



Black Travel Movement: Systemic racism informing tourism

Stefanie Benjamin^{a,*}, Alana K. Dillette^b

^a Department of Retail, Hospitality & Tourism Management, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1215 W. Cumberland Ave., 220C Jessie Harris Building, Knoxville, TN 37996, United States of America

^b L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, Adams Humanities 4146, San Diego, CA 92182, United States of America



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 17 June 2020

Received in revised form 30 November 2020

Accepted 29 January 2021

Available online 3 March 2021

Associate editor: Carter Perry

Keywords:

Black Travel Movement

Collective story

Systemic racism

ABSTRACT

The Black Travel Movement, a collective of Black travelers in the United States, continues to emerge and empower Black travelers to share authentic counter-narratives. Many of these travelers made the transition and began companies that now make up the movement. However, the tourism industry continues to perpetuate a landscape steeped in systemic racism. Adopting a critical race theory storytelling method and informed by whiteness studies, nine interviews with leaders of the movement, material from predominately White workshop participants, and lived experiences were used to create a collective story of how race and ontological views influence the tourism landscape. As evident from the collective story, discrimination and racism continues to create inhospitable experiences for Black travel leaders within the tourism industry.

© 2021 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In June of 1870, Frederick Douglas, one of the United States most famous abolitionists and formerly enslaved, wrote, “Heretofore, colored Americans have thought little of adorning their parlors with pictures. They have had to do with the stern, and I must say, the ugly realities of life. Pictures come not with slavery and oppression and destitution, but with liberty, fair place, leisure and refinement”. At the time these words were written, most former enslaved persons had only experienced freedom for five years (Foster, 1999). Substantial thoughts of equal accessibility to recreation, leisure or travel were over a century away. Moving into the 20th century, Black¹ people in the U.S. continued to be plagued with racial inequalities, segregation and discrimination. These consistent struggles gave way to the Supreme Court decision of 1896 institutionalizing segregation in public accommodations until 1954. This law particularly affected the way Black people were able to travel around the U.S., and in 1936 Victor Green published, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* – the first travel guidebook for Black travelers. This guidebook remained in print for 30 years and allowed Black people in the U.S. to safely navigate racialized places.

Today, more than 50 years post segregation, Black U.S. leisure travelers spent \$109.4 billion on travel in 2019 (MMGY, 2020) and have created companies and organizations ‘for us, by us’ – a collective of Black travelers now known in the industry as ‘The Black Travel Move-

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: Sbenjam1@utk.edu, (S. Benjamin), adillette@sdsu.edu. (A.K. Dillette).

¹ Black Americans, Black, and African-Americans will be used interchangeably. These terms refer to American citizens of African descent but in differing ways that citizenship has been achieved. Black Americans is an older encompassing term for African-Americans, and immigrants from the continent of Africa, the Caribbean, and other locations throughout the African diaspora. While ‘Black’ is a political identity that acknowledges an understanding of shared experiences of injustice, by extension of this identity, American Psychological Association, Modern Language Association, Associated Press and other format styles have slowly embraced the respect that should be given to various racial and ethnic groups and how they wish to be labeled. Thus, any mention of those groups ought to reflect this respect and distinction through the capitalization of their group name (i.e. Black, White, African-American, Latinx, Syrian, or Lakota).

ment'. Despite the growing popularity of these groups, academic research in this area remains sparse, with only a few studies published to date (Alderman, 2013; Butler et al., 2002; Carter, 2008; Dilletta et al., 2018; Lee & Scott, 2017). Therefore, we thought it important to explore the roots of this movement through the eyes of its leaders for several reasons: the resurgence of White nationalism during the U.S. Trump Presidency (Giroux, 2017); violence in Charlottesville, Virginia (Duffy et al., 2019); protests and fighting over Confederate monuments (Duffy et al., 2019); the first NAACP travel advisory for a U.S. state (Alderman, 2018; NAACP, 2017); and most recently, the Black Lives Matter protests over the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020 - which catapulted a greater racial divide of #BlackLivesMatter vs. #AllLivesMatter. The Black Travel Movement is as germane as ever.

Sparked by the viral video showing the murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter Movement had taken to the streets before but never to this magnitude, nor intensity, where masses of White people joined Black, Indigenous, and people of color in protesting police brutality and White supremacy. Additionally numerous corporations, institutions, and businesses showed solidarity with the movement. Other initiatives grew from this critical mass including groups like the formation of Black Travel Alliance (BTA) in June 2020. This group consists of Black travel content creators globally who are working to hold destinations and travel brands accountable on the issue of diversity in travel marketing and storytelling. Furthermore, numerous tourism industry articles emerged discussing how systemic racism permeates the American landscape including an interview with Black CEO of Baltimore Convention Visitors Bureau Al Hutchinson (Ali, 2020):

I believe we have a huge opportunity to have a very honest conversation about race ... If we're honest, we need to recognize that as a country, one of the things that's held us up from growth and being as productive as possible is really facing the fact that the treatment of African-Americans in America has been the worst disease of American society ... It's time for us to have these conversations, but White America has to help us to fix this.

The goal of this paper is to take a deeper look into the nexus of marginalized travelers, specifically BTM leaders and the representation of Black experiences within a predominantly White-washed touristic landscape. Informed by whiteness studies (Burton & Klemm, 2011) and critical race theory (Taylor et al., 2009), this study attempts to shed light on the following overarching research questions: *What are the challenges BTM leaders experience in a traditionally White-washed tourism landscape? And How does race inform predominately White audiences' interpretation of the travel and tourism landscape?* Adopting a collective-storytelling approach commonly used in Critical Race Theory, we wanted to glean insight into the ways in which Black Travel Movement leaders have been included, or excluded, within the travel and tourism industry and how White tourism stakeholders are consciously, or unconsciously, informing this landscape.

Conceptual framework

This study interrogates the differences between how Black and White stakeholders interpret and experience the touristic landscape, unpacking how racialized lived experiences inform our own feelings toward tourism consumption and production. It is essential to identify and understand the different dimensions of whiteness within tourism and travel spheres: What form can whiteness take in travel and tourism research? How is, or might, whiteness be operationalized? What social, economic, historical and political factors structure different levels of whiteness in tourism research?

Unpacking Black travel

Black people have endured racial inequalities, segregation, and systemic racism for centuries (Foster, 1999) inclusive of legal segregation known as the 'Jim Crow Era' where laws and policies enforced racial segregation in public facilities like transportation housing, education, restrooms, restaurants, drinking fountains etc. . Overpoweringly White-washed, travel and tourism leave limited room to highlight the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups, resulting in complete invisibility of Black people in the travel sphere (Buzinde et al., 2006). Evidenced by marketing research, the tourism industry has portrayed leisure vacations with all White faces (Burton & Klemm, 2011; Davis, 2018). The attempt to create a 'racial bridge' resulted in the industry creating separate advertisements to highlight Black faces, perpetuating the old American Jim Crow segregation laws - separate but (un) equal (Alderman, 2013). There is also evidence that Black communities are marginalized at heritage tourism sites in the United States, ironically, sites that are meant to highlight the brutalities of the enslaved (Alderman, 2013; Benjamin et al., 2016). Although many years have passed since the legal end to Jim Crow segregation, the landscape of representation has not changed drastically. For example, according to a study on marketing and racism by Davis (2018), "while there have been significant improvements in the representations of people of color over the years, studies show that some common marketing practices often reinforce the concept of white superiority" (p. 157). Davis argues that racism, intended or unintended, is "embedded in the fabric of marketing organizational cultures" (p. 157), serving as a strong communicative tool to reinforce the privilege of a dominant societal group. Consequently, travelers of color are rarely seen in advertisement campaigns, television commercials, and are just starting to make strides in social media marketing campaigns for brands and destinations putting diversity on the agenda (Robinson, 2018).

The body of literature that exists on Black travel, recreation and leisure is scarce, and linked to a relatively small group of researchers (Alderman & Modlin, 2013; Benjamin et al., 2016; Dilletta et al., 2018; Dilletta, 2020; Floyd, 1998; Foster, 1999; Holland, 2002; Lee & Scott, 2017; Philipp, 1994, 1998, 1999; Shinew et al., 2004; Washburne, 1978). In one of the earliest works on Black leisure, Washburne (1978) suggested that Black Americans participated in leisure activities significantly less due to their socio-economic status. More recently, numerous studies argued against this claim, contending that African-Americans are constrained

not by their socio-economic status, but by anxieties steeped in fear of racial discrimination while traveling (Floyd, 1998; Holland, 2002; Philipp, 1994, 1998, 1999). Most closely related to the goals of this study, Butler et al. (2002) revealed the stories of six Black travel agents, exposing their histories, successes and failures. The authors found that Black travel agents faced issues of segregation, government regulations, and access to capital. Since the publication of this study, not only has it been almost two decades, the climate of travel has also changed significantly. Travelers are searching for a travel *influencer*, an agent of change, a leader to walk alongside them on a transformative travel journey. Other important work to note is that of Carter (2008) who conducted a study exploring the differences between Black and White travelers. Results from this study highlighted that Black travelers make decisions about traveling grounded in the mindset of segregation. Almost a decade later in 2017, Lee and Scott explored themes that impacted African-American travel behaviors. The authors found that racial discrimination, fear of racism, storytelling and safety instructions, social reproduction of the fear of racism, and race-related travel choices were all still major players for Black travel behaviors. In 2018, Dilette et al. explored the lived experiences of Black travelers as expressed through a popular social media platform, Twitter. Results revealed that, although issues of racism, microaggressions, and fetishism of Black people are still pronounced, a hopeful tone of meaningful experiences, transformation, and wanderlust was evident.

During the time that these articles were being published, the wider travel and tourism industry started experiencing a change. In 2011, the very first Black travel and lifestyle brand, Nomadness Travel Tribe, was launched. What began as one woman's vision to shape shift the representations of people of color in the travel industry, has grown exponentially and is represented by numerous organizations, bloggers and social influencers driving Black travel as a movement. Following the birth of NOMADNESS, the larger Black Travel Movement began to emerge, empowering Black travelers to share authentic counter-narratives. Many of these travelers made the transition into entrepreneurs and began companies that now make up the movement of organizations serving Black travelers globally (Dilette, 2021). Though the literature provides a solid platform for understanding issues that are still pervasive for Black travelers, an exploration into the rise of this movement is still missing from academic literature. Additionally, although popular culture articles and personal blogs seem to be discussing whiteness and the privileges around traveling 'while White' (Chandra, 2019; Pina, 2019), there is still a dearth of academic publications that focus specifically on the racial spatiality of whiteness in tourism studies (Burton & Klemm, 2011).

Whiteness in American society

Whiteness is a fundamental aspect of American society and can be used as a liberating tool for social justice "to usher new conceptions, new theories, and new approaches to instruction, programming, and understanding the field" (Mowatt, 2009, p. 511). The dominance of whiteness in economic and social life in Western societies reflects their systems of knowledge production (Allen, 2001). For instance, a euro-epistemological stance as a 'master scripting' silences multiple voices and perspectives that legitimizes the dominant White, upper class, male perspective, while the ideology of whiteness constitutes racism. Consequently, Black people view space as raced and most spaces as White spaces in which to be cautious, whereas "Whites view most spaces as normal (i.e. unracial) ... and are so accustomed to unproblematically occupying most spaces that they are unaware that spaces are Colored" (Carter, 2008, p. 268). This was commonplace within leisure and tourism during the Jim Crow era, as certain beaches, restaurants, hotels, and national parks were segregated.

Although there is much attention focused around whiteness within leisure studies (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Mowatt, 2009; Mowatt, 2020), there is a dearth within tourism studies - acknowledging whiteness within tourism scholarship is a distinctive epistemological standpoint. The ideology of whiteness influences four areas: (1) thought and memory, (2) assessment and decision-making, (3) behavior and action and, (4) tendencies to not act outside of a coherent set of beliefs (Mowatt, 2009). Within whiteness studies, Allen (2001) asserted that "most White supremacists do not know that they are White supremacists" (p. 484) - consequently, White tourists and tourism stakeholders may not be aware of their racist views or that they profit from a structure of systemic racism. Although individual White people may be against racism, they still benefit from a system that privileges White people as a group. Being perceived as White carries more than a mere racial classification; it is a social and institutional status and identity imbued with legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others (Singh, 2019). These advantages, also known as 'White privilege' are taken for granted and internalized as being 'normal' experiences that everyone has. For instance, not experiencing employment discrimination, being racially profiled, or murdered by police, or laws/policies in place that cater to and benefit White people (DiAngelo, 2018).

When it comes to discussing or challenging racism, White people tend to feel shame, guilt, apathy, and an internalized sense of dominance (Singh, 2019). DiAngelo (2018) coined this as 'White fragility' where White people claim exemption from further engagement or accountability saying phrases like: 'I know people of color'; 'The real oppression is class (or gender, or anything other than race)'; 'You don't know me'; 'You are elitist'; 'You're playing the race card'; 'I have suffered too'; or 'You misunderstood me' (p. 119-120). Not taking accountability of the status or power that whiteness creates allows for White people to believe in the myth of meritocracy and the illusion that hard work, grit, and determination concludes with 'the American dream'. Therefore, whiteness is a system of racial privilege that is an 'invisible bundle of expectations and courtesies' (Delgado & Stefanic, 1997, xvii) where whiteness 'just is' and no White person is seen as representing their race.

This applies in spaces of tourism where the tourism industry has adopted a White male gaze perpetuating the acceptance and centering of Whiteness through marketing promotional materials (Alderman, 2013), press trips, and the influencer economy (Spinks, 2020). This visual creates a sense of belonging where White people are not only curating these touristic landscapes and experiences, envisioning themselves engaging in activities, but also perpetuating the racist stereotype that Black travelers do not belong in these spaces and places (Spinks, 2020). For instance, Tiana Attridge, editor at Here, the magazine of luggage e-commerce brand Away, shared her experiences as a Black woman working in the travel industry with *Skift*. She noted that

most of the businesses she visits for press trips are White-owned and receive the majority of the representation in addition to most of the people attending these trips are also White. This unconscious, or at times conscious bias, demonstrates the power behind the normativity of Whiteness creating majoritarian or dominant narratives – the exact opposite of marginalized populations' lived experiences seen predominantly within the context of critical race theory.

Critical race theory and methodology

The foundations of Critical Race Theory posit that race and racism are endemic, permanent, and ingrained in the cultural landscape. Racism looks and feels ordinary and natural to persons in the culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) and, therefore, culture constructs its own social reality in ways that promote its own self-interest through words, stories and silence. Drawing on this theory, race is eliminated and moves away from Eurocentric views where the landscape is shown as an equal playing ground.

Critical Race Theory is a complex and fluid phenomenon that postulates that race should be examined as a political, social, and cultural/identity construct; its meanings are infused by those individuals and collectives who create it (Kivel et al., 2009). The hope of Critical Race Theory is to liberate and transform marginalized groups and reveal how dominant narratives are used to distort history and silence and marginalize Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Uncovering ways in which hegemonic practices are perpetuated by 'well-intentioned' individuals, Critical Race Theory helps to expose and explain how underrepresented groups, like Black travelers, are experiencing travel and tourism. Lastly, according to Dilette et al. (2018), methodologies associated with Critical Race Theory are now globally informing data collection and analysis within academic research across disciplines – and can help to unpack social justice elements within dominant culture using storytelling.

Critical Race Theory challenges the notion that individual experiences people have with racism and discrimination cannot represent the collective experiences that Black, Indigenous, or people of color have with racism and discrimination (Cook & Dixon, 2013). Additionally, the Critical Race Theory framework of counter-storytelling and narrative development, including the use of composite characters from data collection and personal experience, enables academics to humanize theory and practice (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). In order to get to the root of systemic change, there must be an acknowledgment of the "existence and power of White hegemony and racism ... that makes explicit the power and ideologies underlying individual action, and the policies and practices of social institutions" (Mowatt, 2020, p. 5). This method allows for reality to be challenged by offering and including the 'stock story' from a majoritarian perspective and a 'counter story' from a marginalized perspective (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). A 'story' evolves into a counter-story when it incorporates rudiments of the theory and challenges assumptions of the dominant culture (Solorzano et al., 2002). Collective stories blend the voices of participants taking note of the logical sequences, natural turns and thematic connections in the data.

Collective stories are fictionalized narratives drawn from interview transcripts, field notes, memos, lived experiences, and other research data where the authors' use of these data is done creatively in an effort to craft a coherent narrative. The following points are taken directly from Cook & Dixon's, 2013 study and assist with the interpretation of the collective story:

- (1) the dialogue, setting, and thoughts of the composite characters come directly from the interviews, field notes, and other data sources but are edited to maintain the flow of the narrative;
- (2) the analysis of the counterstories appears later in the paper; and
- (3) footnotes provide background and factual information for clarity (p. 1246).

This qualitative approach allowed us to explore, in depth, the underlying themes and nuances within the data using "first person, storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law, and the unapologetic use of creativity" creating a composite counter-story (Bell, 1995, p. 899). In this way, the counter-story aids in illustrating how Black, Indigenous and people of colour share a history with racism, discrimination, and White supremacy and speaks against the majoritarian narrative in U.S. society – a narrative that is based on the social and cultural history of the dominant race (Yosso, 2006). As Bell (2003) notes, White people hold the power in telling these master narratives that convey, "a sense of history as progressive, depict a U.S. society that is basically fair and meritocratic, and assume a trajectory of forward progress in which injustices are eventually recognized and rectified over time" (p. 4). Critical Race Theory scholars use composite counter-stories as a way to confront the master narrative that attempts to erase the struggles and resilience of Black, Indigenous and people of colour who have challenged and still challenge the U.S. to live up to its democratic ideals (Cook & Dixon, 2013).

To further add context and illustrate themes gleaned from interviews, the thought processes of the characters draw on interview data. Characters are often representative of several participants rather than a single participant with a pseudonym known as composite characters (Delgado, 1989). Composite characters "are written into social, historical, and political situations that allow the dialogue to speak to the research findings and creatively challenge racism and other forms of subordination" (Yosso, 2006, p. 11). In the case of Delgado's (1989) work "composite characters in stock stories and counterstories represent more than just a single individual racism or identity" which is employed by critical race theorists like Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Tara Yosso.

Methodology

Understanding our own positionality and how race informs us as scholars, we crafted the collective story titled '*Unpacking the Tourism Conference*' incorporating the blended voices of our interviews, direct quotes from workshop participants, and our own lived experiences. This collective story, within two parts, showcases several composite characters that tell a story about the racial aggressions and issues within the tourism industry. Part one unpacks the stock story and is based on data from our workshops to predominantly White audiences (including scholars, tourism stakeholders, and students). This story conveys how unexamined

assumptions guide how the design and development of travel and tourism spaces potentially creates biased and segregated perceptions of the travel industry. Part Two is presented as a composite counter-story from the lived experiences of Black Travel Movement leaders as well as the workshops presented to Black and audiences of color.

Part I: stock story and reflexivity

The data collected for the stock story was based on our observations and experiences at tourism conferences, festivals, and workshops - captured through reflexivity journals and analytic memos (Saldaña, 2015). We facilitated four workshops on Black travel research at our academic institutions and to public audiences of industry stakeholders in the U.S. during 2019–2020. The workshops ranged from 1 to 3 h and consisted of an overview of our research, along with an interactive discussion with audience members. The first workshop was led by both researchers with tourism stakeholders who were predominately White and took place in the southeast. The second and third workshops were academic and made up of undergraduate and graduate students and faculty members who were predominately Black, Indigenous or people of colour. The fourth workshop was an invited research presentation of predominantly White male professors. After each workshop, we documented non-verbal cues, comments, quotes, and questions from participants - helping to inform and design our stock story. Additionally, we included our own reflexivity and positionality in this manuscript to understand our identity, potential biases that we may bring to the field, and highlights the importance of declaring and taking responsibility for our positioning as researchers (Saldaña, 2015).

Stefanie Benjamin. I identify as a White, Jewish, hetero-sexual, cisgender, non-disabled woman. I completed my PhD in Foundations of Inquiry of Education and was informed heavily by Critical Race Theory and whiteness studies— critiquing how power, race, and politics intersect and influence our perspectives. When I dove into this project, I was excited to explore the complexities of Black travel. However, this project resurfaced feelings from my dissertation - being a White scholar researching Black travel. Do I have the ‘right’ to be researching this topic as a White woman? Am I allowed in this space? I will never know what it feels like to be Black, but I can do my best to listen and empathize with this movement. I also was aware of not playing “the good White” - and felt like my sincerity and passion for social equity triumphed over my personal discomfort. I hoped that the participants weren’t holding back their feelings or thoughts around race because I was in the room. I do understand the privileges that I hold as a White person and work toward dismantling White supremacy in the academy and tourism industry.

Alana Dilette. I identify as a Black, bi-racial, bi-cultural, hetero-sexual, cisgender, non-disabled woman. I am from a multi-cultural family and travelled to different countries. This is pertinent because it allowed me to personally understand the lived experiences shared by participants of travelling to different countries as a Black person. After concluding the interviews, my first impressions are that participants seemed receptive to speaking with us. Even before interviewing them, this confirmed that this work is necessary, and that people want to share their stories. Throughout each interview, I did feel my presence brought a certain sense of comfort - it’s like the unspoken *head nod*, when you see a Black person out in the world, nodding your head simply means, *I see you*. As a Black scholar, I felt a sense of fulfillment throughout the process. I felt like I was seen, I felt a yearning to understand more about myself and my history and to pass this knowledge on not only through research, but through storytelling. These interviews solidified how important representation is.

Part II: composite collective-story

We adapted Cook and Dixson's (2013) study that utilized composite characters in their counter-stories turning the focus from the individual participants to larger issues African-Americans faced as a collective group. We did the same for Black travel leaders within the Movement as a collective group by pulling from our interview data, observations, literature, and professional and personal experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). For insurance, in 2018, we conducted semi-structured interviews with leaders of the Black travel movement. Our initial list included seventeen different companies that were identified through an overview of industry publications, podcasts, and blog postings across the digital travel sphere. Additional companies were added to the list as we conducted interviews using the snowball sampling technique (Saldaña, 2015). Overall, we contacted twenty companies - all located and positioned in the U.S. and completed nine in-depth interviews via video conferencing. Interviews ranged from 60 to 90 min and were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions of interviews were returned to each participant to review for necessary edits or corrections for member checking and were coded separately using in vivo and value coding (Saldaña, 2015) through the qualitative text software, NVivo. We focused our curiosity around the challenges Black travel leaders faced, which helped to answer our overarching research question and unpack the complexities around race, assumptions, perceptions, and biases.

The collective story

The setting for the collective story is at a national tourism conference located in the southeast United States pre-COVID-19 and told in two parts. These two narratives are concurrent sessions at the fictional conference, one focusing on a workshop around research on the topic of ‘Traveling While Black’ and the other, a panel session with leaders from the Black Travel Movement.

Both stories revolve around the current Black Travel Movement process by looking at how a decision for representation in the tourism industry is made at the professional level and the pushback from White tourism stakeholders.

Part I opens with the stock story including us, as two academic scholars, presenting a workshop based on our previous research on Black travel. Blended voices including direct quotes of the participants from our workshops are presented below as composite characters: Toni - White workshop facilitator; Mark - White senior professor of tourism, and Anna - White PhD student of cultural studies.

Part I – stock story: ‘we don’t see an issue’

Toni shared according to MMGY’s recent study, U.S. Black leisure travelers contributed to \$109.4 billion to the travel market and make up 13% of the U.S. population. Although this market continues to experience upward growth, the relationships African-Americans have with travel is still complex and the current landscape of the industry is a testament to this.

Mark, who considers himself well versed in tourism economics, interrupts the flow of Toni’s presentation to ask “Why should we care about Black people traveling when they *only* make up 13% of our population and *only* contribute to \$109.4 billion to tourism? What is the TOTAL amount of money generated for travel and tourism? \$109.4 billion is NOT that much compared to the total gross product.” Feeling validated, two White male undergrad students nod in agreement, as they too question why this topic matters.

“*Only!?*” shouted Anna from the back of the room. “Did I hear you correctly? This isn’t just an issue around the amount of money Black travelers contribute to the tourism economy. It goes beyond the money. How would you feel if you were a minority in this country? Think back on what was just presented during this presentation. Think back on the tweet from one of the Black travelers saying, ‘Vaca’s off to a pleasant start, but trying to unsee the confederate flag flying outside a home five minutes down the road’. How would you feel if you traveled to a destination and upon driving into town, you see a large flag that offended you? Would you feel welcomed? Would you feel safe and comfortable visiting? Or, how about getting racially profiled from Airbnb like what we heard in one of the Tweets ‘just got instantly denied on @Airbnb. I wonder why?’”

“Listen, I just don’t get what is so wrong with the Confederate flag. Why do Black people hate it so much? It doesn’t bother me!” replies Mark. “You know, this whole research presentation and workshop ... it all seems biased – it seems like everything is based on race. Also, this research isn’t ‘research’ because it is being pulled from Twitter ... where are the ‘facts’ ... where is the ‘science?’ Where is the ‘data?’ I just do not believe that things are this bad for Black people.”

Anna takes several deep breaths and spans the room trying to find allies. She is shocked to see the amount of White people sitting uncomfortably silent, trying to not make any eye contact with her. She is outraged at the cowardness in the room and says, “the Confederate flag is a symbol that is offensive to many Americans, especially for Black people. It represents a history of racial violence – rape, torturing and killing scores of Black citizens in order to sustain White supremacy and power. So much of our U.S. history is glorified, romanticized, and absent of marginalized voices. Twitter is a platform for Black voices to be heard, for their stories and their experiences to be validated. To say that this is not ‘data’ or not ‘fact’ ... that proves your Eurocentric views on what research *should* be.” Mark, sitting offended and appalled, refuted quickly stating, “I have Black friends ok? I am not a racist. Also, I know what discrimination feels like. I’ve encountered reversed racism for being White!” Anna responds, “The fact that you are bringing it back to your feelings – to your entitlement – to YOU proclaiming that you ‘have Black friends’ and therefore cannot be racist ... that is your White entitlement and privilege showing. This isn’t about *you*. This is about what we just learned through this presentation. Black Twitter users shared various stories detailing their awareness of how tourists, residents, and other people reacted to their traveling. The tweets extracted from the data exemplify the exasperation Black people felt when traveling and frustration faced with having to educate people around the history of being Black in America. I really encourage you to consider your own privileges of being a White man in this country and how that has allowed you the freedom to travel safely. That you never needed a *Green Book* or felt the ramifications of being White and being afraid to travel from your ancestors. It is time for all of us, all White people to educate ourselves on what White privilege truly means and how we can be better allies for marginalized groups. This is the least we can do”.

Rather than provide a breakdown of this story, we ask you to consider the story’s arguments and compare and contrast the reality in the first half of the story with the reality in the next part of the story (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Part II, is the composite collective story which takes place simultaneously as the workshop. In this story, an industry panel session of four Black Travel Movement leaders is underway discussing the barriers and challenges they face as business owners and as traveling while Black. Please note, that although we interviewed nine leaders, we blended their stories to create four composite Black characters reflected below as: Kwesi – founder of Black Ladies Travel; Dawn – CEO of Our Tribe; Sean – Director of Urban Experiences; and Sofia – Founder of Travel Black.

Part II – composite counter-story: we need a new Green Book

Dawn begins, “I want to say thank you to this conference for allowing for our voices to be heard. We don’t typically get to hear from people of color, as our voices have historically been silenced. This, the Black Travel Movement, is a result of slavery that has trickled down. When our ancestors were enslaved people, we were prevented to learn ... and the result of that is catastrophic - still present today. Many of our parents didn’t travel, couldn’t travel. Although now we have the ability to travel and have access to knowledge, generational limits of beliefs still linger. You have to go back and correct all of what went wrong, and this is what the movement is doing for Black Travel. Mainstream media is still doing a poor job representing travelers of color. One of the things that I get booked for are keynotes, and I have a keynote presentation that I give to boards of tourism and destination marketing associations called ‘Why the Travel Industry Needs to See in Color’. It’s usually me standing up, schooling a room full of White people who don’t understand where they’re missing the boat on marketing to travelers of color. It’s just like, ‘You say you want a part of this, but nothing in your marketing is indicating that.’ There’s a couple of levels with it, but it starts with lack of representation and us needing to tell our own stories, us owning our own narratives, and social media became a level playing field for us to be able to do that...

Dawn continues, I’ve had so many tweets. I did this in Missouri. We’re talking Ferguson land, and they are asking me back from doing their governor’s conference. I bring humor to it, but I keep it extremely real with these people. It’s in a delivery that they can digest, instead of them feeling like they’re being attacked. That’s important for me too, because I really need them to listen. One of the big things that’s been coming back more frequently are - say we have a place, a destination that is extremely White, like it’s just known, they’re like, ‘Listen, we want to do better, but we also don’t want to false advertise that there’s these Black-oriented experiences or Black people that live here. How do we do our due diligence, play our part, and not lie in our advertising and marketing?’

My answer to them is, ‘You need to invite the Black people that live in your destination out to dinner and just have a conversation with them. Just talk to them about what their experience is like living in your destination as a Black person. From there, ask them if you were to get Black people to start coming to the destination, what do they think they would be interested in? How do they honestly feel like they would be received? Because not every place is safe for us. They never thought about that.’

I think it depends on the destination, but there are many destinations that are like, ‘Look, we need to get it out.’ This is the first, I’d say, in the last fifteen months I’ve seen the biggest change in the industry that I’ve seen since I started. You’re seeing it with sponsorships. You’re seeing it with partnerships, and you’re also seeing it in keynote bookings that I’m getting and the questions I’m being asked on the back end. I think diversity is starting to become less a buzzword and more something that people are really trying to pay attention to. That’s where I enter the room, but they’ve got to make that choice on their own prior to me walking through that door.”

Kwesi responds, “We, as Black people, continue to face hurdles and discrimination, even at tourism conferences like this one. The most discrimination I’ve experienced is being at travel shows. When I go to travel shows to make connections with vendors, we’re overlooked. I remember approaching a vendor’s table to get information and the vendor, not only did he ignore me, he stayed seated. However, when a Caucasian gentleman walked up, he immediately stood up. ‘Hello sir, how are you? How can I help you?’ And I’m like oh wow, this is what it is ... they can’t ignore us anymore. There’s so many of us, and we’ve grown so big - our platforms are getting bigger and bigger. We have built tangible communities, that is power.”

Sean interrupted, “I never did the travel show sector but want to share more about what it is like being Black in this country. As you look at our audience here now, y’all are mostly White. So let me break it down for you ... I think if you are African-American and you turn on the TV, it’s pretty routine that you will hear about something that just makes you uncomfortable. You hear about police shootings, you hear about people just having the police called on them for existing. And me personally, I’m in a place, in a mindset where I feel like maybe I don’t need to be in America, or maybe I need to be open to the idea of living somewhere else.”

Dawn shared, “Social media, like I said before, has leveled the playing field. We are owning our own narratives, and we’re building platforms that are getting the reach where people have no choice but to see that this isn’t going anywhere and that it’s only growing. However, being a Black startup, people underestimate us in a lot of ways. We’ve had to go through different development teams, guys who were just trying to hustle us and take advantage of us. I think the main roadblock is funding... just overcoming that learning curve of being a Black startup and having to further prove yourself.

I think that reminds people, ‘Hey, for as much as we’ve advanced, we still have more to go.’ I think that that forces people of color around the world to be like, ‘Well look, it was cool for a bit, but we have to go back into our communities and not forget about how real things are for us, not only in America but around the world’. I think in a lot of ways as much as it sucks, it’s almost been good for us because people are remembering ‘we do need each other right now’. It makes sense for

us to build these spaces and these companies to further serve our market. We're in a cultural renaissance, whether it be artistically, socially, technologically. There are many awesome things happening and as we collaborate and come together, there's going to be so many opportunities."

Analyzing the collective story

This story adds to the growing need for more critical, reflexive and embodied counter-narratives of tourism (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). Rigorous qualitative research requires rich description, yet solely using pseudonyms would not offer the protection participants deserved in sharing their stories and experiences (Cook & Dixson, 2013). The use of collective storytelling answers the call by Ladson-Billings (2005) to provide, "richer, more detailed stories that place our stories in more robust and powerful contexts" (p. 117). An important function of collective storytelling is "providing empirical space for researchers to recount the stories and experiences of people who are in politically vulnerable positions and working in politically charged environments" (Cook & Dixson, 2013, p. 1253). The experiences shared in both the stock/majoritarian story and composite counter-story make up the collective story and unveil the difficult but extraordinarily important truth that, as a tourism industry, we are still dealing with the remnants of a history steeped in systemic racism.

First told in the collective story is the stock story which illustrates how the historical dominance of White supremacy in U.S. society still contributes to an environment of defensiveness, fragility, and reluctance of discussing race (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2002). Often, the majoritarian story is not questioned because, as Solórzano and Yosso (2002) observed, "people do not see them as stories but as natural parts of everyday life" (p. 28) which is masked in White supremacy. In fact, in our majoritarian story, many in the room remained silent during the workshop, aligning with tenants of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) that posit White people feeling uncomfortable discussing race, acknowledging their part in systemic racism, or continuing to center Whiteness within their story (Spingh, 2019). This is indicative of 'the ideology of whiteness' (Mowatt, 2019) where White participants refuse to acknowledge the wealth, power, and privilege passed down generationally and historically or their perpetuation of White supremacy. These dominant Eurocentric worldviews pose a crucial issue as many of them continue to fill rooms around the globe where important decisions about tourism are being made. Though the stock story presented us with a grim view of Black/White relations in travel and tourism, it is our hope that the workshops acted as a platform from which some industry stakeholders left feeling a sense of responsibility to make changes in their various organizations. However, the challenge remains – how can awareness and conversations around race and racism, in a room predominantly full of White people, be heard without White fragility or defensiveness? When will White people hold themselves accountable for White supremacy and racism and actively become anti-racist?

The second part in the collective story is the part that speaks against the dominant narrative in U.S. society – a narrative that is based on the social and cultural history of the dominant race (Cook & Dixson, 2013). The story juxtaposed against the majoritarian narrative reveal the existence of White supremacy and racism in the tourism industry and the structural conditions that continue to limit the professional lives of Black travel stakeholders. For instance, the lack of representation of Black, Indigenous and people of colour within marketing/advertising and having to endure the emotional labor of trying to educate White people on this issue (Singh, 2019). The constant theme of discrimination, through micro-aggressions to blatant denial of access of financial means – proved exhausting for Black Travel Movement founders. The power that White stakeholders continue to have in the industry creates multiple barriers and hurdles for marginalized groups. As Derrick Bell (2004, p. 195) argued:

Beyond the ebb and flow of racial progress lies the still viable and widely accepted (though seldom expressed) belief that America is a white country in which blacks, particularly as a group, are not entitled to the concern, resources, or even empathy that would be extended to similarly situated whites.

Telling the composite counter-story allowed for the exposure and explanation of how marginalized groups continue to feel in predominantly White landscapes. Quotes shared from Black Travel Movement founders in front of audiences predominantly made up of people of color, were well received, and created a sense of solidarity in the room amongst attendees. When these stories were shared in a majoritarian room, like in the stock story, the opposite occurred. Thus, these two stories confirm the premise within Critical Race Theory that the master narrative attempts to erase the experiences of the marginalized (Cook & Dixson, 2013). For those White tourism stakeholders who expressed an interest in being an ally, they approached Black travel leaders with more of a 'tell me what to do' attitude, centering their Whiteness and their role, rather than a 'I want to learn and understand your struggles' attitude (Singh, 2019). This boundary is nothing new to critical race or whiteness studies, but, without remedy – will continue to be a significant barrier to addressing the systemically racist undertones of travel and tourism.

Within the context of systemic racism and White supremacy in the U.S., Critical Race Theory narratives, stories, legacies, and other creative and interdisciplinary products venture to include positions of those deemed "as being at the bottom," challenging normative beliefs about power relations (Matsuda et al., 1993). According to Matsuda (1995), narratives that look to the bottom both recognize that, "... those who lack material wealth or political power still have access to thought and language, and their development of those tools ... differ from that of the most privileged" (p. 65). This way of counter-storytelling is entrenched in the lived experiences of those who are least privileged. It is our hope that our industry becomes more conscious of the current reality for Black travel stakeholders from the perspectives of the Movement's founders. That by reading the counter-stories,

hearing their voices, their frustrations, and their hopes will encourage critiques of the dominant Whitewashed narrative - causing action toward creating an authentic and truly inclusive landscape where marginalized voices are finally valued, heard, represented, and compensated.

CONCLUSIONS

Although these stories revealed the continued struggles that exist behind the scenes, they also represent the growth and movement that is bringing us one step closer to equity. As mentioned previously, more attention around institutionalized racism, specifically within tourism, are *trending* as seen in the *Skift* interview with Angela Gathings (2020), a Black travel agent:

It's challenging when the industry isn't as inclusive or diverse as it should be ... The travel industry is another industry to be made to feel invisible and voiceless. I would (and I'm sure every other Black person in this industry) would love to see more representation at every level. I would love to see major organizations DO MORE to welcome minorities in the travel industry and give them some resources to help them be seen and grow their businesses.

Dismantling Whiteness within the tourism landscape will take major strides, not only within our research paradigm, but within the politics and policies in the tourism industry. Collaboration between social equity scholars and the Black Travel Movement can help foster a paradigm shift that creates not only space for marginalized voices to be heard, but also tangible steps toward building an anti-racist tourism landscape and industry. For instance, on June 11, 2020, an open letter signed by 21 African-American Convention Visitors Bureau presidents and vice presidents (USAE, 2020) shared a new vision for the tourism industry:

Begin by accepting that racism has no place in this country or our industry, perhaps a starting point for making things better would be to establish meaningful platforms to have open conversations to LISTEN to those in the industry, as well as the broader traveling public whose experiences are shaped by the policies and decisions made by those of us in positions of leadership.

To make this actionable, leading travel brands and businesses should create safe and consistent spaces for dialogue around difficult issues like race as presented in this study - housed within tourism conferences or within companies. However, one diversity training or inclusiveness workshop will not fix the issues exposed. As an industry, we must address the fact that many of the experiences detailed in these cases are deeply embedded in U.S. society and need deep and continued attention to become undone. Other recommendations include creating stronger, more widespread frameworks of accountability across the tourism industry that will actually follow up on the progress (or lack of) progress made with regards to racial equity - partnering with racial equity organizations such as the Black Travel Alliance or Tourism RESET.

As Cannella & Lincoln (2017) posited, "we must struggle to 'join with' and 'learn from' rather than 'speak for' or 'intervene into.' Voices from the margins demonstrate the range of knowledge, perspectives, languages, and ways of being that should become foundational to our actions, that should become a new center." (p. 86). We encourage scholars to 'get comfortable with being uncomfortable' and to use privilege, in this case academic and White privilege, to disseminate these difficult conversations around systemic racism, White supremacy, and hegemony within our academic and industry spheres. Our question is, will the predominately White tourism industry follow this call? When will these honest and difficult dialogues transpire to enforce actionable and tangible changes within the industry - beyond the tokenized Black tourist on a brochure, toward authentic inclusion of Black management and leaders, amplifying and representing Black voices?

References

- Alderman, D. H. (2013). Introduction to the special issue: African-Americans and tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(3), 375–379.
- Alderman, D. H. (2018). The racialized and violent biopolitics of mobility in the USA: An agenda for tourism geographies. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4), 717–720.
- Alderman, D. H., & Modlin, E. A., Jr. (2013). Southern hospitality and the politics of African American belonging: An analysis of North Carolina tourism brochure photographs. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 30(1), 6–31.
- Ali, R. (2020, June 10). Let's have a discussion about race. Skift<https://bit.ly/2B6Nlr8>.
- Allen, R. L. (2001). The globalization of white supremacy: Toward a critical discourse on the racialization of the world. *Educational Theory*, 51(4), 467.
- Arai, S., & Kivel, B. D. (2009). CRT and social justice perspectives on whiteness, difference(s) and (anti) racism: A fourth wave of race research in leisure studies. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 41(4), 459–472.
- Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. Oxford University Press.
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review*, 4, 893–910.
- Bell, L. (2003). Telling tales: What stories can teach us about racism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 6(1), 3–28.
- Benjamin, S., Kline, C., Alderman, D., & Hoggard, W. (2016). Heritage site visitation and attitudes toward African American heritage preservation: An investigation of North Carolina residents. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(7), 919–933.
- Bernal, D., & Villalpando, O. (2002). An apartheid of knowledge in academia: The struggle over the "legitimate" knowledge of faculty of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2), 169–180.
- Burton, D., & Klemm, M. (2011). Whiteness, ethnic minorities and advertising in travel brochures. *The Service Industries Journal*, 31(5), 679–693.
- Butler, D. L., Carter, P. L., & Brunn, S. D. (2002). African-American travel agents: Travails and survival. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(4), 1022–1035.
- Buzinde, C., Santos, C., & Smith, S. (2006). Ethnic representations: Destination imagery. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(3), 707–728.
- Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). The ethics social, intellectual, and even political positions from which the notion of research. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 83.
- Carter, P. L. (2008). Coloured places and pigmented holidays: Racialized leisure travel. *Tourism Geographies*, 10(3), 265–284.
- Chandra, G. (2019, September 9). 7 ways to check your white privilege while traveling. FodorsTravel<https://bit.ly/2MU6IXh>.

- Cook, D. A., & Dixon, A. D. (2013). Writing CRT and method: A composite counterstory on the experiences of Black teachers in New Orleans post-Katrina. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(10), 1238–1258.
- Davis, J. (2018). Selling whiteness?—A critical review of the literature on marketing and racism. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 34(1–2), 134–177.
- Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, 87(8), 2411–2441.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Critical White studies*. Temple University Press Retrieved February 23, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bw1kc5>.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2000). *Critical race theory*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press.
- Dillette, A. (2020). Roots tourism: A second wave of Double Consciousness for African Americans. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–16.
- Dillette, A. K. (2021). Black travel tribes: An exploration of race and travel in America. In C. Pforr, R. Dowling, & M. Volgger (Eds.), *Consumer tribes in tourism*. Singapore: Springer.
- Dillette, A. K., Benjamin, S., & Carpenter, C. (2018). Tweeting the Black travel experience: Social media counternarrative stories as innovative insight on #TravelingWhileBlack. *Journal of Travel Research*, 58(8), 1357–1372.
- Duffy, L., Pinckney, H., Benjamin, S., & Mowatt, R. (2019). A critical discourse analysis of racial violence in South Carolina, USA: Implications for traveling while Black. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(19), 2430–2446.
- Floyd, M. F. (1998). Getting beyond marginality and ethnicity: The challenge for race and ethnic studies in leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 30(1), 3–22.
- Foster, M. S. (1999). In the face of "Jim Crow": Prosperous blacks and vacations, travel and outdoor leisure, 1890–1945. *The Journal of Negro History*, 84(2), 130–149.
- Gathings, A. (2020, June 5). A Black travel agent's message for her industry. Skift<https://bit.ly/2BYAhEJ>.
- Giroux, H. A. (2017). White nationalism, armed culture and state violence in the age of Donald Trump. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 43(9), 887–910.
- Holland, J. (2002). *Black recreation: A historical perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kivel, B. D., Johnson, C. W., & Scraton, S. (2009). (Re)theorizing leisure, experience and race. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 41(4), 473–493.
- *Ladson-Billings, G. (2005). The evolving role of critical race theory in educational scholarship. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 115–119.
- Lee, K. J., & Scott, D. (2017). Racial discrimination and African-Americans' travel behavior: The utility of habitus and vignette technique. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(3), 381–392.
- Matsuda, M. (1995). Looking to the bottom: Critical legal studies and reparations. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 63–79). New York, NY: New Press.
- Matsuda, M., Lawrence, C., Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. (1993). *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the first amendment*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- MMGY (2020). *The Black traveler: Insights, opportunities, and priorities report*.
- Mowatt, R. A. (2009). Notes from a leisure son: Expanding an understanding of whiteness in leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 41(4), 511–528.
- Mowatt, R. A. (2019). A people's history of leisure studies: Where the white nationalists are. *Leisure Studies*, 1–18.
- Mowatt, M. (2020). *Revised notes from a leisure son: Expanding an understanding of White supremacy in leisure*. Annals of Leisure Research.
- NAACP (2017, August 2). Travel advisory for state of Mississippi. <https://bit.ly/37tnMwww>.
- Philipp, S. (1994). Race and tourism choice: A legacy of discrimination? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3), 479–488.
- Philipp, S. (1998). African-American perceptions of leisure, racial discrimination, and life satisfaction. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 87(3_suppl), 1418.
- Philipp, S. (1999). Are we welcome? African American racial acceptance in leisure activities and the importance given to children's leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31(4), 385–403.
- Pina (2019). Lets talk privilege. Pina Travel <https://bit.ly/3fjeiH6>.
- Robinson, E. (2018, January 14). Why the travel industry needs to see in color. Travel & Leisure<https://bit.ly/2AwPY5Q>.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.
- Shinew, K., Floyd, M., & Parry, D. (2004). Understanding the relationship between race and leisure activities and constraints: Exploring an alternative framework. *Leisure Sciences*, 26(2), 181–199.
- Singh, A. A. (2019). *The racial healing handbook: Practical activities to help you challenge privilege, confront systemic racism, and engage in collective healing*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23–44.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1/2), 60–73.
- Spinks, R. (2020, June 26). Tourism marketers must now go beyond optics to reach Black travelers. Skifthttps://skift.com/2020/06/26/tourism-marketers-must-now-go-beyond-optics-to-reach-black-travelers/?utm_content=132879288&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&hss_channel=fbp-155942621181219.
- Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *Foundations of CRT in education*. USAE (2020). Retrieved from <https://usaenews.com/USAEMail/An-Open-Letter.pdf>.
- Washburne, R. (1978). Black under-participation in wildland recreation: Alternative explanations. *Leisure Sciences*, 1(2), 175–189.
- Wilson, E., & Hollinshead, K. (2015). Qualitative tourism research: Opportunities in the emergent soft sciences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 54, 30–47.
- Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the chicana/chicano educational pipeline*. New York: Routledge.

Stefanie Benjamin, PhD is an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee and the Co-Director and Research Fellow for Tourism RESET. Her research interests include social equity in tourism around the intersectionality of race, gender, sexual orientation, and people with disabilities. She also researches contents tourism, implements improvisational theater games as innovative pedagogy, and is a certified qualitative researcher exploring ethnography, visual methodology, and social media analysis.

Alana K. Dillette is an Assistant Professor in the Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University. She also serves as a co-initiative coordinator for Tourism RESET, an organization focused on promoting race, ethnicity and social equity in tourism. Her research interests include issues around diversity and inclusion, more specifically looking at the intersection between tourism, race, gender & ethnicity. Currently, she is conducting research to better understand the Black travel experience.