

## Exploring cultural connectedness in the sustainability of rural community tourism development in Jamaica

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**Abstract:** The focus of research into the sustainability of rural community tourism in Jamaica often gravitates toward the economic, environmental, political and management components. This ethnographic study explores how two distinctive groups - the Charles Town Maroons, descendants of slavery resistance fighters and the Seaford Town Germans, descendants of indentured labourers from Germany - are exploiting their culture by way of rural community tourism to fashion new livelihood streams. The discussion offers unique insights into how the concept of horizontal and vertical cultural connectedness can add to an understanding of how locals are drawing on their past to generate intangible and tangible cultural tourism products. It further highlights the meanings culture holds for rural inhabitants in relation to sense of place, identity and the development of sustainable rural community tourism.

**Key Words:** Culture, connectedness, Germans, Maroons, Jamaica, sustainability, tourism.

### Exploración de conexión cultural en la sostenibilidad del desarrollo del turismo rural comunitario en Jamaica

**Resumen:** El enfoque de la investigación sobre la sostenibilidad del turismo rural comunitario en Jamaica a menudo gravita hacia los componentes económicos, ambientales, políticos y de gestión. Este estudio etnográfico explora cómo dos grupos distintivos - Charles Town Maroons, descendientes de los esclavos combatientes de la resistencia y Seaford Town Germans, descendientes de trabajadores contratados en Alemania - están explotando su cultura por medio del turismo rural comunitario a la moda nuevas fuentes de sustento. La discusión se ofrece detalles sobre cómo el concepto de horizontal y vertical conectividad cultural puede agregar a la comprensión de cómo la gente se basan en su pasado para generar tangibles e intangibles productos de turismo cultural. Se destaca la cultura significados tiene para los habitantes rurales en relación con el sentido del lugar, la identidad y el desarrollo del turismo rural comunitario sostenible.

**Palabras Clave:** Cultura, conectividad, alemanes, cimarrones, Jamaica, sostenibilidad, turismo.

### 1. Introduction

As a series of actions and practices, tourism centres on the heuristic behaviour of people and understanding and communication of their mea-

nings by way of 'symbols and embodied through objects' (Robinson and Smith 2006: 1). At the same time, culture can be seen as 'substituting itself to life as a constructing power and transformational process' (Robinson and Smith 2006: 1). In

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other words, even though culture constructs and reconstructs, it is imbued with normalcy and is interwoven into the very fabric of everyday life. Tourism is an illustration of these processes and shares historical references and capabilities for constructing and re-constructing culture. 'Tourism is simply 'cultural', with its structures, practices and events very much an extension of the normative cultural framing from which it emerges' (Robinson and Smith 2006: 1). Tourists' inclination for culture products is thus intertwined with a reach for the past, to connect to historical references in either intangible or tangible forms.

In a similar way, ideas of cultural belonging, at both conscious and unconscious levels, encompass desires, which 'satisfy a deep psychological need for a sense of historical continuity, security and identity' (Pinderhughes 1989: 10). It 'refers to a sense of connectedness with the world that can be seen as both vertical and horizontal, external and internal' (Pinderhughes 1989: 10). While these linkages resonate with ideas of socio-psychological and emotional wellbeing, they are also interrelated with the generation and communication of ideas that influence the construction and re-construction of intangible and tangible tourism culture products. This not only has implications for emic perspectives in sustainable rural community tourism research, but also for etic considerations, in that a major reason why people go on holiday, as McCabe (2009) argues, relates to satisfying their socio-psychological wellbeing needs through consumption of tourism culture offerings.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to explore notions of cultural connectedness in the sustainable development of rural communities in Jamaica by analysing the influence of horizontal and vertical linkages on local inhabitants' way of life and their production of intangible and tangible culture inventions. The examination draws on empirical data from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a community of Maroon descendants in Charles Town in the eastern parish of Portland and a community of German descendants in Seaford Town in the western parish of Westmoreland. The paper is based on doctoral research evaluating the role of culture and tourism in the sustainable development of rural communities in Jamaica. The goal of the research was an examination of the meanings culture holds for rural inhabitants in relation to sense of place, identity and community development in Jamaica and the extent to which local people capitalise on their intangible and tangible culture in pursuit of sustainable rural community tourism in Jamaica. The discussion begins with a definitional outline of culture. This is followed by discussion of cultural connectedness focussing on how linkages to the

past, which African Jamaicans relied on as a source of resistance and empowerment, are now being utilised in the construction and re-construction of intangible and tangible culture products for tourists. Selected findings of the study are reported.

## 2. Culture meanings

Culture is a socially constructed continually evolving concept that is forged through the outcome and product of human interaction (Cohen, 1988: 196). In this study, culture, which is said to enjoy a symbiotic relationship with tourism, can be seen as the meta-variable underpinning the key topics and themes. As a series of actions and practices, tourism centres on the heuristic behaviour of people and understanding and communication of their meanings by way of 'symbols and embodied through objects' (Robinson and Smith, 2006: 1). Culture cannot be viewed as inimical or a veneer, 'but as substituting itself to life as a constructing power and transformational process (Robinson and Smith, 2006: 1). In other words, even though culture constructs and reconstructs, it is imbued with normalcy, is not discrete, but interwoven into the very fabric of everyday life. Tourism is an illustration of these processes and shares historical references and capabilities for constructing and re-constructing culture. 'Tourism is simply 'cultural', with its structures, practices and events very much an extension of the normative cultural framing from which it emerges' (Robinson and Smith, 2006: 1).

## 3. Cultural connectedness

Whether consciously or unconsciously, African descendants in Jamaica have drawn from their cultural connectedness to Africa, not only to resist European attempts to dominate them, but to sustain themselves, boost self-esteem, ensure wellbeing and growth. The inherency of their cultural connectedness thus intertwines with notions of sustainable development, which is about linkages with present circumstances and future aspirations, and extends beyond by encapsulating ideas of psychological happiness. In a similar way, heritage, the production of which increasingly appeals to tourists, (Park, 2014) can be seen to coalesce with ideas of cultural connectedness and sustainability. Even though heritage is rooted in 'historical knowledge and performance', it should not be seen as a by-product of economic change, but as 'living history incorporating social processes of both continuity and change' (Park, 2014: 2). Furthermore, it is not de rigueur physical presentation that makes heri-

tage products attractive and appealing to tourists, but the significance of the 'images, meanings and symbols that are attached to them' (Park, 2014: 2). While the idea of continuity associated with heritage accords with sustainability so too does its linkages with cultural connectedness. After all, heritage and culture are multiple constructions of the past that are continually recreated and presented for contemporary uses.

With few built structures, the majority of rural community tourism products in Jamaica are based on intangible and tangible cultural heritage. They take the form of storytelling, artefacts, images, symbols, meanings and natural phenomena, which have emerged from a setting that has been built on forced migration, disparate peoples, resistance, natural wonders and an assortment of beliefs, customs, habits and norms. Reflective of the island's representations from across the globe, they are primarily shaped by those forcibly taken from Africa to work on European-owned plantations as slaves between 1498 and 1665 (under Spanish rule) and 1670 and 1808 (under British rule) (Buckridge, 2004). Others, who came in the 19th Century from India, China, Lebanon, Syria and Germany, were indentured labourers and economic migrants seeking a better life. Although some of the migrants' stories are tinged with adversity, the narrative of African descendants is incomparable. Among the indignities they endured was 'psychological conditioning' to erase every aspect of African culture so that they would be permanently mentally imprisoned (Buckridge, 2004: 17; Beckles and Shepherd, 2004). Europeans felt that if African descendants were to maintain their own culture it would unify them into rebellion (Buckridge, 2004: 17; Beckles and Shepherd, 2004). Even though many Africans appeared to acquiesce by maintaining aspects of their culture, they were able to survive European hegemony. That the influence of Africa is still visible in Jamaica today is evidence not only of the survival of heritage, but the sustainability of holding on to facets of one's culture.

The survival tactics of African descendants were built around notions of cultural continuity even though the incommunicable nature of their captivity meant their connection to the African motherland was, largely, symbolic. 'By claiming Africa as the homeland, (African) Jamaicans gain a sense of historical continuity, of identity, of roots' (Sherlock and Bennett, 1998: xi). It was a continuity or connectedness that manifested in numerous ways. Buckridge (2004: xi) notes the African descendants were determined to continue the wearing of African attire, which allowed them to 'maintain a vital cultural link with their ancestral homeland and, in the process, to resist

the institution of slavery, which denied them basic human rights'. Furthermore, Buckridge (2004: 17) argues that the Africans in Jamaica 'nurtured certain African characteristics and transmitted them to their descendants'. These are rooted in folklore, music, language, religion, dress, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and funeral customs. It is out of these traditions, Buckridge (2004) believes, have evolved the innovation and creativity that have shaped the intangible and tangible cultural heritage that exists in Jamaica today. These undergo continuous recreation, in various genres, and exploited for emotional and psychological wellbeing and livelihood strategies such as rural community tourism.

#### 4. Ideological mosaic

Chevannes (1994: 33) highlights the 'idealisation of Africa' as another way in which African descendants sought to maintain their cultural connectedness with their ancestral homeland. This representation of Africa focussed on Ethiopia, because Biblical references to the country held a 'liberatory promise', which 'showed the black man in a dignified and humane light' (Chevannes, 1994: 34). For example, Psalm 68, verse 31 states, 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God' (Chevannes, 1994: 34). The significance of Africa or Ethiopia as an 'ideological mosaic', Chevannes (1994: 34) argues, 'becomes a symbolic point of reference, whether as ideal home - hence denoting reparation - or as a source of identity - hence identification'.

Without much doubt, the most significant feature in the idealisation of Africa was the crowning of Ras Tafari as Emperor Haile Selassie 1 of Ethiopia in November 1930 (Chevannes, 1994). Selassie's titles, like some of the Biblical references to the 'Messiah', were, 'Kings of Kings, Lord or Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God and Light of the World' (Chevannes, 1994: 42). His ascendancy, along with the 'Back to Africa' teachings of the late Jamaican African rights campaigner, Marcus Garvey, gave impetus to the formation of the Rastafari, who view Ethiopia as 'Zion', their spiritual home (Chevannes, 1994: 33-42). The Rastafari doctrine holds that Selassie is the two-hundred-and-twenty-fifth descendant of the throne of David, which would make it the oldest sovereignty in the world, and, therefore, has direct lineage to Solomon (Bedasse, 2010). The Biblical linkages, which represents an 'Africanisation of Christianity' (Bedasse, 2010: 972), not only cemented the Rastafari cultural connectedness to Africa, but provides them with a discourse to

counter the source of European hegemony, which were based on interpretations of Bible text. The Jamaican religious practice of Pukumina, for example, embodies 'Africaness' (Chevannes, 1994: 33-42). Many of these customs that form the basis of Pukumina and Rastafari are inherited from the Maroons (Campbell, 1985), who continue to use them today. For example the Charles Town Maroons' spectacle for visitors revolves around drumming, dancing, reciting West African folklore and speaking in the Twi language.

## 5. Sense of connectedness

African centred ideological symbolisms suggest a need to belong, a sense of connectedness. A prevalent resistance strategy in slavery was running away (Chevannes, 1994), and as Quinn in Halfacree (2010: 257) notes, 'People's desire to escape is strongly tempered by an attempt both to reconnect with experiences from their past and to strive for a continuity that will strengthen into their futures'. Similar notions of connectedness and wellbeing are bound up with the African philosophical tradition of Ubuntu, which places emphasis of 'belonging' to the human community (Venter, 2004: 151). Sharing overtones of Buddhism, the idea of human community encompasses a 'vast, ever-expanding net of spiritual, psychological, biological and emotional relations' (Venter, 2004: 151). Even though Venter (2004: 150-156) points out the critics' line that Ubuntu is often hijacked as a 'mechanical' problem-solving tool, it is maintained that its underlying principles are built on a 'concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings'. Furthermore, Ubuntu's existentialist underpinnings recognise the need to consider the wellbeing of others and that sharing was an essential feature of interactions between people as opposed to the discreteness at the heart of western culture.

Cultural connectedness can thus be framed within the context of Berger and Luckmann's (1996: 82) contention that cultural contact 'may be a built-in need' for cohesion in the psycho-physiological constitution of man'. Hill (2006: 210) notes that the worldview of the American Indian 'emphasises connectedness to the creation/universe'. It is argued that as a cultural facet, 'belonging is a component of relatedness and connectedness' (Hill, 2006: 210). A 'sense of belonging is a dynamic phenomenon of social significance', asserts Hill (2006: 214), that can help to aid mental health wellbeing. Saewyc *et al.*'s (2013) search for evidence to support the idea of whether greater cultural connectedness could lower discrimination among indigenous Canadian

adolescents, found those who exhibited high levels of cultural connectedness displayed 'higher self-esteem' and 'healthier youth behaviours'. An earlier study, Poon *et al.* (2010), which assessed whether cultural connectedness was a protective factor in 'risk prevention and health promotion for North American youth', revealed higher cultural connectedness was linked to lower odds of substance use, under age sex and greater odds of higher educational goals and art/club participation. Chandler and Lalonde's (1998: 192) research into suicide among indigenous groups in Canada, revealed 'communities that have taken active steps to preserve and rehabilitate their own cultures are shown to be those in which youth suicide rates are dramatically lower'.

MacKinlay (2010: 16) argues 'meaning is held in connectedness between people' and that a 'meaningful community provides the basis for human flourishing and connectedness'. These observations resonate with the objectives of this research, which seeks to examine the meanings culture holds for rural inhabitants in Charles Town and Seaford Town and how they act towards these interpretations. Understanding these aspects will reveal their motivations for capitalising on their intangible and tangible cultural heritage in pursuit of sustainable rural community tourism. Moreover, it is clear that the concept of cultural connectedness is a significant feature in psychological wellbeing. While research has not yet determined whether it is a preordained human facet, as Berger and Luckmann (1996) surmise, the link with culture is explicit.

Cultural connectedness thus applies to 'culturally shared ways of knowing'; can reveal insights into a culture's perspective; offers 'a shared sense of socially constructed meanings' and fulfils a desire to connect to others and, therefore, to be accepted (Hill, 2006: 212). This idea of connection extends to tourism, whose key tenet is the pursuit of 'otherness' - (Gibson and Connell, 2003: 167) - people take holidays to experience; connect to other cultures. In doing so, one can gain cultural knowledge, insights into another culture's viewpoints and even sharing how others' meanings are constructed and their significance to those concerned. As Kolb (2008: 129) notes, the idea of connected relates to an 'established condition'; in other words, things that have happened; the past. A high proportion of tourism products are primarily based on connections to past intangible and tangible cultural heritage. As culture products, they are recreated, renegotiated and presented as being cultural connected to the present and future, and therefore sustainable.

## 6. Horizontal and vertical connectedness

Notions of sustainability, psychological wellbeing and development came to the fore at the Rio+20 sustainable development conference in Brazil in June 2012. Helen Clark, administrator for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) told the gathering, 'equity, dignity, happiness, sustainability' were fundamental to human existence, yet were absent in GDP accounting formats. 'Progress needs to be defined and measured in a way which accounts for the broader picture of human development and its context,' said Clark (United Nations, 2012). These socio-psychological approaches resonate with ideas of cultural belonging, which at both conscious and unconscious levels encompasses desires that 'satisfy a deep psychological need for a sense of historical continuity, security and identity' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 10). In other words, an awareness or cultural connectedness to the world, which can be seen as 'vertical and horizontal, external and internal' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 10). Cultural belonging is recognition that people are connected to the world vertically and horizontally. Vertical indicates a 'piling up of effects' and horizontal denotes 'interactions' (National Research Council Committee on Geography and Community and Quality of Life: Data Needs for Informed Decision Making, 2002: 56). Viewed correspondingly, vertical relates to 'individuals of varying status and power', while horizontal refers to people of the same standing (Chandra, Acosta and Stern, 2011: 27).

African descendants' determination to maintain cultural connection to Africa, for example, meant keeping intact their values and identification many generations after their forced uprooting (Pinderhughes, 1989). Their cultural assets, such as foods, stories, languages, music, places, religion and spirituality, which are a significant feature of family life and personal development, are intertwined and fundamental to the function of each other. 'Histories come and go', insists Hall (1993: 4), 'peoples come and go, situations change, but somewhere down there is throbbing the culture to which we all belong'. Like Pinderhughes, Hall (1993: 4) argues culture is a platform on which identity is built. 'Something to which we can return, something solid, something fixed, something stabilized, around which we can organize our identities and our sense of belongingness' (Hall, 1993: 4).

Through vertical and horizontal linkages, Pinderhughes (1989: 10) believes cultural identity offers protection against 'emotional cut-off from the past and psychological abandonment in the present'. The idea of 'cultural homelessness' suggests a loss of heritage, racial identity and

sense of belonging, which can lead to self-blame, shame and low self-esteem (Navarrete and Jenkins, 2011: 791). Moreover, eschewing cultural roots and links with reference groups can lead to 'political powerlessness and personal sense of isolation and become vulnerable to cultural ambiguity, negative identity, and psychological conflict' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 4). It is, therefore, crucial to maintain both vertical and horizontal linkages to retain a 'cultural sense of self' and a healthy 'self-esteem' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 10). 'Cultural coherence is necessary for psychological well-being' (Arizpe, 2005: 38). Furthermore, 'being secure in one's own cultural identity enables one to act with greater freedom, flexibility, and openness to others of different background' (McGoldrick cited by Pinderhughes, 1989: 11).

In arguing that research concerned with the "rural" in rural development is antiquated, Ray (1999: 257) believes there should be greater emphasis on the idea of 'territories (that happen to be in rural locations) and/or marginalised social groups (that happen to live in rural areas). The rationale that drives this conception is based on the fact that territorial identity, history and culture are intertwined and 'there is also the psychological issue that the human individual has a need to belong' (Ray, 1999: 263). It is a perspective that provides a platform for endogenous development, to 'raise a community spirit' among local people, boost 'social solidarity' and psychological wellbeing (Ray, 1999: 263). A resilient community, argues Chandra, Acosta and Stern (2011: 31), is one that is interconnected and has the 'presence of strong horizontal and vertical relationships that exist between community residents'. 'People are lost without their traditions, which contribute to mental and physical diseases and disharmony in a society' (Chiweshe, 2010: 15).

## 7. Vertical connectedness

Vertical connectedness relates to a person's linkage with time, history, continuity, 'collaboration, negotiation, discipline and completion' (Thiele and Marsden, 2002: 4, Pinderhughes, 1989: 10) and is aligned to one's internal feelings, thinking and behaving. A group more vertically aligned, places greater emphasis on ancestral cultural connections. Arce cited by Pinderhughes (1989: 10) explains that vertical connectedness is 'preconscious recognition or traditionally held patterns' of conduct, emotion and reasoning. Drawing on history as a source of empowerment, 'gives a sense of depth, historical belongingness, a feeling of deep-rootedness and sense of a sacred obligation to extend the genea-

logical line' (Mbiti cited by Sherlock and Bennett, 1998: 9). Ethnic identity is an 'essential human need' according to a personal 'sense of belonging and historical continuity based on a common cultural heritage' (Navarrete and Jenkins, 2011: 791). In maintaining vertical linkages, African descendants in Jamaica have retained a sense of psychological cultural wellbeing, identity and an awareness of their reality. The significance of Africa as an ideological symbol provides an internal cultural connectedness, a 'cultural sense of self' and a 'healthy self-esteem' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 10), which, although kept hidden, is of great significance.

Spiritually, MacKinlay (2010: 181) argues, horizontal linkages concern 'a sense of life purpose and life satisfaction' and vertical connects to 'our sense of wellbeing in relation to God'. 'Others have extended this model, where the horizontal typifies spiritual wellbeing derived interpersonally (among other sources), and the vertical transpersonal (a relationship with a higher being [or God])' (MacKinlay, 2010: 181). The intimation that vertical linkage is aligned to the internal means it is a concept that deals with the psychological, the emotional, the private, the hidden, the self. These intramural states, though often not expressed, are highly symbolic and relate to how each individual comprehends and make sense of their existence. African descendants' desire to remain connected to the land of their ancestors, through symbolic, intangible and tangible cultural heritage or otherwise and continue to draw from Africa as a source of empowerment, ties in with notions of vertical connectedness.

## 8. Horizontal connectedness

Horizontal connectedness refers to an equilibrium; a quantum; the same level of being marked by relationships shaped by interactions and shared experiences. These connections are rooted in 'cooperation, continuity, respect, reliability and trust' (Thiele and Marsden, 2002: 4). Horizontal connectedness, Pinderhughes (1989: 10) states, is representation of contemporary connections to other people who share the 'same ways of thinking and belonging in the world' and 'thus constitutes a bridge to all that is external'. Research exploring the 'importance of place and connectedness' reveals horizontal relationships are shaped by interactions between people, goods and information and 'common experiences' (National Research Council Committee on Geography and Community and Quality of Life: Data Needs for Informed Decision Making, 2002: 71). These observations parallel accounts of the various migrants who made their

way to Jamaica and have enmeshed the various strands of their culture to produce a whole way of life.

## 9. Tourism connectedness

In a review of 'Cultural tourism as an economic development strategy for ethnic neighbourhoods', Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureli (2012), found that collaborations could benefit from horizontal and vertical linkages. Horizontal connections could create local stakeholder networks, which could secure endorsement, allegiance and corporation with local people, organisations, companies, landlords, artists and young people (Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureli, 2012). Vertical linkages could help garner support from city council officials, museums, tourism information centres and travel agents (Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureli (2012). Such partnerships, within and between communities, could bolster cross-district networks, boost local understanding of the dearth of available assets, create economies of scale and 'account for more effective and innovative synthesis of cultural programs and community economic development' (Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureli, 2012: 65). In assessing 'A community-based tourism model: its conception and use', Okazaki (2008) points to poverty indicators which reveal that it is standard for communities in developing countries to have an abundance of social ties, yet experience chronic hardships. Diversifying external linkages that underpin 'bridging social capital' could open up new avenues to economic opportunities, while extending vertical relationships beyond the locality by connecting to social capital from formal organisations, could yield similar positive benefits (Okazaki, 2008: 516).

In Jamaica, where tourism development is criticised for being unplanned and lacking strategic direction, (Hayle, 2014) advocates notions of horizontal and vertical linkages. 'Tourism is not an end in itself. The role of the community-based tourism projects is to seek opportunities for vertical and horizontal linkages within a community with other industries outside of that community' (Hayle, 2014: 1). Creating such paths, argues Hayle (2014) could pave the way for new businesses and reduce leakages from the island. Similarly, Debes' (2011) contends tourism is based on people using linkages to the past to define them in the present. 'Consuming the past (that is, heritage) becomes a bridge to connect and introduce the people and their identity through a transaction with the tourists' (Debes, 2011: 236). Tourists flock to places and communities; 'historical and mythologized' sites, which 'promise a connection' that might be

idealised or otherwise (Martinez, 2012: 545). They manifest in the 'economization' (Debes, 2011: 236) of cultural assets such as folk storytelling, traditional entertainment and performances, sale of arts and craft, ceremonial vestiges, provision of foods and historical nature trail.

Steiner and Reisinger (2005: 304) argue 'connections among things are the products of history'. They highlight factors like events, discoveries and experiences of people who have existed, which are preserved in 'memories, books, education, socialisations, culture, art myths, and sense of places' and are passed on as heritage (Steiner and Reisinger, 2005: 304). Furthermore, there are practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces, which UNESCO has defined as intangible cultural heritage (Lira and Amoeda, 2009). 'This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity' (Lira and Amoeda, 2009: 3). Exploitation of this cultural heritage is the basis for culture's symbiotic relationship with tourism. McCabe (2009) argues tourism is linked to personal and social growth, but also with emotional, psychological wellbeing and satisfying the desire to connect to other cultures. A major reason why people go on holiday is to satisfy their socio-psychological wellbeing (McCabe, 2009). 'People find themselves in their unique place in the world, in a unique situation in relation to the connectedness around them' (Steiner and Reisinger, 2005: 307). This connectedness is to culture, as it is 'lived, experienced, shared and exchanged' (Robinson and Smith, 2006: 10). It is a process that has become increasingly contested and pluralised in reflection of the 'heterogeneous nature of communities' (Cole, 2006: 89) and the varied and differing tastes of tourists for who it is being commoditised. An approach such as horizontal and vertical connectedness offers insights from both internal and external perspectives and is ideally suited to add to understanding of the role of culture in the sustainability of rural community tourism in Jamaica.

## 10. Connecting to German and Maroon culture

The main data gathering activities focussed on the Maroon enclave of Charles Town and the German district of Seaford Town. Maroons are colonial resistance fighters who were never enslaved and so were more positioned to retain African cultural traditions in comparison to plantation slaves. The

Germans, who were experiencing economic and political strife in their own country, were persuaded to emigrate to Jamaica where economic conditions were said to be more favourable. Further data was produced by semi-structured interviews with cultural and political professionals and organisers in Jamaica. The selected sites faced a myriad of social and economic problems that needed urgent attention. What came across from observations and conversations with people in Charles Town and Seaford Town was the desire to exploit their intangible and tangible cultural heritage to improve their social and economic conditions. This was particularly emphasised in Charles Town where capitalising on their culture for their own benefit was one of the stated goals of the Maroon Council, the governing body in the district. In Seaford Town, there are plans to expand a German heritage museum and build new toilet facilities to attract and cater for tourists. The topic of this paper is based on relevant findings from the full data set, which comprised participant observation, 69 face-to-face semi and unstructured interviews, more than 3,000 digital images, 70 video clips and three focus group interviews.

## 11. Analysis of data

Production and analysis of data has been guided by the qualitative analysis principles of 'reasoning and argumentation' espoused by Alasuutari (1995: 7). This centered on 'riddle-solving' methods, which are used to explain and make sense of the phenomenon under study (Alasuutari 1995: 7). The process entailed applying equal significance to every 'hint or clue' or 'piece of information' as each was just as important as the other in helping to answer the research question (Alasuutari 1995: 7). Differences in how rural inhabitants describe their way of life were explored. Particular practices, unique expressions, sayings, the way they dressed, the work they did, their relationships with each other and outsiders, their views on political, social and economic conditions were all examined. Alasuutari (1995: 11-12) contends that viewing data as a 'totality', grouping hints and clues together underpinned a research model that 'includes both idiographic and nomothetic elements'. The nature of information provided by participants cannot be said to be homogeneous. 'Holding different speaker's positions', as Alasuutari (1995: 19) concedes, ethnographic participants are 'able to shed light on the structural whole being studied from different points of view'. The information they provide is 'many-sided' – 'folk tales', 'myths', 'proverbs', 'rituals and religious

beliefs', all critical in unriddling; interpreting findings (Alasuurati 1995: 19).

Adhering to these considerations gave rise to themes such as culture connectedness around which the findings of the study are grouped.

## 12. Participants

Interview participants were selected on the basis of knowledge of rural community tourism development in Jamaica; engagement in the activity; intention to become involved; those who felt they had not benefitted from the activity or had; people who were simply interested in the development of their community by way of culture, agriculture, tourism or other means. Participants were also recruited using snowball sampling techniques as there was 'no list or institution' available to identify frontline staff and key rural community development actors (Deacon *et al.* 1999). This method was appropriate for the 'closed' and 'informal social groupings' of rural communities where recommendations were valuable in 'opening up' channels of communication with prospective participants (Deacon *et al.* 1999). This was to ensure a wide and diverse cross section of participants who would be able to provide a range of views and insights.

## 13. Seaford Town

Seaford Town is located in northeast Westmoreland, about 42 km from Savanna-la-mar, the parish capital, and has a population of 666 people (SDC, 2010a). The town was founded in 1835 as part of an attempt to populate the Jamaica interior with European immigrants. It was feared that after emancipation, former slaves would quit sugar plantations and hide away in rugged uninhabited terrain like where Seaford Town is now located. This would have crippled the sugar industry so the Jamaican Legislative Assembly offered £15 for each European immigrant brought to the island to live in these locales.

Seaford Town, a 500 acres plot of land donated by Charles Barron Seaford, Governor of Barbados, was one of three locations designated to house such new immigrants. Of the 532 Germans, recruited by Prussian, William Lemonius, from the Westphalia and Waldeck areas of Germany, 249 were settled on the site. Lemonius is said to have tricked the Germans into coming to Jamaica with tales of paradise and the discovery of gold. The Germans included carpenters, shoemakers, masons, a baker, weavers, a blacksmith, tailors,

millers, brick makers, a butcher, a musician and a comedian. When they arrived in Seaford Town, only 29 of the promised cottages were built. Unsuitable to tropical conditions, 34 of them died in the first fortnight having succumbed to tropical diseases. Food shortages saw many of the Germans raiding the provision grounds of the former slaves they had been recruited to deter.

There are approximately 50 people of full German descent still living in the town. They are mainly third and fourth generation descendants. The town's tourism enterprise is based around a museum housing various artefacts depicting their history and heritage. The Germans are known locally as 'Germaicans', a moniker, which indicates their rootedness to Jamaica. This is visible in the lasting bonds and relationships they have formed with the descendants of Africans with whom they live side by side. Original German architecture and cuisine are very much features of Seaford Town and the local way of life.

## 14. Charles Town

Charles Town is a Maroon community in the foothills of the spectacular Blue Mountain range. It is primarily agriculturally based and has a population of 740 people (Social Development Commission, 2010b). Charles Town is one of four recognised existing Maroon settlements in Jamaica. The town is steeped in history and is the site of the famous Quao victory over the English Redcoats in 1739.

The defeat of the English led to the signing of a Peace Treaty with the Windward Maroons some 272 years ago. As well as their fighting skills, Maroons, Jamaica's only indigenous group as a by-product of their cohabitation with the Taino Indians, the island's first settlers, are renowned for their resourcefulness in living off their natural environment. However, faced with high rates of unemployment, the Charles Town Maroon Council has initiated a range of programmes aimed at exploiting their culture and heritage by way of tourism and agriculture. Initiatives include beekeeping, nature and heritage tours and a museum incorporating artefacts from Charles Town and the surrounding Maroon villages of Scott's Hall and Moore Town. The annual Quao Day celebrations, held in June each year, attract visitors from around the world. Their fierce opposition to slavery and colonialism has inspired groups like Rastafari and freedom fighters across the world.



## 15. Data findings in Maroon Town

Just over a decade ago, the Maroons decided to exploit their culture to create employment and improve social conditions. With approximately 50 per cent of people of working age in Charles Town unemployed (Social Development Commission – (SDC), 2006b), the community was in need of income generation strategies. Farming, the main economic activity, had experienced a down turn and many people were having to rely on remittances from abroad and borrowing from each other to survive (SDC, 2006b). There were also issues with moral decline in the community with reports of young people lacking respect for their elders. Concerned Maroon leaders formed a committee, the Maroon Council to orchestrate strategies to exploit their rich cultural heritage. Even though its significance was recognised, there were reservations.

*'We were not selling out our culture, but if that is where you can get the help to build your community, then you go there and get the help, (otherwise) culture isn't worthwhile'* (Sharon, a female Maroon elder and Charles Town resident, 2011)

Another feature of the development was to ensure the survival of the Maroon legacy.

*'There was a concern about the Maroon culture been lost and we wanted something to pass on to our children and grandchildren – that was one of our main objectives'* (Sharon, 2011)

According to Charles Town Maroon Chief, Colonel Frank Lumsden, there was a feeling that youths in the community were not aware of what it meant to be a Maroon, an experience that perhaps, could be applied to young people in other communities. However, he argues there is a need to return to conditions of the past.

*'We have to go back to some of the values of the past. The way in which mother, father, children relate; the fact that age was venerated; the concept of our spirituality; the way in which we relate to our ancestors'* (Lumsden, 2011).

The idea of cultural connectedness is a notion that lies at the heart of Maroon existence. According to Col Lumsden, Charles Town would be like any other inconsequential rural community in Jamaica if it were not for the presence of the Maroons. It is a mnemonic he usually directs at those who question the significance of his people to the town. From being a 'moribund' district, at the foothills of the Blue Mountains, the town is now a thriving Maroon enclave attracting weekly coach loads of tourists. Charles Town's elevation has been pinned to the commoditisation of the Maroons' unique culture, which is the linchpin in their economic regeneration strategy. In June

2012, the Maroon Council received J\$18 million from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) to refurbish the Charles Town Maroon Museum, Safu Yard, a ceremonial communal space, and bathroom facilities. Col Lumsden argues that the best way to protect the legacy of their ancestors is to use it to drive economic development.

*'This is the best way of sustaining the culture more so than merely preserving it'* (Lumsden, 2011).

According to Col Lumsden, it is the foundations laid by their ancestors that they are building on today. This is what he believes provides the bridge between the past and the future.

*'We cannot separate ourselves from our ancestors. If we do not reconnect with our past we will face destruction. Cultural identity is who we are. Cultural identity provides you with an anchor of who you are and what guides you in making decisions'* (Lumsden, 2011).

Col Lumsden's pronunciations of connections with their ancestral roots resonate with ideas of vertical linkages. The Maroons continue to maintain strong links with Ghana in West African where many of their rituals and practices such as the Twi language they use and the Kromanti drumming and dancing originates. As for the Colonel, his burning desire is to connect with his African ancestors before he dies.

*'If I am a good servant, I will be rewarded. The reward that I want is connection with the other world before I die; that's why I am in Charles Town - to make that connection with the other world before I die'* (Lumsden, 2011).

Even though the Maroons' agreement to return run away slaves as part of the 1769 peace treaty remains controversial, observing them and local people's reactions to them suggests they also imbue strong horizontal connectedness.

## 15. Data findings in German Town

The German descendants in Seaford Town decided to set up a museum in 1999 in an attempt to preserve their heritage and provide an alternative source of income to farming, which has been devastated by the global economic crises. Fifty-seven per cent of women and 40.3 per cent of men in the town are unemployed. The Seaford Town Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) established the Seaford Town German Heritage Museum as a focal site for visitors as well as to keep alive their heritage, which hitherto had received very little attention. For third generation German descendants like Marian, their parents spoke very little about their European past. Even though they know they have a rich heritage, they

are unsure of the aspects that directly relates to them. It means they have become resigned to their current situatedness.

*'I just a Jamaican, basically. The only culture I got is the normal 'duppy' stuff and slavery...'* (Marian, daughter of third generation German descendant, 2011).

Eschewing connections with Germany may be an indication that the Seaford Town Germans have finally accepted their fate. 'I think through several generations, there is a very strong emotional attachment to here' (Rita Hilton, first president of the Seaford Town NGO and current treasurer, 2011). A further indication of this is that members of the Seaford Town German community exhibit a sense of pride at being considered 'Germaicans'. As far as Delroy, 70, a third generation German descendant, is concerned, Jamaica is where he was born and, therefore, he is Jamaican. Even though Jamaicans of African descent speak of a longing to return to the land of their ancestors, Delroy does not harbour similar feelings for Germany.

*'It is my Motherland, but I don't know anything about it, and I have the sixth sense to tell me that if I stay in Jamaica I will survive better'* (Delroy, 2011).

However, there appears to be resentment at how they ended up in Jamaica. In many ways their story bears some similarities with the deceit, greed and hardships surrounding the narrative of slavery.

*'When they brought the people here, they put them in slavery, because the people never knew how to cope'* (Delroy, 2011).

Delroy says he does not blame Germany for what happened to his predecessor and even though he has accepted his fate, some local people in Seaford Town believe not maintaining a cultural connection with the European country, like African Jamaicans have with Africa, has had a psychological effect. Hilton argues that even though they accept their German origin, they don't quite understand the 'fullness of it' (Hilton, 2011). As a result, she says, the Seaford Town Germans are a 'little bit lost'.

*'Someone was saying that they were Germans living in a remote, very remote place like on top of a hill totally cut off from that time, but you can't live in isolation, you must be part of a global network'* (Hilton, 2011).

Hilton argues that even after such a period it was still important to try to re-establish links between the Seaford Town Germans and Germany, if not for the sake of the older generation, then for the younger ones. She believes this is important because of the rural nature of the community mean young people are not as exposed as their urban counterparts.

## 16. Discussion

African Jamaicans' desire to remain connected to the land of their ancestors, through symbolic, intangible or tangible heritage or otherwise, and draw from as a source of empowerment, ties in with notions of vertical connectedness. Using history for empowerment, 'gives a sense of depth, historical belongingness, a feeling of deep-rootedness and sense of a sacred obligation to extend the genealogical line' (Mbiti in Sherlock and Bennett, 1998: 9). In maintaining these vertical linkages, the Maroons exude a sense of psychological cultural wellbeing, identity and an awareness of their reality. 'Civilisation begins with the African yuh nuh (you know),' asserts Col Prehay, a Maroon Chief. 'And, creation begin in a Africa, so me would a like guh (go) back man,' he added, confidently.

In Jamaica, the Maroons are revered both locally and nationally for their fearlessness in resisting the yolk of slavery. This bond or bridge to their fellow Jamaicans connotes with the idea of horizontal linkages. Their indomitable spirit of having played a critical part in ending slavery strengthens their external ties. Since deciding to exploit their cultural connectedness by way of rural community tourism, the Maroons have transformed what has been described as a 'moribund' district into a thriving enclave attracting two coaches of visitors each week. They say this has helped them to earn a living at the same time as sustaining their heritage for future generations.

The idea of the German descendants of Seaford Town being 'lost' is a clear indication of 'emotional cutoff from the past and psychological abandonment in the present' (Pinderhughes, 1989: 10). This psychological malaise could be related to a lack of vertical connectedness to their ancestral roots in Germany. One respondent described the Germans as a 'reserve people', in that they were reluctant to put themselves forward for community development activities. They were also said to be passive', which may have resulted from their expectations not being met when they came to Jamaica. The respondent remarked, they have turned in on themselves, 'like going into your house, closing the door and not caring what's outside'. Even though the Germans acknowledge they have a strong history, their vertical linkages are weak. As one respondent stated their parents never talked about their German connections, which suggest their cultural heritage, is not being passed on, which makes for a less sustainable way of life in relation to psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Despite this, in asserting their 'Germaicanness', thereby integrating with fellow Jamaicans, they

draw strength from the idea of horizontal connectedness. This suggests the German descendants of Seaford are only interested in the present and the people they intend to share their future with. The Seaford Town NGO is making attempts to expand their German heritage museum, but they complain of a lack of interest by the people of German descendants, which hampers progress. Tourists used to visit on a regular basis, but numbers are now a trickle.

This study has revealed that horizontal and vertical linkages are indeed critical in giving local people the confidence in asserting a sense of self in their attempts to improve their conditions. The implications of these findings for rural community-based tourism policy, is that rural community tourism development needs to embrace factors such as emotional and psychological wellbeing to ensure sustainability. As Pinderhughes (1989: 10) notes, the idea of continuity bolsters security and identity. And, cultural identity offers protection against 'emotional cutoff from the past and psychological abandonment in the present' (Pinderhughes 1989: 10).

As a limitation of the study, time constraints stand out restricting detailed data collection to only two communities, therefore the findings are but a synopsis of the full picture of the role of culture and tourism in the sustainable development of rural communities in Jamaica. Furthermore, culture is a fluid ever-changing concept and a longitudinal study would, perhaps, capture more of the unfolding metamorphoses over an extensive period. Additionally, given the diversity of Jamaican communities, future studies could ensure a broader sample size, which would reflect a more exhaustive picture of the role of culture and tourism in the sustainable development of rural communities in Jamaica.

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*Recibido:* 04/11/2013  
*Reenviado:* 03/02/2014  
*Aceptado:* 11/02/2014  
*Sometido a evaluación por pares anónimos*