**Research Proposal**

At the outset of this venture I had many pre-conceived notions about the condition of young people in Ghanaian society and was under the erroneous assumptions that there would be many similarities in the way young people of African descent in both Ghana and America dealt with: their economic status; drug culture; relationship to authority; participation in politics; views about the future; their place in society’ and life in general. At the heart of these assumptions was a personal belief that in some way form or fashion there was a commonality of oppressive culture that permeated the experiences of people of color everywhere.

Based on those assumptions I surmised the following hypotheses:

H1: There would be many similarities in crime rates and types between Ghanaian and African American youth.

H2: There would be similarities in drug use and abuse among young people comparable to those in the states.

H3: There would be similarities in poverty and lack of opportunity which would lead to major social problems for youth and society.

H4: There would be social deviance such as lack of respect for governmental and police authority, no value placed on educational attainment, negative public behaviors, and in some instances outright lawlessness.

I must admit these feelings were not drawn from any objective or empirical foundations

but were based on personal experiences and expectations, conversations with peers, authors whose views were somewhat suspect, and a personal subjectivity which bordered on myopia. And since most research in America showed a distinct relationship between poverty and the plethora of social ills found in African American communities, it seemed like a sensible assumption, which at its core asked the overarching question of what does citizenship look like for the African living in the same or similar condition as the African American. At the same time I also wondered if this was the case, if conditions were similar, were there mechanisms in place such as social movements, non governmental organizations, and other forms of grassroots organizing which gave people access to the Ghanaian governmental structures which could address the concerns of the impoverished and provide some relief. Which hopefully did not include an expansion of the prison/industrial complex as the cornerstone of problem solving.

Fundamental to these ideas is the sense that we are seeing a slow degradation of social networks and communities worldwide as the boundaries of economic and class separation are slowly disappearing. Through advancing technologies the world is becoming one massive nation that includes all people on the planet. This development was unforeseen just thirty short years ago, but as entities such as business and industry seem to be moving ahead at light speed, social and cultural attitudes are moving at a snail’s pace. Therefore we are obligated to find new ways of looking and thinking about things, especially those that are retrogressive, in order to develop progressive stances such as those taken by many of our prescribed authors which can help explain the present and theorize a new future.

Therefore the approach I thought best was one of an interested but not too inquisitive by-stander, (a form of non participant observer) listening to conversations in general, engaging when necessary, and being willing to let the indigenous people express themselves as they saw fit. This made everyone a possible primary source including my fellow travelers who would have conversational exchanges with locals and between themselves which would make evidence collection rather simple. This information can be presented in a “man on the street” format on my website, and if interest is great enough it may encourage me to return to Ghana in order to follow-up on some initial findings.

And in case there is no interest sparked in the minds of the general public, it may begin to start new conversations about solutions to our everyday problems in our inner cities, and there is always the possibility that those interested in social reform, violence intervention, educational reform, and improving government policies on poverty and crime may find the information viable as an adjunct to their ongoing efforts at intervening in the seeming down spiraling lives of African American youth