assessment are “does comply with ICAO standards, and does not comply with ICAO standards” (FAA IASA Definitions, 2007, para. 1). If the CAA meets standards, FAA gives a Category 1 rating meaning the country’s air carriers may initiate or continue service to the United States and engage in code-share arrangements with other American carriers.

If the CAA does not meet standards, a Category 2 rating is issued. This means operations are restricted to current levels of any existing service to the United States while corrective actions are pursued. No new operations can be initiated, code-share arrangements are not supported, and all operations are subject to additional inspections at U.S. airports. When the factors that caused or contributed to the Category 2 rating, for example: lacking necessary laws or regulations, or deficiencies in one or more areas, such as technical expertise, trained personnel, and record keeping or inspection procedures, are resolved another assessment is scheduled. While in Category 2 status countries may conduct services if using aircraft wet-leased (aircraft, crew, maintenance, insurance, etc. leased) from a duly authorized and properly supervised Category 1 country that is

authorized to serve the United States with its own aircraft (FAA IASA Definitions, 2007).

“After the assessment visit, consultations (if necessary), and notifications have been completed, the FAA will publicly release the results of...assessments...to all U.S. citizens so they can make informed choices in their international” (FAA IASA Process, 2007, para. 9) flight planning.

In 1997, the Department of Transportation launched an African Aviation Initiative to stimulate dormant aviation relations between America and Africa by improving air links between the continents. Concurrently with an economic initiative, but in an independent approach, the Safe Skies for Africa was implemented.

The purpose of this presidential initiative...[was] to promote sustainable improvements in aviation security,...safety, [and air navigation] in Africa, and to create the environment necessary to foster the growth of aviation services between Africa and the United States. (FAA, 2006, Safe Skies, para. 1)

These improvements were essential if America registered crafts were to land and depart African airports.

Pan American World Airways (Pan Am), formed in 1927 (Pan American, 2007), was the only United States registered airline offering transportation between America and Africa. It was the only airline allowed by the government “to fly outside of the USA” (Reed, 2006, para. 11) in the 1930s and early 1940s. It began with seaplane service between America and Europe in 1937, and made the first jet-powered trans-Atlantic commercial flight in 1958. Pan Am provided the longest-lasting service to Africa. “It opened the route [direct non-stop flights from America] to West Africa [with continuing

service to several West African countries] in 1946” (B. Larsson, personal communication, December 6, 2006). By 1969 they “had extensive flights to obscure destinations in Africa...operating a schedule more conducive to being a flag carrier than [for] profit” (Pan Am, 2006, March 1, 1969). Merging in 1980 with National Airlines, was precipitous to Pan Am’s demise through corporate culture clashing, incompatible fleets merging, and another emerging recession (Pan Am, 2006, January 1980). In order to obtain cash Pan Am had sold many of its routes to other carriers; however the flights to Africa were no longer scheduled and did not appear on the timetables “through about the end of 1986” (D. Keller, personal communication, October 24, 2006). That is, routing to West Africa “was discontinued either late in 1986 or early 1987” (B. Larsson, personal communication, December 6, 2006). “Pan Am celebrated its 50th anniversary of [providing] trans-Atlantic service in 1989” (Pan Am, 2006, July 1, 1989). After experiencing deregulation, worldwide recession, airline airfare wars, higher fuel costs, operational and management difficulties they filed for bankruptcy protections and shut down on “December 4th [1991]. ‘The World’s Most Experienced Airline’ was gone (Pan Am, 2006, October 27, 1991). “Pan Am was a pioneer of the technology that promised to shrink the globe and foster a boom in international travel” (Reed, 2006, para. 12).

Air Afrique Airlines was founded June 26, 1961 by 11 newly independent West African countries. Their route connected the region's capitals, with almost daily flights from those cities to Paris (Onishi, 2001, para. 3, 6, 10). It offered several flights from New York to West Africa each week “from at least 1979...until they ceased operations” (D. Keller, personal communication, October 24, 2006). According to labor and management sources and outside analysts what went wrong was that Air Afrique was a

political creation, not a business, and lacked leadership and accountability. With Pan Am gone, Air Afrique became the main provider for the routes. While flights were usually overbooked, or delayed for days and late departing, or cancelled without advance notice or reason, it was the only carrier that flew direct from New York to Dakar, Senegal, West Africa. It “became better known as ‘Air Maybe’” (Onishi, 2001, para. 18). Air Afrique terminated operations in 2001, “returned its sole remaining aircraft to the leasing company in mid-January, [2002] before [it] was seized for [non] payment,...and filed for bankruptcy” (BBC News, 2002, para. 3-5).

Ghana Airways was established in 1958 and from 2000 operated two non-stop trans-Atlantic round-trip flights per week between New York John F. Kennedy Airport to Accra, Ghana, West Africa, and two non-stop trans-Atlantic round-trip flights per week from Baltimore-Washington International Airport to Accra. Unable to maintain Category 1 status, on July 28, 2004, “Ghana's state-run airline was barred by U.S. officials Tuesday from flying into and out of the United States during an investigation of allegations it ignored orders to ground unsafe aircraft and flew on an expired license” (Kumar, 2004, para. 1).

Nigeria Airways began in 1958, and was defunct in 2002. “At the beginning of the 21st century, Nigeria had a notoriously poor aviation safety record” (Nigeria, 2007, Economy: Transportation and telecommunications: Shipping and air transport, para. 2). “Nigeria Airways’ route was Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa to New York, in the early 1980s” (D. Keller, personal communication, October 24, 2006) continuing for several years, but is no longer available. They ceased service May, 2003 (BBC News, 2003, para. 3).

Virgin Nigeria Airways began in 2004 to replace Nigeria Airways. They had planned to launch scheduled flights from Lagos to Newark, New Jersey followed by a stop in Washington, DC as its second American destination. The FAA has denied the airline a permit for direct Nigeria to America service (Virgin Nigeria Airways, 2006).

South African Airways (SAA) began in 1934 (Morrison and Austin-Williams, 2004, para. 1). “In 1991,...[they were allowed to] resume flights to New York City's J. F. Kennedy International Airport for the first time since the United States imposed economic sanctions on South Africa in 1986” (South African Airways (SAA), 2006). Flights from New York and Washington, DC to West Africa were four times weekly in 2005. Permission for non-stop service from any American city direct to Ghana was discontinued in 2004; therefore Dakar, Senegal became the first stop before the flight continued to Johannesburg, South Africa (SAA, 2006). “SAA...has had full and uninterrupted FAA Category 1 status certification since the late nineteen eighties” (SAA, 2006).

In summary, trans-Atlantic transportation, 1986-2005, was fraught with challenges for each of the airlines trying to serve West Africa. For an African American traveling by air, an incidental comment about the experience was: “One of the worst parts of the trip [to West Africa] can be getting there. It is a long way and the planes are normally full...transportation is a major consideration” (Bailey, 2002, p. 30). The surviving carrier in operation in 2005 seemed to be proficient, stable, and efficient in their flights to South Africa which benefits travelers to West Africa. “South African Airways continues to ‘Bring the World to Africa and Take Africa to the World’” (Corporate Communications, 2006, para. 10).

Stereotypes – Cultural Perspectives

Travelers to West Africa increased after the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 60s “as materials about Africa and its history were unearthed and made more readily available” (Magubane, 1987, p. 232). Alex Haley’s (1976) *Roots* and the 13-hours television series “about lineage and blood, history and suffering, and the need to know about...[culture] was a magnificent attempt to re-establish the ties that bind...[African Americans] to their ancestral home” (Magubane, 1987, p. 233).

The number of African Americans traveling to Africa according to Nelson’s 1986 research “has increased since the early ‘70s as a result of improved economy, better education, more access to travel with competitive prices, less pressures of work and the simple desire to partake of the good life of travel” (p. 191). Nelson reports further that:

Of travel to Africa the expressed need for some visitors is to seek roots, for others it is to get to know the people and their customs, while for some it is to fulfill their interest in historical events. Visitors...were variously interested in the host’s value systems, religion, politics and domestic side of life, that is, family relationships, how women relate to men and the child-rearing practices. One person said that she wanted to learn why her ancestors decided to sell some of their people into slavery. Another interest was in trying to learn why...[Africans were] so disadvantaged, and cannot organize and do better for themselves? One participant reported that since there was so little information about...[African people] during her school days she thought it important to visit Africa to see how much she could learn. The simple process of identifying with the whole feeling of ‘Blackness’ was another reason for wanting to visit Africa.

[Hesitancy, reluctance, to] non-interest in visiting Africa...was varied....One person [feared non-acceptance] because she was the daughter of a slave...[who] had lost her identity which included language,...dress, patterns of religion, dance, and beliefs. Another...thought...by dressing differently..., wearing lipstick, or eating with knives and forks, she might be ridiculed,...that she would view...as...prejudice.... [Some were] upset at the tragedies...shown...by the media...[like] dire poverty..., [starvation]..., multiple wives, bare-chested women, and pot-bellied children. (pp. 192-193)

While some of the people may be financially poor...their land which is controlled by others is rich in many mineral resources. African American “views of Africa lurched from one extreme to another” (Holloway, 2003, p. 99) and have been shaped through lack of information and the media. A “greater acceptance of cultures and [of] peoples different from our own” (Rich, 1980, p. 43) western value-system and way of thinking was realized through tourism to West Africa. “Tourism [has been] promoted as a cure for [some of] the economic ills” (Steffen, 1986, p. 2217).

Travelers to West Africa have found it is a dynamic continent of diverse cultures, economies and aspirations. Nelson’s (1986):

Findings indicate that the travelers were satisfied with their African visit in terms of new sights and learning. There was much to see and much to learn. Visitors had the unique opportunity (although short) of assessing the people and culture then deciding if something was missing in their psyche, what they needed to fill this missing link, and if a visit to the society from which their ancestors came a long time ago fulfilled this need. (p. 200)

The missing identity seems to come from the loss of continuity in the heritage....[Nelson] believe[s] that very little if any difference was made in the area of establishing or redefining an identity by visiting Africa. Too much time has elapsed and too much has changed. Perhaps the idea of establishing an identity through ties with Africa is only an illusion. It is something that is unattainable for...[African] Americans today. What can be felt is the satisfaction of going to Africa and knowing that one [h]as “set foot” on the soil and in the country of ancestors and a country with a ruling plurality of Blacks, Blacks in power as opposed to a society with a plurality of Whites who are the rulers. (p. 201)

One of the questions posed by Nelson at the conclusion of the 1986 research was “has the experience helped those [African] Americans who [have] traveled to Africa to establish a stronger identity as an American citizen?” (p. 203). As a by-product, this research may be able to illuminate some thoughts in how traveling and convenience of air transport has impacted the African American identity.

John Branch (1999), tour director of annual African heritage tours says:

We talk of culture as a way of life, a certain way of walk, a special kind of talk, smells, sounds, rhythms, variations of spices to universal foods, and sometimes new and different foods. Each culture becomes distinct in varying degrees; it is like putting on your own stamp, your own way of recognizing a people, [ourselves]. (p. vi)

Branch and Pryor Malis. (2001) contributed to the identity issues through a production for television broadcast in which several tourist travelers commented as follows:

They [the enslavers] pretended that we were not human so that they could do it.... Intellectually I knew about slavery, I knew what happened. But it is different knowing it, reading it, hearing it, and being here [in a slave dungeon]. (15:40-15:54)

[We are] descendent of the strongest of the strong...to have survived this hell. (16:20 16:29)

I had no idea...once I entered that [slave] dungeon my feelings was gonna be changed – the way that they were. (19:05-19:14)

[Tour director Branch said:] it takes something like [a visit to] these slave dungeons and forts to bring them [African America tourists] to their reality that they are African regardless of how many centuries they have been removed from this land. (19:57- 20:08)

I have actually connected with Africa – there is a physical connection – before it was a thought, it was thoughts, it was words, it was a desire – but I have actually connected – I have walked on the soil – AFRICAN AMERICAN THAT’S ME! (20:08-20:26)

So now, I am so proud to say that I am an African. I am AN AFRICAN....Yes, I live in America...but my roots, Africa, AFRICA...that’s it for me! (20:26-20:46)

Having been called Black Americans, Afro-Americans, and Colored the comments of some travelers in 2001 state an immediate change in their perspective of their identity to that of Africans.

C. Bailey (2002) writes: Africa must be seen to be understood. If you have never been there, you won't understand the attraction. Once you've been there and experienced the "African high," you will return again and again. Each time will be different, even if you keep going back to the same places. The more you go back, the more you will realize you will never get enough. (p. 30)

Today – Recent Journals—2006

Trans-Atlantic Transportation

Today air travel has become more affordable. Several airlines offer direct non-stop service to West Africa with other carriers proposing to implement routes.

At the start of this research North American Airlines (NAA) inaugurated non-stop service between the United States and West Africa on June 4, 2006. Service linked Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) to Banjul, The Gambia West Africa, with continuing service to Accra, Ghana (North American Airlines [NAA], 2006, Gambia). The Gambia has FAA IASA Category 2 status (FAA IASA Results, 2007).

On July 17, 2006, non-stop scheduled service between Lagos, Nigeria [West Africa] and New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport was to be added to their schedule (NAA, 2006, Lagos). However, the "FAA assessed Nigeria's Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and determined it does not provide safety oversight of its air carrier

operators in accordance with the minimum safety oversight standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)” (FAA IASA Program, 2007).

February 19, 2008, the discontinuance of scheduled international service to West Africa was announced by

Rob Binns, [NAA’s] Chief Commercial and Planning Officer [who said] “we have been pleased that all...[West African] markets have performed on a revenue basis as we anticipated”....these markets [have become] untenable...[due to] the rising....jet fuel costs [which has] increase[d] 60 percent since we entered the Africa markets in 2005. (NAA Discontinue, 2008, para. 2)

The Huff Daland Dusters crop-dusting operation began in 1924, and evolved into today’s Delta Air Lines (Delta Airline [DAL] Corporate Information, n. d., 1924).

December 4, 2006, Delta inaugurated daily direct trans-Atlantic flights from Atlanta, GA to Dakar, Senegal (DAL Dakar, 2006, para. 1) and increased routing by departing from New York Kennedy on June 9, 2008 (DAL Expansion, 2007, para.3). Service direct to Lagos, Nigeria from Atlanta commenced December 3, 2007 (DAL Lagos, 2007, para. 1). They anticipate departures from New York Kennedy in December, 2008 (DAL Lagos, 2007, para. 4). October 22, 2008, Delta Air Lines ”announced it will expand its service to the African continent with the introduction of the first and only flight between...Atlanta...and Monrovia, Liberia;---[it] will make a stop at...Cape Verde...and will start in June, 2009” (DAL Monrovia, 2008, para. 1).

South African Airways (SAA) increased flights from New York and Washington, DC to daily service in 2006. On April 10, 2006, SAA entered a code-share agreement with United Airlines (United Airlines [UA], 2006, para 3), where (a) flight routes are

shared, (b) tickets sold and flight connections made on each other's flights, and (c) fliers earn miles useable on each other's flights. Thus code sharing enabled greater service and increased flight availability.

Today South African Airways, United, and Delta Air Lines provide a limited number of trans-Atlantic direct non-stop flights to Dakar, Senegal and/or Lagos, Nigeria in West Africa, regularly, in comparison to the numerous flights scheduled for Europe.

Airlines schedules showed abundant flights to European cities. The distance may be less than the distance to West Africa but the air fare was at least twice the European fare to go approximately the same distance to West Africa. The reference data contained in the table below shows the variance (distance and cost) in air travel to a few locations in Europe and West Africa. Input parameters to the respective airline's website were for a round trip economy class adult ticket departing February 25, 2009 and returning March 13, 2009. All data was collected October, 2008.

TABLE I
DISTANCE & AIRFARE OF SELECT EUROPEAN &
WEST AFRICAN AIRPORTS

Airline	Flight #	Departure Airport	Destination Airport	Approx. Miles	Fare	Tax & Fees	Total Cost
America	142/105	NY Kennedy	London	3452	426.00	156.90	582.90
Delta	3/4	NY Kennedy	London	3452	456.80	126.88	583.86
America	44/45	NY Kennedy	Paris	3635	577.00	105.90	682.90
Delta	8603/8550	NY Kennedy	Paris	3635	651.80	75.16	726.96
Alitalia	609/610	NY Kennedy	Rome	4284	634.00	73.60	707.60
Delta	148/149	NY Kennedy	Rome	4284	629.80	42.85	672.65
United	4586/4587	NY Kennedy	Dakar, SN	3805	970.00	493.33	1463.33
South African Airline	204/203	NY Kennedy	Dakar	3812	799.00	473.34	1272.34
Delta	34/35	Atlanta, GA	Dakar	4340	1395.80	136.70	1532.50
Delta	50/57	Atlanta, GA	Lagos, NG	5840	1466.80	59.50	1526.30

(Alitalia Airline Schedule, 2008; America Airline Schedule, 2008, Delta Air Lines Schedule, 2008; SAA Schedule, 2008; UA Schedule, 2008)

As of January 2008 only three West African countries appear on the FAA Flight Standards Service IASA Program Assessment Results list: Ivory Coast, Category 1; The Gambia and Ghana have a Category 2 rating. Of the fifty-four total African countries, the

spreadsheet only lists eleven, wherein only five attained a Category 1 rating (FAA IASA Results, 2008).

The ability or inability for some African countries to establish and maintain an aviation infrastructure that consistently meets requirements has been problematic which affects the availability and diversity of flights servicing certain destinations. The African cultural reasons for this is a topic for another research project, but this instability does impact African Americans who wish to go directly to a specific destination safely.

Stereotypes – Cultural Perspectives

African “Americans’ attention to and opinion of Africa shifted frequently in light of watershed moments in African history, the development of the Cold War, and the dramatic growth of civil rights struggles in the United States” (Romano, 2003, p. 1602). Through the media, visions of Africa reeled from one extreme to another, shaping attitudes about Africa, and fostering a “greater acceptance of [different] cultures and peoples” (Rich, 1980, p. 43).

Exposure to the culture of Africa, African history, and African-American history was beneficial in building cultural pride, self esteem and changing social attitudes. With increased knowledge about historical self, opened/changed minds, and increased cultural pride. Changes in cultural awareness can be seen in celebrations of African Americans. The gele (headdress), lapa (wraparound skirt), ntuamas (long cloth wrapped and tied over one shoulder), kufis (hats) became a part of the lifestyle, perhaps not daily but more often than never, as it was before. This included an awareness that can also be seen in celebrations with African foods like fufu and peanut soup; it was a new sense of the

interconnection between Africa and African-Americans in the United States, brought about by travel and exposure.

Morrison (1987) writes:

It has long and widely been assumed that...[African]-Americans have a special concern for African affairs, an assumption resulting from the West African ancestry of...[African]-Americans. It is thought that these descendants, like other ethnic entities in the United States, desire some form of continuing linkage to the “motherland.” (p. 269)

“Western influences in education and on the economy have been factors in the gradual process of culture change” (Steffen, 1986, p. 2217). Today tourism remaps the exit routes from Africa and has made a mark on heritage and identity. Through trans-Atlantic travels termed homeland, roots, heritage tours, or other terms, the African American identity, mindset, and landscape formation has become a commodified object changing the culture (Ebron, 2000, p. 910). Air transportation has accelerated the process; and “tourism,...from inception 1965 to present,...[was] promoted as a cure for the economic ills” (Steffen, 1986, 2217) of some African countries.

It was highly recommended by the travels in the 1986 study that prior to the first journey to Africa, the motherland, travelers be given some type of orientation to minimize or dispel stereotypes, and possibly alleviate culture shock on arrival. Some examples cited were (a) shocked and amazed that African people own and manage their own businesses, banks, universities, etc.; (b) astonished at the intellectual scholarship and capacity, (c) astounded that people are undaunted at whether or not utilities work (electricity, water, etc.); (d) surprised at the level of congeniality and hospitality, and (e)

stunned that some urban and rural areas are just as any found in the so-called civilized world. Having discussed some of those items enhanced expectations and broadened their perspectives and sense of Africa. “As the chains of slavery were broken for Africans in the West, our chain and link to Mother Africa must never be broken” (Branch, J., 1999, p. 3) [again].

Futrell (2001) said air transportation has fostered increased awareness and knowledge, helped clarify formation/establishment of identity, and made convenient the adoption/perpetuation to the current mindset, attitudes, and backdrop of the African American culture.

Holloway (2003) reviewed Meriwether and recorded African-Americans’ “shifting sense of American citizenship reflected [in] a constantly evolving kinship with Africa, a...discourse between real citizenship and imagined kinship demand[ed recognition of] how ideas migrate across vast expanses and take root in new spaces in complex ways” (p. 99). Direct non-stop trans-Atlantic flight aided in the evolvement.

Summary

The review of the literature provided only limited information regarding air trans-Atlantic flights to West Africa. Unlike information about routes to Europe which was readily available, data on routes to Africa was usually mentioned as a side-comment or an insignificant note, rather than a topic of interest. The data that was eventually located was retrieved from historical websites, ‘the schedule’ archives of airline companies’ no longer in business, or from aviation enthusiasts.

This research looked at the effect and affect of trans-Atlantic air transportation on African American culturalization after travelers return to America, and adds to the literature.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of air transportation on African American culturalization from leisure tourist travel between the United States and West Africa.

This research explored individuals' life experiences through their expressions, thoughts, and feelings about traveling and touring West Africa. This method allowed for meaningful expressions of complex and personal experiences in order to obtain a deep rich understanding. It followed an ethnographic qualitative design to describe, analyze, and interpret "a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Creswell, 2005, p. 436). It followed five steps: (a) identified intent and design, (b) obtained necessary approval, (c) used appropriate data collection procedures, (d) analyzed and interpreted the data, and (e) the report was written, as detailed by Creswell (2005, pp. 448-453). To foster an environment for ease of information exchange and disclosure, personal one-on-one interviews were held as prescribed by Berg (2007).

Ethnographic qualitative design, in its truest sense, requires "long-term access...so... [the researcher] can build a detailed record of...[participants'] behaviors

and beliefs over time. [The researcher]...may be a participant in the group...gather[ing] extensive fieldnotes, interview[ing] many people, and collect[ing]...evidence to establish the record” (Creswell, 2005, p. 436). In this study, the term started after December 2004 and extended to January 2008. During the three-year period the researcher had occasion to travel and interact with some participants annually. Creswell (2005) stated the researcher “can no longer [be] view[ed]...as an objective reporter; instead, the researcher is only one voice among many...who need[s] to be heard” (p.437). In this ethnographic collective case study—“multiple cases are described and compared to provide insight into an issue” (Creswell, 2005, p. 589)—focus was on individuals and the search was for the shared patterns or themes affecting the African American culture.

Research Questions

While questions did evolve, the primary research question was: How or has air travel to West Africa affected and impacted the African American culture?

Some of the questions of the Nelson (1986) study (interest in travel to Africa, expectations, experiences, and was Africa seen as “home”) were updated, augmented, and included in the interview instrument. The categories of interview questions were: (a) Travel – Transportation which contained six questions that queried participants’ experiences and (b) Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions, which looked for evidence of changed, altered, understood, enriched and or enhanced mindset, landscape, and environment; fifteen inquiries examined participants’ affect and the effect.

Selection of Sample

Intent and Design – Step One

The focus of this study (step 1) was to understand air transportation's role in the activity of traveling to West Africa as a tourist through collective case studies, and the impact to culture after the tourist returned. Using the Stake definition (as cited in Creswell, 2005, p. 439) “multiple cases [were] described and compared to provide insight” in this qualitative study.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval – Step Two

The characteristics of the population for this research were African Americans, over the age of 18, who were born and raised in the United States, and who, after December 2004, traveled to West Africa as tourists, rather than for education or business purposes. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (step 2). The IRB approval form is located in Appendix G.

Due to a limited number of people having expertise in the area being researched, and as an “in-depth understanding require[d] that only a few cases be studied” (Creswell, 2005, p. 439), the initial non-probability, purposeful sample size was ten. Resources permitted an additional three cases to be studied. The Nelson (1986) study had only seven interviewees.

Each subject satisfied the characteristics of the population detailed above. One of the gatekeepers—sources of participants—was The Afrikan Poetry Theatre who offers six to eight African heritage tours annually.

Methods

Data Gathering and Collection – Step Three

Data was collected (step 3) from African American tourists who had traveled to West Africa after 2004, through interviews and observations to amass their understanding and perspectives. Extensive in-depth interviews and active involvement of participants was anticipated; more participants than the number suggested by the design volunteered, were anxious to participate, and their shared views are included. All participants identified as subjects were first contacted by letter explaining the purpose of the research, the time of their involvement in an interview, and the questions that would be asked. An appointment time established. Subsequent follow up was by telephone to confirm and finalize appointments. Permission for the use of audiotape recording during the interviews was requested as part of the oral and written discussions. Signed consent forms were obtained. Assurances were made, orally and in writing prior to and during the interview, that subjects' actual names would not be disclosed. A fictitious name chosen by the participant was used during the interview and in the final written report. A copy of their transcribed interview was furnished to each participant prior to submission and publication for member checking.

Instrumentation

Personal one-on-one interviews were held in a comfortable natural setting of a hotel and several were held at the participant's home. Open-ended and general questions were asked which focused and evolved to obtain rich data of their personal perceptions.

The same open ended, general broad questions were posed to each participant, which logically evolved and lead to an assortment of differing data.

The complete list of questions is located in Appendix A. While all the questions asked did not follow the exact order presented on the instrument, they all were covered. “The researcher-designed instrument...[was] validated...and...pilot-tested” (Key, 1997, Module R6, Methods, para. 1) through a group of experts identified by the researcher. The approximate time proposed for the interview was one hour. Depending on the depth of data the interviewee wished to share, the average interview time was 50 minutes, with 22 and 108 minutes the low and high.

The audiotape recording aided in complete content capture and field notes were written to assist with the analysis of the data. During the interview clarification and/or restating was employed as necessary. As Berg (2007) and Creswell (2005) suggested, the recorded interviews and other notes were transcribed, corrected, and edited before they were indexed and manually coded in order to be analyzed. The collected data was reduced and transformed to make readily accessible, understandable, and to draw out themes and patterns for focusing, simplifying, and making the voluminous data manageable. Researcher followed the recommendation of Creswell (2005) who said first take the data apart and then put it back together in a summarized, pictorial manner that explains your conclusion to answer the initial question. The tapes were transcribed and the data analyzed, and all tapes were destroyed to protect confidentiality at the conclusion of the study.

In addition to the Interview Instrument, other items located in the Appendix include: Appendix B: Checklist and Interview Script—to assist/focus researcher;

Appendix C: Letter to Participant—explaining the purpose of the research; Appendix D: Informed Consent Form—voluntary participation, audio tape, confidentiality, risks, IRB contact, etc.; Appendix F: Participants’ Interview Transcriptions—a verbatim copy of each interview, and Appendix G: Institutional Review Board Approval.

Data Analysis

Analysis and Interpretation - Step Four

To analyze and interpret data (step 4), the collected data was read, described, and themes or issues developed as suggested by Creswell (2005, p. 452). Data was analyzed after many readings. The data was coded by the major categories (transportation and culture), and further organized into sub-topics or themes. For example: first reading was an overview; second, categorized: third, refined/sub-divided the groups; fourth, themes emerged, along with layers and interrelationships, etc. Data segments were compared within and across the categories, analyzing for relationships and/or patterns/themes.

As new categories or themes emerged they were coded for inclusion. From each participant’s interview, data was organized for commonalities, differences, and other areas discerned. It was then compared and synthesized with all of the interviews. This resulted in additional categories and connections between categories.

After analysis and interpretation the reduced text and emerged themes were reported in the findings through narrative discussion and matrices for visual presentation showing relationships among data. Data/interpretations were reflected back to the Nelson (1986) study to highlight new understanding of issues and themes, and cross-case

analysis noted commonalities and differences as proposed by Creswell (2005, p. 452). The personal perspective of the researcher was reported.

Written Case Studies – Step Five

Included in the written report (step 5) were the transcripts of each of the cases. The views and bias of the researcher were kept to a minimum. The findings of cross-case analysis were used to generalize where warranted, and concluded with how the researcher “as well as the participants have changed or benefited from the research” (Creswell, 2005, p. 453). This analysis, interpretation and study helped fill a void in the literature.

Validity and Reliability

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2004), validity of qualitative research was based on logic and required in depth documentation and complete explanations. “The researcher-designed instrument...[was] validated...and...pilot-tested” (Key, 1997, Module R6, Methods, para. 1) through a group of experts. Several travelers—tourist to Africa and colleagues—identified by the researcher served as the validation team for the research instrument. After the instrument was reviewed confusing items were rewritten for clarity and modified for consistent perceptions. Some instrument content and construct was revised based on input from an expert, the tour operator. The same criterion for the same questions as used in the Nelson (1986) study helped validate the instrument. The validity team assessed the instrument to ensure the (face, content, construct, and criteria) data collected measured what was intended and needed to answer the research question.

That data gathered was obtained through focused inquiry and evolved into a rich collection of participants' personal perspectives, from asking the same questions. To enhance validity all data gathered was taped and notes recorded. Non-intrusive comments and perspectives of participants were verified throughout the research process by seeking clarification and/or restating as necessary. Research followed Guba and Lincoln's (1989) recommendation of member checking as an effective way of eliminating the possibility of misrepresentation and misinterpretation of conveyed data; thus minimized threats and established credibility.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) reported the researcher's participation in the environment with the participants being interviewed, could introduce a bias, which could easily destroy or sway the findings or internal validity (p.236). The researcher remained cognizant of that possibility in order to avoid it, and her perspectives have been included.

Wiersma and Jurs (2000) write that internally consistent reliability involves one administration of an instrument where questions are grouped that measure the same concept. The questions of this study were grouped into two categories, transportation and culture. Other subtopics/keypoints were confined to the same categories. Although participants' responses varied widely, each participant was asked the same grouping of questions in transportation and culture for consistency in measuring reliably.

Summary

Using the described ethnographic qualitative design to describe, analyze, and interpret "a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop[ed] over time" (Creswell, 2005, p. 436) resulted in additional knowledge for the

literature that showed how the convenience of air transportation (time, cost, schedule, etc.) made the voyage possible for African American to travel to Africa. Further, the study established what each person, defined as self—an African American before going—has changed based on what they saw, felt, experienced for the short period of time touring West Africa. It included what was done differently or understood differently after having been to the land of their ancestors. More specifically, the methodology used was adequate in capturing data to address how the African American culture (lifestyle, attitude, mindset, landscape, environment, etc.) changed since participants have traveled to West Africa and returned to America.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The 13 participants interviewed for this study were African Americans who were born and raised in the United States. Independently, or as a member of a group, each participant traveled to West Africa after December 2004 as a tourist and visited several countries. The interviews were held at a hotel or at a private residence; two participants answered the questions via eMail and followed-up by telephone. Participants in the study chose a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality in the study; throughout the study, the alias was used. The findings of the study documented their thoughts and reflections.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of air transportation on African American culturalization from leisure tourist travel between the United States and West Africa.

It explored the reasons for visiting West Africa and the end-evolving results of that journey to determine how air transportation has affected the African Americans' culture.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to answer the primary research question: How has air travel to West Africa affected and impacted the African American culture? The instrument questions, contained in Appendix A, form the basis for the interview and were used as a guide. They were categorized into two areas: travel and transportation had six sub-questions, and stereotypes and cultural perspectives contained fifteen interrogatories. Nine other elements captured the demographics. The findings have been listed according to the categories.

Presentation of Findings

The demographics preceded the responses to the 21 questions asked to each of the 13 participants. The replies/findings to 18 questions were summarized, illustrated in a graph, where possible and potent excerpts of participants' comments to three questions were listed in a table. Appendix E contains all the excerpts of the participants' verbatim comments, segregated by question, also in table format. The sub question was used as the title of the table. Where the table continued to the next page, the table header row was repeated atop each page. The tables of excerpts were used to illustrate or explain the perspective of the participant. Any clarifying or follow-up questions were shown in italic typeface, and brackets surround data inserted for better understanding. Comments expressed with extreme emotion or great emphasis was shown using all upper case letters. The spontaneity of responses in this qualitative study, including full narratives of each interview recording, was transcribed and is located in Appendix F. When information sought was supplied in a differing question, that reply was relocated to the

appropriate “findings” area. However, in the transcriptions it remains as it actually occurred.

Demographics

The demographics of the 13 participants in the study are shown in two tables.

“NR” in the age column indicates no response was obtained.

TABLE II
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS: SEX, OCCUPATION, AGE,
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, MARITAL STATUS

Participants	Sex	Occupation	Age	Educational Level	Marital Status
Akosia	F	Retired	69	2 years college	Divorced
Baracha	F	Retired	65	2 years college	Married
BeBe	F	Retired	NR	Some college	Divorced
Brother X	M	Video sound technician	50+	BA	Married
Emy	F	Retired	NR	College grad	Married
Joe	M	Occupational therapist	41	BS	Single
Loss of a Mother’s Love	F	Retired	55	BA	Single
Makeba	F	Retired	64	3 years college	Married
Nursie	F	Nurse	50	Pursuing Masters	Single
Poochie	F	Clerical	59	2 years college	Married
Tiye	F	Occupational therapist	35	MS	Single
Toni	F	Emergency Room Nurse	46	BA	Divorced
Yaw	M	Retired	NR	9 th grade	Married

TABLE III
 DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS: STATE BORN/CHILDHOOD,
 ADULTHOOD, LAST VISIT TO WEST AFRICA,
 TOTAL VISITS TO WEST AFRICA

Participants	Born / Childhood	Adulthood	Last visit to West Africa	Total visits to West Africa
Akosia	AR/MI	AL	2007	6
Baracha	NY	NY	2004	2
BeBe	NY	NY	2005	1
Brother X	NY	NY	2006	3
Emy	SC	NY	2004	3
Joe	NY	NY	2007	1
Loss of a Mother's Love	NY	NY	2007	2
Makeba	NY/FL	NY	2007	13
Nursie	NY	NY	2005	2
Poochie	NY	NY	2005	2
Tiye	NY	NY	2007	1
Toni	NY	NY	2007	4
Yaw	NY	NY	2004	3

Findings from Travel and Transportation

Interview Question One

What were your travel experiences?

The initial question sought to determine participants' travel and transportation experiences surrounding the airports, flight, cost and time. It was presented as departure from an America airport, travel and transportation en route and while in Africa, and transportation experiences in returning to America.

The airport experience was described by 3 (23%) of the 13 participants as occurring without difficulties and went smooth, while 5 (39%) found it hectic and time consuming after the heightened security measures after 9-11. A snowstorm, that delayed a flight, left a traveler with the sense that Kennedy Airport was ill-prepared to handle the situation as they remained on the tarmac for over 7 hours before deplaning.

The in-flight experience for the majority of participants was defined as good, smooth, comfortable and/or pleasant. The seating in coach was not as comfortable as expected and was described as being "on top of each other" (Tiye, 2007, p. 322); the individual television screens and independent movie watching ability was a positive.

Flight scheduling was thought to be convenient by most, especially the direct, non-connecting flight, with the exception of one who had to spend the preceding night in New York, to assure connectivity the following morning. It was also suggested that "more attention...be given to having more direct flights to...[other places in] Afrika" (Emy, 2007, p. 273).

Transportation in Africa received a myriad of answers: different, pleasant, comfortable, good, fairly decent, hectic, buses too small, roads rough, car too old, and for one the taxicab had to be pushed by them, the passenger. It was thought to be different and was not as comfortable as in America.

Most participants found the costs reasonable, ranging from \$2100 to \$3000. It was mentioned that the group rates were a better buy, and some questioned why the cost was more than going to Europe. One found it expensive, but was able to plan for the trip.

Several had preconceived ideas about the time to travel to Africa and were pleasantly surprised that instead of taking 16 – 21 hours, the trans-Atlantic flight ranged from 6 ½ to 9 hours, that went by very fast.

The overall travel and transportation experiences of 92% (12) of the participants were expressed as positive and all were excited about the trip and enjoyed the experience.

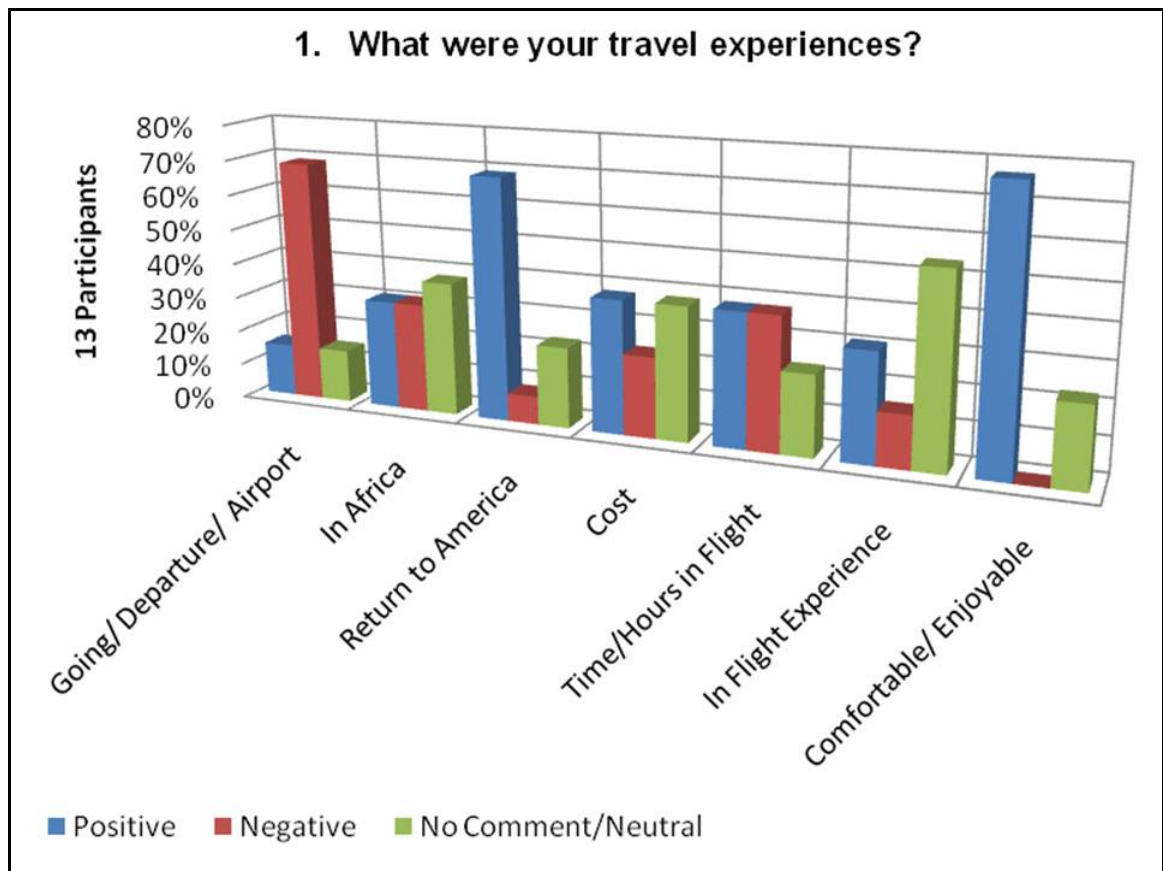


Figure 1. What Were Your Experiences?

Interview Question Two

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (including the availability of products)?

Aviation has made it much more accessible to finding West African products in America. Authentic African fabric/textile/material was used by over half of the participants in sewing. Many bought clothing that was designed/made in West Africa. Shea butter—a multi-use product—was used by half of the participants. Items such as artifacts, natural wood carvings, musical instruments, drums, sculptures, artwork, masks, furniture, jewelry, herbs, different food items, and other items produced by Africans were identified by the participants as products that have enhanced their lifestyles. There's a heavy influx of the West African culture in the African Market in Harlem, New York where many, if not all, of the aforementioned items can be purchased. Mentioned was that imported products "are very expensive over here [in America], once they get here" (Yaw, 2007, p. 343) as compared to purchasing them while in West Africa. Also mentioned was "there are neighborhoods in New York City...for every nationality on earth and the various products associated with their cultures" (Loss of a Mother's Love [Loss], 2007, p. 293). Aviation has contributed to it all.

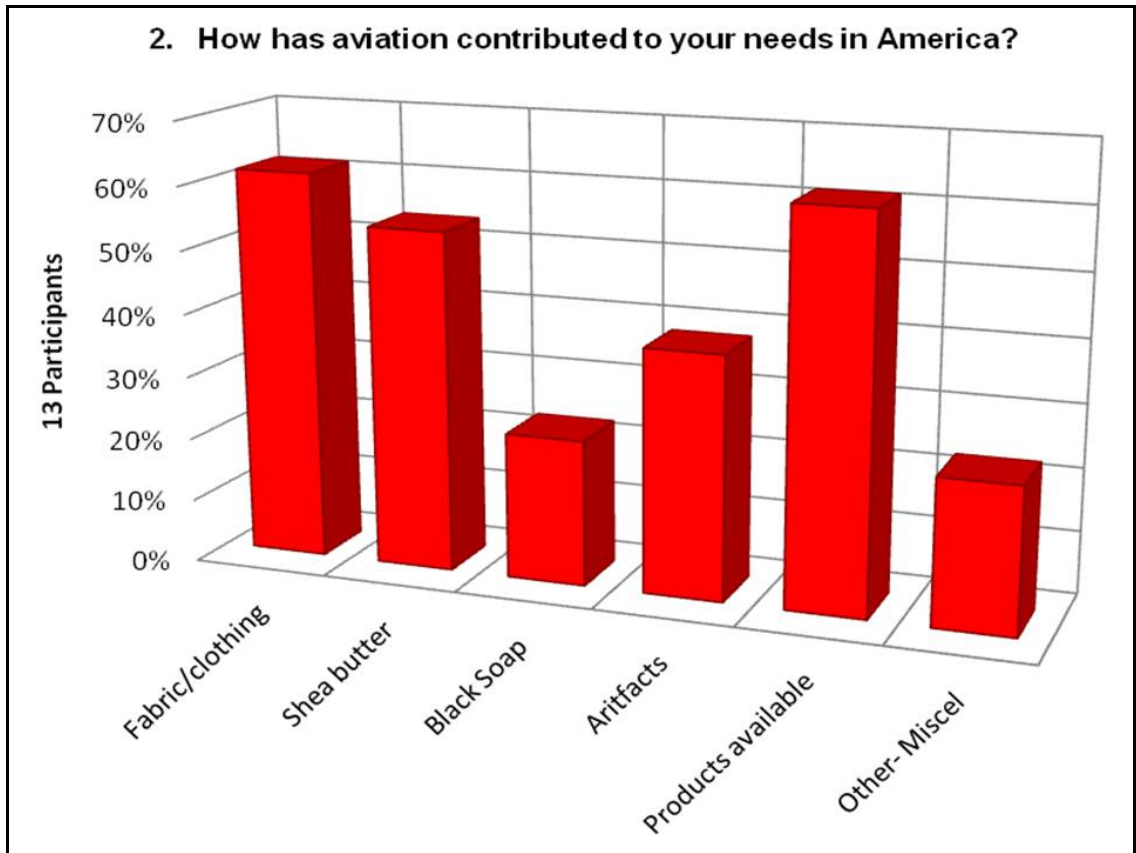


Figure 2. How Has Aviation Contributed to Your Needs in America?

Interview Question Three

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

The resounding convenience aviation offered 12 (92%) of the participants was “time.” Comments included: “Aviation has improved my life...I do not have to drive,...it saves time and...toll on the body” (Akosia, 2008, p. 228); “time saved...from point A to point B” (Baracha, 2007, p. 234); [safe], “comfortable, and you leave the driving to someone else” (Poochie, 2007, p. 316). “Aviation helps me to brighten/heighten my horizons...feel secure...it's fast, it's convenient, and most times it is economical”

(Makeba, 2007, p. 299), and ultimately offers access and availability to other cultures and people.

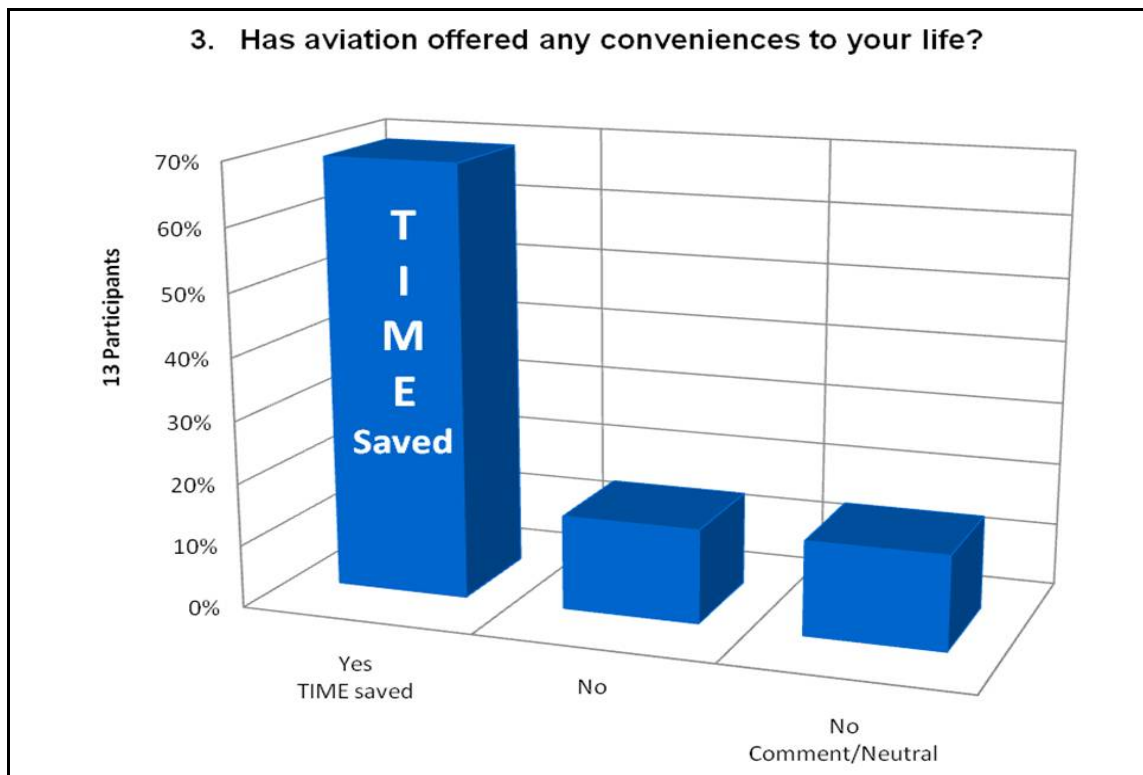


Figure 3. Has Aviation Offered Any Conveniences To Your Life?

Interview Question Four

Why did you go?

The majority of the participants expressed a desire to learn about African people, history, culture, the Motherland, their heritage and ancestry. First hand knowledge was preferred over the missing or distorted information presented by the media, others and/or schools. Based on input from parents, others or curiosity it appeared visiting the African

continent was a passion, and a dream for many years, of several displaced Africans, For one, the reason for going was a family vacation; for another it was to get a clear picture and see what attracted other family members to visit West Africa so often. All participants were excited about going and appreciated the experience.

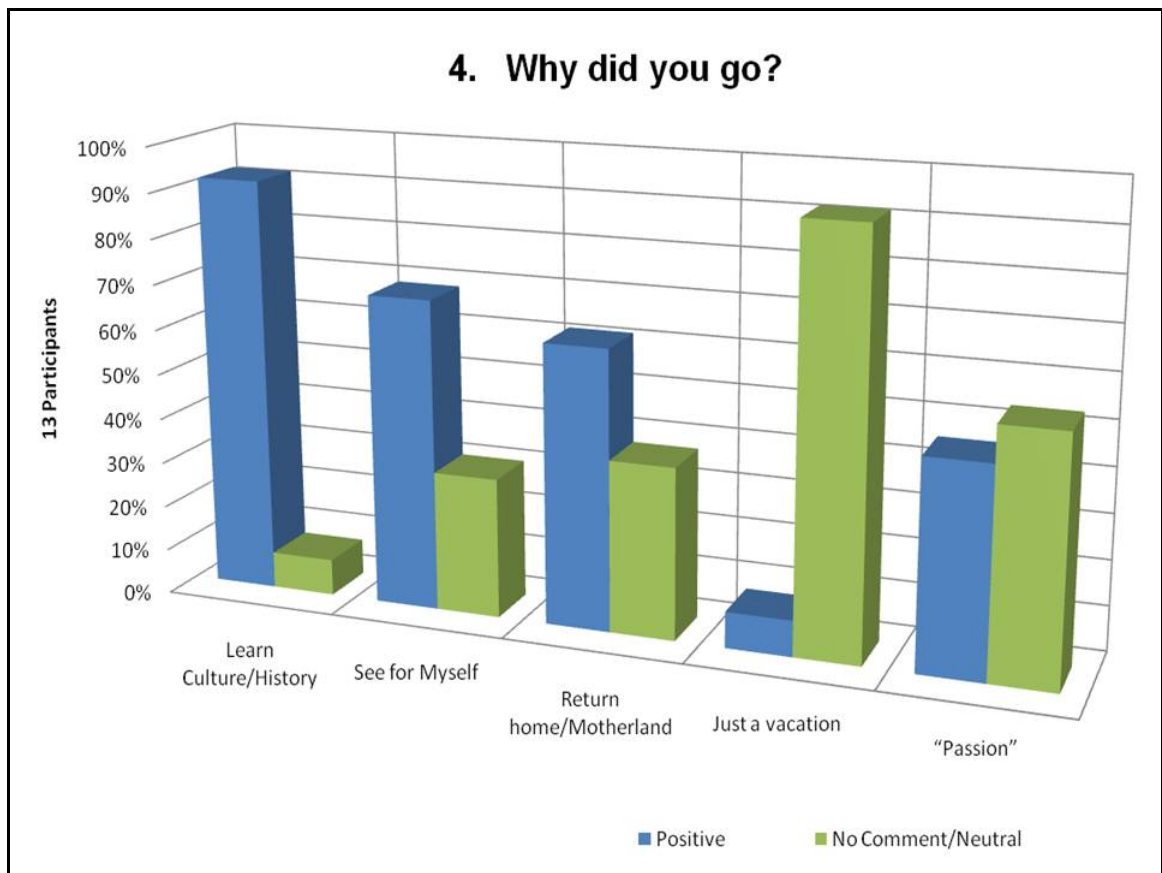


Figure 4. Why Did You Go?

Interview Question Five

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

When necessary, this question was rephrased as: How would you tell somebody who has never gone, how to prepare?

Participants said: the only preparation was to make up my mind that I was going and the rest would take care of itself (Baracha, 2007, p. 235); search for the best price, most direct flights (Akosia, 2008, p. 230), or use frequent flyer miles to save money (Loss, 2008, p. 294), wear comfortable clothing for the flight (Emy, 2007, p. 275), take a laptop, keep a journal (Brother, 2007, p. 259), and take light weight clothes for comfort—it was warm there (Poochie, 2007, p. 317). Based on a poor decision to stay up for two days prior to the trip, now preparation would be to get proper rest daily, and drink plenty of water before and during the flight (Brother, 2007, p. 259).

Pack/bring less clothes—less changes of clothes less personal use items, and bring more items to leave there were the popular replies (Bebe, 2007, p. 245; Joe, 2007, p. 285; Makeba, 2007, p. 299; Nursie, 2007, p. 308; Poochie, 2007, p. 317; Tiye, 2007, p. 324; Yaw, 2007, p. 343). Bringing gifts for extended African families and friends included items that were not convenient or too expensive to acquire, such as tooth paste, deodorant, soap, canned foods, candy, tee shirts, jeans, sneakers, writing materials, and small electronic devices. Packing/taking less personal leaves room to bring back more African products to share; things like masks and jewelry for family and friends to, perhaps, spark an interest in visiting Africa. The unique reply was establishing a scholarship fund for students studying Egyptology at Cheikh Anta Diop University (Tiye, 2007, p. 324), where the participant would present the scholarship(s) to the recipient(s). It was suggested to those who have never visited West Africa that they be told in advance

not to expect the American usual; be open-minded as it's a different way of living, but it's easy to adjust to (Toni, 2007, p. 334).

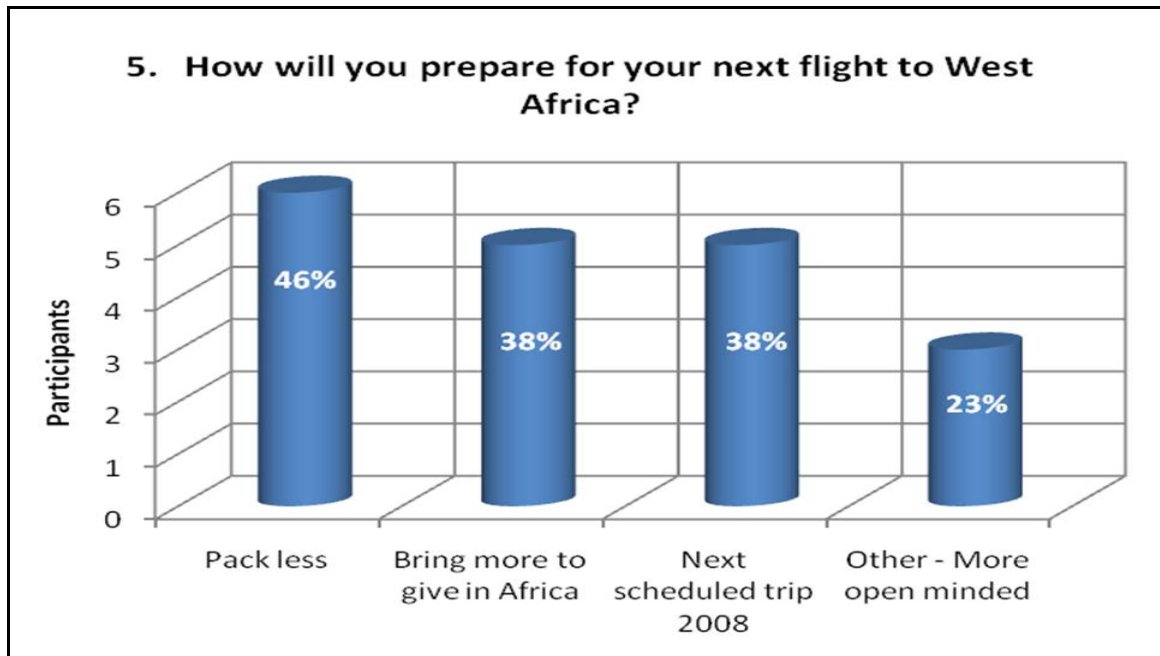


Figure 5. How Will You Prepare for Your Next Flight to West Africa?

Interview Question Six

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights, how would you consider getting there?

Five participants (39%) mentioned they would travel through Europe or North Africa in order to reach West Africa. Five participants (39%) would without hesitation travel by water (cruise ship, steamliner, ship, boat) to visit West Africa. All of them commented on the additional time that type of transportation would consume and did

prefer direct air transport. Three (23%) voiced second thoughts and two implied they would not travel by water. A thought provoked by this question was: a perception of The Middle Passage in reverse, described by Brother X as:

The horrors of how [we] were dragged over here, so now...crossing back over was...actually a conscious decision to go home, and thank goodness it would be in the comfort of air flight, as opposed to...and, that was above water, above land, in the skies opposed to sea level at the bottom of the boat (Brother, 2007, p. 260).

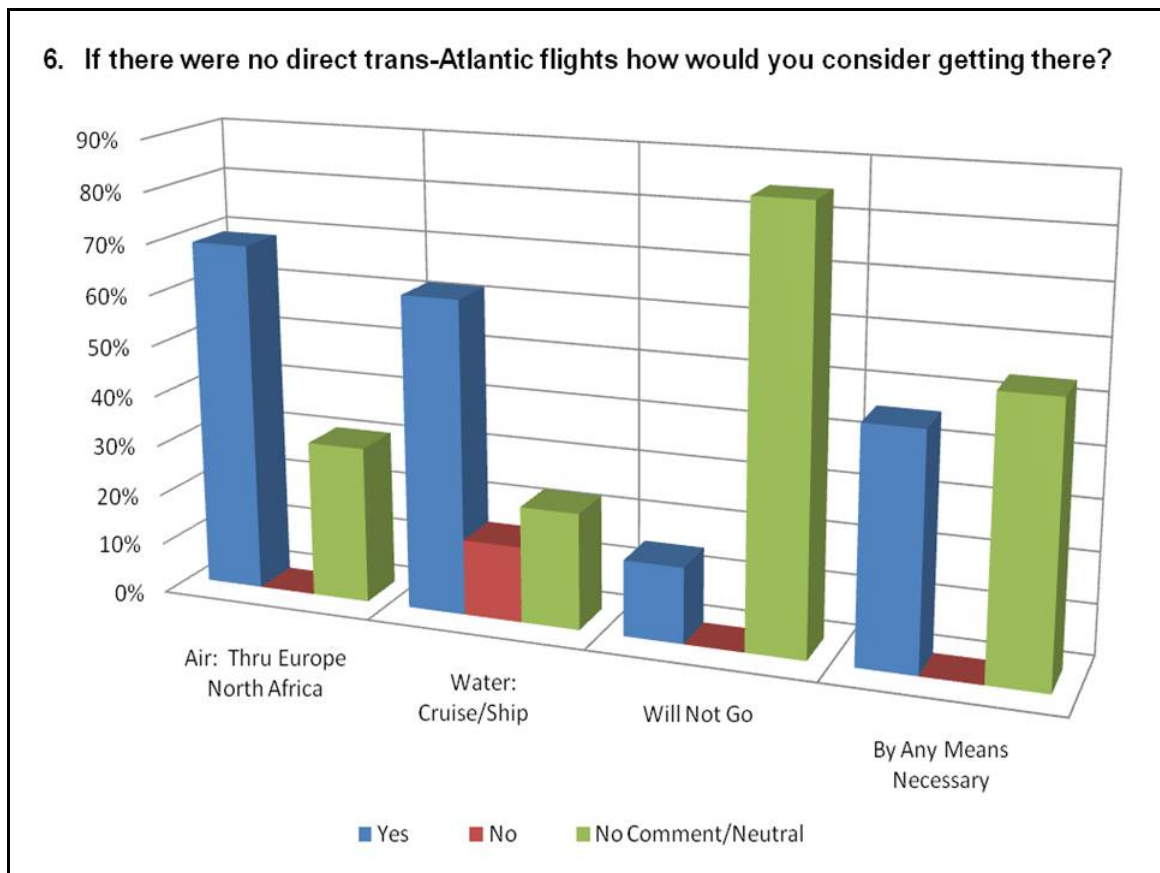


Figure 6. If There Were No Direct Trans-Atlantic Flights, How Would You Consider Getting There?

Findings from Stereotypes and Cultural Perspectives

Interview Questions Seven

What were your expectations and how were they met?

Eight (62%) were expecting the images of Africa as portrayed on television and through the media: negative depictions of the continent, all war, famine, people starving, crime-ridden areas, undeveloped land, a lot of poverty, huts, people with war paint on or just going wild, uncivilized people carrying buckets and pails on their heads, people just out in the woods--jungle-type/wooded areas, half-clothed people, running through the woods, kids starving their stomachs protruding, animals, and jungles. One expected city life would be better than the village life, but it was just the opposite.

Some participants went with an open mind, without any particular expectations, hoping to be comfortable and warmly received while reintroducing themselves to their African family. Learning about and experiencing traditional culture of the people and ancestors while seeing folks who looked like them, their relatives, neighbors, and family members were the expectation of others. Having no preconceived ideas of what it should be like, some just went, eager to get there, and happy to see it the way they saw it.

After arriving most found that there was a “difference”—it was not like the negative American media portrayals (Akosia, 2007, p. 229; Baracha, 2007, p. 235; Bebe, 2008, p. 244 ,246, 248; Brother X, 2007, p. 261; Emy, 2007, p. 278; Joe, 2008, p. 286; Makeba, 2007, p. 300, 303; Poochie, 2007, p. 317; Tiye, 2007, p. 323). The expectations of most were not met. Instead, what was mentioned was there were people who looked like me (Baracha, 2007, p. 237; Emy, 2007, p. 274; Tiye, 2007, p.326; Yaw, 2007, p.

349), a continent of beautiful people (Bebe, 2007, p. 247; Nursie, 2007, p. 308; Tiye, 2007, p. 326), some who were doing QUITE well and some who were not doing so well—just like in America (Makeba, 2007, p. 300. They were very nice civilized people who didn't act wild--they were normal human beings (Poochie, 2007, p. 317).

Participants were greeted, welcomed, and treated as family, like long lost relatives who had returned home. They reported there were so many—some in ruins (Joe, 2007, p. 285), paved roads and streets, many and many houses (Toni, 2007, p . 335). The standard of living was described as a lot different from Americans. Expressed was America is more modernized than any of the other continents, however, the people in West Africa seem comfortable with what they do and how they live (Nursie, 2007, p. 309; Poochie, 2007, p.315).

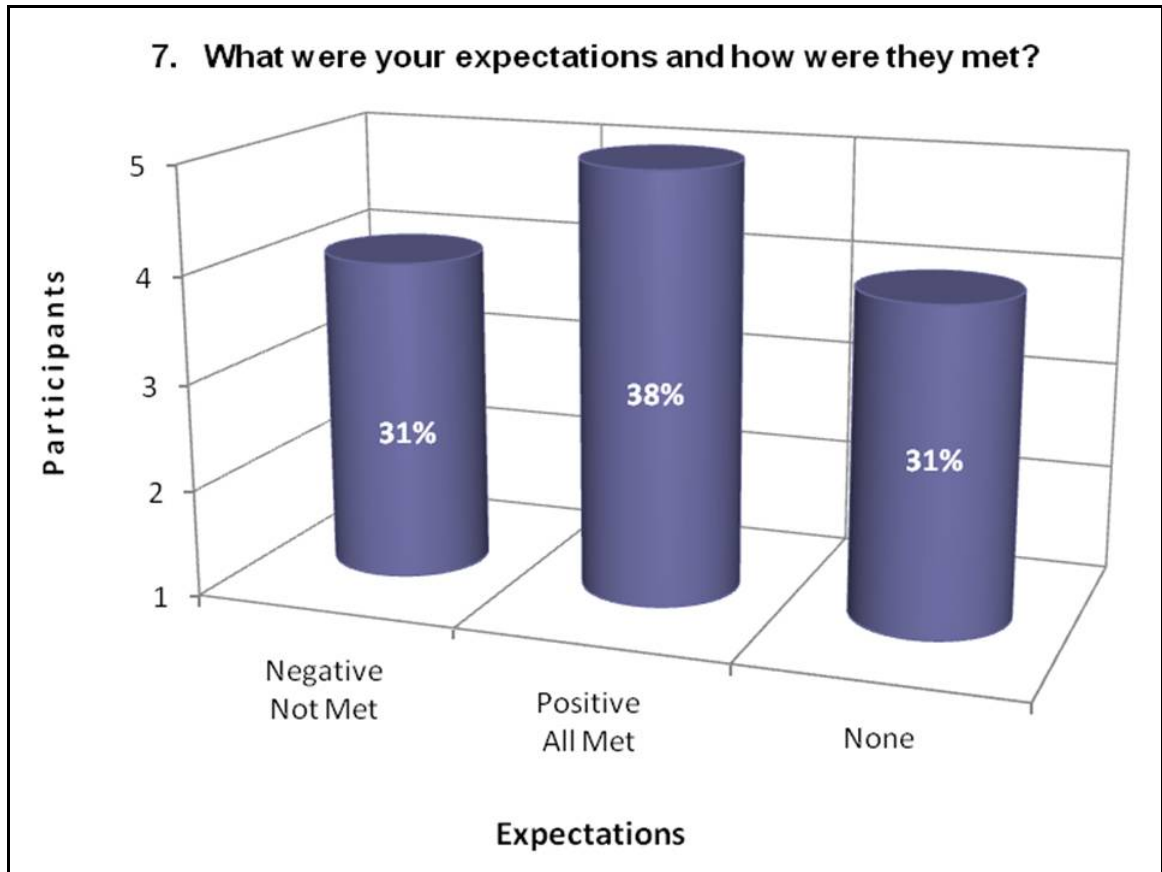


Figure 7. What Were Your Expectations And How Were They Met?

Interview Question Eight

What surprised you and disappointed you?

Many surprises were experienced such as:

1. The beauty of the continent;
2. The people were comfortable, trusting, warm, and welcomed participants with opened arms, received not only as a visitor, but as family members,

the people were very nice and did not act wild, people were not as bad as shown on TV;

3. People wanting to get away from things African, such as using relaxer to straighten hair, weaving in false hair, skin bleaching, dressing in non-African attire—western clothes, use of false fingernails;
4. Women do all the work in the village while the men appear to just sit around and do nothing, or the men gather along the roads and sit and talk all day;
5. Some negative stereotypes of African Americans have been exported to Africa and they were emulating the behaviors (baggy/sagging pants)
6. The question asked regarding African American pop culture “Is Tupac still alive?” (Brother, 2007, p. 263);
7. The density of the population in the cities, no/poor communication infrastructure—but much cell phones usage, not much money available—poverty, women walked from one village to another with shoes made from automobile tires;
8. To see Africans as hardworking people who do not sit around feeling sorry for themselves, people provided things of livelihood for themselves, many people selling same exact things in the open markets—little income.

The disappointments were sometimes expressed as the opposite of the surprises noted above. One was surprised and disappointed that they should not walk about Dakar alone—instead pay for escorts. The disappointments comprised:

1. Afrikans trying to imitate people in the US,

2. Africans treated like second class citizens to newly arrived Chinese, Japanese, Arabic people,
3. Seeing Africans being treated with disrespect,
4. Stores owned by Arabic, Chinese people,
5. Constant barrage of vendors, everywhere, trying to sell their trinkets,
6. Seeing the poverty level—saddened by,
7. “Caucasians lying around...NUDE...[disrespecting]...sacred land”
(Makeba, 2007, p. 300),
8. Ancestors were tortured, hated and treated bad—the slave dungeons,
9. Buildings were partially built—lack of funds to complete,
10. Trash lying around—not picked up,
11. Western influence—hair, clothes, etc., and
12. Many professionals here in the United States with money not investing in African property and land.

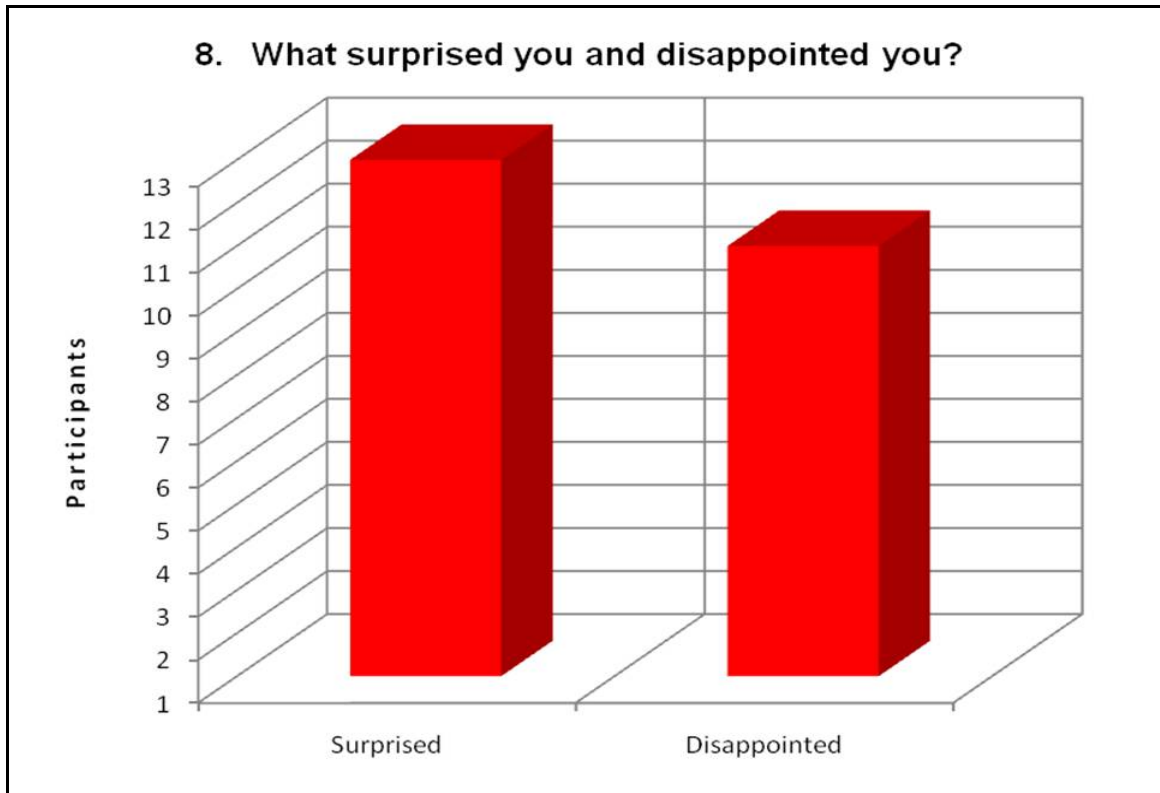


Figure 8. What Surprised You and Disappointed You?

Interview Question Nine

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Many participants spoke of Africa as home and would not hesitate to return for another visit because it was so beautiful and it was “home.” One mentioned her next trip was already planned. Other reasons for another visit given the opportunity were:

1. Being there reduces stress, blood pressure, aches and pains,
2. To learn and see first hand,
3. To reconnect—remember where forefathers came from,

4. To help and give aid—it was “no longer about me, it’s about what I can, actually, do for others” (Joe, 2007, p. 287),
5. To go back—to relive and experience different parts of Africa,
6. To give back to Africa—present scholarships,
7. To reconnect, and
8. “To bring a part of myself as a gift to them saying that I care—giving back, to me, means ‘I care’” (Tiye, 2007, p. 327).

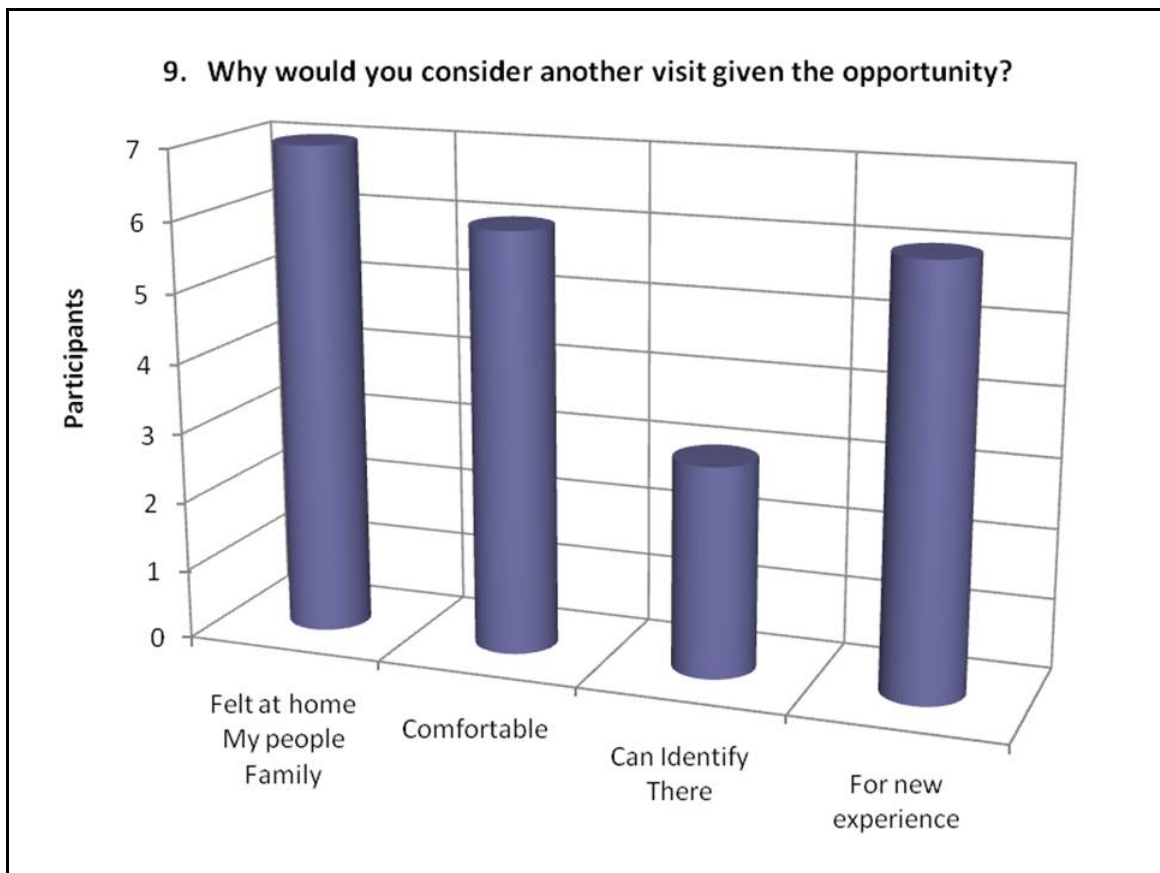


Figure 9. Why Would You Consider Another Visit, Given the Opportunity?

Interview Question Ten

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

The majority of the participants recognized Africa as their ancestral home.

Several were planning to buy land and build so when they go back to visit they will have a part of Africa to call “[their] piece of Africa” (Joe, 2007, p. 287). One reply was “yes [to visit and] ‘no’ to live...[because they]...would have to...[relinquish] too much modernization” (Poochie, 2007, p. 318).

Two said they definitely do not look at the African continent as home.

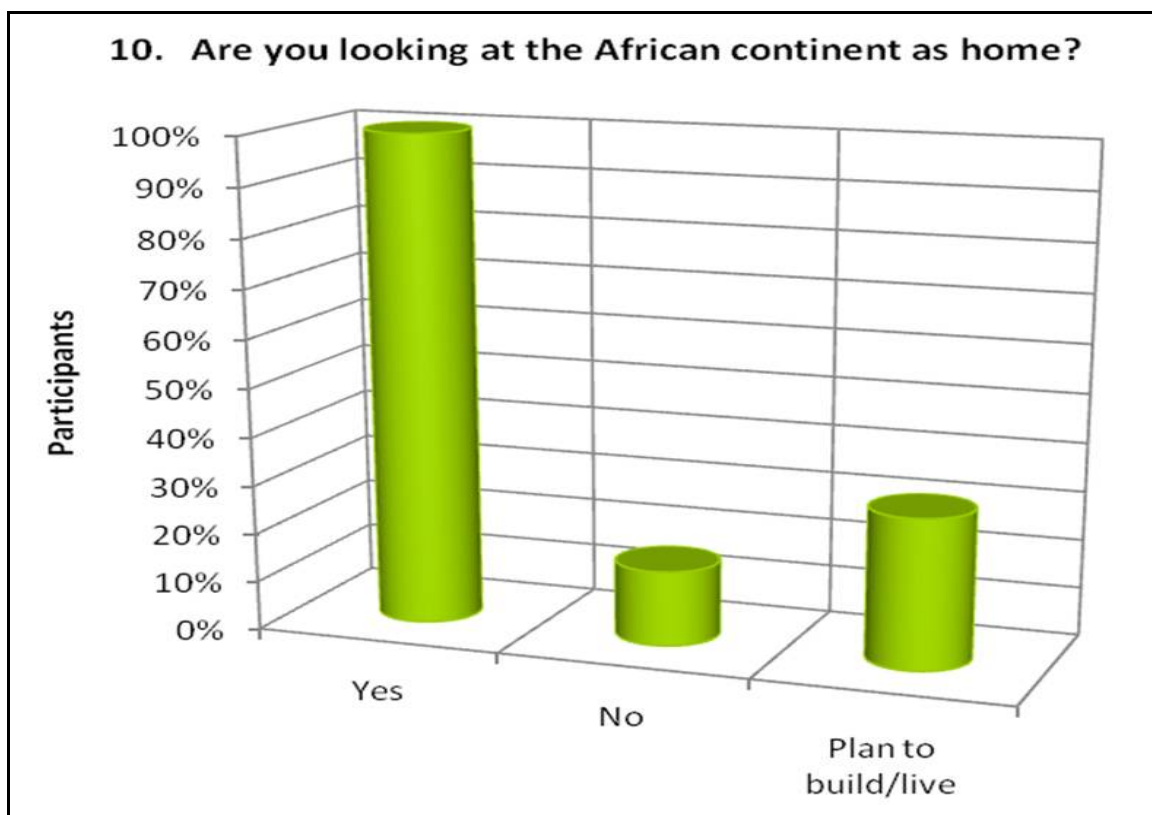


Figure 10. Are You Looking at the African Continent as Home?

Interview Question 11

Where are your ancestral roots?

Eight participants did not know where their ancestral roots emanated in Africa. Two, without definitive knowledge of their African roots, have “claimed” areas or the entire continent as their ancestral root. Four (31%) have completed and others are planning to have DNA testing done. DNA stands for DeoxyriboNucleic Acid—the genetic material of a cell where testing can provide genetic clues to the geographical areas of ancestors. From the Y-DNA, males can determine the origin of their paternal line, and by testing the mtDNA, males and females can determine the origin of their maternal line. The table below shows the results of DNA testing and the known ancestry of the participants.

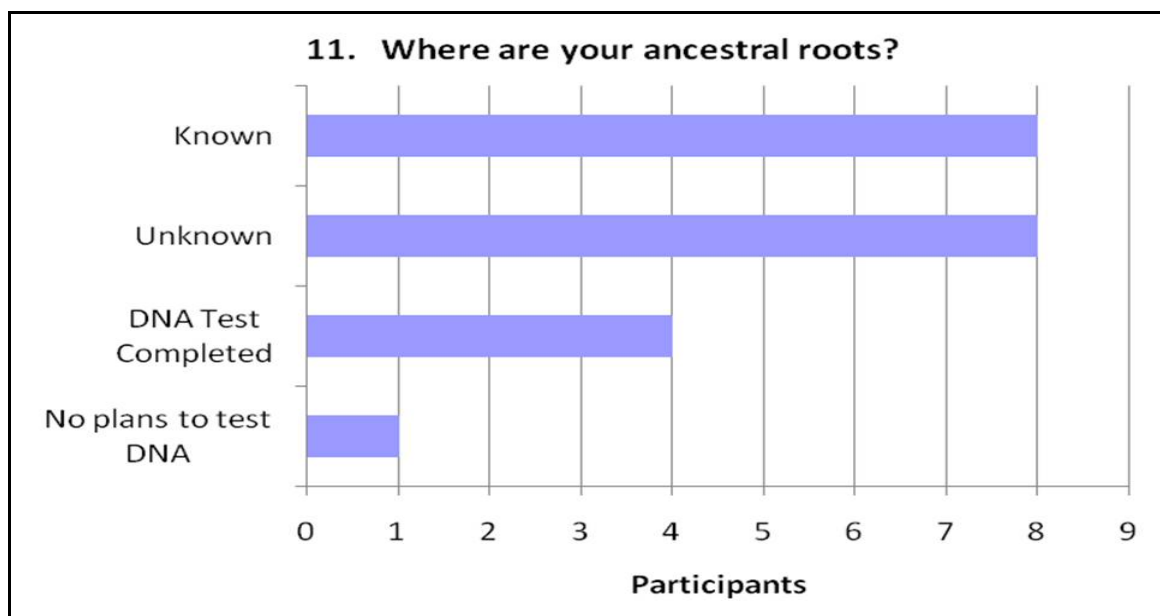


Figure 11. Where Are Your Ancestral Roots?

TABLE IV
ANCESTRAL ROOTS TABULATED

Participants	Maternal (m) DNA	Paternal (p) DNA	Known Ancestry
Akosia	Not tested	Not tested	“Claiming all West Africa”
Baracha	Balanta people, Guinea Bissau Mende people, Sierra Leone Kru people, Liberia	Not tested	Unknown
Bebe	Not tested	Not tested	Portugal
Brother X	Ga people, Ghana	Yoruba people, Nigeria	Unknown
Emy	Mandinka & Balanta peoples	Not tested	Unknown
Joe	Not tested	Not tested	Jamaica, WI
Loss of Mother’s love	Not tested	Not tested	Virginia & Tennessee (m) South & North Carolina (p)
Makeba	Not tested (planning to test)	Not tested	Unknown
Nursie	Not tested	Not tested	Unknown
Poochie	Not tested	Not tested	Unknown
Tiye	Not tested	Not tested	“Claiming all Africa” North & South Carolina
Toni	Not tested	Not tested	Unknown
Yaw	Not tested	Spain, Hungary & Belgium	Unknown

Interview Question 12

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Over half of the participants adamantly defined Africa as their HOME. One defined home as: “A place that I can go and feel a connection with a group of people, whether it be spiritually, culturally...a place where I can, actually, go to feel a connection with my ancestors” (Joe, 2007, p. 287). Others described Africa as the origin, the cradle of civilization, the Motherland, a place they go to be comfortable, feel connected, and be accepted—home. Africa was motivating, has powerful influence, and helped define life’s purpose (Brother, 2007, p. 263)—the people were beautiful (Bebe, 2007, p. 247). Africa means a place for some to whine down, get away (Akosia, 2008, p. 231), relax, reconnect, and build bridges (Brother, 2007, p. 264) by getting to know the people (Nursie, 2007, p. 309), to learn and see how they live (Poochie, 2007, p. 318). It was the foundation of spirituality, where people are wholesome and polite (Tiye, 2007, p. 326).

Also stated was “America is not a homeland for Afrikans” (Emy, 2007, p. 278). Stolen ancestors (Loss, 2008, p. 295) were used and mistreated (Poochie, 2007, p. 316), “enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights...none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, every anything that we get or acquire, requires a fight” (Emy, 2007, p. 278).

12. Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?



Figure 12. Having Been There, What Does Africa Mean to You?

TABLE V

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
HAVING BEEN THERE, WHAT DOES
AFRICA MEAN TO YOU?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Akosia	Africa is by all means my home as I said most likely West Africa. A special love. I feel Africa is the place where I can go to wind down and get away from everything. I can go there and the pace is slowed down and I can just relax and be ME. I can go there and relax much more so than here. It is home (p. 231).	
Baracha	Well having actually seen with my own eyes what I saw...I readily recognize the stereotypes and I just absolutely dismiss it. It's sad...I saw some very sad things, but overall, I am glad I went, I plan to go back many times, God willing, I will go back many times and I have great	

TABLE V (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Baracha (continued)	anticipation about going, touching, feeling, eating, smelling, hugging, listening to MY PEOPLE! I don't have to understand what they are saying...but they are smiling...their body language is friendly and I FEEL AT HOME (p. 236)!	
Bebe	Beautiful people (p. 247).	
Brother X	Africa's home. And, it's such a powerful influence, and it's helped to define my purpose in life. Actually, having a chance to cross the waters, and it really up'd the bar in terms of what my cultural focus, my motivations for study, and to find creative ways to reconnect and build bridges with our people at home (p. 263).	
Emy	<p>Afrika means that, you know, as we say "we're Afrikans living in American" to say that really means that I consider Afrika as my homeland. I was born here in America, as well as, my immediate ancestors, but America is not a homeland. From my perspective America is not a homeland for Afrikans.</p> <p><i>How did you come to that?</i> Well, when I look at what goes on here in America, all the rules, or the majority of the rules and regulations, and bills that are passed are things that hamper the opportunities of Afrikans here in America. For instance, the voting rights bill. When you have others coming to this country, they become citizens, right away they have voting rights. There's no bill to say that they have to be, it has to be approved for them to be able to vote for the next 20 or 25 years, you know. They used us, we were enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights. We have none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, anything that we get or acquire requires a fight.</p> <p><i>And, there it's different?</i> In Afrika? In Afrika, it's different in that you're in Afrika, and you have Afrikans in charge, and the hope is that because you have Afrikans in charge they will be more inclined to work for the benefit of Afrikans than "non" Afrikans. What I see in Afrika, which is saddening to me, is you have Europeans and Asians going into Afrika to secure the resources...for their own benefits and their only benefits and theirs only. The US wants to go there now to set up military bases in Afrika. No, they should not go there. They have no business setting up a military base in Afrika because once they do that, they'll start moving to other areas and take over. I think the Afrikans there should be allowed, left alone to do what they need to do for Afrika (p. 277).</p>	

TABLE V (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Emy (continued)	<i>We got to this because it was about “homeland.” That Afrika is viewed as homeland, and America is not homeland, and that was some of the reasoning why? You feel that Afrika is really homeland, did I restate that right? Yes.</i>	
Joe	<p>To me Africa is considered to be home, is considered to be...it was the cradle of civilization. I always will have a connection to Africa. I remember my Uncle made a point, if you take a German Shepherd...if a German Shepherd is born in America, that dog is still considered to be a “German” Shepherd, it is not an American Shepherd. Even though I’m displaced, I will always have an attachment to Africa.</p> <p><i>Viewing Africa as the cradle of civilization, and you’re considering it as home, based on the fact that it’s the cradle of civilization, how do you define home, what do you mean by home?</i> A place that I can go and feel a connection with a group of people, whether it be spiritually, culturally...a place where I can, actually, go to feel a connection with my ancestors. Being here in America, I’ve been through so many misconceptions about Africa, and some spirituality, I want to be amongst people that I feel connected to (p. 287).</p>	
Loss of Mother’s love	Africa is the place from which my ancestors were stolen or sold into slavery (p. 294).	
Makeba	That's kinda hard to answer. As I stated before, I consider Africa my home and...To me it is like a pilgrimage that I take each year...I am going to spread out a little bit this year and go to some other places other than Africa. But I do have that need to learn as much about Africa as I can and as I can afford to do so. I don't know...just...Africa just means a LOT to me...and I just can not express...It is very hard for me to express what it means to me...but I do consider it my home (p. 301).	
Nursie	Africa means – it means a lot. It means, hopefully, getting to find out where my ancestral origin is. Just knowing, becoming more acquainted with the different parts of Africa because Africa is very vast, getting to know the different types of people. I think that’s basically it, getting to know the people, and being of some assistance if I can (p. 309).	
Poochie	It means a lot, because I really wanted to go there, and I wanted the experience of seeing how people live. It just meant so much just to go, and to see how Africans live there, and seeing the places where my ancestors were mistreated.	

TABLE V (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Poochie (continued)	<i>When you say “it means a lot” how can I write that? What does “means a lot” mean?</i> It meant...I was just, very happy, and, just, very, very glad to be able to go, and to see how other people lived in Africa (p. 318).	
Tiye	Africa is the foundation for my spirituality. I can see where I get that spirit from because you see it in the African people. You see that wholesomeness; you see that politeness, so it means my whole being, my life (p. 326).	
Toni	It means so much to me. I’ve been able to...I think it has made me a stronger person as....when I say that....it has made me change the way I look at people. I’m really stuck here. Hope, joy, why am I so stuck. <i>You’re not stuck, just say what you think, what you feel. You said something earlier that talked about home, or family...Motherland...you felt relaxed...</i> Right, I felt relaxed. You know what, when I’m there, I become very relaxed; I don’t fear anyone robbing me. I’m not afraid. I walk out to the street, even at night; I get up sometimes and walk out. I don’t know, I feel safer there (p. 336). <i>Is comfortable, would that be the word?</i> Comfortable, yes. I would say, comfortable, yes (p. 336).	
Yaw	Well, it’s a place that I go to visit, where people who accept me for what I am. First country that I’ve really known that was run by blacks, all black – black President, black Mayor, more into my roots, you know, what I’m into. <i>What was that first country?</i> Senegal (p. 345).	

Interview Question 13

How did you communicate?

All participants used English to communicate, with a combination of hand gestures, pointing, and sign/body language. As necessary, interpreters were available to translate. Some travelers shared their unique methods of communicating when a different

language was anticipated: a personalized translating list, or they carried a language translation book. Many people in West Africa, especially those associated with the tourist industry, spoke English, and most schools taught English to all students.

No one mentioned having any problems in making their needs and wishes known.

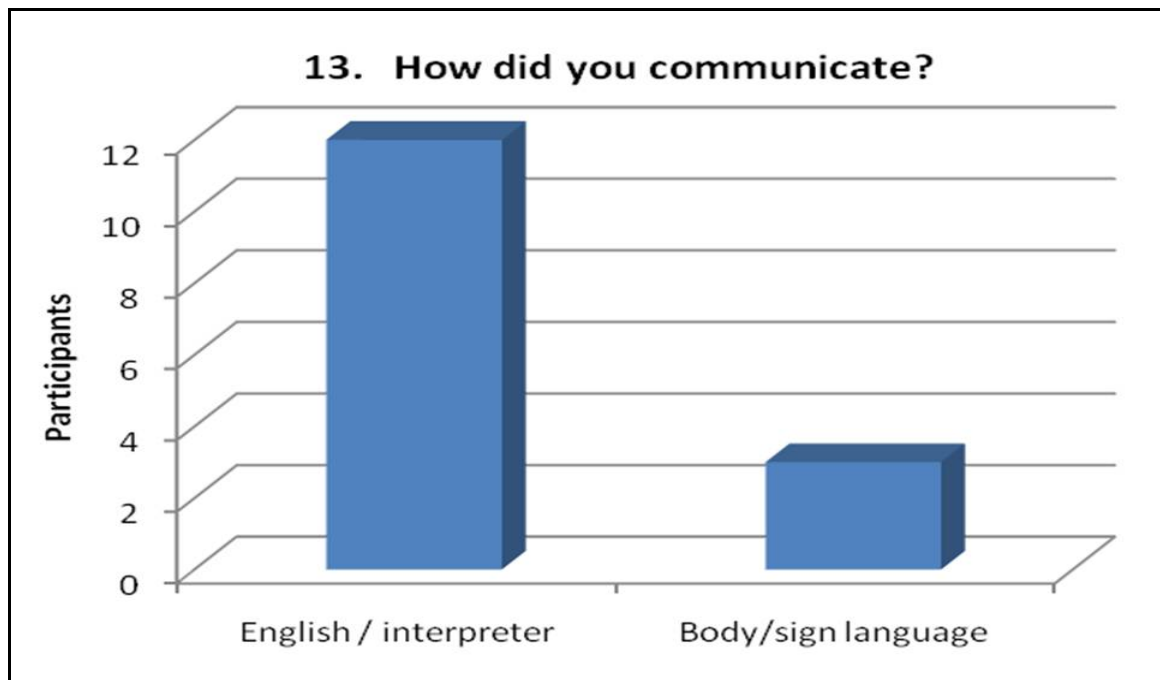


Figure 13. How Did You Communicate?

Interview Question 14

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

One participant did not recognize anything while most spoke of many familiar things. Mentioned most often were the features or mannerisms of African people that resembled their family, relatives, friends, classmates, and/or neighbors, expressed as “they are me, I am them” (Baracha, 2007, p. 237). Several spoke of being told they too (the African Americans) likewise resembled indigenous Africans. The extended family aspect was experienced and described as:

I can meet African Americans in a store and can start up a conversation, you feel connected, you feel that family connection. Like they’re a part of your family, even though they’re not a part of your family, it’s just a connection, just a gesture, warmth that they give that [makes] you feel like you are part their family, and that’s how the people of Africa made me feel a part of their family. (Tiye, 2007, p. 327)

That is, recognized acceptance and connection.

Participants’ actions, cited as recycling cardboard—creating something out of nothing (Baracha, 2007, p. 239), literally sweeping the dirt (Yaw, 2007, p. 345) , and doilies placed on furniture (Makeba, 2007, p. 302) were a few of the mentioned recognized actions that are now presumed to be legacy actions that originated in Africa. Explained as “we don’t know why we do it...cause it was handed down from” (Makeba, 2007, p. 302) our foreparents. The participants also found actions such as busy making a life, raising families, getting an education, and being the best that they can be quite similar and recognizable. Also acknowledged were general similarities in values, rituals, spirituality, how things are done, the discipline of children, food preparation methods,

grilling equated to barbeque, parallel foods in the US and Caribbean, housekeeping actions, decorating techniques, and ideals.

After reading and doing historical research, participants recognized the actual locations and works; examples: slave trade and seeing the dungeons of Gorée Island, Cheikh Anta Diop’s actual writings at the University of Dakar, etc. One participant spoke of the new connection made to “Landagoshen” (Yaw, 2007, p. 346) as a verbal derivative of Atlantic Ocean as spoken by his grandmother.

Ninety-two percent (12) of the participants recognized features, actions, principles, and or values.

To note: The participant who saw no recognizable elements provided comments regarding differences in the next question.

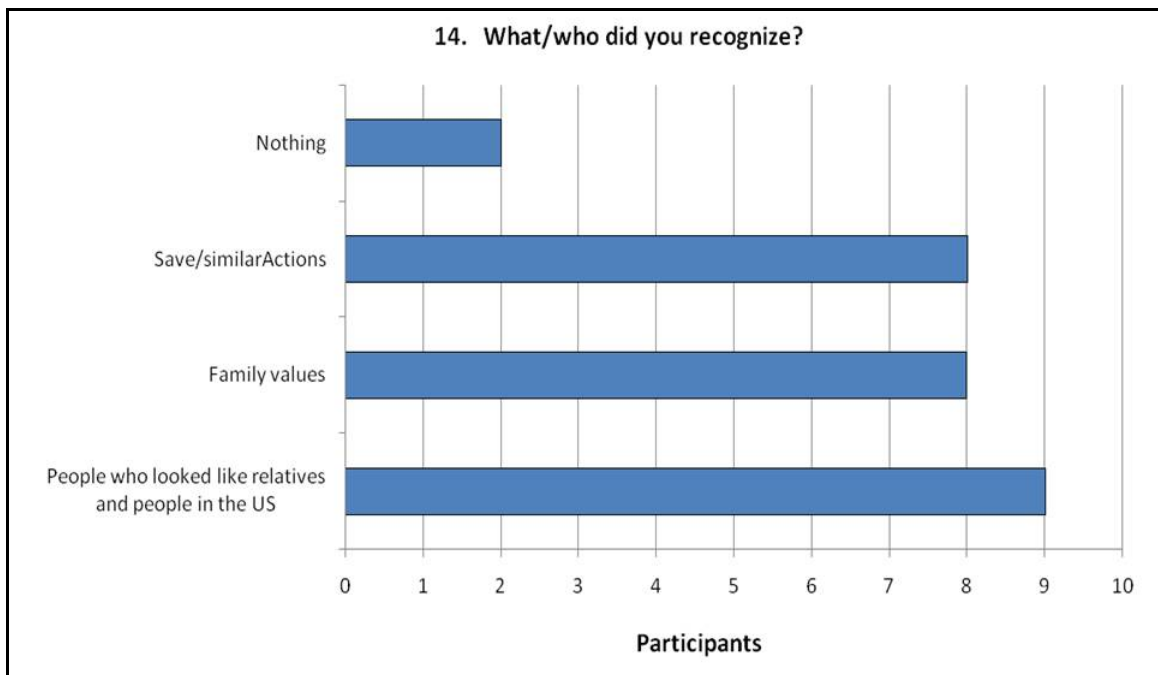


Figure 14. What/Who Did You Recognize?

Interview Question 15

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

Several participants elaborated there were lots of differences in customs, principles, values and actions, especially as they related to the treatment of women. Religious customs and the practice of the Muslim religious values and customs were described as different; they believed and practiced polygamy, which is illegal in the US. Men did not turn-around, solicit, cat-call, or whistle at women, they showed respect. Their values were not materialistic, the things we worry about, they don't worry about. Education was valued and appreciated, here it is taken for granted; the gift of a pencil to a kid was really an exciting thing. Family and family customs were not identified as different.

The differences of food and its preparation were discussed by nine (69%) of the participants. Food was described as similar to what was eaten by most people throughout the world, but fresh, healthy, appetizing, and very well seasoned. Its preparation was manual as opposed to them use of modern gadgets. That is, pounding with mortar and pestle versus food processor, etc., and prepared immediately before use. The area referred to as a kitchen was generally outside of the interior and cooking took place low to the ground rather than on an electric or gas range. The usual fuel source was twigs, sticks, or charcoal. The traditional custom was eating with your fingers rather than forks and knives, our usual eating utensils. Purification of water was not standard throughout West Africa and participants drank bottled water, which was also used by those West Africans who could afford to purchase same.

Other variations noted were: knick knacks were not obviously visible in homes as decor; furniture was made/carved from real wood rather than plywood, particle board, or pressed wood; and some bathrooms had toilets, some had running water, some just had a hole in the ground. Noted too was the custom of receiving things with the right hand only, because the left hand was used for attending to your personal body cleansing needs in the bathroom.

Observed was a difference between African Americans and African people. It appeared the African people preferred to “just let it be, don’t fight about it, just let it be” (Tiye, 2007, p. 327). An illustration cited was:

French people that come there, and are still there – when we were on the boat, [were] very pushy, wanted to be in front, [were] rude, and, they (the Africans) were so laid back, and I’m saying, in America, we’re not laid back about that type of stuff. We had to fight for everything, even, now, we have to continuously fight for everything. And, they’re just like, ohhh, let it be, it’ll be okay, and we’re not like that here, we are not like that at all. (Tiye, 2007, p. 327)

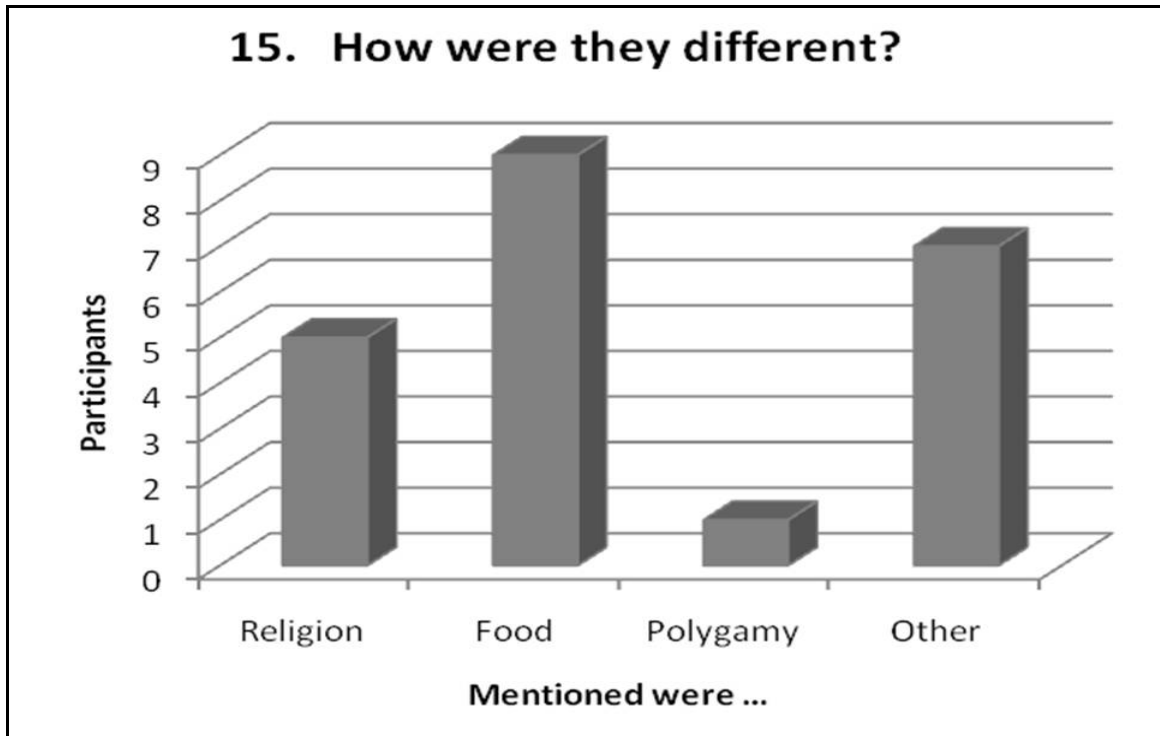


Figure 15. How Were They Different?

Interview Question 16

Describe how you were received?

All participants, except one, lauded their welcome home upon arrival to West Africa. The following table shows how they expressed their reception:

TABLE VI

HOW PARTICIPANTS WERE RECEIVED TABULATED

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	How participants were received.
Akosia	Like a member of the family, were very gracious, very accommodating, not in a reciprocal way because of my giving; I gave nothing and they were excited to welcome me (p. 231).	
Baracha	Very respectfully [due to hair color] no gray haired older people observed; I just smiled, just smiled and opened my arms to embrace (p. 238).	
Bebe	Oh, very well...welcomed with open arms. In part, I guess [due to] African American tourism money being spent there (p. 249).	
Brother X	Warmly embraced [when] returning home not only as a visitor, but as a family member (p. 262).	
Emy	With a very pleasant warm fuzzy feeling they tell you “welcome back home...we’re glad to have you back” (p. 279).	
Joe	Very well. They actually treated me as if I was their brother; a great feeling, people taking you in with open arms (p. 289).	
Loss of Mother’s love	Not answered.	
Makeba	With open arms; named Mama [a measure of great respect], welcomed and invited into their homes, sat on the floor, eaten the traditional way, and accepted as family (p. 303).	
Nursie	Well. Hearing them say welcome my sister, welcome my brother, welcome home...really made me feel like I was home. I was really taken aback (p. 310).	
Poochie	Very well. It was like, the whole world was there to greet us (p. 319).	
Tiye	[As] family. Long lost relative came home, received with open arms. Felt comfortable, at peace, at home & like [you] belonged there (p. 328).	
Toni	Wow. I felt like a Queen. They make you feel so special. Well received. [Felt] appreciated, happy to see me, almost as if they’d been waiting, sitting in that same spot waiting for me to return (p. 337).	
Yaw	Very well with drumming. It was overwhelming, they say “welcome back home, welcome back home, you come back home, welcome back home.” That was really, really nice (p. 346).	

Interview Question 17

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

One participant said the experience did not make or cause any change in them or their community. All other participants expressed the following as ways the experience has emphatically undoubtedly changed them, their perspective, and the community.

Articulated was the increase in self pride and awareness as “proud...to be from Afrika...go there every year...[it is] where your roots are...feel the need to go there as much as I can” (Emy, 2007, p. 280). Being

aware of who I am...knowing that there are people in Africa who are intellectual, who are very much human, who are very much caring, and quite knowledgeable, and, the fact that, now, I can communicate with them, it makes me feel pretty good, pretty decent (Nursie, 2007, p. 311).

“Every time I go, I’m telling you I am happier than the time before” (Toni, 2007, p. 338).

Afrika was claimed “as a homeland, because without a homeland we don’t exist as Afrikans. If there are no Afrikans, there are no Afrikans in America” (Emy, 2007, p. 279).

Several were more appreciative of the way they live in the United States, what they have in the United States, and appreciate living in the United States. Nothing was taken for granted; they were thankful, and more appreciative. Comments included: less concerned about things—make do with less, not as frivolous, more conservative in consumerism (wasting electricity, water, etc.), and not throwing away— give way and recycle. The visit has fostered a desire to help Africans and to help others. BeBe (2007)

told of a little girl now being sponsored (p. 250). Tiye (2007) said, “I have to step up to the plate as an African American, and stop watching others do it, or expecting others to do it” (p. 328). Joe’s (2007) goal was “to find out where I can contribute, and how can I be of service to individuals that have less than me” (p. 289).

A reiterate phrase, “it has changed me a lot” (Makeba, 2007, p. 311) was chorused by most. Some of the ways verbalized were:

1. Understanding that more knowledge “about my ancestors...where they originated from, some of the things they had to endure, which hurts but I need to know...because it...strengthens me” (Toni, 2007, p. 338).
2. Learning more about Africa (history, people, current events, etc.),
3. Dislike of people because of the way the ancestors were treated (Poochie, 2007, p. 319),
4. Sharing/correcting misconceptions/ preconceived ideas other people have portrayed about Africa,
5. Explaining why all need to take the trip to the Motherland—because “until you go there, you just don’t get it...it has to be experienced—it’s an experience of a lifetime” (Toni, 2007, p. 338),
6. Talking about Africa and advising others not to “take anyone else’s second hand information as...valuable...go and see” (Joe, 2007, p. 289) for yourself,
7. Talking to/educating the children more often than I ever did (Baracha, 2007, p. 238),

8. Talking to the adults about my travels and why they should go (Baracha, 2007, p. 238),
9. Continuing to encourage members of my own family and friends to be informed (Brother, 2007, p. 261),
10. Recognizing personal creativity,
11. “Interact[ing] more with people at my job...about Africa and the beauty of Africa” (Nursie, 2007, p. 311),
12. “Always wearing something that came from the Motherland” (Yaw, 2007, p. 347) —African attire, jewelry, etc., and
13. Changed cultural observations—celebrating/decorating Kwanzaa.



Figure 16. How Has The Experience Changed You, Your Perspective, Your Community?

Interview Question 18

What do you now do differently after returning?

Quite diverse were the responses to what participants do differently after coming back from Africa. Two participants spoke of wearing African garb/clothing, saying there was something [special] about wearing African attire in America that gets the respect; another spoke of now eating with their hands; another prays more now; and one appreciates the way of living [here] better, appreciates self, and, in a lot of ways, appreciates others since coming back from Africa.

Sharing information and educating others, especially the children and young adults, was noted as something many are now doing after their returning. An example shared was about the gift of an Adinkra Symbols¹ Chart, which preceded the educating of a tattoo artist about those symbols from Africa. The tattooist was changed, and also charged that while he pricked and stained the design onto the body of his customers, he had to put in their minds the meaning / history of the particular African Adinkra symbol as described on the chart (Baracha, 2007, p. 239). Another, defines, shares and gives to all who listen “Our story...the Black...Afrikan story [rather than]...his story...the Caucasian story” (Yaw, 2007, p. 348).

Making time to enhance personal knowledge was a different activity for some. Several spoke of learning and communicating in an African language, in order to make a better connection with African brothers and sisters. One reads more about Africa, checks

¹ Adinkra symbols are small, symbolic pictures used to decorate and/or impart meanings. Used on fabric, walls, pottery, logos, etc., they symbolize virtues, folk tales, proverbs, animals, and/or historical events; they are ubiquitous in Ghana, very old, and have been passed down through many generations of craftsmen (Robinson, 1998).

the international news to learn what was going on in Afrika, and then shares that knowledge. Akosia (2007) and Nursie (2007) get to know Africans living in America, by visiting with them, letting them know that they appreciate their culture, and they share and exchange information and culture (p. 208, p. 311). Another said a lot of things are done differently after returning and explained:

The way I receive my people, African Americans or Africans—people from the Motherland. I'm different in how I deal with them [since returning from Africa]....There was a time where I didn't have time...I didn't look forward to talking to them...I always avoided them like they were different.... Now, I'm always looking to talk to them, I'm always happy to let them know I've been to Africa; I've been to their home[land].

After visiting Gorée Island and seeing how [my people were] stuffed in rooms and mistreated like they were animals...[has] made me suspect of Caucasians. I'm very careful...about how I deal with them now...I limit my conversation with them...there's some pain and I have a problem...dealing with them as a whole. I think that even today...they still see us as being animals, [that is,] it has continued to move from generation to generation. (Toni, 2007, p. 338)

Five participants again mentioned they were no longer as wasteful as they were before. They now do it differently by trying to find a use or another home for items rather than discarding them, including food.

There was one participant who admits to not doing anything differently after returning.

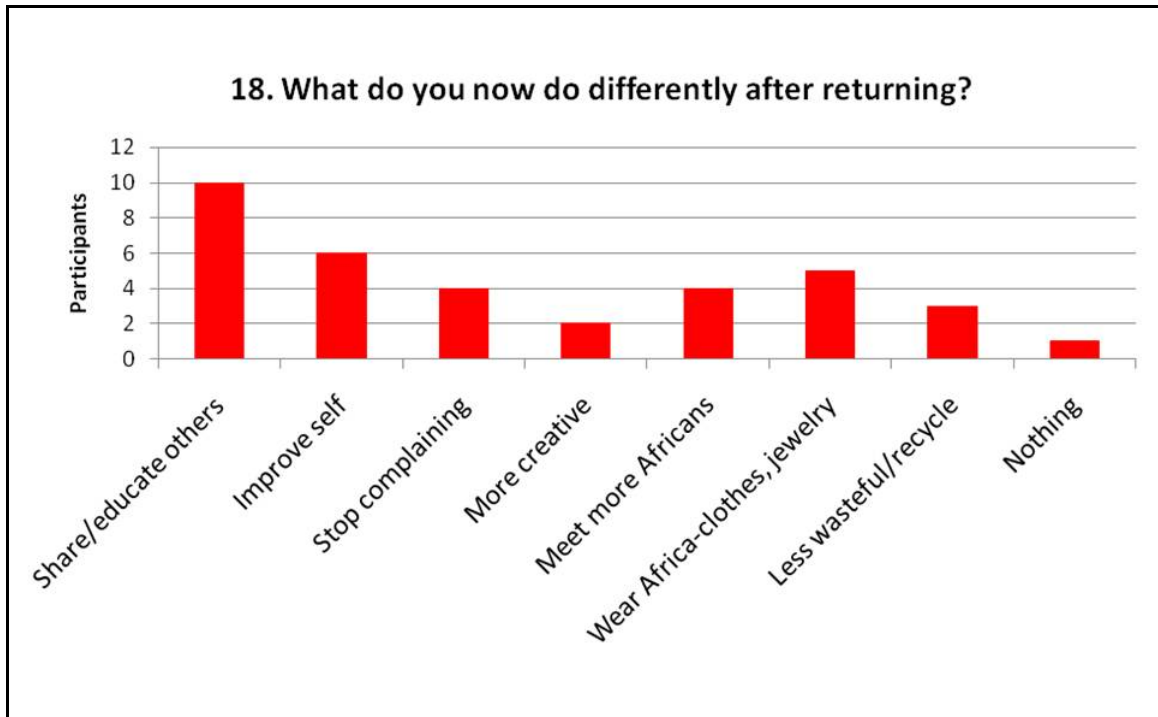


Figure 17. What Do You Now Do Differently After Returning?

Interview Question 19

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

Four of the participants reported no change in their relationships with others after returning. However, most were still presenting information and reasons to others for them to consider experiencing Africa. The remaining participants (9=69%) expressed how their relationship with others has changed. They recognized and shared that they had to continue to be mindful of others' ignorance, and assume the responsibility and perspective to continue to share knowledge and educate. Some tangible results offered were the changing of manner of dress—to African attire (Baracha, 2007, p. 239; Bebe,

2007, p. 251; Yaw, 2007, p. 347), hair styling—locs (Bebe, 2007, p. 251), and change of vacation plans—going to Africa (Baracha, 2007, p. 237).

A common note for both segments, who answered yes and no to ‘has your relationship with others changed after returning,’ was some family members of participants were not interested in learning about or going to Africa.

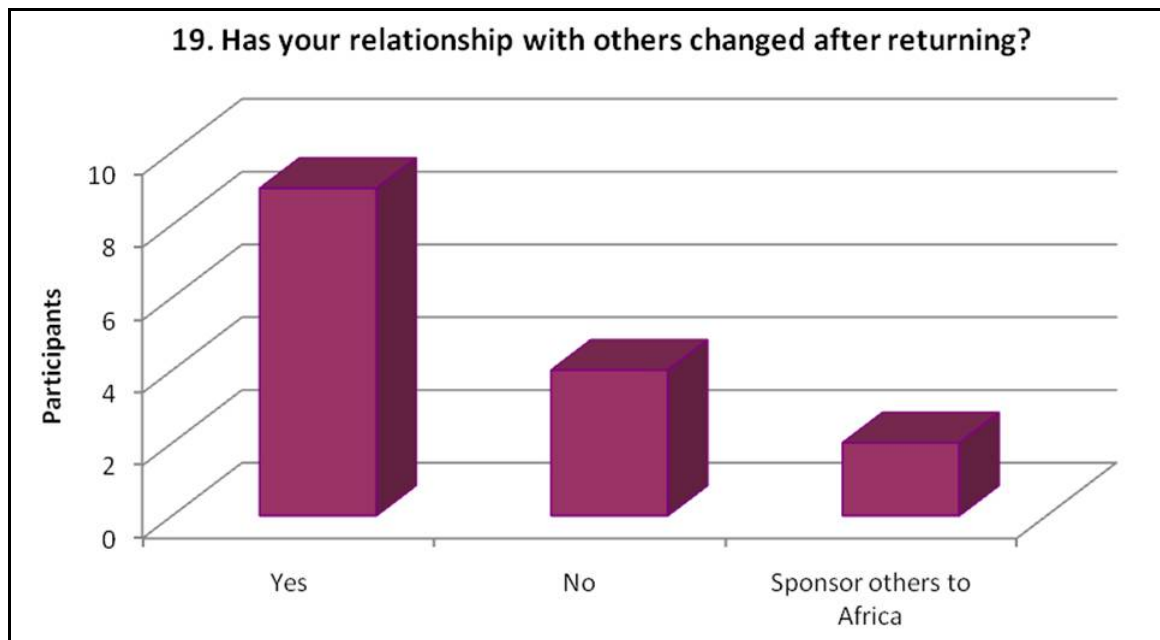


Figure 18. Has Your Relationship With Others Changed After Returning?

Interview Question 20

What are your new expectations?

The new expectations of two participants were to build a home in Africa (Akosia, 2008, p. 230; Joe, 2007, p. 287), another would like to develop some form of trade

enterprise (Nursie, 2007, p. 312), and others expect to continue to helping Africans through humanitarian or other aid/gifts.

Education was an expectation in several forms: (a) to bring Africans to America so they can have a realistic look/perspective of life here, (b) to get more African people in the Diaspora in tuned with Africa, (c) to learn more about Africa and build on past experiences, and (d) to learn an African language. Additional travel, visiting more African countries, was an anticipation of several participants in order to have first hand experience and interactions with different African cultures. One participant had no new expectation.

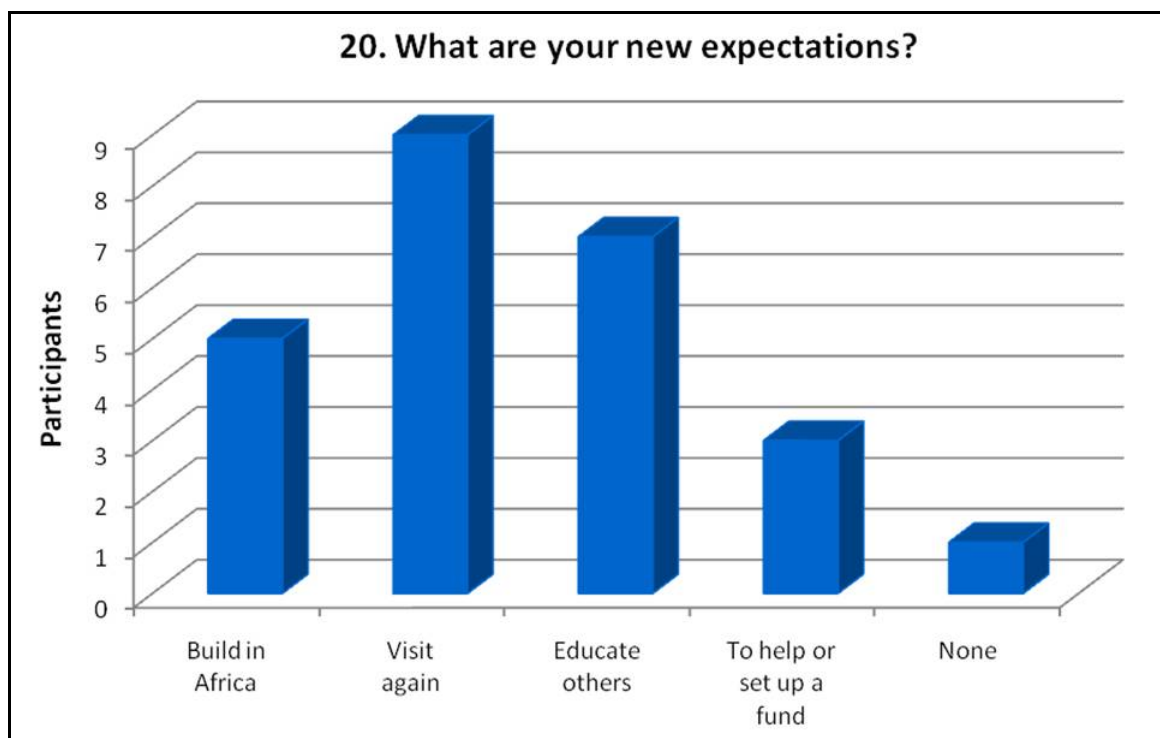


Figure 19. What Are Your New Expectations?

Interview Question 21

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

This, the last question, was answered with fervor and each participant exhibited deep emotion while formulating their reply. Their poignant comments were potent.

TABLE VII

HAVING BEEN TO AFRICA, WHAT AMERICA MEANS TABULATED

Participants	Excerpts/Comments
	Having been to Africa, what America means - Tabulated
Akosia	America was...depressing, [and has] a lot of material things but Africa is where my heart is. America is dull. Africa is a magic place it is full of problems it is my mother and you love her...whatever (p. 232).
Baracha	Listen about the brainwashing that we are still living today. It was never intended that we on this side reconnect with Africa...connect culturally. But now I know (p. 240)!
Bebe	[Appreciative of] all the riches that we have, and how we are so blessed [in America] (p. 252).
Brother X	America owes a significant debt to Africa...and [exists as] a direct result of Africa. Injustices [and] atrocities continue to exist; eventually America is going to have to pay. As long as we get that one last flight out of here, it's going to be all good (p. 267).
Emy	America doesn't mean much...because of the way it is. The way it operates - because of the bills, the rules, the regulations, the achievements of Afrikans. The constant battle against the powers and unfortunately, those who control the situation define the situation. America is not a homeland for Afrikans. They used us, we were enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights. We have none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, every anything that we get or acquire requires a fight (p. 281).
Joe	America is just a place where I could reside until I can find somewhere else to, somewhere I can live, where I can agree with their value system. Basically, the bottom line is, I hate America and its value

Participants	TABLE VII (Continued)
Excerpts/Comments	Having been to Africa, what America means - Tabulated
Joe (continued)	system, that's the bottom line (p. 290).
Loss of Mother's love	<p>Having been to Africa does not change, in any way what America means to me. America is still the place where my ancestors were brought to work and build this country and make it rich. It is still a country where Black Americans are discriminated against and are still treated as refugees when it comes to education, rights, access, respect and etc. It is also a country that gives more (education, rights, access, respect and etc) to immigrants than those descendants of these same slaves who contributed so much to this country's wealth, technology, and culture.</p> <p>America is where Black Americans are discriminated against (p. 295).</p>
Makeba	<p>America means a lot to me. There are a lot of things that I don't like in America, which is the way we are treated here. I have seen some change but we have a long way to go...and hopefully one day it will get better (p. 304).</p>
Nursie	<p>It means that [America is] not my original home. Had it not been for my ancestors, America would not be at the level that it is now because it was off the sweat of my ancestors that America was built (p. 312).</p>
Poochie	<p>America needs a lot of help...a lot of help. There's still a lot of prejudice here, a lot of hatred between whites and blacks, more so from the whites to the blacks. The United States needs a lot of help. We are equal (p. 320).</p>
Tiye	<p>America is just so...I can educate myself, I can...retire comfortably, but, also...I can use it as a stepping stone...to help other people.</p> <p>It's different, America. Everybody is so separated, and so worried about the hustle and bustle. Once I came back from Africa, I realized that the extended family unit is there. Here we're just all over the place; we're so scattered (p. 326).</p>
Toni	<p>Nothing. I'm sorry...I don't feel...wow, what does America mean to me? I'm not impressed. I feel like I'm not wanted here, that if they could send me to Africa they would – the Caucasians. America, I don't have...I have less love now than I did before because I know they have caused some of the pain that those people are feeling over there, America has caused some of that (p. 340).</p>
Yaw	<p>It doesn't mean anything. I'm an Afrikan living in America (p. 349).</p>

Discussion of Findings

This discussion of the findings involved a summary of the findings in three categories: demographics, travel and transportation, and stereotypes and cultural perspectives. It also included the perspectives of the heritage tour operator and the researcher.

Findings related to Demographics

The demographics of the participants' sex, age, marital status, occupation, and educational level are shown in the figure below. All participants, except one, were born, reared, and currently reside on the east coast of the United States, predominantly New York. The exception was born and currently resides in the south, and was reared in mid-western America. Collectively the 13 participants have made 43 visits to West Africa.

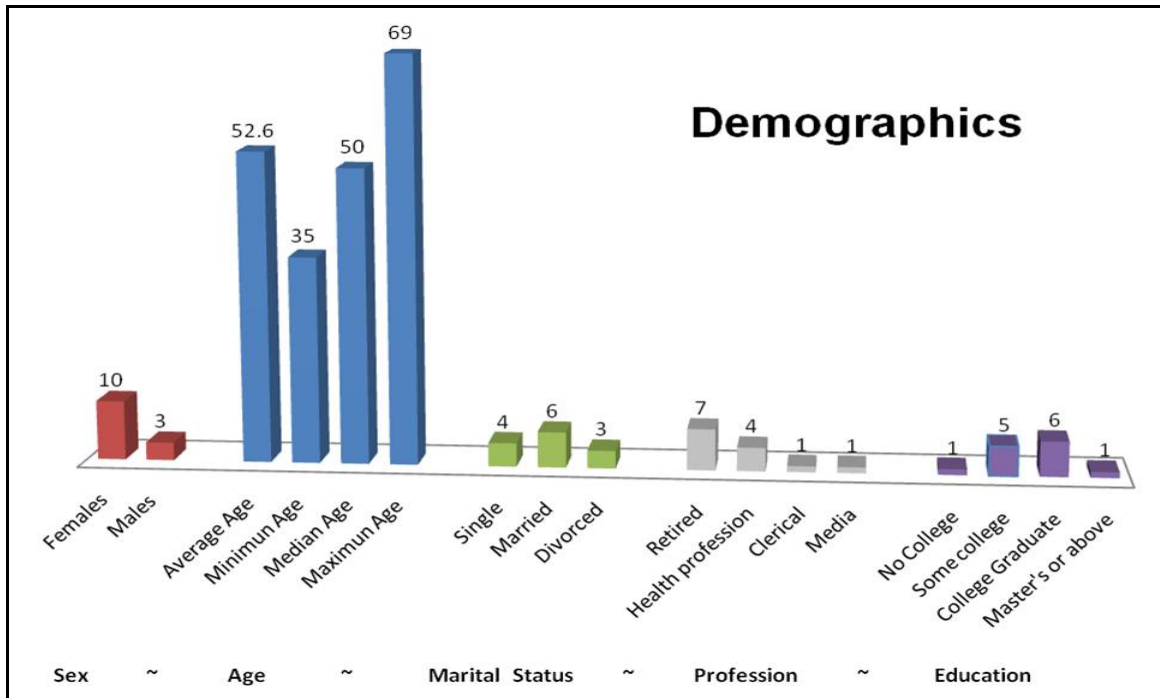


Figure 20. Compiled Demographics

The demographics of the seven travelers in the Nelson (1986) study were five (71%) females, two males (29%), aged 35 – 55, with the average age 46.4 years; three were born in-America and four were of West Indian origins. Occupations included one nurse, engineer, and travel agent. The remaining four were educators: two college professors and two school teachers. None was retired and all were traveling for a reason other than leisure tourist vacationing.

Findings Related to Travel and Transportation

The travel and transportation findings of the 13 African American tourists were for the most part comfortable, safe, and enjoyable. Nelson's (1986) comment that travel has improved among African Americans since the 1970s (p. 191) remains true. As more

people become aware and the preconceived notions are mitigated, travelers continue to explore. Tour director Branch reported increased interest in and travel to Africa over the past decade.

Weather, being outside the control of man, often has wreaked havoc on airline schedules. It played a part in the rescheduling of a flight, and the concern expressed was Kennedy Airport did not seem to serve the best interests of passengers' comfort that were awaiting take-off for over five hours on the runway during that snowstorm. Safety prevailed and the flight did not depart until the following day. The security measures put into practice after 9-11 were mentioned as inconvenient but understood. In-flight was defined by most as smooth and comfortable, with the exception that seating in coach was crowded. Flight scheduling today was thought to be convenient by most when it was direct and without connection. Early morning departures were not preferred as some travelers had to spend the night in the departure city in order to make the flight. The duration of the direct flight was a surprising 6 ½ to 9 hours. Clearly the cost to travel has increased as a Nelson (1986) participant reported "the tour...in 1976...was for three weeks...to six [African] countries and...\$2,200 took care of everything except for personal expenses and extra things one might want to do" (pp. 41-42). The eight comments made about the cost for the trip varied and it was thought reasonable to expensive, ranging from \$2000 to \$3000 for a week to ten days. Even with costs escalating in everything more direct and less costly flights were preferred.

Transportation in Africa was quite different than what participants were used to in America. It was described as good, fairly decent, hectic, buses too small, roads rough, car too old, and was not as comfortable as transportation in America.

Aviation has made African products readily available in America. This includes authentic African fabric, shea butter, black soap, artifacts, wood carvings, musical instruments, sculptures, artwork, masks, furniture, jewelry, herbs, different food items, and other African made products that can be found in specialty and some main stream stores. The imported product market here has changed the landscape by offering a wide variety of products to all, including those who travel to Africa bringing back products for themselves.

Aviation has also offered conveniences, brightened/heightened horizons and has improved life for the participants. The resounding convenience mentioned by 12 (92%) was “time.” Time was saved in getting from point A to point B, safely, comfortably, and with someone else, doing the driving economically.

The reasons for visiting Africa cited by 12 (92%) of the 13 participants were a desire to learn about African people, history, culture, their heritage and ancestry to connect/reconnect. They were curious, seeking firsthand knowledge and information. Twenty-two years ago the “stated reasons for visiting Africa were..., namely, to learn about a culture or to see how the people live” (Nelson, 1986, pp. 141-142), or “to compare their lifestyle with that of Africans to see if there [was] a carry over of culture from Africa to the West,...possibly look...at the slave castles and [some] may have [had] the desire to research [their] roots” (Nelson, 1986, p.176). The prime reason for visiting West Africa, as captured in interview question number four: why did you go, was the same today as it was 22 years ago —to gain knowledge of the culture. Additionally in 1986 “most travelers said that they went on the trip...for the reasons of any tourist in any group, to get away from the daily routine, see something new and different and to

vacation abroad” (Nelson, 1986, p. 142). This holds true for only one participant in this study who said: “went to Nigeria with my family, as a family vacation, and to Dakar [Senegal] with my friend as a vacation” (Loss, 2008, p. 294).

All shared their intention to make other visits to West Africa, and that this experience taught taking less personal clothes would be beneficial and practical. In addition to bringing humanitarian items to give away, one participant plans to establish and give scholarships to students studying Egyptology in Senegal.

Without direct flights several participants would go by cruise ship; a few were vehemently opposed and would not travel by water, implying they had made the trip once already by water at the bottom of the boat [the slavery middle passage] and it was not pleasant. All participants preferred the comfort of air transport with a direct flight; some were willing to make connections traveling through Europe if that was the only routing to reach West Africa.

Overall the travel and transportation experiences and findings of 12 (92%) of the participants were expressed as positive; all were excited about their journey and they enjoyed the experience.

Findings Related to Stereotypes and Cultural Perspectives

The stereotypes and cultural perspectives of the 13 African American were varied and similar at the same time; some were poignant and intense.

The expected stereotypes as portrayed on television, the media, and other reliable /non-reliable sources were dispelled for most of the participants (8=62%). Their negative expectations were eradicated by civilized people who reminded them of themselves; they

lived in buildings, drove cars over paved roads, ate prepared food and did not have protruding stomachs with flies all over their faces. In other words, what was actually exposed was a diverse reality—a truthful picture of people who, in some ways, live similarly to the way the participants do. They met and interacted with beautiful people in various countries. The first hand observations left most with the awareness to authenticate/validate what they have been told to believe about Africa. Others who went with open minds, without any specific thoughts of what they would see, found and experienced the traditional culture without having to replace any preconceived notions. Some found surprising the fascination for changing from the natural to the artificial in the beauty arena (wigs, hair straightening, false fingernails, non-traditional clothes, etc.). Several participants were astonished to see grandmothers and great grandmothers, uncles and aunts, women, men, girls and boys, from the very young to the very old, all living together and contributing to the family/extended family by their productive work.

The Nelson (1986) study states “the majority of travelers did not report specific expectations” (p. 144), although one thought “they deserved preferential treatment as Black Americans, and should be seen as long lost brothers or sisters” (p. 143).

Disappointment was expressed at how other dominating/conquering countries “still” disrespect and exploit Africa and Africans. The density of people, the volume of poverty, and emulation of negative western behaviors having infiltrated the African lifestyle were other disappointments mentioned. The proliferation of non-African business owners and the disrespect shown by Caucasians at Goree Island seemed to fortify the perception of domination and continued colonialization.

Communication was in English or with the assistance/translation of the tour guides, or body/sign language. There were no significant difficulties encountered, unlike Nelson (1986) where “the topic of language pervades the reports” (p. 162). It seemed to some that “languages were used in discriminatory ways...[and] those who spoke English did not want to” (p.162). “The diversity of languages and the inability to speak...[was] both a deterrent and an invitation which set the tone for” (p. 165) further interactions.

Differences were noted in food, some religious values, polygamy, customs, features, and actions. Participants shared “food is food.” We call it one thing they call it something else; we season ours with meat they season theirs with fish; it was the same thing and it was delicious. Everything was fresh. “When I saw the goat, the goat was squealing...alive; ... [in a few hours] we were eating shish kabob...goat...freshest food ever” (Baracha, 2007, p. 238).

Some foods are prepared differently (Emy, 2007, p. 279; Nursie, 2007, p. 310). In America we do not have to “pound...the grain. We...go to the store and buy our flour already powdered, refined, [enriched]...whatever in a package. They [may] have to do this...[for] every meal” (Bebe, 2007, p. 248). Some food was prepared “the same way in America [as in Africa], but...[it] was named...something different (Makeba, 2007, p. 302). Some actions, principles, and values were recognized as things which are done in America. Voiced was perhaps:

It originated in Africa...all kinds of things.... Perhaps... was handed down from grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles. A lot of things, you do and you don't know why but you do it, and [now] have seen [and recognize] it [being] done in Africa. (Makeba, 2007, p. 302)

Eating with your hands and fingers (Brother X, 2007, p. 266; Emy, 2007, p. 279; Makeba, 2007, p. 303), sharing the food from one communal dish (Emy, 2007, p. 279) was mentioned as different. Travelers in the Nelson (1986) study also mentioned eating from a communal pot “set on the floor and everyone dug in at the same time” (p. 168) after hand washing. It was described as very effective where using your hands “you ball the rice and...meat...[squeezed it together] and threw it into your mouth...so that their hands don’t touch their mouth” (p. 169). Polygamy was mentioned as being illegal in America but was the norm in parts of Africa. Receiving things with only your right hand was difficult for a left-handed person. The explanation offered was the left hand was used for personal bathroom hygiene. Bartering was another noted difference. Everything was negotiable; it was easy to “change the asking price, unlike here [in America], where the price is set” (Makeba, 2007, p. 302). So you barter for everything in Africa (Makeba, 2007, p. 301). One participant felt that bartering was akin to robbing them because their stuff was handmade, and they sell you their handiwork for what you want to pay because they are in need (Toni, 2007, p. 337). All participants noted America was more modernized and has and maintains a different standard of living.

Participants spoke of personal changes that they have implemented in their lives or are planning to begin based on what they saw, felt, experienced and shared in Africa. This included self pride/awareness, a desire to help wherever help was needed, becoming more frugal and recycling; changing their style/mode of dress, learning an African language, and sharing information about Africa, particularly with members of their American family and others.

Affecting and powerful of all the interrogatives was the last question (number 21) where participants shared their thoughts of America after returning from Africa. America was described as having conducted brainwashing, depressing, debt owing, needing a lot of help, having a lack of family unity, and appreciative of America—it means a lot—but I don't like how I am treated (pp. 221-225). Further comments aired were

America does not mean much anymore—every anything we [African Americans] get or acquire requires a fight; I hate it—it's just a place to reside until I can find another; the place where my ancestors had to work to build to make [others] rich; it's not my home—it's the place the sweat of my ancestors built; it is to be used as a stepping stone to help others; I feel unwanted; and it does not mean anything—I am an Afrikan living in America. (pp. 221-225)

Emerging Themes

Home / Motherland

A resounding theme permeating all the interviews was that Africa was home and Motherland. All participants, except two, in some manner recognized and claimed Africa as their ancestral home with a follow-up to relocate, buy land, or visit as often as they could. The establishment of identity analysis mainly from questions 10-12 (see Appendix E, pp. 177-184) indicated all except one participant identify their heritage as African. Even the one participant who replied “definitely not” (Loss, 2008, p. 294) to question 10 (looking at the African continent as home) later replied to questions 21 (having been to Africa, what does America mean to you) and question 11 (where are your ancestral

roots), that “...my ancestors were brought to work and build this country” (Loss, 2008, p. 295), and “I can trace my...ancestors back to...slavery in Virginia,...Tennessee,...South and North Carolina” (Loss, 2008, p. 294), indirectly implying African heritage. Given that reasoning, then all 13 participants unanimously identify their heritage as Africa.

Nelson (1986) reported that:

Although Africa is sometimes seen as the ancestral home of Black people, the sentiment of “going home” or of “going to seek roots” was not collectively cited as the major reason for the visit, except...[for one participant], who remarked that “for me as a Black person it was like going home. It was like making touch with your roots” (p. 142)

Today the collective referred to Africa as “home” and/or “Motherland;” professing it as their ancestral home. Some were adamant in their description of home as the place you go and feel connected which was quite a different perspective from the sentiments expressed twenty years ago. In the establishment of identity, most participants found they were received and welcomed not only as a visiting tourist, but as a member of the family. Without the exact knowledge of family lineage, all were very pleased to be so warmly received.

Relocating to Motherland has already been started by friends of some participants; six (46%) participants are planning to purchase land and build their home in the near future or after retirement. Nelson (1986) “did not get the impression that anyone [in that study] was ready and willing to move to Africa from America after the visit” (p. 144).

Established / Connected Identity

Several participants (4=31%) have had their DNA tested and now possess new knowledge of their genealogy. However, that information may not bring them to their exact descendants; it can offer insight to the clan of people and/or the area of land where people having the same DNA markers reside. All of this was exciting and it was “way more” than what was known twenty years ago—the establishment of identity.

As stated by Nelson (1986): No one will embark on a journey and give as the reason, “I am going to seek or establish my identity.” This is such a personal and emotional thing, not a commodity that one can expect to suddenly acquire. An identity is a state of being that helps one to feel that he is a part of a whole. (p. 199)

In 2001, Branch, G. & Pryor Malis, C., (2001) created a documentary in which tourist travelers commented on having changed their identity perspective to Africa after visiting the slave dungeons. The findings of today indicate the same holds true. Participants describe the realization of accepting Africa as home, as the homeland of their ancestors, as finding themselves, and perhaps finding something that was missing in their psyche. It was expressed by Baracha in answer to interview question 10 as “I don't care what I look like today...I was homogenized along the way but DON'T YOU EVER SAY I ain't AFRICAN BECAUSE I KNOW I AM. And I wear my African hat PROUDLY. I LOVE IT. I MADE THAT CONNECTION” (Baracha, 2007, p. 236). “I have walked on the soil” (Baracha, 2007, p. 26).

This finding of identity through a visit to Africa or through DNA testing reverberated through the interviews as the second theme.

A genealogy search by DNA genetic testing has been completed by several other participants and their families. The test kit consists of two cheek scrapers and two collection tubes filled with a fluid to detain bacteria growth. Several weeks after returning the specimens by mail, results are received with an explanation of possible clan affiliation and/or geographic location. The return of DNA test results was described as exciting. Brother X videotaped his parents receiving their DNA results. His Dad's DNA was a match for the Yoruba people [Nigeria], and his Mom's matched the Ga people from Accra, [Ghana] (Brother X, 2007, p. 262). Emy's DNA indicated part Mandinka and Balanta markers (Emy, 2007, p. 274). DNA results are not always as expected. Yaw did not want to believe his DNA results, which indicated that his ancestry on his father's side was from Spain, Hungary, and Belgium, not Afrika as he expected (Yaw, 2007, p. 345).

This visit to West Africa has unwrapped and unleashed a question for some who are now seeking further information about heritage and ancestry. Some participants are planning to do further genealogical research into their identity, while others are planning to have a DNA test completed to search for an identity connection.

Changed Perspectives and Actions

Another theme, projected across 12 (92%) of the 13 interviews were the changes to perspective and the plans participants intend to or have already incorporated into their lives having returned from Africa.

First dispelled were many stereotypes imposed and perpetuated from many sources all around (parents, school, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, music, billboards, books, other misinformed authority-types, etc.), which were directly infused

or subliminally absorbed. Whether the distortion was intentional or not, some of the damage done to identity, self worth, and/or existence, has for the participants, at least, started to be refuted. This change of perspective was significant and manifested in a variety of ways.

With the new-found first-hand, observed information participants shared they have returned with an action plan to not only improve their personal knowledge base but have vowed to share and educate others about the inaccuracies, distortions and misinformation African Americans have received and believe about Africa. What they witnessed in Africa showed them how their preconceived notions had hampered their progress. A collage of comments expressed by participants: I have become aware of who I am (Baracha, 2007, p. 236; Nursie, 2007, p. 311), where I am from—proud to be from Africa (Baracha, 2007, p. 236; Branch & Pryor-Malis, 2001, p. 26; Brother X, 2007, p. 256; Emy, 2007, p. 277, p. 280), and I no longer take things for granted (Baracha, 2007, p. 238; Joe, 2007, p. 291; Makeba, 2007, p. 304, p. 305; Tiye, 2007, p. 327, p. 328; Toni, 2007, p. 338); I have found a part of my mind that was lost/stolen (Yaw, 2007, p. 347), and I intend to let others know what I have learned (Yaw, 2007, p. 347). Seeing what I saw has caused me to be less wasteful (Baracha, 2007, p. 238; Makeba, 2007, p. 303; Tiye, 2007, p. 329), more appreciative of my way of life (Bebe, 2007, p. 252; Makeba, 2007, p. 304; Tiye, 2007, p. 338), and have returned with a new viewpoint about myself, Africa and the world.

Sharing and philanthropic ideas have become a reality and been implemented by some to provide or lend a hand to others in Africa in meaningful ways. Two scholarships are being established, numerous families and/or children have been sponsored by the

giving of basic needs either on a short or long term basis, and annual school tuitions have been paid.

At home in America, perspectives and actions of participants have been altered to do more creative things. For instance, some have changed their personal attire and refused to leave home without some visible element of Africa incorporated in their ensemble (clothes, jewelry, shoes, headgear, briefcase, handbag, pouch, walking stick, etc.). It was interesting to hear how participants were greeted by other Americans and African Americans when attired “African style.” Exposure and attendance at cultural events were found to be enjoyable now rather than avoided. Some also offered that they now have a positive reception for communicating/ visiting with people from other parts of the world and different cultures. This also included an innovative activity of reading and listening to international news reports.

Visiting West Africa has indeed dispelled erroneous information, and changed the outlook and behaviors for all, less one, of the participants—the third emerged theme.

Tour Director’s Perspectives

The Center for Culture, The Afrikan Poetry Theatre Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides a range of cultural, educational, recreational and social programs. In conversation with John Watusi Branch, Co-founder and Executive Director of the organization (December 21, 2007), he commented on the topic of this dissertation. As the Journey to the Motherland Tour organizer he shared some perspectives on aviation, saying:

Air transportation has narrowed the concept to reality—wherein a dramatic difference in culture and environment can be experienced in a matter of about seven hours. Having a familiarity with African culture from various sources (books, others, etc.) and actually being there are two totally and distinctly different things. Exposure to and having experienced the essence of family, family structure, order of authority and respect, especially respect of the elders, that which is normal in Africa and not the norm in America, was quite a change to comfort and milieu. American youth have had some challenges in adjusting.

Branch spoke of the conveniences of direct flights and the routing offered today by South African Airways and North America Airlines. He has noted an increase in the number of travelers and queries why round trips to London could be had for \$400.00 but not to Africa—that cost was excessive. Prior to its demise, Air Afrique was the preferred airline; it was direct and provided a measure of indoctrination to Africa en route.

Branch further observed in the majority of travelers since beginning the Motherland Tours there has been a transformation of African Americans as they are exposed to Africa and the African culture. He noted:

People have enjoyed food, entertainment, learned how to barter, and found pride. Some have been influenced to do more charity-wise, be more helpful, gave in Africa versus not giving in America, except at church. Some expressed their pain and displeasure about the economics, the exploitation, and poverty. One or two did not like and hated the experience while others felt they were wealthy in Africa. Many have changed their style of dress, supported and sought out African cultural affairs, activities, and events after returning to America.

The Center for Culture, The Afrikan Poetry Theatre continues to offer Journey to the Motherland tours to the African continent for all who wish to know more about themselves. “A trip to West Africa is like a pilgrimage, a spiritual rejuvenation, a journey filled with emotional experiences, full of fun and wonderment” (Afrikan Poetry Theatre, 2005, para. 5).

Researcher’s Perspectives

This researcher, an annual tourist to West Africa since 1998, professes, undoubtedly, Africa is my ancestral home. I knew that from deep within my being in 1972 when I first “set foot” on the African soil. My introduction to aviation was on a Pan Am Airline flight to Dakar, Senegal. It was a direct flight, and en route was quasi-comfortable after losing an engine one hour out over the Atlantic Ocean, dumping excess fuel overboard in order to return to departure point—JFK Airport, changing planes and taking off again, six hours late. Since that experience 36 years ago, the direct flight path from JFK Airport to Dakar, Senegal has not changed considerably, however, companies providing air transportation, types of aircraft, number of flights, and scheduling has vacillated and improved greatly.

Years later, I realized having the benefit of using Air Afrique Airline was inspiring. Industry personnel the entire trip from departure to arrival looked like me—ticket agents at JFK Airport, the flight crew (pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, all the flight attendants), ground crew in Africa, baggage handlers, and all airport personnel in my line of vision in Africa. The style and colors of uniforms were likewise uplifting, containing

African colors, patterns and designs. Seeing yourself in other occupations you had never been exposed to was elevating and educational.

Curiosity was the primary reason for visiting the African continent as the information contained in my formal studies conflicted with other sources and I set out to learn more and seek some hands-on answers. I found more than I expected. I also tried to bring back as much of everything (photos, 8mm film, audio recordings, souvenirs, etc.) that I could so I could share Africa and my experiences with others, which unknown at the time, was a futile effort.

Today, having amassed over 30 visits to 11 West Africa countries and 11 other African countries, I have discovered/learned how impossible it was to try to give the understanding/experience of “being home” to another; they have to savor, feel, and experience the journey for themselves, individually.

As a seasoned visitor, I have observed others as they discover self and Africa. The transformation began at arrival in the airport when deplaning was not through a jet bridge way into a terminal but down rolling stairs to a bus, or in some countries you just walk from the plane, to the terminal building. After clearing immigration and passport inspection, a search for your luggage began. It was rather chaotic compared to the American way of luggage retrieval. After all bags have been located, the in-country operator assisted the group through customs, luggage was loaded on the roof of the bus then tied securely, and the passengers were seated for the drive to the hotel. After landing and arrival at the hotel can take anywhere from three to five hours. And so the African experience has begun.

In answering the questions posed to the participants, many of them took the words right out of my heart and mouth. The emotions and descriptions shared, felt and sounded just like mine—in sync parallel experiences. Remaining neutral while hearing and capturing their comments and expressions was fortifying, as it authenticated, sustained, and corroborated my insights.

Specifically regarding the question of identity, I did not know I did not have one until I went home, to Africa, and found mine. Born and raised in the suburbs of New York City, I was constantly trying to fit into somebody's mold, but at the time, I did not know that. I was told by family and friends when I finally returned from my first trip, in 1972 (which I kept extending until I had exhausted all my funds), I had a different walk, stood taller, and walked prouder with my head held higher—pride found. In exhibiting that, one day a week I wear traditional African clothes to work as a proclamation of my heritage to self and others. DNA testing has provided some other interesting facts about my genealogy. Actual geographical locations of clans with like DNA markers in West Africa have been identified, bringing me a step closer to specific ancestral identity. My next few trips will have goals of visiting some of those specific clan locations.

In the Akan (Ghanaian) culture Sankofa is a bird that looks backward while flying forward, holding an egg in its mouth. It signifies and teaches we must go back to our beginning and learn what the past has to teach, to know the present, in order to move forward—the future. That is, the past shows how and why we are who we have become. The egg represents the future, and also reminds us that which has been lost or stolen can be reclaimed. Aviation has made it more convenient to leave North America and arrive on the African continent in as little as six hours, safely and comfortably. Like most of the

participants in this study, visiting West Africa has had a significant impact on my life. Going back to learn about the past and bringing the lessons learned into the present has changed my mindset, landscape, and environment in a myriad of very positive ways to make a better future—Sankofa!

Summary Findings

In summary, this chapter described the demographic of the participants and the findings of each of the questions posed. It included the themes that emerged, and the perspectives of the tour operator and researcher.

The majority of the 13 tourists interviewed for this study were married-9 (69%), female-10 (77%), and retired-7 (54%) with an average age (35-69) of 53 years. They represented a variety of differences in perspectives and provided a rich source of data with many similarities and some differences noted across the categories. In comparison, there were only 7 participants in the Nelson (1986) study.

The travel and transportation findings were for the most part comfortable, safe, and enjoyable. Aviation has made a variety of African products readily available for consumption in America. Time saved was cited as the major convenience offered by aviation, in addition to providing a safe and comfortable mode of transport. More direct flights to African locations were preferred at a more reasonable cost.

The stereotypes and cultural perspectives were varied and similar at the same time. All participants were surprised at what they observed first hand in Africa. It did not match their expectations, which were based on the negative information and stereotypes; it left most with intent to authenticate/validate information about Africa. Disappointment

was expressed at the disrespect and exploitation of Africans and Africa, population density, excessive poverty, proliferation of non-African owned businesses, and the imitation of negative western behaviors. Variations were noted in food, some religious values, polygamy, customs, features, and actions. Participants have made or are intending to make personal changes in their lives based on what they saw, felt, experienced and shared in Africa. The changes included poignant and intense thoughts of America after experiencing Africa.

Themes which threaded through all of the interviews were: accepting/declaring Africa as home, finding a connection for self identification, changing personal perception/perspective and the resulting actions after returning to America. Two items noted but not expounded were: the term “set foot,” and members of participants’ families not interested in learning/visiting Africa. Perhaps, topics for another study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of air transportation on African American culturalization from leisure tourist travel between the United States and West Africa. The assumption was that findings in the personal interviews of the participants could address and identify a clear understanding of specific factors contributing to changes in the African American culture/community. Findings could be especially helpful to the aviation community in looking at future travel needs and enhance the literature for the immediate and latent cultural effects.

Conclusions

There were 21 questions posed to 13 participants to determine how or has air travel to West Africa affected and impacted the African American culture of those travelers and all with whom they directly and indirectly interact? The findings in this qualitative research resulted with the following conclusions as related to travel and transportation, and stereotypes and cultural perceptions.

Conclusions Regarding Travel and Transportation

Air travel has played a major role in changing the mindset, landscape and environment of the participants.

An emerged way of thinking to traverse the Atlantic Ocean and explore the African continent culminated with a diversity of thoughts, some of which are contained in this research. Armed with the knowledge of the convenience, comfort, and time it takes to reach the African continent, a change in mindset has occurred and travel to Africa has become more attractive. Once the “genie is out of the bottle, it can not be returned,” nor “once the bell has been rung, it can not be un-rung.”

Participants intended to travel more and seek direct flights to more African locations. South African Airways and Delta Air Lines provided daily trans-Atlantic direct non-stop flights to and from Dakar, Senegal and Lagos, Nigeria. The Delta schedule represented a recent increase in direct flights and additional access to other African locations. In the next few years several airlines are expected to increase the number of flights and additional routes to other locations in Africa. This will be well received by the participants planning another trip as it provides more options. With costs comparable to flights to Europe the volume of travelers would increase.

Personal observations of the researcher noted the African American landscape has been undeniably altered by the many items available for sale in flea markets, specialty stores, and main stream department stores. Several participants in answer to question two: How has aviation contributed to your needs in America? (see Appendix E, pp. 151-154), stated several locations where they were able to locally obtain products imported from Africa. Mentioned were the African Market in Harlem, vendors in Brooklyn, The Bronx,

and Queens. This availability of products not only changed and impacted the African American community and presumably the rest of America has also been exposed to and/or influenced by African products. “All across the country, African collectibles, decor items, furnishing and clothing are in demand” (Business Catalogs, 2008, Home, para. 11).

Eastern Art Arcade, one of the oldest wholesalers of African Art in the United States..., [for the past] 35 years...[has] import[ed] and suppl[ied] a wide variety of products including African masks, kitchen accessories, home furniture, ebony & wood carvings, walking canes, musical instruments, clothing & fabrics, and one of a kind items (Eastern Art Arcade, 2008, Home)

to “major retail chain stores, boutique’s, gift stores, museums, zoo’s catalog companies, ...home decorators” (Eastern Art Arcade, 2008, About us), galleries and collectors.

For example, some African designs or a compilation of African colors can be seen in the décor of some businesses (McDonalds-Oklahoma City, OK), hospitals (Harlem Hospital-Harlem, New York), schools (Marcus Garvey-Oklahoma City, OK), homes (Anifowose residence-Moore, OK), church choirs (Wildwood-Oklahoma City), and restaurants (African Village, Irving, TX; Ghana Cafe, Washington, DC), etc. The proliferation of establishments, clothing, uniforms, works of art, backdrops, fabrics, spices and foods, etc. attest to the impact on the culture. The aviation industry has contributed to some of these African products being readily available in a timely fresh manner.

The environment—conscious and/or unconscious surrounding factors—has influenced African American lives and activities. The emotional tone and influences prior

to arriving were filled with negative stereotypes and preconceived notions. The thoughts and feelings of the participants have dramatically changed after traveling to West Africa. One six to nine hour flight dispelled most if not all the erroneous attitudes and ideas.

The conclusion was that travel and transportation affected and impacted the African American culture by providing the opportunities for mind expansion and self discovery. The landscape of the community and culture has been altered and enhanced by the availability and use of Africa products. The atmosphere and environment of the culture was likewise amended to reflect new truths about Africans and Africa.

Conclusions Regarding Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions

Air travel has played a most important part in changing the mindset, landscape and environment of the participants. As reported by all 13 African Americas interviewed, their culture has been impacted in assorted direct and indirect ways. Stereotypes were dispelled. Negative, limiting, mistaken, and preconceived beliefs that formed a standardized mental picture, obtained from a variety of sources: missionaries, churches, business/tourist travelers, television, news, newspapers, books, novels, nature programs, movies, advertising, and museum exhibits, etc. have been modified, if not completely erased.

Along with the dispersal of stereotypes, the mindset of participants has been altered in that they want to embrace their long denied/stolen heritage. They do not need to denounce Africa and behave like the preponderate American population. They feel that it was okay to be of African descent. That can be seen in the change in personal attire (dress, hair), environmental décor (homes, businesses), and leisure activities (cultural

events). The impetus for change in mindset was attributed to travel to West Africa and learning and seeing for themselves their lineage, thus changing personal perception/perspective and the resulting actions after returning to America.

Traveling to West Africa enabled the participants to recognize many current day actions and activities as coming directly from Africa. “Slavery did not destroy [all of] the cultural legacy...nor erase [all of] the memories of an African past....They survived...and...customs [were reshaped] ...to conform to African aesthetic ideals” (Holloway, 2005, p. 326). Africanism percolates through the American culture. The African American culture is multifaceted and permeable; finding a bridge connection for self identification, accepting and declaring Africa as home was brought about by air transportation.

Knowing our heritage means knowing ourselves, no longer needing validation of European Americans, and having much to celebrate. Each one sharing their experiences, another learns and conveys, and the cycle repeats. That new knowledge gained continues to change the environment and mindset. In return, that promotes and sparks interest in others to travel and learn more about Africa and themselves. Without the time saved traveling by air, many would be unable to make the journey. With a European-like airfare (as shown in Table I, p. 30) many more would be able to travel, be exposed to learn and see firsthand from whence they came.

The conclusion was that African American culture has been marked by constant evolution and change. Life began in Africa before boat passage to the Americas. Frequent separations and isolation from other Africans lessened the opportunity to retain their African language, ethnic identity, culture, and heritage. Subsequent disruptions of the

family, rapes and sexual abuse where the men could not protect their wives/family were customary. Seasoning² was used to try to remove all of Africa from the slaves but while seasoning did modify behaviors; it did not completely obliterate the culture. Descendants have preserved many ancestral ways—recognized or not. Africa can be seen today in the African American community in family structure/kinship, foods and cooking methods, religious concepts and practices, some words/expressions, literature and arts, and musical style and instruments. The residual latent effect of all this American history continues to impact African Americans today. Some measure of healing of the psyche or spirit begins to occur with that first flight/pilgrimage to Africa. African influences continue to fashion the new African American cultural identity, and air transportation has had a great impact and assisted in bringing this information and knowledge across the Atlantic Ocean.

Moreover, for those denied their heritage, aviation travel and transportation to Africa has contributed to an understanding and acceptance of being descendants of Africa. Embracing the fact that it was okay to be an African living in America and not be ashamed of who they are and how they look is another cultural resultant/outcome from air travel to Africa. Aviation has assisted greatly in finding, recognizing and embracing heritage; it has provided a bridge of connection to ancestry.

This study, the effect of air transportation on culturalization, a study of African American tourist travel impact, has relevance to the African American community, the

² Seasoning, a process that took a year or two to break, tame, subjugate and inure slaves, was the term for behavior modification which forced enslaved Africans to accept their new lives. "It began soon after capture or purchase..., but was intensified once in the Americas....The process [included]...shaving all the hair from their bodies, washing...and oiling...with palm oil [when they were]...about-to-be-sold [sic]." They were fed more often for a few days prior to the sale, and trained not to resist having their reproductive organs examined. "Already branded in Africa with the trader's mark, they might be branded again with the mark of the new owner," and were expected to respond to a new Christian name given during the seasoning period (Seasoning, n. d.).

aviation industry, and aviation education. It provided facts of the aftermath and impact on day-to-day living, and the role international air transportation has played in African Americans' culturalization. It added to the literature, educated others, updated the reasons for visiting Africa, and contributed to the identity establishment issues. Additionally, it afforded the African American community an opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences with others. It is hoped the themes and thoughts proposed by this novel study generated and provoked additional questions in sparking further research.

Recommendations

On the basis of the information gleaned in this study, the following recommendations are offered as related to the findings.

Recommendation Pertaining to Travel and Transportation

The cost of transportation was still a great expense for some, even with systematically saving for the trip. The creation of an airfare comparable to the airfares to Europe was recommended. Today, as the cost for fuel escalates, the challenges for the average and below average income individual to journey to Africa may become a bigger challenge or impossible. We must explore plausible avenues for the experience to be fully savored.

Consistently mentioned throughout the interviews was the need for additional flights scheduled and more direct flights to various locations on the African continent. Rearrangement of flight schedules to avoid having to overnight at a connecting terminal location was another recommendation of the interviewees. Such a modification would

help lessen transport costs and allow more time at the intended destination. The impact of activity generated could have broad implications for the aviation industry.

Recommendation Pertaining to Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions

The educational background of participants in this study was predominately retired professionals. The tourists in the Nelson (1986) were all professionals. The females outnumbered the males more than 3:1. In the Nelson (1986) study the females outnumbered the males more than 2:1. This could suggest education and gender has a correlation with travel. Prohibitive for many, cost may have inhibited traveling and may have stymied personal self identity. A recommendation was that further research be commenced to understand the rationale and implications of how education, gender, and cost have affected the African American culture.

With all the questions posed and answered here, new questions materialize. For example, there were a number of African Americans who have relocated, returned home and now reside permanently in Africa. A study of their experiences and transition would be useful to others and add to the literature about culture. Another study in the reverse would be, how do Africans see African Americans who are just visiting tourists or those who have come back to live there.

Implications

Africa is a huge continent with over fifty countries, more than a thousand separate cultures, and hundreds of millions of people. This study indirectly covered minimal areas in a few of the West African countries visited by participants. Obviously traveling to West Africa as a tourist was a high priority for 13 participants who came to the cultural conclusion that West Africa was home, or at least the home of their ancestors. Their perception—the way they see the world, pay attention to it, attach meaning, and associate memories—affects communication and future contacts.

Although the results of the study indicate air transportation has had significant impact on the culture; it was based on 13 perspectives and portions of a few countries. There are many other countries on the African continent where the environment was not stable or peaceful enough to host tourism. Tour operators only plan trips to places that are somewhat stable and at peace. The war ravished countries or areas where violence is raging was not considered in this study. Thus this report and conclusions in no way purport to speak for or encompass all of the African continent.

Perhaps the participants have expressed a Pollyanna view—external optimists wrapped in a desire to reaffirm an African identity, claiming Africa as home. Since all Africa is not the same, this leaves the question, do all African Americans who have visited Africa claim and embrace it as home—their ancestral home? Their ancestors came from Africa and today their distant cousins live there, but has a chasm of four hundred years and thousands of miles fostered a complete separation? This is another topic for another study.

Everyone makes assumptions or inferences because it is impossible to know everything about everything. So based on incomplete data we arrive at conclusions, which we then categorize. Given the findings that all of the participants in this study claimed Africa as their ancestral home, based on one or more journeys, the derived conclusion was that air travel to West Africa has in numerous ways affected and impacted the African American mindset, landscape, environment, and culture – at least for these travelers and those with whom they have directly and indirectly touched.

Concluding Remarks

We all were and still are students. We continue to be students throughout life, but more importantly we are all teachers. As teachers, we are obligated to pass on our observations of what we have learned. We understand each student learns in their own time and that “when the student is ready the teacher will appear” (Buddhist proverb).

The purposive sample was selected because they were believed to be a rich source of data for understanding the characteristics of cultural changes, and they were exactly that. Their cooperation and enthusiasm for this study and the opportunity it provided for input to aviation and the literature went well beyond expectation. They exemplified concern, which was readily apparent in the quality of information offered for the study. Their innovation and candor, their willingness to find and take quality time for the interviews, and the extra effort many of them made by offering to accommodate the researcher’s schedule was deeply appreciated.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT

Instrument

Travel – Transportation: What were your experiences?

What were your travel experiences (airport, flight, cost, time)?

Going/departing America

While in Africa

Returning to America

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (availability of products)?

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

When was your last visit to West Africa?

How many times have you been?

Why did you go?

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?

Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions: How have you been affected?

What were your expectations and how were they met?

What surprised you and disappointed you?

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Where are your ancestral roots?

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

How did you communicate?

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

Describe how you were received

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

What do you now do differently after returning?

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

What are your new expectations?

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Demographics: Please tell me about yourself

Occupation

Educational level

Marital status

Age

City and State:

Born

Childhood/grew up

Adult

APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST AND INTERVIEW SCRIPT

CHECKLIST AND INTERVIEW SCRIPT

	As I go over these items, please feel free to interrupt and ask questions at any time.
	For the record I will be taking written notes and recording this interview by audiotape to capture the stories exactly as you tell them. The recording will be transcribed and destroyed after completion of the research. The transcriber will sign a confidential agreement prior to doing any transcription work. Is that okay with you? _____
	I have a consent form for your signature that I will go over with you. You will receive a signed copy of the form. Go over the CONSENT FORM.
	A little information about this research. It involves personal interviews with African American people, born and raised in the United States, who have traveled to West Africa in the past 35 months, since December 2004. Your name was obtained from _____ (personal knowledge, African Poetry Theater listing, other, etc.). I am interested in your experiences, expressions, thoughts, and feelings about traveling and touring West Africa. The good, the bad, and the ugly, the easy, and the hard – all that you are willing to share.
	The data will be compiled, analyzed, and referenced with data captured by another researcher in 1986. All the data gather will be used to obtain a deeper understanding of your experiences.
	I have prepared a series of questions which you should have received in the mail. However, one answer may lead to one or more additional questions for full clarity and understanding. I expect the interview to last about one hour depending on you and how much you are willing to share.
	As mentioned in the Consent Form, to maintain confidentiality I will call you by an alias name. What name would you like to use? For this interview I will call you _____. Is that acceptable? _____.
	Prior to turning on the tape recorder establish the assumed name participant wishes to be addressed as. Prepare a NAME CARD for ready visual reference.
	Do you have any questions?
	Recorder on...For the record: Today is (day) _____, December____, 2007 I am Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I am

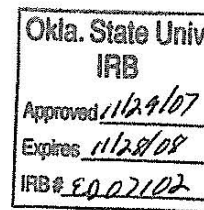
involved in a research study about how the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa have directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity, and I am here with

_____.

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARTICIPANT

Alethia Futtrell
PO Box 1782
Bethany, OK 73008-1782
405-954-6937 405-255-5433
AFuttrell@aol.com



December 5, 2007

Letter to Participant

Dear _____,

I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation in the College of Education, Applied Educational Studies with Aviation and Space Specialization at Oklahoma State University. You have been chosen to participate in the research study because of your interests and recent travel experiences in West Africa. I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you in person at your convenience sometime during the month of December 2007 or January 2008.

The purpose of the study is to gather information about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. The findings of the study could be especially helpful to the aviation community's flight planning, as well as updating the history files and literature. Additionally it affords the African American community an opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences with others.

Attached are samples of the questions which will be used during the interview lasting approximately one hour. With your permission, an audio recording will be made of the interview to aid in the analysis of the data. During the recording process to protect your identity an agreed upon assumed name will be used. Transcription of the recordings and notes will be identified by number and the assumed name only. After the recordings are transcribed, the data analyzed, and the study is completed all recordings will be destroyed to protect your confidentiality. The assumed name will be used in the final report, a copy of which will be presented for your approval/concurrence prior to submission to the graduate college and publication.

I will contact you later this month, to answer any questions you may have, obtain permission to interview, and schedule an appointment. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the project or about me, you may contact me at 405-255-5433.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation regarding my request for assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

Alethia Futtrell

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of African American Tourist Travel Impact

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved <u>11/29/07</u>
Expires <u>11/28/08</u>
IRB# <u>E1007102</u>

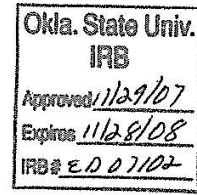
I, _____, hereby authorize Alethia Futtrell to interview me about my experiences and travel to West Africa. I give my permission for this interview to be recorded and the words transcribed.

This interview is to be done as a part of a doctoral dissertation entitled: "The effect of air transportation on culturalization: A study of African American tourist travel impact," a qualitative study. The purpose of this study is to gather information about the effects air transportation and international leisure travel, between the United States and West Africa, has, directly or indirectly, fostered changes in the African American culture. The stories and experiences will be captured in my own words through a personal interview. This data will be captured during December 2007 and January 2008.

I realize that I can voluntarily end the interview at any time. I will not be asked to state any identifying information (such as my name, address or phone number) on the recording. Recordings of interviews will be kept in the possession of Ms. Futtrell and will not be used for any purpose other than this research study. Any transcription services used will sign a confidentiality agreement prior to transcription. All recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study, prior to May 2008. All identifying information about me will be kept confidential and separate from the interview recordings and transcripts. The researcher will retain personally identifiable information data for member checking only. The personally identifiable data document will be handled only by, and kept secure by the researcher. That is, the document cross referencing the subject with a number and the pseudonym used in the audio recording is held confidential and secure in the custody of the researcher. It is a separate file/document, distinct from other research materials (audio recordings, transcripts). The personally identifiable data document and the audio recordings will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

The final transcribed interview prior to submission and publication will be made available for my review for member checking, and I will receive a copy. The Oklahoma State University (OSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) is empowered to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research by minimizing risk and ensuring that subjects agree to participate voluntarily from an informed perspective. It has the Authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

There are no physical or psychological risks. There are no known risks associated with this research project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Information gathered could be especially helpful to the aviation community's flight planning, as well as updating the history files and literature. In addition, it affords the African American community an opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences with others.



I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time by notifying the researcher, Ms. Futtrell.

I may contact Alethia Futtrell at telephone number 405-255-5433 or Dr. Fred Hansen at telephone number 918-594-8406. I may also contact the IRB. If I have questions about the research and my rights as a research volunteer, I may contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or email irb@okstate.edu

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX E

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' REPLIES

BY QUESTIONS

Findings from Travel and Transportation

Interview Question One

What were your travel experiences?

TABLE VIII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO WHAT WERE YOUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Akosia	<p>1995 first trip to Africa...Kennedy Airport to Dakar cost about \$2100 for 7 days. Flight took about 9 hours.</p> <p>Departing – traveled on Air Afrique from Kennedy to Dakar, Africa. We had to fly out of Atlanta to catch a flight to New York. It was difficult because we had to spend the night in NYC to make sure we made the flight the following morning. I think it is different now. I do remember being very excited and experienced no difficulties departing Kennedy. The excitement was the fact that I was GOING to Africa for the FIRST time.</p> <p>In Africa – Upon arrival I was shocked...it was kinda strange...I am use to things being orderly.... In the United States everything is so much more orderly and it looked like, when I first got there, we would never get through. In my mind I wondered how we would ever get through. I saw all the people crowding around...I said how are we going to get my luggage...It looked like there was a bunch of stuff going on and I just could not fathom how they get anything done at all. So it was kinda a surprise as that was the first time in an African airport and I wondered if this was the way they do their business. But everything was okay...we got through...pushing and shoving...whatever we had to do. Some culture shock took place.</p> <p>Returning to America – I was not ready to come back...I just needed to be there a little bit longer. So I did extend it three more days. But that was about...I had to come back to work. So that was that.</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Baracha	<p>The most amazing thing was that I could get to Africa in 6 ½ hours from Queens. That floored me! That was the most unbelievable thing, that the continent of Africa was just that close via an airplane!</p> <p>Departing – Once I finally made the decision that I was going to go to Africa, I was so excited. Nothing bothered me. I do not remember any unpleasant experiences, I was smiling, and I got to the airport maybe 4 hours ahead of time. I am sitting there three and one-half, four hours because I was not going to be late.</p> <p>In Africa – transportation...I was pleasantly surprised...we traveled in an air conditioned bus, we had English speaking guides, I was never uncomfortable...the roads were kind of rough in spots, but I was in Africa. This was like a dream come true. Nothing was going to bother me...even the bad roads.</p> <p>Returning to America – the trip was a very reflective flight. Each day I kept a journal, I just kept going over and over my journal. I could not wait to get my pictures developed so I could relive it over and over again. I was happy having made the decision to go and going with the group that I did go with. That was important.</p>	
Bebe	<p>Departing – from the airport was...not a problem, everything went smoothly. Our tour manager had everything intact for us. We got there in plenty, plenty, plenty of time to sit and to lollygag, to go get something to eat, to meet the people we were traveling with, so there was no rush, and, no, it was just a good travel...it was all a good traveling experience. I thought that I would have more of a problem because of the length of travel time...but after becoming friendly with the people we were [traveling] I felt quite comfortable. Each [airline seat] one had [its] own TV set, so you didn't have to watch something that you didn't necessarily want to watch, you had a variety or if you just chose not to watch anything at all. I was doing a journal on my trip, so I did a lot of writing. I was talking to other people and listening to experienced travelers and everything, so all of that made the time go by quite fast, I didn't have an anxiety in traveling of...when...are we there yet.</p> <p>In Africa – Great. Good. Again, excellent. I don't have too much of a complaint of being in Africa. I was grateful that I was able to go because it had always been something that I've wanted to do.</p> <p>Returning to America – The only problem I remember was with the flight to take us back to Senegal from The Gambia was projected to be delayed, but did arrive on time.</p> <p>Great, cost and flight schedule, very convenient. It was fine, it was not a problem.</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Brother X	<p>Travel and air transportation, for the most part, it was very comfortable. I find that the pricing was, at times, a bit of a challenge, but with planning and, you know, the blessings of the creator, and, just, planning we were able to make a number of trips to Africa. I've been three times. I don't know what we would do without it. I think it would be an incredible challenge trying to find other ways to make passage home – it would, just, be an incredible challenge.</p> <p>Departing – the times, when we had direct flights out of the country, those seemed to be the more enjoyable experiences, more comfortable experiences—leaving directly out of JFK—leaving the country. I had some challenges when we had to fly from New York to Washington, DC, I believe we left out of Newark, NJ one time and went to DC, and, there was, like, a layover, we were there for, hours, and, that was, I don't know if it was psychological or, whatever it was, it was felt, you know. It was like an incredible hardship...as opposed to that direct flight [from New York] to the continent.</p> <p>In Africa – for the most part [it was] very pleasant. At times, the land transportation due to the challenge infrastructure of some of the highways, some of the bus rides were a bit of a challenge.</p> <p>Returning from Africa – We had a direct flight back to JFK...that was really key, and, I think in any of my travels I'm certainly going to opt for the direct flight. It just seemed like when you [are boarding, clearing] security and [handling] your baggage, it's an incredibly difficult experience. If you can just minimize that [it would be] an incredibly different experience. So, direct flight, especially internationally would truly be the option, it's the strong choice.</p>	
Emy	<p>Departing – On departure out of Kennedy sometimes, you know, there's a little glitch when you're traveling with a group..., and we tend to bring things to West Afrika - humanitarian things, such as supplies for the school children and gifts; and, things of that nature. So, because we have a lot of luggage, sometimes there's a glitch at the airport. We have to do a little dealing and explaining at the airport to get ourselves through without paying extra or too much for extra baggage.</p> <p>In Afrika – Again, because I am with a group, the group leader takes care of the details about how to get there. The group leader has arranged with a tour company there to meet us, to handle our luggage, and help us in that regard. So, generally there's no problem. Sometimes when we get there the bus is a little too small, or, something, and they have to call in additional transportation, but otherwise it usually goes pretty good.</p> <p>Returning to America – Same thing, it usually works out with the tour company in Afrika. They are very efficient, they appreciate us coming</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Emy (continued)	<p>there, and they do all they can to assist us with our departure back to the US; escorting us, handling the baggage, getting us checked through security. They take care of all of the details. So, overall it's been a good experience. The flight back – no problem. There were times that we were delayed and had to spend an extra night someplace because of some problem with the airline or the airplane or something. But, you know, I chalk it all up to experience.</p> <p>The costs are good for me because usually when I travel, I travel with a group, partly because the group leader takes care of all of the details, and I don't have to worry about that. And, the time, basically the time of travel is no problem. Being a retired individual, I don't have to worry too much about when I'm leaving and when I'm coming back. At the airport, sometimes there were delays, but no major delays. But, other than that, the travel experiences have been good. The flights were usually pleasant and comfortable.</p>	
Joe	<p>Departing – arrival at the airport was a little hectic. The lines were long, security was heightened. September 11 had a lot to do with the time that we had to wait to have our bags checked, which was necessary.</p> <p>In Africa –it was a little hectic at the airport, it was a little confusing.</p> <p>Returning to America – Arrival was okay, there was no long line.</p> <p>The cost? I, actually, found the cost for the package was very reasonable for the most part. I do have some friends that travel back and forth to Africa, and I'm usually told that they pay really ridiculous amounts for travel. I think since I was traveling with this group, it actually made...the rates were better. I've always had this preconceived idea that the travel flight time was 16 – 21 hours—so long. Travel time was actually 9 hours to Senegal.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>Departing – My departure to Dakar, Senegal was pretty much uneventful. [For] a few hours later...our flight was delayed...and again ...on the tarmac.</p> <p>In Africa – Nothing to share about transportation.</p> <p>Returning to America – The return trip home was also uneventful.</p>	
Makeba	<p>Departing – I found that my travel at the airport ran smoothly, I was excited...it was not my first flight...but I was very excited knowing where I was going...my first trip to Africa.</p> <p>In Africa – During one of my adventures in Africa we got in the cab and the cab broke down. So what we ended up doing was... getting out of the cab and pushing it. But that was okay...we went on where we had to go. We arrived at our destination safely. <i>Did you have to push the cab</i></p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Makeba (continued)	<p><i>all the way there?</i> I would say about one-quarter of the way...we had to help him “pop the clutch”...but that was okay. We knew where we were and if this is what it took to get the car started...we did it...and did it with amusement and pride, I guess. Because it was funny but we did it and everything went smoothly...we did not stop any more.</p> <p>I want and I still have not done it, ride the bus over there. They call it the "I don't care bus." But I am told it is not very safe to ride it...but one day I am going to get on that bus even if I only go a block. It is very very crowded, and it is the mode of transportation for the average person. It's reasonable and cost effective for them. So that's the way they travel. They are not fortunate to have their own vehicle as we do in America. But that's okay...you go with the flow.</p> <p>Returning to America – we were always escorted...transported to the airport by a bus. And when I have gone on my own we got in a cab. And depending on the time of day, it can take you anywhere from an hour to reach that airport to twenty minutes. The flight is great. I have not had any problems and I have been over there on three or four different airlines. And they have all been good even the ones when I had to layover. Everything was nice and it was smooth. I have never encountered a problem.</p> <p>The cost was well worth it. The timing was great. It did not take very long to get there-six and one-half hours. It was just GREAT.</p> <p>Flight scheduling now is better than it was when I first started going in 1998. Then you had two choices: Ghana Airlines and Air Afrique, which is no longer in existence. It has improved a lot, because there are more flights, you have a choice of airlines, and there are flights that go everyday...so that is wonderful.</p>	
Nursie	<p>Departing – Entering the airport waiting to board the plane was a bit time consuming. It was the usual upon going to the airport, you know. You have to wait, you have to carry, you have to get in line, you have to get your ticket, you have to get a boarding pass. To me that’s a bit time consuming, and sometimes, it can get...I get a little disgusted. But, on this particular trip, it went quite smoothly. The flight itself was fairly good. Something I always do is sleep in flight. I slept...the majority of the time, and [was] only awake to eat my meals, and, then, go back to sleep. But, it was, the flight was pretty good, I must say.</p> <p>One thing about going from one continent to another, the lag time, it makes you very tired, it becomes very tiresome. I became very tired after we landed, and really...what I wanted most was to go to a hotel and sleep. In Africa – the travel, the trip, the ground transportation was fairly decent because I think we first went to the hotel, it was a decent ride, it</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Nursie (continued)	<p>wasn't a long ride. That was fairly good. The next day or the day after, we boarded a plane, at that point, I was quite tired of flying, but I didn't think anything of it, I wasn't...I didn't feel any danger, it was just a part of routine...but for the most part, the land transportation was okay. Getting on, getting off..., getting on, getting off was quite tiring, but something that we do often if we go on a tour and travel.</p> <p>Returning to America – was....I really didn't want to go. I wanted to go, and I really didn't want to go. I guess I did want to see as much as I could of Africa, as with every time I travel there because I am excited about the continent itself, and all of the natural resources that it has. The fact that the people are so impoverished, even though it's a continent with all of those resources which has been captured by people from other countries. But, returning home is always good. So, the flight home was without incident, or without..., definitely without incident. Again, I slept, waking only to eat.</p>	
Poochie	<p>Departing – Nothing unique or significant. It was a comfortable trip, expensive trip, loooonnggg trip, but it was fairly good.</p> <p>In Africa – Transportation in Africa was good. We have to realize that they're not as modern as we are, but, on the whole it wasn't bad.</p> <p>Returning to America – It was good. I hated leaving, but I was glad to come back home. Getting back into Kennedy - getting all of your luggage, waiting for someone to come pick you up, getting back finding out that the weather is not what it was when you left. Most of the time coming back, the weather was bad after landing.</p> <p>It was a nice trip, a long trip, an expensive trip. But, it was a good trip. It took 8 hours.</p>	
Tiye	<p>Departing – When we got to the airport it was pretty easy, the transition, from checking in and making sure the weight of your bags were okay. Once we got downstairs it was pretty hectic. They had to make sure you had the right amount of toiletries, if you didn't have the right amount of toiletries, they had to be discarded. The flight going was...we were in coach, we were kind of on top of each other. It wasn't as comfortable as I thought it should be.</p> <p>In Africa – Once we got into Africa it was much easier getting in [the airport] there and getting your stuff than I thought. Because we had tour guides that were helping us out, it made it much easier to get a taxi. They helped out a lot, so getting around wasn't really hard at all.</p> <p>Returning to America –returning back to the states was much easier than leaving. <i>What made it easier?</i> They didn't really check our bags, they just checked our passport, that was it.</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Tiye (continued)	<p>The cost – the cost with the flight, and with spending money once we got to Africa was pretty much around \$3,000. I think it was, 9 hours to get there.</p>	
Toni	<p>Departing – we encountered some trouble--a snowstorm. They had us sitting on the tarmac for hours, no water; almost as if they just didn't care. The flight, once in the air, the flight was good. That was my...my worst experience—the snowstorm leaving out of Kennedy. They were not prepared, they were not prepared. That's what I find strange with an airport that has been in business for so many years, but, yet, a little snow just threw them...I don't know...threw them off.</p>	
	<p>The flight [the next day] was good. I was...you know, the flight was very good because I was there with people I knew, so we talked on the flight about some of the things we would expect to see, and hear, and do, so the flight was good, it was good. It kind of filled in some of the empty spaces because listening to some of the other people voice their opinion of what they expected, things I hadn't thought about, so it was a good flight. I always enjoy going.</p>	
	<p>In Africa – Different, different for sure. Transportation in Africa isn't as comfortable as being here in America. You know, some of the top of the line vehicles you can ride in, I think every car there is used, you know, as far as transportation. I think the Saab's there are 10, 15, 20 years old, but, you know, it took us where we needed to go, so it wasn't bad. We didn't have any break down on us, so it was okay.</p>	
	<p>Returning to America – The flight was okay. Returning, I was sad. I had been there about 14 days, meeting my family, my brothers and sisters, my African brothers and sisters, and, then, leaving them, that was hard. So, many times I just wanted to break out in tears, but I knew that I had to come home because my family is here. I was always sad, whenever I leave there, I'm always sad. It takes me a couple of days to regroup.</p>	
	<p>The cost is probably, pretty close to, well, it was quite reasonable. The time – I thought the time was good. I had no idea, prior to going; I always thought traveling to Africa would mean 18, 19, 20 hours perhaps. So, leaving JFK and arriving in Dakar in 7 hours and approximately 45 minutes was really a surprise.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Departing – My experience was very good. The flight was long, but you get a chance to watch a couple of movies and before you know it, you're there. It was very, very interesting. I've never been on a flight that was that long, but I got used to it. It was great having Afrikan pilots and attendants on the planes. There were no [major] difficulties, except I</p>	

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question One What were your travel experiences?
Yaw (continued)	<p>had a walking stick the first time we went, they wouldn't let me take it on because it looked like a weapon, they said.</p> <p>In Africa – Nothing to share.</p> <p>Returning to America – One time when we went to Benin, on our way [back to America] the airlines went on a strike and we had to spend another night in Afrika; but it was in a 5 star hotel so it wasn't too bad.</p> <p>Nothing to share in terms of cost and time.</p>	

Interview Question Two

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (including the availability of products)?

TABLE IX

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO HOW HAS AVIATION CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR NEEDS IN AMERICA?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Two How has aviation contributed to your needs in America?
Akosia	<p>I use shea butter, buy clothes, I visit their stores. We have...you know...people that own stores...Africans...some African people here they import different things. And I go to their store and buy some of the things out of their stores. I don't buy a lot of things because I don't know enough about a lot of...especially the different food items. But I do patronize those places. Wherever I go I try to look that up.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Aviation has contributed to my needs here in America. I find if I am planning a trip and I make that plan far enough in advance; I can surf the web and find an inexpensive flight, which makes my moving about the country more accessible than many years and years ago. The main product that I use that comes from Africa is shea butter. I use it on my entire body from lubricating my hair to my feet and everything in between. It is readily available in New York. I am mainly interested in textiles. I enjoy sewing; I enjoy making my clothing from authentic</p>	

TABLE IX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Two How has aviation contributed to your needs in America?
Baracha (continued)	African fabric. I did buy a lot in Senegal and Ghana, but whenever I feel the need I can go to the African Market in Harlem and get what I want.	
Bebe	I don't know, I found that in Africa, although I enjoyed the shopping, and things that were available there for me to bring back, I, also, find those things here in New York. I bought some things to say that I bought it in Africa, but I could have gotten it in New York. <i>How did the things get to New York?</i> I think a lot of people have formed a lot of businesses – the guys that carved the statues or the fabric that they have, they're importing a lot of the things here because they want their things sold. I know in one part of Africa...one of the young men approached me and gave me his card, and asked me if there was a way that he could give me his product, so I could take it to America to have it sold here. So, I think, maybe, that might be a way that they do it if they can't find another means. But, somehow or another it gets here, it gets here because so many of the things from Africa are here. And, I do use them, yeah, oh, yeah, yes.	
Brother X	I think we've been spoiled to a certain extent, and, you know, the tri-state area, the inner city area, there are dozens of vendors in Brooklyn, dozens of vendors in Harlem, dozens, you know, a handful of vendors in the Bronx even out in Queens, so, there's a heavy influx of the culture and the people from the continent. I would assume they're coming back constantly and you have folks bringing in material and fabrics, and instruments, so there's just an incredible variety of access that's right here in New York City, and I am 99% sure the stuff has been...I'm assuming it's being flown in, I don't think it's being sent via any barrels or shipping. I could be wrong, but my understanding of it is the materials are being flown in, and, as a result of that availability, you know, we can get it, we can get to it. So, you know, living here...I'm glad that we're able to take advantage of [products] being flown in. It's a real connection.	
Emy	Well, I don't know that [aviation has contributed to my needs] you know. I think that more attention could be given to having more direct flights to parts of Afrika. As it stands, sometimes when you have to fly, you have to go North or East to get to West Afrika or your final destination, so that more attention could be given to more direct flights, I believe for us. As an Afrikan living in America, I'm always looking to use something	

TABLE IX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Two How has aviation contributed to your needs in America?
Emy (continued)	<p>that will help the people in the Mother land. So, when there's an opportunity to secure products, whether it's clothing or artifacts, I'm always looking to be able to do that. When I leave Afrika, I'm usually bringing something home from Afrika whether its clothing, or the artifacts, sometimes it's jewelry and other things that are produced by Afrikans. These days we're not allowed to bring too many things, but whatever I can.</p>	
Joe	<p>I would say availability of certain goods that I can get in America which would not be readily available to me, like African items, sculptures, craft work; I think without aviation that these items would find their way here, but, I think, aviation has made it much more accessible. I have a tendency to collect African masks, the fabric, clothing, Shea butter, [and] jewelry, etc.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>Living in New York, the melting pot of America, there is very little that you cannot find from abroad. There are neighborhoods in New York City which are ghettos for every nationality on earth and the various products associated with their cultures.</p>	
Makeba	<p>When I go to Africa there are many products that I bring back from there, some for personal use and some for business. So far, I have not encountered a problem in transporting them...the airline personnel have always been very friendly towards me. Yes, I have had to pay extra...but that's normal. Because you are only allowed a certain amount...only allowed certain weights and when I have gone over that, I have to pay. But that was okay. It was well worth it—that it came from there here, in a timely manner and safely.</p> <p><i>When you are not directly involved in the transportation of products, do you have a need for products at other times and can you conveniently get those?</i> Yes, but it is costly. When I bring it myself, it comes as a part of my [personal] luggage. When I have to have it shipped...you have to pay...customs and other fees, that a small business person like me cannot absorb easily.</p> <p><i>Do you use any product that you personally do not bring back, that you secure from somebody else?</i> Shea butter is one product. <i>Is that something that you put on your bread?</i> I use it as a lotion. Shea butter has many many uses. Some people put it in their hair. But I find that in the winter time it is very very good for your skin. So I use it more in the wintertime than I do in the summer months. But I do use it year round. Yes, I am able to purchase that here in America.</p>	

TABLE IX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Two How has aviation contributed to your needs in America?
Nursie	<p>No, because, I think, the things that we purchase here that come from Africa, a lot of it is doctored. Now, that I've traveled to Africa I've seen the productivity of these things, I think a lot of it is doctored. Chances are I wouldn't purchase anything here, and, I haven't, and I probably won't until I return to Africa. <i>When you say doctored, what does that mean?</i> It's altered, you know. It's not as it was produced in Africa naturally. Natural wood carvings, and natural structure, it appears that it was altered in some way, after it has gotten here. I think it's to trap Americans. It's different when you're there, they produce their things, and they know how they produce it, but to trap Americans to buy the product, I think they alter them a little bit upon arrival. Actually, my sister purchased a great deal of Shea butter and black soap, so we still have a lot of it. But, you know, I, also, forget, I anticipate buying things from Africa, and, sometimes with touring, and having limited time, a lot of times I forget. I forget the things that I have in mind to bring back.</p>	
Poochie	<p>Yes, what we receive from Africa was here in a timely manner; things that I wanted were available to me. African products used are herbs, their herbs. Just basically, whatever was there that I wanted, or felt that I...not really needed, I was able to buy it and enjoy. [Here in America] not all [the African products]..., are available to me. A lot of their things we were not able to bring back, but, yes in all, a lot of it is still available here if I wanted to go out and purchase it.</p>	
Tiye	<p>The products from Africa we can get—authentic African materials, authentic African artwork, such as masks and furniture; also, we use Shea butter, which, you know, the nut comes from Africa, so that's available to us. Another product that's available to us is Black Soap, African Black soap, which is made in Africa, so it really helps that we can get those types of items here.</p>	
Toni	<p>It has contributed a great deal. Because a lot of our things that we have here in America are imported. Shea butter, black soap, the material, the clothing. The material for making the clothing and, then, the clothing once made there. Yes.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, they are hard to come by. They are very expensive over here; once they get here they are very expensive, not practical, due to supply and demand, I guess.</p>	

Interview Question Three

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

TABLE X

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO HAS
AVIATION OFFERED ANY CONVENIENCES
TO YOUR LIFE?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Three Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?
Akosia	<p>Yes since I hate driving long distances, its good to be able to afford to fly. I must say I can't imagine going to Africa other than by air.</p> <p>Aviation has improved my life...the fact that I do not have to drive when I go home...my family is in Michigan, I am in Alabama...When I get ready to go home to family reunions or whatever, I can go with the ease of knowing that I will not be worn out from driving...and I don't have to think about driving the ten or twelve hours to come back. So I like the convenience of flying. That is mainly what aviation does for me as an individual. It saves time and takes less toll on the body. As you get older you don't really have the stamina to drive ten or twelve hours.</p>	
Baracha	<p>The main contribution of aviation to my need is in time saved in getting from point A to point B. The older I get the more I realize that my time is valuable and I don't mind spending the extra dollars to fly as opposed to using all that time on the road.</p>	
Bebe	<p>Oh, sure, you can't get from point A to point B without some sort of aviation. Particular, I'm going from one country to another, Years ago...going to the airport was always a novelty...and the people were always so nicely dressed because people were traveling. And, now...people dress any kind of way. It's like the novelty is worn off because we're flying all over the place, anywhere, anytime, yeah.</p>	
Brother X	<p>Absolutely. Access and the availability of cultures...who have migrated here, or people who are traveling back and forth. If you want to experience a culture and a people, you can do it.</p>	
Emy	<p>I don't know of any. As I mentioned earlier, if we could have more direct flights to places in Afrika, it would help. It would add to the convenience instead of having to go out of your way, so to speak, to get to your priority destination.</p>	
Joe	<p>Now, that I know...since I've gone to Africa, that the trip is not as lengthy as I thought it would be, I will definitely consider traveling to other parts of Africa, to other parts of, so called, third world countries.</p>	

TABLE X (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Three
		Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?
Loss of Mother's love	Yes, I love to visit different places, learn about different cultures, and get away from the cold climate of New York during the winter.	
Makeba	It has helped me. Aviation helps me to brighten/heighten my horizons. I am able to travel different places. I feel secure in traveling...not only to other countries but within America. It's fast, it's convenient, and most times it is economical.	
Nursie	Yes, because without aviation I would not be able to travel as I have. Traveling to Africa, I think, has been the best experience of my life, and without the ability to travel, to be able to get on a plane, to travel and feel safe traveling, I would not have experienced the beauty of it. I definitely wouldn't take a ship, that would take too long. Time is a factor.	
Poochie	Yes, traveling. Now, I get to see the world, and aviation has supplied me with that. Well, you can get on a plane, and you can be there in no time. You're nice and comfortable, and you leave the driving to someone else.	
Tiye	Getting there is...well, it costs a lot to travel back and forth to Africa, but aviation has made it convenient to get there. It's the most convenient way that I know of to get back and forth to Africa.	
Toni	Other than transportation, um, no. <i>Is it timely?</i> Oh, yes, yes. Okay, yes, yes. Right, it allows me to get from point A to point B in, probably, a fraction, a quarter of the time it would if I had to drive, take the bus, or the train, so, yes, it has.	
Yaw	No.	

Interview Question Four

Why did you go?

TABLE XI

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES
TO WHY DID YOU GO?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Four Why did you go?
Akosia	I went to learn about African culture, to meet the people and see for myself what Africa is all about. In the summer of 1999...my real reason for going was I wanted to see the culture of the African people and to learn from them. I wanted to see positive things rather than the TV images of starvation and wars. My attitude was they could teach me. I recognize there are many people in need, I enjoyed, saw, and experienced many positive things. The family interactions really impressed me a lot; they have a wonderful way of interacting.	
Baracha	When asked why you visit Africa, Baracha gleamed and said "Oh wow!" It has been a dream in the back of my mind and maybe eight or nine years ago, I started associating with African-centered people. And each one of them had been many times. They showed me pictures and shared their experiences.	
Bebe	Oh, I've always had a passion to go to Africa. I still have that passion, even so, I hope to go visit other parts of Africa. I'd love to go. <i>But, why?</i> I, I love our people. I know that that's our Motherland, and we have so much history that we need to know. There are so much of things that we need not to be ignorant of...to know, and to be there, and to see, and to do. It's just a passion in me that...I just have a love for it.	
Brother X	Well, it was a very strong desire, a very strong desire to reconnect with the culture and our people. It's been something that I've wanted to do from a very young age. My parents, in particular, my mother, had always spoke very strongly of Africa – the people, and the culture, and our heritage, and it was something to be very proud of. As I got older, I became more curious about it, you know, going to the lectures and events here, I had always planned that whenever I had the opportunity to do so that I would go, and I am so glad, and thank God that I have had the opportunity to go over there. I really want to make at least another two trips...back over. I felt it was a family reunion, and, everytime I go the bond is stronger and stronger, and one of the greatest moments, for me, is to walk the streets of Dakar and have the people walk up to me – our people walk up to me	

TABLE XI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Four Why did you go?
Brother X (continued)	and speak to me in their native tongue and embrace me as a brother. I will usually study enough to know the greetings and how to say thank you and...once I got beyond that, it was really a warm feeling to be home.	
Emy	Well, because it's the Motherland, you know. It's the source of everything and it's the place of my ancestors. The place I, when I learned of it, wanted to go to, and since going there, it's my favorite place to go. I love being there, seeing the majority of us there.	
Joe	<p>I've always had, growing up; I've always had this fondness of Africa. Through my own research from what I've learned in college, I've always wanted to learn more about it. One thing is that you hear stories about Africa, and you can read about it, but I had to see it firsthand for myself. I try not to let other people's ideas and ideology change the way I feel about something. I need to see things and investigate things on my own, and do my own research.</p> <p>Fondness for...an attachment to...I've always considered myself to be a displaced African, even though I'm here, I know that my homeland or people of African descent, their homeland, or the Motherland, is considered Africa. It may, also, have to do with the research that I do. Africa is considered to be the cradle of civilization, the cradle of mankind. This is my theory, and, a theory that other people hold. I have a strong hold to want to learn more about it.</p> <p>My father used to always talk about Africa. It may have been the little bit that I've learned in history classes in junior high school. The little bit that I did learn left me wanting to know more about it. It's just that there are so many unanswered...there are so many things that I wanted to know, and so many unanswered problems. [Schools offered] very little. Pretty much that bit of information that they provided...it was that blacks came here to America; we were slaves, but I've always thought that there was so much more than that.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	I went to Nigeria with my family, as a family vacation and to Dakar with my friend as a vacation.	
Makeba	I love it, I love it and that is where I met my husband. Another reason I go is because I want to learn as much about my ancestors that I can. It is a learning experience for me.	

TABLE XI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Four Why did you go?
Nursie	<p>My sisters traveled there so much, spoke about it so much, and from reading, I, actually, really wanted to see what it actually was because you don't get a clear picture, even when you're looking at National Geographic. A lot of people are under the impression that Africa is very native like – underdeveloped, only wildlife, nothing to do but to hunt, and the fear of the people eating you, which is all not true. Africa is very beautiful in its beauty, the people are just as beautiful, unfortunately the Europeans have caused them to be in the predicament that they're in, where they have taken all the wealth, they're trying to extract all the wealth from Africa, and leave the natives with little to none, and, subsequently, they're starving. But, in spite of all of that the people are still beautiful, they're welcoming. They still welcome you to their country, to their continent. And, I find that's even better because they don't hold any malice.</p>	
Poochie	<p>I am very interested in seeing how my people live and to learn their ways, and to see how we were mistreated. My ancestors were mistreated. From what I was taught, and the fact that they were black, and I am black, so, I believe that they were my ancestors.</p>	
Tiye	<p>I went because I wanted to connect with my heritage. I heard so many different people telling me about Africa, and, they're not of the same ethnicity, so sometimes their view of things is not the same view that you have. Some things were kind of negative, and I wanted to see for myself, I didn't want to learn through somebody else's experience what my heritage was about. So, therefore, I had a need to go there and experience it for myself.</p>	
Toni	<p>There's so much to see, it's such a big continent, because of the size. There's so much to see, and so much I want to see there. I'm just always so overjoyed when I'm there, just knowing I'm going, I'm just...once I know my trip is planned and my ticket is paid for, I'm just counting down the days until I leave. It's just when I'm there, I'm just at peace. Seeing my ancestors, you know, seeing it firsthand compared to what you read in the book, and, what, my expectations, um, it's nothing like I had ever imagined. I just love going. Every time...the more I go, the more I love it.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, I've always wanted to go home, because Afrika is my home. You have to understand, I am an Afrikan, I live here in America, so I decided, my wife and I decided to take the trip.</p>	

Interview Question Five

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

TABLE XII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
HOW WILL YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR
NEXT FLIGHT TO WEST AFRICA?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Five How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?
Akosia	I'm doing that now. I will try to get the best price and most direct flight I can. I am planning to return to Senegal in May. Home to America for a couple of weeks then go back to Ghana.	
Baracha	With great anticipation...once my mind is made up that I am going...I will get there.	
Bebe	Probably bring less clothes. Yeah, probably bring less clothes, and a little bit wiser in my traveling in what I bring, what I need and don't need.	
Brother X	<p>I tried something, I think it was two trips ago, that I will never do again. I remember coming up with the bright idea of for staying up for two days prior to the trip. I think I'm still trying to recover from it. So, get your rest, drink your water, and get some sleep that week prior. I remember the first time when I went to Senegal..., it was pretty cold here. Because I'll be in the terminal and I'm going to a tropical paradise, and I wouldn't need a coat...I left my coat home. By the time we had got there, I had no voice; I was doing sign language, and whispering in people's ears. So, I had to shut my mouth for a good two, two and a half days, I had to really listen more, so I have to be thankful because I was able to consume more, like a sponge.</p> <p>So preparing for the future, I would secure jeans, and sneakers, and a lot of those types of things [that] I would [barter]/trade with. I certainly would bring some writing materials. I'd probably go with a laptop this time. I did keep a journal a couple of times, I would bring a laptop, and I'd definitely get some rest; small electronic devices that I'd probably give to some friends over there.</p>	

TABLE XII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Five How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?
Emy	<p>The next flight – I won't do anything different. Usually, when we're going to Afrika, I usually just try to make sure I wear comfortable clothing. I wear something that I'm not going to be too cool on the plane. Other than that, I don't worry too much about the flight because some people will say, "oh, it's a long flight, you know, what do you do all that time?" Well, you sleep, watch TV, you read, you relax, you know, you take a deep breath, and you think about what you're going to do when you get there, [and] when you [will] get back, so, you know it's good quiet time.</p>	
Joe	<p>I think I'm going to pack less. Yes, pack less so that I can bring back more items of interest. So, that I can actually share the things like masks and jewelry to family, for friends, so that they can, maybe, actually, develop some interest as well.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>I have no confirmed reservations to travel to West Africa at this time. I am, however currently looking into meeting up with my African American friend in Mali by using my frequent flyer miles to save money.</p>	
Makeba	<p>Pack my bag and go! I do not need preparations. I do not need to prepare myself to go. I have been so many times that it just comes natural. I pack my bags, whatever I need, whatever gifts I am going to take...and I go. And I am excited each and every time that I go over there. I just feel I am going home!</p> <p><i>If you can recall back 13 trips ago to your first time, when you packed that bag to go...how does that bag differ from the bag you pack on the 13th trip?</i> It really doesn't differ that much. The only difference is I have learned that I do not need that much for myself, as I did on the first trip. I did not know what to expect on my very first trip over there. Now I take a minimal amount of clothing, and of course I take my personals, but I take a minimal amount of clothing, and my other two bags, which are almost always overweight...I have that packed with gifts for my extended families there. <i>And what kind of gift s do you bring over there?</i> I try to take gifts of different things...items that's not convenient for them to acquire, or it may be expensive for them. I take tooth paste, deodorant, soap, sometimes canned foods. I take candies for the children, tee shirts for the adults...and I distribute them as I see fit.</p>	
Nursie	<p>Well, I'm hoping to go in May/June to the Gambia and back to Senegal. Hopefully, my preparation would be just to...preparing to take some things to leave there especially for the people that live there, they're so warm and welcoming.</p>	

TABLE XII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Five How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?
Poochie	Well, I wouldn't take as many changes of clothes as I did, that's for sure. Just your regular clothes. Stuff you would pack...instead of heavy clothes; light clothes; clothes that you would be comfortable in, like for walking—shoes, sneakers; dress wise, something thin, maybe take a sweater. Basically, the clothes would be thin clothes because it's rather warm there, in certain parts and time of the year.	
Tiye	Well, my next flight, I hope...there are some things that I would like to do in Africa, and one of the things I would like to do is a scholarship fund for the students studying Egyptology at Cheikh Anta Diop University. I hope, eventually, I can present the scholarship myself. Then, another thing if I just go for leisure, I wouldn't pack so much stuff, there's no need to pack so much stuff. Pack more to give, because I packed more for myself than to give, to give out.	
Toni	Pretty much the same. <i>How would you tell somebody who has never gone, how to prepare?</i> The first thing I would tell them is they can't expect to go there, and necessarily see four bathrooms. It's a different way of living, it really is, but it's easy to adjust to. I would tell them they'd have to be open-minded.	
Yaw	I'll pack a little lighter. There were too many clothes I took this time that I didn't wear. I didn't need them, I'll just pack light and casual.	

Interview Question Six

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?

TABLE XIII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO IF THERE WERE NO DIRECT TRANS-ATLANTIC FLIGHTS HOW WOULD YOU CONSIDER GETTING THERE?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Six
		If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?
Akosia	<p>Most likely will have to go by way of Europe or North Africa. [<i>Emphatically</i>] “No! I would not go by boat...I don’t think so...That would take a while...going by boat...if there was no direct flight...”</p> <p>Why do they charge so much to go to Afrika? People have been discussing. Airfare to Ghana is so much more than going to Europe. More people would go if the prices were lower. \$1500-1600 is too much to for the average person. If you can pay \$1100-1200 or less like going to Europe, more people would go. I intend to go to Africa once a year. I would go two to three times a year if it was cheaper.</p>	
Baracha	No comments.	
Bebe	Oh, sure, I would go. I think there’d be a layover somewhere [in Europe].	
Brother X	<p>I would definitely consider it. I guess it’d be steamliner from some port in Newark, and Europe, and trying to head south, seek passage south, or working my way through Spain. So I guess we’d be dealing with boats...I mean, that’s how we got here, and as I mentioned that the air transportation is really like...it is the reverse phase of The Middle Passage. It’s just so much more convenient this way as opposed to being on the bottom of a boat, you know. I can’t even think of how hard it would be to get back home.</p> <p><i>That’s an interesting concept; I’ve never thought about that it as the reverse phase of The Middle Passage. Now, my picture may be different from yours, so help me see your picture. Middle Passage being sandwiched in as sardines today, economy class sandwiched in the air, is that what you’re seeing as your reverse passage? When I say reverse, it’s just a matter of a return home. Certainly, accommodations are far more comfortable this way, but you do have a good point. I have some notes</i></p>	

TABLE XIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Six
		If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?
Brother X (continued)	<p>from...my first trip over was when you went, and, I remember drawing a ship and the people were lined up, and I remember drawing a cabin of the aircraft and it had the people, the seating, I know that was scribbled into my journal, but, certainly accommodations of sardines on the way here...let's see on the way back, if you had to make a comparison, it would be day and night.</p> <p><i>I'm just trying to get a better understanding of what you meant by "reverse" of the Middle Passage – you mean, direction.</i> Historically, in my mind, the horrors of how we were dragged over here, so now going in the other direction, crossing back over was something that, I think the ancestors were putting that desire in me, but it was, actually a conscious decision to go home, and thank goodness it would be in the comfort of air flight, as opposed to...and, that was above water, above land, in the skies opposed to sea level at the bottom of the boat. We're the lucky ones, actually made it here, and those thousands of people that didn't make it to the shoreline, didn't make it to the boat, didn't make it thru Gorée, or Elmina, or Cape Coast.</p>	
Emy	<p>Yeah, I would still. It would be, you know, probably a longer trip because you would have to go to some European countries and take a flight from some European countries to Afrika. I would do that. In fact, when I went to...we had to go through to Italy before we went to, um, before we got to Afrika, we had to make a stop in Italy, and, then, sometimes what happens too is the flight on which the reservations were made, the airlines changes at the last minute and there has to be some kind of deviation. But, I would still go because as I said, it is still my favorite place to go.</p> <p><i>If there wasn't any air transportation available, would you still go?</i> Oh, yeah, I'd take a cruise. I would cruise again to some European country and get a flight from there.</p>	
Joe	<p>I would have to find a way. If there was a direct boat to Africa, I would have to find a way. If I had to travel by flight to another area and get on a boat or ship, I would get there.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>If I were not able to fly I would definitely have second thoughts about traveling by cruise ship as It would take several days to make the trans-Atlantic crossing.</p>	

TABLE XIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Six If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?
Makeba	I don't know, I can't really think of any other way. I can't swim so that would be out. I do not know of another mode of transportation to take except by boat, by ship and I am afraid of water. So...I don't know. I would have to think about it. Although now since I have been so many times, if there was no other way for me to get there I would probably just take my chances and get on the ship...because I enjoy it that much...I enjoy being over there that much, that I would probably take my chances on the ship. That would be a long ride...that's a journey to do that as opposed to 6 1/2 hours...it might take me a month to get there by ship. But at this point in my life, I would probably take it.	
Nursie	I guess we would have to stop and layover. I don't like those, when you go such a long distance, I prefer not to go through the layovers, I prefer to do the direct flights.	
Poochie	I would try to find a way of getting there. If there was no direct flight, I would take that under consideration, but I think I would still travel. <i>Do you have any idea what your travel routing would look like?</i> No, I do not.	
Tiye	I know there may be a cruise. That would be a little more time consuming, but if you have a need to go somewhere, and you really want to go, then you'll find the means.	
Toni	I would, probably, look into a cruise ship, a cruise ship. <i>So, why do you fly now versus a cruise ship?</i> It's faster. Flight wise, faster.	
Yaw	Through Europe to Afrika.	

Findings from Stereotypes and Cultural Perspectives

Interview Questions Seven

What were your expectations and how were they met?

TABLE XIV

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS
AND HOW WERE THEY MET?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Seven
		What were your expectations and how were they met?
Akosia	I tried to go with an open mind. I went there to learn about the culture and I did.	
Baracha	I expected to see folks who looked like me, my relatives, my neighbors, and my family and I did.	
Bebe	I don't know what my expectations were because I had never been there before—other than what I saw on TV.	
Brother X	My expectations were to be warmly received, to be comfortable reintroducing myself to the family, learning and experiencing traditional culture of our people, of our ancestors, and every one of those expectations was met at one time or another. <i>“They lied to us.” Who was the “they,” and what was “the lie?”</i> I would say educational system, Europeans here, whoever controls the media, negative depictions of the continent - it's all war, and famine, people starving, crime-ridden. I remember I had a family member who will remain nameless when I was leaving for the first trip, he said “don't get eaten.” I was, like, excuse me, he said “don't get eaten over there.” I was, like, whoa whoa. So many people would ask, I was working at NBC at the time, I had told a few of my co-workers that I was going and they were like “oh, you going on safari, are you going to see the animals?” No, I'm going to see the family, I haven't seen them in a while, just trying to reconnect, it's a family reunion.” They said “oh, you're from Africa?” I said “oh, yeah, absolutely.” So, they would leave it at that, and these aren't just Europeans Americans, they're African Americans. Some of the challenges are with my own family here, my own people. So we've got to continue to learn, we've got to continue to embrace the wisdom of the ancestors, and keep teaching and keep learning, and find creative ways to bring our culture, and history to our children and to our people. There's a lot of ignorance out here, and I think it's very clear to me why there's so much misinformation about the continent	
Emy	Well, I don't know that I really had any. My reason for going was curiosity, part of it, and, the other part was to be able to say that I've been to Afrika. I don't know that I really had any particular expectations of what it should be like. I go, you know, I'm not thinking it should be like this, this or this. I just go.	

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Seven What were your expectations and how were they met?
Joe	<p>Before going, I didn't know....when I got there, we got off the airplane and we were driving to the hotel. There was so much undeveloped land, there was so much building...so many buildings that were in ruin. Again, I didn't expect to see that right away, and, that was somewhat disappointing to me. Were my expectations met? I guess my expectations were not met. I just had to accept the fact that Africa is the way that it is and it has a lot to do with history, it has a lot to do with colonialization. It has a lot to do with people taking from Africa, and, not putting back into Africa. I, also, think it has a lot to do with even Africans themselves who live in Africa, sometimes, I think have a tendency to turn away from Africa and want to go outside of Africa to live elsewhere instead of going back to, and trying to build Africa up. It is what it is, and I have come to accept that.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>I really hadn't done any research on either Nigeria or Dakar prior to travel because I was traveling with friends who had prior experiences in those areas so I was not concerned. I was open to any new experiences that those two cultures would offer. If I am not concerned about safety issues I usually like to talk to the natives and learn through discussion and visiting museums and other institutions.</p>	
Makeba	<p>My expectations were...I guess TV versus reality. I expected to see the continent as it is portrayed in America by TV and I...after arriving there I found that there was a DIFFERENCE. It is not really like America portrays it. Because when I look at Africa on TV, I see a lot of poverty...and granted there is a lot of poverty there, but so is there a lot of poverty in America, also. But I found that there are people who are doing QUITE well there and then you have people who are not doing so well. Just like in America. It was just different for me. <i>What was different?</i> The way they are portrayed here in America. I found that was a little different than the way it really is there. The people seem to be... I guess...comfortable with what they are doing and how they live. Our standard of living is a lot different from theirs but...I don't know...I just conformed to their way and I found that it worked for me.</p>	
Nursie	<p>My expectations were...I really didn't have any expectations. I was eager to get there, happy to see it the way I saw it. Love the natural beauty of Africa, because I don't think there's a continent as beautiful as Africa anywhere. We only have seven continents, and, though, America is more modernized than any of the other continents, I think Africa has the beauty—the best beauty.</p>	

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Seven
		What were your expectations and how were they met?
Poochie	<p>I expected for Africa to be, like the huts, and what you see on TV. - Africans with all the war paint on, or just going wild. That's what I expected, but that's not what I saw. I saw people like me, and they were civilized. When I got there I expected to find uncivilized people, but I was wrong.</p>	
	<p><i>Where do you think you got that picture from? TV.</i></p>	
	<p>Surprised...the way they acted. The people that we met were very nice. They didn't act like, like they were wild. They acted like they were normal human beings, they're not what I was expecting to see.</p>	
Tiye	<p>My expectations, I have to think about it because...it seems that my expectations were met because I was welcomed, I was greeted, I was treated as if I was part of their family, like a long lost relative. That's what I was hoping for, I felt like it was a homecoming.</p>	
	<p>Had expected. Once we got there and I saw some of the buildings that weren't completed, and, like, it was just left because there wasn't enough money to continue to build up, and when I looked at the difference between how the city life was, and how the village life – my expectation was that the city life was going to be a little bit better than the village life, but it was opposite. I thought, in the village, that it was a little bit more...it was clean, it felt like home. It wasn't a big fancy building, but it was home. You could tell it was home. It seemed like in the city that the Africans that were in the city, they were displaced. Like it was hard for them to belong there, but the villagers, they belonged there, it was wholesome.</p>	
Toni	<p>Before leaving, all I imagine was seeing people. I didn't expect to see houses, pretty much like ours, other than the fact that they were cinderblock, but I expected to see a lot of, I would say jungle-type areas, wooded areas. I didn't expect to see as many cars on the road. I was under the impression that, you know, you always heard that Africa was rich in natural resources that the people were just torn down, there was nothing there, they had no means of, you know...survival was at a minimum. So, I didn't expect...what I saw was a surprise. I didn't expect to see as many cars there, you know, I thought people were just out and in the woods, here in America, now, they always show you the worse. Now, I'm starting to understand they are going to show you the worse because it's usually people that are half-clothed, running through woods, or carrying buckets and pails on their heads, and kids starving. You always saw these Feed The Children programs, they always show you the kids starving, their stomachs protruding, so that was...I was, you know surprised by what I did see once I arrived in Dakar.</p>	

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Seven What were your expectations and how were they met?
Toni (continued)	<p>Expectation...was not met, definitely, not. No, it was not.</p> <p>You know what, I had...there's so much I could tell you about that. I guess, initially, landing. I remember landing and we were in the airport there, we were trying to retrieve our luggage and I remember standing there saying to myself "what the heck am I doing here?" Because I was not used to seeing...I mean, here, it is such a large airport; there, the airport is so small. The manner in which you retrieve your luggage, it was just so different from being here in the States going to LaGuardia or Kennedy. So, that initial, that was a shock to me. Being in the airport, I just didn't know what to expect on my first visit, so...you know, I was standing there saying to myself "what am I doing here?"</p> <p>I got to see my people. I never thought I would ever take a trip like that, where I would see where my ancestors came from; where my people originated from. I just never expected to take a trip like that.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, the first thing – they say "Afrika, the jungle" so, I was surprised when I saw a lot of buildings and things like that. There were people, the people were very nice and welcomed us.</p> <p><i>So, you were expecting jungle, where did that come from?</i> From the movies that I had seen, Tarzan one night. It was like that, but, then I expected, well it changed my whole perspective on it, you know.</p> <p><i>Because?</i> There were no animals, no jungles.</p>	

Interview Question Eight

What surprised you and disappointed you?

TABLE XV

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES
TO WHAT SURPRISED YOU AND
DISAPPOINTED YOU?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Akosia	<p>I was disappointed in the western influence and a little surprised to see so much of it going on. It appeared a lot of them want to get away from everything African. Their hair is straightened, they use relaxer. Why</p>	

TABLE XV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Akosia (continued)	<p>don't we try to keep and maintain the braiding and the beautiful way we wear our hair? So many people bleach their skin, the dress is western clothes versus African dress. It is their prerogative, of course. It seems the dress of the women in Senegal which is so beautiful is traditional African. It was very disappointing seeing so much western influences.</p>	
Baracha	<p>I was surprised to see that the young women had hair straighter than I ever processed my hair in the United States and that the only women that were wearing natural hair...hair-dos were the very younger girls and the older women. I saw weaves and false fingernails; I mean it was just like being at home. I was expecting to see more women in traditional African attire than I actually saw. They were wearing clothes that I had left at home. I packed what I thought was my Afrocentric clothes and they were wearing the stuff I had left at home. <i>How did that make you feel?</i> Kinda strange because...I said wait a minute, I am in Africa, and they should be dressing like African, whatever that meant at the time. But that's the first thing that popped into my mind. OK. I am coming from New York, so I am dressed like a New Yorker trying to dress like an African and they are Africans trying to dress like New Yorkers. Yeah, it was kinda strange there for a while, until I realized that more African Americans have actually traveled over there and have influenced their style of dress and grooming.</p> <p><i>Do you think that that is the only place the influence came from?</i> No. I don't. Well, they watch TV, you know the baggy pants, the negative stereotypes of African Americans have been exported to Africa and they are emulating that...the young men and women are emulating that.</p> <p><i>What disappointed you?</i> I don't think I had any disappointments. I looked at everything as a new experience and just embraced it. I was not disappointed at all.</p>	
Bebe	<p>I don't think I was...if there was disappointment, it was disappointment on our end because of what we don't do for them. I wasn't disappointed by them because what could they do to disappoint me. I was in full concept of their rights and wondering how could people live like that. There's such a need there. Things that I see our kids, and what our kids get, and they appreciate one piece of food – a piece of gum – one stick of gum. They appreciate a piece of candy. They appreciate, give me a hug. It, also, surprised me how the village, the men, I remember one of the days that we went to and all of the women were around there working. They were taking firewood in, and cooking, and doing things, and, the men just sits around and do nothing, and it's the</p>	

TABLE XV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Bebe (continued)	<p>women that do all the work. That was a little surprising. The men gather on the roads and sit and talk all day, and it's the women.... Another thing I found surprising, how the women can walk from one village to another while we were on the bus and you could see, or you can't see where they're walking from and where they're walking to. It's so long and all they have on their feet are these shoes made of rubber tires from the car, and walking, sometimes, with babies on their back, and, maybe, carrying something on their head. They walk, and it's dry. I remember always wondering when I see them on the bus "where are they going, where did they come from?" because you don't see nothing – from yeah, all the way, you don't see nothing, where did they come from, where are they going?</p>	
Brother X	<p>What surprised me was the warmth of the people. I shouldn't have been surprised, but to be embraced, and I know part of it had to do with...we're returning home and they recognize that, they recognize....not only as a visitor, but as a family member. It's been very genuine. That, probably, surprised me the most, how comfortable and how trusting the people were, and that was pretty much across the board. What, also, surprised me is that there're certain communities that don't have, maybe all the communication infrastructure, but I saw a lot of cell phones.</p> <p>I saw a lot of, for lack of a better term, African American pop culture over there. I remember we were at the university in Dakar...and they called me over...there's something very important...we've talked...debated...this is something that's very serious "is Tupac still alive?" And, they were all looking at me for an answer. So, it's...as we learn, we are teaching; and, as we teach, we are learning. We think about how much we have to offer them, and I'm looking at how much they have to offer myself, and how much I don't know. There're certain aspects of our popular culture that we might not give as much weight to that certain international communities will embrace. And, it's a funny duality.</p>	
Emy	<p>I think I was a little surprised at the density of the population in the cities. I don't think I was disappointed in anything except, maybe, a little disappointed and saddened at the poverty level. Oh yes, I was disappointed that my Afrikan brothers and sisters were trying to imitate people in the U.S. Some of us here are trying to be more Afrikan, culturally and spiritually. However, on the other hand, I could see that there were a lot of good things going on there.</p> <p><i>How do you mean?</i> Well, the fact that the people there are engaged at</p>	

TABLE XV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Emy (continued)	<p>providing things of livelihood for themselves. I just found...it was interesting. It was also odd to me that so many people were selling things. On the other hand, there wasn't much money around. It's like...who's buying it, what are they selling, you know. If you have a million people selling stuff, and those million people are poor, who's buying it, you know. I still don't understand that, I have to figure that out. I guess I didn't give it much thought, but I just found that kind of peculiar. The good thing is that everybody is busy, everybody's trying to make a way for themselves. They're not sitting around feeling sorry for themselves.</p>	
Joe	<p>What surprised me, what disappointed me?. I think certain parts of Africa are experiencing colonialism, there's a lot of Chinese, Arabs, I sometimes have the impression that my African brothers can tolerate things more so, than I could. I think to a certain degree, even in their own country, they're considered...are treated like second class citizens to newly arrived Chinese, Japanese, Arabic people. That disappoints me to a certain degree. It may have a lot to do with our experiences are different. I was born in the United States, I know a little bit about the history of Africa, the enslavement of Africa and its people. When you go there, and you see Africans being treated with such disrespect, it harbors a lot of feelings inside me that...you don't want Africa to repeat that vicious cycle again – of slavery, of colonialization, that's what disappointed me a great deal.</p> <p><i>Were there any surprises?</i> Yes, there was a surprise. I was really surprised that a lot of...generally, Africans are hardworking people, and, they need the opportunity just like everyone else to thrive. A lot of the Africans own, I guess what would be considered, the open market. They're selling their goods, their masks, jewelry, on the streets, as if they're selling flea market items. To me, if Africa is going to build itself up, especially Senegal, you can't survive or build a nation on selling those types of goods. I mean, those types of goods are fine, maybe, in a market, in a marketplace, but to build a country up...Africa needs to start employing Africans to work in the stores. A lot of the stores are owned by Arabic people, Chinese people, and that's disheartening. Africa needs to...they need to employ their own, and they need to start building up their own nation. Everyone has to survive, and an individual can't survive on selling, so called, I guess it would be...market goods. It's hard to make a living like that. And, it seems that everyone is selling the same product, so it's, just, too much competition...too much competition. One person is selling masks, and, of course, 3000 persons are selling masks, so how could these people survive as individuals and support their</p>	

TABLE XV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Joe (continued)	families and thrive as a nation.	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>I was both surprised and disappointed that I advised that I should not walk about Dakar alone. I wanted to go about the market alone to look for batik, however, on the advice of the group leader it was suggested that we travel and pay for escorts whenever we left the hotel.</p> <p>I was also disappointed with the constant barrage of vendors, wherever we went, trying to sell us their trinkets.</p>	
Makeba	<p>I use to work for the airline, and I never got a chance to go to Africa. And friends of mine that had gone, one of the first things they told me was that the people were not very friendly towards Americans. So I was surprised when I got there to find that they welcomed us with opened arms. They were friendly; they were helpful, and everything just went so nicely with them. I just could not believe how nice they were to us...and still are.</p> <p><i>Was the ancestry of your co-workers you mentioned African?</i> Yes, and some were caucasian and what I found was the complete opposite. That was a surprise.</p> <p>My only disappointment is...and I still have a problem with it is...when I go to Gorée and I see...caucasians laying around...NUDE. That bothers me. It disappoints me to see that the natives even allow that. Because to me that is like sacred land and to see it DISRESPECTED like that is a BIG Disappointment to me. <i>What control do you believe that the native people have over that?</i> I really don't think they have much control over it. Because that is tourism that is coming to them...and they are bringing...that is tourism...I don't know...I guess they just accept it. But me...going over on a pilgrimage...it is UPSETTING to me to see them lying out there...like that. But I really don't think the natives have...they probably don't even see it in the same light as me...you know...they probably not even looking at it like I look at it.</p> <p><i>If you could do something about it, what would that be?</i> I would go out there and cover ever one of them...even if it was with sand. I would cover them up. <i>Have you ever visited/spoken with any of them about it?</i> No, I have never said anything...I have wanted to.</p>	
Nursie	Well, the disappointment was the poverty of the people. The surprise was the beauty of the continent.	
Poochie	Surprised me – the way they acted. The people that we met were very nice. They didn't act like, like they were wild. They acted like they were normal human beings; they're not what I was expecting to see.	

TABLE XV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Eight What surprised you and disappointed you?
Poochie (continued)	<i>What disappointed you?</i> The slave dungeons. Just to know that my ancestors were treated so bad, and they were put through all of that torture and hatred.	
Tiye	What surprised me was how some of the people had to survive selling the same goods. Some of the people were selling the same exact thing, how many statues can I really bring home of the same thing. How many waist beads can I bring home? So, that was kind of surprising, so many people selling the same thing, and you wonder how could they survive selling the same goods. Disappointing? It was like the buildings were partially done, and they did not have someone pick up their trash, that was disappointing. Even when I went to the university I was happy to see my brothers and sisters getting an education, but the trash that was lying around was disappointing seeing that.	
Tiye (continued)		
Toni	Seeing that people weren't doing as bad as we were sometimes told, or sometimes what I would see on T.V. I know there are a lot of bad areas, I know the people are hungry, and in need of things, but, we have that right here in America, but it wasn't as bad as I thought. <i>Did anything disappoint you?</i> Did anything disappoint me?. Yes, there was some disappointment there. What I was disappointed with is that we have so many professionals here in the United States with money, and, yet, I see so many Caucasians in Africa investing in the property and the land. And, I see them over there smiling and laughing, and I know they're not there, they don't mean them people any good, they're there to get what they can get. I'm disappointed at some of the black brothers and sisters, I guess, I would say.	
Yaw	A lot of vendors. Everybody had something to sell, from the biggest kid to the littlest kid had something to sell...nothing but a toothbrush to sell you, to give you, you know, sell you. <i>Was there anything that you found disappointing?</i> The poverty.	

Interview Question Nine

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

TABLE XVI

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO WHY
WOULD YOU CONSIDER ANOTHER VISIT
GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Nine
	Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?	
Akosia	<p>Africa is a part of me. I could never conceive of not wanting to go there. I feel at home there, they are my people, they are my family, I am very much comfortable there. I do not have to...as compared to Europe. Europe was fine but it was not like being in Africa. I can identify in Africa. Even the music....I know INSTINCTIVELY this is my home, the beat, the music; I am in time with the rhythm.</p> <p>It's me, it is just the place, and this is the time where I don't have to think about "I am Black." You know you are Black-so what. Here you have to worry about what you.... When I go my blood pressure goes down, I don't have any aches, all my pains go away. I sleep better. But when I get back home the aches and pains return. There I did not have any air conditioning, and I did not complain; it did not bother me at all, I only had a little fan. I slept very well. My body works well there. I believe you just described HOME.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Oh there's...I went twice...for example...I went to Gorée Island twice. My reaction the second time was very different from my reaction the first time. And I CAN'T IMAGE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN THE NEXT TIME I make that pilgrimage. It's a spiritual pilgrimage and I look upon it as so. And no matter where I or what other county I go to in Africa I will always make it my business to make that pilgrimage to Gorée Island to sign the book as a returning descendent. And I have pictures of me doing that.</p>	
Bebe	<p>Oh, definitely, without a doubt. <i>Why?</i> Just because of my love for going.</p>	
Brother X	<p>Oh, yeah, we're going home. We are going home.</p>	
Emy	<p>I'd find the opportunity. As I said, I love going there. I try to go there at least once a year. I would go more often if I could. <i>Your primary reason for that is because?</i> Is to learn about the various countries there. When I'm going there, I do research on the country itself, the population, the industry, the government, how the government is set up, their independence – when they gained their independence, and how it's been since their independence. I try to learn something about the various cultures – and, how they're all related even though they're in different countries.</p>	

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Nine
		Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?
Joe	I would consider another visit to see where I could help. How I could give aid. I think the trip to Africa has opened my eyes to maybe getting involved on some type of level because, for me, the bigger picture is no longer about me, it's about what I can, actually, do for others.	
Loss of Mother's love	Yes. Currently looking into meeting up with my African American friend in Mali.	
Makeba	I love it. I go over there to reconnect. Because I want to always remember that this is where my forefathers came from and I do not want to ever forget that. So, there is a sense of connection when I go over...each year...two or three times a year. I reconnect every time I go	
Nursie	I would consider another visit only because it is so beautiful, and the people, even though they're limited in resources, they're very knowledgeable in regards to culture. And, they're steadfast in their beliefs.	
Poochie	<p>Just to go back to...I would love to go to another part of Africa, to experience different parts of Africa, and to see different parts of Africa. If...I would go back to the same place. I enjoyed it, I really did.</p> <p><i>So, when you go back to another place, are you looking for...what would be your expectations?</i> My expectation now would be....people are civilized, people are living modern in Africa, they're not like what is portrayed on T.V. in the most parts. People there are very friendly, very nice, very outgoing, and, I guess I would expect the same thing that...I'd expect the same thing I saw the first time I went there.</p>	
Tiye	<p>As I said before the scholarship fund, and to give back, that's my main focus, to give back to Africa.</p> <p><i>What would that look like to somebody who doesn't have a clue? What do you mean when you say "give back?"</i> When I say "give back" to me that means being that my ancestors were brought here through slavery, I still have that connection. I think that's something that my ancestors would want me to do, to reconnect, to bring a part of myself as a gift to them saying that I care. Giving back, to me, means "I care." I care about you, I care about your well-being, even though I wasn't brought up in Africa, I still care. Whatever I can do to uplift and to help out, this is what I can do, this is for you.</p>	

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Nine Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?
Toni	Because every time I go I learn something new, I see something new, I see something different. The people there are just so homey. I just like being there, I just feel so relaxed when I'm there, probably because I don't have to make up my bed. I don't have to do anything.	
Yaw	Because it's my home, Afrika is my home – the Motherland.	

Interview Question Ten

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

TABLE XVII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
ARE YOU LOOKING AT THE AFRICAN
CONTINENT AS HOME?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Ten Are you looking at the African continent as home?
Akosia	Yes! Africa is home. I want to build a house in Ghana, plans are in process. I would like to leave that house as a legacy for my children and grandchildren. Some friends of mine have already purchased the land and their home is in construction.	
Baracha	It's my ancestral home. I know that now.	
Bebe	No.	
Brother X	Oh, yes.	
Emy	I do, yes.	
Joe	Yes, actually, I've considered possibly moving to it. Maybe, somewhere down the line, having a home in Africa, a place that I can, actually, go back and visit, and, actually, call my little part of Africa, my piece of Africa.	
Loss of Mother's love	Definitely not.	

TABLE XVII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question Ten Are you looking at the African continent as home?
Makeba	Yes. I live in America, but that is my home. Africa is my home	
Nursie	Yes. I look at the African continent as home, but I don't know my origin. I don't know from whence I came. I don't know if I'm a member of what tribe, what section of Africa, and, I think, that's what puzzles me the most.	
Poochie	Yes...well, no, not to live. I don't know if I could live there. I would have to give up too much modernization here, to go there to live.	
Tiye	<p>If I had the opportunity, most definitely, if I could. Which people say a vacation home, but I don't think I could stay there because my roots are still here. Financially, I wouldn't be able to pick up and leave. I'd have to use it as my vacation home; I couldn't use it as home until retirement or something like that because I have my career and everything here. I'm taking that from a physical sense, home, in the physical sense.</p> <p><i>What about home in any other kind of sense outside of physical? Where are your ancestral roots?</i> Prior to slavery Africa, they were brought to North Carolina and South Carolina. My family hasn't done the genealogy to see where we're from in Africa, so I just consider Africa, the continent, my home.</p> <p><i>Okay, that's the first question. So, the African continent is home.</i> Home. Yes.</p>	
Toni	Home as....when you say home, to live there one day permanently, or...it's my home. <i>You tell me.</i> It's my home. Would I like to live there? I would like to retire and spend four, five, maybe six months out of a year there, yes.	
Yaw	<p><i>Can you give me – explain to me a little bit about what you mean “going home to the Motherland.” So, you're looking at the Afrikan continent as home?</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>What does that mean?</i> It means that my ancestors come from Afrika.</p>	

Interview Question 11

Where are your ancestral roots?

TABLE XVIII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
WHERE ARE YOUR ANCESTRAL ROOTS?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 11 Where are your ancestral roots?
Akosia	My roots are most likely West Africa. I have no plans to have any DNA testing completed. I do not need proof in writing by someone else that Africa is my motherland. I KNOW it is my home.	
Baracha	<p>Because last year I had my mitochondrial DNA tested. And today December 25, I know that the genetic markers in my DNA are the same as the Balanta people living in Guinea Bissau, the Mende people living in Sierra Leone, and the Kru people living in Liberia, all on the West Coast of Africa are my relatives.</p> <p><i>When did you get that?</i> I met a man a year ago Kwanzaa. And he went through the experience and he gave me the information, and I sat on that information for three or four months. I wanted to do.... It's just like making the decision to go to Africa. It's something you wanted to do and for some reason...no, I've got to think about it, got to think about it. And I had it on my desk...then I said that's it. I had the package, I had sent my...I had paid for it. I hadn't swabbed my mouth...it took about three months for me to finally swab my mouth. And I just sat there and said today is the day. Mentally, I'm ready...I've got to know. And I did it. That was the longest six weeks of my life.</p> <p>And when the envelope came there was a certificate telling me about these "hints." Of course a lot of it was very technical and I didn't understand...but I did understand that I have genetically matched relatives in three countries in Africa. and I don't care what I look like today because I know I was homogenized along the way but don't you ever say I ain't African because <u>I know</u> I am, and I wear my African hat proudly. I love it. I made that connection.</p>	
Bebe	My family is from Portugal.	
Brother X	That's where Dad's DNA was a match for the Yoruba people, and Mom's match is for the Ga people from Accra.	
Emy	<p><i>Any significant research that you've done in Senegal with the Mandinka based on the DNA perspective?</i> No. When I got the notice, I did go on the internet to do some, to look it up, to see where they are, the areas that they were in – the Mandinka, as well as, the Balanta. Once in a while, I'll take a look on the internet. I haven't really gathered any information, but I think before my next trip, I will make some notes before I go.</p>	

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 11 Where are your ancestral roots?
Emy (continued)	<p><i>Will you try to do some genealogical research there?</i> I doubt it. I don't know that I'll have the time because, again, you know, I travel with a group, but I'll see what I can learn. My hope is to be able to meet someone from those tribes to let them know that my ancestors are, also, from that tribe.</p> <p><i>That is so exciting. You could be talking to a relative.</i> That's right. Yes.</p>	
Joe	<p>My family is, actually, from Jamaica, Montego Bay. That's my Mother's side of the family, and my Father's side is from the south. <i>Here in the States?</i> Here in the States, yes.</p> <p><i>As far as you know, do they have any idea of their ancestral roots?</i> Yes, my Mother, yes. Going back to...I think she knows as much as her Mother knows, and that's that they came from Jamaica; but, as far as being able to pinpoint a particular region in Africa, no.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>I can trace my maternal ancestors back to two - three generations in slavery in Virginia and Tennessee. My paternal ancestors can only be traced two generations and were located in South and North Carolina.</p>	
Makeba	<p>I am not sure. But I will know in 2008.</p>	
Nursie	<p>I don't know.</p>	
Poochie	<p>I really don't know.</p>	
Tiye	<p>Prior to slavery Africa, they were brought to North Carolina and South Carolina. My family hasn't done the genealogy to see where we're from in Africa, so I just consider Africa, the continent, my home. <i>Then your ancestral roots...is Africa, but your heritage, as far as, you can get back in natural knowledge is North Carolina, South Carolina.</i> Yes.</p>	
Toni	<p>No, I don't.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, my Grandmother, my Father's side, she looked Afrikan from pictures I saw and from knowing her in person, she looked Afrikan – Father's side. Mother's side, she looked Afrikan too, but I had my DNA checked, it told me something different. It said that I was from Spain, Hungry and Belgium – that was on my Father's side. My sisters have to check my Mother's side.</p> <p><i>What does all of that mean to you?</i> It means that my sisters have to check their DNA, you know, but I still feel like I'm an Afrikan - from the blood.</p>	

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 11 Where are your ancestral roots?
Yaw (continued)	<p>My ancestors from my Father's side are from Spain, Hungary, and Belgium. My mother's side, I know it's going to be different – hoping and praying it's going to be different.</p> <p><i>When do you think...your expectations for your Mother's side, you've kind of formed some expectations for the ancestral side on your Mother's side. If it doesn't meet your expectations, what will happen? I'm still Afrikan.</i></p>	

Interview Question 12

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

TABLE XIX

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
HAVING BEEN THERE, WHAT DOES
AFRICA MEAN TO YOU?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Akosia	<p>Africa is by all means my home as I said most likely West Africa. A special love. I feel Africa is the place where I can go to wind down and get away from everything. I can go there and the pace is slowed down and I can just relax and be ME. I can go there and relax much more so than here. It is home.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Well having actually seen with my own eyes what I saw...I readily recognize the stereotypes and I just absolutely dismiss it. It's sad...I saw some very sad things, but overall, I am glad I went, I plan to go back many times, God willing, I will go back many times and I have great anticipation about going, touching, feeling, eating, smelling, hugging, listening to MY PEOPLE! I don't have to understand what they are saying...but they are smiling...their body language is friendly and I FEEL AT HOME!</p>	
Bebe	<p>Beautiful people.</p>	

TABLE XIX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12
		Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Brother X	Africa's home. And, it's such a powerful influence, and it's helped to define my purpose in life. Actually, having a chance to cross the waters, and it really up'd the bar in terms of what my cultural focus, my motivations for study, and to find creative ways to reconnect and build bridges with our people at home.
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Emy	Afrika means that, you know, as we say "we're Afrikans living in American" to say that really means that I consider Afrika as my homeland. I was born here in America, as well as, my immediate ancestors, but America is not a homeland. From my perspective America is not a homeland for Afrikans.
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How did you come to that? Well, when I look at what goes on here in America, all the rules, or the majority of the rules and regulations, and bills that are passed are things that hamper the opportunities of Afrikans here in America. For instance, the voting rights bill. When you have others coming to this country, they become citizens, right away they have voting rights. There's no bill to say that they have to be, it has to be approved for them to be able to vote for the next 20 or 25 years, you know. They used us, we were enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights. We have none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, anything that we get or acquire requires a fight.

And, there it's different? In Afrika? In Afrika, it's different in that you're in Afrika, and you have Afrikans in charge, and the hope is that because you have Afrikans in charge they will be more inclined to work for the benefit of Afrikans than "non" Afrikans. What I see in Afrika, which is saddening to me, is you have Europeans and Asians going into Afrika to secure the resources...for their own benefits and their only benefits and theirs only. The US wants to go there now to set up military bases in Afrika. No, they should not go there. They have no business setting up a military base in Afrika because once they do that, they'll start moving to other areas and take over. I think the Afrikans there should be allowed, left alone to do what they need to do for Afrika.

We got to this because it was about "homeland." That Afrika is viewed as homeland, and America is not homeland, and that was some of the reasoning why? You feel that Afrika is really homeland, did I restate that right? Yes.

Joe	To me Africa is considered to be home, is considered to be...it was the cradle of civilization. I always will have a connection to Africa. I remember my Uncle made a point, if you take a German Shepherd...if a
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TABLE XIX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Joe (continued)	<p>German Shepherd is born in America, that dog is still considered to be a “German” Shepherd, it is not an American Shepherd. Even though I’m displaced, I will always have an attachment to Africa.</p> <p><i>Viewing Africa as the cradle of civilization, and you’re considering it as home, based on the fact that it’s the cradle of civilization, how do you define home, what do you mean by home?</i> A place that I can go and feel a connection with a group of people, whether it be spiritually, culturally...a place where I can, actually, go to feel a connection with my ancestors. Being here in America, I’ve been through so many misconceptions about Africa, and some spirituality, I want to be amongst people that I feel connected to.</p>	
Loss of Mother’s love	<p>Africa is the place from which my ancestors were stolen or sold into slavery.</p>	
Makeba	<p>That's kinda hard to answer. As I stated before, I consider Africa my home and...To me it is like a pilgrimage that I take each year...I am going to spread out a little bit this year and go to some other places other than Africa. But I do have that need to learn as much about Africa as I can and as I can afford to do so. I don't know...just...Africa just means a LOT to me...and I just can not express...It is very hard for me to express what it means to me...but I do consider it my home.</p>	
Nursie	<p>Africa means – it means a lot. It means, hopefully, getting to find out where my ancestral origin is. Just knowing, becoming more acquainted with the different parts of Africa because Africa is very vast, getting to know the different types of people. I think that’s basically it, getting to know the people, and being of some assistance if I can.</p>	
Poochie	<p>It means a lot, because I really wanted to go there, and I wanted the experience of seeing how people live. It just meant so much just to go, and to see how Africans live there, and seeing the places where my ancestors were mistreated.</p> <p><i>When you say “it means a lot” how can I write that? What does “means a lot” mean?</i> It meant...I was just, very happy, and, just, very, very glad to be able to go, and to see how other people lived in Africa.</p>	
Tiye	<p>Africa is the foundation for my spirituality. I can see where I get that spirit from because you see it in the African people. You see that wholesomeness; you see that politeness, so it means my whole being, my life.</p>	

TABLE XIX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 12 Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?
Toni	<p>It means so much to me. I've been able to...I think it has made me a stronger person as....when I say that....it has made me change the way I look at people. I'm really stuck here. Hope, joy, why am I so stuck.</p> <p><i>You're not stuck, just say what you think, what you feel. You said something earlier that talked about home, or family...Motherland...you felt relaxed...</i> Right, I felt relaxed. You know what, when I'm there, I become very relaxed; I don't fear anyone robbing me. I'm not afraid. I walk out to the street, even at night; I get up sometimes and walk out. I don't know, I feel safer there.</p> <p><i>Is comfortable, would that be the word?</i> Comfortable, yes. I would say, comfortable, yes.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, it's a place that I go to visit, where people who accept me for what I am. First country that I've really known that was run by blacks, all black – black President, black Mayor, more into my roots, you know, what I'm into.</p> <p><i>What was that first country?</i> Senegal.</p>	

Interview Question 13

How did you communicate?

TABLE XX

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES
TO HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 13 How did you communicate?
Akosia	A lot of the people spoke English.	
Baracha	With a smile, open arms, and positive body language. I don't speak French, I didn't speak any of the native dialects but somehow or other... when I spoke slowly in English and signed as to what I want I made myself understood	
Bebe	Well, our guide, well, we had orientation. There were certain words that are used there as yes, no, thank you, and how much, all of that – which I don't remember all of that now, but there were certain words and phrases that he gave us that became quite useful. And, then, while you're there you learn to pick up certain things because you hear it said so many	

TABLE XX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 13 How did you communicate?
Bebe (continued)	times. Either if it's not among the people of Africa, it's among your group that's if the well traveled people of Africa know, and will teach you. So you could....and, then, a lot of them spoke English too.	
Brother X	With the people there? I have a cousin who...taught me that if I ever went somewhere I write down...maybe 10 questions, and 10 conversational statements. He told me to write them on the left side of your column [when you arrive] you ask them how to say that statement or how to state that question in their native tongue. He said "write it down phonetically...write it down the way you hear it." I was able to...I wasn't able to have a full conversation, but I was able to make a connection, ask someone their name, be able to say my name to them, [give]...the traditional greetings/replies—good morning and thank you. I think we're the only dummies in the African family—they all speak four, five, six languages...we barely [speak English].	
Emy	Well, with English, you know, sometimes you learn a few words, few local words, a few important words that you need to get your points across. You have to learn the currency, and what it's called, and how to count it; and, then depending on the areas that you're in, you get a list from the locals there will share the language with you on how to communicate. And, for the most part they speak English. So, that helps a lot.	
Joe	As soon as we got there, there were some individuals that, actually, speak English. <i>And, were those the only people that you had to communicate with?</i> No, if I needed to speak to someone that, that spoke a different African dialect, we'd find an interpreter.	
Loss of Mother's love	In Nigeria they speak English quite well and in Dakar, we traveled with escorts who translated. There were also some who I came in contact with that did speak some English.	
Makeba	Sign language. My own made up sign language. And it was surprising. They understood. I learned a few words in Wolof, and a few words in French, the rest in English. I just kept saying it until I got it over to them, motioning, signing, doing all kinds of things. I did what ever it took for me to get them to understand me.	

TABLE XX (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 13 How did you communicate?
Nursie	<p>It's not hard to communicate because most Africans learn, start to learn English when they're in the fourth grade no matter what part of the continent you go, they learn English in school at a certain level, so they're able to communicate, and they try hard to learn as much English as they can.</p>	
Poochie	<p>Not everyone spoke English; you could talk enough to them for them to understand you, and for you to understand them.</p>	
Tiye	<p>English, a lot of people that we met spoke English. <i>Was it always convenient speaking English, could you get full understanding and full meaning across to the people that you were speaking with? And, did you only speak with people who spoke English?</i> Well, the people that were on the tour spoke English fluently, so I could get what I needed across. When we went to the village, I don't know if the Chief spoke, I know he spoke some English, but I don't know if it was fluent. We didn't have that much dialog, but, I know his children were fluent in English, and you could get your needs and wants met because they spoke fluent English. <i>So, then, through translations of others, and...interact[ion] with people on the continent, the primary way of communication was still English or sign language?</i> English and body language. When you're giving someone something, you could tell, the expression on their face showed gratitude, they were thanking you. So, yeah, body language.</p>	
Toni	<p>I had a book...I have a book with Wolof in it, so plus using some of them speak both English and Wolof through an interpreter, pointing. <i>Body language...?</i> Exactly body language, that's right.</p>	
Yaw	<p>The Afrikans in Senegal, they communicated with me because they spoke English. I would listen to their words, some of their words, they would say to me and I picked up a little bit, not very much, but, you know, I knew what they were saying by their gestures, by their hand gestures and stuff like that. <i>So, it was not difficult to communicate, to do the things you needed to do?</i> No.</p>	

Interview Question 14

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

TABLE XXI

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
WHAT/WHO DID YOU RECOGNIZE?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Akosia	<p>I saw people who looked like many of my relatives. Their actions were much like mine and many people I know. Family was very important there and this is still the case with my family. We share many of the values of the people. Hand and body movement all were familiar. The way we talk; we might be a little louder than African people. They have a quite politeness. We are each open, we travel with music; we all are a very social people.</p>	
Baracha	<p>The scary thing...I am walking down the street and I knew that my mother-in-law died five years ago and I swore this was Margarita walking down the street. And I just stopped dead in my tracks and I stared at the woman so bad I had to apologize. Fortunately she did understand English and I explained what was going on. And she said don't be surprised you are probably going to see other people that you recognize. It was absolutely uncanny. I saw people that look like people in my own family, neighbors...THEY ARE ME...I AM THEM...IT WAS LIKE WALKING DOWN THE STREET IN ANY URBAN SETTING WHERE A LOT OF BLACK FOLKS ARE.</p> <p><i>Anything else you recognize, sayings, actions?</i> A lot of things were mimics, not necessarily positive things, especially the young people...that they see on TV...the body language...the "Yo"...but they were talking to each other. But I saw that...I left that at home...I guess I wanted to see something more African.</p> <p><i>What I am asking is things that you know from here [America] that may not have a today connotation...but things from maybe your mother or some elder person that they did that took on a meaning after you saw that same kind of thing when in Africa.</i> It even goes more personal than that. Several years ago I started a business—recycling cardboard. Using things that I found to make something brand new. When I saw a young man on Gorée Island with a rusty nail and a rock hitting another rock to carve a figure I said this is the art of "Make-Do." He took what he found and he is making a piece of art. Subsequently I asked if I could photograph him doing it, I told him I was buying it, and I wanted to take a picture with him. I took those three pictures the first trip. When I went back the second time, three years later, there he was and I took copies of the pictures for him, and I showed him that Owl on my mantle piece, in my house, in Queens County, New York City, USA,...tears...he had tears. Because it was in a place of honor with his picture on my mantle.</p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Bebe	<p>Everyday, walk around, with two eyes, and a nose, and a mouth, and ears, and some have short hair, long hair, light skinned, dark skinned, like us. It's funny that some people that are, maybe, Caucasian or something, they say, you know, you think because it's Africa – oh, they're like monkeys running around in the jungle, and, so you know, well, I guess, maybe, I don't know that there are some who are traditional, tribal, or in villages, that walk around half naked, or if that's because that is their custom. But, basically, we see that they're a person too.</p> <p><i>Were there any things that you saw here that you saw there too? Traditions, or customs, or sayings, or...?</i> Probably their traditions would be a lot different than ours. I think that when we get here, even though, say somebody was African, and, they basically, I think they try to keep their traditions here, but, after a while, our American ways come in, and they kind of change up, so it would be a change, but basically, it's about the same. We have traditions, they have traditions. Different things that we do, I think that's with any group of people.</p>	
Brother X	<p>In terms of the people we interacted with? <i>In terms of your visits to West Africa, did you recognize somebody, or did you see things that you knew based on something that happened here, and, now, it may take on some historical meaning or some historical content or....</i> Sure. There were any number of times. I saw people that resembled family members, I saw people that resembled classmates, people that grew up in my community, and I would do a double take. I remember there was a brother that I saw, I might even have a picture of him, when I looked at him, I thought James Small, I looked at him, and he looked like James. I saw my brother Eddie. I'm walking, and I'm looking at him and he's looking at me, and I've had, not only have I recognized them, I've had people recognize me. As I mentioned, there are times, a period of time, when I'd go without combing my hair or whatever, and brother, and my wife is always on me, and my daughter always gets a kick about my clothes not matching, and a brother asked me if I was Biafar, he asked me if I was Biafar. I was like, at first, I didn't understand what he was saying, I was, like, I had to laugh. So, not only are we recognizing them, they're recognizing us. In terms of Africanisms, I'm always in search of indigenous situations here that reflect home; whether it's instruments or...I remember, many years ago, in my wine drinking with the boys days, I remember someone opening a bottle or somehow, and someone saying "what are you doing", and he'd say "well, this is for when the brothers are not here." Even in a street sense, there was a real authentic</p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Brother X (continued)	<p>African tradition whether we knew it or not. I remember a couple of brothers complaining “that’s for them that are not here, but not so much.” It goes both ways, you can be over there and recognize something that you would think originated at home, but that’s definitely the source. We’re just a reflection of who we are on the continental side. Sometimes the reflection that we give isn’t the greatest, but if you go home and you dig deep enough, it’s pure and it is very beautiful, it’s very giving.</p>	
Emy	<p>I could see, when I go there [Afrika]...I could see the direct link to what’s...here [America]. How my life has been as an Afrikan here, some things my family, my relatives, my Grandmother, my Great Grandmother does. For instance, when I was a young girl, my mother used to wear cowery shell earrings, and I used to ask her where she would get them from. She told me where she got them, right now I don’t remember where she got them, but they were so different, and she was so proud to wear them. I’m not really sure she understood where they came from, but she was proud that she wore them, and I never really learned where they came from until I started to learn about Afrika as an adult. Some of the things that are said, as a child, some things that are said to you are said in Afrika, right now I can’t think of any exactly, but I can remember that some of the things that were said to me when I was a child are things that I hear in Afrika, and it’s like, “oh, that’s where that came from.”</p> <p>Yes, I think we did [recognize...] because you go there, you know, you see your cousins, your aunts, your uncles, your brothers, and your sisters, your neighbors. You also see that most people are busy making a life for themselves, raising families, getting an education being the best that they can be.</p> <p><i>How does that make you feel?</i> It feels great! I remember once when, and my husband will probably talk about this. We were at - we were visiting with a king. The king thought that one of the men and his group was the uncle to my husband, because my husband looked so much like this person there. And, we all got a good laugh from it, but it’s true you see people there who look they’re your relatives or your friends. I think they share the same values that we do – that we’re all here to do good, and we should do good; the same that I am my brother’s and sister’s keeper is not just words, these are things that we should do.</p>	
Joe	<p>Since I’ve, actually, had the opportunity to do a little bit of research before going to Africa, I did some research on Senegal, and prior to that, doing my own independent reading about Kemet - Egypt, there’s a Professor by the name of Cheikh Anta Diop, who was a Professor at the University of Dakar [in 1987 name was changed to University Cheikh</p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Joe (continued)	<p>Anta Diop to honor the Senegalese scholar] in Senegal. We actually...when I was in Africa we, actually, had the opportunity to visit the university because I wanted to see exactly where this man did his work, where he did his research. So, we actually traveled to the university to talk to a couple of the professors and to see what the university looked like. To me that was a recognizable feature for me, because I've always read a little bit...I've read some information in regards to the type of work that Cheikh Anta Diop had did, and I just wanted to make that connection.</p> <p><i>Was there anything else that you could recognize?</i> Africans are very spiritual people. It seems as if they spend a lot of adoration to the one most high. That is a very important value, and, to me, you should give adoration to the one most high. That's our purpose of being here, we're supposed to be in adoration. It seems they are constantly in adoration.</p> <p><i>While there, did you see anybody that you thought you knew from here?</i> Yes, and many times I did. The facial features are very, very similar to a lot of black Americans here. Even though they are on another side of the world, you would think that so many, we'd have so many differences, but, there are so many similarities.</p> <p>One thing that I did recognize is that African men hold their women up with great respect. Here in the states, when men are walking down the street, they see women, they turn around, and they cat-call, and they, try to pick women up, and, sometimes, it's very disrespectful. But, when I went to Africa there was nothing like that, and it really surprised me because...again, maybe it was a preconceived idea, but...you hear a lot in the news how black men treat black women, and, I guess, when I was going there I was thinking it was going to be the same thing, and it's not. They're very respectful to their women. When engaging or walking down the street, they don't turn around to try to pick women up, or solicit certain things. It's really just a different type of attitude, and that kind of...I was really surprised, very surprised. I was really happy to see that. I think, in general, we have a lot to learn from each other.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>Hummm, Ummm, I don't know that I did recognize any.</p>	
Makeba	<p>I recognized...a very good friend of mine here...When we (a friend who accompanied me on the trip) walked into the hotel, I saw this guy that worked in the hotel, I looked at him and I looked at my friend and I said to her look at the gentlemen behind the desk, "Who does he remind you of?" And she said the exact same person I was thinking of. He</p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Makeba (continued)	<p>looked exactly like my friend from home, so much so that I took his picture. When I came back to America I showed the picture to my friend who said “My God, he looks exactly like my brother.” There, I was told a lot that I reminded them of their aunt, their sister, their cousin, someone. Who knows...maybe we are related, you never know. But you always see someone over there that reminds you of someone in America. And that has been my experience each time that I have gone. I have always seen someone that reminds me in some way of someone here. Even the food, I may not know the name in Wolof or what they call it over there but it is very similar to our food here. Or food that I have eaten from the Caribbean, which is that green stuff. They call it...in the islands they call it callaloo...it look just like something that they prepare over there. They do not call it callaloo but when you taste it that is what it is. It is similar to our collard greens, but not quite, it is a little different than our collard greens but very similar to callaloo.</p>	
Nursie	<p>Everything. I didn’t recognize it, but I became acquainted with it. Everything. Well, when we were in South Africa...are we mainly focusing on West Africa? <i>West Africa</i>. Well, I read about the slave trade and going to Gorée Island and seeing the dungeons. I didn’t know that it was just that big, but I recognized that from reading about the slave trade. Nothing else.</p> <p><i>Let’s go back to that a minute. In terms of “what did you recognize” ...did you see anybody in Africa that you’ve seen in America...? Oh, yeah, because I hang out in Harlem sometimes, you have the Senegalese people in Harlem, so I recognized a lot of them. You get to know the difference between being Senegalese or from Mali or from Cameroon or Nigeria, so, you know, because New York is a melting pot, you see a lot of them in different parts of New York.</i></p> <p><i>Do you know any African American people who remind you of African people? In some aspects, yes. Yeah, they remind me. Yeah.</i></p> <p><i>Were any kinds of values or sayings or principles that you know from here, that may have been rooted in Africa...? No, not really, because, no</i></p>	
Poochie	<p>I recognized that, well...I had my two nephews with me, and when I went to chastise them, the people there didn’t chastise their children the way we did. The men there took the boys and they talked to them, and they kept them with them. I didn’t have to worry about them. They were very calm with these gentlemen. They were....they knew how to treat them, they knew how to talk to them to make them feel like they were wanted and needed there.</p> <p><i>Are you kind of saying, implying, that the men raise the children</i></p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Poochie (continued)	<p><i>versus the mother raising the children?</i> No, I feel that the mother has played a part, but the men played a bigger part in the raising of the kids.</p>	
Tiye	<p>Some people when you look at them, they look like they could be in your family. But, another thing that's, probably.... It's related to the question, but, not, exactly what you're saying....the beautiful colors. It was just the darkest of dark, my boyfriend that I'm with, I always saw him as dark, and I always loved the color, but, then when I saw darker, I was, just, in love. It was just...I could not believe it. I said The Creator made that, and it was so beautiful, and you don't see that here, but it's in abundance over there. It is so beautiful – the dark lips, the dark color, the smoothness of the skin, we're blessed.</p> <p><i>Any other thing that you noticed?</i> They're very polite. They're very, when you give a gift, their gratitude, they're gracious. It's a beautiful thing to see. Being here, it's a different thing to see, I guess because we have so much, and they have so much too, because they have their homes and their families. They can go in and be accepted, and they can walk around and not have to worry about looking over their shoulder in the market wondering if the owner thinks you're going to take something. That's a constant thing on my mind, but they don't have to look over their shoulder, it's home. You can tell that it's home. You feel comfortable, you feel at peace, you feel that you belong, and they make you feel like you belong.</p> <p><i>Were there any things that you know from here, maybe things that your mother, grandmother did or said or had that, in and of itself, didn't, necessarily mean anything, but when you went across the water you saw similar things. Maybe a saying or maybe something somebody said or did, some value or some action that was...that you are familiar with from here, but that when you got over there you could kind of make the tie or the leap. Was there anything like that?</i> I can say the extended family aspect. I can meet African Americans in a store and can start up a conversation, you feel connected, you feel that family connection. Like they're a part of your family, even though they're not a part of your family, it's just a connection, just a gesture, warmth that they give that you feel like you are part their family, and that's how the people of Africa made me feel a part of their family.</p>	
Toni	<p>Their features were familiar, their actions, their values. You know...our values and theirs – there's a big difference, there's a big difference. What we value, they don't value. That's probably another reason that I like going there, because, you know the things that we worry about, they don't worry about. We worry about a new car every</p>	

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 14 What/who did you recognize?
Toni (continued)	<p>couple of years, they....</p> <p><i>Was there anything that you know from here, that when you went there, it gave more meaning to that which you know here??...mean something, not that I can recall.</i></p> <p><i>You said you recognized some features, could you elaborate on that – you see somebody that looked like somebody here, or something there that you felt was... Yes. Yes. With them, I noticed that some of them have, at least in Senegal, some of the people I saw have wide noses. I see that in some of my, in some of the people here, the complexion, the hair type, the texture of the hair, and their body, their build</i></p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, I know where you get “to sweeping the dirt.” My Grandmother would sweep the dirt, a lot of that is a thing where Granny would sweep the dirt in front of the house, I remember that.</p> <p><i>So, that’s an action that you’ve seen here in your lifetime – parents, Grandparents – then going to Afrika you see people there sweeping the dirt. That was the same? Yes.</i></p> <p>My Grandmother used to say “Lan-dag-o-shen,” she’d say, oh-landag-o-shen when she would be talking to us, she’d be mad, she’d say landagoshen. I never knew what she meant, but she was saying Atlantic Ocean, that was, of course, the Atlantic Ocean. <i>If you had to spell it, how would you spell it the way she said it? Like Atlantic Ocean. Oh, I don’t know how she’d spelled it.</i></p> <p><i>Okay. Any other things that you can think of features or principles that.... Oh, you’d see a lot of people out there that look like your people. You’d be walking down the street and you’d say “oh, that looks like George, you know, or that looks like Annie.” Things like that, you know.</i></p> <p><i>Is that surprising? Very surprising.</i></p> <p><i>What do you think that means? That’s the attachment, the attachment between us in America and them in Afrika. They look like my cousin, my uncles, my aunts</i></p>	

Interview Question 15

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

TABLE XXII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES
TO HOW WERE THEY DIFFERENT?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Akosia	<p>Some of the food I loved. There were dishes that did not please the palate. I could see the influence of religion as detailed earlier. Family customs were very important.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Food is basically food. We call it collard greens, they call it something else, it tastes like something I had in the Caribbean which was callaloo, which I loved. Except we season ours with pork they season theirs with fish but it was the same thing and it was delicious. Everything was FRESH. Very, very good; tasted very good. Food-wise it was a feast for me, cause I love seafood. One minute...I saw them actually come in on the boats with buckets of fresh fish, they took it to the outdoor kitchen and twenty minutes later I was eating that fish.</p> <p>I will also tell you about the experience with the live goat but that's another story. Cause when I saw the goat the goat was squealing but he was alive. And by the time we left the compound in Ghana we were eating shish kabob and that was the goat. So I have had the FRESHEST FOOD EVER in Africa.</p>	
Bebe	<p>We don't take our...I don't know, I forgot what you call where the women pound up and down with the grain, we don't do that. We can go to the store and buy our flour already powdered, refined, and, whatever in a package. They have to do this with every meal, they have to pound their grain so that they can use it to utilize it as food, we don't do that. Different things like that, especially if it's in a village. But, if it's in a city part, they can go to the store, you know and buy their things.</p>	
Brother X	<p>I think Americans, in general, as Dr. King put it, suffer from schizophrenia. When you talk about culture, and you talk about morals, you...in America, you're going to get the good, the bad, and the ugly. Sometimes, you're going to get it all in the same breath. I don't have to tell you about it. It's beautiful and refreshing to go home and see the beauty and splendor. Every now and then, you may get a scenario that might be a challenge, and you're sitting there with some discomfort in regards to how it played itself out. But, you run into some petty crime. You run into a situation where you're trying to sort it all out, where there's a challenge, your comfort level. And, at the same time if you're going to have people, there's going to be some degree of crime. People trying to feed themselves, so, you take the good with the bad.</p>	

TABLE XXII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Emy	<p>Some of the foods were a little different. Whenever I visit Afrika, I always try some of the local foods; on the other hand, they eat generally what most people throughout the world eats, it's just that some of it is prepared a little different than what we would do here in the United States. But, I overall, have very good experiences.</p> <p><i>Were there any customs that were a little different?</i> Well the custom of eating with your fingers, and sharing the dish with the food on it. You know I have to remind myself that I'm in the Motherland, and this is how it was, and this is how it is. Sometimes, eating with the fingers, depending on what it is; is something I have to do, to push myself to do; but, otherwise. The other thing I remember in West Afrika – you receive things with your right hand instead of your left hand – I'm left-handed – so, that when they're giving me things, and I reach for it with my left hand, they have to remind me, no, take it with my right hand, so that's one thing that I have to remind myself of.</p> <p><i>Do you know why or how that is?</i> Yes, they use the right hand because of – what the left hand is used for, generally, as a people, what the left hand is used for, you use it for your personal body when you're in the bathroom, then, you should not use it when you are eating and drinking, that's what I was told.</p> <p><i>Anything else you want to mention that might have been different in terms of values, or actions, and principles?</i> No, that's all I can think of.</p>	
Joe	<p>Here in the states, when men are walking down the street, they [men] see women, they turn around, and they cat-call, and they, try to pick women up, and, sometimes, it's very disrespectful. But, when I went to Africa there was nothing like that, and it really surprised me because...again, maybe it was a preconceived idea, but...you hear a lot in the news how black men treat black women, and, I guess, when I was going there I was thinking it was going to be the same thing, and it's not. They're very respectful to their women. When engaging or walking down the street, they don't turn around to try to pick women up, or solicit certain things. It's really just a different type of attitude, and that kind of...I was really surprised, very surprised. I was really happy to see that. I think, in general, we have a lot to learn from each other.</p> <p>In regards to the food, from the samples, the food in the hotel, I wish that, I think there was that fresh influence, and, that European influence there. I wish that I had the opportunity to, maybe, sample food from the countries, or real traditional African foods from, maybe, visiting a tribe. I think I didn't really have the opportunity to connect in that way. I was a little disappointed that I had to have French fries with my meal. I really wanted to get into the core of traditional African foods. Actually, I</p>	

TABLE XXII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Joe (continued)	<p>wanted to see, in regards to religion, you have Muslims, you have Catholics in Africa, but I wanted to see the traditional people and see what traditional spirituality they practiced before Christianity and before the Muslim faiths came along.</p>	
Loss of Mother's love	<p>There was not as much variety as you find living in New York and being raised in New York. Being raised a Christian, there were lots of differences in customs, principles, values and actions, especially as they related to women and how they are allowed to practice the Muslim religion. They believe in polygamy which is not practiced on the east coast and is illegal in the USA.</p>	
Makeba	<p>With the food. I have asked how did you prepare this dish. When they explain how it is prepared you start thinking is this where it came from. We prepare it the same way in America, but we just named it something different. I have found that many things that we do here in America, we don't know why we do it...cause it was handed down from our grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles, and you find that they are doing that, not only in America but in the Caribbean. You find that there are so many similarities of different things that they do....rituals...all kinds of things, that you wonder if that is where it originated-in Africa. Because you are still doing it here. A lot of things, you are just still doing it and you don't know why you are doing it but you are doing it. When you visit homes over there, you see doilies on their furniture, placemats on the tables--all kinds of things that we were brought up doing and you see over there...wow, they do the same thing. They eat very healthy over there, as far as I am concerned. You don't find a lot of fried food over there. I don't think I had fried chicken over there and I love fried chicken. They grill a lot. Think that's where we got barbeque from? They grill a lot where here we have our stoves and we do our grilling during the summer outside on the grill. But for the most part we grill in our homes in the oven. They grill over there with charcoal outside in their kitchens--cause most of their kitchens are outside. But the preparations I guess are the same, their seasonings are similar to what we do here. Kitchens are outside--and I have visited different Villages where they have these little huts where the food is prepared. It is actually done on the ground, it is not electric stove or gas stove, it done on the ground with little twigs and charcoal and stuff. But the end result is the same as if we had cooked it on our stove. And it is quite tasty, delicious food. I do not think I have been to anyone's house who had an inside stove. If you went out on the little veranda there was a little room and that was the kitchen, quite different from our kitchen, with the running water and all the stuff. But</p>	

TABLE XXII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Makeba (continued)	like I said the end result it was prepared, it was cooked, and it was delicious	
Nursie	The food was much better than we received...than what we would eat here. The food, the way they prepared their chicken, and the fish, I thought was excellent - even though I didn't eat a lot of it because I was sick. I think the food was good, I enjoyed the food. I enjoy the way they make it, they don't add salt, but it's well seasoned. I enjoy that.	
Poochie	<p>The food was different, healthier, very appetizing. Everything to me was basically good in all, it was really good.</p> <p><i>Did you find any difference in the...that bathing situations, the bathrooms, did they bathe....the same as ours?</i> Yes. Some was the same as ours, and some was different. Some were holes, and some were toilets, running water.</p> <p><i>Anything else that you can think of that might have been different?</i> Their kitchens are different than our kitchens. The living rooms are basically the same, except for they had wood furniture where ours is pressed fiberboard, that won't last too very long. Theirs will last a long time. They don't decorate as much as we do with a whole lot of knick knacks, but their houses are neat and clean.</p>	
Tiye	<p>I say they're different this way. I guess...I don't know a lot about Africa, the history of Africa itself, in different areas, but, I know African Americans, and we had to fight for every single thing that we have, we fought for. It didn't just...it wasn't handed to us. I think that's saying...forgive, but don't forget. With them, it seems like they forgive, and, they, just, like...awww, just let it be, don't fight about it, just let it be because...I don't know, I felt that with them. You see the French people that come there, and are still there - when we were on the boat, very pushy, wanted to be in front, rude, and, they (the Africans) were so laid back, and I'm saying, in America, we're not laid back about that type of stuff. We had to fight for everything, even, now, we have to continuously fight for everything. And, they're just like, ohhh, let it be, it'll be okay, and we're not like that here, we are not like that at all. So, I saw that difference between African Americans and African people.</p> <p><i>Anything else, that you noticed that was different?</i> I think even the smallest gifts that you give toward their education is appreciated. I think here we take it for granted, they really want their education, they really value their education. Even a pencil to a kid is really an exciting thing. I work in the school system, if you give a kid a pencil, they're like where's the goodies, where's the candy, where's the treats, this is not...I don't</p>	

TABLE XXII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Tiye (continued)	<p>want a pencil, I want the stickers, I want the candy.</p> <p><i>Okay, anything else that's different?</i> That's different. Our customs are different, I don't know the percentage of Muslims that are there. When we went to the Holy City of Tuba, you had to cover yourself up, and here you can wear shorts or whatever, and there, as a woman, you had to be covered.</p> <p><i>In the village, how would you equate that to what you just said to women having to be covered, and is it just Muslim women?</i> I saw the women in the village, they were covered. It seemed that they did all of the cooking, what we would call the household chores. I'm not too familiar what the men went out and did. I know when we went there, there were more women there. It seemed like the men were outside of the village working. It seemed like the men are the providers because they said that they didn't like their women to go outside because they may want everything that they saw. So, they had to provide that...the goodies that they wanted, and, so they said that they're the providers.</p>	
Toni	<p>You know...our values and theirs – there's a big difference, there's a big difference. What we value, they don't value. That's probably another reason that I like going there, because, you know the things that we worry about, they don't worry about. We worry about a new car every couple of years, they....</p> <p>Food? The market, the shopping area; the way they shop...the way they go to the market and bring chickens back...tied up on the top of the bus; [or] carrying a chicken and [it is] still alive. There was a lot of difference in food. Most of their meat is fresh – they go and they bring the fish, they go down to the market [daily], they eat a lot of vegetables. I don't see all the cakes and the ice cream and cookies that we have here, I don't see that there. I can't...I don't even see them eat much of it, so their food – a lot different.</p> <p><i>Why do you think that is?</i> Because I think it's very expensive. I think, I don't think they have the opportunity to purchase it as much as we do. That's like something they probably have during Christmas time, not even Christmas, during Ramadan, because most of them are Muslim. It's like something for a special day. Because even going there, taking gum and candy and stuff, you know, they enjoy receiving it, and they're excited when we give it to them. So, I know it's not something they can purchase on a daily or weekly basis.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, I got sick when I went to Senegal the first time, but, then I stuck with fish and I did alright. But, you can't drink the water, it's hot water. You have to drink bottled water.</p>	

TABLE XXII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 15 How were they different?
Yaw (continued)	<p><i>Why do you think that is? Why do we have to do that?</i> Because it's not purified. Not for us, people who drink enough purified water and you go over there and you drink water that's just plain water, it doesn't make them sick, but watch it makes us sick. I think it's because of the purification that we put in our water.</p> <p><i>So, if I heard that right, we purify water here, but they don't purify water there, and if you drink it, you don't fare well.</i> That's right. They can drink it, you know, the Afrikans can drink it. I don't understand that. It could be the purification that's put in the water that's harmless, but when we drink water that is regular water, we get sick.</p>	

Interview Question 16

Describe how you were received?

TABLE XXIII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
DESCRIBE HOW YOU WERE RECEIVED.

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 16 Describe how you were received.
Akosia	<p>I was received just like another member of the family in Senegal and in Ghana, at least that's the way I felt. Over 10 years since visiting Senegal nice. People invite you in, or have you to dinner, or invited to a little setting. I am also Muslin and was invited as if I was one of the family. It made me feel quite at home. They were very gracious, very accommodating, not in a reciprocal way because of my giving; I gave nothing and they were excited to welcome me, a Muslim coming from America to visit.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Very respectfully. I noticed that...I didn't see people in Africa, older people, with gray hair. I know they know something...no gray haired people...I don't care...they could have been a hundred years old...their hair was black. And here I am with this white hair, a face full of freckles; I was like odd man out. I was treated very respectfully. I don't know if they thought I was ancient, or albino, or strange. But, I got some odd steers, and I just smiled, just smiled and opened my arms to embrace. Yea, but I was</p>	

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 16 Describe how you were received.
Baracha (continued)	treated respectfully.	
Bebe	Oh, very well. Part of it, I guess, is the African tourism. More and more money being spent there, so, naturally they want to, you know, welcome us with open arms and whatnot, so we would come back, tell our friends to come to this part of Africa to buy, you know, things from them, we'd buy their things, you know, their wares. They're going to be, they're going to be friendly, maybe, sometimes, overly friendly, especially when they want something....they're quite....I didn't, I don't remember any part where there was a bad experience.	
Brother X	What surprised me was the warmth of the people. I shouldn't have been surprised, but to be embraced, and I know part of it had to do with...we're returning home and they recognize that, they recognize....not only as a visitor, but as a family member. It's been very genuine. That, probably, surprised me the most, how comfortable and how trusting the people were, and that was pretty much across the board.	
Emy	Well received. Again, you get a warm fuzzy feeling. Everybody you meet there makes you feel welcome, they tell you "welcome back home" "we're glad to have you back" and they always do everything they can to make your visit there very pleasant.	
Joe	I was received very well. They actually, the Africans, treated me as if I was their brother, and that was, that's a great feeling to be so far away from this place, and people can take you in and take you in with open arms, that was a great feeling. It made me almost feel as if I'd never left. I remember when we were traveling, I can't remember.	
Loss of Mother's love	We were met at the airport by the tour leader and were transported with our luggage to an air-conditioned bus. There was some uncertainty as to who was working for the tour guide and who could be trusted to take our luggage.	
Makeba	I was received with open arms. I have been nicknamed Mama and that makes me feel good to know that each time I go I am just welcomed and invited to so many homes to eat with their families. And of course I have gone to many of thier homes and eaten. I sat on the floor, because that is the way that they traditionally eat, that is how they had their meals and that's where I sat too. I was accepted as family.	

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 16 Describe how you were received.
Nursie	We were received well. When I...the first time when we went to Senegal, and we got off the bus, just hearing them saying welcome my sister, welcome my brother, welcome home. I was really taken aback by that. To me that really made me feel like I was home, welcome home.	
Poochie	Oh, we were received very well. We got off the plane at the airport, and, it was like, the whole world was there to greet us, and believe me, wherever we went, there they were. They greeted us very well.	
Tiye	As I said – family, they received you as if you were a long lost relative with open arms. They were glad to see that you came home – welcome home.	
Toni	Wow. I felt like a Queen. They make you feel so special. Well received, oh, boy, every time, over and over again. <i>What does that look like? Describe that, what happens? If you had to write it down in a book, what would you...how would you describe the way you were received?</i> Appreciated, happy to see me, almost as if they'd been waiting, sitting in that same spot waiting for me to return. Just the smile on their face when I arrived, and to see some of the same people I saw last time. They're helpful, always willing to go....always willing to do for me. I'm going to be honest, I feel like I'm a Queen when I'm there.	
Yaw	Very well. At the airport, when we first went to Senegal, at the airport. At the airport getting our bags, you hear the drums outside, oh, it was great, it was overwhelming, you know. When you walk out, you walk out the airport they say "welcome back home, welcome back home, you come back home, welcome back home." That was really, really nice. <i>Great. How did it make you feel?</i> Very good, very good.	

Interview Question 17

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

TABLE XXIV

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO HOW
HAS THE EXPERIENCE CHANGED YOU, YOUR
PERSPECTIVE, YOUR COMMUNITY?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
		How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Akosia	<p>I don't complain as much about what I don't have, and get very disturbed when I hear so many of us complain about things we want not need.</p>	
Baracha	<p>OH YES! OH GOD, YES! Oh yes, it did. It has in SO many ways. I embrace a talent that was in me all the time and for the sake of this interview I call it the "Art of Make-Do." Taking something and renewing it, changing it. I am not as frivolous about "things" anymore. I use to be...before my first trip I was more wasteful than I am now. I am much more conservative in my consumerism...even to the point where...I use to get up in the morning and every room I went in as I go into the room I turn the light, the radio, the TV. I do not do that any more. I have been in blackouts over there.</p> <p>When preparing to go I was told to make sure to bring candles and I laughed...but I brought them. And dog gone it, I needed them too...I was glad that I had them. So things that I took for granted...take for granted here...even the short period of time that I spend over there...I've realize what these basic things. Fresh water...I turn on the tap, I've got fresh water. I'm hungry, I go to my refrigerator, nothing that I want to eat, I call Dominos...I call take out. They bring it to my house, it's hot! Yeah!...yeah...yeah...BIG CHANGE.</p> <p><i>Has your change in experiences changed the community? The community being the people you interact with.</i> I hope it has...inasmuch as I take time to talk to children more often than I ever did. Some of them tolerate me out of respect, other tell me to get lost. I talk to the adults about my travels there and invite them to get in contact with the group that I traveled with, which was an excellent...it was learning experience, it was a pilgrimage. It was a journey that I would like to see...even members in my own family don't seem to be interested in going. I showed them my album...one relative said "you stayed there" [surprised]. I said well where did you think I was going to stay. She said in a hut someplace. I said, Oh no, I could have. We were invited to, but I stayed in a four-star hotel, with air conditioning, CNN in English, and I could go to the cocktail lounge every night and get my vodka and tonic. I was very happy and very comfortable!</p>	
Bebe	<p>I don't think it changed me in my community. It just changed me more to make me, like I said be more educated, and to want to go back and see more. It's changed me in the fact of...World Vision, I've taken a child in Africa, a little girl named Clarice, she's 11 yrs old, her and her family. I think that without going to Africa, and, not knowing the needs there, I would have not done that, but because I know that there's a need. I think that World Vision is a good organization. When I went to Africa the first time, when we came back, my girlfriend, Carmen and I, made up</p>	

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
		How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Bebe (continued)	<p>boxes of things to send to one of the schools in Africa. I just went to the .99 store, and I had a load, load, load of boxes. Well, when it came time to send the thing, I had a really great big problem – couldn’t find where to send it to. So, ironically, I had to take that box...over to my church school, and that was [not] what my intention was. Sometimes we have good intentions of doing things, but sometimes the road in doing that, it seems to be obstacles in the way.</p>	
		<p><i>How has your experience changed you, your perspective, and your community? Experience being....</i>If anything, I think I’ve shared with people about going to Africa, why they should go.</p>
Brother X	<p>Absolutely, I had to up the bar in my studying and my understanding of the history and culture of our people. I’ve been a lot more vigilant in terms of how I document and video and film that I shoot over there, and, now, my challenge, having been a few times, is to demystify the continent, to show the people here what home is about, and to show the people at home certain aspects of what we’re experiencing here. That’s been my challenge, so, now that I’ve got – I’ve got the video, and I’ve got contact with a handful of elders, yourself, Brother Small, and, really battling down the hatchets, to get them to get the statements to complete the work, that’s what the internet and all of these vehicles of expression, it’s just no excuses. I know the ancestors are, like, look Brother X, what more do you need. You’ve been over two or three times, let’s start getting things to happen, so we can start making these connections.</p>	
Emy	<p>Well, I guess it has changed the community because I’m in the community, and it’s changed me in that, I always talk about Afrika, and everybody – all Afrikans and Americans – should go there at least once in their life to make the connection. But, if you’re not able to go, you should help somebody else to go. I talk about it all of the time, how important it is that we make sure we claim Afrika as a homeland, because without a homeland we don’t exist as Afrikans. If there are no Afrikans, there are no Afrikans in America.</p>	
		<p><i>So, has it changed you in any way?</i> It’s changed me in the fact, that I’m proud that I’m from Afrika. Some people still say “Why do you go to Afrika? Why do you go there every year?” “Why not!?” That’s where your roots are, you might not want them to be from there, but that’s where your roots are. So, it’s changed me in the sense that I feel the need to go there as much as I can.</p>
		<p><i>Is there any one significant thing that you think has really changed</i></p>

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
		How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Emy (continued)	<p><i>you, having gone; maybe from your personal experience, or, maybe, from all your combined experiences?</i> I don't know if I can think of any one thing. But, wholly as a person being able to understand recognize and understand the world, the whole perspective of what goes on, and how everything is interrelated, and how countries, other countries - other than countries in Afrika – how they are related, and how dependent they are on Afrika and the resources that's provided are means for me to really think about the world as a whole, not that we're all so much individuals, but how everything is interrelated.</p>	
Joe	<p>My perspective is that since I've gone to and traveled to Africa, that there's more out there to see. It makes....and, also, in that same note, I will never take anyone else's second hand information as to be valuable, in regards to Africa, unless I go and see it myself. When I came back from Africa, I had the opportunity, I must have spoke about it to my friends to try to encourage them to travel more. We need to get rid of these preconceived ideas which other people have give to us, there's no need to fear Africa. Prior to my travels, talking about it to certain individuals, again, people have these preconceived ideas that it's nothing but a waste land, and it has nothing to offer. And, again, maybe, what they were taught, maybe what they were, or, maybe they weren't taught, maybe, it's just a lack of information and not knowing. The only way to know about a particular place or country is to get the information yourself, and to explore. My main goal is to find out where I can contribute, and how can I be of service to individuals that have less than me.</p> <p>My perspective is that since I've gone to and traveled to Africa, that there's more out there to see. It makes....and, also, in that same note, I will never take anyone else's second hand information as to be valuable, in regards to Africa, unless I go and see it myself. When I came back from Africa, I had the opportunity, I must have spoke about it to my friends to try to encourage them to travel more. We need to get rid of these preconceived ideas which other people have give to us, there's no need to fear Africa. Prior to my travels, talking about it to certain individuals, again, people have these preconceived ideas that it's nothing but a waste land, and it has nothing to offer. And, again, maybe, what they were taught, maybe what they were, or, maybe they weren't taught, maybe, it's just a lack of information and not knowing. The only way to know about a particular place or country is to get the information yourself, and to explore. My main goal is to find out where I can contribute, and how can I be of service to individuals that have less than me.</p>	

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
		How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Loss of Mother's love	<p>My two trips did not change me or my community. Being raised in NYC and being a child of the sixties during the civil rights movement, with an Nigerian Uncle, I have not experienced feeling really relaxed and comfortable and being an acceptable part of any community, NY, the USA, Brazil, the Caribbean, Panama, and Europe.</p>	
Makeba	<p>It has changed me a lot..I do not need as much as I thought I needed to survive. I can get by with a little of nothing. After seeing how the people over there can take so little and make so much out of it. It has made me appreciate everything that I have, knowing that if I wanted it to be different...be extravagant I could, but I do not find it necessary after seeing, being over there and seeing how they can just manage with so little. So...I don't know, I just feel differently about a lot of things now.</p> <p>I am forever telling them how they can also not have that because so many of our people over there don't have all the things that we have here, yet they manager and you can be comfortable with what you have. Yet appreciate what you have but you do not have to follow the Jones. Just be comfortable and happy. They seem to be very happy with the little that they have and we have so much and are so ungrateful. And they are grateful for whatever they get.</p>	
Nursie	<p>Well, the experience has just made me a little more aware of who I am. Knowing that there are people in Africa who are intellectual, who are very much human, who are very much caring, and quite knowledgeable, and, the fact that, now, I can communicate with them, it makes me feel pretty good, pretty decent.</p> <p><i>Has any of those experiences that you've discovered for yourself been translated to others in the community; community being all the folks that you know and interact with here.</i> I would say, I guess I interact more with people at my job even though I voice to them a lot about Africa, and the beauty of Africa, they seem to listen and take note. I don't know what they're thinking, but they show quite a bit of interest in it, when I speak about the different things that I experience in Africa, I've seen in Africa. As far as changes them, I don't know if it changes them or the fact that they just listen to me talk, and afterwards, say, oh, okay, and then go on.</p> <p><i>That's okay because you may not never ever know as far as that change. Would you have done that prior to going to Africa? You probably wouldn't have had a reference, a personal reference in which to speak.</i> No, I wouldn't. Yeah, coming....going and coming back gave me that knowledge.</p>	

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
	How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?	
Poochie	<p>I appreciate the way I live in the United States. I do have some hatred toward white people. I wouldn't say hate, I just dislike the way my ancestors were treated, and that causes me to dislike people sometimes in a lot of ways, but other than that, it was...other than that was fine.</p> <p><i>Okay, so it changed you to appreciate more of the way you live. Right. And, to appreciate people more for who and what they are.</i></p> <p><i>Do you see any changes in your community based on the changes in you? Not really.</i></p>	
Tiye	<p>I realize that I have to do more. I have to step up to the plate as an African American, and stop watching others do it, or expect others to do it. I know that I really have to get busy, do the foundation to do a scholarship fund. And, also, I try not to throw away things. I try not to take things for granted, and say, ohhh, I can get another...tomato, and, let the tomatoes sit out and rot. I try not to do those types of things.</p> <p>I know when I came home, my mother, my family asked "how was your trip" and when I saw them, I told them the experience that they wanted to be educated. They have a thirst for education, they're very, very intelligent. Some can speak three and four languages, very intelligent people. My community...besides for my family – it's just me, my boyfriend, and my family, I don't really go out into the community that much, or speak up much like a speaker in the community. But, if I had the opportunity to tell them, I would tell them that they do want to be educated. They do take their education seriously, and if you want to go out and do a drive or to get school books for them, they would be more than willing to have those things – to have books, to have pencils.</p> <p><i>In trying to hear what you just said – am I correct in understanding that you meant that you experienced some things, you came back, you gave...you shared your experiences with your family, and, in that, you told them what some of the people in Africa did, do, have, speak languages, etc., and, that education is valuable, and what they can do is to possibly collect things to help and share with that African side of the family – the whole family. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>In that, that's changing the community. The question to you is how has your experience changed the community or does something for the community, and from what I heard you say, you took your experience, you shared it, and you gave the community, by sharing it in the community, and, now, the community is charged to do something. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>And, so you have, in essence, attempted to make a change within your community. Even though, you don't go out and become a speaker...I know that one of the young ladies that came with us and her mother, they</i></p>	

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17
		How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Tiye (continued)	<p>said they were going to do a school supply drive, I can connect them that way, but I'm not doing a school supply drive. I could tell them, but telling and doing is two different things when I don't have that connection...I don't have a means to send it there for them to get it, but I can connect them through the young lady and her mother.</p>	
Toni	<p>I don't take anything for granted. I'm thankful, you know, I'm more appreciative of what I have, and so...it makes me....my experience going to Africa...it has made me want to know more about my ancestors; where they originated from, some of the things they had to endure, which hurts but I need to know it because it just strengthens me to know that they had such....that they fought so hard. It makes me think....it makes me think about my ancestors, I think about them a lot. I hurt because I know they went through a lot, they were mistreated, and killed, and beaten, and, oh, boy. My community? I feel myself getting involved in more organizations I have, and I'm always expressing to them that they all need to take the trip to the Motherland.</p> <p><i>Why do they have to "take that trip?" Why can't you just tell them about it?</i> No, I don't care what anyone tells you until you go there...I could remember before leaving to go on that first trip, and being at the African poetry theatre, and they were telling us what to expect, and how they had enjoyed the trip, like Alice, and those who had gone before me, and I was excited, but until you go there, you just don't get it. You have to experience it. It's an experience of a lifetime. Because every time I go, I'm telling you I am happier than the time before.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Well, we never did put up Christmas lights, still don't put up Christmas lights. We celebrate Kwanzaa instead. Always talking about Afrika "when you going back to Afrika, you ain't lost nothing in Afrika." I quote Malcolm X "yes, you did, we lost our mind in Afrika."</p> <p><i>So, in going to Afrika, did you find "your mind?"</i> Oh, yes.</p> <p><i>What does that mean? Share with me how you found your mind.</i> There was no, um, I didn't see any prejudice, from the people that we met. People just treated us so good, you know. And, I'm always wearing something that came from the Motherland.</p> <p><i>Say that again.</i> I'm always wearing something that came from the Motherland, like my bracelet.</p> <p><i>That came from the Motherland, okay?</i> Yeah. I noticed that over there they wear European clothes, but over here we wear Afrikan clothes, there's an attachment there somewhere. Here we wear Afrikan clothes, over there Afrikans wear American clothes, European clothes. It seems so</p>	

TABLE XXIV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 17 How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?
Yaw (continued)	<p>strange, I am walking around with my kufi [Afrikan hat] and they are wearing their top hats you know. But, that was okay, you know.</p> <p><i>Why do you think that is?</i> It was taken over there, the style was taken over there and it was told this is what you have to wear. The people over there said, oh, this is what was happening, and it's not what's happening.</p>	

Interview Question 18

What do you now do differently after returning?

TABLE XXV

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
WHAT DO YOU NOW DO DIFFERENTLY
AFTER RETURNING?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Akosia	<p>I try to get to know more people in the US who are from Africa. There seems to be a rift between African and Blacks [Africans born in America]. A cultural divide. Blacks don't treat them nice. I want to get to know folks from Africa and they to learn more about us. There is a divide each try to stick together. When I visit their houses I am the only American there. I reach out trying to show all of us don't think the way they may think we think. Some African American asks offensive questions like "Where do you live and what do eat?" They have to reply African people do not swing from trees, and eat each other. They live in houses and eat food. Education is needed on both sides to bridge the divide.</p>	
Baracha	<p>Well, the one thing that I like to do is wear African clothing for no other reason other than I have it. And watch how I am received. When I where my African clothing and I go into the barber shop to get my hair cut the raunchy video get turned off immediately. Men stop me in the street and said Sister you look beautiful. I wish my wife would wear her hair like that. I wish my wife would wear clothing like that. Now I come back the next day with my jeans and tee shirt and nobody pays any attention. But there is something about wearing African attire in America that gets the</p>	

TABLE XXV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Baracha (continued)	<p>respect. Sometimes with a knuckle-head hoodlum on the corner Ms. you look beautiful. Yeah! Very interesting. It's as though they understand that there is a difference and they are holding it in high esteem but they are still hanging out with the hoochie mamas...not encouraging them to emulate. But that is where those of us who have the opportunity to travel MUST CONTINUE to talk to our young people.</p> <p>One other thing that changed...I when into one barber shop and they were opening up a tattoo parlor. I looked at the tattoos that they were...I said this is not good. I said you are servicing African American people. We are not Chinese I said I am going to bring you something, I am going to GIVE it to you because YOU need to understand...and my sacred (I did replace it) my Adinkra Symbol Chart. I said STUDY THE AFRICAN SYMBOLS. SEE WHAT THEY MEAN. And if our people are going to decorate their bodies, it should be WITH SYMBOLS FROM THEIR PEOPLE. Cause they are not Chinese.</p> <p><i>And how is that working out?</i> So far, so good. I have not gotten a tattoo.</p> <p><i>Did the person receive that well?</i> Yes, he did. I have gone back from time to time and they are loving the GYE NYAME ['except God'—represents the omnipotence of God and the fearlessness of the faithful], the SANKOFA ['return and fetch it'—represents the importance of learning from the past], NKYIN KYIN ['the 'twisting'—represents versatility and initiative], oh they love that, and all the different ones. I said okay, you put it on their body but did you put it in their minds. Oh yeah, they were copying it down on pieces of paper because they wanted to know. This is...makes them seem very, very proud...Man, this is Africa...This is from Africa. So if we take time to educate them to let them know that no our history didn't start on the slave blocks here in Charleston and up and down the coast of the Caribbean. All of this culture that we had over there...I showed one kid a picture of an Ashanti King with the gold and I said and that is not "stupid gold"... that's real gold. You see those men attending...he's got so much gold on his arm, he can't lift his arm. Those men are to lift his arm when he waves to the people. That is solid gold from his land! And what are you wearing? Stupid gold...take that off and put on some beads from Africa until you can get over there and buy some African gold. [Laughing] Sometimes they just say Okay..okay.</p>	
Bebe	<p>I don't do anything. I like my African garb. I do wear a lot of African clothes.</p> <p><i>Do you receive any comments about your attire?</i> Oh, most of the time,</p>	

TABLE XXV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Bebe (continued)	<p>you know, it's look – ooo, look what you've got on, you know. If I go to church, I'll wear it, you know, they don't really pay...you know, because they see me in African clothes.</p> <p><i>Can you go back to, maybe, the first time?</i> I don't remember. I believe it was long before I went to Africa.</p>	
Brother X	<p>I would have to say, I pray more now. I pray more now. Now, more than ever. I eat with my hands more. I had some Ceebu-jen today. I thought about you.</p> <p>I eat with my hands, and every now and then, my daughter will join in. I eat a little more with my hands. Anytime now if I'm in a taxi, or I'm in a restaurant, or if I'm in the market, I make a point of speaking to my African brothers and sisters. I going to ask them where they're from. If they say Nigeria, I'm going to say "Kedu." If they say they're from Senegal, I'll say "Na nga def." If they say they're from South Africa, I'm going to say "Sawubona." If they say they're from Ethiopia, I'm going to say "Teanastellen." Just to get that, they look, and, say, wow. And, then, they'll hit me with three sentences. They give me a hug, and we'll talk a little bit. The thing is that I make a point of making a connection. I bought a hat today. I still haven't been able to discern specific languages; I have to work a little harder. Most of the vendors, if I hear them speak, I can catch the Wolof. I got the hats, and I gave him the money, and, he said thank you, and, I said "noko-boko" (Wolof for we share this) in other words..."you're welcome.", and the other brother said, ahhhh, and, so, I waved. It's just connections. I just need to work, study harder, pick up a few more phrases, a little more language, and, I'm learning.</p>	
Emy	<p>I don't know, except talk about it more, read about it more. When I go on the internet, I check the news, I check the international news, and sometimes I'll put in a country and see what's going on there. When I get the local paper, I check to see what they say about Afrika, as well as, Haiti and other black countries. So, I read about it more, and I want to read about it more, and I want to know about it more, about what's going on in Afrika and other minority...[entities].</p> <p><i>What do you do with that information?</i> I share it with others. If there's something that requires action or telephone call or email, or something, I'll send out emails. I get emails regarding – from a lawyer – that talks about Haiti, and what's going on in Haiti. I learn from this lawyer, in an email, that European women are going to Afrika, women in their 50's and 60's, going to Afrika to have sex with young men, young Afrikans. They go there, they buy these little things for them, it's like what they are doing is making them gigolos. They go there, and "hook up" with these young</p>	

TABLE XXV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Emy (continued)	men in Afrika. But, for them, it's a means of getting some money, getting some new shoes, new shirts, new pants, or whatever, but that was the most recent emails that I've gotten that we should know about.	
Joe	I try to be mindful of not wasting things, whether it be water, whether it be food. Sometimes, I think I have a tendency to buy food in abundance just because it's there. And, I have to realize that there are people in Africa and many other parts of the world, who don't have the opportunities like I do, so, I try to be mindful in that way to be a little more conscientious of how I utilize food. I try to be a little bit more giving, seeing, first-hand, how people live day-to-day, it makes you want to give more of yourself.	
Loss of Mother's love	Nothing.	
Makeba	I don't waste. I don't waste, especially food. There was a time when I decided that I don't want the rest of this and would just throw it away. But now, I think about what I am preparing and how much I am preparing. If I have to freeze it, I freeze it. I don't waste. As a matter of fact I don't waste too much of anything anymore. Going to a factory over there, I found that the materials they were using in the factory...you saw very little waste in that factory. They utilize every little scrap and that is something that we don't do here. I don't need the rest of this you throw it away. Over there they find a use for it. So I find myself doing the same thing here instead of saying of I'll just throw this away. I'll try to find a use for it or try to find someone who can use it rather than throw it away. Even if I have to sit it outside for garbage, I'll put a sign on it that says "Take Me." Before I would just dump it in the garbage can but now I will put a sign on it. That's a little different for me	
Nursie	I think just my awareness of those who that I meet here that are from Africa, letting them know that I appreciate their culture because their culture really isn't my culture, but I've been...they allow me to share with them. So, I always let them know that I've been there, I appreciate them, I'm eager to go back, and I'm willing to be any support that I can to them	
Poochie	I appreciate my way of living better, I appreciate myself, and, in a lot of ways, I appreciate others since I've been back from Africa. <i>Can you elaborate on any one of those – your way of living? How is it different or how you appreciate yourself better or others?</i> I eat a little	

TABLE XXV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Poochie (continued)	different. I try to stop eating all that food that's no good for you because I noticed in Africa people were very healthy, they weren't large. Their diets were basically from the water, from the land, and it wasn't a whole lot of fried food. It was, basically, rice...it was broiled, boiled, whatever. So, I did get away from the fried foods, the unhealthy foods.	
Tiye	Now, that I'm back, as I said before, I try not to waste so much. The clothes that I know are good, I try to make sure I pack them, and give them to, like, Big Brother/Big Sister. If I knew that someone was going to Africa, I would definitely donate the clothes to them for Africa. I make sure that I don't just throw things away. I don't say there's no need for this anymore because someone else can use it.	
Toni	<p>A lot of things. The way I receive my people, African Americans or Africans, people from the Motherland. I'm different in how I deal with them. It's also made me suspect of Caucasians. I'm very careful, after going there, I'm very careful about how I deal with them now back in the States.</p> <p><i>And, how do you do that, how are you more careful? What do you do or don't do?</i> I limit my conversation with them. I don't know...there's some pain and I have a problem with dealing with them as a whole, Caucasians as a whole, I have a problem. After what my people have gone through, after going there visiting Gorée Island and seeing how they was stuffed in rooms and mistreated like they were animals. I don't think...I think that even today it has continued to move from generation to generation, they still see us as being animals. After going there, and knowing how they treated us, I don't feel like they look at us any different now than they did then.</p> <p><i>You said in receiving African Americans and Africans you deal with them differently, can you describe a contact?</i> Yes, there was a time where I didn't have time....you know, I didn't look forward to talking to them or going into Harlem and going to 116th Street. I always avoided them like they were different, you know. Now, I'm always looking to talk to them, I'm always happy to let them know I've been to Africa, I've been to their home. So, I'm always looking forward to talking to them.</p>	
Yaw	<p>Talk to my brothers and sisters about it. I have an Afrikan ministry – I attend an Afrikan Ministry where we greet each other with “Eem Hotep and Shem Hotep.” The ministry is like I am in an Afrikan Village.</p> <p><i>Tell me a little bit more about that?</i> We meet on Sundays from 1 – 4, and we talk Afrikan. We talk, do our ritual, and talk about the ancestors. We have guest speakers down there like Professor Smalls and Leonard</p>	

TABLE XXV (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 18 What do you now do differently after returning?
Yaw (continued)	<p>Jeffries. A lot of good people come down there. They give us a story too. They give us our story, not his story.</p> <p><i>What do you mean by "our story / his story?"</i> Well, his story is HIS story. Our story is the black story, the Afrikan story. His story is the Caucasian story.</p> <p><i>This group that – the Afrikan ministry that meets Sundays come to share and hear our stories. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>And, how is that received and what kind of differences or impact do you see that making on the attendees.</i> It's a positive impact for the people that are there want to be there; if you don't want to be there, don't come. The people that come there, they want to be there, they want the stories. A lot of them don't know our story, all they know is his story, so we give our story. All of Afrika – we start with Kemet to Senegal to all of them.</p> <p>How long has that been going on? 7 - 8 years now.</p>	

Interview Question 19

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

TABLE XXVI

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS
CHANGED AFTER RETURNING?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19 Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
Akosia	<p>Not so much changed. I do talk a lot about Africa and try to influence others to take a trip there. The relationship...with my brother and members of my family...there is a divide. My brother wants nothing to do with Africa; he is very negative and it upsets me. He says he does not want to see a bunch of poor people. I get annoyed and upset that a man his age is unable to.... I get defensive about it. We all need to travel to know more about ourselves and each other</p>	
Baracha	<p>Yes it has. I am mindful of their ignorance because it is the same ignorance I had before I started associating with "cultural people." And that was the turning point in my life. I started going to festival and participating in festivals where "AFRICAN" were there. Where my African American friends and neighbors were speaking to them...some</p>	

TABLE XXVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19
		Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
Baracha (continued)	in their own language...I was impressed with that. And I had just started...yeah this is cool!...Yeah these are my people!...yeah okay!...yeah, I'm down with this.	
Bebe	<p>No.</p> <p><i>You mentioned earlier about trying to get the education, the knowledge with folks. Would that qualify with, maybe, helping to change perspectives or your relationship with other people... ?</i> Both times that I went to Africa, I did a journal. Journaling experiences in Africa on both trips, and coming back I held a journal reading in my house, and it was quite positive. In fact, when I did it the first time everybody really enjoyed it, so that when I went back again the second time and did it again, I had just as much people because they enjoyed it the first time to come back and do it again. I got very, very positive responses in doing that. When I did the journal, I did it because...I didn't do it to do a journal reading, I let some of the people that I went to Africa with, they came, and let them, you know be in the meeting and put their comments in to though. The people that were there got a good understanding of what was going on and what their daily things were. When I did the journal, I think I did good because it was like "wow, I'm here, I gotta write this down" you know, "I gotta take all of this in" but I was doing it for me, not necessarily for somebody else. But I saw that all of the information that I put in I needed to share that with everybody.</p> <p><i>Having those readings, did people decide I'm going to go next year or anything... ?</i> No, my girlfriend Diane, she was at one of my readings and she wants to go. In fact, she's hoping to go, if I do go back in July. From me going and sharing my trip with her, and she's got her attire and her locs and everything, and she wants to go back to the ancestors there, and to see what it's all about. She's, probably, the only one. I tried to see whether or not my sister would be interested, but my sister has no want to go there.</p>	
Brother X	<p>If anything has changed, to be honest, since I've been back, as I've matured, and as I've grown, as I've grown knowledge about Africa; there's a responsibility to share. I've had situations, where I...I work at a hotel, I do video sound at a hotel. You know in a hotel you've got Latino, Asian, European, you've got continental Africans. I remember I had walked into the cafeteria one day, and the interesting thing is as you carry yourself with pride, and you carry your culture, there's a responsibility that comes with that. I walked in and there's like 12 people</p>	

TABLE XXVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19 Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
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Brother X (continued)	<p>arguing in five different languages, an Asian brother trying to make a point...so, I walked in and they were all in a corner, and they saw me, they said, hey, we need to speak to you brother. So, I walked over, and they all calmed down. There was a brother there who was from the Dominican Republic. He was, not that this is of any consequence, I'm just trying to give you the context...brown skin, dark skinned brother, straight black hair, and, Spanish speaking. The argument that they were trying to resolve was what race was he from. One group was saying that he was African; another group said that he was Indian, I think, he said he identified with, I believe, the Indio people of his region that he had come from. Someone else said that he was Dominican, he said, yeah, I'm Dominican. For someone who was listening to all of this insanity. At first, I was, like, where do I plug in. I just said to myself, and my statement to them was that...they were saying what race is he, and I said there's only one race. I said there's only one race. I believe you're confusing race with ethnicity and nationality. In terms of his nationality, if he identifies with the Dominican Republic, he's a Dominican national. Now, he may even be American. Ethnically, he may identify with a particular indigenous group from that region, that's his prerogative. I said there's only one race, and that's the human race. Then, I walked away. I had to glance back, and, they were all, like, uhhhh, yeah. So, as much as you learn, you have a responsibility to get it right, and to share. I'm working a little more with young people, and, I think just as importantly is sharing our history and information of the culture with the elders, the older people, not the elders, they're teaching me. A lot of our young adults, 30, 40, 25 year olds, some of the things that are coming out of their mouths is scary, I know, I have to work harder.</p>	
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Emy	<p>No, I don't know that it's changed so much except people who know that I go there every year, they're "oh, where are you going next year?" They're like, "oh, well, I know where you're going next year, you're going to Afrika". "Yes." And, then, "well, where are you going in Afrika? Haven't you been to every place in Afrika?" "No, not yet. I haven't gotten to half the countries in Afrika."</p> <p><i>The relationships remain about the same.</i> They were good relationships, and they're still good relationships.</p> <p><i>Okay. I guess what I'm trying to get to is was there any impact? Can you see any impact on them based on what you've shared with them?</i> I think the fact that I talk about Afrika a lot, and remind them that they should go, and, I go "when are you going to go? And they say "I'm going to go" And, they say "Oh, I don't know when I'm going to go." And, I</p>	
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TABLE XXVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19 Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
Emy (continued)	say, "Well, you have to pick a day, I mean, pick a year, then, after you pick the year, you pick the month; then, after you do that, you save your money, so you know you're going. Because each time they know that I'm going they say "Oh, I'm going to go" and, I say, "when are you going to go?" They say, "oh, you always ask me that." "Well, when are you going to go?" Sometimes I think they want to go when we talk about it, but after the conversation there is no need to say or do anything. For them it was just conversation for me, since they know I love to talk about Afrika.	
Joe	I would say so. I'm trying to be a little more family oriented, and...the family unity is so much more important to me now than it was before. I think..., and it may have a lot to do with the black American experience in regards to slavery, how we were separated from each other – mother from child, husband from wife – I think that psychologically has impaired black American's ability to be a family unit. I think my experience in Africa has changed my view on that, family is very important, and we actually have to...in order to...we have to become unified in order to improve ourselves as black people, as a whole, as a family, as a nation.	
Loss of Mother's love	No.	
Makeba	I try to educate friend of mind that have not gone. A few of my friends have gone with me over there. And they have enjoyed it. I try to educate my friends here as to how it is over there as opposed to what they see on TV. I take a lot of pictures and I share my pictures with them and explain to them exactly how it is. They are surprised to see how ADVANCED they are. Of course what they are seeing on TV is not what...the way it really is there...in some parts of Africa. So I try to educate them...to see it through my eyes and my way of showing it to them is through videos and pictures. Which they've appreciated it and now have a different outlook of how it is living in Africa. And they understand why I go back. Each time I go I try to get someone to go with me and I have been successful quite a few times...so I am happy about that	
Nursie	I think I'm just a little more aware of the Africans that are here. But, as far as Americans, that hasn't changed much. As far as the Caucasian race, I don't think it changed me, it just made me more aware of my surroundings and who I really am, and where am I really going.	

TABLE XXVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19
		Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
Nursie (continued)	<p><i>Can you give an example of any one of those – you’re aware of your surroundings, you’re aware of where you’re going, aware of who you really are, what is that?</i> Okay, being aware of my surroundings is knowing that I really didn’t...this is temporary, I really came from a place far away, my ancestors, and that was home for them. It’s not home for me because I haven’t been there long enough to say this is home. But, knowing that my ancestors came, and that was their home. As far as the people, just knowing that they’re my people, that we’re all in it together.</p> <p><i>And, that allows you to know where you’re going?</i> Oh, most definitely.</p>	
Poochie	<p><i>We may have touched on some of that back here when you said that you appreciate others.</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>Has your experience changed you and your perspective, or your community?</i> Your answer: <i>there was a hatred towards white people, or a dislike for white people. So given that, then has your relationship with others changed after returning. Do you think....?</i> Yes, somewhat towards white people. Yes.</p>	
Tiye	<p>I think so. I think I’m less tolerant of what...I can’t change what someone experienced, but I wouldn’t just let someone degrade another person’s ethnicity, another person’s customs. I think I’m less tolerant. I think it helped me....not that I didn’t accept other people’s customs and beliefs, but it helps you to be more open, because even though I consider myself, I can use the term a “displaced African” you still have different customs and different beliefs, and so, you have to be able to tolerate everybody’s customs and beliefs, and so it changed me in that way.</p>	
Toni	<p>Yes.</p> <p><i>In what way?</i> My relationship with black people as a whole, because I think there’s so much more we can do - that we need to do to connect with our brothers and sisters back in the Motherland.</p> <p><i>And, how do you see that....what’s a way of that change?</i> Talking to them, constantly trying to be in their company or finding new places to see when I’m in Africa. Things that we have here that they don’t have that we can take to them. Just...whatever I can do, I don’t know I’m always looking for something to do or someway of doing something different.</p> <p><i>But, with the people that you know here, your community, the folks that you interact with here in America, has your relationship with them changed after you’ve gone to Africa...?</i> Oh, no, no.</p> <p><i>I think you said, at some point that you’re talking with them, you’re</i></p>	

TABLE XXVI (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 19 Has your relationship with others changed after returning?
Toni (continued)	<p><i>trying to tell them to go, they need to go and experience it for themselves.</i></p> <p>They need to go, right.</p> <p><i>...and I just wonder if that...have you seen any changes, has anything happened differently between those people here based on what you and that person had before now what you and that person have after you've come back.</i> The only one's that I have....because...when I talk to some my brothers and sisters here who have never gone to the Motherland, and you say "oh, it's a trip that you should take" some of them say, "oh, I'm not from there, why would I want to go there" because, just like, before...me before going the first time, I didn't see a need to go there, but once...after going there, I see a need to go back. I see a need to go back, I see a need to connect with my brothers and sisters across the water, over there in that continent. We need it, we need it. We are so divided, we a split up and messed up.</p> <p><i>And, that's what you're trying to communicate to other folks.</i> That's right. That there's so much to know, that there's so much they don't know</p>	
Yaw	<p>Yes. Well, the people know that I'm an Afrikan, you know, there's no doubt about it. You're going to Afrika and stuff, tell them the black stuff. So, I tell them the good stuff, you know.</p> <p><i>What's the impact that you see in terms of how it's changed somebody else?</i> Well, when they come down to the ministry, when I invite somebody down and they show up, they first walk into the door, they look around and look around. Then when we get into it, they get into it too.</p> <p><i>And, what about you coming back, how has it changed you?</i> Well, I'm learning more about Afrika. A lot of things I didn't know, I didn't know a lot of things, and, now I'm aware of them. When I greet a person I usually say "Ankh Uja Sneb," like that, you know. Not greet them in the old European way, like Hello; hell is low.</p> <p>It's a greeting, a greeting. You cross your hands in front of your chest...and, then, you say, "Ankh Uja Sneb." [<i>cross your arms in front of your chest and, then, you open your hand, and extend your hand out in front, then, rubbing your hands together</i>] say "duwa."</p> <p>You're wishing them a good life, health, prosperity.</p> <p><i>Okay, versus hello? Yes</i></p>	

Interview Question 20

What are your new expectations?

TABLE XXVII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
WHAT ARE YOUR NEW EXPECTATIONS?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 20 What are your new expectations?
Akosia	To build a house in Ghana and convince my family to come home to Africa at least once.	
Baracha	To get more of the African people in the Diaspora in tuned with Africa. I use the analogy of Sankofa. Sankofa states that it is never to late to go back and fetch that which was left behind. But I added something to that. And it is simply this. We need to go back and fetch that which was hidden from us, because it was hidden for a reason! I feel mentally stronger...having seen the Ashanti's and going and listening to the folklore and knowing that my people were GREAT centuries ago. They call us the sun people, the ice people were living in caves...we were doing eye surgery and nobody was going to tell that story until Black people researched it. And all of that was hidden from us for a reason. And IT IS EMPOWERING! And sometime it could be even be dangerous because I do go off sometimes.	
Bebe	No, just to see more. I don't know in going to other parts of Africa, I tend to believe there'd all just basically be the same it would just be another country of Africa. But, I would like to experience the different cultures of Africa. Basically, most of them live, maybe, the same type things – do the same sort of things, maybe, I guess. I would like to see, I don't what I'd expect, but I know there is something to see.	
Brother X	New expectations on the continent? I'm just trying to follow up on what I've experienced. Just making stronger alliances, studying harder, trying to find a way to build legitimate relationships and bridges for the people at home. I try to stay the course, I think this is the path that's been laid out for me, and I think the fact that being into the media lays a firm foundation for me in terms of my responsibility, so I just have to up the bar, and start finishing this stuff and getting it out there. I'll be keeping you posted.	

TABLE XXVII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 20 What are your new expectations?
Emy	<p>In going to Afrika? Well, my expectations are always to learn about the country, and the customs, and the practices there in whatever country I visit. The new countries - the new expectation is to learn about what goes on there, and to be able to relate it to what I've seen or grown up with, or what goes on here in the US.</p> <p>I don't know if I can think of any one thing. But, wholly as a person being able to understand recognize and understand the world, the whole perspective of what goes on, and how everything is interrelated, and how countries, other countries - other than countries in Afrika – how they are related, and how dependent they are on Afrika and the resources that's provided are means for me to really think about the world as a whole, not that we're all so much individuals, but how everything is interrelated.</p>	
Joe	<p>I'm charging myself with trying to do more travel. My goal is to set up a fund for, some type of fund, a fund for, maybe, one of the university students so that they can pursue their educations, their dreams. Instead of being selfish, and thinking about myself, helping someone out that definitely has less than I, and improving their quality of life</p>	
Loss of Mother's love Makeba	None.	
Makeba	<p>I do want to learn Wolof. I am going to work very hard in 2008 to learn at least...twenty words in Wolof so that I will be able to communicate a more effectively with them</p>	
Nursie	<p>My new expectations? You know what, I hope one day to have better interactions, to have better interactions with people from Africa, and, possibly, do some form of trade – communication trade, and an economical phase.</p>	
Poochie	<p>To be able to help. To be able to send whatever I can there. To be able to help those I have come in contact with. To be able to send supplies for the children in school, clothes, shoes, books, even money. Hoping that things will get better there for them</p>	
Tiye	<p>New expectations are to give more. To make sure that I'm being the best person I can be to help others.</p>	
Toni	<p>My new expectations...I would love to own a home there. I would love to start a business there. I would love to bring a couple of them here to the United States and show them that it's not what they think, you know they think we can go outside and pull money off a tree. They don't</p>	

TABLE XXVII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 20 What are your new expectations?
Toni (continued)	know we really work hard...we have to really work hard to make that trip, well, some of us do, I know I do. So, I think that's it	
Yaw	To travel, to hit some more Afrikan countries. Possibly to take my pictures, concentrate on the children – taking pictures of the children. <i>That's what you're planning to do. What do you think you'll find when you go back, expecting when you go back on your next visit?</i> Well, I'm not sure – friendships, hope to see some more people that look like me.	

Interview Question 21

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

TABLE XXVIII

EXCERPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO
HAVING BEEN TO AFRICA, WHAT DOES
AMERICA MEAN TO YOU?

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 21 Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?
Akosia	In Africa I feel so alive and returning to America after staying over a month in Ghana was a little depressing. America may have a lot of material things but Africa is where my heart is. Just the fact I could not wake up and go out to the street and get fresh pineapple was a big let down. America can be quite dull. Africa may be many things but dull, NEVER, for me. America is dull. Over there, there is a rhythm...Africa has a rhythm...moving to the beat. Here you have to deal with all this phony stuff. When I came back after spending a month in Ghana as I got closer and closer to my house, I became depressed and more depressed. In Ghana I can go buy pineapple fresh off the tree...now that morning I could not DO that, I WAS MAD AND ready to turn around and go back. So AFRICA IS A MAGIC PLACE it is full of problems it is MY mother and you love her...whatever.	

TABLE XXVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 21
		Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?
Baracha	<p>Well, America is where I was born. And I think the older I get the more I realize how powerful Willie Lynch was in his doing and I understand why he had to do what he had to do. Having said that, having read his writing it is my crusade to inform as many as will listen about the brainwashing that we are still living today. A lot of Black folks don't want to hear it. But those who do...you can pull it up on the computer; you can go to the library and get it. You need to understand what was done to us and why it was done to us. It was never intended that we on this side reconnect with Africa. That was never the intention. Yeah, send them back to Liberia, fine. But we were never supposed to connect culturally. So when I go, when I was working... and I went into a meeting wearing my Kente, having cut my processed dyed hair...WOE...What's up with that ...Back to my roots!... Well, what country are you from?...At this time I have no idea...so I claim the whole continent. So this year I am from Ghana, next year it will be Mali. Since I don't know, I claim EVERYTHING! But now I know!</p>	
Bebe	<p>All the riches that we have, and how we are so blessed. Well, you know I used the word struggle, it would be a struggle for us, it wouldn't be a struggle for them because they have to live that way. It makes us more appreciative of we have lights, and gas, and roaring fire just about...</p>	
Brother X	<p>America? America is an interesting thing....country because so much of what America has is a direct result of Africa, so, if anything America owes a significant debt to the continent of Africa. Now, I know most educated adults understand that, whether they're willing to share what they have, or what they've gained is a whole 'nother story. Whether they believe that they should give anything back, or whether they believe the injustices they've committed, I don't even know if any of them give a second thought to the atrocities that were committed, and continue to exist. With that said, eventually America is going to have to pay, because, you know, it's out of their hands...what goes around, comes around. So, part of my challenge, at the earliest, this might sound a little selfish, but part of my challenge is to be home before that day in my lifetime. It's interesting, as long as we get that one last flight out of here, it's going to be all good.</p>	
Emy	<p>Well, it doesn't mean much. I'm here, I was born here, I grew up here. I don't know that it means, it doesn't mean a lot to me, because of the way it is. The way it operates - because of the majority of the bills, the rules, the regulations, that are passed are things that hamper the</p>	

TABLE XXVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 21 Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?
Emy (continued)	<p>opportunities of Afrikans here in America—the achievements of Afrikans. The constant battle against the powers; and, unfortunately, those who control the situation define the situation. And, because we have very little control here in America, we’re not able to define much of what goes on especially how it affects us.</p> <p>America is not a homeland for Afrikans. They used us, we were enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights. We have none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, every anything that we get or acquire requires a fight.</p>	
Joe	<p>Now, that I’ve been to Africa, sometimes, I have so much disdain for what America means, and American values. To be honest there wouldn’t be an America if it wasn’t for the efforts of blacks, of the slaves that were here. America is, pretty much, built on the backs of slavery. It’s disheartening to me, and so much has been taken from Africa, and one of the main resources were the people. Africa hasn’t had the opportunity to thrive and to grow. Still today, Africa is being raped, natural resources are leaving – gold, diamonds from South Africa – everything is being taken out of Africa to build up other nations, and it’s really disheartening. You can’t expect people, or the African nation to become independent and to grow when too many things are being taken away from it. Again, its still being, I think, being colonized, and people are taking everything away from it. It can’t prosper, the people can’t prosper, the African nation can’t prosper.</p> <p><i>Okay, now, let’s see if we can encapsulate that...are you saying that America needs to do all those things, or not do those things...now – that you’ve seen with your own eyes what you’ve seen...? I don’t know if America could really do anything for Africa. I think, pretty much, they have done ENOUGH. America’s values are basically greed on greed. Greed and what they can get from a nation to benefit themselves, I don’t appreciate or like American values because of the hardships they have caused to indigenous people - African indigenous people, Native American – I really don’t think America can do anything for Africa now. Right now, America is just a place where I could reside until I can find somewhere else to, somewhere I can live where I can agree with their value system. Basically, the bottom line is, I hate America and its value system, that’s the bottom line.</i></p>	
Loss of Mother’s love	<p>Having been to Africa does not change, in any way what America means to me. America is still the place where my ancestors were brought to work and build this country and make it rich. It is still a country where Black Americans are discriminated against and are still treated as</p>	

TABLE XXVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 21
		Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?
Loss of Mother's love (continued)	refugees when it comes to education, rights, access, respect and etc. It is also a country that gives more (education, rights, access, respect and etc) to immigrants than those descendants of these same slaves who contributed so much to this country's wealth, technology, and culture.	
Makeba	Well, since this is the only country I have ever actually lived in; I am appreciative of what I have and what I have accomplished in America. And I don't think at this point in my life that I would give it up to go live anywhere else. Because even though I know Africa is my home I know more of America than I do Africa. And so I have just kinda grown accustomed to certain things here and I don't know if I could manage a year or the rest of my life over there. So...America means a lot to me. There are a lot of things that I don't like in America, which is the way we are treated here. But I have seen a change being that I was partly raised in the south. I have seen some change but we have a long way to go...and hopefully one day it will get better.	
Nursie	It means that it's not my original home, but we were brought here for a purpose – to help build America – and we were, besides the Indians, we laid the groundwork for white America. Had it not been for my ancestors, America would not be at the level that it is now because it was off the sweat of my ancestors that America was built.	
Poochie	America needs a lot of help....a lot of help. There's still a lot of prejudice here, a lot of hatred between whites and blacks, more so from the whites to the blacks. The United States needs a lot of help. <i>And, how would you...if it was in your power to do that, to make the change, or provide the help, or to give somebody the words to do or to fix that, what would that be?</i> To try to make them understand that we are equal. We were all born to die, we all bleed red blood, and, that they're no better than we are. The whites are no better than the blacks.	
Tiye	I'm here, I can be somewhere else, but America is just so....I can educate myself, I can be able to retire comfortably, but, also help....I guess I can use it as a stepping stone to be able to help other people. To use it as a stepping stone to help other people. It's different, America...everybody is so separated, and so worried about the hustle and bustle. I don't think we take enough time to enjoy each other's company. Africa, you can see that they enjoy each other, enjoy each other's company. Their family is alive to them, especially in the village – you have the father, their sons, their grand children. You don't have that here, you don't have everybody in the same space, or in the same area, or in the same state, everybody's just all over the place, so it's hard to take the	

TABLE XXVIII (Continued)

Participants	Excerpts/Comments	Interview Question 21
		Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?
Tiye (continued)	time out to tell your family you love them, you can tell your family over the phone that you love them, but in person, to show it, and to do things for your family. <i>So, in that did you...what you just said, did you realize that prior to going to Africa, or did that revelation come....?</i> Once I came back from Africa, I realized that the extended family unit is there. Here we're just all over the place, we're so scattered. The grandparents, our elders are...if they haven't passed on, sometimes they're not with us because they're in a different state. That's what I realized, they're really family oriented.	
Toni	Nothing. I'm sorry...I don't feel...wow, what does America mean to me? I'm not impressed. I feel like I'm not wanted here, that if they could send me to Africa they would – the Caucasians. America, I don't have...I have less love now than I did before because I know they have caused some of the pain that those people are feeling over there, America has caused some of that.	
Yaw	It doesn't mean anything. I'm an Afrikan living in America. <i>Could you elaborate on that a little bit?</i> Well, the lies that we've been told, shooting of all the black, young youths, it's getting outrageous. There's a war going on here, there's a war going on between "blacks and whites." We don't have no guns, cradle of power. I always think about what the soldiers did to the Indians when they put them against that wall and gave them those blankets with typhoid. That was a terrible thing to do. I always think about that, you know, when they shout about how great America is. America is great, but the people in it are not.	

APPENDIX F

PARTICIPANTS' INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

January 12, 2008 by telephone

AKOSIA

Travel – Transportation: What were your experiences?

What were your travel experiences (airport, flight, cost, time)?

1995 first trip to Africa. JFK to Dakar about \$2100 for 7 days. Flight took about 9 hours. Traveled on Air Afrique from Kennedy to Dakar, Africa.

Going/departing America

We had to leave here, to fly out of Atlanta to catch a flight to New York. Then we had to spend the night in New York in order to make the flight out the following morning. It was difficult because we had to spend the night in NYC to make sure we made the flight, then. I think it is different now. I do remember being very excited and experienced no difficulties departing Kennedy. I traveled first class as there were no other seats available. That was just incidental, the excitement was the fact that I was GOING to Africa for the FIRST time, and that is what really excited me.

While in Africa

Upon arrival I was shocked... it was kinda strange... I am use to things being orderly.... In the US everything is so much more orderly and it looked like, when I first got there, we would never get through here. In my mind I wondered how we would ever get through. I saw all the people crowding around... I said how are we going to get my luggage... It looked like there was a bunch of stuff going on and I just could not fathom how they get anything done at all. I do not know if it is still like that because I have not been there in a while ...but I will see because I am going in May again. So it was kinda a surprise as that was the first time in an African airport and I wondered if this was the way they do their business. But everything was okay...we got through...pushing and shoving...whatever we had to do.

Some culture shock took place, but the joy of being in Africa made it all worthwhile. I loved every moment of the trip. Gorée Island blew me away. I could not hold back the tears.

It was just so...I guess...I don't know if it was a spiritual thing...it was just something...it seems like something come over me....I just felt like I was going back in

time...I don't know what happened...I really can't explain it.... I felt so ... calm and peaceful there, for some reason... it just looked like.... I don't know how to explain it. I just had a ... it wasn't a culture shock ... it wasn't a bad feeling ... and actually it was good feeling. I felt really good about the island. I felt like it was...I wanted to stay there. I actually wanted to spend the night, but they would not let us. So I don't know ... it was somewhere ... and I HAVE NOT been back. And I think about it a lot. You know, I am planning to go again coming up this year. I will be going in May and I will try to take a little more account... write something down, if possible about my experience.

Returning to America

I was not ready to come back. The trip was only schedule for 7 days, but I paid for and additional three days and even that was not long enough, but I had to get back, job and other obligations calling. I JUST wanted to see more, and more of the people, and to interact. I was having such a WONDERFUL TIME. It was just like...I don't know.... In fact some of the stuff that I saw was just like going back in time. Because you know how they have ... you'll see a cart, then you'll see somebody in a wagon. It was just so fascinating. Just learning the culture, being with the people, going out We went to this town called Touba. We interacted and here we were with these people in this town. I guess it was like a religious pilgrimage for a lot people. We did so many things, that I just didn't feel like I had a chance to experience enough of it. And I just needed to be there a little bit longer. So I did extend it three more days. But that was about ... I had to come back to work. So that was that.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (availability of products)?

I use shea butter, buy clothes, I visit their stores. We have ...you know ...people that own stores...Africans ... some African people here they import different things. And I go to their store and buy some of the things out of their stores. It's not... I don't buy a lot of things because I don't know enough about a lot of...especially the different food items. But I do patronize those places. Where ever I go I try to look that up.

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

Yes since I hate driving long distances, its good to be able to afford to fly. I must say I can't image going to Africa other than by air.

Aviation has improved my life ... the fact that I do not have to drive when I go ...travel. I mean...I don't really particularly...it makes me...you know like I go home... Michigan...my family is in Michigan, I am in Alabama... When I get ready to go home to family reunion or whatever, I can go with the ease of knowing that I will not be worn out from driving when I get...and I don't have to think about driving the ten hours or twelve hours to come back. So I like the convenience of flying. That is mainly what aviation does for me as an individual. It saves time and takes less toll on the body. As you get older you don't really have the stamina to drive ten or twelve hours.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

March 2007 to Ghana, West Africa

How many times have you been?

I've been 6 times

Why did you go?

I went to learn about African culture, to meet the people and see for myself what Africa is all about.

In the summer of 1999, I had experienced a family tragedy, and needed to get away. I met some students and joined them going to Ghana. There I met a few people some have since visited me in America. My real reason for going was I wanted to see the culture of the African people and to learn from them. I wanted to see positive things rather than the TV images of starvation and wars. My attitude was they could teach me. I recognize there are many people in need, I enjoyed, saw, and experienced many positive things. The family interactions really impressed me a lot; they have a wonderful way of interacting.

What truly surprised me was the dominance of religion. When you see a store named the "Jesus Christ Cleansers" and the "Lord is my Sheppard Shoe Store," it cause you to pause and wonder. The signs are everywhere, Christian named store. I guess they don't really appreciate us telling them anything about their embrace of religion. If you have any thoughts that are not positive about Christianity, it is best you keep it to yourself. They will get offended. At the same time they come to you with worshiping idols pictures. I have gotten away from all that worshiping idol pictures of Jesus. I did not go there to preach to anyone, but in the meantime they wanted me to buy these pictures and calendars of Jesus. It was difficult trying not to offend, so I just said I do not put images in my house.

How do you think they go to be that way?

I think the English people [outsiders] when there, they convinced them, I suppose. They did a very good job of it on the continent and here; they did the same thing here. I guess you can almost do anything to anybody if you use the technique of making them depended on you, and then you show them these images. I find we are a very spiritual and religious people, and I guess if you see these people [outsiders] doing so well, you think their God is better, somehow. The question of how they did it is baffling, but it is still going on. I think a lot of us here in the United States, we know, but we just go along with what's going on now, because it has been going on for so long, and all our families are connected to this. So we just stick with it because we figure it is not hurting nobody and we'll just stay with this. It seems to be working for us in a cultural way not...you know, I don't do it...I am not into it anymore so I do not know how they keep it going. When I went to the church on Gorée Island, they had a picture of the Pope, so there is a little influence there in Senegal too. But in Senegal, most of them are Muslims, and at least they have a spiritual leader, who they revere, who is Black--the Mourides. It makes a little more sense to me; than having someone outside of yourself that you are going to revere. And that's my take on Ghana and Senegal, the differences in their cultural, spiritual, religious, Muslim, Christian, influences.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

I'm doing that now. I will try to get the best price and most direct flight I can. I am planning to return to Senegal in May. Home to America for a couple of weeks then go back to Ghana.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?

Most likely will have to go by way of Europe or North Africa. Akosia's initial reply to going by boat was an emphatic "No! I would not go by boat... I don't think so... That would take a while...going by boat...if there was no direct flight..."

Why do they charge so much to go to Afrika? People have been discussing. Airfare to Ghana is so much more than going to Europe. More people would go if the prices were lower. \$1500-1600 is too much for the average person. If you can pay \$1100-1200 or less like going to Europe, more people would go. I intend to go to Africa once a year. I would go two to three times a year if it was cheaper.

Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions: How have you been affected?

What were your expectations and how were they met?

I tried to go with an open mind. I went there to learn about the culture and I did.

What surprised you and disappointed you?

I was disappointed in the western influence and a little surprised to see so much of it going on. It appeared a lot of lot of them want to get away from everything African. Their hair is straightened, they use relaxer. *Why don't we try to keep and maintain the braiding and the beautiful way we keep wear our hair?* So many people bleach their skin, the dress is western clothes versus African dress. It is their prerogative, of course. It seems the dress of the women in Senegal which is so beautiful is traditional African. It was very disappointing seeing so much western influences.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Africa is a part of me. I could never conceive of not wanting to go there. I feel at home there, they are my people, they are my family, I am very much comfortable there. I do not have to...as compared to Europe. Europe was fine but it was not like being in Africa. I can identify in Africa. Even the music....I know INSTINCTLY this is my home, the beat, the music; I am in time with the rhythm. It's me, it is just the place, and this is the time where I don't have to think about "I am Black." You know you are Black-so what. Here you have to worry about what you.... When I go my blood pressure goes down, I don't have any aches, all my pains go away. I sleep better. But when I get back home the aches and pains return. There I did not have any air conditioning, and I did not complain; it did not bother me at all, I only had a little fan. I slept very well. My body works well there. I believe you just described HOME.

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Yes! Africa is home. I want to build a house in Ghana, plans are in process. I would like to leave that house as a legacy for my children and grandchildren. Some friends of mine have already purchased the land and their home is in construction.

Where are your ancestral roots?

My roots are most likely West Africa. I have no plans to have any DNA testing completed. I do not need proof in writing by someone else that Africa is my motherland. I KNOW it is my home.

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Africa is by all means my home as I said most likely West Africa. A special love. I feel Africa is the place where I can go to whine down and get away from everything. I can go there and the pace is slowed down and I can just relax and be ME. I can go there and relax much more so that here. It is home.

How did you communicate?

A lot of the people spoke English.

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

I saw people who looked like many of my relatives. Their actions were much like mine and many people I know. Family was very important there and this is still the case with my family. We share many of the values of the people. Hand and body movement all were familiar. The way we talk; we might be a little louder than African people. They have a quite politeness. We are each open, we travel with music; we all are a very social people.

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

Some of the food I loved. There were dishes that did not please the palate. I could see the influence of religion as detailed earlier. Family customs were very important.

Describe how you were received

I was received just like another member of the family in Senegal and in Ghana, at least that's the way I felt. Over 10 years since visiting Senegal...nice. People invite you in, or have you to dinner, or invited to a little setting. I am also Muslim and was invited as if I was one of the family. It made me feel quite at home. They were very gracious, very accommodating, not in a reciprocal way because of my giving; I gave nothing and they were excited to welcome me, a Muslim coming from America to visit.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

I don't complain as much about what I don't have, and get very disturbed when I hear so many of us complain about things we want not need.

What do you now do differently after returning?

I try to get to know more people in the US who are from Africa. There seems to be a rift between African and Blacks [Africans born in America]. A cultural divide. blacks don't treat them nice. I want to get to know folks from Africa and they to learn more about us. There is a divide...each try to stick together. When I visit there house I am the only American there. I reach out trying to show all of us don't think the way they may think we think. Some African American asks offensive questions like "Where do you live

and what do eat?" They have to reply African people do not swing from trees, and eat each other. They live in houses and eat food. Education is needed on both sides to bridge the divide.

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

Not so much changed. I do talk a lot about Africa and try to influence others to take a trip there.

The relationship ... with my brother and members of my family ... there is a divide. My brother wants nothing to do with Africa; he is very negative and it upsets me. He says he does not want to see a bunch of poor people. I get annoyed and upset that a man his age is unable to.... I get defensive about it. We all need to travel to know more about ourselves and each other.

What are your new expectations?

To build a house in Ghana and convince my family to come home to Africa at least once.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

In Africa I feel so alive and returning to America after staying over a month in Ghana was a little depressing. America may have a lot of material things but Africa is where my heart is. Just the fact I could not wake up and go out to the street and get fresh pineapple was a big let down. America can be quite dull. Africa may be many things but dull, NEVER, for me. America is dull. Over there, there is a rhythm...Africa has a rhythm ... moving to the beat. Here you have to deal with all this phony stuff. When I came back after spending a month in Ghana as I got closer and closer to my house, I became depressed and more depressed. In Ghana I can go buy pineapple fresh off the tree ... now that morning I could not DO that, I WAS MAD AND ready to turn around and go back. So AFRICA IS A MAGIC PLACE...it is full of problems...it is MY mother and you love her...whatever.

Demographics: Please tell me about yourself

Occupation – Retired Auto Worker

Educational level – High school two years college

Marital status – Divorced

Age – 69

City and State Born – Arkansas

Childhood/grewup – Michigan from age 6 to 43.

Adult – now live in Huntsville, Alabama since 1982

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

BARACHA

Today is Tuesday, December 25, 2007, I am Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I am involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Baracha. This interview is divided into three areas.

Travel – Transportation: What were your travel experiences (airport, flight, cost, time)?

The most amazing thing was that I could get to Africa in 6 ½ hours from Queens. That floored me! That was the most unbelievable thing, that the continent of Africa was just that close via an airplane!

Going/departing America

Once I finally made the decision that I was going to go to Africa, I was so excited. Nothing bothered me. I do not remember any unpleasant experiences, I was smiling, I got to the airport maybe 4 hours ahead of time. I was so nervous that I would leave my ticket home that the first time I went I left my ticket with John, who was our tour guide. I was like a child...I did not want to be responsible, because I know he would have it and I was too excited that I would just walk out of the house without my ticket. And there I am sitting there three and one-half, four hours because I was not going to be late.

While in Africa

About transportation in Africa...I was pleasantly surprised...we traveled in an air conditioned bus, we had English speaking guides, I was never uncomfortable...the roads were kind of rough in spots, but I was in Africa. This was like a dream come true. Nothing was going to bother me...even the bad roads.

Return to America

The return trip to America was a very reflective flight. Each day I kept a journal, I just kept going over and over my journal. I could not wait to get my pictures developed

so I could relive it over and over again. I was happy having made the decision to go and going with the group that I did go with. That was important.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (availability of products)?

Yes actually, aviation has contributed to my needs here in America. I find if I am planning a trip and I make that plan far enough in advance, I can surf the web and find an inexpensive flight, which makes my moving about the country more accessible than many years and years ago.

The main product that I use that comes from Africa is shea butter. I use it on my entire body from lubricating my hair to my feet and everything in between. It is readily available in New York.

I am mainly interested in textiles. I enjoy sewing; I enjoy making my clothing from authentic African fabric. I did buy a lot in Senegal and Ghana, but whenever I feel the need I can go to the African Market in Harlem and get what I want.

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

The main contribution of aviation to my need is in time saved in getting from point A to point B. The older I get the more I realize that my time is valuable and I don't mind spending the extra dollars to fly as opposed to using all that time on the road.

Last visit to West Africa

My last visit to West Africa was in 2004.

Number of Visits

I have been only two times.

Why did you go?

When asked why you visit Africa, Baracha gleamed and said "Oh wow!" It has been a dream in the back of my mind and maybe eight or nine years ago, I started associating with African-centered people. And each one of them had been many times. They showed me pictures and shared their experiences. I finally go to the point where I said that's it. I am going and on the day I decided I gave the tour operator a \$200.00 non-refundable deposit, and I knew I was going to go.

My first thought upon arrival in Africa was "My God, I finally made it."

"And when I saw the Atlantic Ocean on the African side, I took off my shoes and socks and put my foot--I have pictures of my feet, in the water, in the Atlantic Ocean, but on the African side. Those are some of my most revered pictures--of my feet, and in the soil and in the water -- African Side."

When Baracha asked what was she feeling, she responded: "The emotions...I finally did it, I kissed the ground,...I did all the things you see in you see in pictures, BUT I DID IT! I was so HAPPY to physically be there that for a while I was kinda speechless, I was just trying to take everything in. The air was different, but the people were familiar to me--very familiar to me. I FELT AT HOME!"

How will you prepare for next flight?

With great anticipation.

If no direct flights, how would you consider going? Or would you?

Oh I would, I have talked to others who went via way of Europe to North Africa to West Africa, and once my mind is made up that I am going...to say Senegal or Ghana or wherever. How...by any means necessary, I will get there. I am not worried about it. The decision just has to be made and everything else will fall into place one way or the other, I will get there.

The second area is: Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions: How have you been affected?

What were your expectations and how were they met?

I expected, only because I talked to a lot of people that have gone and I read a lot, I expected to see folks who looked like me, my relative, my neighbors, and my family, and I did.

What surprised you and disappointed you?

I was surprised to see that the young women had hair straighter than I ever processed my hair in the United States and that the only women that were wearing natural hair...hair-dos was the very younger girls and the older women. I saw weaves and false fingernails; I mean it was just like being at home. I was expecting to see more women in traditional African attire than I actually saw. They were wearing clothes that I had left at home. I packed what I thought was my Afrocentric clothes and they were wearing the stuff I had left at home. How did that make you feel. Kinda strange because...I said wait a minute, I am in Africa, and they should be dressing like African, whatever that meant at the time. But that's the first thing that popped into my mind. OK. I am coming from New York, so I am dressed like a New Yorker trying to dress like an African and they are Africans trying to dress like New Yorkers. Yeah, it was kinda strange there for a while, until I realized that more African Americans have actually traveled over there and have influenced their style of dress and grooming.

Do you think that that is the only place the influence came from?

No. I don't. Well, they watch TV, you know the baggy pants, the negative stereotypes of African Americans has been exported to Africa and they are emulating that, The young men and women are emulating that.

What disappointed you?

I don't think I had any disappointments. I looked at everything as a new experience and just embraced it. I was not disappointed at all.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Oh there's...I went twice...for example...I went to Gorée Island twice. My reaction the second time was very different from my reaction the first time. And I CAN'T IMAGE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN THE NEXT TIME I make that pilgrimage. It's a spiritual pilgrimage and I look upon it as so. And no matter where I or what other county

I go to in Africa I will always make it my business to make that pilgrimage to Gorée Island to sign the book as a returning descendent. And I have pictures of me doing that.

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

It's my ancestral home. I know that now.

How do you know that?

Because last year I had my mitochondrial DNA tested. And TODAY DECEMBER 25, I know that the GENETIC MARKERS in my DNA are the same as the BALANTA PEOPLE living in Guinea Bissau, the MENDE PEOPLE living in Sierra Leone, and the KRU PEOPLE living in Liberia, all on the WEST COAST OF AFRICA ARE MY RELATIVES.

When did you get that?

I met a man a year ago Kwanzaa. And he went through the experience and he gave me the information, and I sat on that information for three or four months. I wanted to do.... It's just like making the decision to go to Africa. It's something you wanted to do and for some reason...no, I've got to think about it, got to think about it. And I had it on my desk...then I said that's it. I had the package, I had sent my...I had paid for it. I hadn't swabbed my mouth...it took about three months for me to finally swab my mouth. And I just sat there and said today is the day. Mentally, I'm ready...I've got to know. And I did it. That was the longest six weeks of my life.

And when the envelope came there was a certificate telling me about these "hints." Of course a lot of it was very technical and I didn't understand...but I did understand that I have GENETICALLY matched relatives in three countries in Africa. And I don't care what I look like today because I know I was homogenized along the way but DON'T YOU EVER SAY I ain't AFRICAN BECAUSE I KNOW I AM. And I wear my African hat PROUDLY. I LOVE IT. I MADE THAT CONNECTION.

Are you planning to go there, either of those countries?

I have been surfing the net and the three countries I mentioned are not as stable as Senegal, Ghana. You gotta look out for self. I don't think I am ready to put myself in that position. I am in several chat rooms talking to other African Americas who have had the test...and some of them... I have met a couple of people who are Balanta, I met some Kru...they live in Bed-Sty, they live in the hood where I use to live and it's...we look and we smile at each other...and all we can do is HUG! Who knew! We REALLY ARE related! Down to our DNA we are related and it's a FABULOUS FEELING of CONNECTION!

It is exciting and I am encouraging EVERYBODY that I know--JUST DO IT...JUST DO IT [have your DNA tested].

Where are your ancestral roots?

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Well having actually seen with my own eyes what I saw...I readily recognize the stereotypes and I just absolutely dismiss it. It's sad...I saw some very sad things, but overall, I am glad I went, I plan to go back many times, God willing, I will go back many times and I have great anticipation about going, touching, feeling, eating, smelling, hugging, listening to MY PEOPLE! I don't have to understand what they are saying...but they are smiling...their body language is friendly and I FEEL AT HOME!

How did you communicate?

With a smile, open arms, and positive body language. I don't speak French, I didn't speak any of the native dialects but somehow or other... when I spoke slowly in English and signed as to what I want I made myself understood.

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

The scary thing...I am walking down the street and I knew that my mother-in-law died five years ago and I swore this was Margarita walking down the street. And I just stopped dead in my tracks and I stared at the women so bad I had to apologize. Fortunately she did understand English and I explained what was going on. And she said don't be surprised you are probable going to see other people that you recognize. It was absolutely uncanny. I saw people that look like people in my own family, neighbors...THEY ARE ME...I AM THEM...IT WAS LIKE WALKING DOWN THE STREET IN ANY URBAN SETTING WHERE A LOT OF BLACK FOLKS ARE.

Anything else you recognize, sayings, actions?

A lot of things were mimics, not necessarily positive things, especially the young people...that they see on TV...the body language...the "Yo"...but they were talking to each other. But I saw that...I left that at home...I guess I wanted to see something more African.

What I am asking is things that you know from here [America] that may not have a today connotation...but things from maybe your mother or some elder person that they did that took on a meaning after you saw that same kind of thing when in Africa.

If even goes more personal than that. Several years ago I started a business—recycling cardboard. Using things that I found to make something brand new. When I saw a young man on Gorée Island with a rusty nail and a rock hitting another rock to carve a figure I said this is the art of "Make-Do." He took what he found and he is making a piece of art. Subsequently I asked if I could photograph him doing it, I told him I was buying it, and I wanted to take a picture with him. I took those three pictures the first trip. When I went back the second time, three years later, there he was and I took copies of the pictures for him, and I showed him that Owl on my mantle piece, in my house, in Queens County, New York City, USA,...tears...he had tears. Because it was in place of honor with his picture on my mantle. .

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

Food is basically food. We call it collard greens, they call it something else, it tastes like something I had in the Caribbean which was callaloo, which I loved. Except

we season ours with pork they season theirs with fish but it was the same thing and it was delicious. Everything was FRESH. Very, very good; tasted very good. Food-wise it was a feast for me, cause I love seafood. One minute...I saw them actually come in on the boats with buckets of fresh fish, they took it to the outdoor kitchen and twenty minutes later I was eating that fish.

I will also tell you bout the experience with the live goat but that's another story. Cause when I saw the goat the goat was squealing but he was alive. And by the time we left the compound in Ghana we were eating shish kabob and that was the goat. So I have had the FRESHEST FOOD EVER in Africa.

Describe how you were received.

Very respectfully. I noticed that...I didn't see people in Africa, older people, with gray hair. I know they know something...no gray haired people...I don't care...they could have been a hundred years old...their hair was black. And here I am with this white hair, a face full of freckles; I was like odd man out. I was treated very respectfully. I don't know if they thought I was ancient, or albino, or strange. But, I got some odd steers, and I just smiled, just smiled and opened my arms to embrace. Yea, but I was treated respectfully.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

OH YES! OH GOD, YES! Oh yes, it did. It has in SO many ways. I embrace a talent that was in me all the time and for the sake of this interview I call it the "Art of Make-Do." Taking something and renewing it, changing it. I am not as frivolous about "things" anymore. I use to be...before my first trip I was more wasteful than I am now. I am much more conservative in my consumerism...even to the point where...I use to get up in the morning and every room I went in as I go into the room I turn the light, the radio, the TV. I do not do that any more. I have been in blackouts over there.

When preparing to go I was told to make sure to bring candles and I laughed...but I brought them. And dog gone it, I needed them too...I was glad that I had them. So things that I took for granted...take for granted here...even the short period of time that I spend over there...I've realize what these basic things. Fresh water...I turn on the tap, I've got fresh water. I'm hungry, I go to my refrigerator, nothing that I want to eat, I call Dominos...I call take out. They bring it to my house, it's hot! Yeah!...yeah...yeah...BIG CHANGE.

Has your change in experiences changed the community? The community being the people you interact with.

I hope it has...inasmuch as I take time to talk to children more often than I ever did. Some of them tolerate me out of respect, other tell me to get lost. I talk to the adults about my travels there and invite them to get in contact with the group that I traveled with, which was an excellent...it was learning experience, it was a pilgrimage. It was a journey that I would like to see...even members in my own family don't seem to be interested in going. I showed them my album...one relative said "you stayed there" [surprised]. I said well where did you think I was going to stay. She said in a hut someplace. I said, Oh no, I could have. We were invited to, but I stayed in a four-star hotel, with air conditioning, CNN in English, and I could go to the cocktail lounge every night and get my vodka and tonic. I was very happy and very comfortable!

What do you now do differently after returning?

Well, the one thing that I like to do is where African clothing for no other reason other than I have it. And watch how I am received. When I where my African clothing and I go into the barber shop to get my hair cut the raunchy video get turned off immediately. Men stop me in the street and said Sister you look beautiful. I wish my wife would wear her hair like that. I wish my wife would wear clothing like that. Now I come back the next day with my jeans and tee shirt and nobody pays any attention. But there is something about wearing African attire in America that gets the respect. Sometimes with a knuckle-head hoodlum on the corner Ms. you look beautiful. Yeah! Very interesting. It's as though they understand that there is a difference and they are holding it in high esteem but they are still hanging out with the hoochie mamas...not encouraging them to emulate. But that is where those of us who have the opportunity to travel MUST CONTINUE to talk to our young people.

One other thing that changed...I when into one barber shop and they were opening up a tattoo parlor. I looked at the tattoos that they were...I said this is not good. I said you are servicing African American people. We are not Chinese I said I am going to bring you something, I am going to GIVE it to you because YOU need to understand...and my sacred (I did replace it) my Adinkra Symbol Chart. I said STUDY THE AFRICAN SYMBOLS. SEE WHAT THEY MEAN. And if our people are going to decorate their bodies, it should be WITH SYMBOLS FROM THEIR PEOPLE. Cause they are not Chinese.

And how is that working out? So far, so good. I have not gotten a tattoo.

Did the person receive that well? Yes, he did. I have gone back from time to time and they are loving the GYE NYAME, the SANKOFA, NKYIN KYIN, oh they love that, and all the different ones. I said okay, you put it on their body but did you put it in their minds. Oh yeah, they were copying it down on pieces of paper because they wanted to know. This is...makes them seem very, very proud...Man, this is Africa...This is from Africa. So if we take time to educate them to let them know that no our history didn't start on the slave blocks here in Charleston and up and down the coast of the Caribbean. All of this culture that we had over there...I showed one kid a picture of an Ashanti King with the gold and I said and that is not "stupid gold"... that's real gold. You see those men attending...he's got so much gold on his arm, he can't lift his arm. Those men are to lift his arm when he waves to the people. That is solid gold from his land! And what are you wearing? Stupid gold...take that off and put on some beads from Africa until you can get over there and buy some African gold. [Laughing] Sometimes they just say Okay...okay.

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

Yes it has. I am mindful of their ignorance because it is the same ignorance I had before I started associating with "cultural people." And that was the turning point in my life. I started going to festival and participating in festivals where "AFRICAN" were there. Where my African American friends and neighbors were speaking to them...some in their own language...I was impressed with that. And I had just started...yeah this is cool!...Yeah these are my people!...yeah okay!...yeah, I'm down with this.

What are your new expectations?

To get more of the African people in the Diaspora in tuned with Africa. I use the analogy of Sankofa. Sankofa states that it is never too late to go back and fetch that which was left behind. But I added something to that. And it is simply this. We need to go back and fetch that which was hidden from us, because it was hidden for a reason! I feel mentally stronger...having seen the Ashanti's and going and listening to the folklore and knowing that my people were GREAT centuries ago. They call us the sun people, the ice people were living in caves...we were doing eye surgery and nobody was going to tell that story until Black people researched it. And all of that was hidden from us for a reason. And IT IS EMPOWERING! And sometime it could be even be dangerous because I do go off sometimes!

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Well, America is where I was born. And I think the older I get the more I realize how powerful Willie Lynch was in his doing and I understand why he had to do what he had to do. Having said that, having read his writing it is my crusade to inform as many as will listen about the brainwashing that we are still living today. A lot of Black folks don't want to hear it. But those who do...you can pull it up on the computer, you can go to the library and get it. You need to understand what was done to us and why it was done to us. It was never intended that we on this side reconnect with Africa. That was never the intention. Yeah, send them back to Liberia, fine. But we were never supposed to connect culturally. So when I go, when I was working... and I went into a meeting wearing my Kente, having cut my processed dyed hair... WOE...What's up with that ...Back to my roots!...Well, what country are you from?...At this time I have no idea...so I claim the whole continent. So this year I am from Ghana, next year it will be Mali. Since I don't know, I claim EVERYTHING! But now I know!

The third and final are is Demographics and all questions are optional. You may answer or not as you choose. Please tell me about yourself.

Occupation

Very proud to answer all the Demographics.

I retired from a part-time job because I never... my husband afforded me the opportunity to never having to go out and get a serious full time job. So I retired from the NAACP. And I created my own one woman business, I am an artesian and I have been that for over ten years, and I do very well with that. It sent me to Africa twice and it will send me again.

So we are happily residing in Queens County, New York City, USA.

Educational Level

I did two years in college, just because my mother wanted me too.

Marital status

As of right now I am married to the same man for 44 years.

I currently reside in Queens, New York.

Age

And tomorrow, December 26th, I will be 65 years old, and arrogant and sassy and strong [Happy Birthday] as I can be.

Born

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York.

Childhood

Childhood in Brooklyn - Bed Sty[vestant], New York

Adult

Once we bought a car we realized we could not live in Brooklyn because there were no parking spaces so we moved to Queens where we have our own driveway and I have my parking space. And all the neighbors know not to park in that spot, because that's her spot. They all respect that.

What questions I should have asked?

Comments.

In reflection:

I do tell...I do explain to people when I talk about Africa don't look upon it as a white linen black patent leather sandal vacation. Look upon it...you are making a pilgrimage. My first pilgrimage to Gorée Island was so emotional I could not physical step into the cells where the women were kept. I could just stand outside and cry. The second time I went, I was able to go into the cell and one of the people in the group suggested that we take off our shoes and socks and feel the floor. Cold, clammy, and all I could think of was women...maybe pregnant, maybe on their period...standing, sitting, sleeping in the DAMP place and I can feel it. I am sitting here right now and I am in a comfortable room [at the hotel] and I can feel chills go up and down my spine.

This is a pilgrimage that changes you if you are AWAKE. Because there was one young lady, after leaving Gorée Island, she was on the boat and I wanted to throw her in the water because she TOTALLY MISSED everything. I was in a state of grace and she was yapping...it was so bad that a white man said "please don't throw her overboard." Cause he saw I was like this [intensely angry] at her and he said "she doesn't understand." I said, no she doesn't... my God...how could she not. He said "not everybody understands...not everybody is ready." And this man talked me down. I didn't want to look at his face, I did not particularly want to look at his face but he saw...I mean...I never play cards because my emotions are on my face....And he said "no, back off,...no...no!" Cause I just wanted to grab her and throw her overboard. But...so many folks here... and she was not ready. Some people aren't ready. They go and they are still not ready. They experience and they don't know what they have experienced.

So, I will continue to talk and share my experiences in the hope that if I talk to twenty and I get one, okay, that is one more that understands what I'm talking about.

The interviewer said, Thank you, and thank you for doing what you are doing. Baracha replied, thank you for the interview, I feel blessed to be able to do it. Thank you

for the opportunity. You brought up some things...when I was reading the questions...it brought up some things, some positive things, very good things.

About the DNA results--One of the things said when the package was returned was that they are not called "tribes" they are "PEOPLE." Receipt of DNA was very, very exciting, very emotional. Because here you have it in black and white. I had all the dots and the different things...but the results of that was...BOOM!...TODAY, living there you have people who have the same DNA markers as you have. **THERE IS THE CONNECTION!**

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

BEBE

Today is Saturday, December 22, 2007; I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with BeBe.

Okay, BeBe, we're going to get started. It's broken into three groups, the first group is travel and transportation, and, so, that's where we'll start. I just need you to tell me about your experiences, some of your experiences in traveling, like the airport, flight, cost, time.

I thought that I would have more of a problem because of the length of travel time that we would have to travel, but with the people that we were with, and after becoming friendly with people with the airline I felt like was quite comfortable. Each one had their own tv set to see in front, so you didn't have to watch something that you didn't necessarily didn't want to watch, you had a variety or if you just chose not to watch anything at all. I was doing a journal on my trip, so I did a lot of writing. I was talking to other people and listening to experienced travelers and everything, so all of that made the time go by quite fast, I didn't have an anxiety in traveling of....when are we there yet, so, you know.....

Great. Cost, and flight schedule, was it convenient?

Fine, it was not a problem. I remember, at one point, writing out my check because I think I had waited.....I did, I waited until the last minute to decide to go, my girlfriend and I, and, I remember sitting at the table writing out the amount of the ticket, and, as I was writing out the amount, I remember thanking God that I was able to write a check for that specific amount, that I was able to do that check.

What about your experiences in going and departing from the airport?

Not a problem, everything went smoothly. Our tour manager had everything intact for us. We got there in plenty, plenty, plenty of time to sit and to lollygag, to go get

something to eat, to meet the people we were traveling with, so there was no rush, and, no, it was just a good travel.....it was all a good traveling experience.

Great. Good. While in Africa what was your traveling experience?

Again, excellent. I don't have too much of a complaint of being in Africa. I was grateful that I was able to go because it had always been something that I've wanted to do, and a lot of the things that I did in Africa, both on my first and second trip, were things that I thought I saw in magazines or saw on tv, and saw other people do, and I was grateful to God, that I was able...I was looking at myself and saying...this is me here, being able to do this.

How about traveling, returning back to America? Any transportation issues?

The only problem there was, I remember, coming back from...we had left our group to go to Gambia, and coming back from Gambia, we were meeting up with the group again in Senegal so that we could all catch our plane together to go back home to New York. And, in Gambia, there seemed to have been a problem with the flight, the plane coming in to take us back to Senegal, and it was delayed. There was a problem with this, that, and the other, and I remember sitting down looking up at the board, the time board, and, just thinking to myself, I'm not getting upset by this. I said a little prayer, and, I just said that, I know I'm not going to get to Senegal until I get to Senegal, you know, until a plane comes in, and I'm not gonna, I mean, if it comes it comes, if it doesn't come there's nothing I can do about it. I'm powerless over this, and I knew there was a God, and He knew that, you know, we needed to get back to ... cause it wasn't only myself; it was me and three other people and we needed to meet up with the group, and, lo and behold, looking up at the board we saw that the plane was coming in, and it was on time, and we were able to board, but, it was a little anxiety there from other people. Sometimes, other people's anxiety can come off on you, but I just tried to stay focused on my prayer, and, knowing that, you know, we're going to get out of here. It'll come, it'll come.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America? For the availability of products, how has aviation contributed to your needs in America? Have you been able to obtain things that come from Africa specifically, in terms of what you do and need daily? Some people have talked about Shea butter, some people talked about fabric, you know, how has the availability of things.....

Well, I don't know, I found that in Africa, although I enjoyed the shopping, and things that were available there for me to bring back, I, also, find those things here in New York. The same things, so it wasn't so much that I was, like, I mean, if I bought something, I bought it to say that I bought it in Africa, but I could have gotten it in New York. I don't know if that's the answer to what you were...

Well, not exactly. The question is how did the things get to New York? The availability – is it, let's say 20 years ago could you go and buy that thing in New York or would you have to go there 20 yrs ago to get it versus....

I think a lot of people have formed a lot of businesses – the guys that carved the statues or the fabric that they have, they're importing a lot of the things here because they

want their things sold. I know in one part of Africa that I was at, and I can't remember what country, one of the young men approached me and gave me his card, and asked me if there was a way that he could give me his product, so I could take to America to have it sold here. So, I think, maybe, that might be a way that they do it if they can't find another means, you know, they will ask. But, somehow or another it gets here, it gets here because so many of the things from Africa are here.

And, do you use those.....

Oh, I use them, yeah, oh, yeah, yes.

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

Oh, sure, you can't get from point A to point B without some sort of aviation. Particular, I'm going from one country to another, I don't think it was.....I think at a time, years ago, years ago, years ago, I remember looking at different parts of aviation, going to the airport it was always a novelty..... just, oh, wow, you know, going there and you see the people, and the people were always so nicely dressed because people were traveling. And, now, it's come so bad that people dress any kind of way, you just go, and people are just there, you know. It's like the novelty is worn because we're flying all over the place, anywhere, anytime, yeah.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

In 2006, going to Kenya.

2006 you went to Kenya, that's in East Africa, how about.....

Oh, you mean, when I went to Senegal and that was in 2005, I believe.

2005, okay. And, how many times have you been?

I've been to Africa twice.

Okay. Why did you go?

Oh, I've always had a passion to go to Africa. I still have that passion, even so, I hope to go visit other parts of Africa. I'd love to go.

But, why?

I, I love our people. I know that that's our Motherland, and we have so much history that we need to know. There are so much of things that we need not to be ignorant of.....to know, and to be there, and to see, and to do. It's just a passion in me that..... I just have a love for it.

How would you prepare for your next flight?

Probably bring less clothes. Yeah, probably bring less clothes, and a little bit wiser in my traveling in what I bring, what I need and don't need.

If there were no transatlantic flights going to Africa, how would you consider getting there, and would you go?

Oh, sure, I would go. I think there'd be a layover somewhere. When I went to Kenya, we laid-over in London for a number of hours, but, you know, even with doing that that made the trip much longer, we found things to do. We became closer as a group, it got us to know, you know, because we stayed in one group and everybody did what everybody wanted to do, you know, we didn't go one person here and one..... we tried to stay together as a group, and become more closer and became family-like, and looked out for one another. It was the start of that even while we were in London, and still not getting to Africa, so it kept us closer.

That's the end of the transportation and travel area. Moving into stereotypes – cultural perceptions: how have you been affected? What were your expectations and how were they met in going to Africa?

I don't know what my expectations were because I had never been there before – other than what I saw on TV, but, I know that some of the things that I saw was heart wrenching, very emotional for me. I think I want to say the children and the women, and in that order, affected me more.

You mentioned TV – what was it that, what was it that TV caused you to think you would see or not see, what did it, what was your picture before you went?

Okay, it wasn't visualized, so maybe whatever I read in a book or magazine or something, I couldn't actually see until I got there and actually see the red dirt, instead of the dirt being brown like it is here in New York. It's absolutely red dirt, you could see the dryness of the land, or what parts where greenery at to.....just, actually, visual.....well, yes, to visualize it and see all that I saw. I couldn't actually picture that from TV, I mean, TV gives you one time, but, oh, wow, this is what it really looks like, you know, you get a different look at it.

You mentioned – the children and the women, and that things were heart wrenching, what was that?

Well, that was, that was really something for me. I even get filled up sometimes even when I think about it, what we have and how we're so blessed. Just to see the little kids with clothes that are just held together with a piece of string, not being clean, not having, but, yet you give them one pencil, and the smiles on their face is like they just are just happy in their lifestyle. We, I guess, sometimes, tend to think that they need so much, and, yet, it's because of what we have, that we have so much, and, they're in their lifestyles, how are we to say that they're not happy, that, you know, because what we have, they don't have. It does make you feel that because you know there's so much more you could.....and, even if it's just you want to hug them and pick them up or, you know, whatever..... seeing them walk, taking them, sometimes, two hours, just so they can have breakfast, one meal. Or, even, carrying their own chair because they need that chair to sit down. They need a guardian, a parent, to hold their hand.

What was surprising? What surprised you, and what disappointed you?

That surprised me. Disappointed me?

Both?

I don't think I was.....if there was disappointment, it was disappointment on our end because of what we don't do for them. I wasn't disappointed by them because what could they do to disappoint me. I was in full concept of their rights and wondering how could people live like that. There's such a need there. Things that I see our kids, and what our kids get, and they appreciate one piece of food – a piece of gum – one stick of gum. They appreciate a piece of candy. They appreciate, give me a hug. It, also, surprised me how the village, the men, I remember one of the days that we went to and all of the women were around there working. They were taking firewood in, and cooking, and doing things, and, the men just sits around and do nothing, and it's the women that do all the work. That was a little surprising. The men gather on the roads and sit and talk all day, and it's the women..... Another thing I found surprising, how the women can walk from one village to another while we were on the bus and you could see, or you can't see where they're walking from and where they're walking to. It's so long and all they have on their feet are these shoes made of rubber tires from the car, and walking, sometimes, with babies on their back, and, maybe, carrying something on their head. They walk, and it's dry. I remember always wondering when I see them on the bus “where are they going?” “where did they come from?” because you don't see nothing – from yeah, all the way, you don't see nothing, where did they come from, where are they going?

Given the opportunity, would consider another visit?

Oh, definitely, without a doubt.

Why?

Just because of my love for going.

Are you looking at the African continent as....

No.

How do you see Africa n relationship to you?

Basically, I think it's given me more of an education to know of before, I know firsthand. Not from TV, or reading from a book, I know firsthand. So, it's given me an education.

Where are your ancestral roots?

My family is from Portugal.

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Beautiful people.

How did you communicate?

Well, our guide, well, we had orientation. There were certain words that are used there as yes, no, thank you, and how much, all of that – which I don't remember all of that now, but there were certain words and phrases that he gave us that became quite useful. And, then, while you're there you learn to pick up certain things because you hear it said so many times. Either if it's not among the people of Africa, it's among your group

that if the well traveled people of Africa know, and will teach you. So you could...and, then, a lot of them spoke English too.

You mentioned orientation – was that something that you did, or tell me more about your orientation

It prepared you. It prepared us for the trip, especially, like, the first time that I went, it prepared us about our monies that we spend, how would we be traveling, and what would be required of us. Just a well planned thing, so that we would have some sort idea in our traveling. What to pack, what not to pack, just a basic outline that I thought was very, very helpful. You know, you think because you travel, and I've traveled quite a bit, and you think because you're a traveler, that you know, oh, I know that, you know, he doesn't have to tell me, but, yeah, you do need to know. There was a lot of good information that was passed on. And, plus, too, other people that have traveled to Africa before, there's a lot of ideas, a lot of things around the table that are thrown out that, maybe, John might have forgotten, but somebody else might think of that's good information for you to have. That's a good thing to have – orientation, especially if you need to know certain things – immunizations, passport things, papers you need to have, monies, your prescriptions, your drugs. Things are vital and important that you need.

What or who did you recognize?

Everyday, walk around, with two eyes, and a nose, and a mouth, and ears, and some have short hair, long hair, light skinned, dark skinned, like us. It's funny that some people that are, maybe, Caucasian or something, they say, you know, you think because it's Africa – oh, they're like monkeys running around in the jungle, and, so, you know, well, I guess, maybe, I don't know that there are some who are traditional, tribal, or in villages, that walk around half naked, or if that's because that is their custom. But, basically, we see that they're a person too.

Were there any things that you saw here that you saw there too? Traditions, or customs, or sayings, or ...?

Probably their traditions would be a lot different than ours. I think that when we get here, even though, say somebody was African, and, they basically, I think they try to keep their traditions here, but, after a while, our American ways come in, and they kind of change up, so it would be a change, but basically, it's about the same. We have traditions, they have traditions. Different things that we do, I think that's with any group of people.

Within those different traditional things, that were different, could you identify anything, food, or customs, or principle, or value?

We don't take our..... I don't know, I forgot what you call where the women pound up and down with the grain, we don't do that. We can go to the store and buy our flour already powdered, refined, and, whatever in a package. They have to do this with every meal, they have to pound their grain so that they can use it to utilize it as food, we don't do that. Different things like that, especially if it's in a village. But, if it's in a city part, they can go to the store, you know and buy there things.

Describe how were you received?

Oh, very well. Part of it, I guess, is the African tourism. More and more money being spent there, so, naturally they want to, you know, welcome us with open arms and whatnot, so we would come back, tell our friends to come to this part of Africa to buy, you know, things from them, we'd buy their things, you know, their wares. They're going to be, they're going to be friendly, maybe, sometimes, overly friendly, especially when they want something.....they're quite....I didn't, I don't remember any part where there was a bad experience.

Was it intimidating at all?

Yes. In Senegal I found intimidating as far as shopping.

How would you define intimidating?

That they make you.....I remember John had told us at one point don't make eye contact because once you make eye contact with somebody that's selling something then they're going to hound you because they think that you want whatever it is that they're selling. So, if you just happen to even look at something, you know, like, we're used to shopping here in New York and picking up something, we see a vase or a fabric or something, we want to feel it, we want to examine it. There if you do something like that, you're in for, they're going to....."oh, Miss, Soul Sister, come buy this, I give you this" and they do not leave you alone until you purchase that. So, they can be quite intimidating that way.

How has your experience changed you, your perspective, and your community? Experience being.....

If anything, I think I've shared with people about going to Africa, why they should go.

How did you communicate?

We learned a few phrases from John, and....

Let me interrupt you again, it was at the top of this page. How were you received?

We were received quite well, because, like I said, they want us to spend our money. They want us to visit their shops, to eat their food, to spend money, to come back even at another time. I found them....I think, also, too, they kind of, at some point, are fascinated with us. They like the clothes that we wear, and ask us, you know, where we get these things, and they have. The women like our nail polish and lipsticks, and are always receptive to us giving them little Zawadi [gifts]. They're receptive, because I think that how they welcome you the more they got.

Would you explain some of your shopping experiences?

I learned a lot. I learned to examine my things that I buy more closely, instead of trying to buy so fast, because it wasn't until after I got home that a lot of my things were defective. But, that was my own fault, and I wasn't upset with that because that was just a learning experience. You tend to want to buy everything that you see because you think

you're getting such a sale, and because you feel it and you like it, and you say this is good, and they just rush you. You tend to want to buy things, but I think we need to be a little bit more observant on the items that we buy, because a lot of it is defective; especially, like, we're on a tour bus, and they come up to the window, and sell you things at the window of the bus. Like a bought a statue, two big statues, and because the guy had them in his hands, and, I forgot what I paid for them, a little closely, well, when I got them home, they don't even stand up straight. They fall down, they need to be shaved underneath, and I couldn't find anybody that would shave them for me so they could stand straight. I've taken them around to several places to.....that was my own fault. I bought a lot of things, I know next time when I go to be more careful with what I buy, and how I pack my things to because in my packing I broke a lot of my stuff.

Because the tape was turned off and turned back on, you had mentioned something about eye contact, would you share that again?

We were taught from John not to make eye contact with the vendors or the sellers of things because they seem to think once you look at their items that you are most interested, so they will hound you, you can't pick up an item and examine it, and look at it, and put it down, and walk away because they'll come to you and tell you "oh, I got a deal for you" and they want you to buy, and they stay on you. They will not let you go, I found that more in Senegal than in any other place.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, and your community?

I don't think it changed me in my community. It just changed me more to make me, like I said be more educated, and to want to go back and see more. It's changed me in the fact of.....World Vision, I've taken a child in Africa, a little girl named Clarice, she's 11 yrs old, her and her family. I think that without going to Africa, and, not knowing the needs there, I would have not done that, but because I know that there's a need. I think that World Vision is a good organization because a lot of times, like, even, while we were there and different things that you want to give to...oh, I have a "for instance." When I went to Africa the first time, when we came back, my girlfriend, Carmen and I, made up boxes of things to send to one of the schools in Africa. I just went to the .99 store, and I had a load, load, load of boxes. It wasn't even with Carmen's things yet, because I hadn't gotten anything from Carmen. But, every time I went into the .99 store, I'd buy books, and pencils, and slippers, and I just had a big box full of stuff. Well, when it came time to want to send the thing, I had a really great big problem – couldn't find where to send it to? I had a problem with anybody that I spoke to, and, this was going even in New York, or asking people that I know that are African or in Senegal where to send it to. It seems that there's a problem with sending it for cost, or to sending it and make sure that it's going to get to the place that it's supposed to go, and another problem I had, well, ironically, that package not got off to Africa because of the problem, and I was, like for a long time, trying to find how can I get this – it was a big box, and it had a lot of different things in it. It would have cost me an arm and a leg to send it, and I didn't know that. So, ironically, I had to take that box, and take it over to my church school, and that was what my intention was. Sometimes we have good intentions of doing things, but sometimes the road in doing that, it seems to be obstacles in the way, and there needs to be a better way. So, I find with World Vision I was able to do a little

something. But, because of what I've seen in being in Africa is what educated me to see that this was a need. There are so many things you get in the mail, and different things that support this, support that, and you give money here, and, you just take it and throw it in the garbage, but.....

What do you, now, do differently after your return, if anything?

I don't do anything. I like my African garb. I do wear a lot of African clothes.

Do you receive any comments about your attire?

Oh, most of the time, you know, it's look – ooo, look what you've got on, you know. If I go to church, I'll wear it, you know, they don't really pay ...you know, because they see me in African clothes.

Can you go back to, maybe, the first time?

I don't remember. I believe it was long before I went to Africa.

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

No

You mentioned earlier about trying to get the education, the knowledge with folks. Would that qualify with, maybe, helping to change perspectives or your relationship with other people....

Both times that I went to Africa, I did a journal. Journaling experiences in Africa on both trips, and coming back I held a journal reading in my house, and it was quite positive. In fact, when I did it the first time everybody really enjoyed it, so that when I went back again the second time and did it again, I had just as much people because they enjoyed it the first time to come back and do it again. I got very, very positive responses in doing that. When I did the journal, I did it because...I didn't do it to do a journal reading, I let some of the people that I went to Africa with, they came, and let them, you know be in the meeting and put their comments in to though. The people that were there got a good understanding of what was going on and what their daily things were. When I did the journal, I think I did good because it was like "wow, I'm here, I gotta write this down" you know, "I gotta take all of this in" but I was doing it for me, not necessarily for somebody else. But I saw that all of the information that I put in I needed to share that with everybody.

Having those readings, did people decide I'm going to go next year or anything?

No, my girlfriend Diane, she was at one of my readings and she wants to go. In fact, she's hoping to go, if I do go back in July. From me going and sharing my trip with her, and she's got her attire and her locs and everything, and she wants to go back to the ancestors there, and to see what it's all about. She's, probably, the only one. I tried to see whether or not my sister would be interested, but my sister has no want to go there.

Do you have any new expectations, and if so, what are they?

No, just to see more. I don't know in going to other parts of Africa, I tend to believe there'd all just basically be the same it would just be another country of Africa. But, I would like to experience the different cultures of Africa. Basically, most of them live, maybe, the same type things – do the same sort of things, maybe, I guess. I would like to see, I don't what I'd expect, but I know there is something to see.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

All the riches that we have, and how we are so blessed. Well, you know I used the word struggle, it would be a struggle for us, it wouldn't be a struggle for them because they have to live that way. It makes us more appreciative of we have lights, and gas, and roaring fire just about.....

Stereotypes and perspectives – is there anything that you'd like to add that I didn't ask or should have asked or that you'd like to share?

I don't think so. I don't know whether or not I fully put in how I really feel about Africa. I think it's something simple for all of us, you know, because that is our Motherland. When you come to Africa, off the plane, and you come into the airport, they say to you "welcome home" because it is home, and a lot of us don't realize that.

How do you take that?

I feel good about it.

You feel like you're home?

Yes. Because those are my people, those are my brothers, those are my sisters. Those are my children.

Next, there is the demographics, if you'd please tell me about yourself – occupation, educational level, marital status, city and state where you were born, grew up. You don't have to answer them, but if you do, I would appreciate it.

Educational level? - Some college.

Marital status? – Divorced.

City and State where you were born? – Brooklyn, New York

Did you spend your childhood there in Brooklyn? – Yes

That's all I have. I thank you so much.

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PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

BROTHER X

Today is Saturday, December 22, 2007; I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Brother X.

What were your experiences – at the airport, the flight, the cost, the time, what were your experiences in travel and transportation?

Travel and transportation, for the most part, it was very comfortable. The accommodations I find that the pricing was, at times, a bit of a challenge, but with planning and, you know, the blessings of the creator, and, just, planning we were able to make a number of trips to Africa. I've been three times, I believe, in the last 6 years, I guess, maybe 7 years, two or three times. So, I don't know what we would do without it. I think it would be an incredible challenge trying to find other ways to make passage home – it would, just, be an incredible challenge. I was thinking about that a little earlier actually, what would be the options if there was not air flight and transportation. It seems as a result of the technology, we've really been able to reconnect with the family there, and it's an incredible bridge of time in regards to facilitating connecting with the family home. So, it's an incredible and it's absolutely necessary.

In departing America on your outbound leg, any difficulties or what were your experiences?

Here for the times, when we had direct flights out of the country, those seemed to be the more enjoyable experiences, more comfortable experiences. Leaving directly out of JFK, leaving the country, I had some challenges when we had to fly from here to DC, I believe we left out of Newark one time and went to DC, and, there was, like, a layover, we were there for, like, hours, and, that was, I don't know if it was psychological or, whatever it was, it was felt, you know. It was like an incredible hardship, not only on the way leaving the country, but, then, when we returned, I remember coming back from Ethiopia and we went to DC, and, it was....I had taken ill, just from fatigue, and, I don't

know, maybe there was something airborne in the cabin on our way back, but, I remember by the time we hit Washington, they actually got a chair for me. I remember sitting in the chair, and I had a little fever, and we couldn't get home. And, I think there was some complication with the flight, we had missed a flight, there wasn't a tying connection or something. If I'm not mistaken, we wound up taking a bus home, now that I'm sitting here thinking about it. So, that was an incredible challenge in terms of dealing with land transportation, as opposed to that direct flight from the continent or trying to make that connection on the US side of things, it was just....it felt like it was an incredible hardship, so...

Do you have any idea of why you had to go to Newark, or why you left out of Newark versus leaving out of Kennedy?

I can't say I'm a veteran of international travel, but I think I've been to enough events, handful of events, to understand how, sometimes, the promoters may get a better deal, or somehow they may be able to, you know, turn a corner in regards to if it's the economics of an indirect flight, you know, such as layover switching. I'm not sure how that factors into the personal factors, but..... that was not my original understanding of it. But, having been on other trips, you know, between here and the Caribbean, I've always come to suspect that somehow someone was cutting a corner and somehow was able to repackage what was originally laid out. That's just from kinda keeping my eyes and ears open over the years.

Do you recall, I'm just curious, do you recall when you went out of Newark, whose airline were you on? Were you still on Air France, or was it Air Afrique, or...?

Oh, I don't know that is a very good question. I believe it might have been, I believe it might have been a domestic carrier to guide us to DC, but out of DC we took, I think it was South African Air. I'm pretty sure it was domestic from here to DC, and, I believe, it was South African Air.

While in Africa, what were your travel experiences?

I would say by....for the most part there were very pleasant. At times, the land transportation due to the challenge infrastructure of some of the highways, you know, some of the bus rides were a bit of a challenge. The last time I went to Africa, which was in 2006, I took a team, we went to Senegal, then, to Gambia. I recall the young men were from DC and Philly and New York, and they didn't have their passports. We were supposed to secure their passports in advance, and, then, the day of they were to have the passports for us that morning, and we were leaving at, I think, 4 p.m., and I had done a lot of running around; we got them here and they were settled, they stayed at my home, and, so one of the brothers in the collective said that he would go get them. And, for one reason or another, he said he was delayed in terms of actually getting them in his hand, so, now I had a dilemma, as the flight was about to leave, I had to explained the situation to the airline. They said that they could get them on another flight the next morning, or the next day. I chose to go ahead with the group to make sure things were in order. So.....I'm trying to get back to answer your question. When I got to Dakar, I was with the group, we did the day tour. Now, they were leaving for the Gambia the next morning, or that night. I stayed in Dakar alone, which was an incredible experience, and I had to

secure transportation by land from Dakar to the Gambia, at least, to the border where the ferry was, and, then..... it was an interesting thing, so I spent part of the day trying to secure transportation and, eventually, and tried to use some independent resources, but, eventually, I wind up with the gentlemen, and I know you know him, because he's always with the FESTAC group, the promoter, you know him, with the heavy accent, almost a French accent, you know what I'm talking about, so, we wind up renting a bus....

Mustaffah?

Mustaffah. Mustaffah. That's a whole 'nother conversation. So, you know....

But, I'm curious now, tell me about the passports. They let you out of the country, they let you out of the US....

No, I had mine.....

No, no, no, the group, the kids.

They had to stay in New York another day.

Oh, but, then, the other gentleman picked them up, and, then, they got their passports, and, so, now, they have them...

Right. So, they had to go back to my place, then, they came the next day, so I had to wait. You know, the way John lays it out that group left, you know, they left gone, I was on my own. So, I had to think whether I was going to leave or go ahead, I couldn't leave them to figure it out, they had never, most of them had never been out of, you know, whatever communities they were from. So, securing land transportation was a bit of a challenge, but, eventually, we came back and, I settled with Mustaffah, and it got rather pricey, but it was really a point where I didn't have too many options to be sort of playing with, you know. These young men arriving, they had never been out of the country before, had never been to Africa actually, so.....

On your return trip back, were there any challenges or what were your experiences coming back other than the Newark one we talked about?

We had a direct flight back to JFK, actually, where did we go, 'cause I remember, yeah, came to JFK, came back to my house, we took taxis, no, my wife actually came and got us. So, it was a direct flight back, so it was.....that was really key, and, I think in any of my travels I'm certainly going to opt for the direct flight. It just seemed like when you getting on, and, with security and your baggage, and it's an incredibly different experience. I know you remember the cities we hopped back and forth through Ethiopia, and, you know the challenge of – shoes off, you know, the bag, the....you know, the metal detectors, the change back in your pocket. If you can just minimize that or just have that, you know paced out – just to minimize, minimize it, it's an incredibly different experience. So, direct flight, especially internationally would truly be the option, it's the strong choice.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America, vis-à-vis, the availability of products? Do you use products that have been imported, if you will, from Africa? How do you...?

That's a very good question. I think we've been spoiled to a certain extent, and, you know, the tri-state area, the inner city area, there are dozens of vendors in Brooklyn, dozens of vendors in Harlem, dozens, you know, a handful of vendors in the Bronx even out in Queens, so, there's a heavy influx of the culture and the people from the continent. So, I would assume they're coming back constantly and you have folks bringing in material and fabrics, and instruments, so there's just an incredible variety of access that's right here in New York City, and I am 99% sure the stuff has been.....I'm assuming it's being flown in, I don't think it's being sent via any barrels or shipping. I could be wrong, but my understanding of it is the materials are being flown in, and, as a result of that availability, you know, we can get it, we can get to it. So, you know, living here is, as I was saying to my wife, I think we've been a little bit spoiled to a certain extent, but I'm just glad that we're able to take advantage of it, but I believe that it's being flown in and out, flown in. With the people, with the drums, the whole culture, 116th Street is a heavy influx of Senegalese, and, you know, New York is just wonderful, and, I think, every year it's just getting stronger. It's a real connection.

Has it offered any conveniences to your life?

Absolutely. Access, and the availability of the culture to be able to go to the semiformal and formal gatherings of the people from Ghana that are here, or to the Nigerian community that have their formal balls or things that kind of go on a handful of times through the year. If you keep your ears open, with the heavy influx of people, I guess, who have migrated here, or people who are traveling back and forth. If you keep your eyes and ears open, just about every month, you know, If you want to experience a culture and a people, you can do it.

When was your last visit?

2006, July 2006.

And, you said before, you've been two, three times? How many times have you been?

I believe three.

Why did you go?

Well, it was a very strong desire, a very strong desire to reconnect with the culture and our people. It's been something that I've wanted to do from a very young age. My parents, in particular, my mother, had always spoke very strongly of Africa – the people, and the culture, and our heritage, and it was something to be very proud of. As I got older, I became more curious about it, you know, going to the lectures and events here, I had always planned that whenever I had the opportunity to do so that I would go, and I am so glad, and thank God that I have had the opportunity to go over there. I'm really challenged coming into the next year because I really want to make at least another two trips, perhaps, in 2008 to go back over. I felt it was a family reunion, and, everytime I go the bond is stronger and stronger, and one of the greatest moments, for me, is to walk the

streets of Dakar and have the people walk up to me – our people walk up to me and speak to me in their native tongue and embrace me as a brother or be walking the streets of one of the roads in Ethiopia and having local people walking over to me asking me directions. I will usually study enough to know the greetings and how to say thank you and, you know, and that would probably be about it, so once I got beyond that, it was really a warm feeling to be home.

Okay. You said, why you went was because you had a strong desire to see the family.

Yes.

What family? How do you know that family? Maybe the real question is, what is the definition of family?

Okay. Without a doubt, we are.....we are Africans in America without a doubt. We are Africans, our ethnic, our family line, our heritage, our ancestry is from the continent of Africa. Not many people may be challenged to try to find which of the 50 or so countries we identify with or we connect with, or where our family comes from. I've always felt a very strong connection to the people that we met in Senegal once I was able to go there, and see the people. I remember a few years before we got married, I was walking through Harlem, and I was walking through the market and I heard music, it was callers and djembes. I just stopped in my tracks, and I wound up purchasing the music, and, actually, I found out.....come to find out it was Youssou N'dour and his group, so they were out at Senegal. I had a few friends in undergrad that were from Senegal and they were saying to me that I was Fulani and I would say "for real", and, oh, yeah, look at you, you know. He grabbed my wrist, and said, oh, yeah, you're Fulani, so that was kind of embedded. But, as you know, Africa is immense, it's an immense continent, you know, two, three times the size of the U.S., but people move, and, so, we claim it all. You can connect with someone in the East, you can connect with someone in the West. You can see the spirit and rhythm of the people anywhere there. So, people migrate, people don't stand still; however, two years ago, we did have the DNA testing that was done, and actually my mother did the testing and, also, my father did the testing, so we were able to solve, at least, a portion of the riddle.

So, in essence, when you speak of family, you're not, necessarily, talking about your immediate lineage? Your immediate sisters, brothers, down the line, or...?

Of course they're included, but we're embracing the concept of the extended family also. The greater village, the connections of our people, the heritage, the common ancestry we have in terms of struggle, the creativity, the love, the great historical works, the many historical challenges that we've had over the years, the conflicts – the good, the bad, and the ugly. Sometimes, when you do enough research, sometimes, it can actually enlighten you, and, sometimes, it can actually break your heart. You know, what you find at the end of some of these passages when you see how your ancestors interacted with the neighboring villages and the good that was there, and, some of the bad that was there in terms of facilitating some of our own oppression in terms of how, actually, you know, some of us were actually sold down the river. So, it's the greater family, it's the continental village, and as we experience life in a mature sense in travel and exchange

with one another, we learn more about ourselves, and we learn more about our people – all of our peoples.

Okay. You said your mother, your mother spoke of Africa and taught you to be proud?

Yes.

Where do you think she got that sense of Africa in her to give to you?

I would have to say she had the normal resources. She was raised in Harlem, my Grandmother was born in Puerto Rico, my Grandfather, her Father, was from Cuba. They instilled in my mother a sense of pride, but, also they gave her historical references of the struggle - what they had to do to actually survive and embrace the culture in Puerto Rico, and what they had to do to embrace the culture in Cuba. So, my Grandmother came here, I believe it was 1918, and my Grandfather came, I think, it was 1920, Mike in 1915. So, you know, and plus all of the challenges of the language, you know, English as the second language and trying to adapt to this urban environment that was waiting for them; leaving paradise and coming to the streets of East Harlem and having to make a way for themselves. But, what they did have was the strong ties and the foundation that they had culturally before they left. There were some economic challenges here, but there was a, once again, an extended family that they were able to embrace one another and make it. So, there was a whole group of women that I was raised as, I was told that these were my Aunts, or these were my Abuelos. Come to find out, as I became, you know, in my late teens and early 20's, that they were not direct bloodline family, but they were always Aunts and Grandmothers to me. But, come to find out, to my surprise from my mother – I was like, well who is Aunt so-and-so? Mom's like "no, she's a neighbor, we knew her from the old block" and I'm like, "wait a minute, what about the others?" The reality was, come to find out, that they had known each other, or they might have been from similar villages in Puerto Rico, but they were all in the village here. And, it's really adopting, picking up some of the children, and, some of the mothers had challenges, no different from any other African community. I would think there is, probably, a historical context for this anywhere across the African continent. I have cousins, cousins from the time I could remember, I always knew this was cousin Diana and this was cousin Theodore; now, that I'm older.....they were, they were neighbors, and, you know, I was kind of floored, I was 21 or 25 finally finding this out, I mean "are you serious?" Well, that's how it was. People talk too much about the broken homes, and the challenges of our community; in terms of the men not doing what they should or men not being there, or, not raising their own children, but I had an elder tell me this when I was in my teens, and he spoke of - and quote, unquote this wasn't a quote unquote cultural brother in the community – this was a street brother, he was an elder. He expressed to me that when children are brought into the world his perspective on it was that Fathers don't always raise their children for one reason or another they might not even be in the house, or even around, but he said to me – I remember this, I must have been about 16, 17 – he said, but there will always be someone who will raise that child. I don't think this is a given law, or if it always works out that way, but I remember seeing wisdom and.....what he was trying to say, he said it. So, we've always.....I think historically, that's always been part of who we are as a people, embracing the work that needs to be done, in terms of

embracing the responsibility of helping out or helping to raise a child somewhere or another. Sometimes, it gets....we may have some young men or young women that might not have as much support as they may need, but, even in a street sense, as bad as that example can be a lot of times each situation becomes, some of our young adults.....these people become their family, you know, whether they're gangs or street organizations or, or, you know, or "get high buddies" as bad as some of these scenarios are, there are family structures even within them. So, I think part of the challenge, in terms of us holding our heads to do what needs to be done in our communities the things that need to be done in our community, I think, historically, there's always been someone who has actually stepped up, took care of a child, brought a neighbor in, when the family has some challenges – aunts, cousin, nephew, you know, uncle – so, that's, probably, been one of our underlying strengths for years.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

I tried something, I think it was two trips ago, that I will never do again. Understanding that it was, I don't know, how many hours it was to Ethiopia, it was something, combined, it was 12 hours or 16 hours or something, I don't even remember it was something in that order, and I remember coming up with the bright idea of for staying up for prior to the trip, and, then, I'll just sleep for 15, 16 hours, and, I'll get up, and I'll be refreshed. That trip was about four years ago, I think I'm still trying to recover from it. And, if I had to put a finger on why I was so wiped out on the way back, well, hello, you know, so, get your rest, drink your water, and get some sleep that week prior, especially the last 48 hours before. I mean, to try to stay up, what was I thinking about, you know. I've done some real bone-headed things before actually going over. I remember the first time when I went to Senegal, when I first met you, I remember it was pretty cold here, I don't know, it might have been 30, 40 degrees, I remember saying to myself, I'm leaving for the airport, and I remember saying to myself, I was going to leave my coat home, and I was going to drive to the terminal, and I wouldn't need a coat because I'll be in the terminal and I'm going to a tropical paradise, and I wouldn't need a coat for that hour. I don't know if you remember, when I first came to interview you on tape, I had no voice, I had no voice, I had no voice. By the time we had got there, I think it was two days, I was doing sign language, and whispering in people's ears, and what have you, but with respect to the power of the ancestors and almighty God, it made me listen. So, I had to shut my mouth for a good two, two and a half days, I had to really listen more, so I have to be thankful because I was able to consume more, like a sponge. I know after that third day, I believe, I had Balla, I had asked him to take me somewhere I could get a drink – alcohol. He took me to a rum stand, I don't know what it was, took a shot, wow, okay, it's a little sweet, let me try another one. I took another one, and, probably, two and a half, three hours later, I had my voice back. That was three days in. So preparing for the future, I would secure, probably, like jeans, and sneakers, and, a lot of those types of things I would get to go trade with. I certainly would bring some writing materials. I'd probably go with a laptop this time. I did keep a journal a couple of times, I would bring a laptop, and I'd definitely get some rest; small electronic devices that I'd probably give to some friends over there. Grinding machines, a few people had talked to me about bringing some of those, I think they use them to grind peanuts, hand grinders. One of the brothers had told me if I come back to bring back some goggles, these are

things that they can vend, and they can do, and they can deal with some tourist trade. But, my background is in video and film, and I'm certainly looking to take over some digital cameras, and some small camcorders because I think there's a duality of purpose when we go.....when I go to enjoy the people, to see the family. At the same time, some type of commerce, helping to develop some kind of grassroots vending, and, I think, photography and video is.....it could be a very sound life changing experience for some of the brothers over there, and sisters who want to, maybe, travel with some of the tourists and take photos or do some video for them, because when you go as a tourist or as a guest it becomes a little cumbersome, you know, a little bit of a hassle to try to get as many pictures as you'd like. And, then, if you're taking the pictures, you're not in the pictures, and, you've got to deal with video and the whole scenario. So, there are a handful of brothers and sisters over there I spoke to, and that'll certainly be part of my preparation on the way back.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights, how would you consider getting there? Or, would you?

I would definitely consider it. I guess it'd be steamliner to some port in Newark, and Europe, and trying to head south, seek passage south, or working my way through Spain. I really would like to see North Africa – Morocco, Algiers, some of those communities, Egypt, I've never been, so I guess we'd be dealing with boats. I mean, that's how we got here, and as I mentioned that the air transportation is really like.....is the reverse phase of The Middle Passage. It's just so much more convenient this way as opposed to being on the bottom of a boat, you know. I can't even think of how hard it would be to get back home, but the older I get, and I talk to my wife about this, and, she always wishes me well, she says "when you do move, she will visit," so, she's telling me when I do move, she will visit. So, as I get older this will be less of a concern for me once I'm living there. So, I'll have to be working more on speaking to others how they're coming to have to come visit me.

That's an interesting concept, I've never thought about that it is the reverse phase of The Middle Passage. Now, my picture may be different from yours, so help me see your picture. Middle Passage being sandwiched in as sardines today, economy class sandwiched in the air, is that what you're seeing as your reverse passage?

When I say reverse, it's just a matter of a return home. Certainly, accommodations are far more comfortable this way, but you do have a good point. I have some notes from.....my first trip over was when you went, and, I remember drawing a ship and the people were lined up, and I remember drawing a cabin of the aircraft and it had the people, the seating, I know that was scribbled into my journal, but, certainly accommodations of sardines on the way here....let's see on the way back, if you had to make a comparison, it would be day and night.

I'm just trying to get a better understanding of what you meant by "reverse" of the Middle Passage – you mean, direction.

Historically, in my mind, the horrors of how were dragged over here, so now going in the other direction, crossing back over was something that, I think the ancestors were putting that desire in me, but it was, actually a conscious decision to go home, and

thank goodness it would be in the comfort of air flight, as opposed to.....and, that was above water, above land, in the skies opposed to sea level at the bottom of the boat. We're the lucky ones, actually made it here, and those thousands of people that didn't make it to the shoreline, didn't make it to the boat, didn't make it thru Gorée, or Elmina, or Cape Coast.

Stereotypes – cultural perceptions and how have you been affected? What were your expectations, and how were they met in going to West Africa?

My expectations were to be warmly received, to be comfortable reintroducing myself to the family, learning and experiencing traditional culture of our people, of our ancestors, and every one of those expectations were met at one time or another. Words can hardly express it, the feeling of completion, purpose, clarity of thought. I remember laying in our hotel room the first night we were there, and feeling the energy, feeling the sense of upliftment, feeling empowered, I was hearing drums with it, there weren't any drums playing. I remember waking up before the sun rose, and looking out the window, and watching the sunrise, the birds. I was out on the balcony, and I was amazed at the beauty and splendor of our homeland. I remember, I kept saying over and over, they lied to us, they lied to us. It was just incredible, so I'm going to have to find a very creative way, a very intelligent use of resources to get over more often, because once every other year or so is not good anymore. Actually, we're going to look at some land when we go over, and we'll see what unfolds. I'm looking forward to it. I felt very much at home. I had a handful of situations where I would say there was a degree, a challenge, but no difference from something that I may have experienced on 125th Street in the Bronx, bumping heads with someone on one level or another.

You had said, you were saying “they lied to us.” Who was the “they,” and what was “the lie?”

I would have to say the.....I would say educational system, Europeans here, whoever controls the media, negative depictions of the continent - it's all war, and famine, people starving, crime-ridden. I remember I had a family member who will remain nameless when I was leaving for the first trip, he said “don't get eaten.” I was, like, excuse me, he said “don't get eaten over there.” I was, like, whoa whoa. So many people would ask, I was working at NBC at the time, I had told a few of my co-workers that I was going and they were like “oh, you going on safari, are you going to see the animals?” No, I'm going to see the family, I haven't see them in a while, just trying to reconnect, it's a family reunion.” They said “oh, you're from Africa?” I said “oh, yeah, absolutely.” So, they would leave it at that, and these aren't just Europeans Americans, they're African Americans. Some of the challenges are with my own family here, my own people. So we've got to continue to learn, we've got to continue to embrace the wisdom of the ancestors, and keep teaching and keep learning, and find creative ways to bring our culture, and history to our children and to our people. Some of the biggest criticism I got on some of these trips are from my own family here. But, I enjoy it, I'm always up for the big debate, I have fun with it. My skin isn't as thin as it was 6 years ago, when I first went over, I remember being very sensitive, I was ready for a fight. But, now, I'm just ready to share, I don't have to beat you up. If you want to talk jive, we'll talk jive. If you want to do the dozens, we can do the dozens. If you want to talk about

my people, I'm going to talk about your people. We'll keep it moving, I'm not going to waste a whole lot of time on it. There's a lot of ignorance out here, and I think it's very clear to me why there's so much misinformation about the continent. It's because it's so rich – it's so rich in culture, it's so rich in history, it's so rich in resources, it's so rich in pride and depth of character. So many people that we've met over there on these trips, they're not driving, they don't have a lot of financial resources, but they carry themselves with a pride and dignity that a lot of well-to-do people over here couldn't even touch them. In terms of sincerity, ability, positive spirit, embracing and sharing what they have for you for the time that you're there with them, honesty, I've had some beautiful, beautiful conversations with some of the brothers and sisters over there. I think over here you're dealing with "the mask" or the masquerade - people attempting to position themselves to either misrepresent or aren't prepared to be fully honest with you in terms of how they deal with you or how they converse with you. So, I think that wool is not there, and it's very genuine, and it just embraces you. I'm looking forward to going back, I can't wait. I'm trying to make two or three trips this year. Trying to go to Ghana, trying to go back to the Festival, the Roots Festival, again, is in The Gambia, again, this year, and I'm trying to get over to Nigeria. That's where Dad's DNA was a match for the Yoruba people, and Mom's match is for the Ga people from Accra. I'm really going to have to hustle, we've really got some hustling to do get on over there. I'm even looking at some artist's grants, and since I have such video footage already, a couple few hours in the camera already, so I'm trying to get some completing funds to travel to go over and complete some of this episode to be shot. Hopefully, God willing, we'll find a way to get on over there.

Were you there when they received their results, their DNA results?

Actually, we videotaped it. It came in the mail. Actually, how did it work, I got the kits came back to me, and, then we went to the house, and sat with them, and we taped it. As a result, Mom and Dad, they're not far apart, the families, they're not far apart. My mother is in the Yoruba culture. So, it was really interesting, and that's supposed to be Dad's roots. Hey, it's all family; I'm looking forward to going over there. We've got some more work to do.

What surprised you, and what disappointed you in your visits when you go home?

What surprised me was the warmth of the people. I shouldn't have been surprised, but to be embraced, and I know part of it had to do with.....we're returning home and they recognize that, they recognize....not only as a visitor, but as a family member. It's been very genuine. That, probably, surprised me the most, how comfortable and how trusting the people were, and that was pretty much across the board. What, also, surprised me is that there're certain communities that don't have, maybe all the communication infrastructure, but I saw a lot of cell phones. I saw a lot of, for lack of a better term, African American pop culture over there. I remember we were at the university in Dakar and there was a group of young brothers and sisters sitting at a table, and they called me over, and they said Brother X there's something very important I think we've talked about many times, and we've debated it and you're here and we're so glad you've come home, and we want to ask you this, this is something that's very serious that we want to

deal with. And, I was like “wow, this is deep, alright.” And, the brother said “is Tupac still alive?” And, I said, you know, I couldn’t believe the question, and I said “what?” “Is Tupac still alive?” I looked at them, and they were all looking at me for an answer and I was, like, whoa, this is deep, this is really deep here. So, it’s.....as we learn, we are teaching; and, as we teaching, we are learning. We think about how much we have to offer them, and I’m looking at how much they have to offer myself, and how much I don’t know. There’re certain aspects of our popular culture that we might not give as much weight to that certain international communities will embrace. And, it’s a funny duality. I grew up in the Bronx, went to school with Curtis Blow, Russell Simmons, these are guys, Keith Sweat, they were singing in the hallway, it was like, it wasn’t a big deal. It was like, alright, he can sing, he can rap, there wasn’t a built in infrastructure for that industry or for people to recognize those talents and abilities. It was like something that was, it was a street thing. Sometimes, we just don’t recognize our own power and strength and creativity. And, all those brothers and sisters needed back then was a handful of brothers and sisters to link arms, and put the structure together and we could benefit from it. Look at how many times artistic talent goes to the benefit of another community or our scholars. Our young corporate geniuses, they plug into that, just add water, American machine, Wall Street, or whatever, and the community doesn’t benefit much from it. A lot of those old Mom and Pop, or semi-illegal establishments that laid the ground work for that one particular musical industry, they were all gone. They weren’t, half of them weren’t even registered businesses, I would think. They were after hour clubs, or whatever they could get a place to go on and make some noise and direct some speakers.... and so, I don’t know where we’re at.....

The question was what surprised you and what disappointed you? I think you kind of covered that. The next question is why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity, but I think we’ve kind of answered that in several other questions.

Oh, yeah, we’re going home. We are going home.

So, Brother X, are you looking at the African continent as home, and it sounds to me I heard that as a resounding yes?

Oh, yes.

Where are your ancestral roots?

Ghana, Nigeria, I’d say Senegal, Ethiopia. People move, people travel. The more I travel around Africa, the more I realize that.

I’m thinking that this question at the time I posed it was.....DNA has helped many folks to find where that ancestral root lies for some folks, so, in your case we’ve kind of covered that as well earlier somewhere throughout this conversation.

Yes.

Having been there what does Africa mean to you?

Africa’s home. And, it’s such a powerful influence, and it’s helped to define my purpose in life. Actually, having a chance to cross the waters, and it really up’d the bar in

terms of what my cultural focus, my motivations for study, and to find creative ways to reconnect and build bridges with our people at home.

How did you communicate?

With the people there? I have a cousin who did a couple of tours in Vietnam and South East Asia, I don't think he did any combat, I could be wrong. But, many years ago he taught me, and he had traveled a lot in the service, he had taught me that if I ever went somewhere I wrote down 10 to 20 questions, maybe 10 questions, and 10 conversational statements. He told me to write them on the left side of your column. Then, he said as soon as you get there, whatever country you're in, whatever community or village, you speak to someone and you ask them how to say that statement or how to state that question in their native tongue. He said "write it down phonetically." He said "write it down the way you hear it" so, as soon as I got to Senegal, John came that morning to reset the room, I had my notes, and I had my notepad, I still had my notes, I had my questions on the left side of my notes, and he sat there with me for about 15, 20 minutes and I wrote them out, I was able to...I wasn't able to have a full conversation, but I was able to make a connection, ask someone their name, be able to say my name to them, to be able to say "my brother" – "sumarack" (Wolof for young brother). To be able to get the traditional greetings, and I've done it every trip I've gone to, I've been able to use my notes, or at breakfast that I'll have that morning, I'll sit and order with the waiters and waitresses, they're very.....and, it's a beautiful thing to be able to say "thank you" or to be able to say "good morning," just to break that barrier. Usually, they know a little English, and I think we're the only dummies in the African family. They all speak four, five, six languages like it's nothing for them, and we barely get through....I do speak two languages, I speak basic English and jive, I speak jive, so.....we barely get through that.

What or who did you recognize via features, actions, principals, values?

In terms of the people we interacted with?

In terms of your visits to West Africa, did you recognize somebody, or did you see things that you knew based on something that happened here, and, now, it may take on some historical meaning or some historical content or...

Sure. There were any number of times. I saw people that resembled family members, I saw people that resembled classmates, people that grew up in my community, and I would do a double take. I remember there was a brother that I saw, I might even have a picture of him, when I looked at him, I thought James Small, I looked at him, and he looked like James. I saw my brother Eddie. I'm walking, and I'm looking at him and he's looking at me, and I've had, not only have I recognized them, I've had people recognize me. As I mentioned, there are times, a period of time, when I'd go without combing my hair or whatever, and brother, and my wife is always on me, and my daughter always gets a kick about my clothes not matching, and a brother asked me if I was Biafar, he asked me if I was Biafar. I was like, at first, I didn't understand what he was saying, I was, like, I had to laugh. So, not only are we recognizing them, they're recognizing us. In terms of Africanisms, I'm always in search of indigenous situations here that reflect home; whether it's instruments or...I remember, many years ago, in my wine drinking with the boys days, I remember someone opening a bottle or somehow,

and someone saying “what are you doing”, and he’d say “well, this is for when the brothers are not here.” Even in a street sense, there was a real authentic African tradition whether we knew it or not. I remember a couple of brothers complaining “that’s for them that are not here, but not so much.” It goes both ways, you can be over there and recognize something that you would think originated at home, but that’s definitely the source. We’re just a reflection of who we are on the continental side. Sometimes the reflection that we give isn’t the greatest, but if you go home and you dig deep enough, it’s pure and it is very beautiful, it’s very giving.

How were things different? Food, customs, principles, values, morals?

I think Americans, in general, as Dr. King puts it, suffers from schizophrenia. When you talk about culture, and you talk about morals, you....in America, you’re going to get the good, the bad, and the ugly. Sometimes, you’re going to get it all in the same breath. I don’t have to tell you about it. It’s beautiful and refreshing to go home and see the beauty and splendor. Every now and then, you may get a scenario that might be a challenge, and you’re sitting there with some discomfort in regards to how it played itself out. I remember during the festival....in 2006, we went to I think it’s Kanilai Village, the President’s hometown in The Gambia. I forget the village, we left real early in the morning, we were supposed to stay the night for the Rights of Passage, but we wound up going early in the morning. When you see some of the militarism, when you see, I don’t know, when you walk into a bank, and you see a brother with an M16 across his lap, it can be very sobering. But, no, different, I could, probably, think of a hundred situations where I was here at a party here in New York, and something 5 times worse probably transpired. It just seemed so out of context sometimes. You know you could be lulled by the beauty and the romanticized version of your return home, maybe euphoria. But, you run into some petty crime. You run into a situation where you’re trying to sort it all out, where there’s a challenge, your comfort level. And, at the same time if you’re going to have people, there’s going to be some degree of crime. People trying to feed themselves, so, you take the good with the bad. The whole political structure with some of the communities –I have to confess I’ve done more homework after returning from some of these trips, and when I read some of the political things that had unfolded literally months before I had gone to some of these communities, maybe, if I had read it, really, I might not have even gone there. I think about what I’d experienced there, what I had felt then. In March 2006, there was a coop in one town, and I was, like, “what, in The Gambia? Wait a minute.” You hear about the oppression of some of the press, and some of the protests, and I think when we left Ethiopia there, supposedly, a few weeks later, there was some unrest, and some gunplay, and some people were shot, so.....when I went to The Gambia and Senegal last time, I took two brothers from Philly, a brother from DC, and a brother from New York, there were under age 30, so, we.....I wanted to take a larger group where they would have the cultural experience and be able to come back and tell the story, but the interesting thing was when we got over there, they..... if I gave them the option, they would have just stayed in the hotel, ate cheeseburgers, actually, a couple more than what they did on my....in the room, wrapped in blankets, with the A/C on blast. I was, like, my brothers, you could have stayed in Brooklyn and did this. I told them to get up, get up. It laid the foundation for me for future trips, saying that, if I do take some other young adults, I will have a full itinerary for them; this is what’s going to

be asked of you, this is your commitment. If you're going, we're up at 7:00 and we're going to the beach, we're running, we're going to walk through town, we'll come back, have breakfast, you've got a couple of hours here. I didn't have the foresight to plan it that way, but, as a result of having done it, I know now that if they're going to go, hey, you're up.....they had a full itinerary of what John had laid out. We had a few interactions that were off that schedule, we had our own schedule in terms of the games, that's what they were up there for, to play ball. There was just so much more to offer, so much more to experience, I had to crack the whip a few days, and, lay that foundation for that experience for them.

Okay, this next one we have covered "How were you received?" Has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community.

Absolutely, I had to up the bar in my studying and my understanding of the history and culture of our people. I've been a lot more vigilant in terms of how I document and video and film that I shoot over there, and, now, my challenge, having been a few times, is to demystify the continent, to show the people here what home is about, and to show the people at home certain aspects of what we're experiencing here. That's been my challenge, so, now that I've got – I've got the video, and I've got contact with a handful of elders, yourself, Brother Small, and, really batting down the hatchets, to get them to get the statements to complete the work, that's what the internet and all of these vehicles of expression, it's just no excuses. I know the ancestors are, like, look Brother X, what more do you need. You've been over two or three times, let's start getting things to happen, so we can start making these connections.

Is there anything that you do differently now, that you've been back?

I would have to say, I pray more now. I pray more now. Now, more than ever. I eat with my hands more. I had some Ceebu-jen today. I thought about you.

And, you have the nerve to come by and tell me about it. Is it in that bag over there?

I wasn't going to say nothing. No, it's not. I brought the camera, I brought the video camera just in case. I wound up.....I'm not even going to tell you 'cause the last few days have been a blur. I eat with my hands, and every now and then, my daughter will join in. I eat a little more with my hands. Anytime now if I'm in a taxi, or I'm in a restaurant, or if I'm in the market, I make a point of speaking to my African brothers and sisters. I going to ask them where they're from. If they say Nigeria, I'm going to say "Kedu." If they say they're from Senegal, I'll say "Na nga def." If they say they're from South Africa, I'm going to say "Sawubona." If they say they're from Ethiopia, I'm going to say "Teanastellen." Just to get that, they look, and, say, wow. And, then, they'll hit me with three sentences. I'm, like, sister that's it, that's all I know. They give me a hug, and we'll talk a little bit. The thing is that I make a point of making a connection. I bought a hat today, as I mentioned, we wound up in Bloomingdale's in Midtown, going to Bloomingdale's, and, I didn't have a hat or gloves. I still haven't been able to discern specific languages; I have to work a little harder. Most of the vendors, if I hear them speak, I can catch the Wolof. I got the hats, and I gave him the money, and, he said thank you, and, I said "noko-boko" (Wolof for we share this) in other words..."you're

welcome.”, and the other brother said, ahhhh, and, so, I waved. It’s just connections. I just need to work, study harder, pick up a few more phrases, a little more language, and, I’m learning.

How has your relationship with others changed since your return?

If anything has changed, to be honest, since I’ve been back, as I’ve matured, and as I’ve grown, as I’ve grown knowledge about Africa; there’s a responsibility to share. I’ve had situations, where I....I work at a hotel, I do video sound at a hotel. You know in a hotel you’ve got Latino, Asian, European, you’ve got continental Africans. I remember I had walked into the cafeteria one day, and the interesting thing is as you carry yourself with pride, and you carry your culture, there’s a responsibility that comes with that. I walked in and there’s like 12 people arguing in five different languages, an Asian brother trying to make a point.....so, I walked in and they were all in a corner, and they saw me, they said, hey, we need to speak to you brother. So, I walked over, and they all calmed down. There was a brother there who was from the Dominican Republic. He was, not that this is of any consequence, I’m just trying to give you the context.....brown skin, dark skinned brother, straight black hair, and, Spanish speaking. The argument that they were trying to resolve was what race was he from. One group was saying that he was African; another group said that he was Indian, I think, he said he identified with, I believe, the Indio people of his region that he had come from. Someone else said that he was Dominican, he said, yeah, I’m Dominican. For someone who was listening to all of this insanity. At first, I was, like, where do I plug in. I just said to myself, and my statement to them was that.....they were saying what race is he, and I said there’s only one race. I said there’s only one race. I believe you’re confusing race with ethnicity and nationality. In terms of his nationality, if he identifies with the Dominican Republic, he’s a Dominican national. Now, he may even be American. Ethnically, he may identify with a particular indigenous group from that region, that’s his prerogative. I said there’s only one race, and that’s the human race. Then, I walked away. I had to glance back, and, they were all, like, uhhhh, yeah. So, as much as you learn, you have a responsibility to get it right, and to share. I’m working a little more with young people, and, I think just as importantly is sharing our history and information of the culture with the elders, the older people, not the elders, they’re teaching me. A lot of our young adults, 30, 40, 25 year olds, some of the things that are coming out of their mouths is scary, I know, I have to work harder.

Do you have any new expectations?

New expectations on the continent? I’m just trying to follow up on what I’ve experienced. Just making stronger alliances, studying harder, trying to find a way to build legitimate relationships and bridges for the people at home. I try to stay the course, I think this is the path that’s been laid out for me, and I think the fact that being into the media lays a firm foundation for me in terms of my responsibility, so I just have to up the bar, and start finishing this stuff and getting it out there. I’ll be keeping you posted.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

America? America is an interesting thing....country because so much of what America has is a direct result of Africa, so, if anything America owes a significant debt to

the continent of Africa. Now, I know most educated adults understand that, whether they're willing to share what they have, or what they've gained is a whole 'nother story. Whether they believe that they should give anything back, or whether they believe the injustices they've committed, I don't even know if any of them give a second thought to the atrocities that were committed, and continue to exist. With that said, eventually America is going to have to pay, because, you know, it's out of their hands.....what goes around, comes around. So, part of my challenge, at the earliest, this might sound a little selfish, but part of my challenge is to be home before that day in my lifetime. It's interesting, as long as we get that one last flight out of here, it's going to be all good.

That was the last question in that series. The last part is the demographics: occupation, educational level, marital status, city where you were born and grew up, and your adult city and state?

Occupation - I'm a video and sound technician, well, actually, I'm a filmmaker.

Educational level - BA, City College of New York. Marital status – married. Where born – I'm from the south, South Bronx, NY.

You grew up there?

Yes. Bronx, and Harlem.

Okay. Your childhood was in both Bronx and Harlem?

We had a weekly ritual – we had to go to Grandma's.

And, then, your adult life?

I was in New Jersey for a little bit, for the most part, you know, Tri State area for the most part. I lived in all five boroughs. Now, I'm in Queens.

For age?

Just put "over 50?"

Is there something that you think I should have asked that I didn't ask?

I think what might be helpful, somehow connecting the individuals experience with the collective tour. I think that's integral. I've been over, every time I've been to Africa, I've been with a group, and somehow that gave me a sense of comfort. Somehow it gave me a sense of family to be honest. I don't believe I would have been brave enough or inspired enough to go alone. Each time that I do travel over, I feel that the connection is stronger, and I know a handful of these trips next year, I won't be going in a group. I don't know what that's totally about, maybe, it's a comfort zone, maybe, it's not wanting to go on a dramatic adventure alone. But, I think the fact that we were able to meet at the theater, and go to an orientation, which in itself, wasn't any incredible new revelation to what was going on, but just to kind of meet the folks that you would be traveling with. I didn't realize the importance of it, once I got there in Ghana. It really plays a major factor into travel, and, eventually, I'd like to get into the business, bringing that experience to others. I love John, I love what he does, I have a world of respect for what he does. But,

even him being as good as he is, I have seen situations where I thought it could have been handled better, or it could have been structured more consumer friendly. He's just such an incredible and dynamic brother, but, there's still room for improvement. He's, I have a world of respect for what he's been doing, and how long he's been doing it, and I would love to one day to be in a similar situation to make way for others to go. We had to hustle to get those young men to go with us in 2006. It wasn't easy, but it wasn't hard. We could have really utilized some other resources, and worked smarter, secure more resources, take more people over.

How did you...the logistics...how did you find and locate the people?

I would have to backtrack a year and a half before the trip. I have a website nydlball.com. I would travel up and down the Eastern seaboard from North Carolina to Connecticut and I would go to tournaments. I was, originally, looking at 15, 16 year olds because a trip of that nature would have strong and curious impact on that age group. As my lack of experience in dealing with organizations who were very enthused initially when we made contact....you're talking about a trip that's a year and a half away, and everybody's real enthusiastic, and, "we're going to send kids from Connecticut." I was trying to get matching funds. I was asking if they get \$1,200 or \$1,500, we would do the rest; if they could do the whole thing and send one young man, fine; if not, fine. I would even put them in direct contact with John. Went down to Virginia, saw a tournament down there. It was really independent organizations that were trying to put together this collective. As we got closer and closer to the actual trip, a lot of that just fell by the wayside – lack of follow up, lack of follow through, folks not returning the emails. It was all wonderful before.....and, these are all challenges as a people, and another thing you were saying how have I changed since I've been going. I'm more respectful of my word. I don't know if it's because I'm approaching 50, or just having gone over and witnessed so much truth, very much more conscious of saying "I'm going to be there, I'm going to show up. I'm not going to go and just.....being more accountable of what comes out of my mouth. I would say those trips certainly contributed to myself.....if I can't make it, I can't make it, maybe next time, in another week, or another month, but, leaving folks out there dry. Three words are yellow flags....don't worry about it. When they say "I got it, or don't worry about it," I got to say, okay, now I'm on alert. When you're trying to take a group of young men and young women out of the country, we're not going to another borough. It's hard enough trying to get anybody up the street, 3 blocks from here. You're talking about taking kids out of the country, and folks not calling you back, and, oh, yeah, you got our passports. Okay, so, send me a fax.....I'm learning, send me the fax, let me see the passport. You got your passport? Let me see your passport. You need to come to an orientation; we need to see your paperwork. Oh, you need to speak to your parole officer, you didn't mention that before. Okay, so we need to get these things done. I know John can fill you in on some things because I was driving him crazy. He was asking "who are these people?" I was, like, "well, he can't make it." He was, like, "well, I have to change the ticket." He said "Brother X, you don't understand." I had to pay a penalty, to switch the name, but you know what, we did it. We did it, they missed a flight. It's a movie. We got it done, we got it done, we begged, we borrowed, but we got it done. We got some footage, we've just got to complete it. Since they've been back, there's some challenges for the young men. I'm studying, I was watching. I saw you there with your

nephew, I said, whoa, okay, alright. There's all those little pieces, and you never know who's watching, you never know who's paying attention. We're doing it from the spirit of it because it's the right thing to do. If you can do it, then, do it. I would love to take 20 over or 30.

When you do this again, let me know.

Alright.

Is there anything else I should ask.

No. I think that covers it. But, I think, the transition or, certainly, the group or to go over, and have.....leaving with a group, there was something to that. There was something very comforting about that. We didn't come here alone, we did not come here alone, we know that. There was something very beautiful and comforting about going in a group, there's something integral in that. Now, that I've been a few times, I've got folks inviting me to come to their house, just get to the airport. I've got some vendor brothers, next time they go over for one of their little trips to get their stuff, they say I can stay at their house. I have to pay my airfare, but I can stay at their house.

Thank you for participating. If you think there is something that you think you'd like to include, I'll send it to you, and, you can tweak it.

Sure. I've been thinking about going back, but it's been a little out of my mind; you've just put a little wind under the wings. Thank you.

Epilogue.....

If I had to give an average age from the three trips I've been on, I'd probably say it was 60, if I had to give an average age. These are people who have lived life, paid their dues here, and this is part of their pay off. A lot of the people here, young African Americans, are so busy chasing the dream that they will defer a trip to Africa, they will defer a trip to Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa. They'll say "yeah, I'm going to do that, but, that's for later. Now, it's the car, the clothing, it's lifestyle." And, I can't put my finger on it, when I made the first trip, I said "how do you do this?" She said "I plan." Well, I put a little away, and I put a little away, and, you know it really works. When you make a commitment to something, and I'm going to a wedding tomorrow, when you make a commitment, when you verbally say you're going to do something in front of God and in front of family, in front of witnesses, there is a beginning of a manifestation that takes place. For years, I remember saying "I'm going to Africa, I'm going to Africa." For some people, it's just talk, but if you believe it yourself, and you make a commitment to it, you've already taken that first step. Now, there are some sacrifices that are going to have to be made, but everyone that has made that commitment, but everyone that has gone has secured passage. There's definitely an economics to it, but the economic investment made is actually an affirmation in us spiritually that says, in spite of the oppression here, in spite of the economic challenges that are here, state side. In spite of the obstacles you go through in the workplace, in spite of the lack of educational resources, or whatever challenges you had to get through the grad and grad school, these are very accomplished people. I've sat with two brothers to Ethiopia, one was retired. I had to find my place, and

you all helped me find it. You all let me know where my place was. I watched you all and observed to see how you would move, and it was...for me, it was eye opening, the path that I should be on. All the young people had to do was study their elders, study the folks that have laid the foundation for us. Everybody thinks that we've got to reinvent, or what we're going through no one else has done. It's really easy for us because we've stopped paying attention. There's something to do with the economics, and there's something to do with the sense of accomplishment that the folks that make the trip and make commitment to go - and go - that they've been through this American maze, we've done that, and saying, we're going home now. And, I saw that. Sitting up nights with Brother Sam....brilliant, the conversation. I'm looking at the buildings, and he's looking at the architecture, and he's explaining to me the structural dynamics and fire codes, and I knew that I was riding with masters, sitting talking with you, sitting talking with the other folks. For me to go before age 50, I felt privileged to be able to witness, and get an insight.

I was thinking that the economic base plays a big part in who goes.

Absolutely.

Directed by "the powers that be" in this venue, I wanted to ask people about their income because that was very sensitive, and very, whatever, whatever, I said let's do a broad range. Either you're above this level, or you're not above this level.

Right.

They said "oh, you'd probably do better to take it out", so I took it out.

I think that's for real.

So, I had to approach it from some other kind of perspective, we'd get that piece in there about how it plays into who goes.

You're right. It absolutely does.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

EMY

Today is Saturday, December 22, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Afrika has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the Afrikan American identity.

Tell me about your travel experiences?

My travel experiences have been good. At the airport, sometimes there were delays, but no major delays. The flights were usually pleasant and comfortable. The costs are good for me because usually when I travel, I travel with a group, partly because the group leader takes care of all of the details, and I don't have to worry about that. And, the time, basically the time of travel is no problem. Being a retired individual, I don't have to worry too much about when I'm leaving and when I'm coming back. But, other than that, the travel experiences have been good.

On departure out of Kennedy or whatever airport you depart from?

Usually it's from JFK, sometimes, you know, there's a little glitch when you're traveling with a group, there's a glitch because we travel as a group, and we tend to bring things to West Afrika - humanitarian things, such as supplies for the school children and gifts; and, things of that nature. So, because we have a lot of luggage, sometimes there's a glitch at the airport. We have to do a little dealing and explaining at the airport to get ourselves through without paying extra or too much for extra baggage.

What about transportation after, while in Afrika?

Again, because I am with a group, the group leader takes care of the details about how to get there. The group leader has arranged with a tour company there to meet us, to handle our luggage, and help us in that regard. So, generally there's no problem. Sometimes when we get there the bus is a little too small, or, something, and they have to call in additional transportation, but otherwise it usually goes pretty good.

Okay, what about on the way back?

Returning to America? Same thing, it usually works out with the tour company in Afrika. They are very efficient, they appreciate us coming there, and they do all they can to assist us with our departure back to the US; escorting us, handling the baggage, getting us checked through security. They take care of all of the details. So, overall it's been a good experience.

And the flight back.....

The flight back – no problem. There were times that we were delayed and had to spend an extra night someplace because of some problem with the airline or the airplane or something. But, you know, I chalk it all up to experience.

Good. How has aviation contributed to your needs in America?

Well, I don't know that they have, you know. I think that more attention could be given to having more direct flights to parts of Afrika. As it stands, sometimes when you have to fly, you have to go North or East to get to West Afrika or your final destination, so that more attention could be given to more direct flights, I believe for us.

What about products? What about products that come from Afrika, and how is your availability or accessibility to those types of things?

Well, as an Afrikan living in America, I'm always looking to use something that will help the people in the mother land. So, when there's an opportunity to secure products, whether it's clothing or artifacts, I'm always looking to be able to do that. When I leave Afrika, I'm usually bringing something home from Afrika whether its clothing, or the artifacts, sometimes its jewelry and other things that are produced by Afrikans. These days we're not allowed to bring too many things, but whatever I can.

Okay, great. Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

I don't know of any. As I mentioned earlier, if we could have more direct flights to places in Afrika, it would help. It would add to the convenience instead of having to go out of your way, so to speak, to get to your priority destination.

When was your last visit to West Afrika?

My last visit was a few years ago, I've traveled to other parts of Afrika since then. My goal is to visit as many countries as possible so that each year I don't go to West Afrika, I go to other parts of the continent.

So, how many times do you think you've been thus far, independent trips?

To Afrika?

To Afrika?

To Afrika, at this point, I think it's probably about..... um, Countries or?

How many countries?

Countries, maybe, about 8, or 9, maybe 10, I don't know, I'd have to count them up.

And, what would you say about West Afrika? About how many trips to West Afrika?

West Afrika we've been about three (3) times.

Why did you go?

Well, because it's the Motherland, you know. It's the source of everything and it's the place of my ancestors. The place I, when I learned of it, wanted to go to, and since going there, it's my favorite place to go. I love being there, seeing the majority of us there.

The phrase "the Motherland" what does that mean?

It's the Motherland in that, I've learned that everything comes from Afrika. The people, the resources, generations of people, of races all emanate from there, whether it's from Afrika to Asia to Europe, it all started in Afrika – the science, the math, all of our knowledge and technology comes from Afrika.

...comes from the place of your ancestors, how do you feel....

Fortunately for me, I've had my DNA done, so that I can say that, my DNA indicates that I'm part of the Mandinka and the Balanta tribe. It makes me very excited to know that my ancestors came from that part of Afrika. And, it's exciting too because, I can see in my relatives, you know..... when you go to Afrika, you always see people that look like someone you know, someone in your family, and, of course, I look like someone they know too. But, when I look at my relatives and my cousins, I can see their faces when I'm in Afrika, especially when I'm in West Afrika, so, you know, I feel a direct link to it.

Really?

Yes.

Which is your favorite place?

You know, I don't have a favorite place. I love every place I've gone, and I really cannot put my hands on a favorite place. However, I do love traveling to Kemet. Kemet is the only place I've gone to, like, two years in a row. And, at this point, I might be going again next year. But, you know, out of all of the places that could be, maybe, a little bit of a favorite. We're awed by what was found there. The people who live there, and raise their families there, I love everything there.

So, tell me a little bit more about the DNA. How does that work? How did you.....

Well, there's this group called Ancestry.com I heard about when I went to the Schomburg for a presentation in December, maybe about two or three years ago. And, Professor Gates was there, as well as, I forget the other presenter. They talked about the DNA and doing the sample, and Professor Gates had his done, and there was some handouts regarding information on how to get your DNA done. I brought it home, held onto it for a little while. Then, I called the number and the person on the phone explained to me what needed to be done. I sent for the kit, they sent it back to me. It was all very

easy. They send you this sealed package, you do this swab on the inside of your mouth, and put it in this envelope they send you. Seal it up, send it back, and in a couple of months you get your explanation. That was all there was to it. I was glad because, you know, growing up, not knowing very much about Afrika; learning everything that you know after you're an adult, to have this opportunity to find that out, to me, was the best thing in the world. So, I did it, and I was glad to get those results.

The day that it came, can you describe that?

The day that it came, actually my husband got his first. I thought, well, where is mine, when are they going to send mine? I sent them both off at the same time, we should have got them back at the same time, but we didn't. I think I got mine a couple of days later, I don't know how many days later. But, when I got it, I ripped it open, and looked at it, and I was so excited. I just looked right in the middle of the page for the lineage, and, then, after I saw that, I read the rest of the letter. It was a nice package too because they send a map of Afrika that puts a star where your tribe lives, it was exciting.

Have you been to any of those places?

I have, well the Mandinka is in Senegal, I've been there, and next year I expect to go to Guinea because that's where the Balanta are. So, it'll be my first trip there since learning that I have a linkage there.

That is so exciting.

Yes, yes.

Do you have any recommendations to anybody based on your experiences with that?

With the DNA?

Yes.

You know, I think that for some people the cost might be prohibitive. For right now, it might have gone up, but I think it's worth it, you know. You save your coins in a jar or something, and accumulate what you need to send it off because this way, you know....I think of myself as an Afrikan, and I'm always talking to people about being Afrikan, we're all Afrikan, but to know that you have a linkage, a direct linkage, and, it's, like, when you see it in black and white, it's, like, proof that you came from there. Even though you know you came from there, your ancestors came from there, but when you see it in black and white, you get that warm fuzzy feeling.

How are you going to prepare for you next flight?

The next flight – I won't do anything different. Usually, when we're going to Afrika, I usually just try to make sure I wear comfortable clothing. That I wear something that I'm not going to be too cool on the plane or something. Other than that, I don't worry too much about the flight because some people will say, "oh, it's a long flight, you know, what do you do all that time?" Well, you sleep, watch TV, you read, you relax, you know, you take a deep breath, and you think about what you're going to do when you get there, when you got to get back, so, you know it's good quiet time.

If we didn't have any direct flights across the Atlantic, how would you, or would you have even considered going?

Yeah, I would still. It would be, you know, probably a longer trip because you would have to go to some European countries and take a flight from some European countries to Afrika. I would do that. In fact, when I went to, we had to go through to Italy before we went to, um, before we got to Afrika, we had to make a stop in Italy, and, then, sometimes what happens to is the flight on which the reservations were made, the airlines changes at the last minute and there has to be some kind of deviation. But, I would still go because as I said, it is still my favorite place to go.

If there wasn't any air transportation available, would you still go?

Oh, yeah, I'd take a cruise. I would cruise again to some European country and get a flight from there.

Okay, that leaves transportation, we're moving into stereotypes – Cultural perceptions and how you've been affected. First one is, what were your expectations, and how were they met?

Well, I don't know that I really had any. My reason for going was curiosity, part of it, and, the other part was to be able to say that I've been to Afrika. I don't know that I really had any particular expectations of what it should be like. I go, you know, I'm not thinking it should be like this, this or this. I just go.

Were you surprised? Is there anything that you saw or disappointed by anything that you saw?

I don't, I think I was a little surprised at the density of the population in the cities. I don't think I was disappointed in anything except, maybe, a little disappointed and saddened at the poverty level. Oh yes, I was disappointed that my Afrikan brothers and sisters were trying to imitate people in the U.S. Some of us here are trying to be more Afrikan, culturally and spiritually. However, on the other hand, I could see that there were a lot of good things going on there.

How do you mean?

Well, the fact that the people there are engaged at providing things of livelihood for themselves. I just found it...it was interesting. It was also odd to me that so many people were selling things. On the other hand, there wasn't much money around. It's like...who's buying it, what are they selling, you know. If you have a million people selling stuff, and those million people are poor, who's buying it, you know. I still don't understand that, I have to figure that out. I guess I didn't give it much thought, but I just found that kind of peculiar. The good thing is that everybody is busy, everybody's trying to make a way for themselves. They're not sitting around feeling sorry for themselves.

Excellent. Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

I'd find the opportunity. As I said, I love going there. I try to go there at least once a year. I would go more often if I could.

Your primary reason for that is because?

Is to learn about the various countries there. When I'm going there, I do research on the country itself, the population, the industry, the government, how the government is set up, their independence – when they gained their independence, and how it's been since their independence. I try to learn something about the various cultures – and, how they're all related even though they're in different countries.

Does that tie back with anything that you relived or anything that you would hear?

I could see, when I go there and I see what goes on there, I could see the direct link to what's down here. How my life has been as an Afrikan here, some things my family, my relatives, my Grandmother, my Great Grandmother does. For instance, when I was a young girl, my mother used to wear cowry shell earrings, and I used to ask her where she would get them from. She told me where she got them, right now I don't remember where she got them, but they were so different, and she was so proud to wear them. I'm not really sure she understood where they came from, but she was proud that she wore them, and I never really learned where they came from until I started to learn about Afrika as an adult. Some of the things that are said, as a child, some things that are said to you are said in Afrika, right now I can't think of any exactly, but I can remember that some of the things that were said to me when I was a child are things that I hear in Afrika, and it's like, "oh, that's where that came from."

Do you think of the Afrikan continent as home?

I do, yes.

Well, that kind of covers the next one – where are your ancestral roots? Any significant research that you've done in Senegal with the Mandinka based on the DNA perspective?

No. When I got the notice, I did go on the internet to do some, to look it up, to see where they are, the areas that they were in – the Mandinka, as well as, the Balanta. Once in a while, I'll take a look on the internet. I haven't really gathered any information, but I think before my next trip, I will make some notes before I go.

Will you try to do some genealogical research there?

I doubt it. I don't know that I'll have the time because, again, you know, I travel with a group, but I'll see what I can learn. My hope is to be able to meet someone from those tribes to let them know that my ancestors are, also, from that tribe.

That is so exciting. You could be talking to a relative.

That's right. Yes.

Having been there what does Afrika mean to you?

Afrika means that, you know, as we say "we're Afrikans living in American" to say that really means that I consider Afrika as my homeland. I was born here in America, as well as, my immediate ancestors, America is not a homeland. From my perspective America is not a homeland for Afrikans.

How did you come to that?

Well, when I look at what goes on here in America, all the rules, or the majority of the rules and regulations, and bills that are passed are things that hamper the opportunities of Afrikans here in America. For instance, the voting rights bill. When you have others coming to this country, they become citizens, right away they have voting rights. There's no bill to say that they have to be, it has to be approved for them to be able to vote for the next 20 or 25 years, you know. They used us, we were enslaved, we built this country, and we still have no rights. We have none. Everything we do, every opportunity we get, every dollar we make, every anything that we get or acquire requires a fight.

And, there it's different?

In Afrika? In Afrika, it's different in that you're in Afrika, and you have Afrikans in charge, and the hope is that because you have Afrikans in charge they will be more inclined to work for the benefit of Afrikans than "non" Afrikans. What I see in Afrika, which is saddening to me, is you have Europeans and Asians going into Afrika to secure the resources that are there, and my fear is that, with so many of them going into Afrika to put a base there, to secure a base there; to build there, for instance the Chinese have already built a bridge there that collapsed – now how bad is that? It just shows they did a sloppy job. But, to have others go there, and set up base there, go there supposedly to help Afrikans to me, is a misnomer – they're there for their own benefits and their only benefits and theirs only. The US wants to go there now to set up military bases in Afrika. No, they should not go there. They have no business setting up a military base in Afrika because once they do that, they'll start moving to other areas and take over. I think the Afrikans there should be allowed, left alone to do what they need to do for Afrika.

We got to this because it was about "homeland." That Afrika is viewed as homeland, and America is not homeland, and that was some of the reasonings why? You feel that Afrika is really homeland, did I restate that right?

Yes.

When there, how did you communicate?

Well, with English, you know, sometimes you learn a few words, few local words, a few important words that you need to get your points across. You have to learn the currency, and what it's called, and how to count it; and, then depending on the areas that you're in, you get a list from the locals there will share the language with you on how to communicate. And, for the most part they speak English. So, that helps a lot.

Who or what did you recognize – Pictures, actions, principals, values? We may have touched a little bit on this before.

Yes, I think we did because you go there, you know, you see your cousins, your aunts, your uncles, your brothers, and your sisters, your neighbors. You also see that most people are busy making a life for themselves, raising families, getting an education being the best that they can be.

How does that make you feel?

It feels great! I remember once when, and my husband will probably talk about this. We were at - we were visiting with a king. The king thought that one of the men and his group was the uncle to my husband, because my husband looked so much like this person there. And, we all got a good laugh from it, but it's true you see people there who look they're your relatives or your friends. I think they share the same values that we do - that we're all here to do good, and we should do good; the same that I am my brother's and sister's keeper is not just words, these are things that we should do.

How are things different – food, customs, values, actions?

Some of the foods were a little different. Whenever I visit Afrika, I always try some of the local foods; on the other hand, they eat generally what most people throughout the world eats, it's just that some of it is prepared a little different than what we would do here in the United States. But, I overall, have very good experiences.

Were there any customs that were a little different?

Well the custom of eating with your fingers, and sharing the dish with the food on it. You know I have to remind myself that I'm in the Motherland, and this is how it was, and this is how it is. Sometimes, eating with the fingers, depending on what it is; is something I have to do, to push myself to do; but, otherwise. The other thing I remember in West Afrika – you receive things with your right hand instead of your left hand – I'm left-handed – so, that when they're giving me things, and I reach for it with my left hand, they have to remind me, no, take it with my right hand, so that's one thing that I have to remind myself of.

Do you know why or how that is?

Yes, they use the right hand because of – what the left hand is used for, generally, as a people, what the left hand is used for, you use it for your personal body when you're in the bathroom, then, you should not use it when you are eating and drinking, that's what I was told.

Anything else you want to mention that might have been different in terms of values, or actions, and principles?

No, that's all I can think of.

How were you received?

Well received. Again, you get a warm fuzzy feeling. Everybody you meet there makes you feel welcome, they tell you “welcome back home” “we're glad to have you back” and they always do everything they can to make your visit there very pleasant.

How has this experience changed you, changed your perspective?

Well, I guess it has changed the community because I'm in the community, and it's changed me in that, I always talk about Afrika, and everybody – all Afrikans and Americans – should go there at least once in their life to make the connection. But, if you're not able to go, you should help somebody else to go. I talk about it all of the time, how important it is that we make sure we claim Afrika as a homeland, because without a

homeland we don't exist as Afrikans. If there are no Afrikans, there are no Afrikans in America.

So, has it changed you in any way?

It's changed me in the fact, that I'm proud that I'm from Afrika. Some people still say "Why do you go to Afrika? Why do you go there every year?" "Why not!?" That's where your roots are, you might not want them to be from there, but that's where your roots are. So, it's changed me in the sense that I feel the need to go there as much as I can.

What do you do differently now that you didn't do before going?

I don't know, except talk about it more, read about it more. When I go on the internet, I check the news, I check the international news, and sometimes I'll put in a country and see what's going on there. When I get the local paper, I check to see what they say about Afrika, as well as, Haiti and other black countries. So, I read about it more, and I want to read about it more, and I want to know about it more, about what's going on in Afrika and other minority...[entities].

What do you do with that information?

I share it with others. If there's something that requires action or telephone call or email, or something, I'll send out emails. I get emails regarding – from a lawyer – that talks about Haiti, and what's going on in Haiti. I learn from this lawyer, in an email, that European women are going to Afrika, women in their 50's and 60's, going to Afrika to have sex with young men, young Afrikans. They go there, they buy these little things for them, it's like what they are doing is making them gigolos. They go there, and "hook up" with these young men in Afrika. But, for them, it's a means of getting some money, getting some new shoes, new shirts, new pants, or whatever, but that was the most recent emails that I've gotten that we should know about.

Has your relationship with others changed?

No, I don't know that it's changed so much except people who know that I go there every year, they're "oh, where are you going next year?" They're like, "oh, well, I know where you're going next year, you're going to Afrika". "Yes." And, then, "well, where are you going in Afrika? Haven't you been to every place in Afrika?" "No, not yet. I haven't gotten to half the countries in Afrika."

The relationships remain about the same.

They were good relationships, and they're still good relationships.

Okay. I guess what I'm trying to get to is was there any impact? Can you see any impact on them based on what you've shared with them?

I think the fact that I talk about Afrika a lot, and remind them that they should go, and, I go "when are you going to go? And they say "I'm going to go" And, they say "Oh, I don't know when I'm going to go." And, I say, "Well, you have to pick a day, I mean, pick a year, then, after you pick the year, you pick the month; then, after you do that, you save your money, so you know you're going. Because each time they know that I'm

going they say “Oh, I’m going to go” and, I say, “when are you going to go?” They say, “oh, you always ask me that.” “Well, when are you going to go?” Sometimes I think they want to go when we talk about it, but after the conversation there is no need to say or do anything. For them it was just conversation for me, since they know I love to talk about Afrika.

Okay, what are your new expectations?

In going to Afrika? Well, my expectations are always to learn about the country, and the customs, and the practices there in whatever country I visit. The new countries - the new expectation is to learn about what goes on there, and to be able to relate it to what I’ve seen or grown up with, or what goes on here in the US.

Is there any one significant thing that you think has really changed you, having gone; maybe from your personal experience, or, maybe, from all your combined experiences?

I don’t know if I can think of any one thing. But, wholly as a person being able to understand recognize and understand the world, the whole perspective of what goes on, and how everything is interrelated, and how countries, other countries - other than countries in Afrika – how they are related, and how dependent they are on Afrika and the resources that’s provided are means for me to really think about the world as a whole, not that we’re all so much individuals, but how everything is interrelated.

Last question in this collective is - having been to Afrika, what does America mean to you?

Well, it doesn’t mean much. I’m here, I was born here, I grew up here. I don’t know that it means, it doesn’t mean a lot to me, because of the way it is. The way it operates - because of the bills, the rules, the regulations, the achievements of Afrikans. The constant battle against the powers; and, unfortunately, those who control the situation define the situation. And, because we have very little control here in America, we’re not able to define much of what goes on especially how it affects us. I think what I would say is that.....I remember having a session with Professor James Small, he said that.....okay, I’m going to have to come back to that, I lost my train of thought.

Last one – the next is demographic, occupation, educational level, marital status, age, city and state, and, if you care to share this fine, if not, fine. But, I would like to know specifically where you were born, what state, city.....

I was born and raised in South Carolina. I came to New York after high school.

And, you’ve been here in New York since?

Yes, I’ve been in New York, I guess many years.

Would you mind sharing your educational level?

Well, I’m a college graduate.

Anything else you’d like to add?

No, I – <the thing I was going to talk about> it escaped me completely.

Well, you can always call me later. Anything you think you'd like to incorporate this, just give me a call.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

JOE

Today is Sunday, December 23, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Joe.

Travel and transportation – what were your experiences?

In getting ready to leave America – the airport, the flight, the cost, the time? What were some of your experiences?

In regards to preparation - learning what was needed to travel. How do we travel today? Given the events of 9/11, some preparation involved in what you should take, how you should store it, the amount of items that you could take. That was a little bit difficult. So, what I had to do was, I went online. I had to do a little bit of research, travel and tourism research, and try to get some information on the items that were necessary that could, actually, go on the plane now.

In regards to arrival at the airport, it was a little hectic. The lines were long, security was heightened. Again, 9/11 had a lot to do with the time that we had to wait to have our bags checked, which was necessary. The cost? I, actually, found the cost for the package was very reasonable for the most part. I do have some friends that travel back and forth to Africa, and I'm usually told that they pay really ridiculous amounts for travel. I think since I was traveling with this group, it actually made.....the rates were better. Travel time? Travel time was 9 hours actually to Senegal. Again, because of my preconceived ideas, and not knowing that much about Africa, again, I do have friends that travel back and forth to Africa, I have a friend who travels back and forth to Ghana, and her flight was.....I believe she told me it was 16 – 21 hours to Ghana. But, I've always had this preconceived idea that the travel time was so long. So, that's why I'm going, I never really.....I've always wanted to travel to Africa, but I was a little discouraged about this idea that I had about time in flight.

When I arrived in Africa, it was a little hectic at the airport, it was a little confusing. Our travel time.....the time that we took from Africa, the airport to the hotel

was a little disappointing; the drive from the hotel, not the hotel, but from the airport to the hotel was a little disappointing. I was a little disappointed to me, because the Africa, to me, was in ruins. I wasn't, it was too soon for me to be disappointed off the plane. Returning trip from Africa? Arrival was okay, there was no long line. It was just leaving out to go to Africa where the long wait happened.

On your perceived time that it took to get to Africa, where do you think you got that idea?

Originally, from friends.

Okay. And, then, when you actually did go, I think you said it was 9 hours.

Nine hours to Senegal, yes.

How has aviation contributed to your needs here in America?

I would say availability of certain goods that I can get in America which would not be readily available to me, like African items, sculptures, craft work. I think without aviation, I think that these items would find their way here, but, I think, aviation has made it much more accessible.

You mentioned African items and craft work, could you be a little more specific?

African masks, I have a tendency to collect African masks, the fabric, clothing, Shea butter, jewelry.

Okay. Has aviation offered any other conveniences to your life?

Now, that I know that....since I've gone to Africa that the trip is not as lengthy as I thought it would be, I will definitely consider traveling to other parts of Africa, to other parts of, so called, third world countries, I would consider travel to.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

My last visit to West Africa was in February 2007.

How many times have you been?

That was my first time.

Why did you go?

I've always had, growing up, I've always had this fondness of Africa. Through my own research from what I've learned in college, I've always wanted to learn more about it. One thing is that you hear stories about Africa, and you can read about it, but I had to see it firsthand for myself. I try not to be....I try not to let other people's ideas and ideology change the way I feel about something. I need to see things and investigate things on my own, and do my own research.

You said, growing up you had "a fondness for"....what does that mean?

Fondness for....an attachment to. I've always considered myself to be a displaced African, even though I'm here, I know that my homeland or people of African descent,

their homeland, or the Motherland, is considered Africa. It may, also, have to do with the research that I do. Africa is considered to be the cradle of civilization, the cradle of mankind. This is my theory, and, a theory that other people hold. I have a strong hold to want to learn more about it.

As a “displaced African” and having done the research, I’m sure that it gave more insight and more knowledge to where you are today, to where you are today. But, if, you can, can you go back before that, how did you know that you had a fondness of Africa? What gave that to you? How did you learn about Africa?

My father used to always talk about Africa. It may have been the little bit that I’ve learned in history classes in junior high school. It left me.....the little bit that I did learn, it left me wanting to know more about it. It’s just that there were so many, there are so many unanswered.....there are so many things that I wanted to know, and so many unanswered problems.

Sounds like what I did heard....what I think I heard you say was the true spark of interest came from your Father? And, then, it grew from there to your school.

Yes.

So, the schools had information?

Some.

Some, okay.

Very little. Pretty much that bit of information that they provided.....it was that blacks came here to America, we were slaves, but I’ve always thought that there was so much more than that.

How will you prepare for your next visit to Africa?

I think I’m going to pack less.

That’s the number one answer.

Yes, pack less so that I can bring back more items of interest. So, that I can actually share the things like masks and jewelry to family, for friends, so that they can, maybe, actually, develop some interest as well.

If there was no direct Trans-Atlantic flights to Africa, how would you consider getting there, or would you?

I would have to find a way. If there was a direct boat to Africa, I would have to find a way. If I had to travel by flight to another area and get on a boat or ship, I would get there.

Stereotypes and Cultural perceptions: How have you been affected? What were your expectations before going, and how were they met?

Before going, I didn’t know.....when I got there, we got off the airplane and we were driving to the hotel. There was so much undeveloped land, there was so much building.....so many buildings that were in ruin. Again, I didn’t expect to see that right

away, and, that was somewhat disappointing to me. Were my expectations met? I guess my expectations were not met. I just had to accept the fact that Africa is the way that it is and it has a lot to do with history, it has a lot to do with colonialization. It has a lot to do with people taking from Africa, and, not putting back into Africa. I, also, think it has a lot to do with even Africans themselves who live in Africa, sometimes, I think have a tendency to turn away from Africa and want to go outside of Africa to live elsewhere instead of going back to, and trying to build Africa up. It is what it is, and I have come to accept that.

What were you, you mentioned this before, where you got off the plane, and you were on your way to the hotel, what did you think you were going to see?

I was a little devastated at the fact that.....I was expecting to see.....I wasn't expecting to see it in such ruin. I was expecting to see.....to me it was almost like a warzone. There were times that it appeared as if they had started building, erecting a building, and, then that maybe that the building, halfway through, it wasn't finished, uncomplete, it was, just, too much ruin, and I was expecting to see more. I just wasn't expecting to see that on the way there to the hotel. I was just expecting to see more, I know that, you know, it's not like a European country where it would be.....it's really a hard question for me to answer, maybe I can come back to that.

What surprised you, and, then, what disappointed me?

What surprised me, what disappointed me. I think certain parts of Africa are experiencing colonialism, there's a lot of Chinese, Arabic, I, sometimes have the impression that my African brothers can tolerate things more so, than I could. I think to a certain degree, even in their own country, they're considered.....are treated like second class citizens to newly arrived Chinese, Japanese, Arabic people. That disappoints me to a certain degree. It may have a lot to do with our experiences are different. I was born in the United States, I know a little bit about the history of Africa, the enslavement of Africa and its people. When you go there, and you see Africans being treated with such disrespect, it harbors a lot of feelings inside me that... you don't want Africa to repeat that vicious cycle again – of slavery, of colonialization, that's what disappointed me a great deal.

Were there any surprises?

Yes, there was a surprise. I was really surprised that a lot of.....generally, Africans are hardworking people, and, they need the opportunity just like everyone else to thrive. A lot of the Africans own, I guess what would be considered, the open market. They're selling their goods, their masks, jewelry, on the streets, as if they're selling flea market items. To me, if Africa is going to build itself up, especially Senegal, you can't survive or build a nation on selling those types of goods. I mean, those types of goods are fine, maybe, in a market, in a marketplace, but to build a country up.....Africa needs to start employing Africans to work in the stores. A lot of the stores are owned by Arabic people, Chinese people, and that's disheartening. Africa needs to....they need to employ their own, and they need to start building up their own nation. Everyone has to survive, and an individual can't survive on selling, so called, I guess it would be.....market goods. It's hard to make a living like that. And, it seems that everyone is selling the same

product, so it's, just, too much competition....too much competition. One person is selling masks, and, of course, 3000 persons are selling masks, so how could these people survive as individuals and support their families and thrive as a nation.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

I would consider another visit to see where I could help. How I could give aid. I think the trip to Africa has opened my eyes to maybe getting involved on some type of level because, for me, the bigger picture is no longer about me, it's about what I can, actually, do for others.

Are you looking at Africa or the African continent as home?

Yes, actually, I've considered possibly moving to it. Maybe, somewhere down the line, having a home in Africa, a place that I can, actually, go back and visit, and, actually, call my little part of Africa, my piece of Africa.

Where are your ancestral roots?

My family is, actually, from Jamaica, Montego Bay. That's my Mother's side of the family, and my Father's side is from the south.

Here in the States?

Here in the States, yes.

As far as you know, do they have any idea of their ancestral roots?

Yes, my Mother, yes. Going back to.....I think she knows as much as her Mother knows, and that's that they came from Jamaica; but, as far as being able to pinpoint a particular region in Africa, no.

With you having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

To me Africa is considered to be home, is considered to be.....it was the cradle of civilization. I always will have a connection to Africa. I remember my Uncle made a point, if you take a German Shepherd....if a German Shepherd is born in America, that dog is still considered to be a "German" Shepherd, it is not an American Shepherd. Even though I'm displaced, I will always have an attachment to Africa.

Viewing Africa as the cradle of civilization, and you're considering it as home, based on the fact that it's the cradle of civilization, what does.....how do you define home, what do you mean by home?

A place that I can go and feel a connection with a group of people, whether it be spiritually, culturally.....a place where I can, actually, go to feel a connection with my ancestors. Being here in America, I've been through so many misconceptions about Africa, and some spirituality, I want to be amongst people that I feel connected to.

How did you communicate?

As soon as we got there, there were some individuals that, actually, speak English.

And, were those the only people that you had to communicate with?

No, if I needed to speak to someone that, that spoke a different African dialect, we'd find an interpreter.

What or who did you recognize in Africa, either through features or actions or values or principles.

Since I've, actually, had the opportunity to do a little bit of research before going to Africa, I did some research on Senegal, and prior to that, doing my own independent reading about Kemet - Egypt, there's a Professor by the name of Cheikh Anta Diop, who was a Professor at the University of Dakar [in 1987 name was changed to University Cheikh Anta Diop to honor the Senegalese scholar] in Senegal. We actually....when I was in Africa we, actually, had the opportunity to visit the university because I wanted to see exactly where this man did his work, where he did his research. So, we actually traveled to the university to talk to a couple of the professors and to see what the university looked like. To me that was a recognizable feature for me, because I've always read a little bit....I've read some information in regards to the type of work that Cheikh Anta Diop had did, and I just wanted to make that connection.

Was there anything else that you could recognize?

Africans are very spiritual people. It seems as if they spend a lot of adoration to the one most high. That is a very important value, and, to me, you should give adoration to the one most high. That's our purpose of being here, we're supposed to be in adoration. It seems they are constantly in adoration.

While there, did you see anybody that you thought you knew from here?

Yes, and many times I did. The facial features are very, very similar to a lot of black Americans here. Even though they are on another side of the world, you would think that so many, we'd have so many differences, but, there are so many similarities.

What about, also, in that same vane, was there anything in principal or values, or actions. I guess what I'm asking is - here Mother, Father, grandparents...things that you know or take for granted that....my mother did this, and that was because she's my mother, that's why she did it. But, when I go to Africa, I see other people doing that same kind of thing, now, I think about it differently.

One thing that I did recognize is that African men hold their women up with great respect. Here in the states, when men are walking down the street, they see women, they turn around, and they cat-call, and they, try to pick women up, and, sometimes, it's very disrespectful. But, when I went to Africa there was nothing like that, and it really surprised me because.....again, maybe it was a preconceived idea, but....you hear a lot in the news how black men treat black women, and, I guess, when I was going there I was thinking it was going to be the same thing, and it's not. They're very respectful to their women. When engaging or walking down the street, they don't turn around to try to pick women up, or solicit certain things. It's really just a different type of attitude, and that kind of....I was really surprised, very surprised. I was really happy to see that. I think, in general, we have a lot to learn from each other.

How were they different, in terms of food or customs or principles, values, and actions, and, maybe the preceding answer kind of falls into that, were there any other kind of differences.

In regards to the food, from the samples, the food in the hotel, I wish that, I think there was that fresh influence, and, that European influence there. I wish that I had the opportunity to, maybe, sample food from the countries, or real traditional African foods from, maybe, visiting a tribe. I think I didn't really have the opportunity to connect in that way. I was a little disappointed that I had to have French fries with my meal. I really wanted to get into the core of traditional African foods. Actually, I wanted to see, in regards to religion, you have Muslims, you have Catholics in Africa, but I wanted to see the traditional people and see what traditional spirituality they practiced before Christianity and before the Muslim faiths came along.

Can you describe how you were received?

I was received very well. They actually, the Africans, treated me as if I was their brother, and that was, that's a great feeling to be so far away from this place, and people can take you in and take you in with open arms, that was a great feeling. It made me almost feel as if I'd never left. I remember when we were traveling, I can't remember. We were traveling on a bus, and we were traveling, it was a great distance from the hotel, and our tour guide, when he was talking to someone else that he met along the way, they talk as if they know each other, as if they're their long lost brother. They have a great respect for each other in that way which we don't really have here in the United States.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, and your community?

My perspective is that since I've gone to and traveled to Africa, that there's more out there to see. It makes...and, also, in that same note, I will never take anyone else's second hand information as to be valuable, in regards to Africa, unless I go and see it myself. When I came back from Africa, I had the opportunity, I must have spoke about it to my friends to try to encourage them to travel more. We need to get rid of these preconceived ideas which other people have give to us, there's no need to fear Africa. Prior to my travels, talking about it to certain individuals, again, people have these preconceived ideas that it's nothing but a waste land, and it has nothing to offer. And, again, maybe, what they were taught, maybe what they were, or, maybe they weren't taught, maybe, it's just a lack of information and not knowing. The only way to know about a particular place or country is to get the information yourself, and to explore. My main goal is to find out where I can contribute, and how can I be of service to individuals that have less than me.

What do you now do differently after your return?

I try to be mindful of not wasting things, whether it be water, whether it be food. Sometimes, I think I have a tendency to buy food in abundance just because it's there. And, I have to realize that there are people in Africa and many other parts of the world, who don't have the opportunities like I do, so, I try to be mindful in that way to be a little more conscience of how I utilize food. I try to be a little bit more giving, seeing, first-hand, how people live day-to-day, it makes you want to give more of yourself.

Has your relationship with others changed since you returned?

I would say so. I'm trying to be a little more family oriented, and...the family unity is so much more important to me now than it was before. I think..., and it may have a lot to do with the black American experience in regards to slavery, how we were separated from each other – mother from child, husband from wife – I think that psychologically has impaired black American's ability to be a family unit. I think my experience in Africa has changed my view on that, family is very important, and we actually have to...in order to...we have to become unified in order to improve ourselves as black people, as a whole, as a family, as a nation.

What are your new expectations?

I'm charging myself with trying to do more travel. My goal is to set up a fund for, some type of fund, a fund for, maybe, one of the university students so that they can pursue their educations, their dreams. Instead of being selfish, and thinking about myself, helping someone out that definitely has less than I, and improving their quality of life.

Now, that you've been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Now, that I've been to Africa, sometimes, I have so much disdain for what America means, and American values. To be honest there wouldn't be an America if it wasn't for the efforts of blacks, of the slaves that were here. America is, pretty much, built on the backs of slavery, and I kind of have that feeling towards a lot of European countries – Portugal, France, a lot of countries that were involved in the slave trade and the exporting of slaves to build their country. It's disheartening to me, and so much has been taken from Africa, and one of the main resources were the people. Africa hasn't had the opportunity to thrive and to grow. Still today, Africa is being raped, natural resources are leaving – gold, diamonds from South Africa – everything is being taken out of Africa to build up other nations, and it's really disheartening. You can't expect people, or the African nation to become independent and to grow when too many things are being taken away from it. Again, its still being, I think, being colonized, and people are taking everything away from it. It can't prosper, the people can't prosper, the African nation can't prosper. This is really disheartening to me. Sometimes, I feel that Africa needs to take note of other countries that were able to survive without European or American interest. They need to start to follow the philosophies of Cuba, of the Cuban nation because Cuba has managed to become, have the third best health care in the world without imperialist interests. So, I mean, Africa can survive but they need to look for other people to do so.

Okay, now, let's see if we can encapsulate that into "what does America mean to you?" What you answered....are you saying that America needs to do all those things, or not do those things. What does America mean to you now – that you've seen with your own eyes what you've seen, now, you come back. How does America look, what does America now mean?

I don't know if America could really do anything for Africa. I think, pretty much, they have done enough. America's values are basically greed on greed. Greed and what they can get from a nation to benefit themselves, I don't appreciate or like American values because of the hardships they have caused to indigenous people - African

indigenous people, Native American – I really don't think America can do anything for Africa now. Right now, America is just a place where I could reside until I can find somewhere else to, somewhere I can live where I can agree with their value system. Basically, the bottom line is, I hate America and its value system, that's the bottom line.

Okay. The last section has to do with demographics. Tell me a little bit about yourself – your occupation, educational level, marital status, age, and where you were born and grew up. If you don't want to answer any of these questions, that's okay to, so you tell me.

I'm an occupational therapist, and occupational therapy, actually, deals with working with individuals that have disabilities. I've worked in...it's a rehabilitative science. I've worked in a hospital/nursing home for about nine years dealing with individuals who have strokes, fractures, heart attacks, spinal cord injury individuals. The main purpose to what I do is to help an individual regain their, what we call, activities of daily living, be able to get up and get into the shower, groom themselves. Everything that we, so called able bodied people, that we take for granted. You and I would get up in the morning, and do what we need to do and we be ready to go out. Someone who has had an injury, they have to rethink and do things differently. So, my intervention is to getting this individual to function in their daily life. Currently, I'm working in the school system, and I work with kids that have autism, and different learning disabilities. My goal as an occupational therapist in the school system, is to help my clients, my kids, to function so that they can be able to do their school work, so that they can move along from grade to grade. I have a Bachelors of Science for Occupational Therapy. I'm single, and I'm 41. I've lived, pretty much, in Queens for all my life. I have no children.

So you were born and raised and grew up in New York?

In New York, yes.

Well, Joe, that takes care of all of the structured questions that I had. Is there something that I should have asked that wasn't there?

No, I really think that the interview was pretty thorough. Actually, you made me think about things that I probably never would have thought about if it wasn't for the interview. There's actually, I think, it's encouraging me to, maybe, possibly think about travel to Africa as soon as possible. You know one thing that I do want to say that I find disheartening is that travel expenses for individuals who were born in Africa or born in another part of the world, sometimes, I have the opportunity to speak to friends, and they tell me that they've been wanting to travel back to Africa but it costs them so much money. Maybe, I have to do my own research and find out why it has to cost so much for one person who was born and is native to a country to travel back to that country, and, I think, for the most part, it, maybe, discourages individuals from travel because expenses are just way so high. And, that's one thing that I need to look into myself.

So, let me see if I heard what you said. You've got people from Africa that have said they come to America, and they're here legally for whatever reason, t hey may be at school, or doing whatever they're here doing, and they're in a legal status. They

would like the opportunity to go back home to visit family, but they can't because the cost of the ticket, to do that, is prohibitive. Is that what you were saying?

Yes. They come to the United States to make a better living, to obtain jobs in order to live here in the states, and have to, to survive. But, on that same note, they, also, want to send money home, and, then, eventually travel home, but it seems that it's just so difficult.

Okay. It's cost prohibitive. They would like to go back, but they don't have the resources to do that.

The funds to do that, yes.

It would be the same cost for you and I to go, as it is for them to go. So, they're not looking....but because they're here trying to better themselves, and probably working at a job that doesn't afford them discretionary income so that they could get back and forth to visit home, is that what I'm hearing?

Yes. It's just very difficult for them. And, you know, at times, I have a tendency to, maybe I think a little bit too much, sometimes, I think, it, also, it forces a disconnect because for those individuals that want to get back home and share experiences, see how the family life is going, visit relatives, they can't do that because it's hard for them to do so. Again, these individuals come here and get involved with selling, so called, African goods, that's not sustaining them enough, so that they would be able to travel back home. To me, it creates another type of disconnect for African people.

How would you venture to fix that?

That's a hard question, that's a really hard question to answer. The research has to be done. Why is it so expensive for travel? Maybe, better opportunities for individuals who come here to the states to better themselves, to get decent jobs. That's a really hard question. It's just that the research has to be done to figure out why the travel prices have to be so expensive.

Without any research, and not trying to answer your question, just a little bit, that I think in what I've observed is that 9/11 played a big factor, a major factor in increasing prices, as well as, the oil situation, and I think those are the two main things that caused the price of air travel to go up. But, yeah, there's some ways to get it down so that, Africans that are here can get back home, that would benefit me too. So, if you find that answer, then, I'm ready. Anything else that you can think of that should be included in this work?

No.

And, if you think of something tomorrow, next week, or whenever, email me, give me a call, or something, and let me know so that I could get it included. The other thing is once all of this is transcribed, I'm going to get back in touch with you so you can go through it and make sure that I've captured accurately what you've shared.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Received via eMail January 14, 2008
Telephone Follow-up January 15, 2008

LOSS OF A MOTHER'S LOVE

What were your travel experiences (airport, flight, cost, time)?

Going/departing America: My departure to Dakar, Senegal was pretty much uneventful. When I arrived at the departure counter there you were having difficulty getting the airlines to talk your additional baggage on board without additional charges. I agreed to include one of your bags as mine and proceeded to the gate. Makeba and I talked and ate and a few hours later were told our flight was delayed. It was again delayed on the tarmac. I had previously had some concerns about my charges as I was staying alone for a portion of the trip and sharing a room for the initial segment.

While in Africa: Although I had asked for a roommate that did not snore or smoke that was not to be. I shared a room with a woman who snored and spent several hours without sleep.

Returning to America: The return trip home was also uneventful.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (availability of products)?

Living in New York, the melting pot of America, there is very little that you can not find from abroad. There are neighborhoods in New York City which are ghettos for every nationality on earth and the various products associated with their cultures.

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

Yes, I love to visit different places, learn about different cultures, and get away from the cold climate of New York during the winter.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

Prior to February 2007, I visited Nigeria in 1995.

How many times have you been?

Twice.

Why did you go?

I went to Nigeria with my family, as a family vacation and to Dakar with my friend as a vacation.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa

I have no confirmed reservations to travel to West Africa at this time. I am, however currently looking into meeting up with my African American friend in Mali by using my frequent flyer miles to save money.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there?

If I were not able to fly I would definitely have second thoughts about traveling by cruise ship as It would take several days to make the trans-Atlantic crossing.

Stereotypes – Cultural PerceptionsHow have you been affected?

What were your expectations and how were they met?

I really hadn't done any research on either Nigeria or Dakar prior to travel because I was traveling with friends who had prior experiences in those areas so I was not concerned. I was open to any new experiences that those two cultures would offer. If I am not concerned about safety issues I usually like to talk to the natives and learn through discussion and visiting museums and other institutions.

What surprised you and disappointed you?

I was both surprised and disappointed that I advised that I should not walk about Dakar alone. I wanted to go about the market alone to look for batik, however, on the advise of the group leader it was suggested that we travel and pay for escorts when ever we left the hotel.

I was also disappointed with the constant barrage of vendors, wherever we went, trying to sell us their trinkets.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Yes (See above)

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Definitely not.

Where are your ancestral roots?

I can trace my maternal ancestors back to two - three generations in slavery in Virginia and Tennessee. My paternal ancestors can only traced two generations and located in South and North Carolina.

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Africa is the place from which my ancestors were stolen or sold into slavery.

How did you communicate?

In Nigeria they speak English quite well and in Dakar, we traveled with escorts who translated. There were also some who I came in contact with that did speak some English.

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

Hummm, Ummm, I don't know that I did recognize any.

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

There was not as much variety as you find living in New York and being raised in New York. Being raised a Christian, there were lots of differences in customs, principles, values and actions, especially as they related to woman and how they are allowed to practice the Muslim religion. They believe in polygamy which is not practiced on the east coast and is illegal in the USA.

Describe how you were received.

We were met at the airport by the tour leader and were transported with our luggage to an air-conditioned bus. There was some uncertainty as to who was working for the tour guide and who could be trusted to take our luggage.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

My two trips did not change me or my community. Being raised in NYC and being a child of the sixties during the civil rights movement, with a Nigerian Uncle, I have not experienced feeling really relaxed and comfortable and being an acceptable part of any community, NY, the USA, Brazil, the Caribbean, Panama, and Europe.

What do you now do differently after returning?

Nothing.

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

No.

What are your new expectations?

None.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Having been to Africa does not change, in any way what America means to me. America is still the place where my ancestors were brought to work and build this country and make it rich. It is still a country where Black Americans are discriminated against and are still treated as refugees when it comes to education, rights, access, respect and etc. It is also a country that gives more (education, rights, access, respect and etc) to immigrants than those descendants of these same slaves who contributed so much to this country's wealth, technology, and culture.

Demographics: Please tell me about yourself

Occupation: Retired

Educational level: BA

Marital status: Single

Age: 55

City and State

Born: New York, New York

Childhood/grew up: Laurelton, Queens, New York

Adult: Brooklyn, New York

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

MAKEBA

Today is Tuesday, December 25, 2007; I am Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I am involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Makeba. This interview is divided into three areas.

Travel – Transportation: What were your experiences?

What were your travel experiences (airport, flight, cost, time)?

I found that my travel at the airport ran smoothly, I was excited...it was not my first flight...but I was very excited knowing where I was going...my first trip to Africa. The cost was well worth it. The timing was great. It did not take very long to get there-six and one-half hours. It was just GREAT.

Going/departing America

In essence wherever I am going, I tend to be an early person, so I was so excited going to the Motherland for the first time that I was at the airport about 4 hours before departure. I know that is a little unusual but THAT IS how excited and nervous I was because I had no clue what was going to happen, what I was going to encounter, when I got there, or anything. I was so excited I did not want to be late and chance missing the plane.

While in Africa

Now, that's another story. During one of my adventures in Africa we got in the cab and the cab broke down. So what we ended up doing was... getting out of the cab and pushing it. But that was okay...we went on where we had to go. We arrived at our destination safely.

Did you have to push the cab all the way there?

I would say about one-quarter of the way...we had to help him "pop the clutch"...but that was okay. We knew where we were and if this is what it took to get the car started...we did it...and did it with amusement and pride, I guess. Because it was funny but we did it and everything went smoothly...we did not stop any more.

I want and I still have not done it, ride the bus over there. They call it the "I don't care bus." But I am told it is not very safe to ride it...but one day I am going to get on that bus even if I only go a block. It is very very crowded, and it is there mode of transportation for the average person. It's reasonable and cost effective for them. So that's the way they travel. They are not fortunate to have their own vehicle as we do in America. But that's okay...you go with the flow.

Return to America

The transportation coming back we were always escorted...transported to the airport by a bus. And when I have gone on my own we got in a cab. And depending on the time of day, it can take you anywhere from an hour to reach that airport to twenty minutes. The flight is great. I have not had any problems and I have been over there on three or four different airlines. And they have all been good even the ones when I had to layover. Everything was nice and it was smooth. I have never encountered a problem. Flight scheduling now better that it was when I first started going in 1998. It has improved a lot, because there are more flights going there and you have a choice of airlines. At one point when I started going over you had two choices, that was Ghana Airlines and Air Afrique, which is no longer in existence. And now I understand there are flights that go everyday over...so that is wonderful.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America (availability of products)?

When I go to Africa there are many products that I bring back from there, some for personal use and some for business. So far, I have not encountered a problems in transporting the...the airline personnel have always been very friendly towards me. Yes, I have had to pay extra...but that's normal. Because you are only allowed a certain amount...only allowed certain weights and when I have gone over that, I have to pay. But that was okay. It was well worth it. That it came from there here, in a timely manner and safely.

When you are not directly involved in the transportation of products, do you have a need for products at other times and can you conveniently get those?

Yes, but it is costly. How is it costly. When I bring it myself , it comes as a part of my luggage. When I have to have it shipped that a different story because now you have to pay...customs and other fees, that a small business person like me cannot absorb easily. But this year...well, next year I am going to look into having items shipped back because I am planning on visiting a country I have not visited before...so I do not know what all I am going to bring back. But I will find out just how costly it is going to be for the items I intend to bring back.

Do you use any product that you personally do not bring back, that you secure from somebody else?

Shea butter is one product. *Is that something that you put on your bread?* That is...well I use it as a lotion. Shea butter has many many uses. Some people put it in their

hair. But I find that in the winter time it is very very good for your skin. So I use it more in the wintertime than I do in the summer months. But I do use it year round.

Any you are able to get that conveniently?

Yes, I am able to purchase that here in America.

Has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

It has helped me. Aviation helps me to brighten/heighten my horizons. I am able to travel different places. I feel secure in traveling...not only to other countries but within America. It's fast, it's convenient, and most times it is economical.

Last visit to West Africa

May 2007.

Number of Visits

Total 13 times.

Why did you go?

I love it, I love it and that is where I met my husband. Another reason I go is because I want to learn as much about my ancestors that I can. It is a learning experience for me.

How do you know that where your ancestors were?

I feel that my ancestors...I do not know where they came from, exactly what region, or country on the continent that they came from. But I do know that we came from SOMEWHERE over there... And one of these days I am going to find out. As a matter of fact, that is one of my goals for 2008, is to trace my ancestry.

How are you going to go about doing that?

A friend of mind did it about a year ago. And they have put me in touch with the same organization that helped her trace her roots. And I want to do the same, I am ready now.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

Pack my bag and go! I do not need preparations. I do not need to prepare myself to go. I have been so many times that it just comes natural. I pack my bags, whatever I need, whatever gifts I am going to take...and I go. And I am excited each and every time that I go over there. I just feel I am going home!

If you can recall back 13 trips ago to your first time, when you packed that bag to go...how does that bag differ from the bag you pack on the 13th trip? It really doesn't differ that much. The only difference is I have learned that I do not need that much for myself, as I did on the first trip. I did not know what to expect on my very first trip over there. Now I take a minimal amount of clothing, and of course I take my personals, but I take a minimal amount of clothing, and my other two bags, which are almost always overweight...I have that packed with gifts for my extended families over there. ***And what kind of gifts do you bring over there?*** I try to take gifts of different things...items that's not convenient for them to acquire over there. Or it may be expensive for them. I take tooth paste, deodorant, soap, sometimes canned foods. I take candies for the children, tee shirts for the adults, male and females, because I have a friend who does tee shirts and he

just graciously give me 30-40 tee shirts each year to take, and I distribute them as I see fit.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights how would you consider getting there? Or would you?

I don't know, I can't really think of any other way. I can't swim so that would be out. I do not know of another mode of transportation to take except by boat, by ship and I am afraid of water. So...I don't know. I would have to think about it. Although now since I have been so many times, if there was no other way for me to get there I would probably just take my chances and get on the ship...because I enjoy it that much...I enjoy being over there that much, that I would probably take my chances on the ship. That would be a long ride...that's a journey to do that as opposed to 6 1/2 hours...it might take me a month to get there by ship. But at this point in my life, I would probably take it.

Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions: How have you been affected?

What were your expectations and how were they met?

My expectations were...I guess TV versus reality. I expected to see the continent as it is portrayed in America by TV and I...after arriving there I found that there was a DIFFERENCE. It is not really like America portrays it. Because when I look at Africa on TV, I see a lot of poverty...and granted there is a lot of poverty there, but so is there a lot of poverty in America, also. But I found that there are people who are doing QUITE well there and then you have people who are not doing so well. Just like in America. It was just different for me. ***What was different?*** The way they are portrayed here in America. I found that was a little different than the way it really is there. The people seem to be... I guess...comfortable with what they are doing and how they live. Our standard of living is a lot different from theirs but...I don't know...I just conformed to there way and I found that it worked for me.

What surprised you and disappointed you?

I use to work for the airline, and I never got a chance to go to Africa. And friends of mine that had gone, one of the first things they told me was that the people were not very friendly towards Americans. So I was surprised when I got there to find that they welcomed us with opened arms. They were friendly; they were helpful, and everything just went so nicely with them. I just could not believe how nice they were to us...and still are.

Was the ancestry of your co-workers you mentioned African?

Yes, and some were Caucasian and what I found was the complete opposite. That was a surprise.

My only disappointment is...and I still have a problem with it is...when I go to Gorée and I see...Caucasians laying around...NUDE. That bothers me. It disappoints me to see that the natives even allow that. Because to me that is like sacred land and to see it DISRESPECTED like that is a BIG Disappointment to me. ***What control do you believe that the native people have over that?*** I really don't think they have much control over it. Because that is tourism that is coming to them...and they are bringing...that is tourism...I

don't know...I guess they just accept it. But me...going over on a pilgrimage...it is UPSETTING to me to see them lying out there...like that. But I really don't think the natives have...they probably don't even see it in the same light as me...you know...they probably not even looking at it like I look at it.

If you could do something about it, what would that be?

I would go out there and cover ever one of them...even if it was with sand. I would cover them up.

Have you ever visited/spoke with any of them about it?

No, I have never said anything...I have wanted to.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

I love it. I go over there to reconnect. Because I want to always remember that this is where my forefathers came from and I do not want to ever forget that. So, there is a sense of connection when I go over...each year...two or three times a year. I reconnect every time I go.

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Yes. I live in America, but that is my home. Africa is my home.

Where are your ancestral roots?

I am not sure. But I will know in 2008.

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

That's kinda hard to answer. As I stated before, I consider Africa my home and...To me it is like a pilgrimage that I take each year...I am going to spread out a little bit this year and go to some other places other than Africa. But I do have that need to learn as much about Africa as I can and as I can afford to do so. I don't know...just...Africa just means a LOT to me...and I just can not express...It is very hard for me to express what it means to me...but I do consider it my home.

How did you communicate?

Sign language. My own made up sign language. And it was surprising. They understood. I learned a few words in Wolof, and a few words in French, the rest in English. I just kept saying it until I got it over to them, motioning, signing, doing all kinds of things. I did what ever it took for me to get them to understand me. ***Did you barter?*** Oh yes! I found that everything is negotiable over there. So you barter for EVERYthing. Outside of the stores and even in the stores you can barter there too. So most of my bartering was done with either shoes or jeans. Those seem to be the most popular items to barter with. So that is what I used.

Define from me what you mean by "barter."

Okay, if I saw a mask that I wanted and they wanted in CFA, which is the money they use in Senegal, if they wanted say 20,000 CFA and I felt that was too much. I would offer them a pair of jeans and instead of 20,000 CFA, which is like forty dollars in American money, I would offer like half of that and most times I would get it, for what ever amount I offered. Most times I would get it. I don't know about now though because

the dollar is not so strong over there. The Euro has taken over. So I don't know about this year...I will have to see...well next year I have to see how it goes next year...I may have to have to give it up. What I am saying is that it is easy to negotiate and change the asking price, unlike here, where the price is set. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.

What/who did you recognize (features, actions, principles, values)?

I recognized...a very good friend of mine here....When we (a friend who accompanied me on the trip) walked into the hotel, I saw this guy that worked in the hotel, I looked at him and I looked at my friend and I said to her look at the gentlemen behind the desk, "Who does he remind you of?" And she said the exact same person I was thinking of. He looked exactly like my friend from home, so much so that I took his picture. When I came back to America I showed the picture to my friend who said "My God, he looks exactly like my brother." There, I was told a lot that I reminded them of their aunt, their sister, their cousin, someone. Who knows...maybe we are related, you never know. But you always see someone over there that reminds you of someone in America. And that has been my experience each time that I have gone. I have always seen someone that reminds me in some way of someone here. Even the food, I may not know the name in Wolof or what they call it over there but it is very similar to our food here. Or food that I have eaten from the Caribbean, which is that green stuff. They call it...in the islands they call it callaloo...it look just like something that they prepare over there. They do not call it callaloo but when you taste it that is what it is. It is similar to our collard greens, but not quite, it is a little different than our collard greens but very similar to callaloo.

How were they different (food, customs, principles, values, actions)?

With the food. I have asked how did you prepare this dish. When they explain how it is prepared you start thinking is this where it came from. We prepare it the same way in America, but we just named it something different. I have found that many things that we do here in America, we don't know why we do it...cause it was handed down from our grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles, and you find that they are doing that, not only in America but in the Caribbean. You find that there are so many similarities of different things that they do....rituals...all kinds of things, that you wonder if that is where it originated-in Africa. Because you are still doing it here. A lot of things, you just still doing it and you don't know why you are doing it but you are doing it. When you visit homes over there, you see doilies on their furniture, placemats on the tables--all kinds of things that we were brought up doing and you see over there...wow, they do the same thing. They eat very healthy over there, as far as I am concerned. You don't find a lot of fried food over there. I don't think I had fried chicken over there and I love fried chicken. They grill a lot. Think that's where we got barbeque from? They grill a lot where here we have our stoves and we do our grilling during the summer outside on the grill. But for the most part we grill in our homes in the oven. They grill over there with charcoal outside in there kitchens--cause most of their kitchens are outside. But the preparations I guess is the same, their seasoning are similar to what we do here. Kitchens are outside--and I have visited different Villages where they have these little huts where the food is prepared. It is actually done on the ground, it is not electric stove or gas stove,

it done on the ground with little twigs and charcoal and stuff. But the end result is the same as if we had cooked it on our stove. And it is quite tasty, delicious food. I do not think I have been to anyone house who had an inside stove. If you went out on the little veranda there was a little room and that was the kitchen, quite different from our kitchen, with the running water and all the stuff. But like I said the end result it was prepared, it was cooked, and it was delicious.

Describe how you were received.

I was received with open arms. I have been knicknamed Mama and that makes me feel good to know that each time I go I am just welcomed and invited to so many homes to eat with their families. And of course I have gone to many of there homes and eaten. I sat on the floor, because that is the way that they traditionally eat, that is how they had their meals and that's where I sat too. I was accepted as family.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

It has changed me a lot...I do not need as much as I thought I needed to survive. I can get by with a little of nothing. After seeing how the people over there can take so little and make so much out of it. It has made me appreciate everything that I have, knowing that if I wanted it to be different...be extravagant I could, but I do not find it necessary after seeing, being over there and seeing how they can just manage with so little. So...I don't know, I just feel differently about a lot of things now.

I am forever telling them how they can also not have that because so many of our people over there don't have all the things that we have here, yet they manager and you can be comfortable with what you have. Yet appreciate what you have but you do not have to follow the Jones. Just be comfortable and happy. They seem to be very happy with the little that they have and we have so much and are so ungrateful. And they are grateful for whatever they get.

What do you now do differently after returning?

I don't waste. I don't waste, especially food. There was a time when I decided that I don't want the rest of this and would just throw it away. But now, I think about what I am preparing and how much I am preparing. If I have to freeze it, I freeze it. I don't waste. As a matter of fact I don't waste too much of anything anymore. Going to a factory over there, I found that the materials they were using in the factory...you saw very little waste in that factory. They utilize every little scrap and that is something that we don't do here. I don't need the rest of this you throw it away. Over there they find a use for it. So I find myself doing the same thing here instead of saying of I'll just throw this away. I'll try to find a use for it or try to find someone who can use it rather than throw it away. Even if I have to sit it outside for garbage, I'll put a sign on it that says "Take Me." Before I would just dump it in the garbage can but now I will put a sign on it. That's a little different for me.

Has your relationship with others changed after returning?

I try to educate friend of mind that have not gone. A few of my friends have gone with me over there. And they have enjoyed it. I try to educate my friends here as to how it is over there as opposed to what they see on TV. I take a lot of pictures and I share my

pictures with them and explain to them exactly how it is. They are surprised to see how **ADVANCED** they are. Of course what they are seeing on TV is not what...the way it really is there...in some parts of Africa. So I try to educate them...to see it through my eyes and my way of showing it to them is through videos and pictures. Which they've appreciate it and now have a different outlook of how it is living in Africa. And they understand why I go back. Each time I go I try to get someone to go with me and I have been successful quite a few times...so I am happy about that.

What are your new expectations?

I do want to learn Wolof. I am going to work very hard in 2008 to learn at least...twenty words in Wolof so that I will be able to communicate a more effectively with them.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Well, since this is the only country I have ever actually lived in; I am appreciative of what I have and what I have accomplished in America. And I don't think at this point in my life that I would give it up to go live anywhere else. Because even though I know Africa is my home I know more of America than I do Africa. And so I have just kinda grown accustomed to certain things here and I don't know if I could manage a year or the rest of my life over there. So...America means a lot to me. There are a lot of things that I don't like in America, which is the way we are treated here. But I have seen a change being that I was partly raised in the south. I have seen some change but we have a long way to go...and hopefully one day it will get better.

Epilogue

I wish that every black person could have an opportunity to travel to some part of Africa at least once in their lifetime. I have been fortunate enough to go 13 times, I am still working on trying to get my children to go and hopefully in the next couple of years, I will be able to persuade them to go, even if I have to pay for it myself. Because, I can not explain the emotional...I have to stop...cause.....it is our Mecca...and it is very emotional each time I go. And I know that there must be some reason that I feel that way.

My second wish is that when I see the children over there...eager to learn and get an education, and how hard it is for them to be able to go to school they don't have shoes to wear... and I look at the children in America, I wish that I was wealthy enough that I could take maybe ten planes and fill it with children that are just throwing their lives away here. I would love to take them over there and just place them with different families out in the villages and let them see what it is like to not have shoes and can't go to school because they don't have a pair of shoes and they have to wait until their cousin can loan them their shoes to go to school...or something as simple as a pencil to write with. We throw away more pencil than those children ever have over there. So that's why when I go I like to take things like pencils and pens and pencil sharpeners...things that we just take for granted here...that is just so precious to them. I would like to take these children over there and let them see and maybe they would come back with an appreciation of their family and of all the things that they have here that other people don't have in other countries. We never have to go to a well to bring water to drink or bathe or prepare our food with. We turn a handle and the water flows. Over there they're people

who have to go to a well to get their water and this is what they do every single day. We turn on our water, we get hot...cold...warm whatever we want. We go to our refrigerators and our freezers and we pull out whatever we want for the day or the week. And these people are just struggling daily just for simple things that we just take for granted. That would be my wish to just take some children over there AND LET THEM SEE THAT IT IS NOT ABOUT Sean John, Donna Karen, AND ALL these other people. They have to learn to...they should learn to appreciate whatever they have because there are so many people in all parts of the world that just have so much less than we have. So with that I am going to stop before I start crying.

Demographics: Please tell me about yourself

All questions are optional. You may answer or not as you choose.

Occupation

Retired New York City Transit Executive

Educational level

2 1/2 - 3 years of college

Marital status

Married for the second time

Age

64 years young, in the work field for 40 years

Born

Harlem, NYC

Childhood/grew

Between Florida and New York

Adult

Queens NY

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Residence, Long Island, NY

NURSIE

Today is Monday, December 24, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Nursie.

The first area of the interview is about travel and transportation, and what I am looking and asking is what were your experiences? First, your experiences at the airport, your flight, the cost, and the time. What were your travel experiences?

Entering the airport waiting to board the plane was a bit time consuming. I think the most exciting part, or the most part of interest was, once I boarded and my anticipation of reaching my destination. It was the usual upon going to the airport, you know. You have to wait, you have to carry, you have to get in line, you have to get your ticket, you have to get a boarding pass. To me that's a bit time consuming, and sometimes, it can get...I get a little disgusted. But, on this particular trip, it went quite smoothly. The flight itself was fairly good. Something I always do is sleep in flight. A lot of the time, I sleep...the majority of the time, and only awake to eat my meal, and, then, go back to sleep. But, it was, the flight was pretty good, I must say.

Okay, um, there? My experience returning?

While in Africa, transportation while in Africa?

In Africa? Oh, transportation while in Africa – going from one area to another, you mean the flight, or just traveling?

Both.

Oh, okay. One thing about going from one continent to another, the lag time, it makes you very tired, it becomes very tiresome. So, you know, I became very tired after we landed, and really don't...what I wanted most was to go to a hotel and sleep. But, the

travel, the trip, the ground transportation was fairly decent because I think we first went to the hotel, it was a decent ride, it wasn't a long ride. That was fairly good. The next day or the day after, we boarded a plane, at that point, I was quite tired of flying, but I didn't think anything of it, I wasn't...I didn't feel any danger, it was just a part of routine....but for the most part, the land transportation was okay. Getting on, getting off, getting on, getting off was quite tiring, but something that we do often if we go on a tour and travel.

Is that it, I don't want to cut you off...

No, that's not it. Returning to America? Returning to America was....I really didn't want to go. I wanted to go, and I really didn't want to go. I guess I did want to see as much as I could of Africa, as with every time I travel there because I am excited about the continent itself, and all of the natural resources that it has - the fact that the people are so impoverished, even though it's a continent with all of those resources which has captured people from other countries. But, returning home is always good.

So, the transportation flight home was without incident, or without...

Was without, definitely without incident. Again, I slept, waking only to eat.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America? In other words, are things that you wish to purchase here that come from Africa, are they regularly available to you?

No, because, I think, the things that we purchase here that come from Africa, a lot of it is doctored. Now, that I've traveled to Africa I've seen the productivity of these things, I think a lot of it is doctored. Chances are I wouldn't purchase anything here, and, I haven't, and I probably won't until I return to Africa.

Okay, when you say doctored, what does that mean?

It's altered, you know. It's not as it was produced in Africa naturally. Natural wood carvings, and natural structure, it appears that it was altered in some way, after it has gotten here. I think it's to trap Americans. It's different when you're there, they produce their things, and they know how they produce it, but to trap Americans to buy the product, I think they alter them a little bit upon arrival.

Do you use products like Shea butter or black soap?

Yes. I find it...

You bring it....you purchase it yourself when you go there?

Actually, my sister purchased a great deal of it, so we still have a lot of it. But, you know, I, also, forget, I anticipate buying things from Africa, and, sometimes with touring, and having limited time, a lot of times I forget. I forget the things that I have in mind to bring back. Yes, because without aviation I would not be able to travel as I have. Traveling to Africa, I think, has been the best experience of my life, and without the ability to travel, to be able to get on a plane, to travel and feel safe traveling, I would not have experienced the beauty of it.

When you say not able to travel, what would be the....

I definitely wouldn't take a ship, that would take too long.

So, time is a factor? Okay.

Um, my last visit to West Africa, actually, my last visit to West Africa was 2005, but we were in Africa this year, earlier this year in February/March where we toured South Africa – Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Okay. How many times have you been?

I've been to West Africa once. I've been to Cote-d'Ivoire—the Ivory Coast once, I've been to Ethiopia once, I've been to South Africa once, Zambia once, and Zimbabwe once.

Okay, so Cote-d'Ivoire and Senegal are in West Africa.

Right.

And, these are separate trips, so that is four times, four trips?

Yes.

Okay. Why did you go?

My sisters traveled there so much, spoke about it so much, and from reading, I, actually, really wanted to see what it actually was because you don't get a clear picture, even when you're looking at National Geographic, a lot of people are under the impression that Africa is very native like – underdeveloped, only wildlife, nothing to do but to hunt, and the fear of the people eating you, which is all not true. Africa is very beautiful in its beauty, the people are just as beautiful, unfortunately the Europeans have caused them to be in the predicament that they're in, where they have taken all the wealth, they're trying to extract all the wealth from Africa, and leave the native with little to none, and, subsequently, they're starving. But, in spite of all of that the people are still beautiful, they're welcoming. They still welcome you to their country, to their continent. And, I find that's even better because they don't hold any malice.

How will you prepare for you next trip to West Africa?

Well, I'm hoping to go in May/June to the Gambia and back to Senegal. Hopefully, my preparation would be just to...preparing to take some things to leave there especially for the people that live there, they're so warm and welcoming.

Okay. You were talking about things to bring and preparing for your next trip, and that you're going to Gambia...

Oh, okay. I think that's about it. I needed to go, can't wait to do it. Hopefully, I'll have enough money to do, and I look forward to doing it.

If there are no direct trans-Atlantic flights, how would you consider getting to Africa?

I guess we would have to stop and layover. I don't like those, when you go such a long distance, I prefer not to go through the layovers, I prefer to do the direct flights.

Stereotypes – Cultural perceptions: how have you been affected?

Actually, the fact that I know how it is, I'm not affected at all. Fortunately, when you come back to America, and you tell people about your experience traveling, they always ask you about the animals. That's the first thing they ask you about. They really don't ask you about the people, but it's the animals they, mostly, ask you about, and did you sleep in the wild. That's the biggest thing.

What were your expectations, how were they met?

Well, my expectations were, I really didn't have any expectations. I was eager to get there, happy to see it the way I saw it. Love the natural beauty of Africa, because I don't think there's a continent as beautiful as Africa anywhere. We only have seven continents, and, though, America is more modernized than any of the other continents, I think Africa has the beauty, the best beauty.

What surprised you and disappointed you?

Well, the disappointment was the poverty of the people. The surprise was the beauty of the continent.

Would you consider another visit, to Africa, if you had the opportunity?

I would consider another visit only because it is so beautiful, and the people, even though they're limited in resources, they're very knowledgeable in regards to culture. And, they're steadfast in their beliefs.

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Yes. I look at the African continent as home, but I don't know my origin. I don't know from whence I came. I don't know if I'm a member of what tribe, what section of Africa, and, I think, that's what puzzles me the most.

Where are your ancestral roots?

I don't know.

Having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

Africa means – it means a lot. It means, hopefully, getting to find out where my ancestral origin is. Just knowing, becoming more acquainted with the different parts of Africa because Africa is very vast, getting to know the different types of people. I think that's basically it, getting to know the people, and being of some assistance if I can.

How did you communicate?

It's not hard to communicate because most Africans learn, start to learn English when they're in the fourth grade no matter what part of the continent you go, they learn English in school at a certain level, so they're able to communicate, and they try hard to learn as much English as they can.

Okay. Did you barter?

Yes, but, sometimes, I just wanted to give away money, because, they're so.....a lot of them are so impoverished, they're so poor, and you just want to help them as much as you can.

Who or what did you recognize?

Everything. I didn't recognize it, but I became acquainted with it. Everything. Well, when we were in South Africa....are we mainly focusing on West Africa?

West Africa.

Well, I read about the slave trade and going to Gorée Island and seeing the dungeons. I didn't know that it was just that big, but I recognized that from reading about the slave trade. Nothing else.

Let's go back to that a minute. In terms of "what did you recognize" like actions or features of people, did you see anybody in Africa that you've seen in America or you could have sworn that that was so and so's brother, or their twin or their double based on the features?

Oh, yeah, because I hang out in Harlem sometimes, you have the Senegalese people in Harlem, so I recognized a lot of them. You get to know the difference between being Senegalese or from Mali or from Cameroon or Nigeria, so, you know, because New York is a melting pot, you see a lot of them in different parts of New York.

Do you know any African American people who remind you of African people?

In some aspects, yes. Yeah, they remind me. Yeah.

Were any kinds of values or sayings or principles that you know from here, that may have been rooted in Africa, that you discovered when you got there "oh, that's why my mother did this, or that's why my mother said that, or she says the same thing that Grandma used to say. Was there any of that kind of thing?"

No, not really, because, no.....

Was there any differences in the foods or customs, principles, values or actions that you observed?

The food was much better than we received....than what we would eat here. The food, the way they prepared their chicken, and the fish, I thought was excellent - even though I didn't eat a lot of it because I was sick. I think the food was good, I enjoyed the food. I enjoy the way they make it, they don't add salt, but it's well seasoned. I enjoy that.

Describe how you were received?

We were received well. When I...the first time when we went to Senegal, and we got off the bus, just hearing them saying welcome my sister, welcome my brother, welcome home. I was really taken aback by that. To me that really made me feel like I was home, welcome home.

How has this experience changed you, your perspective, your community?

Well, the experience has just made me a little more aware of who I am. Knowing that there are people in Africa who are intellectual, who are very much human, who are very much caring, and quite knowledgeable, and, the fact that, now, I can communicate with them, it makes me feel pretty good, pretty decent.

Has any of those experiences that you've discovered for yourself been translated to others in the community; community being all the folks that you know and interact with here.

I would say, I guess I interact more with people at my job even though I voice to them a lot about Africa, and the beauty of Africa, they seem to listen and take note. I don't know what they're thinking, but they show quite a bit of interest in it, when I speak about the different things that I experience in Africa, I've seen in Africa. As far as changes them, I don't know if it changes them or the fact that they just listen to me talk, and afterwards, say, oh, okay, and then go on.

That's okay because you may not never ever know as far as that change. Would you have done that prior to going to Africa? You probably wouldn't have had a reference, a personal reference in which to speak.

No, I wouldn't. Yeah, coming....going and coming back gave me that knowledge.

What do you now do differently after you've returned?

I think just my awareness of those who that I meet here that are from Africa, letting them know that I appreciate their culture because their culture really isn't my culture, but I've been....they allow me to share with them. So, I always let them know that I've been there, I appreciate them, I'm eager to go back, and I'm willing to be any support that I can to them.

How has your relationship with others changed after returning?

I think I'm just a little more aware of the Africans that are here. But, as far as Americans, that hasn't changed much. As far as the Caucasian race, I don't think it changed me, it just made me more aware of my surroundings and who I really am, and where am I really going.

Can you give an example of any one of those – you're aware of your surroundings, you're aware of where you're going, aware of who you really are, what is that?

Okay, being aware of my surroundings is knowing that I really didn't....this is temporary, I really came from a place far away, my ancestors, and that was home for them. It's not home for me because I haven't been there long enough to say this is home. But, knowing that my ancestors came, and that was their home. As far as the people, just knowing that they're my people, that we're all in it together.

And, that allows you to know where you're going?

Oh, most definitely.

What are your new expectations?

My new expectations? You know what, I hope one day to have better interactions, to have better interactions with people from Africa, and, possibly, do some form of trade – communication trade, and an economical phase.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

It means that it's not my original home, but we were brought here for a purpose – to help build America – and we were, besides the Indians, we laid the groundwork for white America. Had it not been for my ancestors, America would not be at the level that it is now because it was off the sweat of my ancestors that America was built.

We're at the end, there's just demographics. Please tell me about yourself – occupation, educational level, marital status, age, city and state where you were born, grew up and reached adulthood in. And, this is optional, so if you choose to answer none, or all, or any, just let me know which.

Okay, I'm a nurse. I'm now attending Hostra University for my Masters. I'm single, I'm 50, I was born in New York on Long Island. Here where I work, actually, I work in the hospital I was born in. I grew up in a small town, actually, it was cut off because my parents were the second black family into the neighborhood, so they cut it off and named it Lakeview. I was born there.

Another story all and in of itself.

Yes. So, I was born there, and grew up there, and had a lovely childhood there.

But, that's still New York?

New York, yes, Long Island.

And, your adulthood was in New York.

Yes, for a brief period, I went to....I moved to New Mexico, but I returned not long after.

How long? A year?

Not even a year, less than six months.

Okay, well, that is it. Now, what is it that I didn't have asked you that I should have asked you?

I don't know. Maybe if I had any fears, which I didn't except we were in Abidjan, Cote-d'Ivoire. I didn't have any fears, I was a little apprehensive only because I wasn't sure what to expect. And, when you go to a different area, and it's a different tribe of people with different...you know, even though the old Africans, they have different dialects, different, in some areas the culture varies, and so sometimes you're not sure what to expect.

So, tell me more about this fear. You said the Abidjan, there was some fear experienced because?

Yes. Being detained by the military police, it was after a coup. The coup was in November 2004, and we arrived in February 2005, so the military was still out and about, and as I wanted to go see the city lights, as the taxi was taking us down, we were detained by the police; and, they kept us until they were able to retrieve money from us.

Okay, you said being apprehensive about not knowing what to expect in a different environment?

Yes.

Because it's outside of the tour group, I mean outside of the tour or....

I think in general, only because of the misconceptions that you get when you're here in the United States. You know they get misconceptions about us, and we get misconceptions about them only until you meet them. Even though I've met a lot of them here in the United States, but when you go to their homeland, you're not sure what to expect, and I wasn't sure. But, I was received with open arms, and that made me feel good.

Do you have any suggestions as to how to fix those things?

No. Yes, the Europeans need to stop stealing from Africa, most definitely. That's the biggest suggestion that I have. Sometimes, you know, they came.....just like when our ancestors were brought over here as slaves, they, also, came to invade Africa and remove the wealth. And, many of them need to return to their primary homes, and leave the Africans to deal with their own continent. Many kept coming....went to Africa from experiencing, especially South Africa, a lot of the Caucasians say "oh, this is my home." It's only your home after your ancestors come over, and take over territory, and take over the diamond and the gold mines. And, conned the Africans out of what was actually theirs. I think they need to go home, and leave Africa to the Africans.

Anything else, I need to include?

I guess that's about it

If you think of something else, you can call me or email me and let me know what that is, and I'll get it captured and put in here, and see where we go from there.

Okay

What will be the next step is that we'll get all of this transcribed, and I'll get a copy back to you, so you can read through it, and make sure that it says, that I've captured what you said because I could miss and leave out a word that could completely change what you said.

Right.

So, I want to be sure that I've got what you said accurately, so I'll get that back to you. Once you've looked it over, and if you're okay with it, you'll send it back, and we'll go for publication. So, I thank you for being willing to participate in this. I wanted to get some of the younger folks, younger than 16 involved, but it was going to take an Act of Congress to go through all the rigmarole that I would have had to go

through to get the consent for this and everybody, and their parents. I wouldn't have made my May 2nd date, so I figured I'd go through all the steps I needed to jump through on this project.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Residence, Long Island, NY

POOCHIE

Today is Monday, December 24, 2007; I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly or indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Poochie.

What were your experiences? Outbound on your way to Africa - the airport, the flight, the cost, the time? What were your experiences?

My experiences – it was a nice trip, a long trip, an expensive trip. But, it was a good trip.

How long did it take?

8 hours.

On board, on your outbound leg going into Africa, was there anything unique or significant that you experienced?

No. It was a comfortable trip, expensive trip, loooonnnnggg trip, but it was fairly good.

What about transportation in Africa?

Transportation in Africa was good. We have to realize that they're not as modern as we are, but, on the whole it wasn't bad.

On your return leg back to America, what were your travel experiences there?

It was good. That, also, was good, I hated leaving, but I was glad to come back home. Hated leaving, it was a good trip, anything else on your return flight?

Getting back into Kennedy - getting all of your luggage, waiting for someone to come pick you up, getting back finding out that the weather is not what it was when you left. Most of the time coming back, the weather was bad after landing.

Okay, but you survived.

Yes.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America? What is the availability of products that you may use or like to use? Things that come from Africa, do you have access to things that come from Africa and is it in a timely manner when you receive them or made available for you?

Yes, what we receive from Africa was here in a timely manner; things that I wanted were available to me.

Can you give an example? What kind of African products do you use?

Their herbs. Just basically, whatever was there that I wanted, or felt that I....not really needed, I was able to buy it and enjoy.

I guess, I'm talking about here in America, when you go out looking for some product that you want that comes from Africa, is it available to you, whatever that may be, those herbs?

Yes. Not all, because I don't think all are available to me. A lot of their things we were not able to bring back, but, yes in all, a lot of it is still available here if I wanted to go out and purchase it?

Has aviation offered any other conveniences to your life?

Yes, traveling. Now, I get to see the world, and aviation has supplied me with that.

How is that? What's the benefit?

Well, you can get on a plane, and you can be there in no time. You're nice and comfortable, and you leave the driving to someone else.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

It was 2 years ago, 2 years ago we went to South Africa.

No, South Africa was this year, in '07.

Oh, that's right, it was this year. It was probably '06 or '05, I have to look at the pictures.

How many times have you been?

Four times.

Why do you go?

I am very interested in seeing how my people live and to learn their ways, and to see how we were mistreated. My ancestors were mistreated.

You said "my people, you go to see how my people live." How do you know that they're your people.

From what I was taught, and the fact that they were black, and I am black, so, I believe that they were my ancestors.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Africa?

Well, I wouldn't take as many changes of clothes as I did, that's for sure. I really don't know how to answer that.

What if you were offering some advice to someone who had never been, what would you tell them that they needed to pack, to take, on their trip. How would you advise them to prepare for that trip? Maybe, there's nothing out of the normal that you would pack to go around the corner.

Just your regular clothes. Stuff you would pack.....instead of heavy clothes; light clothes; clothes that you would be comfortable in, like for walking in – your shoes, sneakers. Dress wise, something thin, maybe take a sweater. Basically, your clothes would be thin clothes because it's rather warm there, in certain parts of the year.

If there were no direct Trans-Atlantic flights to West Africa, how would you consider getting there? Or, would you consider going at all?

I would try to find a way of getting there. If there was no direct flight, I would take that under consideration, but I think I would still travel.

Do you have any idea what you would do? What your travel routing would look like?

No, I do not.

Stereotypes – Cultural Perceptions and how you have been affected. What were your expectations and how were they met? Maybe if you can go back to your very first trip. What did you expect to see or find or discover with Africa, and did you or didn't you?

I got what I expected. In the whole it was very interesting, it was very exciting. There were things that I really didn't expect to see, and there were things, after I got there, some things that I didn't like or didn't approve of, but there was nothing I could do about it. So, I just went along with what I saw and what I learned when I got there.

Okay, can you give some examples of what you expected?

I expected for Africa to be, like the huts, and what you see on TV - Africans with all the war paint on, or just going wild. That's what I expected, but that's not what I saw. I saw people like me, and they were civilized. When I got there I expected to find uncivilized people, but I was wrong.

Where do you think you got that picture from? The picture of what that expectation was, that was wrong?

T.V.

Okay. What surprised you and what disappointed you?

Surprised me – the way they acted. The people that we met were very nice. They didn't act like, like they were wild. They acted like they were normal human beings, they're not what I was expecting to see.

Okay. And, what disappointed you?

The slave dungeons. Just to know that my ancestors were treated so bad, and they were put through all of that torture and hatred.

Why would you consider another visit, if given the opportunity?

Just to go back to.....I would love to go to another part of Africa, to experience different parts of Africa, and to see different parts of Africa. If.....I would go back to the same place. I enjoyed it, I really did.

So, when you go back to another place, are you looking for.....what would be your expectations?

My expectation now would be....people are civilized, people are living modern in Africa, they're not like what is portrayed on T.V. in the most parts. People there are very friendly, very nice, very outgoing, and, I guess I would expect the same thing that.....I'd expect the same thing I saw the first time I went there.

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Yes.....well, no, not to live. I don't know if I could live there. I would have to give up too much modernization here, to go there to live.

Where are your ancestral roots, or do you know?

I really don't know.

Having been to Africa, having been there, what does Africa mean to you?

It means a lot, because I really wanted to go there, and I wanted the experience of seeing how people live. It just meant so much just to go, and to see how Africans live there, and seeing the places where my ancestors were mistreated.

When you say "it means a lot" how can I write that? What does "means a lot" mean?

It meant..... I was, just, very happy, and, just, very, very glad to be able to go, and to see how other people lived in Africa.

How did you communicate?

I spoke English. They spoke English enough for us to be able to communicate with each other.

Everybody spoke English and it was easy?

Not everyone spoke English, you could talk enough to them for them to understand you, and for you to understand them.

Did you barter?

Yes, I did. I bartered with stuff from here, from the United States for things that they had made, and things they were selling. I gave away stuff that, you know, made me feel very good being able to help them.

What/who did you recognize? Such as: features or actions or principles or values or sayings or...what or who did you recognize?

I recognized that, well.....I had my two nephews with me, and when I went to chastise them, the people there didn't chastise their children the way we did. The men there took the boys and they talked to them, and they kept them with them. I didn't have to worry about them. They were very calm with these gentlemen. They were....they knew how to treat them, they knew how to talk to them to make them feel like they were wanted and needed there.

Are you kind of saying, implying, that the men raise the children versus the mother raising the children?

No, I feel that the mother has played a part, but the men played a bigger part in the raising of the kids.

How were they different – foods, customs, principles, values, actions?

The food was different, healthier, very appetizing. Everything to me was basically good in all, it was really good.

Did you find any difference in the.....that bathing situations, the bathrooms, did they bathe....the same as ours?

Yes. Some was the same as ours, and some was different. Some were holes, and some were toilets, running water.

Anything else that you can think of that might have been different?

Their kitchens are different than our kitchens. The living rooms are basically the same, except for they had wood furniture where ours is pressed fiberboard, that won't last too very long. Theirs will last a long time. They don't decorate as much as we do with a whole lot of knick knacks, but their houses are neat and clean.

Describe how you were received?

Oh, we were received very well. We got off the plane at the airport, and, it was like, the whole world was there to greet us, and believe me, wherever we went, there they were. They greeted us very well.

How has the experience changed you, your perspective?

I appreciate the way I live in the United States. I do have some hatred toward white people. I wouldn't say hate, I just dislike the way my ancestors were treated, and that causes me to dislike people sometimes in a lot of ways, but other than that, it was.....other than that was fine.

Okay, so it changed you to appreciate more of the way you live.
Right. And, to appreciate people more for who and what they are.

Okay. Do you see any changes in your community based on the changes in you? The community being all the people you come in contact with here, in America. Have you seen that your actions or thoughts or words, having come back from Africa, transfers over to somebody else.

Not really.

What do you do....what do you now do differently after coming back, after returning?

I appreciate my way of living better, I appreciate myself, and, in a lot of ways, I appreciate others since I've been back from Africa.

Can you elaborate on any one of those – your way of living? How is it different or how you appreciate yourself better or others? The question is: what do you now do differently after you've been back?

I eat a little different. I try to stop eating all that food that's no good for you because I noticed in Africa people were very healthy, they weren't large. Their diets were basically from the water, from the land, and it wasn't a whole lot of fried food. It was, basically, rice..... it was broiled, boiled, whatever. So, I did get away from the fried foods, the unhealthy foods.

Has your relationship with others changed since you've returned? And, we may have touched on some of that back here when you said that you appreciate others.

Yes.

.....to question 22, has your experience changed you and your perspective, or your community? Your answer: there was a hatred towards white people, or a dislike for white people. So given that, then has your relationship with others changed after returning. Do you think.....

Yes, somewhat towards white people. Yes.

What are your new expectations for Africa?

To be able to help. To be able to send whatever I can there. To be able to help those I have come in contact with. To be able to send supplies for the children in school, clothes, shoes, books, even money. Hoping that things will get better there for them.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

America needs a lot of help....a lot of help. There's still a lot of prejudice here, a lot of hatred between whites and blacks, more so from the whites to the blacks. The United States needs a lot of help.

And, how would you.....if it was in your power to do that, to make the change, or provide the help, or to give somebody the words to do or to fix that, what would that be?

To try to make them understand that we are equal. We were all born to die, we all bleed red blood, and, that they're no better than we are. The whites are no better than the blacks.

Demographics – please tell me about yourself. The categories are: occupation, educational level, marital status, age, city and state you were born and grew up in and became an adult in, and they're optional, so any or all, if you don't want to answer you don't have to.

I am married. Very happy. Occupation is clerical emergency. I was born and raised in Nassau County, New York.

That's New York?

Yes. Education – I finished school, and I did two years of college.

And, your childhood and all was in Nassau County?

Yes.

And, your adult life was, also, Nassau County, right?

Right.

Age is the one that's left out.

I'm 59, and very proud of it.

What should I have asked that I didn't? What do you want to say that's not here? Is there something that I should put in, that you want put in?

No. I'm glad that you're doing this, and I wish you all the luck in the world.

Thank you. If you think of something that needs to be said or heard, please call me and let me know and I can stick it in here.

Okay.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Residence, Long Island, NY

TIYE

Today is Sunday, December 23, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Tiye.

What were your experiences? Your initial trip, tell me about that – the airport, the flight, the cost, the time.

When we got to the airport it was pretty easy, the transition, from checking in and making sure the weight of your bags were okay, once we got downstairs it was pretty hectic. They had to make sure you had the right amount of toiletries, if you didn't have the right amount of toiletries, they had to be discarded. The flight going was, it was kind of, well, we were in coach, we were kind of on top of each other. It wasn't as comfortable as I thought it should be. The cost – the cost with the flight, and with sending money once we got to Africa was pretty much around \$3,000. Time was, I think it was, 9 hours to get there. Once we got into Africa it was much easier getting in there and getting your stuff than I thought. Then, returning back to the states was much easier than leaving.

What made it easier?

They didn't really check our bags, they just checked our passport, that was it.

What about transportation while in Africa?

Because we had tour guides that were helping us out, it made it much easier to get a taxi. They helped out a lot, so getting around wasn't really hard at all.

How has aviation contributed to your needs in America; that is in the availability of products?

The products from Africa we can get authentic African materials, authentic African artwork, such as masks and furniture; also, we use Shea butter, which, you know, the nut comes from Africa, so that's available to us. Another product that's available to

us is Black Soap, African Black soap, which is made in Africa, so it really helps that we can get those types of items here.

Is there anything that you think has offered any conveniences to your life. I'm thinking of transportation back and forth to Africa.

Getting there is.....well, it costs a lot to travel back and forth to Africa, but aviation has made it convenient to get there. It's the most convenient way that I know of to get back and forth to Africa.

On your last visit to West Africa was February?

Yes, of 2007.

2007, and was that your first time, or have you been....

That was my first time.

Why did you go?

I went because I wanted to connect with my heritage. I heard so many different people telling me about Africa, and, they're not of the same ethnicity, so sometimes their view of things is not the same view that you have. Some things were kind of negative, and I wanted to see for myself, I didn't want to learn through somebody else's experience what my heritage was about. So, therefore, I had a need to go there and experience it for myself.

Before you heard other people's views of what your heritage was, what were your views of Africa?

That there was still a lot of tribes there and technology wasn't there as much as it is here. So, that was my view of Africa, that they were still doing things.....I shouldn't say "the old fashioned way," but they were still doing things the way their ancestors did.

And, so that was your view, and, then you received other information coming from other people's perspective and it was in conflict with, that you had to go and find out for yourself.

To me if you're living your ancestor's way, it's not a bad thing, I don't see it as a bad thing, but to "down" someone or degrade them and make it seem as though it's a bad thing is ignorant; that's how I felt when I overheard someone talking about Africa, they made it seem like "oh, they should be doing this more and be more advanced" like one gentleman said, in the part of Africa he went to "they're still using....." the word that he used, he wasn't directly talking to me, he was directly talking to someone else, "oh, they still make their homes out of shit" which I thought was degrading. It was degrading because you use the resources that you have, and, if you're not calling on anyone to help you, then, I don't see where there's a problem with how you're living. That's my viewpoint. You're not asking anyone for handouts. You're surviving on your own. If you don't have to live in a mansion, or have best home to survive. I had to see things for myself.

That's pretty powerful. You said this person was not speaking to you, you said this was "overheard" conversation. Was there any....did you ever get into any conversations with this person?

I avoided that person because I know that person can be very ignorant. We really did not have a follow up conversation, because I don't think that person cared about my experience. Even if I'd said something, it still would have turned out to be negative, so it was just to.....my experience is mine, and his is his. I can't deny him his experience, but I had a great experience.

How will you prepare for your next flight?

Well, my next flight, I hope.....there are some things that I would like to do in Africa, and one of the things I would like to do is a scholarship fund for the students studying in the university, the Cheikh Anta Diop University for students studying Egyptology, so I hope, eventually, I can present the scholarship myself. Then, another thing if I just go for leisure, I wouldn't pack so much stuff, there's no need to pack so much stuff.

That seems to be a universal answer – pack less.

Yes. And, pack more to give, because I packed more for myself than to give, to give out.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights, how would you consider getting to Africa?

I know there maybe be a cruise. That would be a little more time consuming, but if you have a need to go somewhere, and you really want to go, then you'll find the means.

What were your expectations, and how were they met? We're in the second area in talking about stereotypes and cultural perceptions and how you have been affected. So, what were your expectations in going, and, then, how were they realized?

My expectations, I have to think about it because.....it seems that my expectations were met because I was welcomed, I was greeted, I was treated as if I was part of their family, like a long lost relative. That's what I was hoping for, I felt like it was a homecoming.

Okay, anything else that you would had expected?

Had expected. Once we got there and I saw some of the buildings that weren't completed, and, like, it was just left because there wasn't enough money to continue to build up, and when I looked at the difference between how the city life was, and how the village life – my expectation was that the city life was going to be a little bit better than the village life, but it was opposite. I thought, in the village, that it was a little bit more....it was clean, it felt like home. It wasn't a big fancy building, but it was home. You could tell it was home. It seemed like in the city that the Africans that were in the city, they were displaced. Like it was hard for them to belong there, but the villagers, they belonged there, it was wholesome.

What surprised you and what disappointed you?

What surprised me was how some of the people had to survive selling the same goods. Some of the people were selling the same exact thing, how many statues can I really bring home of the same thing. How many waist beads can I bring home? So, that was kind of surprising, so many people selling the same thing, and you wonder how could they survive selling the same goods. Disappointing? It was like the buildings were partially done, and they did not have someone pick up their trash, that was disappointing. Even when I went to the university I was happy to see my brothers and sisters getting an education, but the trash that was laying around was disappointing seeing that.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

As I said before the scholarship fund, and to give back, that's my main focus, to give back to Africa.

What would that look like to somebody who doesn't have a clue? What do you mean when you say "give back?"

When I say "give back" to me that means being that my ancestors were brought here through slavery, I still have that connection. I think that's something that my ancestors would want me to do, to reconnect, to bring a part of myself as a gift to them saying that I care. Giving back, to me, means "I care." I care about you, I care about your well-being, even though I wasn't brought up in Africa, I still care. Whatever I can do to uplift and to help out, this is what I can do, this is for you.

We may have touched on some of this, but are you looking at the African continent as home?

If I had the opportunity, most definitely, if I could. Which people say a vacation home, but I don't think I could stay there because my roots are still here. Financially, I wouldn't be able to pick up and leave. I'd have to use it as my vacation home, I couldn't use it as home until retirement or something like that because I have my career and everything here.

I'm taking that from a physical sense, home, in the physical sense. What about home in any other kind of sense outside of physical. Maybe the next question is combined with that. Where are your ancestral roots?

Prior to slavery Africa, they were brought to North Carolina and South Carolina. My family hasn't done the genealogy to see where we're from in Africa, so I just consider Africa, the continent, my home.

Okay, that's the first question. So, the African continent is home.
Home. Yes.

Then your ancestral roots, as far as you know them, I'm not trying to put words in your mouth...this is what I think I heard you say, that your ancestral roots is Africa, but your heritage, as far as, you can get back in natural knowledge is North Carolina, South Carolina.

Yes.

Having been there, having been to Africa, what does Africa mean to you?

Africa is the foundation for my spirituality. I can see where I get that spirit from because you see it in the African people. You see that wholesomeness, you see that politeness, so it means my whole being, my life.

How did you communicate?

English, a lot of people that we met spoke English.

Was it always convenient speaking English, could you get full understanding and full meaning across to the people that you were speaking with? And, did you only speak with people who spoke English?

Well, the people that were on the tour spoke English fluently, so I could get what I needed across. When we went to the village, I don't know if the Chief spoke, I know he spoke some English, but I don't know if it was fluent. We didn't have that much dialog, but, I know his children were fluent in English, and you could get your needs and wants met because they spoke fluent English.

So, then, through translations of others, and not so much from the folks on the trip, because I'm making the assumption that the folks on the trip were from America, but, once there, once on the continent, and having to interact with people on the continent, the primary way of communication was still English or sign language?

English, and body language. When you're giving someone something, you could tell, the expression on their face showed gratitude, they were thanking you. So, yeah, body language.

What/who did you recognize? What I'm talking about here are features, facial features, actions, principles, values, morals. What did you recognize?

Some people when you look at them, they look like they could be in your family. But, another thing that's, probably..... It's related to the question, but, not, exactly what you're saying....the beautiful colors. It was just the darkest of dark, my boyfriend that I'm with, I always saw him as dark, and I always loved the color, but, then when I saw darker, I was, just, in love. It was just.....I could not believe it. I said The Creator made that, and it was so beautiful, and you don't see that here, but it's in abundance over there. It is so beautiful – the dark lips, the dark color, the smoothness of the skin, we're blessed.

Any other thing that you noticed?

They're very polite. They're very, when you give a gift, their gratitude, they're gracious. It's a beautiful thing to see. Being here, it's a different thing to see, I guess because we have so much, and they have so much too, because they have their homes and their families. They can go in and be accepted, and they can walk around and not have to worry about looking over their shoulder in the market wondering if the owner thinks you're going to take something. That's a constant thing on my mind, but they don't have to look over their shoulder, it's home. You can tell that it's home. You feel comfortable, you feel at peace, you feel that you belong, and they make you feel like you belong.

Were there any things that you know from here, maybe things that your mother, grandmother did or said or had that, in and of itself, didn't, necessarily mean anything, but when you went across the water you saw similar things. Maybe a saying, or maybe something somebody said or did, some value or some action that was.....that you are familiar with from here, but that when you got over there you could kind of make the tie or the leap. Was there anything like that?

I can say the extended family aspect. I can meet African Americans in a store and can start up a conversation, you feel connected, you feel that family connection. Like they're a part of your family, even though they're not a part of your family, it's just a connection, just a gesture, warmth that they give that you feel like you are part their family, and that's how the people of Africa made me feel a part of their family.

How were they different - Food, customs, values, principles.

I say they're different this way. I guess.....I don't know a lot about African, the history of Africa itself, in different areas, but, I know African Americans, and we had to fight for every single thing that we have, we fought for. It didn't just.....it wasn't handed to us. I think that's saying....forgive, but don't forget. With them, it seems like they forgive, and, they, just, like.....awww, just let it be, don't fight about it, just let it be because.....I don't know, I felt that with them. You see the French people that come there, and are still there - when we were on the boat, very pushy, wanted to be in front, rude, and, they (the Africans) were so laid back, and I'm saying, in America, we're not laid back about that type of stuff. We had to fight for everything, even, now, we have to continuously fight for everything. And, they're just like, ohhh, let it be, it'll be okay, and we're not like that here, we are not like that at all. So, I saw that different between African Americans and African people.

Anything else, that you noticed that was different?

I think even the smallest gifts that you give toward their education is appreciated. I think here we take it for granted, they really want their education, they really value their education. Even a pencil to a kid is really an exciting thing. I work in the school system, if you give a kid a pencil, they're like where's the goodies, where's the candy, where's the treats, this is not..... I don't want a pencil, I want the stickers, I want the candy.

Okay, anything else that's different?

That's different. Our customs are different, I don't know the percentage of Muslims that are there. When we went to the Holy City of Tuba, you had to cover yourself up, and here you can wear shorts or whatever, and there, as a woman, you had to be covered.

In the village, how would you equate that to what you just said to women having to be covered, and is it just Muslim women?

I saw the women in the village, they were covered. It seemed that they did all of the cooking, what we would call the household chores. I'm not too familiar what the men went out and did. I know when we went there, there were more women there. It seemed like the men were outside of the village working. It seemed like the men are the providers because they said that they didn't like their women to go outside because they may want

everything that they saw. So, they had to provide that...the goodies that they wanted, and, so they said that they're the providers.

Describe how you were received, and I think we kind of touched on that, unless there's anything you want to add.

As I said – family, they received you as if you were a long lost relative with open arms. They were glad to see that you came home – welcome home.

How has the experience changed you?

I realize that I have to do more. I have to step up to the plate as an African American, and stop watching others do it, or expect others to do it. I know that I really have to get busy, do the foundation to do a scholarship fund. And, also, I try not to throw away things. I try not to take things for granted, and say, ohhh, I can get another.....tomato, and, let the tomatoes sit out and rot. I try not to do those types of things.

What about your perspective, and what about the community? How do you think the experience has changed your perspective, and, as a result of changing your perspective, change the community?

I know when I came home, my mother, my family asked “how was your trip” and when I saw them, I told them the experience that they wanted to be educated. They have a thirst for education, they're very, very intelligent. Some can speak three and four languages, very intelligent people. My community..... besides for my family – it's just me, my boyfriend, and my family, I don't really go out into the community that much, or speak up much like a speaker in the community. But, if I had the opportunity to tell them, I would tell them that they do want to be educated. They do take their education seriously, and if you want to go out and do a drive or to get school books for them, they would be more than willing to have those things – to have books, to have pencils.

In trying to hear what you just said – am I correct in understanding that you meant that you experienced some things, you came back, you gave.....you shared your experiences with your family, and, in that, you told them what some of the people in Africa did, do, have, speak languages, etc., and, that education is valuable, and what they can do is to possibly collect things to help and share with that African side of the family – the whole family?

Yes.

In that, that's changing the community. The question to you is how has your experience changed the community or does something for the community, and from what I heard you say, you took your experience, you shared it, and you gave the community, by sharing it in the community, and, now, the community is charged to do something?

Yes.

And, so you have, in essence, attempted to make a change within your community. Even though, you don't go out and become a speaker.....

I know that one of the young ladies that came with us and her mother, they said they were going to do a school supply drive, I can connect them that way, but I'm not doing a school supply drive. I could tell them, but telling and doing is two different things when I don't have that connection.....I don't have a means to send it there for them to get it, but I can connect them through the young lady and her mother.

What do you do differently now that you're back?

Now, that I'm back, as I said before, I try not to waste so much. The clothes that I know are good, I try to make sure I pack them, and give them to, like, Big Brother/Big Sister. If I knew that someone was going to Africa, I would definitely donate the clothes to them for Africa. I make sure that I don't just throw things away. I don't say there's no need for this anymore because someone else can use it.

Has your relationship with others changed after you've returned?

I think so, I think I'm less tolerant of what..... I can't change what someone experienced, but I wouldn't just let someone degrade another person's ethnicity, another person's customs. I think I'm less tolerant. I think it helped me....not that I didn't accept other people's customs and beliefs, but it helps you to be more open, because even though I consider myself, I can use the term a "displaced African" you still have different customs and different beliefs, and so, you have to be able to tolerate everybody's customs and beliefs, and so it changed me in that way.

What are your new expectations?

New expectations are to give more. To make sure that I'm being the best person I can be to help others.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

I'm here, I can be somewhere else, but America is just so.....I can educate myself, I can be able to retire comfortably, but, also help....I guess I can use it as a stepping stone to be able to help other people. To use it as a stepping stone to help other people. It's different, America.....everybody is so separated, and so worried about the hustle and bustle. I don't think we take enough time to enjoy each other's company. Africa, you can see that they enjoy each other, enjoy each other's company. Their family is alive to them, especially in the village – you have the father, their sons, their grand children. You don't have that here, you don't have everybody in the same space, or in the same area, or in the same state, everybody's just all over the place, so it's hard to take the time out to tell your family you love them, you can tell your family over the phone that you love them, but in person, to show it, and to do things for your family.

So, in that did you....what you just said, did you realize that prior to going to Africa, or did that revelation come ?

Once I came back from Africa, I realized that the extended family unit is there. Here we're just all over the place, we're so scattered. The grandparents, our elders are.....if they haven't passed on, sometimes they're not with us because they're in a different state. That's what I realized, they're really family oriented.

Demographics – Occupation, educational level, we can go down the list, if there's something that you don't want to answer, you don't have to answer it?

Okay.

Occupation?

I'm an Occupational Therapist.

Educational level?

I have my master's degree.

Marital Status?

Single

Your age?

35

Where were you born – state

New York

Did you grow up, were you raised in New York, did you spend your childhood and adult life has been in New York?

Yes.

Knowing what the focus of this is, what should I have asked you that I didn't or what else do you want to say?

I think you've touched on a lot of questions on how I felt about Africa. I'm just blessed that I've had the opportunity. One thing is, I feel that sometime the cost – being that it's about aviation and flight and all that – the cost is very high. I noticed that some Africans, from Africa, come here, and it's hard for them to get back home because it's so expensive. It seems they become.....being that it's hard for them to get back home, they become disconnected from their family. They can't go back every year and spend time with their family, so they have to adapt to the customs and the culture here. They have to find other people to have that connection, because it's so expensive. I know that, for instance, one young lady, she's Philipino, not that she's from Africa, but it's even hard for her and she's a physical therapist. I'm fortunate that I have the means to go to Africa, if I had to go to Africa every year, I would be able to do it by myself. If I had a family, that's a different story, but individuals that come from Africa, and they're trying to make a better way, a better life for themselves, they're not afforded the opportunity to go back and forth so easily, especially if they don't have the same educational level as others, it's hard for them.

If you could fix it, what would....how do you think it could be fixed or changed or.....?

Maybe, if someone could start, maybe it would be, maybe, some kind of funding, if they could qualify, for them to have some type of funding. I think there would be

people willing to give, just like they give to other organizations, other things, to give, the ones that.....individuals that need the help, can receive it that way.

Anything else I should have asked?

I think you had a lot of great questions.

If you think of something that you would like to see added, get in touch with me, and I'll see that it gets put in. Once I get all of this transcribed, I'll email it to you, so that you can look it over, and make sure it's captured correctly, and, if not, you need to fix it so that it can be accurate. So, Tiye, thank you.

Oh, you're welcome, it was my pleasure.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Residence, Long Island, NY

TONI

Today is Monday, December 24, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Africa has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the African American identity. I am here with Toni.

What were your experiences? What kind of - what things did you encounter via the airport, the cost, on the flight, and your time? What were your experiences, how did it go for you?

It went well. As far as the airport, I felt – we encountered some trouble; the snowstorm where they had us sitting on the tarmac for hours, no water; almost as if they just didn't care. The flight, once in the air, the flight was good. The cost is probably, pretty close to, well, it was quite reasonable. The time – I thought the time was good. I had no idea, prior to going, I always thought traveling to Africa would mean 18, 19, 20 hours perhaps. So, leaving JFK and arriving in Dakar in 7 hours, and, approximately, 45 minutes was really a surprise. That was my...my worst experience was the snowstorm leaving out of Kennedy. They were not prepared, they were not prepared. That's what I find strange with an airport that has been in business for so many years, but, yet, a little snow just threw them...I don't know...threw them off.

Okay. So, going....leaving America how was that, how was the flight - outbound?

The flight was good. I was...you know, the flight was very good because I was there with people I knew, so we talked on the flight about some of the things we would expect to see, and hear, and do, so the flight was good, it was good. It kind of filled in some of the empty spaces because listening to some of the other people voice their opinion of what they expected, things I hadn't thought about, so it was a good flight. I always enjoy going.

How about transportation in Africa?

Different, different for sure. Transportation in Africa isn't as comfortable as being here in America. You know, some of the top of the line vehicles you can ride in, I think every car there is used, you know, as far as transportation. I think the Saab's there are 10, 15, 20 years old, but, you know, it took us where we needed to go, so it wasn't bad. We didn't have any break down on us, so it was okay.

How about on your return trip back to America? What were your travel experiences there?

The flight was okay. Returning, I was sad. I had been for there about 14 days, meeting my family, my brothers and sisters, my African brothers and sisters, and, then, leaving them, that was hard. So, many times I just wanted to break out in tears, but I knew that I had to come home because my family is here. I was always sad, whenever I leave there, I'm always sad. It takes me a couple of days to regroup.

How do you think aviation has contributed to your needs in America – by the availability of products or what's your thoughts?

It has contributed a great deal. Because a lot of our things that we have here in America are imported. They're here from China who is a big contributor, you know, and, the fact that now they're outsourcing, and so it has contributed a great deal.

Any specific things that you go looking for that comes from Africa?

Yes, Shea butter, black soap, the material, the clothing. The material for making the clothing, and, then, the clothing once made there. Yes.

Okay, has aviation offered any other conveniences to your life?

Other than transportation, um, no.

Timely, is it timely?

Oh, yes, yes. Okay, yes, yes. Right, it allows me to get from point A to point B in, probably, a fraction, a quarter of the time it would if I had to drive, take the bus, or the train, so, yes, it has.

When was your last visit to West Africa?

June 2007

How many times have you been?

Seven, seven times.

Why so often?

There's so much to see, it's such a big continent, because of the size. There's so much to see, and so much I want to see there. I'm just always so overjoyed when I'm there, just knowing I'm going, I'm just...once I know my trip is planned and my ticket is paid for, I'm just counting down the days until I leave. It's just when I'm there, I'm just at peace. Seeing my ancestors, you know, seeing it firsthand compared to what you read

in the book, and, what, my expectations, um, it's nothing like I had ever imagined. I just love going. Every time...the more I go, the more I love it.

How will you prepare for your next flight?

Pretty much the same.

Well, how would you tell somebody who has never gone, how to prepare?

The first thing I would tell them is they can't expect to go there, and necessarily see four bathrooms. It's a different way of living, it really is, but it's easy to adjust to. I would tell them they'd have to be open-minded.

If there were no direct trans-Atlantic flights, how would you consider getting there?

I would, probably, look into a cruise ship, a cruise ship.

So, why do you fly now versus a cruise ship?

It's faster. Flight wise, faster.

Second section is Stereotypes and cultural perceptions: How have you been affected? What were your expectations, and how were they met, if they were met?

What did I expect?

If you can take that back to your first visit, what did you expect to find in Africa?

You know what, I had...there's so much I could tell you about that. I guess, initially, landing. I remember landing and we were in the airport there, we were trying to retrieve our luggage and I remember standing there saying to myself "what the heck am I doing here?" Because I was not used to seeing...I mean, here, it is such a large airport; there, the airport is so small. The manner in which you retrieve your luggage, it was just so different from being here in the States going to LaGuardia or Kennedy. So, that initial, that was a shock to me. Being in the airport, I just didn't know what to expect on my first visit, so...you know, I was standing there saying to myself "what am I doing here?" Were my expectations met, most of them were.

What were they, what got met?

I got to see my people. I never thought I would ever take a trip like that, where I would see where my ancestors came from; where my people originated from. I just never expected to take a trip like that.

And, how did you know that your ancestors originated from there?

How? From my Mom, who...as growing up she always educated us to where slavery started, where we originated from Africa, we were dropped off in all different places, so growing up I was introduced to this. I always knew there was an Africa, I always knew my ancestors were from there.

And, with that knowledge, and some ideas of what it looked like, or how it appeared, or what you would see, so when you finally did leave the airport and go out into the town, countryside, wherever, was it what you expected to see. I'm trying to get at what your picture before you left America was.

Oh, my picture before, okay.

And, when you got there, was you picture the same picture, a different picture...

No, it was not. Before leaving, all I imagine was seeing people. I didn't expect to see houses, pretty much like ours, other than the fact that they were cinderblock, but I expected to see a lot of, I would say jungle-type areas, wooded areas. I didn't expect to see as many cars on the road. I was under the impression that, you know, you always heard that Africa was rich in natural resources that the people were just torn down, there was nothing there, they had no means of, you know.....survival was at a minimum. So, I didn't expect....what I saw was a surprise. I didn't expect to see as many cars there, you know, I though people were just out and in the woods, here in America, now, they always show you the worse. Now, I'm starting to understand they are going to show you the worse because it's usually people that are half-clothed, running through woods, or carrying buckets and pails on their heads, and kids starving. You always saw these Feed The Children programs, they always show you the kids starving, their stomachs protruding, so that was.....I was, you know surprised by what I did see once I arrived in Dakar.

So, in that regard your expectations were or were not met?

I would say, I would say most of them were met.

But, if you expected to see no housing, poor housing, lots of jungle, no cars, or fewer cars, then, that expectation...

...was not met, definitely, not. No.

What surprised you, what disappointed you?

Seeing that people weren't doing as bad as we were sometimes told, or sometimes what I would see on T.V. I know there are a lot of bad areas, I know the people are hungry, and in need of things, but, we have that right here in America, but it wasn't as bad as I thought.

Did anything disappoint you?

Did anything disappoint me. Yes, there was some disappointment there. What I was disappointed with is that we have so many professionals here in the United States with money, and, yet, I see so many Caucasians in Africa investing in the property and the land. And, I see them over there smiling and laughing, and I know they're not there, they don't mean them people any good, they're there to get what they can get. I'm disappointed at some of the black brothers and sisters, I guess, I would say.

Here?

Here in America not investing in Africa, in the Motherland.

Why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Because every time I go I learn something new, I see something new, I see something different. The people there are just so homey. I just like being there, I just feel so relaxed when I'm there, probably because I don't have to make up my bed. I don't have to do anything.

What's one something that was new or that was different?

The market, the shopping area, the way they shop. They way they go to the market and bring chickens back from the market tied up on the top of the bus; carrying a chicken and, you know, they're still alive.-

Are you looking at the African continent as home?

Home as....when you say home, to live there one day permanently, or...it's my home.

You tell me.

It's my home. Would I like to live there? I would like to retire and spend four, five, maybe six months out of a year there, yes.

Do you know where your ancestral roots are?

No, I don't.

Okay. Having been there seven times, what does Africa mean to you?

It means so much to me. I've been able to...I think it has made me a stronger person as....when I say that....it has made me change the way I look at people. I'm really stuck here. Hope, joy, why am I so stuck.

You're not stuck, just say what you think, what you feel. You said something earlier that talked about home, or family....Motherland...you felt relaxed.....

Right, I felt relaxed. You know what, when I'm there, I become very relaxed, I don't fear anyone robbing me. I'm not afraid. I walk out to the street, even at night, I get up sometimes and walk out. I don't know, I feel safer there.

Is comfortable, would that be the word?

Comfortable, yes. I would say, comfortable, yes.

How did you communicate?

I had a book...I have a book with Wolof in it, so plus using some of them speak both English and Wolof through an interpreter, pointing.

Body language....

Exactly body language, that's right.

Did you barter?

Yes.

What was that experience like?

I didn't do a lot of it, I felt like I was robbing them, you know. I did a little, it was different. It's definitely not like we do here in the States. You know, after a while, they give you what you want for what you want to give them because they're in need. I feel bad because here in the States if I go into one of these stores, they tell me it's \$50, it's \$50, yet why would I go there....to be honest with you I think their stuff is worth more there, than the stuff here because it's handmade. Most of the stuff is handmade, ours is machine, mass production.

What or who did you recognize – either their features, actions, principles, or values, what was familiar?

Their features were familiar, their actions, their values. You know...our values and theirs – there's a big difference, there's a big difference. What we value, they don't value. That's probably another reason that I like going there, because, you know the things that we worry about, they don't worry about. We worry about a new car every couple of years, they.....

Was there anything that you know from here, that when you went there, it gave more meaning to that which you know here? In other words, if your Mother has a phrase or something that she always used, and, then, when you went there it meant something. Did you have any kind of situation like that?

...it meant something, not that I can recall.

You said you recognized some features, could you elaborate on that – you see somebody that looked like somebody here, or something there that you felt was.....

Yes. Yes. With them, I noticed that some of them have, at least in Senegal, some of the people I saw have wide noses. I see that in some of my, in some of the people here, the complexion, the hair type, the texture of the hair, and their body, their build.

How were their differences, or were there any, in foods and customs, principles, values, actions?

Food? There was a lot of difference in food. Most of their meat is fresh – they go and they bring the fish, they go down to the market, they eat a lot of vegetables. I don't see all the cakes and the ice cream and cookies that we have here, I don't see that there. I can't....I don't even see them eat much of it, so their food – a lot different.

Why do you think that is?

Because I think it's very expensive. I think, I don't think they have the opportunity to purchase it as much as we do. That's like something they probably have during Christmas time, not even Christmas, during Ramadan, because most of them are Muslim. It's like something for a special day. Because even going there, taking gum and candy and stuff, you know, they enjoy receiving it, and they're excited when we give it to them. So, I know it's not something they can purchase on a daily or weekly basis.

So, Toni, describe how you were received?

Wow. I felt like a Queen. They make you feel so special. Well received, oh, boy, every time, over and over again.

What does that look like? Describe that, what happens? If you had to write it down in a book, what would you....how would you describe the way you were received?

Appreciated, happy to see me, almost as if they'd been waiting, sitting in that same spot waiting for me to return. Just the smile on their face when I arrived, and to see some of the same people I saw last time. They're helpful, always willing to go....always willing to do for me. I'm going to be honest, I feel like I'm a Queen when I'm there.

How has this experience changed you, your perspective, and your community?

I don't take anything for granted. I'm thankful, you know, I'm more appreciative of what I have, and so...it makes me....my experience going to Africa...it has made me want to know more about my ancestors; where they originated from, some of the things they had to endure, which hurts but I need to know it because it just strengthens me to know that they had such....that they fought so hard. It makes me think....it makes me think about my ancestors, I think about them a lot. I hurt because I know they went through a lot, they were mistreated, and killed, and beaten, and, oh, boy. My community? I feel myself getting involved in more organizations I have, and I'm always expressing to them that they all need to take the trip to the Motherland.

Why do they have to "take that trip?" Why can't you just tell them about it?

No, I don't care what anyone tells you until you go there...I could remember before leaving to go on that first trip, and being at the African poetry theatre, and they were telling us what to expect, and how they had enjoyed the trip, like Alice, and those who had gone before me, and I was excited, but until you go there, you just don't get it. You have to experience it. It's an experience of a lifetime. Because every time I go, I'm telling you I am happier than the time before.

What do you now do differently after returning?

A lot of things. The way I receive my people, African Americans or Africans, people from the Motherland. I'm different in how I deal with them. It's also made me suspect of Caucasians. I'm very careful, after going there, I'm very careful about how I deal with them now back in the States.

And, how do you do that, how are you more careful? What do you do or don't do?

I limit my conversation with them. I don't know...there's some pain and I have a problem with dealing with them as a whole, Caucasians as a whole, I have a problem. After what my people have gone through, after going there visiting Gorée Island and seeing how they was stuffed in rooms and mistreated like they were animals. I don't think...I think that even today it has continued to move from generation to generation, they still see us as being animals. After going there, and knowing how they treated us, I don't feel like they look at us any different now than they did then.

You said in receiving African Americans and Africans you deal with them differently, can you describe a contact?

Yes, there was a time where I didn't have time....you know, I didn't look forward to talking to them or going into Harlem and going to 116th Street. I always avoided them like they were different, you know. Now, I'm always looking to talk to them, I'm always happy to let them know I've been to Africa, I've been to their home. So, I'm always looking forward to talking to them.

Has your relationship with others changed after you came back?

Yes.

In what way?

My relationship with black people as a whole, because I think there's so much more we can do - that we need to do to connect with our brothers and sisters back in the Motherland.

And, how do you see that....what's a way of that change?

Talking to them, constantly trying to be in their company or finding new places to see when I'm in Africa. Things that we have here that they don't have that we can take to them. Just...whatever I can do, I don't know I'm always looking for something to do or some way of doing something different.

But, with the people that you know here, your community, the folks that you interact with here in America, has your relationship with them changed after you've gone to Africa....

Oh, no, no.

...and, I think you said, at some point that you're talking with them, you're trying to tell them to go, they need to go and experience it for themselves...

They need to go, right.

...and I just wonder if that...have you seen any changes, has anything happened differently between those people here based on what you and that person had before now what you and that person have after you've come back.

The only one's that I have....because...when I talk to some my brothers and sisters here who have never gone to the Motherland, and you say "oh, it's a trip that you should take" some of them say, "oh, I'm not from there, why would I want to go there" because, just like, before...me before going the first time, I didn't see a need to go there, but once...after going there, I see a need to go back. I see a need to go back, I see a need to connect with my brothers and sisters across the water, over there in that continent. We need it, we need it. We are so divided, we are split up and messed up.

And, that's what you're trying to communicate to other folks.

That's right. That there's so much to know, that there's so much they don't know.

So, what are your new expectations?

My new expectations...I would love to own a home there. I would love to start a business there. I would love to bring a couple of them here to the United States and show them that it's not what they think, you know they think we can go outside and pull money off a tree. They don't know we really work hard...we have to really work hard to make that trip, well, some of us do, I know I do. So, I think that's it.

Having been to Africa, what does America mean to you?

Nothing. I'm sorry...I don't feel...wow, what does America mean to me? I'm not impressed. I feel like I'm not wanted here, that if they could send me to Africa they would – the Caucasians. America, I don't have...I have less love now than I did before because I know they have caused some of the pain that those people are feeling over there, America has caused some of that.

Okay, we're in the last part, the demographics. Please tell me about yourself – occupation, educational level, marital status, age, the city and state where you were born and grew up, and where you've spent your adult life. Anything that you don't want to answer, you don't have to.

My occupation: Resource Interviewer in the admitting department of a hospital; educational level: Bachelors degree; marital status: divorced; Age: 46; Born: Oceanside, NY; Grew up: West Hempstead, NY; as an adult: still residing in West Hempstead, NY. I'm back, I'm back.

That's all the structured questions that I had. What do you wish I had asked that I didn't? In other words, is there something more that you think needs to be included here.

No, I think you covered it all.

If you do think of something that you'd like to see included here, let me know. Just email or call me, and we'll get it added.

Okay.

Epilogue

I remember having to go to the bathroom in a restaurant and when I got there, there was only a hole in the floor with water in it. And, then I realized I would have to stoop. I'll never forget that. I will never, ever forget that. I was like...I'm telling you, when I was in that restaurant I was like, "Oh, my God." Do you know that I did not use that bathroom! I just couldn't imagine. But, when we went back the next year, they had toilets.

In talking about family...you know, sometimes we talk about things that happened. In my family we had fun. It was a lot of fun. I thank God, and I wouldn't change nothing, I wouldn't change nothing, other than I'd love to see my two brothers and my father again. But, my Mother said we all have to go that way someday. That's

what she tells us. She just keeps moving on. My mother is special and family is paramount.

The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of
African American Tourist Travel Impact

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Holiday Inn, Jamaica, NY

YAW

Today is Saturday, December 22, 2007, I'm Alethia Futtrell, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I'm involved in a research study about the effects the aviation industry and international leisure travel between the United States and West Afrika has directly and indirectly fostered changes in the Afrikan American identity.

The first area we're going to talk about is travel and transportation and what were your experiences in traveling to West Afrika, the airport, flight, cost, time, just tell me something about your experiences.

Well, my experience was very good. The flight was long, but you get a chance to watch a couple of movies and before you know it, you're there. It was very, very interesting. I've never been on a flight that was that long, but I got used to it. It was great having Afrikan pilots and attendants on the planes

In the airport, did you have any difficulties? What were your experiences in the airport itself?

None. There were no difficulties.

Okay in terms of cost and time, anything you want to share there. There travel experiences?

No, nothing.

En route, going to Afrika departing America, any significant events, funny stories, or experiences you'd like to share?

Yes, I had a walking stick the first time we went, they wouldn't let me take it on because it looked like a weapon, they said.

Transportation and travel while in Afrika, any experiences there?

Yes, when we went to Gorée Island, and the man was giving the speech, I was trying to video. He was saying, when we came to this spot and we went to the door of no

return, we would never see Afrika again. Then, he said, “but, I see I was wrong, I see you are back again,” and I started crying. Tears ran down my face like crazy.

Traveling back from Afrika, coming back home to America what was your transportation experiences like?

One time when we went to Benin, on our way the airlines went on a strike and we had to spend another night in Afrika; but it was in a 5 star hotel so it wasn't too bad.

Back here in the states, how has aviation contributed to your needs in terms of the availability of products that are coming from Afrika?

Well, they are hard to come by. They are very expensive over here, once they get here they are very expensive, not practical.

Have you ever given any thought as to how or why that occurred?

Supply and demand, I guess.

Still in Aviation and Transportation. How has it made your life easier, if it has - has aviation offered any conveniences to your life?

No

When was your last visit to West Afrika?

West Afrika, about 3 years ago.

How many times have you been, do you know?

Well, I've been to Afrika about 8 times, going every February.

Why did you go?

Well, I've always wanted to go home, because Afrika is my home. You have to understand, I am an Afrikan, I live here in America, so I decided, my wife and I decided to take the trip.

How will you prepare for your next flight to West Afrika?

I'll pack a little lighter. There were too many clothes we took this time.

Why is that?

Because there was a lot of stuff that we took over there that I didn't wear. We didn't need them, we'll just pack light and casual.

If there were no direct transatlantic air flights to Afrika, how would you consider getting there?

Through Europe to Afrika.

Okay, into the second area which is called stereotypes, cultural perceptions and how you have been affected. First one is what were your expectations, and how were they met?

Well, I don't know how to answer that.

Well, maybe if I can try to help. The first time you went

Yes

...the very first time you went, what were you thinking about, what did you know about, what did you think you would see when you got there? What were you expecting?

Well, the first thing – they say “Afrika, the jungle” so, I was surprised when I saw a lot of buildings and things like that. There were people, the people were very nice and welcomed us.

So, you were expecting jungle, where did that come from?

From the movies that I had seen, Tarzan one night. It was like that, but, then I expected, well it changed my whole perspective on it, you know.

Because?

There were no animals, no jungles.

Okay, what surprised you?

A lot of vendors. Everybody had something to sell, from the biggest kid to the littlest kid had something to sell.....nothing but a toothbrush to sell you, to give you, you know, sell you.

Was there anything that you found disappointing?

The poverty.

The next question is why would you consider another visit, given the opportunity?

Because it's my home, Afrika is my home – the Motherland.

Can you give me – explain to me a little bit about what you mean “going home to the Motherland.” So, you're looking at the Afrikan continent as home?

Yes.

What does that mean?

It means that my ancestors come from Afrika.

How do you know that your ancestors...?

Well, my Grandmother, my Father's side, she looked Afrikan from pictures I saw and from knowing her in person, she looked Afrikan – Father's side. Mother's side, she looked Afrikan too, but I had my DNA checked, it told me something different. It said that I was from Spain, Hungary and Belgium – that was on my Father's side. My sisters have to check my Mother's side, but I've got to get them to do that now, but they seem to be holding us up, you know.

When you received that information of your ancestral roots, how did that....what did you think about that?

I didn't want to believe it. Because I've been talking Afrika, I believe I belong to Afrika and, then, when I got my DNA and it said something else, and I said "no." I didn't want to believe it, I told my wife "no, that's wrong, that's wrong" you know. She said that was my Father's side. Now, my Grandfather, we thought he was Indian, but if he's not, he just looked Indian.

What does all of that mean to you?

It means that my sisters have to check their DNA, you know, but I still feel like I'm an Afrikan - from the blood.

That answers the next question – where are your ancestral roots?

My ancestors from my Father's side are from Spain, Hungary, and Belgium. My mother's side, I know it's going to be different – hoping and praying it's going to be different.

When do you think.....your expectations for your Mother's side, you've kind of formed some, expectations for the ancestral side on your Mother's side. If it doesn't meet your expectations, what will happen?

I'm still Afrikan.

Okay. Having been to Afrika what does Afrika mean to you?

Well, it's a place that I go to visit, where people who accept me for what I am. First country that I've really known that was run by blacks, all black – black President, black Mayor, more into my roots, you know, what I'm into.

What was that first country?

Senegal.

How did you communicate?

The Afrikans in Senegal, they communicated with me because they spoke English. I would listen to their words, some of their words, they would say to me and I picked up a little bit, not very much, but, you know, I knew what they were saying by their gestures, by their hand gestures and stuff like that.

So, it was not difficult to communicate, to do the things you needed to do?

No.

What or who did you recognize there in Afrika in terms of features, actions, principles, values, customs?

Well, I know where you get "to sweeping the dirt." My Grandmother would sweep the dirt, a lot of that is a thing where Granny would sweep the dirt in front of the house, I remember that.

So, that's an action that you've seen here in your lifetime – parents, Grandparents – then going to Afrika you see people there sweeping the dirt. That was the same?

Yes. My Grandmother used to say “Landagoshen,” she’d say, oh, landagoshen when she would be talking to us, she’d be mad, she’d say landagoshen. I never knew what she meant, but she was saying Atlantic Ocean, that was, of course, in the Atlantic Ocean.

Say it again.
Landagoshen.

Lantic? If you had to spell it, how would you spell it the way she said it?
Like Atlantic Ocean. Oh, I don’t know how she’d spelled it.

Okay. Any other things that you can think of features or principles that.....
Oh, you’d see a lot of people out there that look like your people. You’d be walking down the street and you’d say “oh, that looks like George, you know, or that looks like Annie.” Things like that, you know.

Is that surprising?
Very surprising.

What do you think that means?
That’s the attachment, the attachment between us in America and them in Afrika. They look like my cousin, my uncles, my aunts.

What about the food, the different customs or values or actions, how did they differ from what you were used to?

Well, I got sick when I went to Senegal the first time, but, then I stuck with fish and I did alright. But, you can’t drink the water, it’s hot water. You have to drink bottled water.

Why do you think that is? Why do we have to do that?
Because it’s not purified. Not for us, people who drink enough purified water and you go over there and you drink water that’s just plain water, it doesn’t make them sick, but watch it makes us sick. I think it’s because of the purification that we put in our water.

So, if I heard that right, we purify water here, but they don’t purify water there, and if you drink it, you don’t fair well.

That’s right. They can drink it, you know, the Afrikans can drink it. I don’t understand that. It could be the purification that’s put in the water that’s harmless, but when we drink water that is regular water, we get sick.

How were you received?

Very well. At the airport, when we first went to Senegal, at the airport. At the airport getting our bags, you hear the drums outside, oh, it was great, it was overwhelming, you know. When you walk out, you walk out the airport they say “welcome back home, welcome back home, you come back home, welcome back home.” That was really, really nice.

Great. How did it make you feel?

Very good, very good.

How has the experience changed you, your perspectives, your community?

Well, we never did put up Christmas lights, still don't put up Christmas lights. We celebrate Kwanzaa instead. Always talking about Afrika “when you going back to Afrika, you ain't lost nothing in Afrika.” I quote Malcolm X “yes, you did, we lost our mind in Afrika.”

So, in going to Afrika, did you find “your mind?”

Oh, yes.

What does that mean? Share with me how you found your mind.

There was no, um, I didn't see any prejudice, from the people that we met. People just treated us so good, you know. And, I'm always wearing something that came from the Motherland.

Say that again.

I'm always wearing something that came from the Motherland, like my bracelet.

That came from the Motherland, okay?

Yeah. I noticed that over there they wear European clothes, but over here we wear Afrikan clothes, there's an attachment there somewhere. Here we wear Afrikan clothes, over there Afrikans wear American clothes, European clothes. It seems so strange, I am walking around with my kufi [Afrikan hat] and they are wearing their top hats you know. But, that was okay, you know.

Why do you think that is?

It was taken over there, the style was taken over there and it was told this is what you have to wear. The people over there said, oh, this is what was happening, and it's not what's happening.

The mind that was lost, now that you have that what are you doing differently when you come back?

Talk to my brothers and sisters about it. I have an Afrikan ministry – I attend an Afrikan Ministry where we greet each other with “Eem Hotep and Shem Hotep.” The ministry is like I am in an Afrikan Village.

Tell me a little bit more about that?

We meet on Sundays from 1 – 4, and we talk Afrikan. We talk, do our ritual, and talk about the ancestors. We have guest speakers down there like Professor Smalls and Leonard Jeffries. A lot of good people come down there. They give us a story too. They give us our story, not his story.

What do you mean by “our story / his story?”

Well, his story is HIS story. Our story is the black story, the Afrikan story. His story is the Caucasian story.

This group that – the Afrikan ministry that meets Sundays come to share and hear our stories.

Yes.

And, how is that received and what kind of differences or impact do you see that making on the attendees?

It's a positive impact for the people that are there want to be there; if you don't want to be there, don't come. The people that come there, they want to be there, they want the stories. A lot of them don't know our story, all they know is his story, so we give our story. All of Afrika – we start with Kemet to Senegal to all of them.

How long has that been going on?

7, 8 years now.

After returning from Afrika, has your relationship with others changed?

Yes. Well, the people know that I'm an Afrikan, you know, there's no doubt about it. You're going to Afrika and stuff, tell them the black stuff. So, I tell them the good stuff, you know.

What's the impact that you see in terms of how it's changed somebody else?

Well, when they come down to the ministry, when I invite somebody down and they show up, they first walk into the door, they look around and look around. Then when we get into it, they get into it too.

And, what about you coming back, how has it changed you?

Well, I'm learning more about Afrika. A lot of things I didn't know, I didn't know a lot of things, and, now I'm aware of them. When I greet a person I usually say “Ankh Uja Sneb,” like that, you know. Not greet them in the old European way, like Hello; hell is low.

I'm trying to capture what you did in words, how would you describe that? You twist your arm. I'm trying to put it in words, because that's how I'm going to relate it back out, and I can't get it.

It's a greeting, a greeting. You cross your hands in front of your chest.

Okay.

and, then, you say, “Ankh Uja Sneb.”

So, if I say cross your arms in front of your chest and, then, you open your hand, extend your hand out.

Yes.

And, then, you rub your hands together and say “duwa.”

Okay.

Okay, so in doing that you then feel welcome.

Yes, you do. Because you’re wishing them a good life, health, prosperity.

Okay, versus hello?

Yes

Okay. What are your new expectations?

To travel, to hit some more Afrikan countries. Possibly to take my pictures, concentrate on the children – taking pictures of the children.

That’s what you’re planning to do. What do you think you’ll find when you go back, expecting when you go back on your next visit?

Well, I’m not sure – friendships, hope to see some more people that look like me.

This is the last one in this collective is having been to Afrika, what does America mean to you?

It doesn’t mean anything. I’m an Afrikan living in America.

Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

Well, the lies that we’ve been told, shooting of all the black, young youths, it’s getting outrageous. There’s a war going on here, there’s a war going on between “blacks and whites.” We don’t have no guns, cradle of power. I always think about what the soldiers did to the Indians when they put them against that wall and gave them those blankets with typhoid. That was a terrible thing to do. I always think about that, you know, when they shout about how great America is. America is great, but the people in it are not.

Would you like to elaborate on any of what we’ve talked about?

No

Last area is the demographics where I’m asking you to, please, tell me about yourself – occupation, educational level, marriage (well, I know that), where you were born, grew up.

Well, I was born in Brooklyn, New York. Lived near the Italians, worked for the state, as a nutritionist. I had a very loving mother and father.

So, you grew up in New York, in Brooklyn?

Yes

Educational level, if you want to share.

9th grade

I think I've got everything that I started out on my list, is there anything else that you think that I should have asked that I didn't ask? If you think of something that you think should go in here, let me know.

Okay.

Yaw, thank you very much.

Thank you.

APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2007
IRB Application No ED07102
Proposal Title: The Effect of Air Transportation on Culturalization: A Study of African-American Tourist Travel Impact
Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 11/28/2008

Principal Investigator(s)

Alethia E. Futtrell
P.O. Box 1782
Bethany, OK 730081782

Frederick D. Hansen
OSU Tulsa 700 N. Greenwo
Tulsa, OK 741060700

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Alethia E. Futtrell

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TOURIST AIR TRAVEL IMPACT

Major Field: Applied Educational Studies

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Brooklyn, New York, on February 12, 1943, the daughter of Sadie and Thomas Futtrell.

Education: Graduated from Washington Irving High School, New York in June 1960; received Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from Marshall University, West Virginia in May 1982; received a Master of Science degree in Natural and Applied Sciences from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 2000. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Applied Educational Studies Aviation and Space Specialization at Oklahoma State University in December 2008.

Experience: Nurses Aide, Queens General Hospital, Jamaica, New York, 1960-1963; US Postal Record & Letter Distribution Clerk, Air Mail Facilities, J. F. Kennedy Airport, 1963-1974; Probationary Police Officer, New York City Police Department, 1974-1975; Full Time Student 1974-1976; Youth Counselor Brooklyn Association of Settlement Houses, New York, 1976-1978. Employed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an Air Traffic Control Specialist in 1978 to present. Working in many locations and positions; currently Manager, Specialized Training Branch, FAA Academy.

Professional Memberships: Charter Member Major Charles B. Hall Jr. Chapter Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.; Charter Member Professional Women's Controller Association (PWC); Charter Member of Special Friend of Ralph Ellison Library; Women in Aviation.

Name: Alethia E. Futtrell

Date of Degree: December, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TOURIST AIR TRAVEL
IMPACT

Pages in Study: 352

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major Field: Applied Educational Studies

Scope and Method of Study: This qualitative research was conducted to determine if air transportation contributed to changes in the African American culture. It explores the reasons for visiting West Africa and the evolving results of the journey. Questions were in two categories. The travel and transportation area asked if aviation fostered any changes to mindset, attitudes, and landscape; while the stereotypes and cultural perspectives category examined cultural issues before travel and after return. An earlier study from 1986 was referenced and the evolution noted. A purposive sample of 13 African Americans over the age of 18, born and raised in America who traveled as tourists to West Africa since December 2004, were interviewed and asked 21 standard structured questions, with follow-up as indicated. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and included.

Findings and Conclusions: The travel and transportation findings were comfortable, safe, and enjoyable; and African products were readily available in America. Time saved was cited by 12 (92%) as the major convenience offered by aviation. Curiosity and seeking firsthand knowledge and information about African people, history, culture, heritage and ancestry were reasons for traveling. The expectations of negative stereotypes were eradicated. Disappointments were observed and expressed. Differences and similarities were noted in several areas. Intense negative sentiments were expressed about America after returning from Africa. The themes that threaded through all of the interviews were: accepting/declaring Africa as home; finding a connection for self identification; and changing personal perception/perspective and the resulting actions after returning to America. It was concluded that travel and transportation affected and impacted the African American culture in mind expansion and self discovery. The landscape of the community and culture has been altered and enhanced. The atmosphere and environment reflect new truths about Africa and Africans. Aviation travel and transportation has contributed to an understanding and acceptance of being descendants of Africa. It has provided a bridge of connection to ancestry.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Frederick D. Hansen