



This academic year, I had the extraordinary privilege of undertaking two significant research trips that greatly enriched my scholarly journey. The first of these was a research trip to Ghana in January, where I conducted in-depth interviews on the themes of Black motherhood and womanhood. Engaging with these remarkable women, who generously shared their experiences and perspectives, was both a profound honour and a critical learning opportunity. Their insights offered invaluable contributions to my research, particularly in understanding African diasporic identities. Additionally, the trip allowed me to explore and experience the rich historical, social, and cultural landscape of Ghana, deepening my connection to the country and broadening my academic perspective.

The second research trip took me to the University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine campus in Trinidad, where I was invited as a keynote speaker and attendee at the 2024 Summer School hosted by the UWI Institute for Gender and Development Studies in collaboration with the University of Leicester. This program was designed to provide postgraduate students, early career researchers, and professionals from the Caribbean, the UK, and North America with opportunities for both intellectual growth and professional development. The focus was on the critical themes of Gender, Violence, and Conflict.

At UWI, I presented an extract from my thesis on the Afro-German subsection of my PhD research, engaging in dynamic dialogues with esteemed scholars, researchers, and fellow early-career academics. The opportunity to learn from such a diverse group of experts was an enriching experience that broadened my understanding of the intersectionality of gender studies within a global context.

Beyond the formal lectures, the program offered educational excursions that further deepened our engagement with local Trinidadian culture and scholarship. One highlight was a visit to the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS), where I attended a webinar on Indentured Women in Trinidad by Dr Radica Mahase. Additionally, meeting with Shanice Smith, a local artist and co-founder of the Cousoumeh Collective, was particularly impactful. Her powerful mixed-media work, which critically examines and deconstructs issues of abuse, gender violence, and the objectification and commodification of women's bodies, resonated deeply with my research focus and personal interests.

Immersing myself in the vibrant culture, cuisine, and art of Trinidad, while participating in rigorous academic training grounded in a Caribbean framework, was particularly meaningful for me as a Jamaican-British academic. These experiences reinforced the importance of diverse perspectives and methodologies in academic research.

I remain deeply grateful for the alternative funding provided by the Doctoral School's College Studentship, which made these transformative research trips possible this academic year. As a former 2022 Doctoral School Research Awards recipient, I strongly encourage other doctoral students to apply for the awards, as they provide invaluable experiences that will undoubtedly enhance both your PhD journey and your future academic endeavours.