

# AFRICAN DIASPORA “OUT OF AFRICA” AND AFRICA DIASPORANS “INTO AFRICA”

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The Africa Diaspora, the distribution of peoples of African descent, is global and reaches every continent and almost every country in the world. The migration of African peoples has both historical and geographical resonance. I presented a paper at the International Conference on African Studies sponsored by the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana that captured this phenomenon, “The Geography of the African Diaspora: Where, When, Who, What.” I also chaired a panel session: “Out of Africa, Back to Africa: African Diaspora, Migration, and Sustainable Development.” Material from my research as well as other studies on this topic will inform the new UF course that I will initiate in Spring 2015: “Geography of the African Diaspora: A Global Survey.”

An additional component of this research is what may be conceptualized as “reverse migration.” I am interested in the phenomenon of people of African descent in the Diaspora who have chosen to move to Africa to settle permanently. Although most of them were born outside of Africa,

culturally they identify as “returning” to what they consider their African roots. I have begun this research in Ghana. The diversity of these groups ranges from recent immigrants from the United States and the Caribbean to descendants of Africans who escaped enslavement in Brazil in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and relocated to Ghana and other areas in West Africa. I am studying Africa Diasporans who are currently living in Ghana and conducted in-depth interviews with these ‘returnees’ from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Trinidad. Some had lived in other countries in Africa (Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire, South Africa) before settling in Ghana. The United States returnees comprised the largest number of those whom I interviewed, but additional study will help determine whether this is statistically significant or due to convenience or snow-ball sampling. According to the Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which recently established a Diaspora Affairs Bureau) approximately 3,000 returnees from the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean currently live in Ghana. However, this is an estimate as no census

has been carried out to specifically collect such data. The returnees in the United States group were from a number of states: New York, Louisiana, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, and Illinois. This research seeks to analyze their reasons for moving to Ghana and how they have fared as residents there.

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