

**LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



**AN ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:  
A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE GHANA-AFRICAN DIASPORA RELATIONS**

**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY  
OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD  
OF THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE  
IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**LEGON**

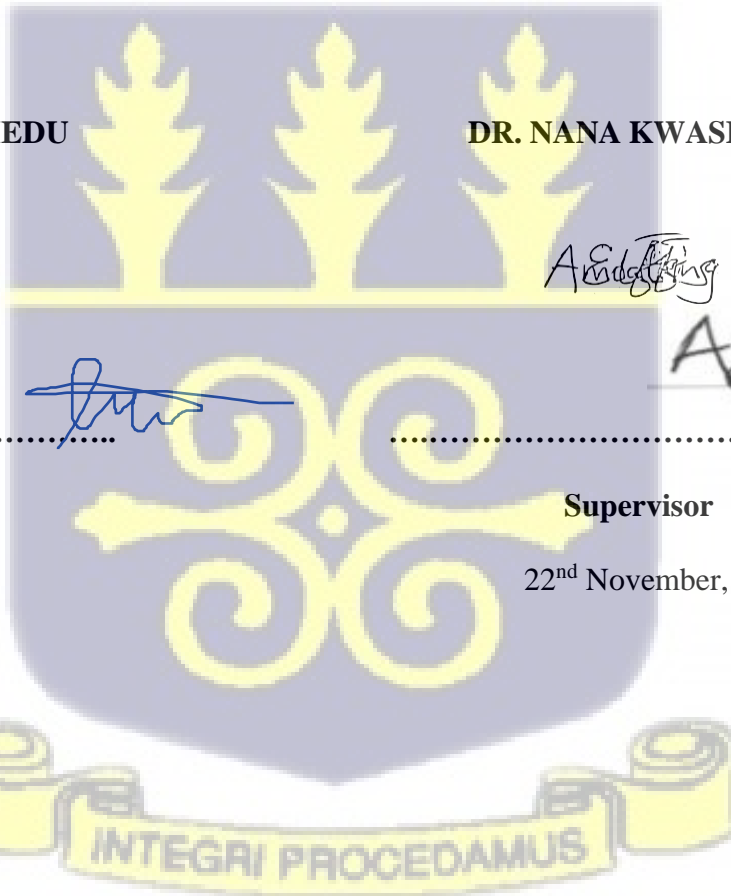
**AUGUST, 2023**

## DECLARATION

I, Nana Serwaa Asiedu, hereby declare that this dissertation is the final product of my own studies under the supervision of Dr. Nana Kwasi Amoateng of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana, towards the award of a Master of Arts (MA) degree in International Affairs. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is an original research work with the exception of references to other works which I have duly recognized. I also declare that this dissertation has not been submitted either in part or in whole for any degree elsewhere.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first and foremost to the Almighty God who gave me the strength and capability from the beginning of the journey through to the end. Indeed, He has been faithful.

My parents, Prof. Alex Asiedu and Mrs. Gifty Asiedu have also been of tremendous help in encouraging me and offering pieces of advice while putting this dissertation together as well as my sibling, (Dr. Paapa Kofi Boakye Asiedu) who supported me with prayers.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

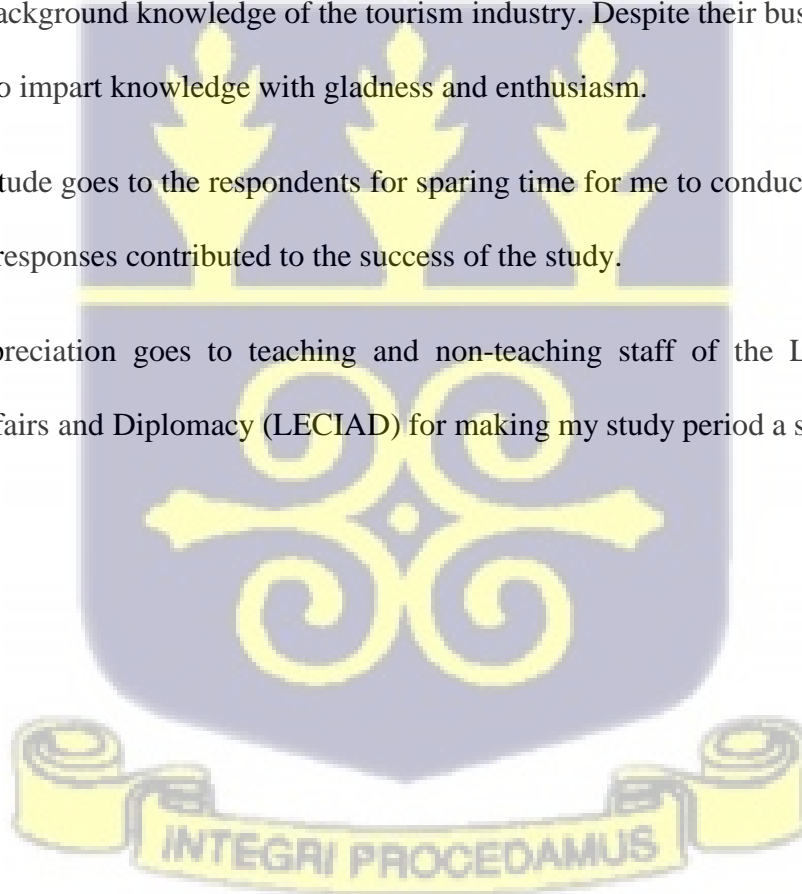
First of all, I bestow my enormous gratitude to Almighty God for His favour and boundless blessings throughout the period of writing this dissertation. I acknowledge the pioneering work of others in the field of tourism which motivated and provided the foundations for this study.

I wish to acknowledge the immense contribution of my supervisor, Dr Nana Kwasi Amoateng, for his timeless dedication, guidance, constructive criticisms and professionalism throughout the supervision of this thesis. He never left my hand throughout this journey.

I wish to express my indebted thanks to the Ghana Tourism Authority for their support in making time to supply background knowledge of the tourism industry. Despite their busy schedules, they still made time to impart knowledge with gladness and enthusiasm.

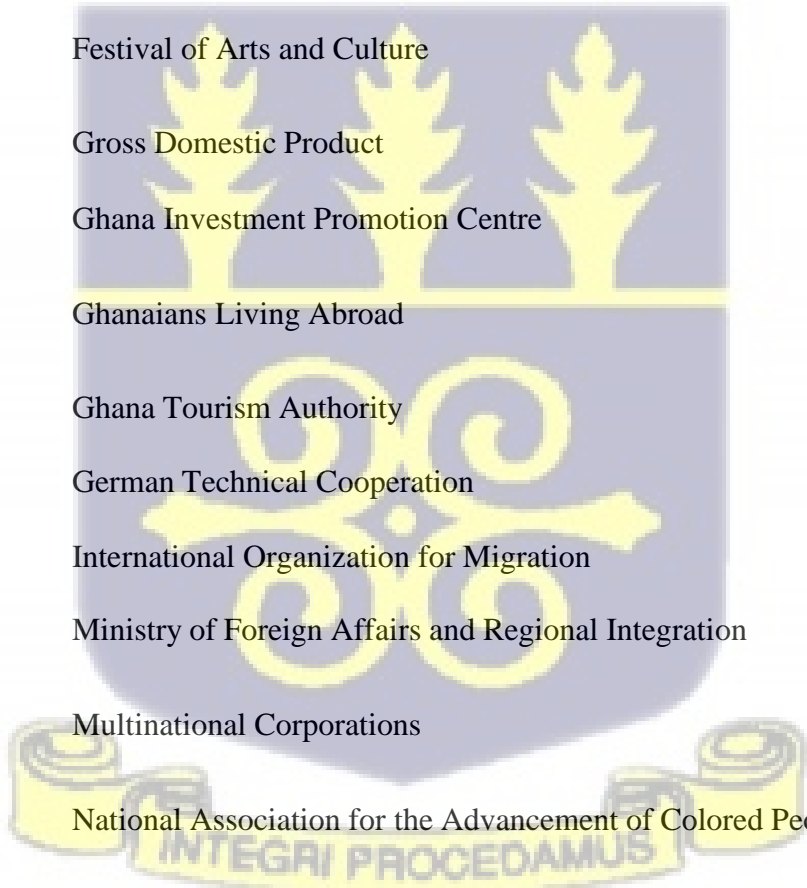
My earnest gratitude goes to the respondents for sparing time for me to conduct my study. Their time and useful responses contributed to the success of the study.

Finally, my appreciation goes to teaching and non-teaching staff of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD) for making my study period a successful one.

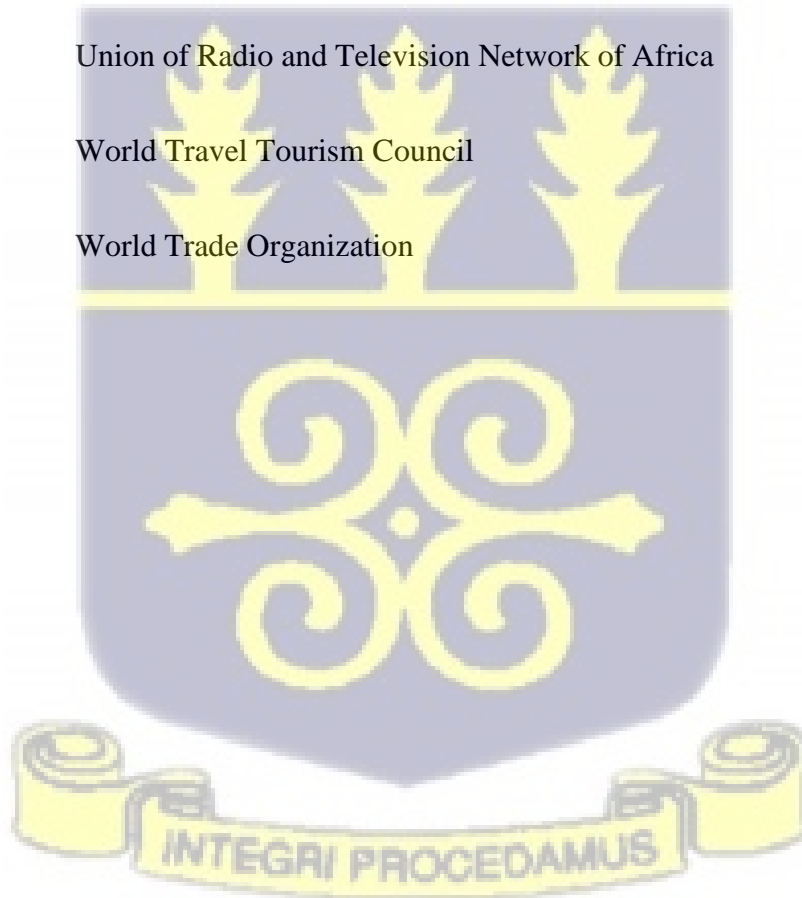


## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfDB	-	African Development Bank
AU	-	African Union
CMS	-	Centre for Migration Studies
CRC	-	Constitutional Review Committee
CRS	-	Computer Reservation System
DAB	-	Diaspora Affairs Bureau
FESTAC	-	Festival of Arts and Culture
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GIPC	-	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GLA	-	Ghanaians Living Abroad
GTA	-	Ghana Tourism Authority
GTC	-	German Technical Cooperation
IOM	-	International Organization for Migration
MFARI	-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
MNCs	-	Multinational Corporations
NAACP	-	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NDC	-	National Democratic Congress



- NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development
- NPP - New Patriotic Party**
- PANAFEST - Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival
- RETOS - Regional Tourism Organization for Southern Africa
- SADC - Southern African Development Community
- SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
- UNESCO - United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization
- URTNA - Union of Radio and Television Network of Africa
- WTTC - World Travel Tourism Council
- WTO - World Trade Organization

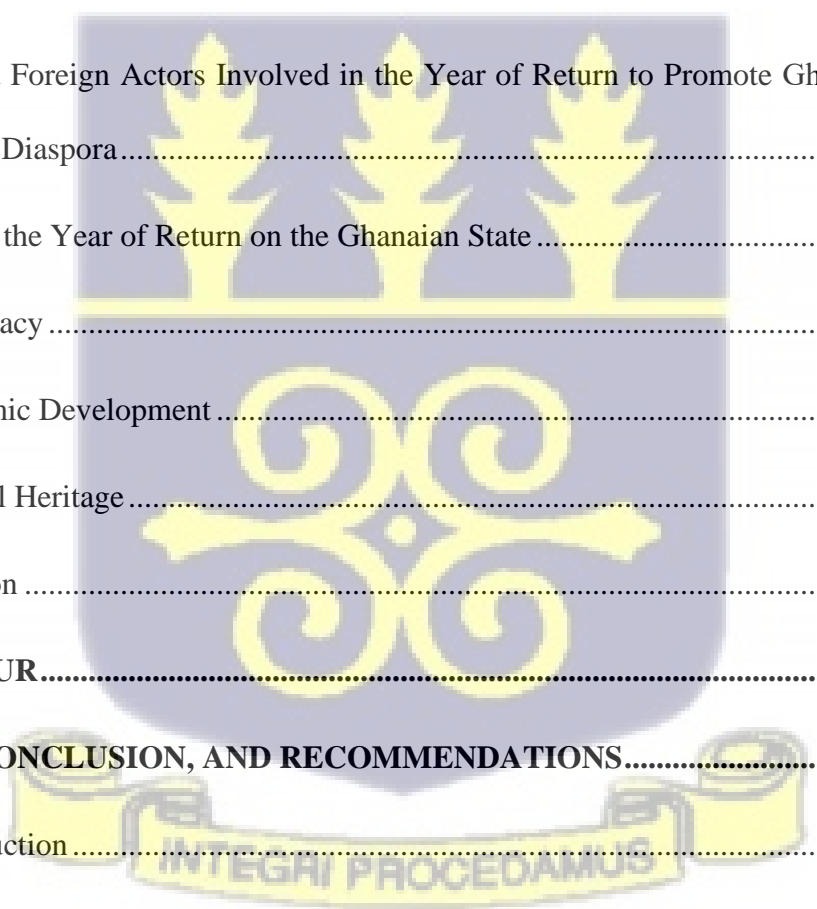


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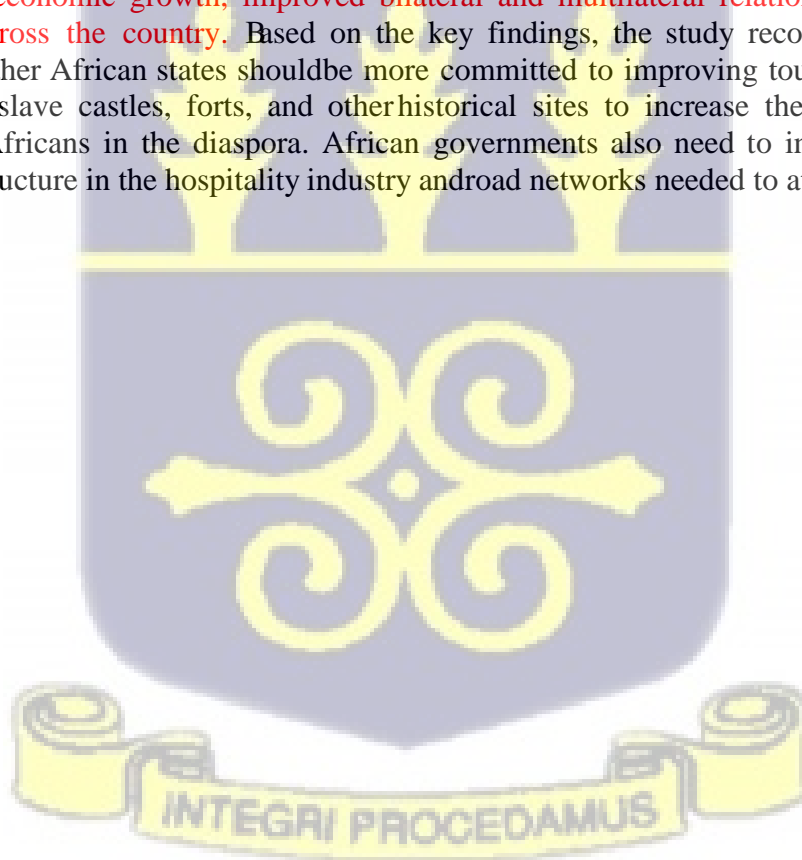


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## ABSTRACT

International tourism has been a key component of relations in the international system, although this has not been adequately discussed by IR scholars. Existing discussions have highlighted different issues such as the different types of tourism, the history of international tourism, the political and socioeconomic conditions that influence international tourism, the link between tourism, globalization, and development, the positive and negative effects of tourism on states, the nature of tourism in Africa as compared to other parts of the world, and the programs that tend to drive international tourism, among other things. This dissertation builds on the idea of Pan-Africanism to investigate the development of international tourism and how the “Year of Return” initiative has impacted tourism and other dimensions of the Ghanaian state including the relations between Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora. The study principally argues that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives that have promoted and strengthened the bond between Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora. The analysis triangulates insights from both primary and secondary sources. Fieldwork included semi-structured interviews involving sixteen participants. **The study found that the Year of Return celebration has had significant impact on Ghana’s tourism and international relations as a whole as it impacted economic growth, improved bilateral and multilateral relations and promoted development across the country.** Based on the key findings, the study recommends that the Ghanaian and other African states should be more committed to improving tourist sites such as national parks, slave castles, forts, and other historical sites to increase their patronage and relations with Africans in the diaspora. African governments also need to invest more in the requisite infrastructure in the hospitality industry and road networks needed to attract tourists.



## CHAPTER ONE

### TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1.1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the areas broadly expounded in the international relations (IR) literature, and thus various IR scholars have offered different insights in this field of study. Lei et al. (2022), for example, have highlighted IR and its role in facilitating access to leisure and other aspects of life. According to Alsarayreh et al. (2010), it is impossible to separate tourism from IR because tourism by nature is an international activity. Other important scholarly works have discussed IR, tourism and global peace (Wohlmuther & Wintersteiner, 2014), an increase in Chinese tourists to Africa (Chen and Duggan, 2016), and Ghana's engagement with its diaspora through tourism (Adjei, 2018), among other things. Furthermore, there are several scholarly works that have underlined how tourism is a form of soft power, helping to promote unity and stronger ties between states in the international system (see Stumpf & Swanger, 2015; Gou, Li & Wang, 2014; Weaver, 2015; Kwek, Wang & Weaver, 2014; Assadzadeh, 2015). In turn, this dissertation builds on the theory of Pan-Africanism to assess tourism in IR, focusing mainly on the relations between the Ghanaian state and Africans in the diaspora.

The term tourism was first used by the United Nations in 1937, drawing on its Latin roots "tour", which means going back and forth between one place (source) and another (destination) (Yazdi, 2014). According to Yazdi (2014, p. 12), tourism entails a "collection of travels between sources and destinations for leisure, recreation, entertainment, sports, visual, commercial and cultural purposes, in which the tourist is not at the destination for employment or permanent residence". In turn, Rezvani (2015, p. 5) has defined a tourist as "a temporary visitor who travels to a country

other than his/her own country for recreation, resting, holidays, visiting interesting sites, medical and therapeutic reasons, business, sports, pilgrimage, visiting relatives, missions, and participating in conferences; provided that his/her stay is not less than 24 hours at least and not more than 3 months at most". Thus, tourism entails a short-term visit within and to a country for different purposes. Jalalpour and Shojaeifar (2014) and Rezvani (2015) have highlighted three types of tourists, namely: those traveling from their own country to another; those traveling within their own country; and those traveling from one foreign country to another foreign country for diverse reasons.

According to Jarvis and Peel (2010), the desire to travel is often associated with the yearning to escape from something, or as Kim and Ritchie (2012) put it: the "break from routine" activities of home and work. This break usually affords tourists the opportunity to refresh their minds by engaging in nonroutine forms of leisure activities, geared towards liberating them from tension and anxiety (Ritchie, Tkaczynski & Faulks, 2010; Grimm & Needham, 2012). Against this backdrop, Leonard and Onyx (2009) have highlighted how relaxation is the most central psychological predisposing factor for tourist trips.

The effects of tourism on states' economies vary according to the income levels and institutional qualities of the host countries (Tang & Tan, 2017). Antonakakis et al. (2016) have underlined how the complex relationship between tourism and development needs to be understood through broader indicators including politics, economics, and geography, among other things. According to Jahangir (2007), tourism is likely to be the only service sector that offers tangible and quantifiable trading prospects to all nations, regardless of their degree of development. This is because most tourists are willing to part with money in exchange for good experiences wherever they choose to visit. Tourism is one of the most important pillars of development for many

developing countries, especially islands and small economies with fewer natural resources. Adjei (2018) has argued that tourism serves as a source of foreign currency and employment, thereby providing a solid foundation for economic development. In addition, tourism provides avenues for the enhancement and promotion of a nation's IR as different entities exchange culture, information and resources (Alsarayreh, 2010).

Cobbinah and Darkwah (2016) have argued that with the recent calls for tourism-led development, most governments have begun to promote tourism as a viable alternative to diversify their economies. Tourist sites in different countries are mostly unique and can help to create market niches for each state. With the right packaging and appropriate marketing strategies, countries with attractive destinations can boost tourism.

According to Forbes (2020), tourism is a big business sector as it accounts for more than 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Data from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2019) shows how about 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals were reported globally in 2018, which was 5% over the value reported in the previous year. Furthermore, the total international tourism export was valued at US\$1.7 trillion in 2018, which was attributed to the relatively strong global economy and a growing middle class in emerging economies (UNWTO, 2019). Although international arrivals grew below the exceptional rates observed in 2017 (+7%) and 2018 (+6%), strong growth was evident in 2019, with 1.46 billion people traveling globally (UNWTO, 2019).

In general, African countries have not been able to fully develop their tourism sectors. Forbes (2020), for example, has highlighted how tourism accounts for only 3.6% of GDP on the African continent, as compared to 9.9% in Asia, and 72% in countries such as Maldives, Seychelles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Grenada. Furthermore, no African country has been able to improve upon

its tourism industry as Ghana in the few past years due to economic meltdowns, conflicts and the global pandemic, COVID-19 (Forbes, 2020). The programs that have helped to develop tourism in Ghana include the “Back-to-Africa” initiative in which Africans in the diaspora were invited to visit Ghana in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gebauer, 2021). This yielded positive results as, for example, it supported the successful movement of a few Africans from different parts of the globe to Ghana for tourism and resettlement (Benton & Shabazz, 2009; Dillette, 2020). Furthermore, Ghana’s famous “Year of Return” was launched in 2019 to celebrate the resilience of Africans across the globe and project this West African state as a desirable tourist and business destination for the African diaspora (Agyeman, 2016). The Ghana Tourism Authority reported that the “Year of Return” program brought over 900,000 foreign visitors into the country, contributing to more than 10% of the Ghana’s GDP. According to the Daily Graphic (2020), a total of \$1.9 billion was injected into the Ghanaian economy through activities related to the “Year of Return”. The latter has, however, received criticisms including the government’s intention behind the focus on a few Africans in the diaspora such as black Americans, Jamaicans, Cubans, and Brazilians as opposed to Africans across the globe (Yeboah, 2019). The dissertation contributes to this discussion by building on the idea of Pan-Africanism to understand the degree to which the Year of Return initiative has helped to shape Ghana’s relations with other actors in the international system.

To summarize, tourism is an important dimension of IR although IR scholars have paid a relatively limited attention to it. Tourism has been linked to peace and development in many countries, but many African states are yet to fully develop this aspect of their relations with foreign entities. The rest of the chapter elaborates on the problem statement, the study’s objectives and research questions, scope, rationale, theoretical framework, literature review, methods and methodology, thesis statement, and overview of the subsequent chapters.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Although some IR scholars and practitioners have examined African states and tourism (for example, see Bouzahzah & El Menyari, 2013; Signe, 2018), there is limited understanding of how tourism-led programs have helped to shape the relations between African states and foreign actors. The dissertation helps to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing the evolution of tourism in the international system, narrowing down to how the Year of Return initiative has helped to shape the relations between Ghana and the African diaspora.

Bentum-Ennin (2014) has modeled international tourism demand for Ghana based on five tourist-originating regions, namely that the Greater Accra, Central, North East, Volta, and Western regions have the most preferred tourist attraction sites in the country based on the frequency of visits at the tourist sites available in these regions. Gabauer (2021) has also examined roots tourism and the Year of Return campaign in Ghana, moving beyond the history of slavery and focusing on reuniting Ghana with the African diaspora. In turn, the dissertation highlights the evolution of international tourism and how Ghana and other African states have largely focused on boosting their tourism industries using Africans in the diaspora (see next chapter).

Revenues from Ghana's tourism sector compete with the revenues from the other major sectors of the economy including gold, cocoa, and remittances (Agyeman, 2019). According to Akyeampong (2011), Ghana's tourism industry has been described as successful and thriving over the years and has evolved into a contemporary industry with considerable involvement of both local and multinational enterprises. Given that Ghana has cultivated stronger relations and cooperation with other countries through various associations, contracts, and alliances (Pwalia, 2018), the government has over the years sought to strengthen international ties using different avenues including tourism. For example, Ghana has initiated policies that have seen nationals of

Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago enter the country without a visa for 90 days. Ghana, just like some other African countries, has also provided several ways to “blow off steam” for international tourism participation (Egbejule, 2019). Tourism in Ghana provides the opportunity for relaxation and provides a hideout from the normal routine lives of most tourists.

Therefore, Ghana’s tourism industry has been buzzing with many activities in recent years ranging from the establishment of more modern accommodation facilities, hosting and participation in several international events, tourist sites publicity drives, and expansion of tourism infrastructure such as the airports, road networks, and accommodation, among other things (Alsarayreh, 2010).

Also, the government, through its relevant agencies and departments such as the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), has put in place measures aimed at increasing tourist arrivals by capitalizing on specific thematic areas, particularly cultural heritage. In this vein, the culture of Ghana is projected to the outside world as desirable, and thus international tourists are influenced to visit to experience the rich Ghanaian culture through food, music, arts, dance, and fashion, among other things. The cultural heritage tours target mostly black (African) people living in the diaspora, to have a feel of what was once the culture of their ancestors.

In recent years, the Year of Return initiative has mostly received global attention. Gabauer (2021) has highlighted how this program has boosted Ghana’s relations with the rest of the World, especially the African diaspora. However, critics have highlighted how the focus on a few Africans in the diaspora, particularly Black Americans, and the exclusion of Northern Ghana from the Year of Return activities, among other problems, have undermined the credibility and level of impact of this initiative (Yeboah, 2019). Scholars such as Obadele Kambon have also characterized the Year of Return as ‘fraud’ – a political and social scam to extort money from the rich areas of the African diaspora (Maya, 2019). According to Yeboah (2019), the initiative was

predominantly focused on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, with the US at the center, which silenced some important aspects and legacies of Africa's history of slavery. Yeboah (2019) posits that there was a need to give equal attention to Africans or black people across the globe as the Transatlantic Slave Trade and other historical events have had a wider impact on international affairs. Despite the few criticisms, the Year of Return has been described as a "beacon for people of African descent living on the continent and in the Diaspora" (Gabauer, 2021, p. 28). The dissertation investigates issues involving how international tourism has evolved over time and what Ghana's Year of Return has contributed to the country's tourism sector and relations with foreign actors.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What did the Year of Return entail and how is it compared to similar initiatives?
2. To what extent did local and foreign actors contribute to the Year of Return initiative to promote Ghana's relations with the African diaspora?
3. To what extent did the Year of Return initiative help to shape Ghana's tourism sector and relations with Africans in the diaspora?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To assess what the Year of Return entailed, and compare it to similar initiatives.
2. To identify the extent to which local and foreign actors contributed to the Year of Return initiative to promote Ghana's relations with the Africans in the diaspora.
3. To ascertain the extent to which the Year of Return initiative helped to shape Ghana's tourism sector and relations with Africans in the diaspora.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on “the Year of Return” initiative that was introduced by the Government of Ghana in 2019. Data for this research is largely drawn on the 2018-2022 year period to understand the preparations, implementation, and outcome of the Year of Return program.

### **1.6 Rationale of Study**

- To understand how tourism has evolved in the international system over time
- To appreciate the “Year of Return” as an initiative that is relevant for strengthening Ghana’s international relations and the development of the economy.
- To bring to light what the program entailed, the relevance of the initiative, and similar initiatives.
- To identify and know the various stakeholders that were involved in the initiative, and their capacities as stakeholders to reliably inform decision-making in the future.
- To highlight how aspects of tourism and participation in international relations help achieve development cooperation, foreign direct investment, event and cultural tourism promotion, export trade promotion and foreign employment promotion.

### **1.7 Thesis Statement**

The dissertation principally argues that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives including the Year of Return that have promoted and strengthened the bond between Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora.

## 1.8 Conceptual Framework

The dissertation builds on Pan-Africanism, which highlights how people of African descent have aligned their political and socioeconomic interests in international affairs, to understand international tourism. According to Martin (1983) cited in Shepperson and Drake (1945, p. 2), Pan-Africanism mainly entails "the attempts by the peoples of the African Diaspora and Africa to link up their struggles for their mutual benefit." Sherwood (2012) has highlighted how Pan-Africanism has repeatedly appeared as a political and cultural movement in the past. In turn, Kasanda (2016) has underlined how the idea of Pan-Africanism was birthed by Africans living in the diaspora at the tail end of the nineteenth century before being propelled to the African continent in the middle of the twentieth century. The foundational idea behind Pan-Africanism and its movement was the belief that "black people all over the world constitute a single nation and that they have a common destiny" (Ankomah, 2012).

The first Pan-Africanist congress that was organized by Henry Sylvester Williams in London, England, from 23 to 25 July 1900, and subsequent meetings have addressed some principal issues such as Africa's emerging ascendancy in international matters, racism, colonialism/neocolonialism, global governance, international security, international political economy, transnational justice, and China-Africa relations (Shepperson & Drake, 1945; Agyeman, 2019). The idea of Pan-Africanism has helped to shape some national and regional initiatives in Africa since the late 1950s and early 1960s including the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), among other things (Pieterse, 2017; Shepperson & Clark, 2008).

Pan-Africanism was demonstrated through the "Year of Return" initiative that saw many black people return to Africa for tourism and other reasons (Agyeman, 2019). Put differently, the Year

of Return was an avenue for Ghana to promote and apply Pan-Africanism that was rooted in the liberation and solidarity of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. International liberation movements such as Black Lives Matter and political instability involving coup d'états in some African states underline how black people have continued to struggle with oppressive structures in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, Pan-Africanism has been used as a foreign policy and IR tool to promote various shades of meaning in the domains of politics, economics, and culture. This includes encouraging the African diaspora to travel to Africa for different reasons including tourism and resettlement (Araujo, 2018; Handley, 2006). Countries in Africa have particularly constructed foreign policy strategies by using tourism-related events and campaigns to reach out to people of African descent (Adjei, 2018).

In turn, Pan-Africanism has been critiqued for only promoting political independence and racial equality, and thus ignoring any concept, idea, framework or theory that does not fall directly within such discussions (Ankomah, 2012). Begunrin (2009) has also argued that Pan-Africanism is a failed ideology because it could not promote the unity it sought between Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. Despite these criticisms, Pan-Africanism provides a credible avenue for explaining the political and socioeconomic interconnectivity between Africa and its diaspora. For instance, it has helped to understand why some Black Americans, Black British, and Black Canadians have retained associations with their African roots through tourism, acceptance of citizenship in African states, money transfers, and business investments, among other things (Ankomah, 2012). Oyewole and Joash (2019) have also highlighted how Pan-Africanism has helped to recognize the connection between the African and Afro-American intellectuals and political activists, thereby strengthening racial solidarity based on self-consciousness. The

dissertation builds on Pan-Africanism to understand the evolution of international tourism using the Year of Return as a case study.

## **1.9 Literature Review**

This section analyzes relevant themes in the literature on international tourism including globalization and international tourism, tourism and development in Africa, and tourism and development in Ghana.

### **1.9.1 Globalization and International Tourism**

This section highlights some major issues from the globalization and international tourism literature, paying particular attention to the character and effects of tourism on states in the wake of globalization. Perry (2022) has analyzed globalization and its influence on international tourism, arguing that some global challenges involving tourism fears, health crises, financial distress, environmental concerns, and terrorism, among other things, need international cooperation to be overcome. In turn, the geographical widening of linkages between places through technological advancement has become prominent in the development of international tourism, contributing to the internationalization of tourism, leisure culture, and increasing global flows of tourists (Lei et al., 2022). Lei et al., (2022) further assert that through the process of intensification, the long-established trickles of tourists to the most distant corners of the globe have been transformed into large-scale tourist flows. Tourism at the global level has led to increasing exchanges of flow of information, culture, education, and opportunities. Against this backdrop, Shaw and Williams (2002) have highlighted how tourism is, in many ways, one of the most powerful exemplars of globalization as the geographical scale of travel and trade has become greater than it used to be, with spatial interactions taking place over greater distances and ever-

wider circles. The globalization phenomenon has contributed significantly to the spread of tourists to the furthest reaches of the planet, including Africa, leading to the shrinking of the “pleasure periphery” (Bayly et al, 2004; Bhatia, 2006).

According to Cochrane and Pain (2000), due to globalization, there is increasing host-guest interaction as distant cultures and societies come face to face at local levels. Waters (1995) has also highlighted how globalization has stretched social relations in terms of the existence of cultural, economic, political, social, and technological networks across the world, the increased density of interactions across the globe, and the increased interactions between states that share common borders.

Zakharov (2018) has also assessed how several factors have played a major role in facilitating globalization in general and international tourism in particular. This includes the increase in worldwide business and trade, technological developments in transport and communications, and increased cultural and political interdependence. Rana et al. (2019) have asserted that one of the often-cited drivers of globalization is the improvement in new technology, improvements in transport and communications have fundamentally facilitated the growth and movement of international tourists. According to Shaw and Williams (2002), the process of globalization has significantly advanced through technological developments in the fields of transport and communications, particularly long-range aircraft, the internet, computer reservations systems (CRS) and e-commerce.

Furthermore, Heidari et al. (2021) have highlighted some links between tourism, regionalism, and global trade. The spatial pattern of “macro-regionalization” is particularly distinctive in the two largest international tourism flows between the United States of America (USA) and Canada as well as the Trans-Atlantic flows. In Western Europe, regionalization has brought with it the

promotion of the four “freedoms”, that is, the free movement of capital, people, goods and services which, along with the “open skies policy”, have allowed companies to expand their operations across international borders (Shaw & Williams, 2002). Sub-regional systems involving tourism also exist between Europe and North Africa as well as between South Africa and most countries in Southern Africa (Jansen-Verbeke, 1995).

Also, Khaksar Astaneh et al. (2021) and Yaza Azzahara (2018) have underlined how tourism has facilitated direct, sophisticated, effective, and cooperative contacts between nations, thereby helping to improve countries’ international images. Although tourists may vary in taste, they tend to be influenced by images of the destinations and activities available. According to the World Tourism Organization (1979) quoted in Cooper et al. (1993, p. 25), the term image embraces “the ideas, conceptions held individually or collectively of a destination”. Moreover, the ‘destination image’ entails “the totality of beliefs and impressions that tourists, individually or collectively, have regarding each tourist destination” (1993, p. 25). To boost the image of their countries, some governments have used Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) to create good impressions about their countries (Khaksar Astaneh et al. 2021). Incentives and tax concessions have also been used to attract MNCs (Zakharov, 2018). This is because tourists mostly avoid a country that is shunned by international investors and other actors.

In summary, globalization involving the increasing interconnectedness among countries has impacted positively and negatively on international tourism. Perry (2022) has highlighted how international tourism can help to address some of the world's most difficult challenges regarding health, education and the environment, and at the same time be an avenue to perpetuate some of the world's most heinous crimes against humanity such as terrorism. Lei et al. (2022) have also underlined how tourism promotes development, exchange of information, culture and

opportunities. International tourism generally helps to improve a country's image whenever thoughtful plans are put in place in the globalized world (Astaneh et al., 2021; Yaza Azzahara, 2018).

### **1.9.2 Tourism and Development in Africa**

The link between tourism and development in African states has been widely discussed by scholars such as Sign (2018), who, in his article: "Africa's tourism potential Trends, drivers, opportunities, and Strategies", examined Africa's tourism potential. He asserts that the tourism industry in Africa has tremendous potential, notably due to the continent's richness in natural resources and its potential to further develop cultural heritage, for example, music. The author further explains that tourism in Africa is "playing an increasingly important role in the global economy, contributing 5 percent of GDP, 30 percent of service exports, and 235 million jobs. Indeed, each year, approximately 1 billion people travel internationally. By 2030, consumer spending on tourism, hospitality, and recreation in Africa is projected to reach about \$261.77 billion, \$137.87 billion more than in 2015" (Signe, 2018 p. 1).

In turn, Novelli (2015) has highlighted how there is an increasing danger in approaching tourism only from a commercially focused perspective and reacting purely to shifting market demands, which will not deliver the aspired responsible forms of tourism that promote and enhance long-term inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa. Thus, the tourism sector in African states needs to aspire to be more stable, higher-yielding, responsible and sustainable, delivering tangible and equitable benefits to communities, preserving the natural environment, fostering inclusive growth, peace and stability, and ultimately contributing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Favosola et al. (2014, p. 9) have also discussed the link between tourism and Africa's growth and development, arguing that "initiatives, projects, and investments in this activity systematically result in strong and sustainable development effects for the countries and regions involved". The idea of developing the tourism sector in a way that contributes to national development has been fostered and echoed by different stakeholders including businesses, governments, and nongovernmental organizations with varying vested interests in the tourism sector. Given the growing size and importance of tourism to the global economy, one challenge facing states is how to arrive at sustainable development outcomes in popular tourist destinations. One of the longstanding calls in the tourism and development literature has been for a deeper understanding of the nature of tourism as a powerful social force, which is shaped by a variety of actors and factors (Spenceley and Meyer, 2012). This is partly due to the fact that scholars have not adequately studied tourism vis-à-vis the evolution of development theories (Sharpley, 2012). However, Okello and Novelli (2014, p.54) have demonstrated how tourism can be an engine for inclusive growth and economic development, aimed at fostering economic diversification and structural transformation within the right policy context.

In African states, five key constraints have been highlighted as undermining tourism's contributions to sustainable development: unpredictable and weak business environments, institutional weaknesses, inadequate access, low level of linkages, and price/value mismatch (Novelli, 2015). According to Jones (2012), although there have been some improvements in African tourism, especially at the local level, much more needs to be done by both the public and private sectors to fully tap the continent's potential in the tourism industry. This includes establishing stringent measures to guide the tourism industry, stakeholders looking for potential in tourism for future development, African countries focusing on major policy reforms geared

towards developing specific tourist areas and offering different trajectories of tourism development.

In summary, tourism can contribute to a state's development agenda whenever robust measures are put in place to support tourist activities. Signe (2018) has highlighted how tourism is a potential driver of Africa's economic growth because of the revenues and jobs it creates every year. By investing and paying close attention to the tourism industry/sector, both private and public sectors can come together to implement measures and strategies to accrue more revenues and benefits for the development of states in Africa and elsewhere (Jones, 2012).

### **1.9.3 Tourism and Development in Ghana**

Scholars such as Dillette (2020) and Teye (2000) have analyzed the tourism industry of Ghana and how it is linked to its development. Dillette (2020) opines that Ghana has experienced various development at the economic and social levels, which can be directly attributed to its tourism industry. Generally speaking, "development means making a better life for everyone" (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p.1). Therefore, all benefits gained from people visiting Ghana as tourists can be classified as development from tourism.

The tourism industry in Ghana has received the attention of the government over the years, although more needs to be done to develop the industry. Formal tourism planning and development in Ghana started in the 1970s with the constitution of the Obuam Committee in 1972 to assess the country's tourism resources (Teye, 2000). Subsequently, the development of Ghana's long-term strategic tourism plans for the periods 1975-1990, 1990-2005, and 2013-2027 have not materialized due to political and socioeconomic reasons (Teye, 2000).

Tourism is a major tool that builds bilateral and multilateral relationships between Ghana and other countries (Dillette, 2020). Ghana attracts tourists mainly from the USA, Nigeria, Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, Cote D'Ivoire, China, South Africa, and France (Dillette, 2020), and this is mostly attributed to the historical link between Ghana and these countries. The most visited tourist areas in Ghana are in the southern Zone, comprising the popular triangular route going through historical sites and forest attractions in Ghana's Central and Western regions, the cultural heartland of Ashanti, and eco-tourism, water sports and adventure tourism resources in the Volta and Oti regions (Tetteh, 2018). The most visited tourist sites are the Cape Coast Castle, Kwame Nkrumah Memorial, Elmina Castle, Kumasi Zoo, Aburi Gardens, Afadjato Mountain, and the Wli and Tsabobo waterfalls (Tetteh, 2018).

Furthermore, the Year of Return as discussed above was a major marketing campaign that targeted the African American and a few other African diaspora markets. It was launched in Ghana to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Africans in Jamestown Virginia in the United States of America (USA). Over 500,000 people from the African diaspora participated in the campaign launch. Over the years, many Africans in the diaspora have been traveling to Ghana and other African countries in search of culture, history, and opportunity (Delpino, 2011). This has led some Africans from the diaspora to resettle in Ghana, obtain permanent residence and citizenship, and thus establishing new lives in this West African state (Ankomah et al., 2012). Wealthy African Americans have particularly been given traditional titles/stools with the hope that they will invest in the development of their local communities (Nti, 2014).

In summary, tourism has made some contributions to Ghana's development including influencing the development and periodic renovation of road networks, monuments, sites, and national parks, among other things (Dillette, 2020). Also, the money obtained from tourism has been used to

develop other sectors of the economy. In turn, Tetteh (2018) has highlighted how tourism has fostered bilateral relations between Ghana and other states in Africa and elsewhere. Programs such as the Year of Return and “Beyond the Return” have boosted Ghana’s tourism industry.

#### **1.9.4 Summary of Literature Review**

Overall, the literature discussed in this chapter underlines, among other things, the links between tourism, IR, globalization, and development of Ghana and other African states. In contrast to Perry’s (2022) position that tourism cannot be used as a tool to overcome global challenges arising from health crises, financial distress, and environmental concerns, Lei et al. (2022) have highlighted how international tourism has promoted the exchange of culture, education and resources. In turn, Zakharov (2018) has underlined how there are several factors that have played a major role in facilitating globalization and international tourism including the increase in worldwide business and trade, technological developments in transport and communications, and increased cultural and political interdependence.

Furthermore, Signe (2018) has discussed how the tourism industry in Africa is boosting economic and social benefits, while Favosola (2014) has highlighted some limitations of tourism on the continent. Overall, there is still more room to improve the tourism industries in African states in order to reap their full benefits (Jones, 2012). In Ghana, tourism has helped to enhance the state’s relations with foreign entities including the African diaspora and promote development in some rural areas and places linked to tourist sites (Ankomah et al., 2012; Nti, 2014).

#### **1.10 Research Methods and Methodology**

There are different approaches employed by researchers to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Silverman (2005) has defined research methodology as the selection of an appropriate field for

the research, gathering data, and the use of the best technique to interpret data to get the right information. In what follows, the section discusses how information was gathered for the dissertation

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

Bryman (2012) defines research design as a framework used to collect and analyze data in research. There are three different research designs namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Creswell (2009) defines quantitative design as a research technique that uses numbers and statistics to gather, examine and predict the relationship among variables. The mixed method is the combination of processes and procedures of both quantitative and qualitative research designs. In turn, the qualitative approach is the use of non-numerical data to achieve research objectives. A qualitative approach is used in this research for data gathering and analysis as explained below.

A qualitative research design focuses on “interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity; flexibility in the process of conducting research; an orientation towards process rather than outcome; a concern with context—regarding behavior and situation as inextricably linked in forming experience; and finally, an explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation” (Kohlbach, 2007 p. 7). A qualitative research design focuses on the use of non-numeric data to explain and arrive at research objectives. It dwells on the subjectivity of participants selected for data gathering and their opinions and perspectives about a phenomenon. A qualitative research design helped to collect information on the Year of Return initiative and highlight what this has contributed to the Ghana-African diaspora relations. It also provided contextual meaning to the situations described by the participants, and not merely sorting responses into predetermined groups that may not effectively

cover all possible outcomes (Hsieh, et al. 2005). Similar works that used a qualitative research design are Olender (2018), Gebauer (2021) and Adjei (2018).

### **1.10.2 Case Study Approach**

The researcher employs a case study approach, which according to Yin (2013), is empirical research conducted to acquire a detailed understanding of a specific phenomenon. According to Mesec (1998, p. 45), case study involves a “comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis; that is, the characterization of the case and the events, as well as a description of the discovery process of these features that is the process of research itself”. Therefore, case study entails both the process of investigating a case and the conclusion of that investigation (Swanborn, 2010). Sandelowski, (1996. p. 25) states: “analysis of individual cases enables the researcher to understand those aspects of experiences that occur not as individual units of measurement but as part of the pattern formed by the confluence of meanings within individual accounts.”

Selection of the Ghana-African diaspora relations case study helped to collect and analyze detailed information on the subject matter and offer conceptual validity. The latter refers to the identification and measurement of the indicators that best present the theoretical concepts that a researcher wants to describe or measure (Rebolj, 2013 p. 36). Gebauer (2021) and Adjei (2018) in their work also used a case study approach.

### **1.10.3 Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for this study. According to Mesly, (2015) primary data can be defined as factual and original data, first-hand data to be gathered and secondary data is analyzing that which has already been collected by other people or sources.

Primary data was gathered from people with strong ties to the tourism sector of Ghana including

Africans from the diaspora, Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Tourism Development Company Limited, hospitality players such as hotel management teams, Cultural Tourism and Event Planning and Marketing organizations, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, among others. **These individuals from the listed organizations and entities were selected based on their years of experience in the tourism industry or their relevant achievement towards the planning and success of the Year of Return initiative.**

**Secondary data was gathered from historic books on global tourism and tourism in Africa, journals, official websites of corporate groups and agencies such as the Year of Return and the United Nations, publications by journalists, news items, local and foreign newspapers, published research by Masters and doctoral candidates, documentaries and official reports relevant to this study. All these documents and publications were relevant for gathering credible information to achieve the research objectives.**

#### **1.10.4 Sampling Technique**

Yin (1999) has highlighted how the process of selecting sections or samples from a population to be included in a particular study constitutes a sampling procedure. The researcher adopts two sampling techniques: snowballing and purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique where the researcher obtains a sample through referrals (Patton2002). A snowball sampling technique was used in selecting participants because at the start of fieldwork, the researcher did not know many people who were going to provide relevant insights. Snowballing enabled the researcher to meet “hidden” populations who had knowledge or are involved in tourism and international relations. Adjei (2018) used snowball sampling in the selection of his participants for his work.

Furthermore, the study adopted the purposive or subjective sampling technique, which allows a

researcher to select participants or respondents from a population using his/her own discretion (Etikan, 2016). This sampling technique helped in selecting participants with expertise and knowledge of Ghana’s tourism and Year of Return such as sector directors, experts, and university academic staff.

### 1.10.5 Sample Size

The sample size of a study mostly depends on the characteristics of the population being studied and the researcher's assessment of the quality required (Babbie, 2015). Kreuger et al. (2006) have highlighted how a large sample size does not necessarily assure the quality and accuracy of findings, thereby recommending the selection of professionals, knowledgeable, and well-informed respondents who can offer relevant and meaningful information. This study used a sample size of sixteen (16), which enabled the research to collect meaningful information within a reasonable timeframe. Two participants were selected from the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. One participant was also selected from Accra Arts Center, Labadi Beach and a citizen each from Australia and Portugal. The other participants included two citizens from Canada, the United States of America, Britain, and the Caribbean.

### PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR CODES

Name of Institution/ Country of Origin	Code
Ghana Tourism Authority	Informant 1
	Informant 2

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	Informant 3 Informant 4
Accra Arts Center	Informant 5
Labadi Beach Hotel	Informant 6
Two Americans	Informant 7 Informant 8
Two Australians	Informant 9 Informant 10
Two Portuguese	Informant 11 Informant 12
Two Canadians	Informant 13 Informant 14
Two British	Informant 15
The Caribbean	Informant 16

#### 1.10.6 Data Collection Instruments and Methods

All primary data was gathered through interviews. There are two forms of interview guide; structured and semi-structured interview guide. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were used to collect experiences, opinions and ideas of the participants that were selected for this research. Participants who were sampled for this research are also known as interviewees, because an interview will be used in gathering data. A semi-structured interview allows participants to give extra contributions outside the planned line of questioning. Face-to-face interviews were conducted because they provided extra information using non-verbal means such as body

language, body posture, and tone of voice. The interview questions generally focused on assessment of the Year of Return and similar initiatives, the key actors- both local and foreign- and the impact of the Year of Return on Ghana's tourism sector and relations with Africans in the diaspora. All interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. They were recorded with the help of a tape recorder, enabling the researcher to transcribe verbatim from audio to text. According to Krippendorff, (2012), the most popularly used method for qualitative content analysis is written text. Therefore, the interviews that were recorded in audio were transcribed verbatim into written texts.

### 1.10.7 Data Analysis

The first step taken after gathering primary data was transcription, which was done from audio to text to make it easier for the information to be grouped under major headings. Every interview was useful for reaching the overall objectives of the research.

The second step taken after obtaining both primary and secondary data was sorting. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), one of the most crucial stages in data analysis is sorting, which is a process of separating data gathered into themes or codes. This is particularly useful when using a qualitative research approach.

Finally, a thematic content analysis was adopted to triangulate information from both primary and secondary sources. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is the process of identifying and interpreting salient patterns or themes from information gathered in a way that helps to address the research questions and objectives. Not only primary data will be grouped into themes, but both primary and secondary data. Denzin (1989) has emphasized how thematic analysis helps to arrive at in-depth evaluation and analysis of the research problem. To ensure that

insightful information collected from participants has been quoted, paraphrased, and interpreted.

#### **1.10.8 Ethical Consideration**

Fleming (2018) is of the view that ethics is very important in selecting suitable participants for any study, especially when it involves human participants. He further asserts that some basic principles that must be followed are; respect, consent, confidentiality, honesty and individuality.

Informed consent was sought from participants before interviews were conducted. An introductory letter from the University of Ghana helped with this endeavor. All potential participants received details about the study in their preferred language, thereby enhancing



comprehension of technical terms. Participants were given adequate time to reflect on their participation in the study and to ask questions when necessary. All participants voluntarily responded to questions and were free to withdraw from the study at any point in time. All interviews were conducted within the premises of the various institutions. Interviewees who wanted to be kept anonymous for various reasons were kept as such. Cohen et al (2007) are of the view that interviews infringe on the privacy of respondents due to the limited time and space. Not only was anonymity followed during the interview processes but it was also followed during the data analysis and interpretation. Some sensitive information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and the like were taken out to ensure complete anonymity. All participants were given a code to ensure anonymity.

### **1.11 Organization of the Study**

The next chapter delves into the historical initiatives of tourism activities that promoted Ghana's international relations. It also discusses the historical insights and the rationale behind the Year of Return. The chapter argues that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives that attract Africans in the diaspora to the country.

Chapter three presents the analysis and discussion of the data gathered. It discusses how the Year of Return initiative helped in promoting Ghana's international relations. It also discusses the setback that was faced by the government and how they can be improved for future initiatives in the tourism industry of Ghana. The chapter argues that Ghana through tourism promotes its

international relations and strengthens bonds across the globe, especially with the African diaspora.

Chapter four summarizes the findings, presents a conclusion based on the findings as well and makes some recommendations to individuals, government and policymakers who have the mandate of promoting Ghana's international relations through tourism.



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## CHAPTER TWO

### EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM:

#### A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE GHANA-DIASPORA RELATIONS

##### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes different perspectives on tourism at the global, regional, and national levels. Among other things, it highlights the history of tourism and elaborates on the economic benefits of this endeavor. In Africa, tourism has been touted as one of the strategic policies for promoting socio-economic development (Gabeur, 2018), therefore, this chapter explains how African governments implement programs and initiatives aimed at attracting tourists to the continent. Studies by Adjei (2018) and Amponsah (2010) point to the investment and efforts made by subsequent governments in developing the tourism industry in Ghana. In contrast, critics such as Awumbila and Teye (2014) and Araujo (2018) have underlined how tourism has not made meaningful contributions to Ghana's development due to the nonchalant attitude of the government in developing the sector.

Building on the concept of Pan-Africanism, the chapter argues that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives that attract Africans in the diaspora to the country. Thus, the analysis underlines how Pan-Africanism has been the bedrock of major tourism initiatives in Ghana that have been aimed at deepening the relationship between the Ghanaian state and Africans in the diaspora (hereon referred to as the Ghana-diaspora relations). The chapter begins with an analysis of how tourism has evolved in international affairs over time before narrowing down the discussion to Africa and Ghana.

## 2.2 Historical Evolution of International Tourism

This section analyses international tourism, focusing on how this phenomenon has evolved in international affairs over time. Tourism is an age-long phenomenon that existed centuries before its name was officially recognized in the literature (Basch et al. 2005). Adi et al. (2003) have argued that the word “tourist” first appeared in literature in the 1800s. However, tourism as an activity existed long before the 1800s, for example, Koshar (2008) has highlighted how people moved voluntarily between permanent and other places for leisure before the 1800s. Furthermore, Williams (1974) has analyzed the prehistorical and historical movements across Africa, fueled by different political and socioeconomic factors including tourism. Basch et al. (2005) have also discussed how before the invention of the word “tourism” in the 1800s, prominent Greeks, wealthy Romans, and other important Europeans such as Homer, Plato, and Orpheus embarked on sightseeing at ancient Egyptian monuments. According to Casson (2001, p. 8), “the massive temples and tomb complexes associated with both the Old (third millennium BCE) and the New (roughly 1550 BCE to 1077 BCE) Kingdoms were as amazing to inhabitants of the ancient world as they are to us today.”

Additionally, Bauböck, et al. (2005) have highlighted international tourism by focusing on how English aristocrats traveled and made various stops in France, Italy, and Switzerland around mid to the end of the seventeenth century. These famous tours around the world, often referred to as “Grand Tours”, required heavy investments of time and money, thereby rendering them a privilege only for the upper class. The latter primarily sought to “become finer and less parochial gentlemen” among their contemporaries through these travels as they were exposed to diverse motivations and the finest thoughts (Adi et al, 2013). Overall, most of the earlier Western

literature on tourism focused on expeditions on the wealthy and powerful in Europe (cf. Adi et al, 2013; Bauböck, et al. 2005).

Although the intentions of ancient tourists were noble, they faced extreme challenges such as limited road and rail infrastructure, bandit attacks, and communication and currency conversion issues, among other problems (Bauböck, et al. 2005). As such, the term “traveling for pleasure” as a prerogative for the rich was not just attractive and alluring because many people who embarked on such tours mostly faced varying degrees of threats.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, tourism had significantly improved and became widespread for various reasons, ushering the world into the “golden age of travel” (Adi et al, 2013). The number of tourists grew significantly, which Adi et al. (2013) have attributed to the growing number of middle class in countries such as England and elsewhere. Also, transportation in and around tourist sites improved significantly due to different reasons including the invention of steam engines which reduced costs of travel as well as safety and distances tourists could traverse within a shorter period. Nevertheless, tourism remained a delicacy for the rich as it was still widely known as leisure for the privileged class (Adi et al, 2013).

In 1841, tourism was revolutionized in Europe as Thomas Cook, innovator of the conducted tour, organized his first trip and subsequently opened his office in London to sell tickets for domestic and international travel, thereby introducing what is known as mass tourism in contemporary times (Cohen, 2008). Although there could have been mass tourism in the past, the first documented is that of Cook’s. Mass tourism involves the organization and movement of large number of people to specific and popular tourist destinations for relaxation and recreational reasons. Cook was successful in organizing the first mass tourism to Europe. This was largely embraced across Europe because it was relatively cheaper as compared to solo travels or earlier

traveling expeditions. Following this success, Cook arranged a second tour in 1869 to Africa and Israel, which became known as the “Grand Tour” (Cohen, 2008). Subsequent trips were made to Greece and prominent countries in Europe. According to the historian Leed (1998, p.16), the travel to Greece was awestruck: “It was not the sight of Athens that triggered the universal shivering, the touristic orgasm, but its mere actuality. Here, as elsewhere, the origin of the power of place is clearly in the imagination of the traveler, stocked with literature and a world of images.”

By the 1900s, people had come to appreciate the term tourism as a pleasure-given activity that offers a great impression to the mind. Gaines (2008) opines that people became genuinely interested in traveling around the world, especially the middle class who could now afford to tour the world. Cohen (2008) asserted that by the mid-1900s, the increase in tourism promoted democratization and technological advancement that expanded the geography of destination sites, increasing revenue returns and development. After World War II, over a million people were traveling abroad each year from Europe to the rest of the World (Gaines, 2008). This was further bolstered by the introduction of automobiles in the 1900s and, more importantly, commercial air transport that encouraged mass tourism wherever these means of transport could go on the face of the earth. Global tourism in the twenty-first century has taken tremendous shape with the introduction of the newest waves of tourists who are interested in space tours, the so-called final destination (Arlt, 2013).

To summarise, international tourism has evolved over time given that it is relatively easier now for people to move from one country to another using vehicles and aeroplanes, among other means, although there are current issues involving visa restrictions and occasional unpleasant experiences for some tourists. This underlines how tourism forms a key part of international affairs. Duggan (2015) has highlighted how one of the safest tourist destinations in the world is

Africa's safari (see next section), which appeals mostly to wildlife adventurers. International tourism offers state and non-state actors different experiences such as mountaineering, trekking, rock climbing, skydiving, boat and yacht cruise, among many other exciting activities that test tourists' endurance, suppleness and courage. This has led certain international tourists to self-discovery, self-realization, and self-consciousness, among other things (Duggan, 2015). The next section delves into the discussion of tourism in Africa.

### **2.3 Tourism in Africa**

Africa is the second largest continent in the world with an area of 30 million km<sup>2</sup> and a coastline of 26,000 km (Sarmiento, 2015). Africa is also the second most populated continent with a population of approximately 1.4 billion people and 54 states (Sarmiento, 2015). Earlier tourists in Africa who were predominantly European missionaries and some tourists described the continent as exotic, distant, challenging and dark. According to Sarmiento (2015, p. 1), one of the attributes of the African continent with respect to tourism is "its great diversity of natural landscapes and cultural richness".

During the nineteenth century, the frequenting of colonialists and the influx of foreigners into principal tourist sites popularized the Kiswahili term "safari" ("to travel"), which mostly alluded to animal hunting in the Wild Forest of Africa (Pirie, 2013). Countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, South Africa, Swaziland, Kenya, and Zambia, among others, experienced growth in tourism in the nineteenth century because of the desire of European and American tourists to explore these lands. Pirie (2013) further discusses how tourism in Africa contributed immensely to imperial explorations and expansion, and the construction of native Africa in the twentieth century. Fayissa et al. (2008) have underlined how tourism in Africa was heavily dependent on

the availability of automobiles owned by European elites, which led to the establishment of automobile clubs in Europe in the early twentieth century. By 1930, the development of the aviation industry and networks from colonial centers to Europe further promoted tourism growth (Pirie 2009).

In turn, Signe (2018) has highlighted how the global market for international travel experienced exponential growth from 1950. The tourism industry in the Post-Cold War era has experienced accelerated growth that surpasses the global economy, with an average annual growth rate of 4.1% between 1995 and 2010 (World Bank, 2011). Africa has also experienced a boom in tourism in recent years as the continent's tourism proceeds increased above 50% in the 1990s, that is, from \$2.3 billion to \$3.7 billion in less than 10 years (Fayissa et al., 2008). There was a 300% growth in international travel to the African continent, from 6.7 million in 1990 to 26.2 million in 2000 (UNWTO, 2018). According to Sarmento (2015), tourism growth in Africa around the 1950s and 1960s was inevitable because most African countries gained independence around that time, which propelled their tourism development as nature tourism was highly patronized by Europeans and Americans. Countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, and Tanzania experienced tourism growth after their independence in the 1960s. South Africa became one of the most prominent traveling hubs in Africa because its tourism sector grew consistently by 94% between 1990 and 2002 (Sarmento, 2015). With the introduction of tourism concepts such as safari, the term continued to drive tourism especially in East and Southern Africa, in countries such as Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia, where nature and wildlife tourism was economically lucrative (Hottola 2009).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tourism in Africa has improved significantly due to factors such as economic growth, political stability, free border movements, and border openness (AfDB, 2016a).

According to the World Bank (2011), the global financial crises of 2007-2008 affected global tourism as it experienced a net decline of 4.3%, although Africa's tourism sector grew by 3.7% within the same period. The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2016b) has also highlighted: "In 2015, Africa received 62.5 million visitors, contributed 9.1 million direct jobs in travel and tourism sectors, and generated \$39.2 billion in international tourism receipts." In 2009, international tourists that visited Africa were mostly Blacks (43%), followed by Europeans (31%) and lastly Americans (4%) (UNWTO 2011). The countries mostly patronized by these tourists were South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Kenya due to their wildlife and investment in the tourism sector. South Africa in 2010 experienced an exponential profit in its tourism industry due to the FIFA World Cup Soccer tournament, which subsequently spurred tourism infrastructure development and created employment in different sectors, something that many African countries lag. According to the UNWTO (2014), tourism in Africa is concentrated on a few destinations, for example, South Africa and Morocco alone contribute about 50% of total international arrivals in Africa, with tourists taking a chunk of the percentage.

In 2012, the continent received 52.4 million tourists (almost double the number in 2000), and UNWTO (2022) predicts that proceeds from African tourism will grow from \$85 million in 2020 to \$134 million by 2030. Tourist arrivals in Africa are also likely to double within the same period. This is significant because approximately 1 out of every 11 jobs in Africa is from the tourism industry, which contributes about 9% growth to GDP and 7.1% growth to employment (WTTC 2013). Nevertheless, Africa does not gain much revenue from the tourism industry as compared to other continents, as, for example, the continent raked in only 5% of global tourists and 3% of tourism revenue around 2012 due to low investment in the sector. Across the continent, the North has been identified as the most popular tourist destination. It hosted about 33% of total tourists in

Africa, nevertheless, tourist visits in the subsequent years were unstable leading to unsteady revenue mobilization from the industry. This is largely attributed to the Arab Spring of 2011. The country most affected by this crisis was Tunisia as it lost 31% of international tourists from 2010 to 2011 (Roberto and Misrahi, 2015). Around the same time, several international and regional organizations such as the UNWTO Commission for Africa, the Africa Tourism Organization, the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were apprehensive about tourism, requiring improvises and strategies such as financial investments and commitments.

Overall, Africa's tourism is heavily dependent on regional and national economic development and the growth of the air travel industry, which will provide cost-effective and easy access for tourists into the continent and travel within the continent (AfDB, 2016b). Improving the continent as a tool for development and strengthening its international relations requires some level of investment in technology, resources, education, and skills to reap the full benefits thereof. Issues on sustainability in tourism call for more research concerning managing tourism growth in Africa while at the same time mitigating its potentially negative impacts. The next section highlights some of the positive and negative effects of international tourism in Africa pertaining to its economic and social developments.

### **2.3.1 Effect of International Tourism in Africa**

The increase in tourist arrivals in Africa as discussed in the previous section raises several issues including the political, economic, social, and environmental effects of this phenomenon on African countries. Tourism has become one of the main income-generating activities within several African countries. For example, out of a world total of \$8.7 billion in international

receipts, Africa grossed about \$8.7 billion (Olender, 2018). At the country level, South Africa earned \$1.738 million, Tunisia \$1.436 million, Morocco \$1.292, Kenya \$0.493, Mauritius 40.473, Namibia \$0.265, Zimbabwe \$0.219, and Botswana \$0.178 million in 1996 (Reid, 1999). In Zimbabwe, revenue from international tourism increased by an average growth rate of 18% from 1989 to 1999 [Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), 2000]. In Ethiopia, international tourism was expected to account for 9.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1999 (World Tourism Organization, 1999). Between May 2008 and May 2009, over 1.9 billion birr was earned from tourists who visited Ethiopia. This was partly attributed to the expansion of infrastructural facilities and the prevalence of peace in the country (The Ethiopian Herald, 12 July 2009). Although the revenue accounted for less than 2% of the total global earnings, they contributed significantly to Africa's total export earnings, as they increased from 4.9% in 1985 to 10.4% in 1993 (Reid, 1999). In this vein, international tourism is now viewed by African governments as a major source of revenue, especially in some cash-starved African countries. According to De Chavez (2003), international tourism has also become one of the packages for debt servicing or bailouts for African countries in distress because of its potential to generate much-needed revenue. Revenues generated from tourism could be a potential source for payment of debts owed by African governments.

## **2.4 Tourism in Ghana**

Ghana's tourism history is relatively recent, stemming largely from the "diasporic consciousness" – a condition where individuals in one place wish to return to their home at another (Gilroy, 1994). According to Gebauer (2022), Ghana's tourism industry is fundamentally rooted in colonialism and the quest for people of African descent to trace their roots back to their ancestral lands.

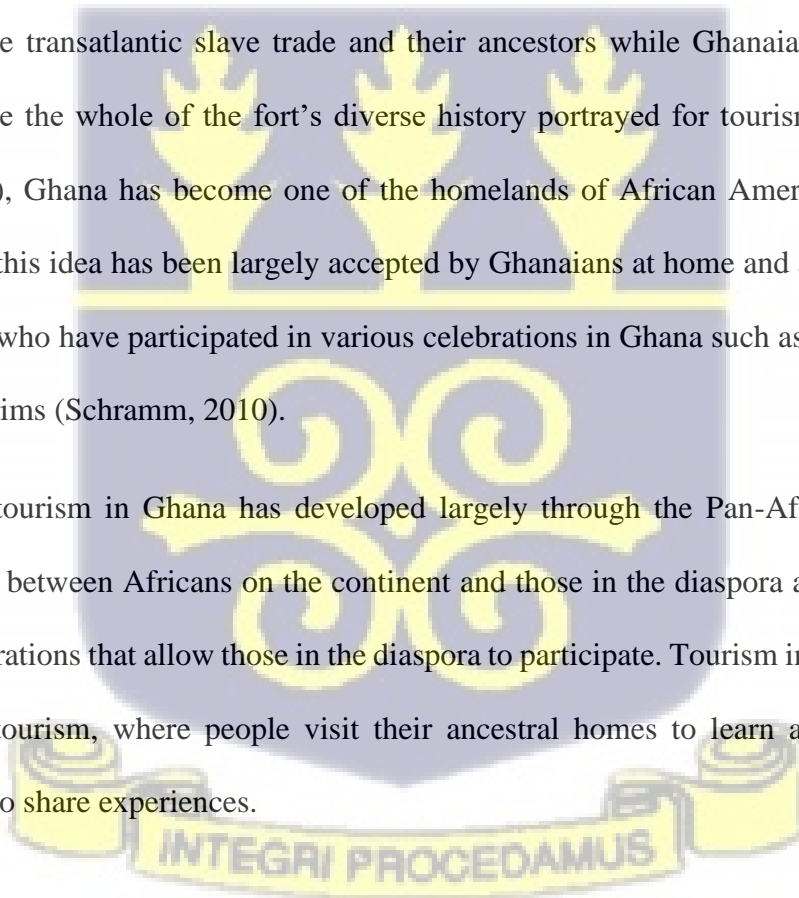
Although it is oftentimes demanding for Africans in the diaspora, particularly descendants of enslaved Africans who were caught up in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, to trace their roots back to their original homeland, some have made efforts to do so due to scientific and technological advancements such as DNA testing. This has led to several Africans in the diaspora visiting some Ghanaian and other African tourist sites including the infamous Cape Coast and Elmina castles, which served as key transit points for Europeans to forcibly transport millions of enslaved Africans to the Americas and Europe. Such tourism endeavors gained ground beginning from the late 1980s (Gebauer, 2022).

The most popular type of tourism in Ghana is root tourism in which most tourists that flood this West African state every year visit purposely to reconnect with their roots and ancestry (Araujo, 2018). It is within this context that diaspora tourism has been promoted over the years, helping the African diaspora to visit the continent and reconnect with their ancestral homes. In the early 1990s, the notion of root tourism became popular in Ghana as it led several Africans in the diaspora, especially African Americans, to visit historical sites in the country. Handley (2006) has highlighted how root tourism enhanced revenue mobilization of the government, and Gebauer (2022, p.124) has asserted: “The overall success of these tourism-related economic development politics is very much linked to the fact that the roots narrative is made accessible through touristic consumption.”

Earlier attempts to re-introduce back-to-Ghana tours were linked with Ghana’s development, therefore it was projected that Ghana would be able to develop should people move from the diaspora to either settle permanently or tour important tourist sites across the country in the spirit of Pan-Africanism (Benton and Shabazz, 2009). Root tourism was an important aspect of Ghana’s foreign policy in the early years of independence but was subsequently lost till the late 1990s

when it was revived because of the incessant military coups and political transitions. (Dillette, 2020). Between 1950s and 1990s, tourists' visits to Ghana decreased because of political instability. From the 1990s, tourism in Ghana was not politicized but was seen as a national agenda for economic development (Benton & Shabazz, 2009). As such, slave forts along the coast were rehabilitated into attractive tourist sites for people to relive and learn about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Brunner (1996) has argued that tourism in Ghana is a holistic attempt by the government to attract the right people to invest in the economy, where African ancestors once lived, thereby mythologizing the notion of motherland as a central pillar of economic success. Reed (2015, p. 43) has also underlined how "most roots tourists are solely interested in the connection to the transatlantic slave trade and their ancestors while Ghanaians and historians would like to see the whole of the fort's diverse history portrayed for tourism." According to Schramm (2004), Ghana has become one of the homelands of African Americans and British Americans, and this idea has been largely accepted by Ghanaians at home and abroad. People of African descent who have participated in various celebrations in Ghana such as PANAFEST are regarded as pilgrims (Schramm, 2010).

To summarize, tourism in Ghana has developed largely through the Pan-Africanist vision of bridging the gap between Africans on the continent and those in the diaspora as well as various events and celebrations that allow those in the diaspora to participate. Tourism in Ghana is largely driven by root tourism, where people visit their ancestral homes to learn about culture and tradition, and also share experiences.



## 2.5 Ghana and the African Diaspora

Ghana is one of the African countries that engages with its diaspora, as this relation goes centuries back. Social interactions between the Ghanaian state and the African diaspora were first documented after the Tabon people – a group of enslaved Africans – fled from Brazil and settled in Accra following a revolt (Adjei, 2018). The Tabon people became fully integrated into the Ghanaian state by the 1820s, creating the first bond between Ghana and the African diaspora (Adjei, 2018). In the 1900s, some of the prominent members of the African diaspora who visited and established relations with Ghana and other African states included Maya Angelou, Guy Angelou, Sylvia Boone, Julian Mayfield, W. E. B. Du Bois, and George Padmore (Amponsah, 2010).

In the 1950s, Ghana's iconic leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, played a crucial role in deepening the relations between Ghanaians and Africans in other parts of the world through the Pan-African movement. Nkrumah's impact was worthwhile in Ghana and abroad which paved the way for prominent individuals such as Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King, Ralph Bunche and Mordecai Johnson to visit Ghana and some parts of Africa (Mensah, 2009). Nkrumah's Pan-African push was geared towards appealing to Africans in the diaspora to help drive Ghana's and Africa's development agenda. Hakim and Sherwood (2003) have highlighted how Africans in the diaspora were encouraged to support the idea of the United States of Africa and the rebuilding of African economies. In turn, Walters (1997) has discussed how the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 lowered the Ghana-diaspora vision due to the popular belief that neo-colonials had taken over political power from Kwame Nkrumah.

However, the Ghana-diaspora relations took an upward dive in the 1980s as this West African state designed a comprehensive national policy on its diaspora relations and engagements (Awumbila and Teye, 2014). Under the Rawlings administration, the Ghana-diaspora relation was grounded in cultural, spiritual and historical wheels, leading to the establishment of the W. E. B. Du Bois Memorial Centre in 1986 and the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park in 1992 (Adi and Marika, 2003). Under the fourth republic, the Ghana-diaspora relations were further strengthened through multiparty democracy. The PNDC government institutionalized the biannual celebrations of the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) and Emancipation Day. These activities created an enabling platform for anyone who identified as Black or had ties with an African ancestry to appreciate African arts and culture, history, and music, among other things. Tourist sites such as the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles became prominent, helping the government generate huge revenues (Awumbila and Teye, 2014). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism organized programs such as PANAFEST and Emancipation Day aimed at strengthening the Ghana-diaspora relations and promoting socio-cultural development.

In turn, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized and used the festivals celebrated under the Ghana-diaspora relations to promote black history, elevating three tourist sites – Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle and Fort St. Jago – to the status of world heritage sites (Klingtins, 2007). This increased the quest of the African diaspora to visit Ghana, thereby boosting the hospitality industry, especially in Cape Coast and its environs. Adjei (2018) has underlined how the building of the Ghana-diaspora relations encouraged the permanent migration of some Blacks from Europe and the Americas to Ghana and other African states. This includes the famous Rita Marley who has taken Ghanaian citizenship. Bruner (1996) has also highlighted how the efforts put into strengthening the Ghana-diaspora network have

boosted Ghanaian culture as Black tourists mostly patronize almost all 80 slave trade-related artifacts and monuments found in the country to appreciate Africa's cultural heritage. These programs and patronage significantly increased income revenues obtained from tourism in the late 1990s and induced investments (Holden, et al. 2011). However, the change of government somewhat disrupted to some extent the flow of events and activities as the main driver of the diaspora events was the government (Amponsah, 2010).

Following the Rawlings-led PNDC and NDC administrations, the Kuffour-led New Patriotic Party administration strengthened the Ghana-diaspora relations by, for example, introducing the Right of Abode Law and the Homecoming Summit in which indefinite residency of Black people abroad who desired to relocate to Ghana was enhanced (Nieswand, 2009). In 2002, the government also introduced the Dual Citizenship Act to offer people of African descent the opportunity to adopt Ghana as their first or second country without necessarily giving up their Colombian, American, Australian, Canadian or British nationalities and privileges. The Dual Citizenship Act also gave Ghanaians the opportunity to acquire foreign citizenship without losing their Ghanaian citizenship, identity and privileges (Awumbila and Teye, 2014). According to the 2010 National Population and Housing Census, about 5,903 emigrants signed up for the Dual Citizenship Act within the first seven years of its implementation, and about 2.9% of Ghanaians possessed dual citizenship by the end of its first decade (Awumbila and Teye, 2014).

The Right of Abode Law enabled foreigners to own properties and businesses in Ghana just as Ghanaian citizens. In 2001, the first Home Coming Summit was organized in the country's capital, Accra, under the theme: "Harnessing the Global Ghanaian Resource Potential for Accelerated National Development." The main objective of the Summit was to reinforce the importance of the Ghanaian diaspora to the development agenda of Ghana. Some of the issues

discussed included resource mobilization and the creation of a diaspora database, Ghana-diaspora partnership, resource mobilization from Ghanaians Living Abroad (GLA), and land access and ownership in Ghana, among other things (Niewswand, 2009). The Non-Resident Ghanaian Secretariat was created in 2003 to implement some of the recommendations made during the Summit (Holder, 2011). The Secretariat operated under the auspices of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) to promote homeland investments from the diaspora (Nillson, 2011). Furthermore, the Ghanaian state made plans to grant suffrage to GLA in general elections. Although this policy initially divided opinions, it gained massive support later on (Teye, 2017). Specifically, the state passed a bill in 2007, granting legitimacy and right of the Ghanaian diaspora to vote in every general election upon satisfaction of the laws on suffrage. Also, the Joseph Project was initiated in 2007 “to invoke a religion-inspired emotion among the African diaspora as well as an attempt to present Ghana as a true gateway to the Homeland for Africans in the diaspora” (Bolaji, 2010, p. 67). This led to the creation of the Tourism and Diaspora Relations Ministry in Ghana and the Diaspora Issues Desks in many capitals across the globe.

In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFARI), the International Organization for Migration (Ghana), the German Technical Cooperation (GIT), and the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana came together to form the Diaspora Support Unit (Teye, et al. 2017). This was geared towards boosting existing support for the diasporans. To unveil the Support Unit, a colloquium was organized under the auspices of the MFARI and IOM Ghana under the theme: “Linking the Ghanaian Diaspora to the Development of Ghana.” The Diaspora Support Unit was somewhat successful in achieving its mandate and was later upgraded to the Diaspora Affairs Bureau (DAB), which was given the directive to function as a link between Ghana and its diaspora communities. In 2012, the government

strategically included the Ghanaian diaspora community in its quest to review the 1992 constitution by forming a consensus through the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) (Amponsah, 2010). This move helped to bridge the gap between the Ghanaian state and its diaspora. As Adjei (2018, p. 26) has argued: the inclusion of the Ghanaian diaspora community in the 1992 constitution review helped the state to “tap into the rich pool of unique political, economic, social insights and experience from the diaspora. It was an attempt to incorporate diasporic views in national issues and to create a sense of belongingness among the Ghanaian diaspora.”

In 2016, the John Mahama-led administration deepened the Ghana-diaspora relations by organizing a famous naturalization ceremony for 34 Africans from the diaspora who relocated to Ghana (Adjei, 2018). A portfolio of Business Development and Diaspora Relations was also created at the presidency to ease the processes involved for foreigners living in Ghana to own businesses and access other opportunities. In 2017, the Office of the President, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), and the MFARI organized a Homecoming Summit for African diasporas living in Ghana (Kleist, 2018). The three-day summit – 5-8 July 2017 – was geared towards appealing to the diaspora community to invest in the Ghanaian economy, and thus help boost the country’s development.

In 2019, the popular “Year of Return” was launched by the Akuffo-led government, underlining the deepening Ghana-diaspora relations (cf. Dillette, 2020). The campaign sought to connect the African diaspora with the mainland to exchange culture, ideas, initiatives and development. The campaign influenced the traveling of hundreds of people from the diaspora, especially the Americas to visit Ghana. Although the campaign was largely successful, it had challenges as the

hospitality industry and infrastructure were not as developed as expected by tourists (Asiedu, 2023).

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined tourism from global to country-specific perspectives. The analysis shows how tourism is an important dimension in international affairs although IR scholars have not paid adequate attention to this field of study. The chapter has argued that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives that attract Africans in the diaspora to the country. The Nkrumah, Rawlings, Kuffour, and Mahama administrations have pursued different strategies to deepen the Ghana-diaspora relations.

Most countries including those in Africa have invested in the tourism and hospitality industries, encouraging investors to help attract foreign capital (Adjei, 2018). Tourism in Africa is diverse and has experienced exponential growth in the past few years (Crotti, et al. 2015). Ghana's root tourism has been popularized, attracting visitors who have the desire to learn more about the trans-Atlantic slave trade and other historical events on the continent. The Ghana-diaspora relations have yielded some positive results including boosting the number of Africans living in the diaspora to visit and relocate to Ghana and other African states.



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## CHAPTER THREE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from fieldwork. In this chapter, the Year of Return is explained as an initiative geared toward connecting the African diaspora with Ghana. This chapter further explains how beneficial the Year of Return was to uniting Ghana with the diaspora and promoting its international relations through the efforts of various stakeholders, and how Ghana can improve the tourism sector and strengthen its relations with the diaspora.

Among other things, fieldwork was geared towards:

1. Understanding what the Year of Return entailed as compared to similar initiatives elsewhere
2. Knowing the extent to which local and foreign actors contributed to the Year of Return initiative to promote Ghana's relations with the African diaspora.
3. Ascertaining the extent to which the Year of Return initiative help to shape Ghana's tourism sector and relations with Africans in the diaspora.

Sixteen stakeholders in the tourism industry were selected as informants for this study and are named and coded as follows; xoxo

### 3.1 Assessment of the Year of Return and Similar Initiatives

The Year of Return was to commemorate 400 years after the first slave ship with African slaves arrived at Jamestown, Accra. The tourism celebration was organized year-long under the theme "Year of Return". According to the third informant;

*"Year of Return was primarily organized by the Ghanaian Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the campaign revolved around the commemoration of the beginning of the commercial*

*transatlantic slave trade to the United States. The format can be described as a cultural,*



*historicized tourism experience of African indigeneity to market Ghana as the prime destination for those searching for their long-lost African homeland.”*

The campaign sought to bring together dispersed African descents to celebrate their resilience, strength and pliability. The opening ceremony was led by the President of the Republic of Ghana Nana Akuffo Addo in Washington DC in September 2018. The address was summarized by the first informant who quotes the President;

*”We know of the extraordinary achievements and contributions they [Africans in the diaspora] made to the lives of the Americans, and it is important that this symbolic year – 400 years later – we commemorate their existence and their sacrifices”.* (President Akuffo-Addo cited by informant 1).

The campaign is a historical reference of symbolic representation of the common history of suffering and remembering the victories of overcoming those times. The narrative portrayed in the celebration was from a place of victory, other than a victim’s perspective, and a positive enabling environment expressing the strength of Africans. According to informant 3;

*“One of the themes employed throughout the celebration is resilience. The Year of Return campaign thus not only tries to commemorate the beginning of the slave trade in 1619 but rather celebrates the overcoming of the many adversities that had to be endured by all people of African descent, in the past as well as today.”*

Although Ghana is not the only gateway, the campaign was hosted in Ghana because of a preceding campaign, the Joseph Project in 2007 (Schramm, 2008). Hence, the Year of Return is presented and justified by setting it in the light of an already existing reality of pan-African mobility affecting millions of Africans living in the diaspora and longing for home (Akufo-Addo, 2019). By drawing

on the spiritual connection expressed by many visitors to the slave castles, Ghana positions itself as a “beacon for people of African descent living on the continent and in the Diaspora” (Akufo-Addo, 2019, p. 3).

In addition, the celebration was strategic in communicating the aims of the campaign towards some specific areas of the diaspora that are known to be inclined, committed and linked to the Ghanaian culture. Some of these locations are the United States, Jamaica and the Caribbean, where descendants of the former slaves are present. The call made is one of reaching out to long-lost brothers and sisters and for them to establish a (re)connection with Africa through Ghana. However, the reference to a common fate is surprising to a certain extent, since most ancestors of today’s Ghanaians did not share the experiences of the enslaved ancestors of the African Americans, though the emotional aspect is nevertheless convincing. Therefore, it is a call to collaborate and commensurate history and culture that was once shared by our common ancestors before the slave trade. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the campaign continues to be based on the narrative of a common history, even though history is already in dispute on various sides of the spectrum and across Africa at large. The reference to overcoming the adversities and miseries of all people of African descent is, therefore, an important aspect, as it can be related to Africans in general and their overcoming of colonization, as well as to the still prevailing economic disadvantages of African states. Informants 4 and 1 add that;

*“The Year of Return campaign had a clear focus on the African diaspora in the United States and other countries as well to promote a narration of embracing all Africans everywhere to put Ghana on the map as the African country for all people living in the diaspora and boosting tourism in Ghana. (Informant 4).*

*“...another important narrative that was the campaign sought to create a connection among African people all over the world using Ghana as a point of contact. The connection will ultimately create an African family that will thrive and progress in all aspects.”* (Informant 1).

This affirms the role of Ghana as the gateway and justifies her position as the leader of the Pan-African movement in Africa. The Year of Return is strongly influenced by the Pan-African history and movement of uniting black people everywhere. This finding is accordant with Agyeman (2019) who asserts that one of the perspectives of African history is that Ghana plays a leading and important role and continues to be one of the strongest leaders and promoters of African unity. Afeku (2019, p. 5) also agrees that the Year of Return campaign “presents a unique opportunity for Ghana to cement its Pan-African leadership”

From the perspective of the organizers, the campaign was strategically drafted to present and project specific themes such as African unity, Pan-Africanism and a common identity for all Africans in Africa and the diaspora. Informant 5 is of the view that;

*“The African community on a global scale is classified as a family, and often contextualized by expressions such as brothers and sisters, common ancestry and common root.”*

From the perspective of the tourists, for whom this program was organized, the campaign brought about the realization and satisfaction of a connection with roots and ancestry. While some believed that it was exactly what they wanted after a lost connection, others were partly satisfied with the concepts, events, happenings and execution of the entire program. According to informant 14;

*“The Year of Return was probably the biggest event in Ghana that connected the African diaspora to its homeland. A program as big as this has high prospects as well as expectations. Personally,*

*as a first-time visitor, I am impressed with a couple of things. The amazing tourist sites, the food, and the great reception of foreigners into the country are impressive.”*

Informant 15 also added that;

*“I have always anticipated a program as big as this to commemorate black history and black people’s experience under a common umbrella. I am happy to be a part of this history in celebrating our shared struggles and commonality, and to appreciate what our ancestors did for us to overlay what we can also do in support.”*

Informant 12 also shared that;

*...my expectations were cut short due to one or two happenings; some of the challenges are poor road networks and transportation services, and poor maintenance culture of tourist sites. It is disheartening that some heritage sites in Ghana that connect the African diaspora to the continent are poorly managed and maintained. The ones I am particular about are the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles. These are global chattels and must be maintained as such.*

Informant 16 who was a retiree tourist explained that;

*“The poor state of the roads reduced the fun I expected to have since I had severe body aches and had to stay indoors for a while to recuperate. As such, I missed some important functions and events. Although old age is a factor, the bad road networks made it worse.*

It is important to note that the Year of Return is not the first-ever initiative to reunite the African diaspora with its roots. While such programs have been described as an economic transaction shoved under tourism, the concepts of these programs affirm an ancestral connection of familiarity and reunion (Adjei, 2018). In the past, various attempts have been made by other African states to

develop major cultural festivals that could be identified with the continent. These include the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria, the Union of Radio and Television Networks of Africa (URDNA) awards in South Africa and the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FESPACO) in Burkina Faso.

In Ghana, a program closely linked to the Year of Return narrative is the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST). Amenumey (1998) argues that the first move towards celebrating PANAFEST was in 1992 when the first festival was celebrated. He further contributes that the idea of PANAFEST was birth in 1980 by Dr. Efua Sutherland in her paper titled "Proposal for a historical drama festival in Cape Coast". Subsequently, two more events were held in 1994 and 1997 and have continued until date, being regionally and globally recognized and endorsed. Informant 3 adds that;

*PANAFEST is a global event that targets both local and foreign residents to participate in the celebration of the unique African culture. The celebration has grown to a level where it is potentially comparable to the historical Carnival in Brazil or Sunsplash in Jamaica. Its concepts are drawn from the tenets of Pan-Africanism and the development of the African continent. Biennially, calls are made to all Africans on the land and in the diaspora to unite for the progress and development of Africa.*

The festival has over the years enhanced socio-cultural and economic development by providing opportunities for Africans to learn and familiarize historic and contemporary African history through arts, music and dance. Informant 1 also adds that;

*PANAFEST provides a forum for dialogue between Africans in Africa and Africans in the diaspora for the exchange of rich ideas, resources, and opportunities. It also creates fora for the*

*discussions of the common problems and challenges of black people around the world and solutions to them. It has become a platform to network and build important connections in all aspects of life.*

Over the years, PANAFEST has allowed the sampling of Ghana's tourism products and services, sharing of investment opportunities and the promotion of Ghana by word of mouth as visitors share their experiences upon their return to their countries of origin. PANAFEST has become a vehicle for the promotion of international (including regional) and domestic tourism. Critics like Tetteh (2019) and Yeboah (2019) argue that all festivals and celebrations centered around tourism, culture promotion and heritage linkage are purely economic and transactional. Moreover, even though locating one's heritage to a specific place on the African continent continues to be a more than uncertain undertaking – an aspect that recently led to the emergence of an industry promising verifiable results through DNA testing – the promise of finding the imagined homeland by visiting Ghana is left undisputed (Holsey, 2004).

The findings made above coordinate with Nchor et al. (2020) who identified that the Year of Return is a central occasion for celebrating black history and culture, and will continue to project a Pan-African reunion and narrative through long-established cultural identity with the African diaspora. The celebration is rooted deeply in tourism and establishing strong relations and projecting traditional performances to entice homecoming to encourage migration and mobility and ultimately, economic benefits. Findings also contradict with Nti (2014) who argues that addressing the African diaspora as part of the African family and positioning Ghana as the home for all the African diaspora is a potential threat for conflict, because Ghana cannot represent all the African history and culture, especially with the history of the slave trade. Tetteh (2019) also contributes that Ghanaians' expectation of a strengthened diaspora relation may be largely

economic-influenced, as they may have expectations of the African diaspora to develop some portions of the Ghanaian economic such as trade and investment – instead of forging long-term family-like relationships, which may be the ulterior motive of the African diaspora. As the diaspora may uphold a narrative of Pan-Africanism and common grounds for sharing kinship experiences in their quest to reunite with their “roots”, the “root” in return may have economic and financial expectations leading to limited realization. Nti (2014, p. 114) already points out that the “Diaspora Project” gives the impression of a strategy to promote development rather than delivering a genuine commitment to a pan-African culture. However, this contradiction of discourse and practice is not only criticized by African Americans but also by Ghanaian intellectuals who would like to see a different way of dealing with the issue of slave trade history in their country.”

### **3.2 Local and Foreign Actors Involved in the Year of Return to Promote Ghana’s Relations with the African Diaspora.**

The Year of Return did not happen in a vacuum; it had many local and foreign actors coming together to ensure its realization. The narratives, the public appearance and communication of the Year of Return campaign were altogether put together by private and public stakeholders at the local and international levels for identification and marketing. Prominent among them is the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture is leading the project in collaboration with the Office of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, the PANAFEST Foundation and the Adinkra Group of the USA. Informant 3 contributes that;

*There was the need to get everyone on board, and this was done through private-public partnerships through manifold online advertisement activities together with the focus on getting African Americans involved are of significance. In addition, the country’s political measures to*

*call upon the diaspora to play a major role, not only as consumers or visitors but also as performers became a crucial part of the campaign.*

One of the core mandates of all stakeholders was to market the Year of Return. This mandate was predominantly done, and continues to be, the strong online presence and communication through social media such as Facebook and Instagram. All official sites of all major stakeholders had a common theme, and the Year of Return profiles were extremely active throughout 2019 and continuously promoted the upcoming events of the Year of Return, as well as the campaign in general, sometimes with several posts per day. Building on the follower-logics of social media channels, the significantly higher numbers of fans and followers of celebrities traveling from the United States to Ghana during the Year of Return and subsequently reporting about their experiences on their social media channels became an important incubator for the online campaign. Among high-profile visitors were actors and musicians such as Boris Kodjoe, Steve Harvey, Cardi B and Ludacris (Mensah, 2020). Through their positive publicity as well as interviews with American media concerning their experiences, they created awareness of Ghana and thus promoted the country as a prime tourist and cultural destination beyond the campaign (Greenwood et al., 2020). The CEO of the Tourism Authority, Akwasi Agyeman, was quoted in a newspaper article with the following statement:

*“It has been like a miracle if you look at even the media aspect of this; having Aljazeera, BBC, CNN, Ebony Magazine, Essence and all of them here, [...] we couldn't have paid for the media”*

For the organizers and the Ghanaian state, the celebrity factor within the web of communicating the Year of Return globally became a decisive element for the overall success of the campaign (Akufo-Addo, 2020). In contrast to the narrative of reaching out to the global African diaspora, the promotional online materials such as the website of the Year of Return reflect a strong focus

on African Americans. The main reason for the campaign's focus on African Americans and the relative neglect of, for example, Jamaican and other Caribbean-African diasporas was linked to the peer group's disposable income (Reed, 2015). This renders Ghana a more attractive destination for African Americans wanting to travel abroad and the United States a sought-after diaspora market for the Year of Return campaign.

In addition, stakeholders had the dictate to bring out strategies that would serve as "bait" or better still an attraction. Through extensive consultation and collaboration with the diaspora communities in America and Europe, they tapped into the growing popularity of DNA testing for (supposedly) verifying the geographical heritage of the descendants of enslaved people. This strategy has been employed over time in the diaspora, successfully resulting in enthusiasm for the search for one's roots, which was the focus of the entire celebration and the region at large. The special involvement with the United States cannot only be found in the marketing approaches but within the institutional set-up of the overall organization of the Year of Return itself.

The Maryland-based Adinkra group became a major partner in the marketing of the Year of Return, offering pre-organized tour packages with destination Ghana specifically to people of African descent. It is worth noting that their "Birthright Journeys" packages include a DNA test with the company African Ancestry. Other organizations involved in the transatlantic promotional partnership were lobby groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congressional Black Caucus, which were specifically approached to reach out to African Americans (GhanaWeb, 2019). The figures on the development of international tourism to Ghana so far point to a successful implementation of US-focused strategies with a 26% increase of Americans entering the country from January to September 2019 in

comparison with the previous year (Greenwood et al., 2020). Ghana has long been pursuing the goal of attracting African diasporas and their investments to the country. Informant 4 adds that;

*“Through online and social media strategies targeting the African diaspora in general and the United States in particular, the Year of Return became the most well-known, and consequently, in all probability, the most successful measure of the Ghanaian government so far.”*

Proclaiming a “Decade of African Renaissance” through the already initiated follow-up campaign, “Beyond the Return” (Beyond the Return, 2020) underlines Ghana’s intentions to further promote its international relations through tourism and diaspora relations.

The ultimate goal of stakeholders’ collaboration towards the Year of Return was to create a unified body that could be accountable for the planning and coordination of the celebration. Although there were major stakeholders that were directly responsible for the celebration, other diaspora groups equally put in efforts in its organization. Prominent among them is the Asanteman Association of the United States, particularly the New York branch, which was established in 1982 and has continued to be one of the oldest and strongest Ghanaian-immigrant ethnic associations. The group has the goal of promoting the Asante heritage, reminding them of their roots, and supporting the interests of the Ghanaian diaspora, especially Ashanti’s in the United States by fostering friendship and understanding among Asante and others (Awumbila & Teye, 2014). Informant 8 contributes that;

*“As a member of the Asanteman Association, I can categorically attest to the relevance and contribution of this group to cultural and historic programs such as this. Plans have been made all year round towards the Year of Return, and I am glad to be a part of its celebration. A couple of our members are around, and I anticipate that this historic celebration is just a means to an*

*end, the beginning of something big for the African continent and its people everywhere in the world.”*

Informant 7 also adds that;

*“...this is our celebration, this is our people and this is our culture. Knowing the importance of such a historic program, I had no other option than to join others in celebration. Such programs are very important for connecting the diaspora to the mainland and promoting the role of the diaspora in mainland development. If celebrants position themselves well enough, they will benefit immensely from it because this is a fertile ground for promoting investment and business development for Ghanaians, supporting sustainable returns to Ghana for those who wish to do so and positioning Ghana as the beacon of Africa.”*

The contributions of relevant stakeholders as a factor to achieving the objectives of the Year of Return is in harmony with Herbert (2020) who found that one of the effective ways of uniting the diaspora with its roots is through diaspora organizations and groups that represent people in the diaspora in all aspects, especially culturally. These groups act as a support system first to blacks in the diaspora and second to the state they affiliate with. They support national and cultural programs through either participation or donation according to their interest. Greenwood, et al. (2020) also contribute that Pan-African programs or initiatives are run better through effective collaboration between local and international stakeholders, the African communities in Africa and the African communities abroad.

In contrast, Green (2019) diverges that diaspora associations are not very interested in engaging the homeland due to incessant criticisms by the home government and the citizens about their inability to fully participate in the state's development and welfare. Again, they are mostly

reluctant to contribute financially due to tacit mistrust of the government or individuals to use resources for their intended purposes. Green (2019) further debates that they rather concentrate on “autonomous homeland engagement which involves collective developments of rural areas and other minor philanthropic engagements in their local communities”. In support of the above, Khakhlyar (2016) also opines that the claims of mistrust cannot be dismissed about the diasporas and their engagement with their home countries and this is due to the absence of a well-balanced, well-coordinated and mutual benefit plan that will serve the interest of all parties, and the preparedness of the home countries to take from the diaspora without any concrete plan of giving back.

Nevertheless, the contributions of all stakeholders, especially the diaspora community remain significant towards the success of the Year of Return because they were actively involved in the mobilization, empowerment, capacity building and information sharing about the historic celebrations in Ghana.

### **3.3 Impact of the Year of Return on Ghana’s Tourism Sector and Relations with Africans In The Diaspora**

The Year of Return campaign in Ghana gained prominent attention in local and international media and was designed to encourage Africans in the diaspora to visit and invest in the country as discussed earlier. Overall, it provided a great opportunity for individuals who were looking for their ancestral roots to seize this opportunity to visit Ghana. Some of the major outcomes of this initiative have been elaborated below, especially as it relates to Ghana’s diplomatic relations with several countries.

### 3.3.1 Diplomacy

The Year of Return celebration has given the impression that diplomacy can be built on tourism.

The governments of the United States of America and Ghana collaborated to ensure that the appropriate resources were available for the organization of the Year of Return.

Ghana's ambassadors overseas also played a vital role in championing, advocating, and facilitating the travel arrangements of tourists to Ghana. Besides being able to provide a comprehensive view of the country's tourism industry, they also play a vital role in international relations marketing and selling Ghana's tourism assets to all potential visitors/tourists, especially first-time visitors. To repeat tourists, new developments in Ghana's tourism arena are also exposed to them. Informant 2 is of the view that;

*“It is important to make considerations on the thought that the tourism industry is an important aspect of diplomacy and diplomatic engagements. It is one of the avenues that allows engaging the diasporas and other states as Ghana has sought to do over the years, and requires the acknowledgment of a distinction between the two in terms of their interests and thus keep the distinctions in mind in engaging.”*

Tourism has been facilitated by increased interconnections between states that border with each other. In Western Europe, for example, regionalization has brought with it the promotion of the four 'freedoms', that is, the free movement of capital, people, goods and services which, along with the open skies policy, have allowed companies to expand their operations across international borders (Shaw and Williams, 2002). Informant 9 is of the view that;

*“One of the preferred destinations in Africa is Ghana for people within Western Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas. This is because, over the years, successive governments have*

*invested in building trust with diaspora populations and have created a welcoming environment for diaspora engagement in development activities. Thus, there are chances for increased capacity building, improving the domestic business climate and promoting good governance and rule of law to attract diaspora engagement.”*

Sub-regional systems also exist between Europe and North Africa as well as between South Africa and most countries in Southern Africa (Jansen-Verbeke, 1995). The development of relations with other countries and the establishment of new tourism markets are some of the key factors that are considered when it comes to the international relations and diplomacy of nations. In Ghana's Year of Return event, this was exemplified when the Ghanaian government hosted the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, and the late civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis, among other invited guests.

The diplomacy system of a country has a unique position in the field of tourism. This is evidenced by the fact that it has a significant and distinct relationship with the various organizations and institutions that are involved in the tourism industry. As a result, it is regarded as a vital part of the country's foreign relations. It can also help guide and channel the development of international tourism. It initially seems like a strange connection, but tourism can play an important role in maintaining peace and harmony between states. It can be used as a tool for international development and public diplomacy, and it helps countries overcome their poverty and improve their standard of living. The assertions made above are supported by Agunias and Newland (2012, p. 23) who wrote; “Although every diaspora relation with its country of origin or destination may be unique, there are certain fundamental elements that are necessary components of almost all successful strategies of engagement. These components are shrouded in promoting diplomacy and the promotion of diplomatic engagement for the mutual benefits of all.”

### 3.3.2 Economic Development

Another significant impact of the Year of Return is economic development. This sector is also regarded as a vital aspect of the country's development and was mostly realized through foreign exchange earnings that were accrued throughout the entire planning of the Year of Return campaign. It was largely realized through various sources such as accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, entertainment and cultural activities. The money earned from tourism helps to support local businesses, create jobs and contribute to the development of infrastructure. As published by the World Trade Organization (WTO, 1981) the generation of foreign currency earnings; contribution to the balance of payments, increases in government revenues from the taxation of multinational corporations, airline tickets and hotel rooms; a positive balance of payments; and the creation of much-needed employment opportunities were the main positive economic impacts associated with the globalization of the tourism industry in Africa. According to informant 6

*“One of the silent reasons for diaspora engagement through programs, campaigns and celebrations such as the Year of Return is for its economic benefits. Some of the economic benefits derived include remittances, foreign direct investment, human capital/skills transfers, capital market investments and philanthropic contribution. During the celebration of the Year of Return, some African Americans donated money, promised to build schools, gave scholarships to students, and those who were enstooled as chiefs in some villages did something significant for the villages such as drilling boreholes and building the chief palace.”*

Another perspective was introduced by informant 11 who added that;

*“Revenue and investment across the tourism industry tripled during the entire year of the celebration as the African diaspora continued to troop into Ghana throughout the year. Two sectors that realized significant growth were the hospitality and trade and industries as individuals invested in them and got their returns. There was deliberate capacity building through conferences and public lectures that aimed at developing the potential of Ghana in one way or the other through the transfer of vital skills and resources in different fields (education, social affairs, health and other priority areas of the African diaspora to Ghana.*

The Year of Return also created jobs for many, especially in the hospitality and service sectors. Job creation helps in reducing poverty, lessens financial burdens and strengthens the purchasing levels of individuals, thereby improving the standard of living of citizens. The World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) has estimated that there are about 321 million people in the world employed directly and indirectly in the tourism industry. This is about 10% of the world labor market force, and there is more employment generated by international tourism in developing than in industrialized regions. This is because tourism is a labor-intensive industry and developing countries are generally characterized by high unemployment.

Despite the many economic benefits that have so far accrued, the economic aspect of tourism has also been associated with several negative challenges. As such, there are negative economic challenges associated with the organization of touristic programs and events such as the Year of Return. These include but are not limited to the problem of financial leakages of the approved budget for the organization of the event/campaign. Budget allocations are bloated and monies are not used for their intended purposes. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture GHC 6 million was used in the organization of the Year of Return campaign, and the funds are yet to be accounted for. The organization of such events becomes a means for some individuals to enrich

themselves at the expense of taxpayers and the country. The existing challenge of limited accountability in Ghana worsens matters as culprits are confident of not being accountable. This finding is mentioned by Page (2005) who estimated the average leakage for most African countries to be between 40 and 50 percent. He went on to say that only 10% of gross earnings from tourism were retained within the country (Page, 2005). It is for this reason that calls have been made by various stakeholders to minimize foreign exchange and internal leakages within the tourism industry.

Again, jobs within the tourism industry have tended to be characterized by expatriate labor at the top position and local labor at the lower positions. Generally, jobs in high positions are often reserved for expatriate employees while locals are employed in lowly paying and seasonal jobs. According to Parkins (2000), some foreign-owned companies usually build, own and manage their tourist complexes, with little advantage to host countries. Unfortunately, the operations of many countries' economic diplomacy departments, which focus on tourism, have not been successful so far. This sector is still in its early stages and has a long way to go before it can reach the desired level.

### **3.3.3 Cultural Heritage**

Through the Year of Return celebration, tourists have expanded their intellectual, cultural, and heritage understanding of Ghana and connected with their families and friends in Ghana. This has enabled them to exchange ideas and beliefs and not limit themselves to just one culture. Also, it has helped in the promotion of cultural tourism and raised awareness about Ghana's cultural diversity. According to informant 2;

*“The Year of Return drew more attention to Ghana internationally”. Although Ghana is globally known for other things, the Year of Return drew an unprecedented crowd for the celebration. It was beautiful and bewildering. In addition, tourists may vary in type and expectations; they all tend to be influenced by images of destinations and activities.*

Almost all the regions had tourists visiting to learn and know something about them. It was an opportunity to expound on the various cultures and tribes in Ghana to debunk the myth of a limited number of existing tribes in Ghana. According to informant 10;

*I learned about some local dishes such as et or mpotompotor (mashed yam). I have learned a lot about the traditional cloth of the Ashantis and Ewes. I know how to play a few of our local games such as Oware, Antoakyire and Dame. I have had wonderful encounters with people at the beach, market, farms and roadside. This is worth an experience traveling for...”*

Cultural heritage is one of the central themes of the Year of Return campaign, emphasizing the need for the African diaspora to get conversant with the heritage of their ancestors. The concept of image tourism was promoted across board by all stakeholders, therefore tourists looked forward to learning and discovering something new about the African culture. The importance of image within tourism is such that the World Tourism Organization (1979, quoted by Cooper et al. 1993:25) have suggested that the term image embraces “the ideas, conceptions held individually or collectively of a destination”. Thus, ‘destination image’ has become so catholic and taken a wider currency that it is now taken to mean “the totality of beliefs and impressions that tourists, individually or collectively, have regarding each tourist destination. This is because tourism is a very sensitive phenomenon that involves the movement of people, not goods or commodities. To project a good image of Ghana, various cultural groups such as the Abibigroma and other prominent individuals were contacted to display the rich culture of Ghana through music, poetry

arts and dance. Tourists, especially those of African descent were encouraged to preserve the traditional practices and customs learned in Ghana.

Findings are in agreement with Shaw and Williams (2002) who cite that tourism is an important medium of development across cultural and international boundaries and a major contributor to international goodwill. Conversely, socio-cultural perspective, an influx of large numbers of international tourists into some parts of Ghana has led to a change in cultural values, and not necessarily for the better. In some African countries, the socio-political dynamics of international tourism have resulted in the local community largely losing its cohesion as well as control over its affairs. Practices such as prostitution, drug dealing, and black markets are among the often-cited ills. This has negatively affected some African ways of life which involved a greater sense of community cooperation and a strong commitment to family life, religion and traditional customs.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented, analyzed, and interpreted the results of data gathered from the fieldwork of the study. The data was analyzed through the conceptual framework of Pan-Africanism as participants largely made positive remarks about the Year of Return. Most respondents argued that although the Year of Return initiative encountered some challenges, it was successful largely due to its promotion and strengthening of the Ghana-diaspora relations.

The findings in this chapter have implications for other African countries, in that, if they want to promote their international relations through tourism, they should focus on building stronger partnerships with African diaspora groups through their various embassies and consular. Also, African countries should develop concepts and initiatives focused on connecting the diaspora to

the mainland as often as possible. Importantly, African countries should as much as possible develop tourist sites and build their hospitality industries to encourage inbound tourists. The next chapter presents a summary of findings, a conclusion and makes some recommendations.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of key findings of the study, concludes and makes some recommendations that will improve Ghana's international relations through tourism. The key findings have been presented to respond to the study objectives which appeared in chapter one of the study. The objectives were as follows;

#### 4.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study identified that tourism has significantly evolved in international affairs over time and successive Ghanaian governments have improved some aspects of tourism through organizing programs and initiatives that attract Africans in the diaspora to the country. A recent initiative is the Year of Return. The Year of Return celebration was used as a medium to re-brand local and international tourism in Ghana. The approach and strategy applied have been geared toward targeting specific populations, that is the blacks in the diaspora. The message of the Year of Return celebration was specific and encompassed inviting blacks in the diaspora to visit their ancestral home in Ghana. The campaign brought together dispersed African descents to celebrate their resilience, strength and pliability. The campaign was driven by the historical reference of symbolic representation of the common history of suffering and remembering the victories of overcoming those times. Ghana became the gateway for such historic celebration due to a similar project in the past known as the Joseph Project which was put together in 2007 to invite all Africans everywhere in the diaspora to visit their root.

The study found that a similar initiative exists in other African countries; the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria, the Union of Radio and Television Networks of Africa (URTNA) awards in South Africa and the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FESPACO) in Burkina Faso. Nevertheless, the closest of such initiatives to the Year of Return is the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST), whose proponent is Afua Sutherland. Its first-ever celebration was held in Cape Coast in 1992 and has subsequently been celebrated as a biennial program inviting all Africans in the diaspora to visit their roots to experience their rich culture and history.

The study further identified that the Year of Return was largely successful due to the contribution of some relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders were drawn across board; governmental, private agencies, and individuals at the local and foreign levels. Some of the leading stakeholders that helped put together the campaign were the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture is leading the project in collaboration with the Office of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, the PANAFEST Foundation and the Adinkra Group of the USA. Also, the hospitality and arts industry was part of the planning and coordination of the campaign. Individuals such as some Ambassadors of the various embassies across the Americas, Western Europe and the Caribbean were instrumental in the promotion of the Year of Return campaign.

The study revealed that the ultimate goal of stakeholders' collaboration towards the Year of Return was to create a unified body that could be accountable for the planning and coordination of the celebration. They were largely responsible for the advertisement, promotion, planning of events and budgeting. The study also identified that international stakeholders in the diaspora were

instrumental in the mobilization of people through their organization of pre-event tours to stimulate the interest of the African diaspora.

The study further identified that without doubt, the Year of Return celebration has had a significant impact on Ghana's tourism and international relations as a whole. The Year of Return celebration which encompassed a series of events including festivals, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and diaspora tourism promoted diplomatic relations among Ghana and some of the countries of origin of this visiting black communities and also brought some economic gains to the state. It has strengthened the bilateral and multilateral relations between Ghana and the rest of the world. The Year of Return celebration has positioned Ghana as a haven for tourism. The results of the study revealed that tourists now perceive Ghana as hospitable, peaceful, and friendly. Thus, tourism has projected Ghana positively to the global world.

The study found that the Year of Return had an impact on the economic development of Ghana. Revenue was realized through foreign exchange earnings through various sources such as accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, entertainment and cultural activities. Also, some African Americans who participated in the celebration were enthroned as Chiefs of some communities and have contributed to the building of schools, boreholes, and palaces, given scholarships to students and many others. Importantly, the campaign created jobs in the hospitality and service delivery sectors providing jobs to Ghanaians. Nevertheless, the study found that the campaign was an avenue for revenue mismanagement as the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture reported that GHC 6 million was used for the planning and organization of the Year of Return campaign, which is yet to be accounted for.

Lastly, the study found that the Year of Return has consolidated existing cultural and historic relations between the mainland and its diasporas. The exchange of culture, ideas, arts and sharing of history has impacted lives and created new opportunities for Africans living in the diaspora and those on the continent.

#### **4.2 Conclusion**

The Year of Return initiative has served as a major mediating factor in positioning Ghana as a very attractive destination for global tourism. This celebration has transformed the tourism industry and positioned it as an innovative sector. The cultural and bilateral relations gap between the black diaspora and Ghana has been bridged considerably. The efforts made toward promoting Ghana's international relations have been greatly enhanced through the policies implemented by the government of Ghana and the GTA. Continuous and elaborate advertisement of the program in the media was critical in raising awareness. More so, the collaborative efforts between the government of Ghana and the USA heightened interests and made the necessary inputs available. Other success factors included hospitality, effective protection and security, reasonably priced accommodation, food, handicrafts/souvenirs and services, and relatively attractive tourist destinations.

Finally, the Year of Return celebration has strengthened the relationship between Ghanaians and the black diasporan community and has resulted in the attraction of both foreign and local investments into the Ghanaian economy. This is one of the positive outcomes for tourism development and the enhancement of international relations for Ghana.

### 4.3 Recommendations

- The government of Ghana should be committed to maintaining tourist sites to increase their patronage. Some of the relevant sites that must be constantly maintained are national parks, castles and forts. These are important historic venues that attract people of black descent all over the world.
- It is also recommended that the government should invest more in providing the requisite infrastructure needed to attract tourists. This includes roads leading to tourist sites, sizeable event centers to contain large crowds and shopping centers to sell tourism products such as handicrafts and souvenirs. Receptive facilities are inadequate for receiving tourists and this is quite embarrassing.
- Also, fares, taxes and entry gate fees paid for tourism-related services should be utilized for the development of some of these infrastructural services. By so doing, tourists would be motivated to undertake revisits, to the benefit of the country's tourism and international relations promotion. If these recommendations are taken into consideration, PANAFEST and the Year of Return can be repackaged to sustain diaspora inbound tourism in Ghana.
- All relevant stakeholders who were instrumental in the organization of the Year of Return celebration must be encouraged to further engage the diaspora communities to strengthen existing relationships. If not, everything will be forgotten all too soon and nothing can be achieved in the long run. Although the campaign "Beyond the Return" has been launched, the efforts put into realizing this campaign are not as same as the main event.
- Lastly, the government should be accountable to the citizens concerning the revenue disbursed and that accrued at the end of national or historic programs as a form of accountability to citizens that on their tax paid. This is because a chunk of the population is of the view that the entire program was a waste of time and resources and benefited a few

people within the government and the private sector.



## APPENDIX I

### TOPIC: TOURISM AND GHANA'S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH

#### QUESTIONS

1. Who are your current tourists?
  - What continents/countries are they mostly from??
  - More males or females?
  - Their age groups
2. What impressions do they visit and leave with?
3. Which regions in Ghana are mostly visited and what is the reason for this?
4. Is there a system that collates data on feedback received from tourists and how does this organization seek to work on such feedback?
5. What would you say is the best module for tourism promotion in Ghana and why?
6. How often does the tourism industry improve its facilities to the expectations of tourists?
7. What are some of the challenges the Ghanaian tourism industry has faced in the past five years?
8. What intervention has the government of Ghana put in place to curb these challenges?
9. During the Year of Return (YOR) program, what were some of the major contributions made by the Ghana Tourism Authority?
10. What were the challenges faced in the promotion of the YOR, why do you classify them as challenges and how did you address these challenges?

11. How has the YOR activity helped in building Pan-Africanism?
12. Since the YOR, do you think the number of tourist visits have increased? If yes, what are some factors that have contributed to that? If not, why?
13. Currently, how is Ghana's tourism/ visits of tourists improving our international relations; bilaterally and multilaterally?

