

MIGRANT COLLECTIVES AS NEW TWENTY FIRST CENTURY  
TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS: THE CASE OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA

by

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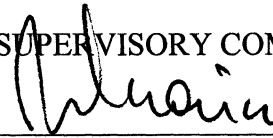
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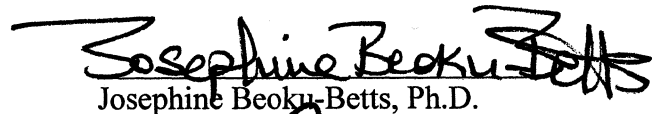
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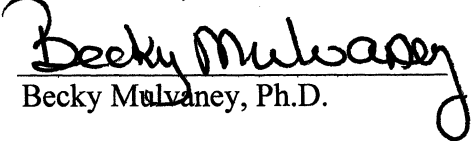
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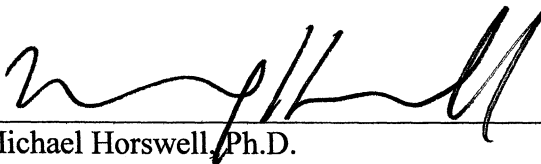
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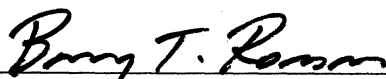
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I will be forever indebted to my family in Jamaica and extended family and friends in the United States. They are too many to name here, but suffice it to say that without their unending, unconditional support, generosity and love, I would not

have been able to finish this project or survive in the United States. Thank you for opening your hearts and your doors to me.

## ABSTRACT

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In the past two decades the tendency to view migrant communities as victimized, without agency, or oppressed has been challenged by the new rhetoric of “Diaspora”. The recent formation of Diaspora movements globally suggests that these groups of migrants are not just financial remitters but are organized, visible collectives that influence the geo-political status quo in many ways. Scholars in social and cultural studies grapple with how best to define and understand these revived and reinvented migrant collectives. This case study brings clarifications to current understandings and interpretations of Diasporas. Utilizing qualitative methodology in conjunction with the analytical lenses of social movement theory and the rhetoric of movements, the study addresses the gaps in the literature on Diasporas by exploring the factors that contributed to the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora during the years 1962 to 2011.

The results reveal that the unique nexus between the global and local contexts create distinctive “third spaces” out of which Diasporas emerge. This is significant since,

traditionally, studies have granted preference to the creation of Diasporas in just the host countries. However, the case of Jamaica illustrates that the occurrences on the local level, in the homeland, are equally important in determining the manner in which Diasporas emerge. One such example is the changing attitudes of the Jamaican government towards its migrant community between 1990 and 2000 which affected the development, recognition and influence of the Jamaican Diaspora. As such, the findings call for a reopening and reconsideration of our understandings of Diasporas as not just transnational entities, but as *transnational-national* movements encompassing a very nationalistic element. This nationalistic element is evident in the way migrants mobilize around new conceptualizations of their identity, who they are and how they understand their nationality. This (re)created diasporic identity becomes the impetus and fuel for the Diaspora movement. Moving even beyond our conceptualization of movements, this study also connects Diasporas to the notion of publics. Migrant communities, like the Jamaican Diaspora, negotiate global and local terrains, operate as self-organized publics and form new public spaces in which a common identity, goal and imagination connects and motivate strangers.

## DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my family, particularly to my mother, Frantz Johnson and father, Leroy Johnson, whose confidence, support and unconditional love made the journey worthwhile. I also dedicate this work to those in the Jamaican Diaspora who inspired this project and allowed me access to their lives.

MIGRANT COLLECTIVES AS NEW TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS: THE CASE OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA

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## INTRODUCTION

Advances in information technology, increased accessibility to communication via the internet and more affordable modes of transportation have facilitated the rapid mobility of information, capital, people and power to nontraditional spheres. In the twenty-first century, such nontraditional spheres include Diasporas—groups of migrants originating from the same homeland who have formed transnational, movements. Throughout the study, the word “diaspora” (common ‘d’) denotes the larger community of Jamaican migrants scattered around the world. “Diaspora” (capital “D”) will be used in reference to the actual movement, that is, those individuals who have made the decision to take an active role in the transnational movement. This is my own operationalization of the terms that are employed throughout the study. This clarification is helping the reader determine who I am referring to in the various discussions.

Diasporas are comprised of migrants who have shifted away from traditional, linear understandings of “migrants” and who have reclaimed and adopted the concept of “Diaspora” as a new means of defining who they are. As a result, the term has become a more influential and action-infused one that encompasses not only the experience of migrants, but also the impact they intend to have on the world. Diasporas are now seen as contemporary types of public spheres<sup>1</sup> where migrants come together collectively, despite

being dispersed globally, in order to engage in rational, critical debate. These new public spaces exist not just physically, but in conversations, in discourse, and, most importantly, in their reclaimed identity and redefined understanding of citizenship and nationality.

Indeed, there is something unique about such nontraditional communities, something that is beginning to grab the attention of other migrants, politicians, intellectuals and academics alike. This is the context in which this research is justified. The political importance of Diasporas across the globe is evident in the recent surge in discussions about their geo-political influence. The 2010-2011 Arab Spring (the revolutionary political demonstrations and protests in the Middle East) gained tremendous global coverage for the way in which residents were displaying levels of frustration and intolerance for injustice; but it also was a platform from which Diasporas connected to these countries were able to directly become involved in socio-political change. The important role of migrants in the Arab Spring resulted in political analysts, academics and intellectuals developing renewed interest in the impact of diasporas. One online commentary, *The National*, published an article discussing the important role of diasporas, not just in the revolutionary process of change, but also in the future reconstruction of the countries affected in the Arab Spring. Specifically, the article highlighted the World Bank's appeal that these nations call on their Diasporas to help them rebuild and quotes the organization's economist, Dilip Ratha as saying, "The diaspora can be a friend in foul weather. If things are not going well in your country, and foreign investors aren't there, the diaspora will still be there" (Arnold 2011). These kinds

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<sup>1</sup> A very thorough investigation of public spheres and the way they have transformed in contemporary times, see Jurgen Habermas' timeless volume, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962).

of discussions about Diasporas are not unique to the Arab Spring or to countries experiencing political upheaval.

For example, in 2012, the U.S. State Department hosted its second annual Global Diaspora Forum under the theme, “Moving Forward by Giving Back.” This conference took place in the nation’s capital on July 25-26, 2012. According to the website for the forum, “The Global Diaspora Forum is an annual celebration of America’s diaspora communities. The gathering challenges diaspora communities to forge partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and public institutions in order to make their engagements with their countries of origin or ancestry effective, scalable, and sustainable” ([www.globaldiasporaalliance.org](http://www.globaldiasporaalliance.org)). Such examples of journalists, intellectuals and political leaders hosting conferences and forums and making public attempts to facilitate Diasporas influence on the home countries shows just how timely this research is.

This renewed interest in Diasporas is not limited to the developing world or to the host countries where migrants reside. Leaders in developing countries<sup>2</sup> also are having conversations and reconsidering nontraditional resources that could help them become competitive. Noticeably, Diasporas frequently are mentioned in these conversations, often cited as invaluable assets to aid in the country’s development and therefore a major part of the solutions they seek. The case of Jamaica is a good example of a developing country that recently has experienced a shift in the way in which it engages with its diaspora. Historically, it has had a somewhat negative relationship with its migrant community. However, since 2000, the Jamaican government has extended itself

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of these countries are in Africa, the Caribbean and South America

tremendously to repair the damaged relationship that existed and has adopted new attitudes towards its diaspora. This shift in attitude, in conjunction with other contextual factors, has resulted in the formation, and growing sustainability of the Jamaican Diaspora movement.

This study illuminates and explores the unique trajectory of Jamaicans who collectively transitioned from viewing themselves as migrants, to forming a Jamaican diaspora community and finally to becoming members of an active *transnational* organization—the Jamaican Diaspora movement. Of specific interest, is an examination of those factors that are pivotal in its sustenance as well as the projections that can be made for the future of this movement. Exploring these dimensions of the Jamaican Diaspora uncovers the tensions and negotiations on the global and local levels that result in the creation of these contemporary migrant collectives.

In embodying the notion of public intellectual work, this research engages theoretical ideas with the ultimate purpose of conveying to the public the relevant insights derived. While the primary intention is to supplement and enhance academic literature, the information gathered and conclusions made are of practical use to the community it explores and is intended to facilitate positive change. In light of that, the first two sections are dedicated to a thorough investigation of the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora while the third section entails detailed recommendations for this movement. The information is valuable for policy makers and politicians in home countries that have large Diasporas as well as decision makers in the host countries, where migrants have relocated.



Furthermore, this is a historical and reflective study that members of the Jamaican Diaspora can utilize to enhance the movement and become more efficacious agents of change. While the focus of this study is the Jamaican movement, a thorough understanding of the processes of mobilization as well as of the factors influencing participation is beneficial for members in all Diasporas. Finally, this research is of importance to anyone who is impacted by the current rapid wave of migration being facilitated by this new era of globalization—this is, in fact, everyone.

#### Statement of the Problem

Kim Butler (2001) postulates, “Human beings have been in perpetual motion since the dawn of time, but not all their movements have resulted in Diasporas” (189). That is, diaspora formation is not necessarily the direct, inevitable outcome of mass waves of migration. In the case of Jamaica, mass migration has been occurring primarily to the United Kingdom since the 1940s and then to the United States and Canada in the 1960s and beyond. Best estimates as of 2008 suggest that there are approximately 637,000 Jamaicans in the United States, 123,500 in Canada and 150,000 in the United Kingdom (Glennie and Chappell 2011). Still, it was not until approximately 2004 that Jamaican migrants made a conscious decision to become involved in an active transnational movement. There was a shift from Jamaicans identifying themselves as migrants, to identifying themselves as members of a diaspora community and then finally to defining themselves as part of a Diaspora movement. In addition to mass migration, there must be other factors facilitating these movements. This puzzle of Diaspora development is the motivation behind this study.

## Research Questions

Research questions for this study include the following:

1. Since diaspora is not an inevitable consequence of migration, what factors led to the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora in 2004?
2. What events local and global events or conditions triggered the formation of this transnational Jamaican diaspora community?
3. What key players or “agents of diasporic imagination” helped to frame the discourse of the Jamaican Diaspora and what was the impact on the movement?
4. What is the future of this movement and other Diasporas?

## Chapter Overviews

This study is divided into four sections that develop chronologically. The first section, comprised of the first two chapters provides the literature review, theoretical framework, and methodology upon which the argument in the study is based. The second section, inclusive of chapters 3 through 5, provides a background to the Jamaican Diaspora movement (prior to 2004), detailing the historical context on both the global and local levels out of which the Jamaican Diaspora emerged. Section three, inclusive of chapters 6 through 8, engage with a more contemporary discussion of the movement (2004 to 2011), shifting the focus to the existing sustaining elements of the Jamaican Diaspora and those factors, that make the movement viable today. Finally, in section four, chapter 9 elucidates the future of the movement (2011 and beyond), discussing proposals for the next moves of the Jamaican Diaspora and what should be expected. Chapter 10 summarizes the research, presents an analysis of the implications of this study and makes recommendations for future research.

## SECTION I: STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

### Section Overview

This section provides an understanding and justification of the foundation of this research. The first chapter describes the various ways in which this study enhances the existing academic literature in various disciplines including research on Jamaican migration, movements, Diasporas and identity formation. Following this is a description of the theoretical frameworks employed in the study, including an overview of interdisciplinary research, perspectives on Diasporas, identity theory, social movement theory and theories on the rhetoric of movements.

## CHAPTER 1: ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Contribution to the Literature on Jamaican Migration and the Jamaican Diaspora

In terms of Jamaican migration, much exhaustive research has been conducted focusing on the numerical significance of the mass migration of Jamaicans specifically to the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States<sup>3</sup>. Such research often focuses on the where Jamaicans settled, how they assimilate and what they do once they migrate. Other research on Jamaican migration tends to highlight remittances such as financial support to Jamaican schools, hospitals, hometown associations and personal consumption, which, when added together account for a significant portion of Jamaica's Gross Domestic Product<sup>4</sup>. These studies are not as concerned with understanding the lived experiences, consciousness and identity of Jamaican Diaspora formation or with the process of how migrants experience the transition from migrants to involvement in a transnational movement. This study moves away from researching migrant numbers and migrant locations as well as from migrant adjustment and assimilation to an understanding of the significant historical and contextual structures that led to the development of the Jamaican Diaspora.

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, Castles 1998; Chamberlain 1998; Foner 1978; Henke 2001; Olwig 2007

<sup>4</sup> In 2007, remittance inflows from the diaspora to Jamaica totaled US\$1.9B, a figure that by all indications has risen since. The average annual amount Jamaican migrants send home is approximately US \$640 (Glennie and Chappell 8). These remittances from members of the Jamaican diaspora now comprise the largest source of foreign exchange receipts in Jamaica. In 2005, Jamaicans in the diaspora sent home US \$1.6 billion (60% of this came from the United States, 25% from the United Kingdom, 5% from Canada and 10% from other countries), a figure that has likely increased in recent years (Franklyn 5). Here it should be noted that remittances from the diaspora have surpassed revenue from tourism.

The recent visibility of emerging Diasporas means that little has been done in detailing or exploring the significance of these movements including how and why they came about. As a result, there is a paucity of scholarship that fully examines the unique case of each movement including the Jamaican Diaspora. Delano Franklyn, a Jamaican intellectual, attorney, and former Jamaican politician (2002-2007) recently published *The Jamaican Diaspora: Building an Operational Framework* (2010). Prior to publishing the book, Mr. Franklyn was the first Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who had the responsibility of working with the Jamaican Diaspora to stage the first biennial Diaspora conference held in Jamaica. His book is an overview of the first two Jamaican Diaspora biennial conferences (held in 2004 and 2006), and contains a compilation of written transcripts of the speeches made at the two conferences. Franklyn's edited volume assesses the Jamaican Diaspora as well as the conferences through the eyes of a Jamaican politician and does not examine the reasons they formed a collective body, the experience of becoming members of the Diaspora or how they perceive their involvement in the movement.

For example, when referring to the initial discussions and symposium on Diaspora in Jamaica, Franklyn states, "That symposium set the stage for Jamaica to join a raft of other countries which have been taking initiatives to establish formal mechanisms to coordinate the relationship between their Diaspora and institutions at home. In all these cases, the initiatives have been led by the state" (10). In his introduction, he further states, "The efforts of the stakeholders, led by the Government, to broaden the discourse has clearly proven that without the establishment of workable organizational linkages, the possibilities which exist between Jamaicans at home and abroad for a greater and more

coordinated, mutually beneficial working relationship will not materialize” (22). Notice the way in which Franklyn states that the effort at Diaspora engagement and involvement is an initiative led by the government. From this, we can get the sense Franklyn comes from the perspective that it is the government that really paved the way for the Diaspora movement. While the government certainly played a role, in this study, I discuss the movement formation from the perspective of the members, arguing that, within the context given, the migrants were and are the ones responsible for the Diaspora movement being formed. In fact, in his chart analysis, Franklyn places the Government of Jamaica at the very top of the organizational structure of the Jamaican Diaspora, with the advisory board and members of the movement below, (see Appendix 1). This perspective, while not completely erroneous, presents a perspective that privileges the role of the government minimizing efforts of the movement members. Franklyn, like other scholars, sees the government as playing the most important role in the movement. As such, his volume fails to tease out the entirety of the unique contextual conditions that gave rise to this movement in the first place. Being a part of the Jamaican Diaspora, I am much more interested in telling the story from the viewpoint of the migrants and telling the story from my own vantage point within the larger context. This study highlights the ways in which Jamaican migrants galvanized around a renewed understanding of their identity and purpose as members of a diaspora.

Additionally, this study will add to the literature on Jamaican movements. While there have been some studies on Jamaican social movements, for the most part, they have focused on slave rebellions and revolts, the rebellions of the Maroon community, and the

Garveyite and Rastafarian movements<sup>5</sup>. More recently, some scholars have begun to pay attention to other internal movements in Jamaica including gender equality movements, environmental movements and citizen movements resisting government imposed taxes and road tolls<sup>6</sup>. Still, these studies on social movements in Jamaica overlook the possibility of the Jamaican Diaspora as a transnational social movement with Jamaica as its hub. It is argued in this study that although the Jamaican Diaspora is comprised of members from outside Jamaica, the roots of the movement can be found in Jamaica.

#### Contribution to the Literature on Diasporas

The existing literature on diasporas tends to explore the various ways in which governments in home countries can benefit from these collective bodies and overcome physical distance to incorporate the skilled migrants who have ties to global markets, capital and investment possibilities (Burton 2004). Such studies utilize a discourse of diaspora that paints migrants as agents of development, focusing on the effects that migrants have on stimulating economic growth and investment rates (B. Mullings “Diaspora Strategies” 27). In doing so, a significant number of studies are concerned primarily with an examination of the ways in which the governments of home countries can develop better relationships with diaspora communities in an effort to “tap into” the talent pool of the diaspora community and encourage migrants to give back more financially<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, some studies examine the unique formation of Diasporas, but

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<sup>5</sup> See for example the work of: Barnett 2006; Boyce-Davis 1999; Hayes 2007; Kebede 2001; King and Jensen 2004; Singh 2003; Watson 1973. These authors have written extensively on different movements originating in Jamaica, specifically the Rastafarian movement.

<sup>6</sup> Dodman 2009; Lundy 1999

<sup>7</sup> Bonnett 2009; Kapur 2005; Lahneman 2009; Minto 2009

grant preference in their assessment and analysis to skilled migrants and the manner in which they have given back to their home country<sup>8</sup>.

This study breaks from such tradition by acknowledging that there is more to these communities than their financial remittances and ability to aid in development; more to those in the Diaspora than their skills. The focus is not on how Diasporas can engage financially with their homelands and donate their time and skills, but rather, on understanding how these collectives come about and what elements help to sustain their existence. In considering factors that facilitate Diaspora formation, this study highlights the *process* of Diasporas (how and why they come about, how they are sustained) and not solely the *outcomes* of Diasporas (what they do and how they relate with their homelands). The findings help to expand the literature, making it more inclusive of all persons who join these Diaspora movements by including those who are considered unskilled migrants.

Significantly, the findings in this study show that rather than being fixed, antiquated phenomena, contemporary Diaspora movements encourage us to reexamine the boundaries and understandings of the processes involved in migration. For example, this study explores different dimensions of the intricate relationships among diasporic identity, rhetoric of diaspora and transnational movements.

The Jamaican Diaspora exemplifies the new kinds of transnational movements that operate on different levels and can fit into multiple categories and understandings of movements, something the literature on movements has yet to examine in detail. This study argues that the Jamaican Diaspora embodies both global and local influences in its

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<sup>8</sup> See for example Mullings “Diaspora Strategies” (2011).



development. Throughout the study, the reconciliation between the global and local forces is examined and used to explain how this movement and other migrant collectives like it are unique in both their formation and their existence. An understanding of these forces elucidates ways in which members of Diaspora movements develop relationships with governments and make demands for social, political and cultural incorporation within both the host and home countries.

This study discusses the role of discourse as a key mobilization tool that allows such collective organizations to emerge as well as the way in which the discourse about diasporas has impacted the development of migrant movements. In doing so, this scholarship brings together the literature on diasporas, social movements and the rhetoric of movements.

#### Contribution to the Literature on Theories of Identity Formation

The findings presented in this study demonstrate that the discussions of diaspora identity should remain open and that any previous understandings of these concepts as fixed does not give due merit to the nuanced migrant experiences. Identity always is in formation, is fluid, varied and continually in the process of being defined and understood. Current studies on Diasporas often fail to engage in a thorough discussion of the role of identity negotiation in the migrant experience. In contrast, diasporic identity is of significance in this study and considered essential in the way that migrant collectives experience a common sense of belonging—which is at the heart of the movement formation. Specifically, the process of identity development and the experience of identity negotiation are explored in this study. A key contribution of this dissertation is an exploration of the specific factors that contribute to a migrant's decision to identify as

part of a community and subsequently participate in the Diaspora movement. With the analysis of primary and secondary sources, this dissertation gives voice to the lived experiences of the migrants—the negotiation of multiple identities and at times the conflicting understandings of who they are.

### Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the introduction, the current empirical literature on migrants and migration, while certainly useful, does not address sufficiently the complex elements that make Diasporas not just interesting entities in and of themselves, but also appealing and compelling organizations to migrants, scholars, intellectuals and governments. In order to examine these appealing areas, this study combines the academic literature most relevant to Diasporas, movements, identity, rhetoric and discourse as a theoretical guide to inform the understanding and exploration of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. By employing these different approaches to the study of Diasporas, the research models an interdisciplinary approach that uncovers pertinent elements of the construction of migrant collectives either not yet explored or previously overlooked.

### Understanding Interdisciplinary Research

This project is interdisciplinary in nature, employing relevant theoretical frameworks in various disciplines. As early as the 1960s, interdisciplinary research became more acceptable and prevalent in the humanities and social sciences (Sherif and Sherif 1969). This framework promotes the notion that “each discipline needs others in a fundamental and basic sense” (5). Many issues worth exploring and understanding are not arranged or built along the clear cut path of disciplinary structures; rather, there is a great deal of overlap in the topics under investigation in the social sciences, “The

different disciplines are studying and theorizing about many of the same problems and many closely related problems of the human condition” (7). None of the theories utilized in this dissertation is mutually exclusive. For example, one concept that has been investigated across multiple disciplines is language. Rhetoricians in communication and social movement scholars in sociology both acknowledge the important role of language and the way in which language is employed in social and collective institutions and movements. This dissertation borrows from both disciplines, adopting the relevant interpretations of the role of language in movements and gaining a comprehensive understanding of discourse in the Jamaican Diaspora.

For an understanding of the concept of diaspora, this study incorporates the work of cultural studies scholars which is also useful in the chapter on the role of identity. Sociology’s migration theory and theories of transnationalism not only explain the various reasons why Jamaicans leave their homes, but these theories also provide foundational understanding of the Jamaican migrant trajectory. This dissertation also utilizes the literature on social movement theory to help explain the collective organization of the Diaspora. Finally, theories of rhetoric and rhetorical movements are employed to answer the questions pertaining to the role of language and persuasion in the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. The next few paragraphs engage in a more indepth understanding of the theoretical perspectives utilized.

### Perspectives of Diaspora

Theories of “diaspora” are housed in different academic disciplines including but not limited to political science, cultural studies, sociology, and geography. In conducting this research it became clear that while different disciplines discuss diaspora separately,

they hardly communicate with each other, often speaking about the same notion but using different terminology. Hence, there is not a concise or conclusive theoretical conceptualization of the term. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research, the understandings of “diaspora” from sociological theories of migration and cultural studies are most relevant.

### Defining Diaspora

The concept of “diaspora” is now a popular topic in academia resulting in a global discourse that has resulted in increased interest in Diaspora movements. According to Barbara Burton (2004), the recent scholarship on Diaspora movements focuses heavily on strategies that seek to “redefine the relationship between states and their diaspora emphasizing the regulatory and partnership role that these extra-territorial groups can play” (3). The strongest connection between studies on diasporas, often originating out of the cultural studies tradition and sociological theories of migration is the area of transnational migration. However, where I believe that cultural studies advance beyond theories of transnational migration can be summarized in two points: (1) their focus on how members *self identify* as belonging to diaspora communities and eventually formulate a new movement based on this identity and (2) the ways in which members of connect not only with the host country and the home country, but also the way in which the members *connect with each other*.

In the pioneering work on diaspora communities, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (1997), Robin Cohen presents a thorough assessment and analysis of the world’s dispersed communities. The word, *diaspora*, is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over), so its literal translation is “to sow over”

(Cohen ix). Therefore, when we speak of diaspora, we are acknowledging some form of dispersion from a central location or place of origin that results in scattering over various locations, often times in more than two countries. When referring to people, the term implies that people have been relocated or removed from their original place of residence (homeland) and now are located in multiple countries. For this reason, Jamaican migrants constitute a diaspora, since Jamaican migrants can be found in multiple locations worldwide. In his book, Cohen describes the original use of “diaspora” as synonymous with the experience of the Jews who were forced out of their place of residence, shunned into exile, and scattered around the world. Hence, in academia the word diaspora often was used in relation to the Jewish population and had a negative and historically adverse and nostalgic connotation. In his discussion, Cohen acknowledges that although the modern conceptualization of diaspora communities has evolved drastically from this negative, victimized view, an understanding of the Jewish diaspora is crucial in understanding today’s dispersed communities.

Historically, there are other “victim diasporas” that have influenced the discourse on diaspora significantly. These include the African Diaspora, the Armenian Diaspora, the Irish Diaspora and the Palestinian Diaspora (Cohen 27-28). But today, there is much more variety in the way diaspora communities are defined and analyzed, with a shift from the historical, victimized diasporas, to conceptual, active migrant movements such as the Jamaican Diaspora. As one scholar, James Clifford, put it, “Membership in diaspora now implies potential empowerment based on the ability to mobilize international support and influence both the homeland and the hostland” (qtd. in Butler 190).

Diaspora formation is neither an inevitable result of migration nor is it merely a new category in which to group migrants. So it is no surprise that not all migrants belong to the Diaspora movement. Unlike transnational migration theory, diaspora is considered a process, a practice and not just a category of people. As Brubaker stated, “We should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice, and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis” (12). That is, diaspora is a lens that attempts to understand, first, the process that migrants engage in and second, the categorization of migrants. This study will illuminate both aspects of this assertion, examining those elements of the Jamaican Diaspora that enhance the viewpoint that it is a process that migrants go through individually and collectively, as well as a collective entity that operates as a movement.

#### Perspectives on Identity

Cultural studies scholars assert that members of the diaspora experience a strong bond with each other based on their shared belief of having a unique and distinct cultural and national identity as well as on a belief that they have a common and connected future because of this identity. The salience of identity often is neglected in the transnational migration paradigm, but cannot be ignored in diaspora studies. As Butler (2001) states, “[Diaspora] calls attention to the relationship between identity and active participation in the politics of hostland and homeland” (191). It is this identity that eventually facilitates the active involvement in the diaspora community and sustains the bonds and linkages that members form with each other. Identity becomes important not only to first generation migrants, but also to second generation migrants who never migrated and even

to those who have returned to the home country to live. They all share a common diasporic identity.

Cultural studies expert, Stuart Hall reminds us that “Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (S.Hall, “Cultural Identity” 222). Identity then is constantly refreshing, renewing, and reforming; it is never static. Identity becomes that thing that differentiates self from other—who I am as opposed to who you are. Our identity helps us to identify commonalities or differences with others resulting in identification with certain ethnic or cultural groups. It tells us who we are and where we are in relation to others and becomes the core of our sense of individuality (Weeks 88).

Our identity is not developed in isolation, it is influenced by our environment and the surroundings in which we grow up. As such, identity also is a byproduct of the interrelation of politics, economics, societal norms and social expectations. But within an individual, there is not just one identity; there are multiple identities that come to the forefront depending on where we are, with whom we are, and in what we are engaged. Cultural identity is one aspect of the multiple identities we possess. These multiple identities also have historical connotations and, as Stuart Hall suggests, they mark the conjuncture of our past with the present social, economic, and political relations (qtd. in Rutherford 19). These factors help us negotiate our identity and determine our perception of identity. But our identity also signals how we want to be represented, what parts of us we want to show the world and what parts of us we want in the background. Our identity

becomes a malleable construct, something we are able to display or hide as we please. But more important, it is this identity that plays a major role in determining the organizations we join and the passions we develop.

In the United States in the 1960s there was a unique and distinct wave of identity politics, including the Black movement, feminism, and the lesbian and gay movement. During this time, scholars, activists, and researchers began to grant more attention to the formation of identities and the role they play in influencing thoughts and actions. Today, with the current wave of international migration and the increased presence of dispersed communities, identities are coming into focus once more. In “Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Post Modern Politics” Kobena Mercer (1994) argues that identity only becomes an issue of focus when it is in crisis and is approaching the possibility of being replaced by doubt and uncertainty (43). Mercer may be right. As these Diasporas are developing, identity again becomes an issue of concern, suggesting a reexamination of our understandings of identity.

### Diasporas as Movements

Although the academic literature has not produced a set definition, it generally is agreed that a social movement consists of interactions between various persons who share a common collective identity and where the primary goal of the social movement is to change a given social order or to create some kind of change in society. This study also adopts the definition put forth by Laura Toussaint (2003) who stated that social movements are “conscious, organized collective actions designed to bring about or to resist change and that are established outside of political institutions, utilizing at least some non-institutionalized methods” (11). Therefore, from this understanding, a



movement comes about when persons become dissatisfied with some aspect of their environment, when they desire change, have an interest in altering the environment and finally when they come together and agree that their collective efforts will result in some degree of success. In this sense, as will be later explored, it becomes clear that the way the Jamaican Diaspora has evolved bears similarity to the traditional definition of what a social movement is.

When I decided to write an explorative and historical account of the Jamaican Diaspora, I thought about what theoretical framework was best suited to describe the process through which migrants come together, mobilize around a renewed understanding of identity and engage in collective action. Especially at the transnational level, various derivatives of social movement theory have been instrumental in helping other investigators understand the mechanisms through which collective action occurs. The idea that Diasporas can be likened to social movement is relatively new, and more detailed examination of other Diasporas will need to be conducted to confirm that social movement theory is completely appropriate for the study of Diasporas. The Jamaican Diaspora may at times resemble an organization, a network, and still at other times a transnational social movement. Throughout the study, I will explore different facets of the movement that present the tensions in the emergence of the Diaspora and in the difficulties that both members and observers have with trying to define it. Nevertheless, throughout my participation with the movement, I maintain that the tenets of social movement theory are most suited to explaining the phenomenon. The assumption being made is that the Diaspora resembles or at the very least has qualities that mimics the trajectory of a social movement.

The inspiration for studying the evolution of the Jamaican Diaspora through social movement theory is rooted in an article written by Martin Sökefeld (2006) entitled “Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora,” where he advocates utilizing a social movement lens when attempting to study and understand Diasporas. This research builds on his work by using social movement theory to help study the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora, a task that few scholars have undertaken. Sökefeld views the formation of Diaspora as a result of mobilization efforts and not simply as an inevitable consequence of migration. According to Sökefeld, “Migrants do not necessarily form a Diaspora but they may become a Diaspora by developing a new imagination of community, even many years after the migration took place” (267). Similarly, the Jamaican Diaspora did not emerge when Jamaicans began migrating in large numbers in the 1940s and 1950s; instead, it emerged nearly 50 years later when certain elements were in place. Specific conditions and mobilization efforts resulted in the formation of the Diaspora. An underlying premise is that, participants, with their new reclaimed hybrid identities made an active and conscious decision to become part of the transnational diaspora and were not involuntarily considered part of the diaspora solely because they had migrated. I argue that there are other factors including specific trigger events, conditions, and environments that possibly had little relation to the original waves of mass migration, but yet were crucial for the Jamaican Diaspora to emerge as a transnational movement at the time it did.

Exploring the Jamaican Diaspora movement involves an understanding of the processes and structures of social mobilization and collective action that it employs—all elements of social movement theory. At their core, studies of Diasporas and social

movements are concerned with the same puzzle: how do individuals mobilize for social issues? Both are concerned with understanding social processes as well as the interaction of processes and structures that occur when groups of people come together with a common purpose and focus (Sökefeld 2006). As Sökefeld argues, in order to understand how these diaspora communities emerge and evolve, we must then be concerned with the analysis of social movements that also focuses on how people mobilize for collective purposes (268). The research questions guiding this study are geared towards understanding how the Jamaican Diaspora emerged and evolved and, as such, social movement theory is most appropriate.

In his work, Sökefeld does not necessarily equate Diasporas with social movements or suggest that they are the same thing. What he suggests, is that those who propose to study Diasporas make use of the theories that are instrumental in the study of social movements. This study builds on Sökefeld's work, by using the tenets of social movement theory to advise the interpretation of the Jamaican Diaspora.

Not all social movements are defined by having an antagonistic agenda. In the case of the Jamaica Diaspora, it is a collective body acting outside of the traditional, established institutions and seeking recognition and legitimacy as it attempts to present an alternative status quo—one in which it can make meaningful contribution and influence. They seek to change the status quo and power relations within which they exist and to construct new ones. While some approaches to social movements may stress the need for a movement to have an identifiable target enemy or confrontational source, this is not the case with the Jamaican Diaspora. Manuel Castells (1997) reminds us that a tenet of social movements is that collective organizations and actions must always be understood and

analyzed in their own terms; they are what they say they are (71). In the case of the Jamaican Diaspora, the movement primarily seeks to gain recognition as a viable movement as well as to become more influential in the socio-political arena in Jamaica, participating in key decisions affecting the country. They also are interested in the empowerment of the Jamaican migrant community trying to ensure that these migrants are afforded their rights in the home and host countries. Additionally, like other social movements, the Jamaican Diaspora is interested in getting visibility and public attention that will help put pressure on the respective government bodies to be guarantors of the rights of these Jamaican migrants.

#### *Diasporas as Transnational Movements*

Diasporas, as Homi Bhabha (1990) posits, are operating out of new autonomous “third spaces” that are not regulated by the state in the home country or in the host country. A transnational movement is understood as one that exists physically in multiple geographical places while remaining closely connected. According to Jackie Smith (2008), successful transnational movements have the following characteristics: Efficient exchange of information and experiences, an organized social base, mutual support among participants, joint actions and campaigns, shared ideologies and shared political cultures (119). Members of Diasporas, in contrast to traditional definitions of transnational movements, also are not primarily resistant to an identified state authority but rather have the goal of improving conditions for residents of the home country in whatever way they can. Increasingly, whenever they engage in conversation it is not unusual for many to identify themselves as leaders, change agents and willing volunteers on a mission to bring change and development wherever they are and wherever they can.

They are not just trying to make a difference within the home country, but within the host country as well.

In this sense, while operating under the banner of a transnational movement, those in the diaspora bear resemblance to what Richard Falk (2009) refers to as the “citizen pilgrim.” These persons, according to Falk differ from traditional citizens in that their quest for change and improvement in the world is not tied to or bound to a territorial space; rather, these diasporic citizen pilgrims constantly are on a journey for “a sustainable, equitable, humane, and peaceable future” (22). Those in the diaspora subscribe to a model of citizenship that acknowledges the right to challenge the state when necessary and to demand human rights where previously they were denied. In fact, the rhetoric of diaspora is a powerful motivator invoking the need to get involved and become active change agents. It would seem that those within the diaspora join in solidarity with those living within the territorial spaces who share a common identity.

In keeping with this idea of a citizen who envisions a world that transcends national boundaries, Jackie Smith in *Social Movements for Global Democracy* (2008) also discusses the way in which such transnational movements play a crucial role in validating the efforts and actions of those whose identities are not bound by geographical space. She states, “Transnational ties help emphasize the interests and identities of people that transcend the divisions constructed by national political boundaries” (10). In a similar vein, diaspora communities, replete with transnational ties, become new platforms for persons who embrace more flexible, less bounded identities. Members have a vested interest in the wellbeing of their homelands and believe that their involvement with the diaspora will enable them to become catalysts of change. This community of

transnational change agents, the diaspora, is part of what Richard Falk terms the “global momentum of the last half century” (3). Following the lead of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles that refused to stay within national borders, diaspora communities have assumed, with pride, new transnational identities that have a role to play in relieving oppressive conditions in developing countries.

Nation states no longer have total control over the information that circulates within their borders. As Anderson (1991) pointed out in *Imagined Communities*, new sources of information dissemination such as print media and the internet, always have played an essential role in bringing communities together without state intervention. With the aid of social media websites, diaspora members, miles apart, have been able to communicate transnationally.

#### *New Social Movement Theory*

The theoretical framework presented by New Social Movement Theory (NSM) is most suitable for understanding new collective forms of action and sites of conflict that are interwoven in everyday life (Buechler 446). Although there are variations among social movement scholars, in their book, *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (1994), Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield explain that the older models of social movement theories tended to come from a more biased European and North American framework. Hence, it cannot be expected that a study of social movements emerging out of the Global South or in conjunction with the Global South (as is the case with the Jamaican Diaspora) will appropriately fit into those traditional social movement theories. Instead, today’s “new” movements are diverse and tend to have culture, ethnicity,

identity, gender, and sexuality at their root. Typically, such movements are more about defending a collective identity; they also have meaningful claims to culture.

Due to the significant role of culture and particularly, identity in the formation of this movement, I posit that the Jamaican Diaspora most closely fits the characteristics of NSM within the literature on social movements. NSMs often have at their core the emergence and strengthening of some identity or claim to multiple identities. “The new social movement perspective holds that the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation” (Laraña et al. 10). In this sense, there is a tendency for mobilizing structures to appeal to these aspects of identity that allow members to feel part of something special, to experience some sense of belonging to a social group. Often times, the salient identity is presented as something to be protected. This study acknowledges that this is the case with the Jamaican Diaspora where the salient identity within the group is their new diasporic identity, one that suggests that a central part of who they are is their continued connection to Jamaica. It therefore follows that their grievances and mobilization mechanisms are organized around the lines of this identity.

Older social movement theories and models often have been criticized for the way they privilege class conflict and proletariat revolutions, often overlooking the importance of identity, culture and emotions (Klandermas and Staggenborg xii). The trend in movement studies tended to grant preference to movements that had a glaring opposition to state authority. However, as many theorists contend, the new social movements tend to embrace personal identity narratives as the main impetus behind their existence (Beck

2000, Bennett 1998, Giddens 1991)<sup>9</sup>. Diasporas and NSMs primarily are founded on a common sense of belonging and connection to a homeland or to a cause. Like diaspora communities, NSM theorists argue that some of the more contemporary movements tend not to have a strictly political and economic focus and are more inclusive of persons who are more educated, from the middle class, and who are younger—all characteristics of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. According to Buechler, new social movements are “new” because of their “postmaterialistic value base, search for pragmatic solutions and global awareness” (448). Today’s Diasporas seek to find solutions for developing the home country, incorporating migrants in development and helping others recognize migrants as viable members of the home country.

Participants in NSMs often consider themselves outsiders, as persons excluded from the system of established politics. In the case of the Jamaican Diaspora, the foundational issue is empowerment on an individual as well as collective level of Jamaican migrants who feel that in the past they have been excluded from the socio-political arena in Jamaica. These migrants are struggling to make the transition from what it means to be an insider, living within Jamaica to a geographical outsider to a balanced combination of the two identities—a diasporic identity. They often embody multiple identities, feeling like they live in multiple places, but never quite at home anywhere and at times feel excluded from any involvement in the one place that is for many remains their only reference of home—Jamaica.

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<sup>9</sup> Examples of NSMs include the human rights movement, women’s movement, peace movement, the student movement, the anti-war movement, the women’s movement, the environmental movement, the civil war movement and movements originating in the Global South such as the Third World movement.



The NSM framework is less concerned with strict boundaries and categories of movements and tends to be more flexible and inclusive of more modern types of collective organizations. In their explanation of NSM theory, Laraña, et al. (1994) state, “It is not a set of general propositions that have been verified empirically but just an attempt to identify certain common characteristics in contemporary social movements and develop analytical tools to study them” (6). This is, therefore, the most suitable social movement framework through which the Jamaican Diaspora can be examined, since at its core, this study seeks to assess the unique characteristics of the Jamaican Diaspora as a contemporary transnational movement.

#### Theories on the Rhetoric of Movements

Social movement theory and rhetorical movement theory find a common connection under the banner of framing and the significance of language in movement formation. Historically, sociologists have acknowledged that there is much to be gained from studying movements from a rhetorical perspective and examining the *discursive field* of social movements (Johnston 67, Lucas 26). In the last 20 years, the humanities and social sciences have seen a linguistic turn, with researchers becoming more prone to assessing and exploring the ramification of language in their studies.

The concept of framing, though possibly new to social movement theory has existed for some time in other discipline areas including the cognitive sciences, and particular psychology under different names such as “schemas” and “scripts” (Donati 140). The basic premise of frames, as discussed by Donati, is that importance perceptions, seemingly scattered and unrelated are made coherent under the larger umbrella of a particular frame. This particular frame is what gives these various

perceptions meaning and in turn dictate the way in which people perceive the world. But these frames are hard to decipher, hard to distinguish and hard to understand without the presence of language. It is language essentially, that demonstrates the connection between framing and reality. Frames are communicated, acted upon and given relevance through language (Donati 142). But we cannot take the frame out of context and must always analyze the frame and the perception of the frame within the culture of the recipients. As Donati reminds us, frames are “cultural constructs included in the receiver’s cultural tools and knowledge (151-152). Language then is not a mere passive part of a movement, but instead creates new things and helps to transfer meaning from what is known to what is new (Donati 157).

Both discourse and frames are based on text and part of this research entails looking at the content of the frames that are employed by the movement and the ways in which such language and frames become mental schemas that are shared among the members of the movement and outsiders.

Rhetorical theorist, Kenneth Burke, is known for his observation that rhetoric is the study of the role of language in creating permanence and social change. This research borrows from this premise that language is an essential catalyst for change. That is, there is a direct link between discourse and praxis, and we can look to language to understand the realities existing within a phenomenon. As communication scholars have noted, “The idea that language is much more than a simple reflection of reality—that in fact, it is constitutive of social reality—has become commonly accepted” (Phillips and Hardy 12). Maurice Charland (1999) also states, “The artful deployment of language, through topics, arguments, tropes, and figures, has real effects upon language itself, upon meaning, and

finally upon what humans do” (465). As these scholars note, organizations and movements like the Jamaican Diaspora are socially constructed, come into being and engage in experiences primarily through language. In this research analyzing the Jamaican Diaspora, the main designers of the discursive field under investigation include leaders of the Diaspora movement, the Jamaican government and the Jamaican media. Some important questions that employing rhetorical theory helps to answer include the following: How do the leaders and members of the Jamaican Diaspora utilize rhetoric to strengthen and galvanize the Jamaican Diaspora and bring about social change? How do the participants in the movement come to share the same beliefs? What messages are promulgated and disseminated through specific language? What is the role of rhetoric in identity formation?

### Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting an overview of the academic contribution this research is making. Primarily, the research is contributing to the literature on Diasporas, on contemporary transnational movements and on identity hybridization in Diasporas. Importantly, the research highlights a new aspect of Jamaican migration not yet explored and brings clarity to the process of Diaspora formation. This chapter also explained the interdisciplinary framework of this project and the way that it incorporates sociology, cultural studies and theories of rhetoric and language, employing the concepts most suited to studying Jamaican Diaspora. The chapter also defined the key concepts in this project, including the term “diaspora” noting that while it often is considered a category of migrants, it also is a process through which migrants endure.



## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains and justifies the research methods that are employed throughout this project. Qualitative methods are utilized, based on their ability to help discover the elements that influence, affect, and result in the construction of Diasporas.

### Qualitative Methodology

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this study, a multifaceted methodological framework is employed to answer the research questions that seek to explore the factors that led to the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora, how it is currently sustained, and what is its projected future. This dissertation is an example of what social scientists refer to as methodological pluralism—a multi-method approach utilized to gain various dimensional insights. In deciding what methods to employ, it became clear that current trends in studies of movements and collective organizing tend to have a preference for qualitative techniques that focus on lived experiences. Qualitative methods also are best suited for an intensive examination of movements with the intention of identifying patterns, linkages and organizational structure.

These methods help to answer both the “how” questions (how the movement expresses itself, how the movement utilizes elements of the broader culture, how the discourse employed in the movement is embedded in the larger cultural discourse) and The “why” questions (why the movement has succeeded thus far, why the movement has or has not been successful and why the movement can be expected to have a certain

trajectory) (Johnston 69). Furthermore, as researcher Suzanne Staggenborg (2010) concluded, qualitative methods are best suited for exploring contextualized knowledge as opposed to the scientific precision that quantitative methods support. The outlined research questions in this study are more related to the contextual and structural factors involved in the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora.

This case study employs qualitative methods including participant observation and discourse analysis. All these elements are most appropriate when trying to explore the way movements are formed and organized (Klandermas and Staggenborg xvi). The focus years for the data gathered for this study are 1962-2004 (Jamaican independence to the start of the Jamaican Diaspora), 2004-2011 (the years since the movement's inception and 2011-Beyond (the future of the movement). The year of independence was chosen as a starting point because it signifies the beginning of the first mass wave of migration out of Jamaica. The long and complex history of Jamaica, prior to independence, is not a critical element of this project except in so far as a brief historical account of significant developments will help to situate the emergence of the movement. Looking at data and material during the focus years (1962-2011) helps us to paint an accurate picture of what was going on immediately before the inception of the Jamaican Diaspora as well as the results and effects of what happened following the inception. The methods employed in this study have been chosen carefully and all seek to help reconstruct the evolution of the Jamaican Diaspora during this specified time period.

### Case Study

This project is a case study utilizing the Jamaican Diaspora as the unit of analysis. A case study is defined as “an in-depth, multifaceted investigation of social

phenomenon” (Snow and Trom 149). At the core, a case study is a construction of “commingled theory and data” that presents descriptive material organized in conjunction with specific theoretical points being made (Strauss 219). While the formation of a Diaspora movement is a rising global phenomenon and not unique to Jamaica, my access to the Jamaican Diaspora makes this population a pragmatic choice. As a method of qualitative analysis, the case study allows the researcher to focus in-depth on exploring the multiple dimensions of this phenomenon. Furthermore, as an analytic description, the case study is most appropriate for this research since the organization of the movement is the unit of analysis and the main purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of how and why the movement came about when it did. The case study is also most appropriate for gaining a better understanding of the specific mobilization strategies that are employed in this movement.

This case study employs what cultural anthropologists refer to as the emic approach to research, as it presents an insider’s perspective engaging with the meaningful qualities of the culture of the Jamaican Diaspora. According to linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Pike (1976), this emic approach that considers a culture from within the system itself helps with a wholistic understanding of how language and culture are constructed within the daily lives of the people in the system. Participant observation provides the avenue to gain insider perspective, which allows for a careful evaluation of the attitudes and motives that are meaningful within the Jamaican Diaspora.

### Participant Observation

While a full ethnographic description is not the goal of this dissertation, tools of ethnographic research are employed to examine the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora.

Ethnographic methods allow the researcher to participate, for an extended period of time, either overtly or covertly in the daily lives of the members, seeing what happens, watching what they do, listening to what they say and asking relevant questions in order to explore thoroughly the issue under investigation<sup>10</sup>. Participating at this intimate level within an organization or movement is advantageous, presenting an opportunity to see and understand key components of the movement that otherwise may be overlooked or ignored. In other words, participant-observation presents an opportunity to discover those things that have not made it into print. “Participant-observers can find out what traditions, symbols and stories make activism meaningful *as it is happening* in everyday life” (Lichterman 410). Considering the importance placed on the role of discourse in the Jamaican Diaspora, this study utilizes participant observation as a method that best captures and promotes an understanding of “rhetoric in practice” (Mulvaney 32). Participant-observation helps uncover what the movement means to the members themselves and discover the ways in which they talk about their involvement and motivation to participate in the Jamaican Diaspora.

For this study, participant observation was carried out between 2007 and 2011, marking the years when I began researching the topic and the year the research was completed. As was the case with feminist scholar, Verta Taylor (1998), I believe that my own participation in the Jamaican Diaspora between 2007 and 2011 has influenced the trajectory of the movement. As a participant-observer, I wear multiple hats. Since I am studying in South Florida, I have been able to attend the majority of the Jamaican Diaspora events, meetings and conferences held in Florida and have also served as a

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<sup>10</sup> See Hammersly and Atkinson (1983).



representative for the Jamaican Diaspora youth arm (Future Leaders Delegation) at different occasions including the biennial Jamaican Diaspora conferences held in Jamaica in 2008 and 2011. I have also participated in various technological initiatives of the movement including the Jamaican Diaspora Network and have been a representative for the Diaspora on telephone conference calls, conference meetings as well as in conference organizing. At the conferences and local meetings (in South Florida) between 2007 and 2011, I also served as the official transcriber and note taker at the meetings. I have also been able to attend Jamaican Diaspora gatherings and simply observe the group, the new members, the routines, the tense moments as well as see ways in which members interact with each other. At these conferences I have frequently spoken and participated on panels that serve to promote various interests of the Jamaican Diaspora movement, explain its significance and attract new members. My role as a Future Leaders representative provided the impetus and motivation behind my proposal outlining the need to get youth more involved in the movement.

The participant observation analysis is presented in chapter 7 that examines the Jamaican Diaspora biennial conferences as well as in chapter 8, which looks on the role of identity. In these chapters, I incorporate my own experiences within the Jamaican Diaspora and the way in which different speakers and leaders highlight specific discourse or make reference to a specific understanding of the Jamaican Diaspora identity.

My participation in the movement is evident in my insistence that this study neither speaks for movement members nor speaks to them, but instead speaks with those in the Jamaican Diaspora. Based on my involvement, the final portion of this project is

entirely action oriented in the sense that it is a proposal for the future course of the movement, which is expected to benefit movement members and leaders.

### Discourse Analysis

It is important to pay attention to the role of language in creating meaning and structuring social interaction. The argument being made is that the language utilized within the movement, disseminates as well as recreates a very specific image of a diaspora community, an image that is held by the members. Social movement scholar Hank Johnston (2002) notes, “Taken together, frame and discourse analysis represent part of the cultural turn in the social sciences” (88). According to discourse analysis scholar, Teun Van Dijk (1993), discourse impacts social cognition whereby affecting various aspects of knowledge, beliefs, understandings, ideologies, norms, attitudes and values (257). In assessing archival data and conducting discourse analysis, it also is possible to discover historical recruitment strategies, conditions under which the movement survives, and the impact of the movement on policy making (Polletta 419).

This approach to research therefore illuminates what is underneath the surface, showing us what actually happens within the Jamaican Diaspora. Discourse analysis is most suitable for highlighting the constructive effects of language in collective organizations or movement phenomena. Discourse analysis involves close readings of the selected texts revealing assumptions made as well as any hidden motivations within the discourse of the text. That said, the study examines more than just the mere text itself and is interested in the entire discursive milieu out of which the movement emerged. For this reason, the study investigates the history of the movement paying attention to the history

of Jamaican migration, the conditions in the host countries, the way identity is constructed and the various elements that facilitated the rise of the movement.

The discursive field of the Jamaican Diaspora movement can be discovered in a variety of texts. Text in this case refers to all discursive material produced by the Jamaican Diaspora, transcriptions of speeches published and spoken, information published on various websites about the Jamaican Diaspora and conversations and words spoken by members of the movement. Text also refers to slogans, songs and visual representations such as pictures—these are all considered representative elements of the movement (Johnston 66). Though seemingly simplistic, these texts often are not self evident but certainly are very much connected to the context and culture out of which they are created. Rather than assume that these variations of texts (slogans, newspaper articles, speeches at Diaspora conferences) stand alone, this research takes the stance that together, the different variations or fragments of text constitute a whole picture of the conditions creating the Jamaican Diaspora. McGee (1990) also states, “Critical rhetoric does not begin with a finished text in need of interpretation, rather, texts are understood to be larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent” (275).

What McGee highlights is that it is important to realize that most often, the texts we have only represent a fragment of a larger discursive reality that exists and connections usually can be made beyond the mere text itself. Such texts constitute discursive units that are imbued with meaning and influence the social reality that is evident in the Jamaican Diaspora. For this project, while there will be times when slogans and mission statements of the movement and songs will be analyzed, the majority of the

discourse analysis will utilize online correspondence of the movement and selected articles published in the Jamaican newspaper, *The Gleaner*, as well as speeches given at the biennial Diaspora conferences (2004-2011). These texts were selected because they are considered the most accessible sources that have constructed knowledge and frames of the Jamaican Diaspora.

As the texts are presented, specific phrases, utterances or sentences will be quoted and then discussed in terms of their meaning and their impact on creating an understanding of the Jamaican Diaspora and its members as well as the way outsiders interpret the movement and its purpose. Elements of persuasion will be considered including the setting of the text, the use of argumentation, how speakers establish credibility based on their title or position as well as the way they rationally defend their point of view, the choice of words, use of rhetorical figures (such as ‘them’ versus ‘us’), positive and negative representations and ways in which words may be employed to discredit others. As always, these elements will be considered within the context of the Jamaican culture. While examining the texts with these guidelines in mind, the analysis of the texts remains open to allow any nuanced findings to be uncovered. As scholars Potter and Wetherell (1987) noted in their description and definition of discourse analysis, “It is not a case of stating first you do this and then you do that. The skills required are developed as one tries to make sense of transcripts and identify the organizational features of documents” (99). In this study, some relevant research questions discourse analysis helps to answer include: What do the speakers mean when they speak in a certain way; what appeals are being made? What is the language beyond the text and what does it tell us about the Jamaican Diaspora and different perceptions of

the movement as well as the identity of those in the movement? How does the language tie into a larger discourse of diaspora and how does this impact the meaning of the text?

In conducting such close and critical analysis of discourse, it is possible to determine what conditions of legitimacy, acceptance and resistance can be found in relation to the Jamaican Diaspora as well as what messages were reproduced and accepted. Close critical discourse analysis of the chosen texts helps us to understand the various strategies employed by the movement as well as their effect on how the audiences understand and interpret the Jamaican Diaspora. The purpose is to engage in a deconstructive reading and discussion of the text in a way that allows for untold interpretations to surface. This kind of close attention to language and text also emphasizes stories told in the movement as well as stories told about the movement. These stories become crucial in “illuminating features of the emergence, trajectories, and consequences of movements that are not yet well understood” (Polleta 419).

### Reflexivity

It is important to note here that this dissertation is written from my perspective; from my understanding of Diasporas and the Jamaican Diaspora. My reading of the Jamaican Diaspora is done through my eyes; through the eyes of a participant in the movement who has developed a specific understanding and definition of the movement. It is important to note, that this perspective is my own understanding and may not be shared by those in the Jamaican Diaspora or outside observers. Additionally, because I write from my own perspective, I am aware of the privilege I have coming to the United States to study, as well as participating in this movement, because I have the time and resources to do so. Not all Jamaican migrants have this privilege or opportunity. As such,

in writing about the active participants and members of the Diaspora, I am predominately writing about a middle class, educated and professional group of Jamaican migrants who have also made a decision to participate in the movement. Certainly, there are others who participate who may not subscribe to this categorization, but the majority does. That said, there are benefits to be gained from personal involvement in this study that allow the researcher to truly encapsulate the way of life and cultural forms that impact the movement. To counter concerns about the researcher's ability to verify the data, the notion of reflexivity is employed. "Reflexivity is grounded in the recognition that the researcher also acts within the world of social discourse under study and can reflect upon his or her actions in that world" (Mulvaney 31). In other words, by subscribing to reflexivity, I acknowledge that my subjective experience in this project (including my feelings, actions and thoughts) are connected to, and influence the manner in which I produce and interpret the results of this study. Feminist scholars such as Verta Taylor (1998) assert that all methodologies are influenced by the interests, standpoint and position of the researchers who deploy them (Taylor 368). That stated, the arguments made and the interpretations presented in this study are based on the researcher's own experience as a Jamaican and as a participant in the Jamaican Diaspora.

Furthermore, reflexivity is best suited for a project such as this that employs discourse analysis—a method that is inherently reflexive in nature. According to social science scholars, Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy (2002), "Discourse analysis aims to remind readers that in using language, producing texts, and drawing on discourses, researchers and the research community are part and parcel of the constructive effects of discourse" (2). The advantage of participating at this deep and intimate level within the

phenomenon being studied is that it produces an authentic account since, in essence, I am studying myself. Percy Hintzen (2001), a scholar seeking to study West Indian migrants in California, also was faced with this question of authenticity since his is a West Indian conducting research for a book he was writing about other West Indian migrants. His way of overcoming such reservations is summed up in this pronouncement, “I see this book as my own contribution to the methodological debate on authenticity. Because I am both its subject and its analyst, I do not need an ‘informed interpreter’ and an ‘opinion leader’ ....As a member of the community, I am in a position to ‘know’ what is important and what to look for and to ‘understand’ the meaning of what is being said and observed” (4). This is how I see my own involvement in this study. So while acknowledging the potential bias as I relate my own interpretation of and experience with Jamaican culture and language, I maintain that my participation in this research brings a unique perspective to the study that enhances the understanding of the Jamaican Diaspora.

#### Chronological Narrative

The best way to organize a historical and descriptive analysis of the Jamaican Diaspora movement is to present the ideas in a chronological context that highlights both the global and local forces that operated and continue to operate on the movement. In keeping with the objective of this study to understand how and why the Jamaican Diaspora emerged at the time it did, the ideas are presented in a sequential format, acknowledging the contexts in which events occurred and complementing the historical nature of this project. This approach best enables the reader to easily access and remember the sequence in which the movement developed as well as to see clearly the way in which certain influences, such as attitudes towards migrants, evolved over time.

Furthermore, this chronological framework is a beneficial approach when trying to illuminate patterns that may exist in movement formation and more specifically in all Diasporas.

The purpose, therefore, is to explain what happened first, second, and so forth. The chronological narrative acknowledges the “snowballing” mechanisms of how each element capitalizes on the previous. In keeping with both the theories of social movements and discourse analysis, chronological organization is best suited for understanding the comprehensive contextual milieu, specifically, the source and culture of the movement as well as its influence.

For example, the first section of the study provides a contextual and historical narrative out of both global and local forces that set the stage for the movement to emerge. The following sections describe the ways in which the global influences manifested in changed attitudes on the local level in Jamaica. The subsequent section then recognizes how the global and local forces interact at the Diaspora conferences as well as in the diasporic identity the Jamaican migrants embody. The final section of the study builds on the previous three by making recommendations for the movement, based on the information gathered on the movement’s historical trajectory.



## SECTION II: CONTEXTUALIZING THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA MOVEMENT

### Introduction to the Section

This section situates the contextual environment out of which the Jamaican Diaspora emerged bringing clarity to derivatives of the initial research question including: What is the historical background of the Jamaican Diaspora? And what socio-political elements were in place when the movement began? The premise behind this section is that it is difficult to fully understand the discourse and trajectory of any organization or movement without first gaining a thorough understanding of the circumstances out of which the phenomenon arises. This increased emphasis on the contextual factors reflects the importance of understanding the interaction between the movement and the environment out of which it emerges prior to understanding the movement itself. This is in keeping with the notion of political opportunity structures promulgated by social movement theory and seeks to discover the way in which exogenous factors enhance or inhibit the prospects for mobilization and collective action (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). This section therefore uncovers those elements in the external world that facilitated the construction of the Jamaican Diaspora and is crucial in determining what patterns, if any, allow such transnational collectives to come about (Smith xi). While ultimately, the section outlines the prospects of predictable patterns in Diaspora formation, it alludes primarily to existence of issue specific opportunities on both the global and local levels that can be applied to Diaspora formation.

The section begins by presenting a brief yet poignant historical assessment of Jamaican migration in order to bring clarity to the geographical and physical background of the Diaspora movement. Next, the section highlights the political opportunity structures at the global level that facilitated this movement followed by an examination of the local climate that made the issue of Diaspora and discussions of Jamaican migration pertinent. The final portion is dedicated to a thorough examination of the cultural identity of those in the Jamaican Diaspora movement and a discussion of how this understanding of identity has been a significant mobilization force for Jamaican migrants.

## CHAPTER 3: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: SOCIO-POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES IN THE HOST COUNTRIES (1940 TO 2000)

### Introduction

Borrowing from sociology's world-historical method, it is important to recall that the Jamaican Diaspora did not emerge out of "thin air" and is situated in specific historical events in the respective nations that it emerged out of. According to social movement scholars Sidney Tarrow (1994), these opportunities represent "consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action" (qtd. in Meyer and Minkoff 1458). This chapter is devoted to a macro level analysis of the emergence of the Jamaican Diaspora globally, and identifies the triggering events and socio-political opportunity structures in the countries where the movement has roots. It explores the historical background of Jamaican migration and the political opportunity structures in the respective countries out of which the movement emerged. In doing so, the chapter presents a brief, but essential overview of the history of Jamaican migration, especially to the countries where the Diaspora has its deepest roots: the United States, Canada and England. Obtaining a basic understanding of the history of Jamaican migration is important in recognizing the way in which language, identity and culture have all been crucial elements of this movement.

Close attention is paid to the opportunity structures of the migration trajectory which explain how the Diaspora movement was formed and the significance of why the movement emerged the way it did. Although the emphasis is on these three geographical areas, it should be noted that Jamaicans have historically migrated to multiple regions around the globe, including the wider Caribbean as well as countries in Central and South America. Jamaica has also had a long history of migration to other countries in the Caribbean including, but not limited to the Cayman Islands, Trinidad, Barbados, Antigua and the Bahamas. Additionally, many Jamaican migrants can be found in Panama, Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Jamaicans migrated to these countries primarily because of the great employment opportunities available there in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries<sup>11</sup>. In addition to looking to sources that assess the lived experiences of Jamaican migrants, the chapter explains the immigration policies and socio-political climates of the receiving countries that impacted the mobilization efforts of Jamaican migrants.

#### History of Jamaican Migration to Host Countries

Migration has always been an integral part of the history and culture of Jamaica manifesting in an attitude that some scholars have pronounced as the “migration-mobility syndrome” (Jones 1). This syndrome suggests that the majority of Jamaicans view migration to countries in the Global North as more desirable or preferable to staying and living in Jamaica. A study conducted by noted Caribbean migration scholar, Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, found that 68.3 percent of Jamaicans surveyed said that they possessed

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<sup>11</sup> See for example Castles and Miller (1998), Chamberlain (1998), Foner (1978, 2002), Jones (2008), Olwig (2007) and Thomas-Hope (2002).

strong intentions to migrate to a developed country with more opportunities (Thomas-Hope 91). For many Jamaicans, leaving the country was one of the only avenues they saw as guaranteeing economic sufficiency and better access to educational and employment opportunities.

During World War II and immediately after, many Jamaican men migrated to the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, as contractual workers to help fill gaps in labor shortages being experienced there. This is a tradition that has continued ever since. Jamaicans continue to migrate to countries in the Global North primarily because of economic reasons (push factors). In fact, most accounts state that high unemployment rates in Jamaica have always contributed to the individual’s decision to leave. In 2009, unemployment rates in Jamaica approached 14.5 percent (Glennie and Chappell “Migration Information Source”).

Table 1. Primary Destinations of Jamaican Migrants, 1970s to 2000s

Decade	Total Jamaican Migrants	United States	Canada	United Kingdom
1970s	327,779	256,984	56,964	13,831
1980s	239,207	201,177	33,973	4,057
1990s	212,892	170,291	39,973	3,158
2000-2006	135,493	117,205	15,374	2,914
Total	915,371	745,657	145,754	23,960
% of Total	100	82.4	15	2.6

Source: Glennie and Chappell “Migration Information Source” 2010

Table 1 gives a visual snapshot of the numbers of Jamaicans who migrated between 1970 and 2006, to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. This data provides an estimate of the numbers of Jamaican migrants who could possibly become part of the Diaspora movement. The data fail to give information on some of the variables that most social scientists are concerned with such as age, race or gender. More detailed

statistics are difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, the data from Table 1 suggests that post Jamaican independence in 1962, the United States and Canada have attracted the majority of Jamaican migrants with the United Kingdom seeing a reduction in the number of Jamaican migrants going there. From this table, it should be noted that while migration to these countries has continued on a consistent basis, after the 1980s, the percentages of Jamaicans migrating began to decline steadily. This information is in keeping with other sources documenting Jamaican migration.

### Jamaican Migration to the United Kingdom

The first mass wave of Jamaican migration was to the United Kingdom and took place during the Second World War when many Jamaicans went there as volunteers in the armed services or to serve in the industrial sector (Peach 37). Most accounts of Jamaican migration state that in 1947, 110 Jamaican workers arrived in Britain on the ship *Ormonde* (Harris 21). In May, 1947, over 8000 Jamaicans had applied for their British passports because of significant unemployment in Jamaica coupled with the fact that Britain was undergoing a severe labor shortage. As the famous West Indian immigration scholar G.C.K. Peach (1967) declared, “It is demand for labor in Britain that explains the movement that took place in the 1950’s and the beginning of the 1960’s” (36).

The 1948 Nationality Act in the United Kingdom came immediately after Indian independence and made it possible for Commonwealth citizens to migrate to the UK with minimal restrictions. The Act declared that previous colonial subjects from commonwealth countries were entitled to some status of citizenship in the mother country. It further lifted restrictions that prevented such persons from gaining employment in

Britain and made it possible for foreigners to get certain jobs in the industrial sector (Horst 66). This Act was significant to the formation of the Jamaican migrant community in Britain. In June 1948, 492 Jamaicans arrived in Britain on *Empire Windrush*. Many of the Jamaicans arriving on this ship had served in Britain during the war in the air force, the army and munitions (Harris 22). This ship is often credited as the one that carried the first wave of Jamaicans into the modern diaspora. The significance of the arrival of Jamaicans on this vessel and those who followed the first wave of migrants should not be overlooked, because in fact, between 1955 and 1968 a total of 191, 330 Jamaicans arrived in Britain (Horst 66).

As a result of this new policy, all immigrants from the colonies were allowed entry to Britain on the account that they were also subjects of the same King. By being a citizen of the Commonwealth, one was immediately recognized as a citizen of Britain. Some scholars argue that at this time, rather than trying to help citizens of its colonies, Britain was more interested in the acquisition of cheap labor to fill the positions that British natives no longer wanted to occupy (Model and Ladipo 1996). Unfortunately, it did not take long for many natives to respond adversely to this new influx of persons of color.

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 was the first time Britain engaged in strict immigration controls. Though on paper it did not explicitly discriminate against nonwhite immigrants, it gave immigration officers substantial power to decide who they would admit and who they would not. In essence, it was designed primarily to keep Blacks out as well as to define “Britishness” and citizenship along racist lines (Harris 27). The rise of nationalism in Britain is intricately related to the conceptualization of

“foreigner” and ‘other’ that became pronounced in such laws and acts. But prior to this law, in 1961 it was already known that the British were going to do “something” that was going to affect immigration and have negative repercussions for Jamaicans. And with many Jamaicans uncertain as to what exactly was going to be done, they decided to make a last attempt to enter the country while they still had the opportunity. The Jamaicans who migrated to the United Kingdom settled primarily in London, but other large pockets of Jamaican migrants can also be found in the Midlands and the Southwest regions (Glennie and Chappell “Migration Information Source”).

In the mid 1960s to 1970 Britain experienced an economic recession that had severe implications for migrants. The publishing of the White Paper in 1965 made it clear that Jamaicans and other migrants now had to possess specific work permits that only guaranteed employment for a fixed time period (Horst 67). The economic boom that had attracted so many Jamaicans to British soil began to disappear. As the economy in Britain faltered, many Jamaicans found it preferable and indeed necessary to “take their chances” on new soil such as Canada and the United States (Horst 67).

The 1981 British Nationality Act came into effect under the conservative government at the time. This Act brought the issues related to nationality into the immigration policies and renamed immigrants as “cultural aliens” (Stolcke 32). Again, this was significant for Jamaicans as it once again reminded Jamaicans that they did not quite fit into the mainstream British culture. This prompted the beginning of the Jamaican Diaspora movement in England. This segment of the Jamaican Diaspora movement is known for its informal stance, deciding against having a formal bureaucratic leadership. What they have decided to do instead is to separate their responsibilities based on the



interests of the Diaspora members. For instance, they have subgroups with members who have interests in areas such as health, education and social welfare. Although the United Kingdom has some of the most invested members of the Jamaican Diaspora, they also have the lowest proportion of skilled Jamaican migrants. This is partly due to the restrictive immigration policies (discussed earlier) that limited the number of skilled Jamaicans who could endure the process to migrate there, especially in the 1980s and 1990s (Mullings “Diaspora Strategies” 32).

The Jamaican migrant community in the United Kingdom is geographically speaking, a close knit community because of their early and long immigration history, it had the deepest roots of all the host countries. The first host country annual Jamaican Diaspora conference took place in London on April 1, 2006. Unlike the United States and Canada, the organization of the Diaspora movement in the United Kingdom has been unparalleled. This initial annual host country conference attracted over 700 members of the Diaspora movement in the United Kingdom alone! The United Kingdom arm of the Jamaican Diaspora movement has always had a goal of making the movement more attractive to potential members by making a special effort to increase diversity in the movement. This appeal to diversity is significant and in keeping with one of the underlying themes of the Jamaican Diaspora movement that it is a heterogeneous body. Another key element in the theme of the local Diaspora movement in the United Kingdom is their emphasis on trying to ensure that the movement is equally concerned about the quality of life of members of the diaspora living in the host countries as it is about the quality of life of persons living in Jamaica. This breaks from traditional outlined goals of many Diaspora movements globally that tend sometimes to overlook the

misfortunes or issues facing members of the diaspora where they live. At the first conference held in London, one of the issues on the agenda was engaging in discussions to determine what concerns and matters affected those in the diaspora and what the movement could do to help.

The United Kingdom Jamaican Diaspora movement has been the most successful of all the geographical regions in the staging of their national Diaspora conferences. The same year that the first biennial conference was held in Jamaica in 2004, the Jamaican United Kingdom Diaspora had already staged their national conference meeting. In fact, in 2004, the Diaspora movement there met on three different occasions and members were able to structure their organization in a way that would best suit their members. In so doing, they decided that the best way to move forward was to ensure that the movement remained visible at all times and that members ensured that potential supporters remain aware. To do this, members of the movement in the United Kingdom made an effort to go out into the various communities where Jamaicans lived and informed them about the Diaspora, what the movement stood for and ways that they could get involved.

This face to face interaction always proves the most effective method for convincing persons to support and join the movement. The members of the movement in the United Kingdom have also been successful at organizing informational seminars and workshops that specifically target the Jamaican migrant population there. Constantly, planners of such workshops note that while they often expect about 100 persons to turn up, they often find themselves scrambling to accommodate over 500 persons. Engaging in activities such as these helped fulfill the goals of this movement including bringing

more support and assistance to Jamaicans in the diaspora. The Jamaican Diaspora in the United Kingdom is certainly making strides in the arena of lobbying the government there. As recently as April 7, 2009, the Jamaican Diaspora in London was lobbying in support of a proposition that the government rethink its plan to increase the Air Passenger Duty for those traveling to Jamaica (Jamaica Information Service 2009).

### Jamaican Migration to the United States

The majority of Jamaicans who migrated to the United Kingdom, during and after the Second World War, went directly as either acknowledged British nationals or to work there legally. After the 1960s when British immigration policies tightened, the majority of Jamaicans migrating there were family members and dependents of those already there who qualified to migrate to Britain under the family reunification immigration policies. However, this was not the case within the United States where many of the Jamaican migrants who initially came, came on tourist visas to visit families and then ended up staying on as either documented or undocumented immigrants.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the United States had strict immigration policies that aimed to keep many immigrant groups out of the country. It was not until after the Second World War that the United States relaxed its immigration policy which paved the way for many Jamaicans to see the country as a viable immigration destination. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act lifted the restrictive immigrant quotas from independent Western Hemisphere countries and granted small quotas to dependent colonies like Jamaica (Model and Ladipo 490). This Act made it difficult for Jamaicans to migrate to the United States and may have completely stalled all Jamaican migration to the country for a significant period of time due to the fact that Jamaica along with many countries in the

Caribbean had not yet gained independence. So it is not surprising that during this time Britain remained the primary choice for prospective Jamaican migrants.

The 1965 Immigration Act (Hart-Cellar) abolished the preferences for European born immigrants that had been in effect since 1920. As Bryce-Laporte notes, this act has been the most significant United States immigration policy for nonwhite immigrants (34). This new law enabled persons to get green cards (or permanent resident status) on a first come, first serve basis (Defreitas 9). The passage of this law paved the way for large scale immigration from countries in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. After 1970, the number of white immigrants to the United States declined substantially to the point that in the 1980s Europeans accounted for only 10% of migrants to the United States (Reimas 28). With this law, there was no longer any major barrier or obstacle for Jamaicans to migrate to the United States. So while in 1965 there were 1,837 Jamaican immigrants, by 1971 (after the act was passed), there were 15,033 Jamaicans entering the United States (the highest Black immigrant group) (Bryce-Laporte 34). In the end, between 1962 and 1992 over 400,000 Jamaicans (mainly skilled and females) had legally migrated to the US (Foner “West Indian Identity in Diaspora” 174). According to Horst, many Jamaican women benefited from new employment opportunities in service and factory industries including nursing, teaching, caretaking and domestic work (69). The presence of the great demands in these areas can be attributed to the increase in women in the United States finding employment outside the domestic sector in the 1970s. This increased number in Jamaican female migrants is reflected in the membership in the Diaspora movement in the United States.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was intended to punish Americans employers who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, this Act granted amnesty to a large number of undocumented immigrants (2.6 million) who had been living in the United States prior to 1982, or those who had been engaged in farm work for at least 3 months during 1985 and 1986 (Defreitas 10). Although it remains unclear exactly how many Jamaicans benefited from this initiative, it certainly caused Jamaicans to view the United States in a more “immigration friendly” light. Finally, the 1990 US Immigration Act increased the ceiling for the number of immigrants that would be allowed to enter the country. This meant that more Jamaican families could file for their relatives to enter the country legally as family based claims received the largest allocation of visas. The majority of the Jamaicans who have migrated to the United States have settled in Florida and New York, but Jamaicans can also be found in other pockets in the Midwest as well as Southern and Western states of the United States (Glennie and Chappell “Migration Information Source”).

The Diaspora movement in the United States has possibly been the geographical arm of the movement that has had to overcome the most obstacles to achieve success. At the biennial diaspora conferences, the leaders of the movement in the United States have been open about admitting their tardiness in getting organizing and galvanizing the large diaspora population there. The difficulties are primarily due to the geographical barriers that make it nearly impossible for the Jamaican migrants in the entire country to form some kind of union and get together easily. For this reason, Jamaican migrants in the United States thought it best that the movement be further subdivided based on the geographical locations with the largest diaspora population. As a result, currently, there is

a Midwest division, a Northeast division and a Southeast division of the Diaspora movement in the United States.

There is still some controversy surrounding the efficacy of this decision to split the movement in the United States. The split into regional groups has made it difficult for the members to host an annual Diaspora conference in the United States. Their first and only annual conference was hosted in Florida in September 2009 and little has been done to try and organize this again. Furthermore, there is so much distance among these regions that each group often has differing agendas on important issues that are affecting them that need to be addressed immediately. Nevertheless, in terms of numbers, the Diaspora movement in the United States remains the largest arm of the movement and the one that is likely to grow at a much faster rate as Jamaicans continue to migrate to the United States at a consistently increasing rate each year. The movement in the United States has, however, achieved some amount of success primarily in the areas of establishing trade councils in places such as New Jersey, California, Connecticut and Minneapolis (Franklyn 155). These trade councils have been successful in encouraging potential investors to become involved in various projects in Jamaica, especially the building of new schools and hospitals. These trade councils have continued to gain tremendous support from the Diaspora movement in the United States.

#### Jamaican Migration to Canada

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, Canada became a prime migration destination for many Jamaicans. The Canadian government had promulgated a new policy to attract foreign domestic workers to the country; predominantly women from the English speaking Caribbean. This new policy allowed single female migrants (21 to 35 years of age) who

entered the country as domestic workers to apply for Canadian citizenship after at least one year working as a domestic worker and five years living in the country (Jones 2). Beginning in 1955, the Canadian government admitted over 100 Jamaicans to come to the country and work domestically. These more open Canadian immigration policies also facilitated family unification since it was easy for Jamaicans who were already living and working in Canada to then sponsor close relatives to join them in Canada.

Once Jamaica gained independence in 1962, and the British immigration policies became more restrictive, the bulk of Jamaican migrants turned to Canada and the United States where the road to citizenship seemed less burdensome. Although greater numbers went to the United States, Canada also experienced a significant influx in Jamaican migrants. This was especially the case during the 1970s when Jamaica experienced another large wave of migration under the political leadership of Michael Manley, whose seemingly “left leaning” political agenda scared away thousands of middle class Jamaicans. Many of these immigrants were concerned that Manley was intent on implementing a form of democratic socialism on the island that would be detrimental to those who were living above the poverty line.

As is the case with the United Kingdom, the Jamaican diaspora community in Canada is a tight knit community. Being smaller in size, members have an easier time gathering geographically and generating support and consensus. Canada was the first Jamaican Diaspora host country to launch a foundation entitled, “The Jamaican Diaspora Canada Foundation” on November 2, 2004. The members in Canada, therefore, went a step further than those in the other host countries by turning their movement arm into a nonprofit organization with the right to receive donations and financial revenues which

they in turn used to help support their developmental initiatives in Jamaica. The creation of the foundation has been instrumental in legitimizing the movement to onlookers and potential supporters in Canada. Like those in the United Kingdom, Canadians in the Jamaican Diaspora have also been lobbying leaders in the Canadian government to implement tax concessions for those who invest in Jamaica or contribute to charitable donations, including the Diaspora fund established there (Franklyn 341).

### Jamaican Migration Today

Although Jamaicans continue to migrate to countries all over the world and increasingly to other Caribbean countries, the United States remains the prime destination for Jamaican migrants (Jones 3, Migration Information Source 6). Also, unlike before, most Jamaicans who migrate have stayed in the same country since moving. The reasons for migrating have also changed somewhat. Although the economic incentives (pull factors) continue to play a significant role, other reasons for migrating include the close geographical proximity to the country, as well as the fact that many prospective migrants have large numbers of relatives and friends already living there. Furthermore, a large percentage of the Jamaicans migrating are seasonal migrants, including students on student visas, or Jamaicans who travel on the hotel and farm work contracts under agreements between the governments of Jamaica and the United States. Canada also has a Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). Ultimately, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada continue to symbolize the lands of milk, honey and economic opportunities to the prospective Jamaican migrant.



## CHAPTER 4: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT CONTINUED: THE INFLUENCE OF DIASPORA MOVEMENTS WORLDWIDE

In keeping with the theoretical framework of social movements that posits that movements come about because of specific socio-political structural factors, this chapter examines the facilitating environment, providing clarity as to the conditions that make such transnational movements viable entities. The discussion begins with an analysis at the global level, focusing on how diaspora communities and movements emerged in the last two decades as well as their significance in paving the way for the Jamaican Diaspora. The discussion then moves to the local level, and examines how the concept of Diaspora entered the general discourse in Jamaica and influenced the development of the movement and its relationship to the country.

### “Diasporas” as Real World, Contemporary, Global Phenomena

Since 2000, there has been a significant increase in the formation of Diasporas, with the majority of the respective homelands in the Global South. These collectives range in size from a 50,000 member diaspora community of Dominican migrants to the over 30 million migrants in the Chinese diaspora<sup>12</sup>. Still, the notion of a home country engaging formally with its diaspora community is a recent phenomenon which suggests a shift in socio-political climate that has become more receptive towards migrant

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of other newly emerging organized diaspora collectives include those with homelands in: Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Mali, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tunisia, Uruguay and Yemen (Glennie and Chappell “Migration Information Source” 2011)

collectives. This new socio-political global climate, replete with more active migrant collectives as well as countries that have begun to pay attention to them, paved the way for the Jamaican Diaspora movement to emerge. This new climate is a result of changing global sentiments towards migration where a more evolving view of the movement of human capital developed, seeing migrants, wherever they were, as potential resources who remain productive ambassadors and contributors to the home country. In keeping with the cultural studies definition of “Diaspora” presented earlier, migrants are no longer considered inflexible persons who leave one place and become rooted in another. They are being seen as fluid entities living in more than one country, having allegiance to multiple nations and embodying various identities. This is quite evident in the way that governments are now constantly making reference to their citizens “outside the borders.”

By the year 2005, many governments had already instituted diaspora institutions either at the ministry level, the subministry level, the national level or local level. Some, including India and China developed Diaspora offices, and made public attempts at ending abuses that were being inflicted on their migrants abroad. Other governments have expanded their diplomatic presence popular host countries, ensuring that their consulates in the host countries give their migrants legal advice and help. While the various home governments have different titles, mandates and portfolios related to their Diaspora, the fact is that they have established institutional methods to specifically address their increasingly powerful diaspora communities. In some cases, as with the Philippines, the Filipino commission on Filipinos Overseas actually reports directly to the President, suggesting that even the highest level of leadership in that country recognizes the importance of being up-to-date on matters that concern their Diasporas. Sierra Leone

has also instituted a similar project, where the Office of the Diaspora reports directly to the President. Sierra Leone is also a good example of a country that embodies the global political shift in the ways that the government reaches out to its Diaspora. The Sierra Leone government has embarked on a new policy that is specifically targeting members of their diaspora community, providing skilled and talented Sierra Leone émigrés with attractive incentives for coming back to the country and working for the government.

Table 2 illustrates the large number of countries in the Global South that by 2005 had developed formal diaspora institutions reaching out to their émigrés abroad. For many countries, the diaspora institution is hosted in the section of government that oversees foreign affairs and diplomatic relations. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, Haiti and Peru, have developed entire government departments with sole responsibilities serving as liaisons with the large diaspora populations they have. Haiti was one of the first countries in 1995 to establish a Ministry of Haitians Living Abroad collaborating with the migrants abroad, encouraging them to participate in the development of the country.

Table 2. Countries with Diaspora Institutions in their Government in 2005

<i>Country</i>	<i>Government Institution</i>	<i>Number of emigrants</i>	<i>Emigrants as percentage of Country's total Population</i>	<i>Top Destination Country</i>
<b>Albania</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	860,485	27.5	Greece
<b>Armenia</b>	Ministry of Diaspora	812,700	26.9	Russia
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	4,885,704	3.4	United States
<b>Brazil</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,135,060	0.6	Japan
<b>Dominica</b>	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Consumer and Diaspora Affairs	42,723	54.1	United States
<b>El Salvador</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,128,701	16.4	United States
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs	445,926	0.6	Sudan
<b>Haiti</b>	Ministry of Haitians Living Abroad	834,364	9.8	United States
<b>India</b>	Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs	9,987,129	0.9	United Arab Emirates
<b>Lebanon</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	621,903	17.4	United States
<b>Mexico</b>	Secretariat of Foreign Affairs	11,502,616	10.7	United States
<b>Peru</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Undersecretary for Peruvians Abroad	898,829	3.2	United States
<b>Romania</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,244,052	5.7	Israel
<b>Somalia</b>	Ministry for Diaspora and Community Affairs	441,417	5.4	Ethiopia
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Ministry of Foreign Employment, Promotion and Welfare	935,599	4.5	India
<b>Yemen</b>	Ministry of Expatriate Affairs	593,137	2.8	Saudi Arabia
<b>Note: This information is as of July 2009</b>				
<b>Source: Table taken from "Migration Information Source" based on data from World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008.</b>				

As Table 2 shows, home country governments have recently taken a vested interest in their migrant populations and have embarked on formal avenues through which they can reach out to their migrants. Following this explosion of interest in migrant collectives, a plethora of scholarship emerged, documenting the crucial roles diaspora communities play, especially in terms of remittances stimulating growth and investment. Those in the Jamaican Diaspora took note of this new popularity of such movements around the globe, and began making efforts to seriously evaluate the experiences of other Diasporas and generate valuable lessons on ways that they could operate more effectively and utilize available resources (Franklyn 336). The next few paragraphs elaborate on the work of Diaspora movements that have possibly served as the best role models and sources of inspiration to the Jamaican Diaspora.

#### The Influence of Global Diasporas

Members of the Jamaican Diaspora movement constantly make reference to the numerous real world examples of other Diaspora movements that have been formed. By tapping into the larger discourse of diaspora happening on a global scale, movement leaders bring the development of diaspora from the macro level of existence to the meso level. At this meso level, movement leaders have been able to create frames and promote ideologies that are foundationally linked to what is happening globally.

#### *The Jewish Diaspora*

An influential Diaspora movement and certainly one of the oldest and most sustained movements is the Jewish Diaspora. For this reason, leaders of the Jamaican Diaspora often make reference to this “original diaspora” trying to understand how they have been able to remain successful and viable over time. Recent calculations show that

the Jewish Diaspora remits approximately US \$11 billion to Israel each year<sup>13</sup>. This is also often cited as the premier example of the role of a Diaspora community in engaging in development of the home country, in generating support and recognition for issues affecting the country and for maintaining a continuous connection to the homeland. The Jewish Diaspora has traditionally been successful at getting the governments in the host countries to implement policies that support Israel. The other important factor contributing to the success of the Jewish Diaspora (and something that will be discussed in the penultimate chapter), is the way in which they have been able to ensure that even third and fourth generation Jews in the Diaspora maintain a strong and meaningful connection to Israel and engage in programs where they not only visit the country, but also give back and contribute to Israel.

There are many programs that the Jewish Diaspora have implemented that target youth. Examples include the yearly summer camps where Jewish youth return to Israel and work for the summer. Possibly one of the most famous programs is the Jewish birthright program that funds nearly 20,000 youth in the Jewish Diaspora to visit Israel each year. Leaders of the Jewish Diaspora recognize that the more that these youth visit the country and become actively involved in some project there, the more likely they are to stay committed to the goals of the Jewish Diaspora or even return home. These efforts have been crucial in maintaining not only Israel, but in keeping the Jewish Diaspora active and noteworthy.

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<sup>13</sup> Information according to Earl Jarrett, chairman of the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation (Franklyn 338)

## *The Indian Diaspora*

One of the most successful Diaspora movements today is the Indian Diaspora. The sheer size of it is huge, but this is only superseded by the fact that these twenty million Indian migrants have been successful in organizing themselves as a collective movement and have made continuous, sustained efforts to become active in the affairs of India. Not surprisingly the Indian Diaspora is also the largest remitter in the world<sup>14</sup>. Like the Jamaican Diaspora, the Indian Diaspora has its deepest roots in countries in the Global North and their Diaspora is comprised primarily of highly educated and skilled persons who have migrated for economic and employment purposes.

The Indian Diaspora has also been keen on embodying the essence of “diaspora” as an actively engaged movement of Indian migrants. That is, they continue to maintain deep cultural, spiritual and social connections to their homeland, something evident in the Jamaican Diaspora today (Franklyn 337). The Indian Diaspora has also been successful at gathering financial sources in fund locations and has been able to direct these funds to specific projects and investment opportunities that members of the Indian Diaspora see as important and crucial to the development of India. To do this, they have made efficient use of available technology to mobilize resources, and they have also utilized their database of Indians in the diaspora to gather the necessary talents and high skilled Indian migrants most suited to lead the way in promoting and instituting these ventures.

Many Indian migrants working in software technology companies in North America have spent time utilizing their acquired knowledge to develop second-hand technology that can be exported to India (Franklyn 337). Their investment in India has

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<sup>14</sup> The Indian Diaspora remits nearly US \$12 billion every year (Franklyn 337).

certainly helped the economy in India grow significantly. Furthermore, many Indians in the diaspora are beginning to return to India to work in these ventures they invested in while in the Diaspora. In essence, they left India to create the avenues in which they could successfully contribute, and then returned to India once they had created these opportunities. At the Jamaican Diaspora conference in 2008 one of the speakers made reference to the large Indian Diaspora and the way in which it has been able to generate consensus in achieving goals in an efficient manner.

### *The Haitian Diaspora*

The Haitian Diaspora is one of the earliest self defined Diasporas emerging out of the Global South. As noted earlier, the Haitian Diaspora was formed in 1991, under the leadership of President Aristide. At that time, an entire ministry was established and dedicated to servicing the needs of its diaspora community. Barbara Burton (2004) noted, “Aristide and other Haitian politicians recognized the tremendous economic power of the organized diaspora to instigate and support changes at home...Aristide was masterful in his use of charismatic oratory with diaspora representatives to shift a tension about leaving and returning into a positive investment in the future of the nation” (786).

Notice here, Burton’s reference to the language used by Aristide to insight change and to promote a new vision of the Haitian Diaspora. It is for this reason that the later chapters explore the way in which language and specific rhetoric has served to facilitate the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora. So the idea of a political climate shift in the government is not unique to the case of Jamaica. Other governments around the globe were also beginning to re-evaluate their relationships with diaspora communities finding different ways to make it work.



## Conclusion

This chapter examined the global political opportunity structures out of which the Jamaican Diaspora emerged. The discussion began with a look at the way in which the word “Diaspora” has become a global concept, gaining increasing recognition and importance among politicians and leaders around the world. Specifically, the chapter discussed the rise of various Diaspora movements, giving examples of those with growing popularity and influence in the Global South. Following this, was a discussion of individual Diaspora movements that more closely inspired the Jamaican Diaspora movement: the Jewish Diaspora, the Indian Diaspora and the Haitian Diaspora.

SECTION II CONT'D: THE LOCAL CONTEXT—SOCIO-POLITICAL  
OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES IN JAMAICA (1962 TO 2000)

After considering the global context out of which the Diaspora movement developed, the next few chapters brings the focus to the local context of Jamaica, examining the way in which specific discourse about Jamaican migrants impacted the movement. In doing so, the section explains how the relationship between the migrants and the local residents has evolved over the past three decades and further explores the ways in which the Jamaican Diaspora, as both a transnational movement and a phenomenon, maintained itself as a viable entity within the Jamaica.

The significance of looking at the local context can be summed up in a statement made by one Diaspora member in attendance at the Jamaican biennial Diaspora Conference held in 2006. In addressing the audience, she said, “Some of you may recall that in the seventies, it was not felt to be wise to advertise the fact that you were leaving Jamaica. Some viewed our leaving as somewhat less patriotic, to the extent that we wondered if we would be welcomed if we returned even to visit” (Franklyn 325). Statements like these suggest that something significant must have happened if, beginning in 2004, Jamaican migrants were welcomed home. This section tracks these changes by exploring the ways in which the concept of “diaspora” entered and influenced the socio-political climate and discourse in Jamaica and how this new climate facilitated the emergence of the Jamaican Diaspora movement.

## CHAPTER 5: THE LOCAL CONTEXT: TRACKING THE “DISCOURSE OF DIASPORA” IN JAMAICA (1962 TO 2004)

This chapter explores the local context in Jamaica to uncover the ways in which residents redefined the concept of diaspora as well as their understanding of the role of migrants. The chapter begins with an in-depth discussion of how the concept of “Jamaican Diaspora” entered the discursive environment on a local level among residents in Jamaica. The local media represents one of the institutions through which discourse has had implications for the construction of the Jamaican Diaspora. This chapter utilizes discourse analysis to provide a chronological discussion of published letters and articles that referenced the word “Diaspora” or the phrase “Jamaican Diaspora” in Jamaica’s oldest newspaper—*The Gleaner*. The exploration of attitudes, beliefs and opinions included in the newspaper, reveal the “taken for granted” rules of society that created the context for how Jamaican migrants were viewed.

The second portion of the chapter moves the discussion to the socio-political realm highlighting chronologically, the changing political climate within the Jamaican government which influenced the rise of the Jamaican Diaspora. This information is gathered from secondary sources (including publications by government officials, books and academic articles), as well as a few speeches and addresses made by government personnel at the Jamaican Diaspora biennial Conferences (2004-2011). Before the analysis of *The Gleaner* begins, there is a brief discussion which includes examples of the

somewhat negative or adverse sentiments and messages Jamaican migrants were receiving from those in Jamaica during the 1970s, following the first wave of mass migration out of the country. Notably, the atmosphere in the country during that time period, left many migrants feeling unwelcomed in Jamaica and disconnected from the persons living there.

Yet, the irony is that while many Jamaicans have benefited on an individual level from the contributions, remittances and connections of migrants, they have historically remained skeptical of the interests of the collective group, as a Diaspora. They seem to trust their own family members and the contributions they are able to make at the local and individual level. However, as the discussions show, it would seem that as a group, or as a collective body, Jamaican migrants are feared or viewed with a certain level of distrust. It seems that there are conflicting attitudes towards Jamaican migrants. On the one hand, they are life savers, and on the other hand, they are not “true” Jamaicans.

In my own discussions with Diaspora members, they often state that their friends and extended relatives who remained in Jamaica had developed adverse and jealous attitudes and flaunted the idea that they were more patriotic for having remained in Jamaica and enduring the turbulent political climate in the 1970s. These sentiments were expressed in other socio-cultural avenues, including popular music in Jamaica. An example can be found in a song recorded by the Jamaican international Reggae artiste Pluto Shervington, released in 1976 entitled, “I Man Born Ya” (Appendix A). In his song, Pluto speaks directly to the Jamaican migrants, stating that he was born in Jamaica, and will not leave Jamaica, regardless of what happens, telling the migrants what they were missing out on by leaving the country.

More importantly, the lyrics in his song suggest that the patriotic Jamaican will not leave the “full belly” and the cultural traditions of Jamaica to go to Canada, England or the United States. In his song, he viewed migrants as persons running away from the problems Jamaica faces, instead of remaining in the country and helping to contribute to its improvement. His words suggest that Jamaicans on the island will not “hold the gate” open in expectations that the migrants will return, but will instead continue to work hard in Jamaica and enjoy those elements of the Jamaican culture that cannot be reproduced outside of Jamaica. Shervington’s song references former Jamaican Prime Minister, Michael Manley’s famous words during his term in the 1970s when he reminded Jamaicans, who were less than satisfied with his welfare state policies, that there were “Five flights a day to Miami.” Manley, in his position as Prime Minister of the country, seemingly was also of the opinion that if you were fed up with the country and wanted a way out, you could simply migrate to a better life. These sentiments, being expressed by the Prime Minister had a high level of credibility and sent a message that there was a distinction in level of commitment between those who were willing to stay and live in Jamaica and those who migrated. The fact that these words were being quoted in the popular songs is also reflective of the wide appeal and impact of Manley’s words on the local understanding and view of Jamaican migrants. Shervington includes this famous phrase in his song, but affirms that those words “mean nothing” to him—he will remain in Jamaica and work hard to make things better (See Appendix A for the full lyrics). Quite persuasively, Shervington indicates that he will not migrate. It would seem that his indirect response to Manley is that he is willing to remain “true” to his country and resist the pressures to migrate. This is an example of the way in which the text and the context

work together helping us understand the influence of the cultural milieu. These fragments of discourse help to show the separation between the residents in Jamaica and the migrants that existed before.

These examples are not limited to song lyrics or famous quotes from politicians. As the next few paragraphs describe, these sentiments and opinions can also be found in the local media avenues in the island. Communication scholars Tomaselli, Louw and Tomaselli (1986) have argued that media entities often become the prime sources involved in the (re)introduction and (re)definition of a term or idea in a given community or country. By utilizing discourse analysis, the next few paragraphs outline the way that “diaspora” as a term/word/phenomenon has been introduced and reintroduced into the local context through the media in Jamaica and how this process influenced whether Jamaicans accepted or rejected the Jamaican Diaspora movement.

#### A Background of *The Gleaner*

*The Gleaner*, the most popular and widely circulated newspaper media in Jamaica, started its daily publication in Jamaica in 1834 and has historically been read by a large cross section of Jamaicans both in Jamaica as well as in the diaspora. Many rely on this newspaper for getting the most up-to-date information on politics and socio-cultural affairs related to Jamaica. It can therefore be deduced that the sentiments expressed in *The Gleaner* would have a meaningful impact on the local population and their understanding and perspective on the Diaspora movement.

Another Jamaican newspaper, *The Jamaica Observer*, which was first published in 1993, has also become more recently involved in the discussions of the Jamaican Diaspora. This has been the case especially beginning in 2010 and leading up to the

biennial Diaspora conference held in Jamaica in 2011. The introduction of matters pertaining to the Jamaican Diaspora in *The Jamaica Observer* is something that is largely fueled by the fact that it hosts a regular opinion column written by one of the Diaspora Future Leaders Delegates. Only *The Gleaner* was utilized for this portion of the research since *The Jamaica Observer* had not begun its publication until much later in 1993 and to this day, still does not boast *The Gleaner's* large readership both within Jamaica and the diaspora.

### Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Table 3. "Diaspora" related phrases in *The Gleaner* (1962 - 2004)

<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Number of Appearances</b>
"Diaspora"	860
"Jewish Diaspora"	9
"African Diaspora"	193
"Caribbean Diaspora"	38
"Jamaican Migrants"	129
"Jamaican Diaspora"	85

Table 3 above provides a visual snapshot of the number of times "diaspora" related phrases appeared in *The Gleaner* between 1962 and 2004. The results reflect the findings from the research conducted on *The Gleaner's* online archival database. Of significance is the number of times between 1962 and 2004 that the word "Diaspora" was mentioned in *The Gleaner*. This number is greater than the times "Jewish Diaspora," "Caribbean Diaspora" and "Jamaican Diaspora" have appeared in totality. The explanation for this discrepancy is that prior to 2004 when the Jamaican Diaspora movement appeared on the scene, references to "Diaspora" were often synonymous to

“Jewish Diaspora” and there was really no need to specify which body of migrants was being discussed. This finding supports the discussion in the introductory chapter showing how the definition of diaspora has evolved significantly from earlier decades where diaspora was only used in reference to Jewish descendants. Of the only nine entries that used the phrase “Jewish Diaspora,” four were published after 2000 (when the Jamaican Diaspora movement emerged and a distinction needed to be made).

The significantly larger number of references found to the “African Diaspora” also suggests that authors put the “African” in front of diaspora to signal a different migrant community from the Jews. Still, the use of diaspora was in conjunction with another group of persons who were forced out of their homelands; victimized migrant communities that experienced forced dispersal. Still, the term was present in the local discourse referring to a group of persons around the globe with a common ancestry and homeland, but who had been victimized. The idea of a Jamaican diaspora had not yet entered the local discourse. The large group of voluntary Jamaican migrants was not understood at the time to comprise a diaspora let alone a Diaspora movement. The small number of references to “Caribbean Diaspora” also suggests that migrants from the region were also not thought to constitute a separate community from the larger African Diaspora.

#### The Early References: Diaspora related to Jewish Displaced Population

Although the parameters for the research start in 1962, 1961 was inputted in the search engine to account for any significant publication that could have appeared a few months earlier. One such article that referenced the word “diaspora” appeared in a copy of *The Gleaner* published in January 1961. The title of the article was “Jews called back



to Israel.” The article discussed the agenda of the organization of The World Zionist Organization that was appealing to Jews around the world to return to Israel in order to contribute needed manpower and to live “a full Jewish life.” The word “diaspora” was used only once in this article. In fact, on the one occasion, the definition “Countries outside Israel” was placed in parentheses following “diaspora.” The inclusion of the definition demonstrates that prior to Jamaican independence, in 1962 “diaspora” was a term unfamiliar to local Jamaican discourse. The first usage nonetheless paired the term diaspora almost as a synonym to countries where Jews resided outside of Israel.

#### Definition of Diaspora Becomes more Inclusive

“Diaspora” appears in *The Gleaner* on July 4, 1979 in an op-ed piece written by Arthur Kitchin entitled “Rastas and Politics.” This article discusses Rastafarian involvement in Jamaican politics as a revolutionary concept reflecting “a growing trend in the ‘third world’ Caribbean diaspora.” The word “diaspora” is used here in reference to the people in the Caribbean being a derivative of the larger African diaspora, sharing common political fates and destinies. This is significant since for the first time, “diaspora” is introduced in the newspaper in a way that separates the Caribbean displaced population from the larger African diaspora.

Interestingly, it is Arthur Kitchin who also authored the next article in *The Gleaner* that uses the word “diaspora.” This article entitled “Jamaican Music” was published on July 15, 1979. As before, Kitchin uses the word in reference to a larger body of unified Caribbean peoples who have a common tragic beginning and are struggling to fight the oppression of what he refers to as “foreign critics, observers and entrepreneurs.” From this usage it can be understood that “diaspora” was beginning to

take on a more regional definition, again, breaking away from the more overarching understanding of the African diaspora. There is a sense from this article that there are multiple Diasporas within the African diaspora, with the Caribbean diaspora being one of those sub diaspora communities. On one sublevel would be the Jamaican Diaspora, but yet they all remain connected to the larger umbrella of the African Diaspora.

#### Jamaicans Begin to Grapple with Definition of “Diaspora”

The next significant usage of the word “diaspora” appears in *The Gleaner* on September 7, 1980, in an article entitled “How We Misuse Words,” written by one of the editors of the newspaper at that time, Mary Smith. As is the case with the article discussed previously, this one also advocates for expanding the definition of the word. The article called for a need to clarify the definitions and pronunciations of words that seemed to be gaining rising popularity in the media, and in 1980, the word “diaspora” was one of them. According to Smith, an understanding of the word itself may dispel confusion and uncertainty about how to use it. She states:

Reader Gary Prendergast of Mandeville says that one of our columnists keeps using “diaspora” to refer to Africa and Rastafarianism when the word means specifically the dispersion of the Jews after their captivity in Egypt (Mr. Prendergast says Babylon). The word diaspora does not have that special meaning and comes from the Greek “to disperse.”

The term, according to Oxford, originated in Deuteronomy xxviii, verse 25. I see no objection to the word being used figuratively to refer to other dispersions. The word “Exodus” is a case in point. It is a book in the Old Testament, and it refers particularly to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. But the word is

now commonly used to mean emigration. So reader Prendergast, you are correct when you remind us of the meaning of diaspora, but it is possible to use it figuratively. (M. Smith “How We Misuse Words” 1980).

From the quote above, it seems that in 1980, Jamaicans had developed a fascination with the term diaspora and, at least in this article, were already discussing the complex meanings of the term and the understanding of how persons are dispersed from their homelands. In this excerpt, Smith engages in dialogue with a reader, Prendergast, who seemed unclear as to why the word diaspora was being used to refer to persons other than Jews who were dispersed after Egyptian captivity. This is another example how meanings and language evolve. Recall that previously, references to the word “diaspora” were synonymous with “Jewish Diaspora.” However, by 1980, the word had a broader definition that could be applied to various dispersed populations. Smith uses “Exodus” as another example of a word that has expanded from its original meaning to encapsulate more general conceptions of movement and migration.

From this excerpt, we begin to see the “dialogue of diaspora” emerge, possibly setting the stage for the debates that were to come later on. What is clear, however, is that Jamaicans were beginning to gain an interest in “diaspora,” both as a term and a phenomenon. Additionally, some were beginning to investigate the definition of the term and its flexibility in being able to describe multiple expressions of migration and departure.

#### The phrase “Jamaican Diaspora” introduced in the Local Discourse in Jamaica

The subsequent paragraphs are dedicated to a chronological discussion of selected entries published in *The Gleaner* that referenced the term “Jamaican Diaspora.” In the

discussion of the findings, most attention was paid to those articles that provided some type of insight into the discourse about Jamaican migrants and how the concept of “Diaspora” was understood by those in Jamaica. It should be noted that, overall, the majority of the articles found were actually either “Letters to the Editor” submitted by Jamaican residents or op-ed pieces submitted by academics and other public intellectuals on the island.

In terms of appearances of “Jamaican Diaspora,” the majority of the 85 references found were published after 1995 and 75 of these were in entries published after 1999. The discussion of the entries has been arranged chronologically in ascending order with subheadings indicating common themes discovered in the selected articles.

#### Early References to “Jamaican Diaspora”

The first time the phrase “Jamaican Diaspora” is used in *The Gleaner* comes in an article entitled “Carlos I—A Delightful Jamaican Restaurant” published on August 19, 1979. The author of the article, Roselyn Hall, discusses a restaurant in Manhattan that sells traditional Jamaican cuisine, catering to a growing body of Jamaican migrants settling in New York City. This article is significant since it is the first time in the local media that there is reference to an existing “Jamaican Diaspora” as a collective group of Jamaican migrants who share a connection with each other. In this article, the Jamaican migrant population is considered an extension of Jamaica with persons who remain loyal to the country’s culture. Two paragraphs in the article by Hall are of particular interest since they capture some of the same sentiments that are even now being expressed by members of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. The author of the article, Hines,

conducted interviews with some Jamaican migrants in New York City, and writes about the restaurant owner he interviewed:

The diaspora from Jamaica, viewed positively, has provided free education in management efficiency, banking, restaurant management, and a host of other protections for thousands of islanders. Why pay ‘foreign experts’ to bring this experience to Jamaica, say many expatriates, when islanders themselves—in America, in Canada, in Britain—are now equipped with it themselves. “We would only be too glad to give this knowledge back to our own country,” says Hines. “This has nothing to do with politics, or a particular government—we’d like to see the economy viable in Jamaica. If we can help with that, we’d like to.”

Hines, who has been in the States, since 1956, offers the opinion that, “No Jamaican wants to stay in this country. We’re just making a living here to retire in our own island.” This kind of loyalty to Jamaica is not clearly understood on the island, where there is sometimes a feeling that expatriated businessmen are dead-set against the current situation on the island, and therefore would not want to offer assistance or advice. “I know a dozen men in all occupations here who would be glad to sit down right now and talk with island officials about export of Jamaican products, training of islanders in methods learned here,” says Hines. (R. Hall, “Carlos I” 1979).

This quote reveals that clues to the way in which some Jamaicans in the diaspora have historically felt “cut-off,” rejected and ostracized from Jamaica. Some believed that Jamaican residents viewed them as traitors who, after leaving, had no genuine interest in

the well-being of the country. This article shows that in 1979, Jamaican migrants were making attempts to let the Jamaican public know that they had much to offer the country and wanted to make a positive impact, but felt discouraged because of the levels of hostility and distrust they felt. They were finally starting to see themselves as a community of displaced individuals who shared a common understanding of their connection to each other as well as their connection to their homeland, Jamaica. These feelings of exclusion and ostracism eventually became the basis for the migrants forming a communal movement. This idea will be discussed more thoroughly in the chapter on identity formation.

The sense of community among the Jamaican migrants is evident from the first sentence of this quote which suggests that Jamaican migrants had already begun to pool resources, skills and talent together to help newly migrated Jamaican migrants transition successfully to their new lives in the United States. In this article, it is the restaurant owner, Carlos Hines, who noted how other Jamaican migrants shared crucial knowledge and information with him when he first migrated, knowledge which eventually led to him operating a successful business. This article is also one of the earliest instances that provides evidence of Jamaican migrants reaching out publicly to Jamaicans living on the island expressing their desire to become accepted and to become involved in the affairs of the country. Nevertheless, it would be two decades later that they would get a favorable response.

## Ambivalent Attitudes Towards the Jamaican Diaspora

### *Negative Attitudes*

Another significant reference to the “Jamaican Diaspora” in *The Gleaner* is found in an opinion piece written by Carl Wint on Tuesday, August 8, 1989 entitled, “To the Nineties—With Hope.” This piece was published only two days after Jamaica had celebrated its 27<sup>th</sup> year of independence. Due to the holiday and independence celebrations taking place on the weekend, the author notes that the country will also host many persons from within the “Jamaican diaspora” who will be in the island celebrating the occasion with their friends and family. Of significance is his comment about the sentiments and feelings that members of the Jamaican diaspora would be bringing with them to the country. He states in the article, “A lot of them will be insensitive and try to tell us how crude, cowardly, incompetent, inefficient, lazy, corrupt and mendacious we are. They will be ready to compare this country with the countries they are trying to make their way in right now. Tell them to shove it. Tell them that we have looked in the mirror and we know what we are.”

The choice of language here is an example of the kind of attitudes that many Jamaicans in the country expressed towards Jamaican migrants. Some believed that members of the Jamaican Diaspora were no longer connected to the country and labeled those Jamaicans who stayed behind as corrupt and lazy. The “we” versus “them” mentality is also evident in the way the writer depicts those living on the island, (we), as representing one group, the true keepers and caretakers of the Jamaican identity, while the other group consisting of migrants, (them), represents the traitors. The author’s words, “Tell them to shove it,” further suggest that those in the Jamaican Diaspora are

elitist, thinking themselves better off than those living in Jamaica. He describes members of the diaspora as “those people” who have no understanding of what the “real” Jamaica is and since they migrated no longer possess the authentic Jamaican identity, but have instead adopted the cultural identity of their new place of residence. Statements like this certainly help us understand the kind of difficulties the Jamaican Diaspora had to overcome in order to be taken seriously as a well intentioned movement. While not necessarily a direct representation of all Jamaicans, it can be inferred from such a publication in the popular newspaper that there was a very limited sense of connection between Jamaicans on the island and those in the diaspora.

#### *Positive Attitudes*

The next significant reference to the Jamaican Diaspora in *The Gleaner* is in the editorial published on Wednesday, March 3, 1999, entitled “Racism in Britain.” The editor gives credit to the parents of a young man who was stabbed to death in a race related hate crime occurring some years before. Years after the incident, these Jamaicans living in England remained committed to the pursuit of justice on behalf of their son. The author notes that the parents “are good examples of how people of the Jamaican Diaspora contribute to the societies which they join.” This description of the good that members of the Jamaican Diaspora do in their new countries of residence is the first truly positive reference to the movement in *The Gleaner*. Although not necessarily suggesting that members of the Jamaican Diaspora contribute in a beneficial manner to Jamaica, the article at least paints them in a much more generous light breaking away from the previous tendency to disregard them or view Jamaican migrants negatively. The



description in this article also categorizes them as a collective body and uses the word “diaspora” to label the group of migrants.

#### Jamaican Diaspora Recognized as a Movement of Growing Importance

On Sunday, December 8, 2002 an entry appeared in *The Gleaner* entitled “Confronting Issues in Jamaica.” The entry is part of an address made by Douglas Orane, at the annual fund raising dinner of the Central Manchester Returned Residents Association that took place on November 23, 2002. Orane at the time was the CEO of Grace Kennedy (a successful food manufacturer in Jamaica) and a known public intellectual in Jamaica. In this address, Orane lists what he considers to be the issues of utmost importance to the future trajectory of Jamaica. The third item on his list is “The increasing importance of the Jamaican Diaspora.” It is no surprise that this first true reference to the Jamaican Diaspora as a rising movement comes from a leader in the private sector. He would eventually go on to play a pivotal role in the staging of the biennial Diaspora conferences that would be held in Jamaica beginning only two years later in 2004.

In his address, published in *The Gleaner*, Orane states, “I am suggesting that we need a national strategy to deal with this reality of the Jamaican nation being four and a half million people globally rather than just two and half million located physically on ‘the rock.’” Here we see one of the first public appeals to alter the tone of discussion surrounding the Jamaican Diaspora. The definition of nation becomes prominent as Orane pleads to the Jamaican public to consider including the Jamaican Diaspora as part of the larger Jamaican nation and not a separate entity. His plea here is neither a surprising nor outlandish one considering that his audience consisted mainly of returning

residents (former Diaspora members) who would be too happy to know that Jamaicans on the island wanted to reach out to the Diaspora. Such a public appeal in this medium is significant because we can see how over a period of time the Jamaican public became more sensitized to the idea of developing more favorable attitudes towards the Diaspora movement, making it easier for this movement to develop and become involved in the socio-political arena in Jamaica.

#### Discussions on Jamaican Diaspora become More Frequent and Complex

Between 2003 and 2004 the frequency of references to “Jamaican Diaspora” increased significantly. Many of these entries were excerpts taken from speeches made by politicians and public intellectuals in Jamaica. On May 11, 2003, *The Gleaner* published an article by Christopher Tufton entitled “Courting Jamaicans Overseas.” Dr. Tufton is a well known politician and public intellectual in Jamaica who is also a professor at the local University of West Indies. As such, his writing about the Jamaican Diaspora has far reaching effects among the Jamaican population. He presented a proposal to the Jamaican government suggesting they take a serious interest in the Jamaican migrant community living overseas and to “court” the migrants favorably. This is similar to what a previous author, Douglas Orane had said in his publication in *The Gleaner*. Public intellectuals, and specifically, business leaders and academics were beginning to recognize the Jamaican Diaspora as an important stakeholder in the country’s future helping to counter the negative images Jamaica receives in the global media.

In 2003, the Jamaican government began to examine its relationship with the Jamaican migrant communities. However, as Tufton commented in his article, the

government had selfish reasons to harness this relationship, being more concerned with “tapping into the commercial value of the Jamaican diaspora.” This could possibly help explain why initially, Jamaicans in the country were not receptive to the notion of an independent Jamaican Diaspora seeking to bring assistance. Most persons possibly saw the movement as an extension of the Jamaican government and the country’s failed political system. Despite this, in his article, Tufton refers to the Diaspora as a group of people contributing large remittances and as such reduces the group to a financial contributor to the island. This choice of words, grouping the Diaspora with financial benefits, influences the way in which Jamaicans view the role of these migrants. Many began to see them as “money senders” who were now much better off since leaving Jamaica. Even then in 2003, intellectuals like Tufton were beginning to raise questions like never before about the Diaspora community. In his article he states:

The bigger question is what is the role of Government in this process of understanding and engaging our migrant communities, and does the Government have the credibility to encourage Jamaicans to invest in Jamaica? Further, on what basis would the Government seek to influence overseas Jamaicans to support or lobby on Jamaica’s behalf? What is likely to motivate these overseas Jamaicans and how will they benefit from their efforts? Additionally, what is the role of the local and private sector in supporting and exploiting the commercial value of the Jamaicans overseas? And what is the role of Jamaican entrepreneurs within these Jamaican clusters abroad?

Time and further examination will allow for a better picture. However, what is clear, is that any attempt at engaging Jamaican migrants must be based on

a mutually beneficial arrangement. In other words, overseas Jamaicans should not simply be seen as cash cows, waiting to be exploited, particularly if the Government is the driver of this process. This would re-enforce an already existing relationship based on suspicion and distrust. (Tufton “Courting Jamaicans” 2003).

As this excerpt from Tufton’s article suggests, in 2003, just prior to the Jamaican Diaspora blossoming in full force, Jamaicans were starting to question how the local sector should respond and react to this large migrant community force that was beginning to demand notice. Interestingly, Tufton questions the roles of the Jamaican Government as well as the Jamaican private sector (the entities mostly likely to gain from an engagement with the Diaspora), suggesting that they could possibly have selfish intentions that would inevitably sever ties with the Jamaican Diaspora. His comments and questions here are quite telling in light of the fact that nearly ten years after this article was published, the Jamaican government and the local private sector in Jamaica remain the ones most committed to working in partnership with the Diaspora. Furthermore, Tufton’s predictions were true as Diaspora members continue to demand more distance and separation from the Jamaican government and remain distrustful of the government’s intentions in associating with the movement. He also raised the question as to whether or not the government and private sector should be actively involved with the Jamaican Diaspora or mere facilitators of the movement—another question that has yet to be answered nearly a decade later.

This article is further reflective of the political environment in 2003 when the Jamaican government began to take a more serious and concentrated effort in the

“migrant question.” Tufton’s article presented a comprehensive yet succinct discussion of what intellectuals in Jamaica were beginning to feel about the migrant community and the impact on the country. As such, it is at this time that we can see how the discourse of the Jamaican Diaspora as a collective movement of grave importance began to enter the local vocabulary in Jamaica. It also becomes evident that there has always been some ambivalence concerning the relationship that the various stakeholders in Jamaica would have with this self proclaimed Diaspora movement. This ambivalence still exists today.

After Tufton’s article, discussions on the Jamaican Diaspora intensified in *The Gleaner* as evidenced by the numerous appearances in quick succession. An excerpt of a speech by Delano Franklyn was published on July 11, 2003 entitled, “Engaging the Jamaican Diaspora in the USA.” The full speech was given at a panel discussion held in New York in June 2003. By this time, the Jamaican government had launched a new program with a focus on forming a good relationship with the Jamaican Diaspora. When this excerpt was published, Franklyn was Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was the first appointed politician to have under his portfolio responsibility for “The Jamaican Diaspora and Overseas Communities.” Like the more recent articles before it, this piece also tackles the definition of the nation of Jamaica addressing the need to consider expanding the understanding of Jamaica’s boundaries. Franklyn states, “The real configuration of the nation state of Jamaica therefore ought not to be defined in terms of its geographic dimension but instead by its demographic space.” So here we see politicians using this medium to make the appeal to the wider Jamaica encouraging them to be more considerate of engaging in a more inclusive relationship with Jamaican migrants.

This kind of language is significantly different from what we see in the earlier articles where authors were expressing negative attitudes towards members of the Diaspora. In fact, in this excerpt, Franklyn goes to the other extreme, really trying to reach out to the Jamaican public to truly alter their perception of Jamaican migrants. In his speech he notes that Jamaicans in the country have taken too long to “recognize the real worth of Jamaicans living overseas.” He also argues that the Jamaican government, since independence, is to be reprimanded for being slow to recognize the value of the leaders that exist in the Jamaican overseas community. He states, “In fact, on many occasions when the leadership of the State sought outside help, it looked more to foreign institutions and governments than to the Jamaican overseas community.” This statement is in keeping with the demands and goals being made by those in the Diaspora movement who have argued that they want the Jamaican government to recognize their potential and turn to them in times of need. This article was truly beginning to echo some of the main propelling points from which the Diaspora movement emerged and marks a significant turn in the way that Jamaicans were beginning to see the Jamaican migrant community. Franklyn went on in this article to encourage Jamaican migrants to organize themselves more effectively in order to be truly impactful in their host countries as well as in Jamaica.

Towards the end of 2003, discussions about the Jamaican Diaspora were quite prevalent throughout the local media in Jamaica and *The Gleaner* in particular. On November 9, 2003, Christopher Tufton had published yet another article in the paper entitled, “Understanding the Psychology of the Jamaican Migrant.” Even the title here is indicative of the complete shift in the local attitude towards those in the Jamaican

Diaspora. Not only were Jamaicans on the island starting to adopt more positive attitudes and relationships towards the Diaspora, they were also now focused on understanding their experiences. Surely, this was an indication that Jamaica was becoming much more receptive to the idea of a Diaspora movement wanting to engage with the country. In this article, Tufton notes that it is a good thing that Jamaicans have begun to reach out to the Jamaican Diaspora, and that this is the most certain way of countering the “brain drain” that the country suffers from.

In recognizing the organization and growing influence of those in the movement he states, “Jamaicans who settle abroad have become a powerful block with the potential to contribute significantly and positively to our nation state. The challenge for the home country is how to tap into this pool of talent and resources. The starting point is to understand the context and perspective of this target audience.” From this statement we see persons in Jamaica were beginning to change the discourse about the Jamaican migrant at the local level while instituting a new vision of the Jamaican Diaspora. Tufton refers to the Jamaican migrants as powerful and replete with potential, a massive resource that can benefit the country. Again, such statements are far removed from earlier descriptions of the Jamaican migrant published in *The Gleaner* and the remainder of the article paints a sympathetic picture of the Jamaican migrant, who despite her new place of residence, remained loyal to her home country. He spends tremendous time outlining the push and pull factors that influenced migrants’ decisions to leave the country in the first place, many of these factors were honorable and often done because of lack of options and what he refers to as their “survival instincts” that led them to seek residence elsewhere. He really endures a tremendous task of empathizing with the Jamaican

migrant and her decision to leave, making a clear appeal to the public to also subscribe to this more sympathetic description of the Jamaican migrant. In the end, he states, “ So in the final analysis, it’s not just about how to extract more remittances, tourists dollar, or lobbying support, but more fundamentally defining a relationship between Jamaica and Jamaicans living abroad that recognizes mutual value, respect and is reciprocal in its efforts and benefits. This is the expectation of the Jamaican migrant. This is the challenge of our nation.”

Again, the choice of words is telling of the new attitudes and opinions being formed in Jamaica in respect to its diaspora community. We can feel the appeal and sense of urgency behind Tufton’s words, almost indicating that there is a need for Jamaicans to challenge themselves to abandon the negligent attitude towards the Diaspora in order for the country to progress. Also of interest is the way in which Tufton urges Jamaicans to think beyond finances and remittances when they think of Jamaican migrants and instead focus on developing a caring, reciprocal relationship. Such appeals in the local newspaper did much to bring the public into the new conversations taking place between the Jamaican government and the Diaspora movement. These kinds of appeals in the local paper resulted in an expanded conversation about the diaspora throughout the country and also reflect the new attitude that many Jamaicans were beginning to adopt towards the diaspora community. Although not completely representative of the entire country, articles with these more positive themes did much to not only make the Diaspora movement visible, but also expand the discourse about the diaspora throughout the island.



### Conclusion on Findings in *The Gleaner*

The preceding paragraphs highlighted selected publications in *The Gleaner* that have provided a more thorough, contextual background for how the idea and language of the “Jamaican Diaspora” evolved in Jamaica and as such impacted the way in which the Diaspora movement was received in the country. The results of the archival research demonstrate that in the decades following Jamaican independence (1962), Jamaicans held negative and critical feelings towards those in the Jamaican Diaspora. Over the years (as a result of global trends), Jamaicans seemed to develop more receptive and positive attitudes towards the Jamaican Diaspora movement recognizing the need to significantly alter the relationship between the two. As time progressed, these negative feelings and attitudes towards the Jamaican Diaspora seemed to subside.

Publications in *The Gleaner* referencing “Jamaican Diaspora” increased in frequency after 2000, ensuring that both the term “diaspora” and the Jamaican Diaspora movement remained a focal point in the local discourse in the country. Today, many Jamaicans are familiar with the term “diaspora,” the Jamaican Diaspora movement as well as the biennial Diaspora conferences staged on the island. The findings also suggest that leading up to 2000 (around the time the Jamaican Diaspora was being formed), positive discussions about the Diaspora movement in the newspaper were mostly excerpts from speeches or op-ed pieces written by Jamaican politicians. This is more a reflection of the changing opinions and strategies taking place in the Jamaican government and political arena. The next few paragraphs elaborate on this changed political climate that had the most significant impact on the way in which the Jamaican Diaspora was perceived in the country.

## The Jamaican Government Develops New Strategies to Integrate the Diaspora

### *Emerging Counter-discourse to the view of the Migrant as Traitor*

As the previous discussion of *The Gleaner* demonstrated, for years Jamaican migrants felt abandoned by the government of Jamaica who, they believed, only considered them for their potential financial contribution in times of need and emergencies. As Delano Franklyn (2010) stated, “Many persons in the Jamaican overseas community are of the view that they are remembered only when there is a crisis in the country and the country is in need of assistance” (Franklyn 6). Members of the diaspora feel that although they have been contributing much to the country, specifically by way of remittances, they are taken for granted, overlooked and underappreciated for other valuable contributions they could and should be making. This kind of sentiment has previously resulted in a rift between those living in Jamaica and the diaspora community.

However, recognizing that many Jamaicans in the diaspora were experiencing this feeling of getting a “cold shoulder,” the Jamaican government has more recently engaged in continuous efforts to mend the relationship with the diaspora community, especially in the years following Jamaican independence in 1962. The tension had become so obvious and glaring that in 1998, the Upper House of Parliament in Jamaica brought up the issue of this relationship for debate. This was a key moment in turning the tide. The discussion led to the official recognition of the positive role that the Jamaican diaspora was playing in the development of the country (Franklyn 7). As discussed earlier, this changing view of the migrant in the political arena was already beginning to take place on a global scale in many countries.

*The Changing Economic Context: The Transition from “Brain Drain” to “Brain Gain”*

Here it is important to briefly discuss the economic context in Jamaica that resulted in the government’s changed attitude towards migrants. Since gaining independence in 1962, Jamaica has remained, relatively speaking, politically stable. Although there have been prospects and possibilities for beneficial investment opportunities, it is still considered a poor, developing country but without the political turmoil that tend to plague similar developing economies. Nevertheless, the country had to come to terms with the adverse repercussions of its colonial past and the rapid exit of the British out of the country. As a result, Jamaica has always suffered from overcrowding, poor infrastructure, inadequate sanitation, high unemployment rates and inflation. In 2009 the country had an unemployment rate of 14.5% (Cunningham 15). Additionally there have been other global economic arrangements that have further damaged the Jamaican economy. For example, in the early 1990s the signing of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) resulted in many jobs in the garment industry in Jamaica being transferred to Mexico and other countries with lower wages. The WTO (World Trade Organization) ruling in the same time period restricted Jamaican banana exports to Europe at the favorable rates they once enjoyed. These kinds of events destroyed many of Jamaica’s local industries, including banana, sugar, and pimento.

Bauxite is also a major industry in Jamaica, but the country does not benefit from it, since the majority of the bauxite mined is on agricultural and fertile soil that could otherwise be used to plant crops for subsistent living. Furthermore, the bauxite companies are owned by foreign multinational corporations that invest little if any of the profits into the local economy. Even the tourism sector which is Jamaica’s biggest employment

sector does not benefit the country, since most of the hotels and resorts are again owned by multinational corporations, so the money does not stay in the country. Many investors are afraid to invest in the Jamaican economy. Furthermore, Jamaica relies a lot on the import of raw materials, capital and technology to support its local industry but have difficulty affording to buy these necessities to make the industries actually boom (Cunningham 16). The unpredictable hurricane season also makes it difficult for the agricultural, mining and tourism sectors to guarantee steady profits. The poor economy results in many persons being unable to find sustainable employment opportunities and many turn to crime. Crime rates in addition to Larson, looting, extortion and fraud run very rampant in Jamaica; this further discourages outside investment. A significant amount of local resources go into policing, crime solving initiatives, the judiciary circuit and health care (Cunningham 16).

Today, Jamaica is dependent on revenues from tourism and remittances to help sustain the small economy it has (Glennie and Chappell 2010). The majority of Jamaican households have at least one or more family members living abroad, primarily in North America. There are limited employment opportunities for the very skilled workers who often turn to emigration as the solution to find stable employment. As mentioned before, many Jamaicans leave for economic reasons; to get more money, to have the ability to send money home to help their relatives; and to find steady employment (Glennie and Chappell 2010).

Each year remittances to Jamaica increases and represents a major source of income for low income families. Over 40% of households in the rural areas of the country receive money from their relatives abroad (Cunningham 18). It is no secret that many

Jamaican migrants send home money for school fee, medical supplies and other basic consumption to the tune of over \$2 billion US dollars each year. Again, this money goes into local consumption and plays a part in inflation. The Diaspora is now trying to collectively invest this money in other areas of the country to enhance development. Still, even at the conferences and meetings I attend, there is discussion about the “dependency syndrome,” which is the notion that some Jamaicans may have gotten complacent with their efforts to try and find a sustainable means of living for themselves, because they have become dependent on the money which their foreign relatives send home. The problems with lack of investment and failing industries was compounded by the tremendous debt that Jamaica is in to institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with a significant portion of the government’s revenues going to pay interest on the loans that were borrowed following the failed imposition of global structural adjustment programs. As such, by the turn of the millennium in 2000, the Jamaican government was in a position where it had to seek alternative and new solutions to the economic problems that Jamaica was facing. Essentially, the Jamaican government was facing an economic crisis and needed to come up with new solutions.

In 2008 there was a global financial crisis that resulted in small economies like Jamaica taking a serious hit and struggling to find sustainable lifelines to prevent themselves from sinking. Additionally, the economic implications of “Brain Drain” were beginning to weigh heavily on the Jamaican government, forcing them to adapt a new attitude.<sup>15</sup> The idea of a “Brain Drain” suggests that there is an unequal distribution of the

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<sup>15</sup> Studies suggest that the notion of “brain drain” or the migration of high skilled citizens was beginning to have an adverse effect on the quality of the Jamaican educational and health systems, putting great strain on the remaining workforce and dealing a significant blow to levels of morale (Glennie and Chappell 8).

advantages and disadvantages of global migration. The source/home countries seem to bear most of the losses and have yet to be adequately compensated for the net contributions their natives have made to the receiving/host countries. Discussions of “Brain Drain” are essentially discussions about High Skill Migration. High Skill Migration (HSM) is the migration of educated persons and professionals who it is assumed could stay and help their countries out of poverty. The current wave of migrants tend to be persons from the middle and professional classes and tend to be educators, health care workers, scientists, engineers, professors and political reformers (Dugger 2005).

In an article entitled “Brain Drain Compensation,” Sir Ronald Sanders, a former Caribbean diplomat stated, “The Caribbean has been losing its highly educated people to industrialized nations at an alarming rate” (Sanders 2007). In the same article, he concluded that the tendency for industrialized nations to “take the cream of the skills” from developing countries would be an issue that would continue to worsen in the coming decades. These kinds of statements in today’s media are further cause of panic for many developing nations. In a recent survey Suriname had the highest percentage of secondary and tertiary educated persons entering the U.S. at 89.9%, Guyana was second at 85.9%, Jamaica third at 82.5%, Haiti at 81.6%, St. Kitts-Nevis at 71.6% and Antigua and Barbuda at 70% (Sanders 2007).

These kinds of statistics were beginning to alarm officials in the Jamaican government who realized that without an educated and skilled workforce, Jamaica’s chances for development would be quite dim. As more and more studies started to be published about this notion of “brain drain,” the Jamaican government came to the

realization that they needed to do something to develop better relations with those in the Jamaican Diaspora and encourage them to utilize their skills and talents in ways that would benefit Jamaica. They were now willing to consider what Jamaican financial expert Patrick Hylton termed the “Diaspora Option” (Franklyn 172). Public officials were finally beginning to realize that there was little that could be done to discourage persons from migrating.

Furthermore, the government came to the realization that they could not expect Jamaicans who had migrated to come back to live permanently. As such, the next best thing would be to find a way to still get help and support from those in the Diaspora, regardless of where they lived. Essentially, they needed to shift the pendulum from “Brain Drain” to “Brain Gain” as they attempted to discover ways in which they could truly benefit from the accomplishments that Jamaicans overseas had made. For example, the government hopes to work with members of the Diaspora, establishing businesses with the purpose of promoting genuine Jamaican goods and services manufactured in Jamaica in addition to finding appropriate markets for these products in the countries of settlement. The Jamaican government’s new vision and outlook of the diaspora has also been described by some scholars as the “second phase of a neoliberal restructuring strategy aiming to create the social and economic institutional infrastructure required to sustain the opening up of the economy to global markets” (Mullings, “Diaspora Strategies” 24). The government, therefore, had much to gain from this new relationship and investment in its diaspora. The diaspora became one of the few “lifelines” the Jamaican government could utilize to achieve the type of development that would allow them to compete with the ramifications of globalization.

*The Emergence of Political Institutions in Jamaica “Courting” the Jamaican Diaspora*

Intergovernmental agencies such as the UN with their Development arm had long established migrant communities as overlooked resources to aid with development. These agencies have been publishing studies and reports arguing for a reconsideration of the role of migrant communities. One such example is the United Nations Agenda for Peace initiative which was promulgated in 1992 encouraged developing countries around the world to seek more creative and innovative solutions to deficits in peace-building initiatives that were the result of failing economies. Also in 1992, the West Indian Commission published a report entitled, “Time for Action” where the recommendations specifically encouraged Caribbean governments to make efforts to engage their migrants as resources to aid in development.

While there were no defined policies recommendations, it certainly sparked an interest in Caribbean governments. In the mid nineties, as the socio-political climate on migration began to shift, the government of Jamaica established a portfolio under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade that would see to the needs of the migrant community abroad. The government also established consulates in various countries with large numbers of Jamaican migrants, encouraging migrants to remain informed and become involved in the government’s development programs. There was an obvious effort being made to foster better communication and a better relationship between the Jamaican government and the diaspora community. In fact, the government was so determined to foster a more positive relationship with its migrants that it decided that it would host conferences in the country inviting members of the Diaspora movement to



consult with resident Jamaicans in a bid to deal with the specific issues facing the Diaspora.

Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson decided the time had come for the government to recognize the movement and appointed a minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give special attention to the Diaspora movement (Franklyn xiv). At the same time, Patterson signed a new decree authorizing the establishment of a Returning Residents Facilitation Unit (RRFU) on January 12, 1993. Between 1994 and 1998, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) funded a special program called the “Return of Talent Program” designed to attract highly skilled and qualified professionals living in the Jamaican diaspora to fill vacant positions in the public sector in Jamaica (Glennie and Chappell 10). A total of 60 persons were recruited under this initiative who worked in education and health. They were contracted for a period of two years and received one way tickets to Jamaica, special allowances for housing and family, health insurance and competitive salaries. The success of this program remains uncertain. When the funding ended, the program also ended and inconclusive information was gathered from the employers to determine the success of this effort. What is more apparent is that this program was one of the first initiatives to create a Jamaican diaspora database with a goal to locate migrants with specific skills.

The Returning Residents Facilitation Unit was renamed the Jamaican Overseas Department (JOD) in 1998. The purpose of this “reenergized” department was to “pursue the encouragement of a systematic and coordinated approach to the development of mutually supportive relationships with Jamaican communities overseas” (Franklyn 7). Even the opposition Jamaica Labour Party had appointed a shadow foreign minister with

a portfolio with the responsibility for the Jamaican Diaspora. The problem with these created departments, however, is that they suffer from a lack of resources and committed personnel. The departments, although well intentioned on paper, often have limited staff and have difficulty undertaking the tasks necessary to work effectively with the Diaspora movement (Franklyn 2004).

*The Jamaican Government Responds to New Diaspora Global Trends*

By the start of the 2000, the political leaders in Jamaica conducted an assessment and came to the conclusion that in order to engage in true development and be competitive in the new era of globalization, they would have to employ new strategies. One of these strategies was reaching out to members in the Jamaican Diaspora (both verbally and through actions and regulations) in order to harness their support. The new strategy emphasized notions of connectivity and collaboration with the Diaspora. In October 2003, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Jamaicans Overseas Department as well as the private sector, academia and the Returning Residents Association in Jamaica came together to host a symposium with select members of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. This symposium was the first time that members of the movement were able to voice their goals and demands to the various sectors and key stakeholders in the country.

According to the accounts by Franklyn (2004), members of the movement took the opportunity to articulate some of their more important goals and demands. First, they wanted to ensure that the contributions of the Diaspora movement were formally recognized and appreciated. They also wanted the Jamaican government to become more involved in changing policies that negatively impact migrants. They also requested that

the Jamaican government engage in constant and continuous dialogue with the Jamaican Diaspora, keeping an open line of communication at all times. This symposium was one of the first steps that started a chain of events propelling the Jamaican Diaspora movement to the public stage in Jamaica. Probably the most significant result being the decision that the Jamaican government would join forces with the Diaspora movement and in collaboration with the private sector, will host a diaspora conference on the island.

When Patterson resigned as Prime Minister in 2006, his successor, Portia Simpson-Miller continued to highlight the Diaspora movement and acknowledged that her administration would also dedicate resources to form a favorable relationship with the members. This trend has continued with the next Prime Minister, Bruce Golding, also supporting the efforts of the Diaspora movement. This is significant because it shows that the two major political parties in Jamaica, the People's National Party (PNP) as well as the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), although differing on many policies are both committed to sustaining a positive relationship with migrants. Today, it is not uncommon for government officials to have informal town hall meetings with the diaspora community when engaging in official business and diplomatic affairs overseas (Franklyn 7). Involvement of both political parties made the "diaspora issue" a national issue in the country and allowed members of the movement to feel more comfortable regardless of political affiliation.

In order to demonstrate the new, positive attitude they were bringing to start a renewed relationship with the Jamaican Diaspora, leaders in Jamaica started to verbally redefine the boundaries of the country. Evidence of this can be found in the address by the Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller at the 2006 biennial Diaspora conference held

in Jamaica. She stated, “The nation today is not territorial, it is not bounded by physical space. The nation is a social and political construct. In a borderless world, the nation is no longer confined by geography. There are 2.6 million people in the country, but there are approximately another 2.6 million residing overseas” (Franklyn 46). Here we see again another direct reference to what is at the heart of any diaspora community and movement: the fact that boundaries and borders are being redefined.

That is, despite no longer being physically present on the actual homeland, they are still participants and members of that nation. By saying this, the Prime Minister was trying to appeal to the Jamaicans residing in Jamaica, encouraging them to see those in the diaspora as equal stakeholders in the fate of Jamaica and no longer as traitors or persons who found riches and a better life abroad. Her words suggest that she had the intention of showcasing commonality and unity among all Jamaicans and to remove that invisible line and rift that had initially separated Jamaicans living on the island from those living abroad. Later on, more attention will be played to the division between Jamaicans on the island and migrants, but suffice it to say here, that politicians were making a definite attempt to ensure that general sentiments towards the Diaspora remained positive. Mrs. Miller was trying to minimize the notion of difference and division. As she continued to say, “Patriotism can no longer be seen as necessarily synonymous with residence in the country of one’s birth” (Franklyn 46). This is an example of another appeal to emotions and logic, challenging the previously held views that many in Jamaica held.

Rather than looking on migrants as traitors, the Prime Minister was encouraging those still living in Jamaica to not question the patriotism of the diaspora. These words

are truly symbolic of the socio-political climate shift and the change in rhetoric that took place in Jamaica that really helped to situate a much more suitable context enabling the Diaspora movement to develop successfully and gather sympathy and support from the Jamaican public. There was also a push to more broadly define the image of Jamaica. The government knew that to redefine the image of Jamaica, it would certainly need support of Jamaica's largest ambassador—the diaspora. For example, the Jamaican Tourist Board was also beginning to change the way it advertised Jamaica to potential tourists. Jamaica was no longer to be considered merely as a beach, but a country with promising potential and skillful and educated citizens.

Nothing can be more symbolic of the shift in the attitudes toward the diaspora than the words of the Prime Minister when she described her role as that of listener. At the 2006 biennial diaspora conference she stated, “Integral to all of this is listening to you. We want to hear your suggestions and recommendations....the Government is sensitized to your concerns and thinking on matters affecting you at home and abroad” (Franklyn 47). As this quote suggests, the government of Jamaica was willing to involve the diaspora to some degree in policy making and critical developmental matters of the country. These are the kinds of sentiments that truly helped to legitimize the movement in Jamaica. The Jamaican Diaspora had finally gotten the attention of Jamaica; they had found the perfect platform at these conferences and the political leaders were not only acknowledging them, but were ready to listen attentively.

It was also significant that the Prime Minister noted she was not just concerned about the Diaspora's suggestions and recommendations for Jamaica, but was also concerned about matters and issues affecting diaspora members in their respective host

countries. This suggests that the government was now willing to extend their concern and support for all Jamaicans regardless of where they lived. This was an important achievement in the eyes of the Diaspora movement, because one of the things they have long advocated for is that the Jamaican government should attempt to provide support to its migrants in their host countries, especially temporary migrants and students. For example, an issue that the Diaspora movement has discussed at meetings is the need for the government to host an informative and educational event in Jamaica prior to students going abroad to pursue their education. Such an event or program would help inform these migrants on what to expect once they migrate and also educate them on resources and support networks available to them. While the Diaspora movement has already initiated some progress in this regards, they have long argued that the Jamaican government, if it truly is hopeful that migrants will consider returning to the country to invest their skills and talents, must be careful not to abandon its migrants.

At the 2006 biennial conference, Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller stated that she had instructed her administration that new job positions must be advertised both locally and in the diaspora (Franklyn 53). This is an accomplishment for the Diaspora movement as they have argued that they want more avenues to be involved in the development of Jamaica. Specifically, they have argued that their members would like the opportunity to give back to their country by using their developed skills and talents to the benefit of Jamaica. To this end, they have argued that one way to achieve this is by making sure that Jamaicans in the diaspora are aware of new job openings in the country. However, despite Mrs. Simpson Miller's pronouncement, little has been done to ensure that local jobs are advertised in the diaspora. Some would argue that it is truly impossible

and possibly unfair to advertise job openings in the diaspora when so many in Jamaica remain unemployed.

Nevertheless, the movement has seemingly acquired the full support of the Jamaican government in accomplishing its goals, which for some movement members is not necessarily a positive accomplishment. Nonetheless, the new partnership and relationship with the Jamaican government has certainly put the movement in a more influential position, a new position of leverage, reflecting the shift in status quo. As Smith (2008) has noted, “By definition, movements have less direct access to electoral and governmental arenas, but effective movements are those that can mobilize allies and sympathizers in these spaces” (146). This is what the Jamaican Diaspora has been able to do: find its largest supporter in the Jamaican government. By forming an alliance with the government, the movement has gained not only access to information, but also, with the creation of the Joint Select Committee of Diaspora Affairs, a seat at the table in policy-making and policy implementation in Jamaica. Additionally, they are in a better position to hold the Jamaican government accountable for promises made.

### SECTION III: THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA EMERGES: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNAL SUSTAINING STRUCTURES OF THE MOVEMENT (2000 to 2011)

#### Introduction to the Section

In trying to understand this unique movement of migrants, this section presents a discussion about the internal mechanisms that keep this movement alive. In doing so, this section presents the following information: an analytic description of who the members of the Jamaican Diaspora are, what they want and the goals of the movement. The section also includes a look at the current discourse about the movement both outside and within the movement and finally, a thorough discussion on the importance of the collective diasporic identity among the members and the impact of this identity formation on the movement. The majority of this information has been gathered from participant observation at the Jamaican Diaspora biennial conferences. The overall purpose is to understand how the Jamaican Diaspora is experienced and produced through different rhetorical fragments.



## CHAPTER 6: THE MEMBERS OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA

### The Demographics of the Movement Members

At the 2008 biennial Diaspora conference, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ronald Robinson, stated, “We know that we have nearly three million persons living overseas, but we know absolutely nothing about them, where they live, what their occupations are or their age groups” (Jamaica Information Service 2010). Today, Jamaicans migrate to the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada at an increasing rate each year (Jones 3). Best estimates, as of 2008, suggest that there are approximately 637,000 Jamaicans in the United States, 123,500 in Canada and 150,000 in the United Kingdom (Glennie and Chappell, “Migration Information Source” 2010). This suggests that at the very minimum, nearly one million Jamaicans are living overseas. Take into consideration that these numbers only represent the documented Jamaican migrants. That is, they do not account for undocumented Jamaicans who migrated on temporary or short term visas and overstayed. Furthermore, these numbers only provide data on Jamaican born persons in the diaspora, not accounting for the persons of Jamaican heritage and ancestry who have also joined the Diaspora movement including second and third generation Jamaican migrants.

While the movement is open to all Jamaican migrants living in the diaspora, only those who have made a conscious and active decision to become a part of the movement can be counted as part of the Jamaican Diaspora. However, because the movement is in

its embryonic stages, and the Diaspora database remains forthcoming, it is difficult to determine the exact number of persons participating in the movement. Furthermore, at the Diaspora conferences and meetings held, while there are attempts made at ensuring that contact information is shared and persons register and sign in, there is no official effort made to keep count of persons in attendance. Still, an estimate of persons can be gathered by checking the number of registrants at the conferences. On average, these conferences host between 500 and 700 participants every two years (Franklyn 2004). Still, there are many more persons actively involved with the movement who do not necessarily attend the conferences.

Additionally, while it is possible to gather some information with regards to approximately how many persons have migrated (legally) from Jamaica and are part of the larger Jamaican diaspora, the patchy data available remains inconclusive with regards to demographic factors including age, level of education, gender and other categories. According to data released from the Planning Institute of Jamaica in the 20 years leading up to 2002, Jamaica had lost 52,228 highly skilled migrants to North America representing 30.2 percent of the output of Jamaica's educational system.<sup>16</sup> Such data reveal that the modern wave of Jamaican migrants consists mostly of professionals educated at least at a tertiary level. Recent Jamaican migrants tend to be fairly well educated, especially in comparison to the native populations in the host countries. Such persons tend to have experienced better economic standards even before migrating. According to information gathered by Glennie and Chappell (2010), the majority of

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<sup>16</sup> This information is taken from an excerpt of a speech made by Delano Franklyn entitled, "Engaging the Jamaican Diaspora in the USA." This excerpt was published in the local newspaper, *The Gleaner*, on July 11, 2003.

Jamaican migrants were earning more than the average nonmigrant. Furthermore, after migrating, Jamaican migrants are also more likely to be employed than the native population in the host countries and tend to therefore be more financially secure. In fact, available data suggests that the highly skilled constitute over a third of all Jamaican migrants, primarily those to the United States and Canada (Mullings “Diaspora Strategies” 32). See Table 4 for more detailed information about such demographics.

Table 4. Jamaican Migrants with Tertiary Degrees in Host Country’s Labor Force in 2000

	<i>Canada</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>OECD Total</i>
Jamaican-born with tertiary education	39695	21844	128414	190792
Jamaican-born immigrants in the labor force	116340	141851	528869	789748
Highly skilled as percentage of all Jamaican-born immigrants in the labor force	34	15	24	24
Women as percentage of highly skilled Jamaican-born immigrants in the labor force	67	70	63	64

The available data also suggests that women in the Jamaican diaspora tend to have more education and high skilled talent than Jamaican male migrants. Most of the Jamaican female migrants hold at least a bachelor’s degree, and are employed in educational services, health care and social assistance. Although Jamaican female migrants tend to have higher levels of employment than men, Jamaican male migrants are also fairly well educated, many with university degrees and can also be found employed in business, financial and administrative sectors. The fact that many of the Jamaican migrants are skilled in these crucial development sectors, especially education and health care, has led leaders of the country to describe this as a detrimental “Brain Drain.” Still, all accounts suggest that more women are in the Jamaican diaspora than men. There is a

significant demand in the health care, caregiving and domestic sectors in the host countries and more women tend to have the skill sets needed to secure such employment. A later section will further elaborate on the women in the Jamaican Diaspora and the way in which they are important participants in the movement.

#### How those within the Movement define the Movement

It is important to note that it is not my intention to impose any essentialized categorization on the participants in the Jamaican Diaspora, but rather to allow the experiences and the information gathered based on participant observation to help illuminate how members see their own roles. As such, in the next few pages, I spend some time looking at how this movement has defined itself and how members make sense of the movement in which they are involved. By examining the ways in which members of the Diaspora movement have articulated their purpose, this section helps to discover those framing techniques that transfer ideas from individuals to the group generating a common framework and understanding of what the movement is all about. Specifically, this section entails a micro level analysis of the Jamaican Diaspora, paying attention to how the discourse of diaspora and its understanding is articulated at the rank and file participant level in the movement. I have been able to compile this discussion based on my experiences attending the Jamaican Diaspora conferences, looking at the websites and participating in informal and social gatherings the movement has hosted between 2008 and 2012.

When I first began participating in the Jamaican Diaspora in 2008, the Southeast USA Jamaican Diaspora advisory board, Marlon Hill, from who I received updates and

announcements, always finished his Diaspora correspondence and emails with the following mission statement:

The Mission of the Jamaican Diaspora Southern USA is to unite and galvanize all Jamaicans and Jamaican organizations, their talents, resources, and potential throughout the Southern United States for the benefit of their local communities and the future development and support of Jamaica.

The Jamaican diaspora includes all Jamaican nationals and persons of Jamaican heritage (their family and friends) who reside overseas around the world, including the Southern United States. The Jamaican Diaspora movement is a historic opportunity to unite and galvanize all Jamaicans, their talents, resources, and potential throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and around the world for the benefit of their local communities and the future development and support of Jamaica. (Hill “Re: Jamaican Diaspora Southeast USA” 2007-2010).

This redefinition of who Jamaican migrants are and what the movement is about signified the migrants’ intentions to change the unspoken cultural traditions or “doxa” and understandings of Jamaican migrants that they were unsatisfied with. These kinds of sentiments expressed by the movement leaders acknowledge their desire to resituate themselves in the status quo. According to McGee (1990), “When doxa [conventional wisdom] is the source of grievance, rhetoricians in both the platonic and isocretan schools envision a kind of ‘social surgery’ where new cultural imperatives are substituted for old taken-for granted conventions” (277). Their desire to pronounce their purpose and connection to the country was equally an attempt at expressing their grievance with

regards to the way they were previously viewed and acknowledged in Jamaica. As has been noted earlier, the Jamaican Diaspora does not necessarily adopt an aggressive stance against any specific enemy but is rather more concerned with motivating and encouraging Jamaican migrants to become involved in the affairs of the country and to gain leverage with the Jamaican government. This is quite similar to the imagery of McGee's "social surgery" where the members were making strides in changing the taken for granted cultural imperatives that viewed migrants as traitors and no longer active in the welfare of Jamaica. The leaders of this movement are not necessarily trying to ignite members to rise up in reform or revolt. The message seems to be that this movement (like many New Social Movements) is more about autonomy, recognition and self determination. The leaders of the movement oppose the historic status quo and the way in which it disadvantaged Jamaican migrants. They see the Jamaican migrant community playing a more progressive and extensive role. Indeed, it is the leaders of the Jamaican Diaspora who orchestrate the responsibility to bring this vision into reality. This is a good place to bear McGee's (1975) analysis in mind and his assertion that leaders of most movements are indeed the true advocates of any movement<sup>17</sup>.

Like all leaders, those of the movement have their own sense of personal conviction and identity that they bring with them as they encourage others to become involved in this "historic opportunity." For such leaders, a strong sense of identity and what it means to be Jamaican is truly at the core of their commitment to the movement. At gatherings and meetings, leaders of the Jamaican Diaspora were more interested in

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<sup>17</sup>In "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," McGee goes into great detail discussing the organic nature of how a "people" come about and gives significant attention to leaders and spokespersons in his analysis.

being true representatives of the Jamaican migrant population and ensuring that the deep rooted feelings of longing and the desire to become more actively involved in the future of Jamaica were actualized. As McGee explained, “The advocate [movement leader] is a ‘flag-bearer’ for old longings, and by transforming such longings into a new idea, he actualizes his audience’s predisposition to act, thus creating a united ‘people’ whose collective power will warrant any ‘reform’ against any other power on earth” (241). Leaders of the Jamaican Diaspora have been successful at this, constantly appealing to sympathizers and participants by suggesting that their involvement is a natural result of their Jamaican connection.

In a press release (March 2008) made by the Jamaica Diaspora Southeast USA, advisory board member and Diaspora movement leader Marlon Hill noted that the purpose of the Jamaican Diaspora was to extend a message of collaboration and communication throughout the diaspora. In particular, the event that this release was promoting was a high school alumni soccer tournament featuring migrant alumnae of prominent high schools in Jamaica. The fact that the leaders of the Diaspora took this otherwise casual and informal social gathering to promote its message of unity and collaboration demonstrates that leaders of the movement were willing to attract new members and seek out such supporters in the locations where potential members of the movement are likely to be involved.

This approach utilized by the movement leaders differs from the Jamaican government’s approach which seems to be more interested in developing more formal relations with diaspora members and encouraging persons to become involved in the movement for mercenary reasons. Such informal settings where Jamaicans congregate

serve as crucial social settings and the perfect places to connect with other Jamaicans and introduce them to the movement.

The members' sense of loyalty and connection to Jamaica results in them not just wanting to invest in financial markets in Jamaica, but they desire to harness their skills and knowledge in other overlooked arenas (Mullings "Diaspora Strategies" 27). For example, according to Mullings, the sense of loyalty and connection that Diasporans feel, result in them wanting to ensure that the churches they used to attend, the schools they once enrolled in and the roads they used to travel on are also places that require their attention. They figure out ways to make connections and initiative efforts in ways that often do not involve working with the Jamaican government. They develop social networks that allow them to work in collaboration with each other as a single unit with a common goal (this will be discussed in further detail below). Members often seek out joining forces with others from the same schools, churches or hometowns who will likely have the same vested interest in the specific community and devising with a plan of action to improve the situation there.

#### Jamaican Migrants are More than Remittances

The most glaring observation coming from those in the movement is that they define themselves and their purpose as more than just their remittances and potential for financial investment in Jamaica, which is often the way that many outsiders view them. Members of the movement constantly state that they simply want to find an efficient way to help. They also use the Diaspora as a platform through which they can have a direct voice in engaging with the Jamaican government. In an article published on May 15,



2011, in one of Jamaica's local newspapers, the *Jamaican Observer*, David Mullings (Jamaican Diaspora Future Leaders Representative) noted:

We Jamaicans overseas continue to want to help the country from whichever location we happen to be residing. Some have moved back, some want to move back, many want to contribute via what they are able to earn outside Jamaica. Most importantly, they want to ensure that the [Jamaican] Government is aware of their views and that those speaking on their behalf truly represent them. (D. Mullings "Diaspora: Dealing Honestly")

As the words here suggest, there is a sense that members see their position in the Diaspora as a vehicle to streamline their love for Jamaica into something efficient and positive. They want to assert their Jamaican identity and culture in a positive light; they want to help, they want to give back and they want to be heard. Despite these altruistic desires, for the most part, they realize that still, the Jamaican government primarily sees them as a financial tool to promote industry and the economy.

Therefore, there tends to be a disconnect between the way that the Jamaican government sees the Diaspora movement and the way that members in the diaspora see themselves. As scholar Beverley Mullings (2009) noted, "On the one hand, while diaspora strategies seek to incorporate overseas migrant populations into programs that promote growth and economic expansion, diaspora formations are usually the outcome of groups seeking to create community because they share a sense of common identity" (10). As this suggests, the kind of thinking government officials have is usually somewhat different from how the members see their role and position in the Diaspora movement. Generally speaking, their motivation is not from a sense of "rigid profit and

market fundamentalism,” but rather from a sense of loyalty, identity and affection, qualities that become catalysts for their desire to invest skills, talent and knowledge in Jamaica (Burton 3). They are interested in uncovering the ways in which they can give back to the homeland, but not just give back financially. While Jamaican politicians seemed more intent on presenting a warm and friendly invitation to work with the Jamaican Diaspora, movement leaders and members were more concerned with getting goals met and making sure that the Jamaican government knew that they meant business.

As a result, diaspora members have developed a sense of unity based on their common identity and goals. In subsequent chapters I will engage in a more thorough discussion as to the legitimacy of this unity and its source. After all, despite the fact that the members are connected through the organization, the question of unity often comes up. The Diaspora movement can be looked at similarly to an examination of any other movement or society. Karl Marx noted, “a society cannot exist without forging a representation of its unity” (qtd. in Tomaselli et al., 10). In the same light, the Jamaican Diaspora presents a kind of unity that is meant to legitimize the movement to those already in it, prospective members as well as the media and government. This sense of unity (whether real or imagined) is what leaders use to promulgate a mobilizing discourse. The need to present a unified front is crucial to this movement that showcases itself as a unifying network that will bring together other existing Jamaican migrant organizations.

#### Diaspora movement is an Umbrella Organization for smaller Jamaican Migrant Groups

There are various existing Jamaican migrant organizations existing independently in the countries that Jamaican migrants settle. The Jamaican Diaspora has advertised

itself as a facilitating umbrella organization to these already existing independent associations—a united body. According to the Jamaican Information Service, in South Florida alone, there are over 70 lists of associations affiliated with the Jamaican migrants in the area. Typically, the majority of these organizations are hometown and high school alumni associations while the rest tend to be charitable organizations, foundations as well as other cultural and business and professional organizations. The case is quite similar for Toronto and London, where there is a multitude of Jamaican migrant affiliated associations and networks, many of which are oblivious to the existence and work of the other associations.

The efforts of such independent entities tend to amount to a few individuals in the diaspora helping a few individuals at home in Jamaica. The Jamaican Diaspora, since its inception, has sought to unify such separate institutions and create some unity and dialogue among the existing associations in a bid to create what Delano Franklyn has defined as “One grand diasporic network” (Franklyn 14). This has been one of the more pronounced frames of the movement: the idea that members should all operate as one large body moving together in unison. In fact, at one Diaspora gathering in South Florida in 2009, members discussed the need for the Jamaican Diaspora to become a central place where people could ship or send items to Jamaica. The Jamaican Diaspora has capitalized on the global diaspora schema (described in the introductory chapters) that seeks to motivate migrants to become active and successful catalysts for change once they come together and start pooling resources.

There has been some concern that the Jamaican Diaspora movement would overshadow the work that has been done and that continues to be done by these smaller

scale associations. However, the movement leaders and representatives are adamant that the movement intends to work closely with already existing associations and help them accomplish their goals more effectively. The goal is to preserve these independent entities in so much as they are being successful and achieving desired outcomes. However, the reality is that many of those associations have no long term sustainable efforts. That is, when those few individuals move on, who will take their place in sustaining the connection? Leaders and supporters of the Jamaican Diaspora maintain that this movement is the most viable option for ensuring the continued connection and sustenance of Jamaicans in the Diaspora working together to have a meaningful and committed impact on Jamaica. The Diaspora movement becomes a platform from which third, fourth, fifth and even sixth generation migrants can continue to support and contribute to Jamaica.

Being an amalgamation of already existing associations and groups, the Jamaican Diaspora movement defines itself as a diverse, dynamic and action focused entity. The main aim is to ensure that there is some coordination as it concerns the activities that many of these groups and associations are already engaging in. Rather than have these elements remain isolated, the intention of this movement is to bring these elements together, with a common goal. The movement aims to prove that united, these associations will achieve better success and get national recognition and impact with their achievements. The aim is to effectively mobilize persons in the diaspora, especially the skilled, talented and those who have an interest and care to pool resources together in an effort to counter the “brain drain” that has adversely impacted Jamaica.

## Jamaican Diaspora as a Political Platform for Migrants

Members of the movement seem to view it as a political platform from which all members of the Jamaican diaspora can speak and voice concerns, opinions and suggestions. With its large numbers and the attention the movement has generated, it certainly can claim to be the most effective platform through which migrants can articulate grievances and discuss and implement proposed solutions. As such, the Jamaican Diaspora may be said to be engaging in what New Social Movement theorists refer to as “emancipatory politics” in that it presents an avenue through which Jamaican migrants who have been previously ignored or overlooked can gain a voice and make a statement. Leaders in the movement, at both formal and informal gatherings tend to be constantly trying to convince those in attendance, whether current members of the movement, or future members, that they should not take their diasporic status for granted.

Members acknowledge that there are some migrants who never fully assimilate in the new host culture where people desire Jamaican food, sugar, bauxite and Jamaican music, but usually not the Jamaicans themselves (Franklyn 135). As such they often feel like they have limited opportunities or avenues through which their concerns and issues can be represented accurately or heard. Although many become citizens of the host country and have the right to vote there, they still feel that the issues that matter to them will not be addressed. This feeling of exclusion from traditional arenas of expression and modes of established politics is a highlighted characteristic in theories of New Social Movements. In these instances, participants feel like outsiders and try to find a place where they fit in, are accepted and can voice their concerns. With this in mind, they come together and form a collective movement. Despite this, at the conferences, it is not

unusual to hear Jamaican Diaspora members note that the movement is not a political one and is therefore not aligned with any political party (Franklyn 153). This is an important declaration since from the onset, many, including the members themselves have been worried that the movement would eventually be co-opted or controlled by one of the two major political parties in Jamaica in a bid to satisfy partisan goals. However, leaders of the movement will quickly dispel such accusations as invalid, asserting that it is in every sense inclusive of all willing to join and is fundamentally bi-partisan.

#### The Goals of the Jamaican Diaspora Movement (Why Members Get Involved)

The next few paragraphs consider the agenda of the Jamaican Diaspora, paying attention to the most stated goals and objectives of the movement. This discussion is important as it presents an understanding of some of the reasons why new members join, as well as the issues that encourage members to stay involved. In doing so, we are able to answer the sub research question: What factors contribute to the sustenance of the movement? Furthermore, an analysis of the goals and demands being made by the movement participants help us understand the way certain issues are framed and the way in which the frames ignite a certain level of immediacy and importance. It is helpful to remember that the Jamaican Diaspora is primarily a middle class group of migrants whose stated goals often reflect their own privilege and position in society. The conference agendas and goals often reflect a very defined purpose: to be recognized by the Jamaican government as a viable resource, and also to contribute positively to the improvement and development of the country. While Jamaican migrants have historically played a significant role in the local consumption, by way of financial remittances to family members in the country, they have not been successful at challenging their efforts

and resources to larger scale change in the country. Historically, Jamaican migrants have always had very good relationships with their families back home to whom they send money, goods and luxury products that are expensive in Jamaica. The recipients of such products are from various classes and social groups in Jamaica, including the lower classes, who are the ones who benefit most from remittances. Recall from the introduction, that numerous studies focus on the impact of these remittances and how they sustain the lower classes in Jamaica.

From my own observations of the movement, it appears that, for many migrants, a significant motivational factor for joining the Diaspora, is the opportunity to do more than send money home to their loved ones, and instead have a say in the more impactful arenas of the country through influencing the Jamaican government. The sentiment is that they want more than to just pay for school fees and medication, they want to see their care, concern and kindness be directed at structural or system change in the country. It is for this reason, that the primary goals of the movement are directed towards greater engagement with the Jamaican government. This does not mean that the Jamaican Diaspora has overlooked or ignored the plight of lower classes in Jamaica who may very well have no interest in the workings of the Jamaican Diaspora. The less privileged in Jamaica are of course always concerned with survival, something that Jamaican migrants have always played a role with. The difference today, with the emergence of the Jamaican Diaspora, is that migrants want to do more than they have been able to do in the past. They want to invest and impact the country in lasting and sustainable ways, and they want to be recognized for more than the money they send home to help their relatives who struggle. It may seem in this sense that the Jamaican Diaspora may not be

reaching out as it should to all the residents of the country, but in a sense, this is the mission of the movement; to reach out to more than the individual Jamaican (regardless of status and class), and to find some kind of leverage with the policy makers and decision movers in Jamaica.

Although some of the demands of this movement are being placed on members, the majority are being placed on policy makers in Jamaica. While the political leaders and public figures in Jamaica may appear to be at the stage of recognizing and accepting the Jamaican Diaspora, movement members seem to have gone beyond a simple call for recognition and have begun to articulate demands. At the biennial conferences held in Jamaica, members use the opportunity to propose their ideas, make claims and as such legitimize the need for action. The biennial conferences have been instrumental to the morale and strength of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. A more detailed discussion of these conferences and the language employed will be examined in more detail in a subsequent chapter. As mentioned in the section on social movements, these conferences become quite important to movements like the Jamaican Diaspora that are searching for recognition and demanding change.

Due to my own involvement as a participant observer and youth representative at the conferences, I have been able to put together what I consider to be the main goals and demands that are frequently articulated by members in the movement. One characteristic of a social movement is that members of the movement seek recognition, express some dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, are proposing a re-evaluation of the current situation and the institution of new policies. Hence in looking at the goals and demands it becomes clear that some of the demands are more direct service oriented,



others are more focused on identity politics and consciousness raising and still others focused on lobbying to get legislation passed.

### *Greater Level of Political Influence*

One key theme emerging from these formal and informal gatherings and conferences is that Jamaicans in the Diaspora must continue to be politically active in their host countries. Participants make frequent mention of the need for members to stay active in the political affairs where they live—wherever they are, they should engage in initiatives to lobby the host country’s government on behalf of the interest of Jamaica. The movement aims to utilize such lobby groups to show solidarity against injustices, to all migrants (especially those from the West Indies), and any policy that results in migrants being treated like second class citizens. The purpose is to ensure that members can enjoy better qualities of life in an atmosphere that is conducive to their abilities to progress economically, socially or culturally. Like many New Social Movements, this focus of enhancing quality of life is often at the center of what drives the members to remain active. Specific examples of injustices that the Jamaican Diaspora is trying to fight include what they refer to as “selective cleansing” where more and more countries, especially commonwealth ones (of which Jamaica is a member), have started to require that Jamaicans need to get visas to enter their country even when there is no general visa requirements for other commonwealth countries (Franklyn 2010). Migrants state that they see more stringent immigration policies placed on Jamaicans and feel that these acts posit a form of profiling and discrimination that has severe repercussions for all Jamaicans, whether those looking to migrate, or those already in the diaspora. Members are therefore demanding that the Jamaican government engage in diplomatic discussions to ensure that

the Jamaican pride and integrity are maintained and to find out why more stringent restrictions exist. However, members have also begun taking matters in their own hands.

As mentioned earlier, in terms of presenting such concerns and lobbying host country government, the Diaspora movement in the United Kingdom has possibly been the most successful at establishing effective lobby groups that have begun to make demands on the government in the United Kingdom. At the biennial conference, UK Diaspora members reported that they have lobbied the government to make amendments to tax laws so that they have less adverse effects and financial constraints on Jamaicans in the UK wishing to travel to Jamaica. They have also lobbied the government proposing that they rethink their policies on sugarcane imports from Jamaica. Most impressively, they launched the Jamaica Diaspora Day in the United Kingdom and have even been turned this occasion into a Jamaican Diaspora Week with the help of the Jamaican High Commission.

#### *Diaspora Seeking Voting Rights*

One of the more controversial demands being made by the movement is the right for persons living in the diaspora to vote in the national elections in Jamaica. Currently, the Jamaican constitution dictates that the ability to vote in a national election is reserved for those able to prove residential addresses in the respective constituencies in which they wish to vote. Said otherwise, if you are not a resident in the constituency, you are unable to vote for the representative there—migrants, being unable to prove residential status, are therefore not qualified to vote. There is a process by which residence in the constituency is proven (this usually consists of electoral workers coming at an unannounced time to the residence and checking identification to verify that the person

indeed lives at the location). However, the movement is calling that these conditions in the constitution be re-examined to allow those abroad to vote in their last place of residence in Jamaica.

#### *Reevaluation of Deportation Policies*

Between 1997 and 2001, there were 10,190 deportees to Jamaica, between 2002 and 2006, there were 17,796 and between 1997 and 2006 there were 27,986 deportees to Jamaica (Glennie and Chappell 11). These figures confirm that there is a large population of deported persons living in Jamaica, a number that continues to grow. This is significant, since many studies indicate that deportees often play a major role in the criminal activities in the home country (Cunningham 19). Oftentimes, they bring with them their crime links, organizational structures and sophisticated criminal methods. In the case of Jamaica, between 1996 and 2003, there were 15, 500 people deported, 12,000 of which were involved in criminal activity (Cunningham 19). Very often, when they return to Jamaica, they often feel uprooted, isolated and at first, out of place. These kinds of feelings may result in them resorting to the kind of lifestyle they had in the host country. At the 2004 biennial conference, one representative from the United Kingdom noted that the government there was about to deport over 600 persons to Jamaica, many of whom had not even finished serving their prison sentences.

Among members of the Diaspora movement, there has been growing concern about how the country should be expected to handle this influx of persons who often add to the unemployment and homeless statistics in the country and often resort to criminal activities. Although not proving causation, there have been studies conducted by the Planning Institute of Jamaica that show that an increase in the number of deportees is

correlated to increases in the number of homicides and illegal activities in the country (Franklyn 221). The Jamaican Diaspora movement has always had an interest in the effects of deportation on Jamaica. Many argue that it is simply not fair that when persons of Jamaican heritage are convicted of crimes that they instantly deported to Jamaica, a country that is barely managing to deal with the criminal elements there. In fact, some of those deported have spent most, if not all of their lives living in the host countries and have little positive social support (little family ties) and resources available to them once they return to Jamaica. Such persons may even have been entitled to receive citizenship in the host country, but for whatever reasons, had not taken the necessary steps to acquire citizenship there.

#### *Jamaican Diaspora desires Social Change in Jamaica*

One of the main goals of the Jamaican Diaspora movement has been to call for more accommodating practices and policies that facilitate easy transition for returning residents (those Jamaicans who return to the country to live permanently after a long period of migration). As current Prime Minister, Bruce Golding noted in an address to the 2006 conference, “We glorify the tourists when they arrive and we roll out the red carpet treatment for them but too often we are indifferent and, sometimes, downright disrespectful to Jamaicans when they arrive home.” (Franklyn 41). Members of the Jamaican Diaspora, have often argued that even on arrival to the country, customs and immigration officers are often not welcoming or helpful to those they identify as returning residents or migrants. The general concern among the members of the Diaspora movement therefore is that the socio-political climate in Jamaica still is not completely accepting and willing to assist those who have decided to return to Jamaica to live.

### *Jamaican Diaspora as a Fundraising Resource*

Among members of the Jamaican Diaspora, there has been a frequent call to institute a Jamaican Diaspora Fund where persons wishing to financially contribute to such endeavors will be able to do so with ease and with the knowledge that their investment is secure and going to the right place. Some in the movement argue that instead of Jamaicans having to rely on outsiders to help fund needed development programs, this fund would enable Jamaicans to help each other directly and be the leaders in directing the development of Jamaica.

The Jamaican Diaspora Fund has been considered as the most feasible solution to facilitate Jamaican Diaspora investment in Jamaica. This kind of fund is not an uncommon practice among global Diasporas and is expected to be instrumental in achieving goals set out by the movement. As is the case with other such goals, problems arise when it comes to the actual implementation. For example, Diaspora members are still trying to determine the best way to go about building that fund. For instance, at one conference meeting, it was suggested that each member of the Diaspora contribute a minimum of ten US dollars per month to the fund (Franklyn 143). However, this did not receive good support from members of the Diaspora who believed that it was too much money to ask members to invest.

### *Diaspora Protects and Advocates for “Brand Jamaica”*

One of the interesting goals that the Diaspora movement has undertaken is its commitment to support and protect what is being called “Brand Jamaica.” Jamaica has indeed become a popular brand around the world because of the following: having the fastest man in the world and other successful athletes, the song of the millennium

courtesy of Bob Marley, some of the best foods in the world and of course the ever popular and sought after reggae music. This is possibly the most difficult task that the movement has undertaken since controlling the various sectors in which persons use the brand and financially benefit are numerous. According to a representative from the Jamaica Exporters Association, “Brand Jamaica” is the tenth most recognizable country brand in the world (Franklyn 216).

As such, business persons who use the brand can potential gain significant benefits. Members of the Diaspora movement are encouraged to look for cases where others are trading goods utilizing the Brand without purchasing the necessary rights. Movement members argue that such uses of “Brand Jamaica” are fraudulent and where necessary, legal action must be taken. Members have come to the conclusion that requiring persons to acquire rights to trade goods utilizing the Brand presents an opportunity from which the country can gain tremendous financial revenue. Again, however, the problem concerns how best to go about achieving such a goal and what tangible things can members actual do.

#### *Conclusion on Diaspora Goals*

The motivation to work towards accomplishing the above goals is evident in the words of one Diaspora member who at the 2008 biennial conference stated, “As members of the Diaspora we are uniquely placed to fight these battles. We call both lands home. We call on the members to rise up and remember that evil flourishes when good men and women do nothing. It is time for this to change” (Franklyn 226). Here we can see that the members truly believe that they have a moral obligation to tackle what they see as injustices afflicting Jamaicans, wherever they may be. It is also evident that members

recognize that for too long, their scattered efforts have not been successful at creating the kind of change needed to really bring structural change to what this member is referring to as “evils” that are negatively impacting Jamaica and Jamaicans around the world. This kind of language that is frequently expressed at Diaspora conferences is also indicative of the manner in which persons in the Diaspora define their diasporic identity and location seeing themselves as living “in between” two places with multiple homelands as home.

CHAPTER 7: THE DISCOURSE WITHIN THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA:  
EXPLORING THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA BIENNIAL CONFERENCES  
(2004 -2011)

Introduction

The biennial Jamaican Diaspora Conferences, with the largest gatherings of Diaspora members, are arguably the most important mobilization tools utilized by this movement. The conferences also represent the institutions with the largest responsibility of creating, reproducing and distributing the concept of the Jamaican Diaspora. The conferences are the best resources for examining the discursive strategies of this movement. Using elements of discourse analysis, the purpose of this chapter is to explore these linguistic strategies employed and their influence on the movement formation and sustenance. The information in the chapter responds to the research questions posed at the outset of this project including: How does the movement employ a “discourse of diaspora”? And what discursive factors sustain this movement?

An exploration of the language utilized in the discursive field about this movement provides clues about how ideas and values are actualized through communication (Donati 1992). In considering the language employed at the conferences and the speeches made, I will be looking specifically at the effects of the language and the way it influences motivations, assumptions and ideology within the movement. Words, as rhetorical performances, become agents of change bringing about new



ideological beliefs. Other areas that will be examined include the credibility of the various speakers, the manner in which they employ specific appeals, perceptions or rhetorical figures and the way in which the language employed fits into the global discourse on Diasporas.

Additionally, this discussion explores the ways in which specific language rooted in renewed expressions of the Jamaican cultural doxa became part of the mobilizing discourse that kept and keeps the movement active. This section shows ways in which this personal, internalized discourse and diaspora rhetoric was pronounced in the cultural component Jamaican Diaspora movement and became central to the impetus for action within the movement. As Warner noted, “Public discourse says not only, ‘Let a public exist,’ but ‘Let it have this character, speak this way, see the world in this way’” (422). The movement continuously advocates a proud Jamaican diasporic identity and a sense of belonging to a greater, connected community, all of which become pronounced in the biennial conferences.

#### Overview of The Jamaican Diaspora Biennial Conferences

To date, there have been a total of four conferences staged in Jamaica with the next one set to take place in 2013. Following the inaugural one in 2004, conferences have been held in 2006, 2008 and 2011. There should have been a conference in 2010, however, the political upheaval taking place in the country during the month of June (when the conference was originally scheduled), resulted in the conference being postponed until 2011. In 2010, the Jamaican druglord and community leader, Christopher “Dudus” Coke was being extradited by the US government. These biennial conferences have become quite significant in the trajectory of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. The

Jamaican government's open invitation to support and sponsor these gatherings signifies the Jamaican the efforts to foster a partnership with the Diaspora. Although the government led this initiative, it was supported by other private sector stakeholders as well as the media.

The Jamaican Diaspora utilizes these conferences as a means to remain active and visible within Jamaica. The media coverage that the conferences receive, are the main propellers keeping this movement in the imagery of local residents. In fact, these conferences that are held every two years in Jamaica have become the ultimate expression of the legitimacy of the movement. This is true for many reasons. First, the conferences in Jamaica are significant logistically, since participation in them presents the only opportunity where all members of the Jamaican Diaspora movement (from the various geographical regions around the globe) are able to gather physically, meet each other, interact and engage in meaningful dialogue. Second, the conferences present an opportunity for the members of the movement to meet their primary audience [the Jamaican government] face to face and voice their opinions and demands without any liaisons or third parties. Third, these conferences create visibility for the movement within Jamaica allowing local Jamaicans an opportunity to dialogue with movement members and learn what the movement is about. Many Jamaicans become knowledgeable about the Diaspora movement during the time that the conferences are held there.

Fourth, having these conferences in Jamaica every two years ensures that movement members remain committed to the needs of the country and are able to see for themselves those conditions in Jamaica that they seek to improve. As such they can somewhat avoid accusations that suggest that they cannot help Jamaica because they no

longer live there and do not know what is going on. The fifth reason follows from the fourth. The conferences are staged in Jamaica which means that that the members can situate themselves right in the heart of the very country they seek to improve and as such remain committed to their mission and become more motivated to deepen their involvement in accomplishing movement goals.

The biennial conferences present an opportunity for members to meet and discuss new goals for the movement, or what they refer to as “Action Plans.” At the end of each conference, after all the sessions, members meet and summarize each session and then vote on these action plans which dictate the next steps the movement will make to accomplish set and defined goals. In the last two conferences, these action steps have become more specific, observable and measureable as there is greater emphasis on stating the responsible party for each goal as well as deadlines to achieve them.

For the reasons noted above, I argue that these conferences and gatherings can certainly be seen as part of the mobilization efforts utilized by the Jamaican Diaspora movement. Spanning two to three days of meetings and panels, these conferences constitute opportunities for both formal and informal conversations and discussions among leaders of the Diaspora movement, other participants, the government of Jamaica as well as the Jamaican public and media. As such, the conferences serve as the perfect platforms from which much information concerning language utilized by various stakeholders of the Jamaican Diaspora movement can be determined, discussed and analyzed.

The discussion proceeds chronologically, each subsection beginning with a brief overview of the main occurrences and then goes into a more detailed analysis of various

speeches and discussions at each conferences. Since this chapter explores language at the biennial conferences, the time period of analysis is 2004 to 2011, inclusive of the first and last conferences held at the time of this study.

Information about the conferences was gathered from multiple sources. It was difficult to find transcribed data for the 2004 conference, since at the time, the conference did not have large scale media coverage, and it was not well publicized. However, some short versions and quotes of the speeches made by the major politicians were found published on the Diaspora website, [www.jamaicandiaspora.org](http://www.jamaicandiaspora.org). Information about the 2006 conference was gathered from a publication by Jamaican politician and author, Delano Franklyn (2010) entitled, “The Jamaican Diaspora: Building an Operational Framework.” Franklyn’s publication was extremely beneficial, since not only was he an attendee, but he was also a part of the Jamaican government at the time of the first conference. Hence, he had inside access to the written speeches and discussions during the conferences. The information for the 2008 and 2011 conferences were gathered based on my participant-observer role as an attendee at both conferences.

#### The First Biennial Conference, 2004

An earlier chapter has already outlined the manner in which the Jamaican government changed its policies (during the late 1990s and 2004) to include more positive engagement with its migrant community. The new governmental policies and the increased mobilization of Jamaican migrants in forming the Diaspora movement combined to result in the first Jamaican Diaspora biennial Diaspora conference held in Jamaica, June 16-17, 2004. This was one of the first events that signaled the legitimacy of the Jamaican Diaspora movement in Jamaica and saw the involvement of the media, the

private sector and the general public. The significance of this first conference cannot be overlooked. For the most part, up until this conference, most persons in Jamaica were unaware of the strides and efforts being made by Jamaican migrants to have a positive impact in the country as well as the fact that these persons had gathered together and had joined forces forming a movement. Even one of the private sector conference organizers, Douglas Orane, stated, “I had no idea of the talent that resides in the diaspora until I attended the first conference” (Franklyn 39). Here is another example of a shift in the local cultural conventions where members of the Jamaican government propose a new conventional wisdom. It is as if Orane sounds taken by surprise that he had not realized how valuable the Jamaican migrants were until recently. This is not just an appeal to the Jamaican migrants, but also to the larger Jamaican public, presenting a perception that the Jamaican migrants are a valuable resource. The fact that he chooses the words “I had no idea” is somewhat of an irony, since Orane himself, actually studied abroad for some time and must have had some understanding of the talent, expertise and skills of those in the Diaspora despite the fact that he exclaims shock.

Furthermore, the title of this first conference was “The Jamaican Diaspora—Unleashing the Potential.” This is in keeping with the sentiments expressed by Orane where “unleashing the potential” suggests that there has been a buildup of expertise and talents over the years that has remained latent and hidden from the Jamaican public. Or put another way, the talent and resources in the Diaspora are assets that Jamaicans and Jamaican politicians had failed to realize prior to the staging of these conferences. This sentiment is in keeping with the earlier discussion of *The Gleaner*, where many Jamaicans tended to overlook the potential of the Jamaican Diaspora. Politicians in

Jamaica used this conference as an opportunity to appeal not just to prospective participants of the movement, but also to the Jamaican public, urging them to change their understanding and viewpoint of Jamaican migrants. Prospective members are constantly being encouraged to take an introspective stance in recognizing that they have much to offer the movement and the country.

#### *Government and Diaspora begin Partnership*

When this first conference took place, Hon. P.J. Patterson was the prime minister of Jamaica and in his opening remarks he noted that this first conference was a defining moment in Jamaica's history, one that would set the tone for the future. He posited, "It has been my duty, privilege and pleasure as Prime Minister to be closely associated with events that define our nation's history. Without a doubt this inaugural Conference of the Jamaican Diaspora is one such occasion." It would seem that Patterson was predicting a new trajectory for the relationship between Jamaica and its migrants, one that would benefit Jamaica significantly. Furthermore, as a Prime Minister and leader of the country, he uses his credibility to determine that the new partnership between the Jamaican government and the Diaspora is in fact a break from the previous relationship that lacked camaraderie and declares the Diaspora as a significant agent in the country's future. A previous chapter discussed the way in which the political climate in Jamaica changed to become more inviting of migrants. Further evidence of this can be found in Patterson's opening remarks at this conference where he discussed the importance of Jamaicans securing a solid partnership with those in the diaspora. He stated, "It obliges us, therefore, to create opportunities to reinforce our fraternal and familial bonds, to engage in structured dialogue that will assist us in assessing our situation and discover together the

best way forward.” Here, we see the theme of partnership and working together for a better future for Jamaica, as the main impetus behind the Jamaican government’s changed attitude towards migrants. Such sentiments were echoed by K.D. Knight, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade at the time, who like Patterson, made mention of the unbreakable bond that Jamaicans share and what he referred to as the “indomitable spirit” of the Jamaican people. These kinds of words again suggest that Jamaican leaders believe that there is something special about the Jamaican people, their identity and the bond that they share, a connection that still prevails despite years of tension.

#### *Discussions of Nationality and Citizenship*

At this inaugural conference, the Leader of the Opposition, Edward Seaga was one of the first politicians to publicly begin to set the counterframe to traditional definitions of citizenship and nationality. He considered the best way to define what truly constitutes a nation and set out to bring clarity to defining the starting point and ending point of Jamaica. He stated, “In our case it can also be said that our island is not a nation because the Jamaican community stretches across oceans and continents and can be found in virtually every corner of the world.” In this instance, the appeal to the audience was to reconsider the definitions and boundaries about who can be considered Jamaican. The country, Seaga suggests is more than physical borders, it is a borderless community extending throughout the globe. Such words were crucial in helping to convince Diaspora members present that they were no longer considered separate from Jamaicans in the country. As he continued to say, “those who left our shores have never really left home.” Again, this is an extremely different position from the ones described earlier, where many

viewed Jamaican migrants as traitors and persons who after abandoning the country were no longer to be considered Jamaican nationals. In contrast to this previously held frame, Seaga ended his address by actually applauding and commending Jamaican migrants for their help in situating Jamaica in a positive position internationally, and always carrying the Jamaican brand with pride. In describing the Jamaican migrants, he said, “They are the real ambassadors of Jamaica and much of the strength of Jamaica's image in important councils and marketplaces of the world is due to their efforts.”

#### The Second Biennial Conference, 2006

The Second Jamaican Diaspora Conference took place on June 15-16, 2006 and like the one before, was held in Kingston, the capital of the country. The theme remained unchanged from the first conference—“The Jamaican Diaspora: Unleashing the Potential.” The decision to keep the name unchanged signifies the stage that the movement was at, where it was still trying to appeal to potential members as well as establish itself as a positive force in the country. This second conference attracted more than the first as nearly 550 persons were in attendance representing the Jamaican Diaspora in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. However, this second conference also saw the attendance of delegates from other geographical regions including Africa, Central America and the wider Caribbean (Franklyn 12). The presence of such persons representing smaller pockets of the Diaspora movement was significant. Their presence affirmed the fact that the Jamaican migrant community is truly a diaspora consisting of persons scattered over various regions around the world. But their presence also signified the fact that more work had to be done by the government to reach out to all its diaspora, no matter how small or far away.



*Jamaican Politicians Describe Jamaicans in Diaspora as Unique and Special*

The idea of Jamaican migrants having a unique identity that travels with them, wherever they go, is something that was mentioned briefly at the first conference, but seemed to stand out as crucial at the second biennial conference. At the 2006 conference, the Prime Minister at the time, Portia Simpson Miller stated in her address, “There is something about us Jamaicans.....that special Jamaicanness” (Franklyn 46). Again, we see that reference to this unique identity that is transferred in the diaspora and seems to be at the root of the movement. Although this identity is constructed within the diaspora by the migrants themselves, it would seem from such statements that this identity is something that is pronounced within Jamaica as well and as such enables those in the diaspora to not just feel connected with each other, but also with those in Jamaica. In the diaspora and in Jamaica as well, there has been a redefinition or reconceptualization of exactly what it means to be Jamaican and who can lay claim to the Jamaican culture and identity. This new definition that can be heard by the various politicians at these conferences is now more inclusive of all persons of Jamaican heritage, wherever in the world they may be (Franklyn 170). Like the leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister at the time also offered words of praise and accolades to those in the diaspora.

Throughout her address she described members of the diaspora, repeatedly using words such as “talent,” “brilliance,” “resourcefulness” and “determination.” As we have seen from the discussion of the first conference, the frequent utilization of these words can certainly be considered as part of the specific rhetoric emerging out of the Jamaican Diaspora. These words had the intention of generating resonance and appealing to that sense of logic and pride in the audience by suggesting that there is something

significantly special and unique about Jamaican migrants. Such words also have the effect of appealing to those Jamaican migrants who had been reluctant to become part of the Diaspora movement. Her words here were most likely to instill a sense of duty and responsibility in all Jamaican migrants. Simpson-Miller's inclusion of these words in her address at the second conference exemplifies the shift that governmental officials underwent since this was not the same feelings half a century earlier. Many Jamaicans take cues from the ideas and ideology evident in the statements made by political leaders. As such, it was crucial for the Diaspora movement to have the backing and support of the leaders of both major political parties in Jamaica. In essence, if the leaders think the Diaspora movement is important, then there is a greater likelihood that the wider public will also think along similar lines. This is important for a New Social Movement like the Jamaican Diaspora that must first gain recognition and legitimacy if it is to be successful at achieving its goals.

At the second biennial conference, the Leader of the Opposition at the time, Bruce Golding presented a speech entitled "Diaspora: Value and Importance must be Recognized." His choice of words for the title of this speech here suggests that there is something unique about those in the diaspora that must be acknowledged and respected. In his speech, he said, "Because although many of you have for many years lived in foreign lands, across vast oceans and in different continents, you have never really left home because your hearts and minds remain anchored on this piece of rock that we call Jamaica. When you hurt, we feel the pain. When we hurt, we know you also feel that pain. When we celebrate, you share that joy" (Franklyn 41). Possibly, without knowing it, Mr. Golding has, with these words, essentially summed up the definition of "diaspora"

discussed in the theoretical section and more importantly defined the essence of the Jamaican Diaspora movement to the Jamaican public and indeed to the world. Certainly this is the way in which members of the movement would define themselves. At this important occasion with all eyes on this conference, by choosing to define the movement to the public, Mr. Golding was essentially trying to empathize with the movement members present and help legitimize the movement. His intention in this speech was persuasive as he tried to help explain to the Jamaican public what this Diaspora movement was all about and help possibly reverse that tension and rift that tended to exist between Jamaicans abroad and at Jamaicans at home.

By suggesting that those living in the diaspora and those living in Jamaica share the same feelings and have the same aspirations and goals for Jamaica, he helped to attract more sympathizers and increase understanding of what the movement is about. His frequent use of “we” was also instrumental in encouraging a sense of unity among all present and highlighted the fact that for many in the Jamaican Diaspora the lines between the individual and the collective are blurred; it is simply assumed that all involved share that experience. He was, in essence, applauding the work of the movement and acknowledging the importance of this collective body. Later on in his talk he also discussed what he described as “the unbounded spirit of the Jamaican personality” (Franklyn 42). Here we see another reference to this unique Jamaican identity and the role that this identity plays as a foundational string holding this extended Jamaican community together. Any mention of this unique identity coupled with phrases like “unbounded spirit” tends to evoke feelings of unity and legitimize the existence of the

movement. In his address, he seemed to specifically be appealing to that sense of pride that many Jamaicans tend to embody.

Barbara Gloudon, a notable cultural and media intellectual in Jamaica was asked to make an address at the 2006 Jamaican Diaspora biennial conference. Having Mrs. Gloudon address this conference was significant in the sense that her presence confirmed that it was not just the Jamaican government that wanted to reach out to the Diaspora movement, but other intellectuals in the country were also keen on developing more favorable relations. Mrs. Gloudon has been a long time host at one of the most long standing radio talk show programs in the country and her presence at the conference ensured that the local media remained interested in the conference. Furthermore, with her years as an iconic intellectual in Jamaica, her views and opinions come with a high level of credibility and resonance. But Mrs. Gloudon's comments throughout her address were in keeping with the general rhetoric being employed throughout the conference. Like those who spoke before her, Gloudon made reference to the strength of persons of Jamaican heritage and the "special spirit" that all Jamaicans possess, a spirit that is able to overcome any obstacle and that is indomitable and pervasive regardless of location. It is this spirit, she argued, that was at the foundation of the identity that propelled persons in the diaspora to come together in a movement.

One of the final speakers at the 2006 conference was Jamaican business leader, Douglas Orane, known locally for his pioneering work in developing local business in Jamaica. He had a tremendous level of respect from those in attendance at the conference, especially those concerned with the role of the Diaspora in investment and development. At the time of the conference, Orane was one of the top officials in one of Jamaica's most

well-known food brands—Grace Kennedy. As such, his company was well invested in trying to reach out to the Diaspora, ensuring that Grace Kennedy’s products could expand its consumption market. Orane had studied abroad for sometime while he acquired his own tertiary education and as such indicated that he personally knew what it was like to feel a part of and belong to the diaspora.

In an effort to try and connect with Diaspora members present and display sincere empathy, Orane described his difficulty with navigating his own Jamaican identity while in the diaspora, pointing out that his understanding of what it meant to be Jamaican had little to do with where he was living physically; here he alludes to the notion of Jamaican citizenry that extends beyond its borders. It would seem that this conference was focused on appealing not just to a new understanding of Jamaican migrants, but also a new understanding of Jamaican citizenship as well as identity. He stated, “My sense of Jamaican identity comes from an appreciation of how we Jamaicans think, how we speak, how we interact with each other; a particular, *joie de vivre* and sense of camaraderie which are part of our beings; our deep love of our land and its magnificent vistas; the particular spurt of happiness and warmth which we feel when we savour our national foods; the infectious rhythms of the various musical forms which have evolved from our people” (Franklyn 318). This deep rooted sense of having an unending and unconditional love of the country comes to the fore and as before, the Jamaican Diasporic identity is referenced as a crucial and necessary component that motivates Jamaicans wherever they are in the world and is in fact at the heart of this movement and the role it plays in Jamaica. This statement made by the local public intellectual displays the way in which Jamaicans living in the country are able to connect with Jamaican migrants through a

sense of common identity. Orane's words also highlight that Jamaican consciousness mentioned in the previous chapter on identity and the notion that as Jamaicans navigate and negotiate their diasporic identities, there is a sense of nostalgic love and indelible connection to Jamaica that becomes pronounced after migration. This is evident in his use of phrases such as "deep love," "spurt of happiness and warmth" and "infectious rhythms."

His words suggest that there is something unique that Jamaicans experience when they come together and have a common sense of the valuable aspects of the Jamaican culture. Orane utilized words (particularly "deep sense of camaraderie") that generated a sense of unity among Diaspora members and served to ignite purpose within the movement. This is in keeping with theoretical inclinations of New Social Movements that assert that such movements often possess a fundamental component of solidarity and belongingness where members feel deeply connected and linked to each other. This directly references the discussion and definition of "diaspora" outlined earlier that suggested that diaspora communities are unique in the way that members feel connected to one another. The manner in which he described his Jamaican identity also suggests that he was aware that most persons present, although maybe unsure of the way in which they can contribute and get involved, were certain of their love for Jamaica and the Jamaican culture.

Orane's entire address was actually along the same path of trying to ignite passion within the movement members present, trying to encourage them to embody their unique and special characteristics that enabled them to do almost anything. Like the government leaders before him, he made mention of the "innate capabilities" of Jamaicans,

capabilities which would propel them to excel and survive in virtually any scenario. Coming from a business leader in the country, this possibly had great appeal to the members of the Diaspora movement who would want to believe that they too could accomplish some of the more difficult tasks and goals that they had set for themselves. Additionally, following the speakers prior to him, Orane took the opportunity to redefine the borders of Jamaica and who should be considered a Jamaican citizen. He noted that the reality was that the Jamaican nation actually consisted of the five million Jamaicans globally and not simply the “two and a half million located physically on ‘the rock’” (Franklyn 319).

*Leaders of the Jamaican Diaspora Discuss the Diasporic Identity*

The previous subsection outlined the way in which persons in the Jamaican government utilize a specific discourse that brings attention to the movement and appeals to potential members. However, what this discussion of the biennial conferences demonstrates is that there is also an interactive nature of this discourse and the manner in which various stakeholders interact with each other. As such, this next subsection considers the way that movement leaders also claim ownership and employ this appealing language that keeps the movement viable. While the Jamaican government and the Diaspora leaders utilize common language, the words often have different meanings due to who the speakers are.

The importance of an existing Jamaican Diasporic identity was also at the center of an address given at the 2006 biennial conference by the current Southeast USA advisory board member, and Diaspora movement leader Marlon Hill. Marlon Hill, an attorney at law, is one of the most vocal members of the Diaspora advisory board and

Diaspora movement in general. His blogs and interviews are frequently seen and heard in media both in Jamaica and the diaspora. In addressing the attendees at the conference, his voice immediately brings credibility and resonance to the matters discussed. As was the case with the intellectuals and politicians in Jamaica, Hill's address was another attempt to persuade the audience members and specifically the Diaspora members that there was indeed something special about them. He stated, "If you turn and look into the pupils of each others' eyes, you will realize that there is something very special about each of us...There is something very special about our DNA and who we are...Jamaicans are unique in a very special way" (Franklyn 181). He stated this with such confidence and clarity that it almost immediately resulted in a round of applause as a sense of pride was once more ignited in the audience. Here we have one of the first leaders of the movement describing himself and the other members and encouraging them to realize that despite the fact that they did not know each other personally, by looking into their neighbors' eyes, they could see the connection they share as Jamaicans.

Hill seemingly reinforced the message to those present that they represent a special and selective group that can partake in this special Jamaican identity. He even went on to say, "Our God has made us this way and we need to harness this special spirit that we have" (Franklyn 181). Many Jamaicans whether in Jamaica or in the diaspora, are Christians and it is therefore not uncommon to see this inclusion of religious sentiment in a statement such as this that aims to arouse a sense of duty and responsibility. As he suggests, those of Jamaican descent constitute a chosen people who have been awarded a unique, transcendental quality and a special identity. His words also bring to light the lingering reality about this movement that while it is labeled in this study as a New Social



Movement that is predominately identity based, it may be a trans-national movement. This is because the focus on this “special” and unique identity belonging to a “chosen” people bare resemblance to nationalist movements.

### The Third Biennial Conference, 2008

The third Jamaican Diaspora conference took place June 16-June 17, 2008 in Jamaica, and again saw nearly 500 persons in attendance. This is also the first biennial conference that I attended as a participant-observer. I attended in the role as Future Leader for the Southeast USA Jamaican Diaspora and recall being extremely excited to be there. I remember being quite surprised that I was only one of four future leaders from the entire USA delegation. There were many more future leaders from the Canadian and UK delegation and what stood out, is that the majority of those young persons were not actually born in Jamaica, but were still enthusiastic to be there and get the work done. It was then that I realized that the movement had gained ground. There was a sense of purpose and mission from the people in attendance, as if they were there to accomplish a task. But, there was also a strong sense of camaraderie, of common identity, despite the fact that so many people in the room had never before seen each other. Quite fittingly the theme for the conference was, “Borderless Partnership for Development.” The title here is also different from the first two conferences, yet the choice of words for the conference slogan still evokes a sense of continuity and connection. “Borderless” of course is in keeping with the ideology of diaspora that in the current age of globalization with all the technological advances, ease of movement and transition, there is virtually no separation of partition that divides countries or people. “Borderless” is also significant, because it

evokes the essence of the diasporic identity, one that is hybrid, influx and not rooted in any specific location.

By the biennial conference in 2008, Mrs. Simpson-Miller was no longer the Prime Minister, but was now the leader of the opposition. Although her title in government had changed, her prestige in Jamaica remained equally significant as did her language towards the Diaspora movement. At this conference, she discussed the need to strengthen the partnership with the Jamaicans abroad and the importance of fostering a better relationship with the Diaspora. Her address made frequent references to the idea behind diaspora, suggesting that there is a borderless world that facilitates the need to interact more efficiently and positively. In 2008, Mr. Bruce Golding (the former leader of the opposition party—Jamaican Labor Party) had become the Prime Minister of Jamaica. As he had done two years before, he continued to discuss what he believed was something special and significant about persons from Jamaica living anywhere in the world. Something so special, he added, that even those who have never been to Jamaica wish to claim Jamaica as their motherland.

During his address, his use of personal anecdotes was most convincing as he described an interaction with a lady in Cuba who although never having touched foot on Jamaican soil, had a legitimate Jamaican accent. He called this the “Jamaican spirit.” This “spirit” is the same one that was referenced earlier in the chapter on the creation of the Jamaican diasporic identity. Not only are those in the diaspora making reference to this indomitable “Jamaican spirit” but clearly this appeal to identity, pride and emotion is also something being encouraged by those in positions of political power. He also stated, “When we need experts to help us solve our problems, we go everywhere else except to

our Jamaicans abroad.” Here we see the Prime Minister’s intention to appeal to logic, suggesting again that there is a wealth of knowledge and talent existing in the Jamaican diaspora. Furthermore, he is making the point that the country must begin to see those in the Diaspora as an extension of citizens who are just as qualified to contribute positively to the country in whatever means possible. Culturally speaking, there is something to be said about this sense of pride that is encouraged among Jamaicans, despite the often adverse conditions in the country. There is a sense that no matter what, persons should also be proud to be Jamaican. As is evident here, from the onset, there was significant appeal to emotion, with the use of emotion-laden words and repetition, as nearly all speakers seemed to be saying the same thing.

Private sector business leaders have been involved in dealing with the Jamaican Diaspora. At the 2008 biennial conference, the first speaker was Earl Jarrett, another respected member of the private sector in Jamaica. He was the host and chair organizer of the 2008 biennial conference. At the time of writing this dissertation, he also served as general manager of the successful Jamaican National Building Society (a money transfer and investment financial institution with a high stake in diaspora affairs). So he was recognizable, had some element of authority and was respected by both those living in Jamaica and the diaspora. He also made a crucial statement, which is something that gets reiterated in many of the Diaspora meetings and gatherings, that there is a need to convert from “Brain Drain” to “Brain Bank.” Similar to the shift from “migrant” to “diaspora” there is a sense that such stakeholders are recognizing the importance of imbuing a sense of positivity and value within the participants at the conference. So much has been written about the nature of the “Brain Drain” and how countries such as Jamaica have

been adversely affected by the migration of high skilled persons. It seems now, however, that by referring to those in the diaspora as a “bank,” there is much value and importance attached to those who have left.

At the 2008 conference, the Jamaican Minister of Tourism, Ed Bartlett also employed language that praised and celebrated the uniqueness and special identity that those in the Diaspora possess. He stated that he was proud of his fellow Jamaicans in the diaspora who were now “at the top of all the immigrant groups in every society where we have gone” (Franklyn 219). Here we see that Bartlett makes a solid effort to develop a better relationship with those in the diaspora by suggesting that the government is proud of the ways in which they have been unofficial ambassadors for the country. His words are in keeping with other government officials who have also made strides in reaching out to those in the Diaspora. Bartlett went on to discuss the fact that Jamaicans in the diaspora have the highest earnings of all immigrant groups, have achieved some of the highest levels of education and have been able to enjoy a relatively high standard of living and quality of life. He referred to Jamaicans in the diaspora as “quality citizens and world-class performers” (Franklyn 219). All of this kind of language is symbolic of the shift that the Jamaican government was attempting to produce in relation to attitudes towards the diaspora. His intentions are seemingly to win the hearts of those in the Diaspora and reiterate the government’s position to support them.

#### The Fourth Biennial Jamaican Diaspora Conference, 2011

The 2011 conference, June 15-17, 2011 was markedly different from the ones before and certainly the most controversial of the lot. First, this conference was not staged in the capital, instead it was hosted in one of the rural parishes in Jamaica—Ocho

Rios, St. Ann. The reason for this is that some members of the movement believed it was easier for some persons to attend the conference if it would be staged closer to the other end of the island. Furthermore, it was believed that those coming to attend the conference wanted to combine their trip to the conference with their vacation trip and since Ocho Rios had more tourist attractions, it would be the perfect setting. The problem with this, however, was that the conference was staged at a private hotel which was extremely expensive and made it difficult for many members to afford the cost of attending the conference or paying the associated hotel costs. This conference also spanned three days, as opposed to two days at the previous conferences. I also had the opportunity to attend this conference and noticed a difference in the atmosphere compared to 2008. For one, the location at a resort in a popular tourist destination signaled a less serious tone at the beginning and I was not certain that it would be a successful or worthwhile conference. It seemed people were on vacation! However, by the time the conference started, I realized quickly, that the surroundings did not interfere with the tone of the speakers or the mission of the Diaspora. Once inside, members of the Diaspora and the government engaged in the discussion in a very serious tone.

Despite the consistency in some of the rhetoric, this was the most poorly attended of all the biennial conferences since the inaugural one in 2004. Only approximately 400 persons were in attendance according to statistics presented by the conference organizers. The number of participants could also be smaller, as many in the Diaspora movement are doubtful of the legitimacy of this number noting that this 400 figure is most likely a reflection of those who expressed interest in attending the conference and not necessarily a reflection of the number of people who actually attended. The small number is likely

due to a number of factors including the fact that the conference was postponed from 2010 and it was not until much later that it was confirmed that the conference would actually be taking place in 2011. Furthermore, as stated in the previous paragraph, the location meant that more expenses were involved with attending the conference—expenses that many were unable to fund.

*Continued Emphasis placed on Unique Characteristics of Members of Diaspora*

The fourth conference was again hosted by the current chair of the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation, Earl Jarrett, who noted at the onset of the two day conference that “Jamaicans are some of the most enterprising people in the world.” His words reflected the importance of this unique diasporic identity and appeal to the ethos of those in the movement. Furthermore, the rhetorical situation and occasion here is the beginning of the fourth biennial Diaspora conference which generated the need to legitimize the presence of those who took the time, effort and money to attend this conference in Jamaica. There was a sense that those in the Diaspora movement are somewhat wary as to whether or not their participation in the movement is recognized and worthwhile. Officials also praised the Jamaican Diaspora movement for their impressive organization and structure in creating a successful movement. Another politician, the Minister of Finance, Audley Shaw commented that “The Jamaican Diaspora is like a bull that does not quite recognize its strength.” These are similar sentiments to those that have been expressed by politicians in the past: the notion that the members of the Jamaican Diaspora are really quite powerful and influential and even more powerful than anyone realizes. Like the conferences before, the appeal to citizenship and nationhood was a prominent theme emerging from government leaders. One participant, who was representing the leader of

the Opposition, Portia Simpson-Miller noted that, “The nation state extends to wherever you may be.” Again, this was an appeal to Jamaicans that no matter what, they will always be a part of the country.

*The Partnership between the Diaspora and the Jamaican Government gets Strained*

The 2011 conference was also organized amidst much controversy and unlike the previous conferences, the Jamaican government had a much more influential role in the planning and staging of this conference. In fact, this conference was possibly one of the first displays of new tensions between the movement and the Jamaican government. Prior to the staging of the biennial Diaspora conference held in June 2011, there was a lot of discussion in the local media in Jamaica, especially on radio talk shows and in the local newspapers about the fact that the Jamaican Diaspora would boycott the conference that the government was hosting. David Mullings (USA Diaspora Future Leader Representative) wrote an op-ed piece entitled “Diaspora: Dealing Honestly and Truthfully with the People’s Business” published in the *Jamaica Observer* on May 15, 2011. In this article he outlines many of the problems that were encountered with the staging of the biennial Diaspora conference in June 2011. One of the things he noted was the lack of consultation between the Jamaican government and the Diaspora advisory board that has the responsibility of serving as liaisons between the government and the Diaspora movement. According to Mullings, there were some in the movement who felt that the Jamaican government had its own agenda for the conference, failing to utilize democratic processes and wanting to use the conference for political benefits. As such, some movement members were concerned that the Diaspora was not properly engaged during the planning of the conference especially concerning the agenda setting and the

program. As is still the case, Diaspora members were calling for there to be more engagement and transparency concerning the planning of the conference.

*Politicians Emphasize connections between Jamaican Diaspora and Global Diasporas*

The previous conferences seemed much more focused on trying to educate persons about the movement and the unique place of identity among Jamaican migrants. However, at the 2011 conference, officials seemed to have a more global outlook, situating the Jamaican Diaspora in a larger global context, encouraging patrons to realize that the Jamaican Diaspora movement was a part of a much larger worldwide trend. Earl Jarrett, the chair of the 2011 biennial conference committee, in his opening remarks likened the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora to the rise of the Arab spring political uprisings that took place in the early months of 2011. In doing so, his words suggested that like the African uprisings, the Jamaican Diaspora was about people demanding recognition and respect and declaring control of their destiny.

The minister in the Ministry of Affairs with responsibility for the Diaspora, Senator Malahoo-Forte, in her opening remarks at the conference, pointed out that she was happy that despite what seemed to be numerous obstacles, the conference was still able to convene. In her message, she acknowledged the history that paved the path for the diaspora to be where it is today. Interestingly enough she made mention of an African Diaspora Summit that would be taking place in South Africa in 2012, and made the point that Diasporas were beginning to make their mark in the world. Again, we see the connection being made between the Jamaican Diaspora and the African Diaspora with the Senator highlighting the African Diaspora as somewhat of a trendsetter for Jamaica or at the very least a larger body in which the Jamaican Diaspora can feel part of. This attempt



to help the Jamaican migrants situate themselves among a larger global movement of Diasporas was to again help them recognize the gravity of their role, not just in Jamaica, but also in the world. Furthermore, reminding those in the Jamaican Diaspora that they belonged to a significant global movement did much to inspire the Jamaican migrants to take their role as members of the Jamaican Diaspora seriously and to remember that they had colleagues or contemporaries all over the world, who just like them, were beginning to reclaim national identities and cultures as they made attempts to change the world.

#### Conclusions on the Biennial Conferences

This section explored the way in which specific appeals to language and rhetoric are employed and utilized in the Jamaican Diaspora. The section brings clarity to the question of how such migrant collectives come about because of the incorporation of specific discourse and how they in turn create new discourse that keeps the movement active. The analysis was conducted using speeches and addresses made at the Jamaican Diaspora biennial conferences and showed that Jamaican politicians, intellectuals and movement leaders made constant reference to the “special spirit,” “unique identity” and “enormous talent” and potential of Jamaican migrants. These messages were consistent throughout the four conferences discussed. The biennial conferences which constituted the largest gathering of members of the Jamaican Diaspora presented the best opportunities to employ this specific rhetoric and disseminate these views and ideologies. The discussion showed that the migrants were being encouraged to adopt and embody a renewed understanding of the role they could and should be playing, not just in their host countries, but also in Jamaica.

The information presented in this section is particularly interesting in light of the fact that some scholars of rhetoric, including Michael McGee argue that some movements that have strong rhetorical components infuse artificiality in people and that without this rhetoric, the people would not otherwise innately develop and claim these ideologies and identities. In his 1975 essay, “In Search of ‘The People’: A Rhetorical Alternative,” McGee noted, “The people therefore are not objectively real in the sense that they exist as a collective entity in nature; rather, they are a fiction dreamed by an advocate and infused with an artificial, rhetorical reality by the agreement of an audience to participate in a collective fantasy” (343). In this quote, McGee problematizes the common definitions of social movements, including some of those presented earlier in this study. For McGee, the real essence of the movement is its existence in the meaning created by those who envision it, and not necessarily a physical phenomenon that exists independently in the real world. This somewhat contradictory understanding of movements is not necessarily far removed from the example of Diaspora. While I assert that there are elements of traditional social movement theory that applies to Diaspora, McGee’s notion that the movement is created in the consciousness of people is also applicable to how Jamaican migrants envision their participation. This is not to say that the Diaspora is completely void of any substantive presence, but certainly, the presence is enhanced by the role of rhetoric and meaning created.

If we apply McGee’s thesis to the case of the Jamaican Diaspora, we get a sense that, along with the other contextual conditions that result in collective action, people come together when persons have a similar understanding and share common meanings. This is similar to Benedict Anderson’s (1991) notion of imagined communities. The

biennial conferences have been quite representative of the way in which specific rhetoric is connected to the meanings that abound within the Diaspora and create a common “people.” We saw this in the language of the participants, the media and the Jamaican politicians. In addition to the role rhetoric plays, earlier sections of this project have thoroughly explored other contextual factors that create the conditions out of which this movement came about both on the global and local levels. The information from those sections highlights the specific elements that together, made it possible for these migrants to begin reconsidering their status and to initiate reclaiming identity. We can see the way in which the rhetoric employed in the Jamaican Diaspora both arose out of a more global rhetoric and also gave birth to specific rhetoric that has since been used to mobilize Jamaican migrants.

McGee proposes that there are stages of rhetoric that become pronounced during the different phases of persons joining together, or what he calls the “collectivization process” where the motive of rhetoric used is to get others to buy into a common understanding (345). Due to the fact that this movement is young (just about 8 years old) and is in the initial phases, there are examples where the Jamaican Diaspora employs rhetoric to invoke this sense of collectivization that McGee describes. This would explain the frequency and repetitiveness of the language utilized at these initial conferences in reference to the uniqueness of Jamaicans and the Jamaican culture. It cannot be denied that what the use of this specific language has resulted in is the adoption of a new and collective identity by the Jamaican migrants—a collective faith based on the rhetorical vision created. It would truly appear that the leaders of the movement and the other stakeholders insist on the Jamaican migrants adopting this new understanding of

themselves in order to ensure that the movement stays alive. This would support McGee's statement that "So long as 'the people' believe basic myths, there is unity and collective identity" (347). For McGee, these "myths" are essentially "false consciousness," but they provide some amount of social unity and collective identity. The people, in his understanding eventually become the myths that they accept.

While not suggesting that the statements about the Jamaican migrants are myths, or that the beliefs and identities they possess are overtly false, this can be applied to the case of the Jamaican Diaspora. The insistence from the speeches at the conferences, that Jamaican migrants accept their specialness and built up potential not yet unleashed, suggests that there is a push for the migrants to accept this new vision of themselves, and once the rhetoric at the conferences no longer ignites the sentiments of importance, specialness and talent, the movement may begin to be less attractive and members may not feel as committed. As McGee suggests, once these beliefs go away, a crisis may develop and new rhetoric, with "new myths" will have to be introduced.

The conferences seem to provide the platform through which this rhetoric can be distributed regularly enough to keep the members energized. It leaves one to wonder, what will the speeches be like ten years from now? Will they continue to employ consistent with what we have seen at the previous conferences? Whatever the answers to those questions are, it is certain that the language used at these conferences conjures a unique identity that Jamaican migrants possess; something so important that it is enough to propel them to join the Diaspora movement. In fact, given the global and local contextual factors from which this movement emerged, including the interesting and essential discussion of *The Gleaner* articles, it has become clear that identity is a

prominent characteristic in the Jamaican Diaspora. Identity is at the heart and soul of this movement. The migrants' understanding of who they are is pivotal to Diasporas. McGee suggests that the best place to find out what motivates people is to spend time looking at the beliefs they have (wherever these beliefs may have originated from). The speeches at the conferences indicate that these beliefs of Jamaican migrants are encapsulated in the identities they assume in the Diaspora. Hence, the next chapter is dedicated to a thorough analysis of this identity that members of the Jamaican Diaspora possess and how this identity becomes one of the primary sustaining elements, which like the rhetoric discussed in this section give members a reason to remain in the movement.

## CHAPTER 8: THE (RE)CREATION OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORIC IDENTITY AS A SIGNIFICANT SUSTAINING ELEMENT

### Introduction to the Chapter

Thus far, this study has examined the transnational and national contexts out of which the Jamaican Diaspora came about highlighting various discursive points of significance. Throughout each discussion, the distinct connecting thread is the crucial role of identity formation that lies at the heart of this collective body and is the impetus behind the success of the movement. Again, this is very much in keeping with the significance of identity proposed by New Social Movement Theory. As one social movement scholar noted, “The new movements bring with them a new politics concerned with quality of life, projects of self-realization and goals of participation and identity formation” (Buechler 446).

Personally, this chapter has been the most revealing to me, because as I researched and wrote, I realized that I was really exploring my own experiences of rediscovering my Jamaican identity. The reason this project began in the first place was due to my renewed commitment to Jamaica and the unique process I endured as I tried to understand my identity as a Jamaican inside and outside the country. Like myself, even after migration, Jamaicans often remain committed to their “Jamaicanness” while embodying a new diasporic identity. As one Diaspora member put it, “Some of our

people leave Jamaica physically, they leave the country for a variety of reasons but you all know that we are connected to this country no matter where we live or how long we are abroad, we are connected forever” (Franklyn 215). This is an example of the way in which those in the movement use specific language that often evokes a sense of pride and embodiment about what it means to be Jamaican and to be deeply connected to each other.

In the earlier discussion of the definition of “diaspora,” it was noted that diaspora is primarily a process and secondarily a category. The next few paragraphs explore the processes through which Jamaican migrants negotiate their new identities and the way in which this identity sustains their involvement in the movement. This chapter adds to the academic discussion on identity by suggesting that those involved in Diasporas, engage in a process through which they arrive at a new understanding of their identity.

These recreated, hybrid and collective identities are at the root of the Jamaican Diaspora formation and remains an internal mechanism through which participation in the movement is sustained. The discussion begins with an attempt to bring clarity to the concept of identity and by extension the diasporic identity that tends to be created after migration. It begins with an exploration of how the history of Jamaica has played a role in how Jamaican migrants define themselves. The next subsection describes the way in which the Jamaican culture has influenced the formation of the Jamaican diasporic identity significantly. This leads into an examination of the way that Jamaicans experience double consciousness as they navigate their new identities. There is also a description of the way in which new understandings of nationality and citizenship emerge after migration as well as the way in which the migrants negotiate a new understanding of

what it means to be “other” in their new environment. The final two subsections elaborate on the manner in which migrants hold multiple identities and also the way in which these various elements result in the creation of a collective identity that is found within the Diaspora movement.

### The Significance of Identity

In attempting to understand the identity within a movement such as the Jamaican Diaspora one must consider the perceptions, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and values—the consciousness—of those in the movement (Lucas 257). This is also in keeping with earlier discussions of the meaning of “diaspora” outlined by Robin Cohen that pointed to the importance of exploring the ways in which identity and consciousness contribute to a shared understanding in diaspora communities. At a Jamaican Diaspora gathering that took place in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 2008, one of the leaders in the movement noted that there had to be something unique about the “make-up” and DNA of Jamaicans that resulted in them having such a strong connection to their culture and Jamaican identity even years after migrating. The members internalize this new consciousness of a unique claim to identity being the unifying force among the participants in the movement.

This consciousness is evident in the discourse that is employed by movement leaders and organizers in a bid to generate a collective sense of togetherness and belongingness. It is the promise of a certain understanding or embodiment of a Jamaican diasporic identity that tends to attract new members and encourages current members to stay active in the movement. That is, the Diaspora movement offers participants the luxury of a new identity to which they can hold claim. Jamaican politician and Diaspora author Delano Franklyn (2010) has stated, “The maintenance of a Jamaican identity,



values and culture is a necessary condition for a person to be included in the Jamaican Diaspora” (Franklyn 4). Being “Jamaican” has been exported across geographical regions and is no longer limited or bounded by national borders.

#### Understanding the “Diasporic Identity”

In keeping with the discussion of Diaspora theories presented in the introductory chapters, it is important to recall that diasporic identities, like all identities, are seen as entities constantly in flux, always being performed and represented through multiple channels including memory, images, symbols, rituals and interpretations (Hintzen 4). The bases of identities that persons hold important have various sources and influences, including culture, heritage and inheritance. There is no essentialized, definite or permanent identity, especially for those in the diaspora who frequently negotiate their new identities as migrants in a new environment interacting with new cultures (this will be explored in more detail below). In fact, it is evident that the Jamaican “diasporic identity” shares both global and local beginnings. There is no longer just one national identity or one definition of it—their identities are found within the diasporic space that exists between the new host country and the home country. For the migrant, this ability to move away from a linear mode of understanding identity is crucial to a true exploration of the process and negotiation he or she endures. The identity creation for Jamaican migrants is not simply an “A to B” (home country to host country) formulation and a fundamental premise of this dissertation is that all identity is complex and multiply determined. In fact, identity in itself has been redefined in modern scholarship to avoid notions of fixed, predetermined identities that are frozen in time. Rather, identity has

been redefined as something that is fluid, always in motion, full of contradictions, always being produced, reproduced and transforming<sup>18</sup>.

One of the defining characteristics of Diasporas is the creation of self identity. Those in the Diaspora occupy what some argue as a “diasporic space” that incorporates the physical and metaphoric homeland as well as some attributes of the new “host” society—a space replete with multiple identities. Because of this, participants have a global outlook, living in the local but occupying global identities. That is, they often embody identities that transcend their physical location. For this reason, traditional scholars of cultural studies including Stuart Hall (1990, 1992) and Paul Gilroy (1993) argue that contemporary, hybrid definitions of diaspora challenge essentialised understandings of race, identity, culture or ethnicity with their focus on differences and the reconstruction of new, multiple, fluid identities. These identities, they argue, get formed in a different space. It is within this diasporic space that a sense of who “we” are is formulated as well as the development of groupness.

#### The Postcolonial Influence on Identity formation in the Diaspora

The notion of post colonial scholarship emerged out of an era when many found that there was a need to develop a way of addressing the cultural production of those societies affected by the historical phenomenon of colonialism (Ashcroft 7). The post colonial lens provides an alternative methodology, not a meta theory for studying groups of people. Following the Second World War, many scholars developed an interest in the phenomenon of post colonial people. Since then, scholars have been continuously interested in the identity of post colonial peoples and the impact on formerly colonized

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<sup>18</sup> See for instance: Hall 2003; Hegde 2000; Moon 1998; Moon 1999; Ting-Toomey 2005; Tanno 2000

societies. The scholarship emerging from this body of literature has been applied to an understanding of movements, including migrant movements originating out of the Global South and more specifically, previously colonized countries. As they contend, the effects of colonization did not disappear when colonization ended (Ashcroft 12).

To understand how Jamaicans form identity, we have to situate them in their historical context since as Richard Morris (2004) argued, “History always matters” (221). In 1655, Jamaica was colonized by the British after spending over 200 years in the hands of the Spanish following the “discovery” of the island by Christopher Columbus in 1494 and the complete eradication of the native Caribs and Arawaks who previously lived there. Jamaica quickly became a sugar producing colony that required an extensive labor force. The British acquired slave labor from the continent of Africa and later on brought indentured laborers from China and India. As such, the ethnic make-up of Jamaica is really a combination of European, African, Chinese and Indian heritage with the largest percentage of the population being of African descent. But all aspects of Jamaica, including the political, economic and cultural sectors, were significantly influenced by the presence of and occupation by the British on the island. In reference to the imperialistic nature of the British, author Jamaica Kincaid (1995) said, “Everywhere they went they turned it into England; and everybody they met they turned into English” (93).

In “The Occasion for Speaking,” George Lamming (1995) goes into detail outlining the ways in which the imperial British power enforced its values and customs on those in the West Indies. Unequal power relations, Lamming argues, begins with the education that the British brought to its colonies. These unequal power relations situated

the white colonial power as superior and placed the colored natives as inferior subjects. It is often a quest for more meaningful education and stable and reliable foundations that encourage Jamaicans to migrate. A Jamaican migrant and scholar, Jennifer Keane-Dawes (2004) said, “Many postcolonial subjects like me liberate ourselves not through warfare but through education, and we travel to other countries, including the United States, to further this education...The decision to leave our countries is not individualistic; we have a social and cultural responsibility to achieve and achieve well” (95). This search for knowledge to formulate a more meaningful identity is essential to the Jamaican migrant. This understanding of how migrants view their decision to leave home is a clear break from the ways that many Jamaicans have understood the factors influencing the decision to migrate.

Jamaica is not new to the concept of diaspora or the connection between Jamaicans and the larger African diaspora scattered around the world. As I have discussed earlier, while the Diaspora I refer to breaks from the identity of victimized, oppressed and forced removal, it is still important to recognize that the Jamaican Diaspora continues to embrace notions of liberation, freedom and new identities—all elements connected to the African Diaspora movement. Even the Garveyite movement, the Back to Africa movement in 1914 as well as the Rastafarian movement in the 1930s become important when considering that members in the Jamaican Diaspora also envision a “Back to Jamaica” movement, a new ethno-cultural identity and a redefinition of nationality. Those historic movements set the stage for Jamaican identity and a black consciousness and identity that even today remain important to the Jamaican migrant. Furthermore, the Garveyite Movement that emerged out of Jamaica in the early 20<sup>th</sup>

Century was one of the first indications that Jamaicans were on a quest to search for a “home,” an attachment to the true historic homeland and a place that they belonged. These are elements that resurface in discussions of contemporary Diaspora movements that also challenge the concept of borders and seek to redefine national identity and citizenship in a bid to find a place where they belong.

Jamaicans have always been searching for somewhere to call home, somewhere where they can finally understand who they really are. But the reality for many is that the only way to discover this identity is through some reference to the colonial power. Even after migrating, the only history, the only identity and the majority of the culture Jamaican migrants know remains influenced by the culture of the colonizer. That is, they are always dealing with the consequences and repercussions of living in a colonized country; they seemingly cannot escape the hegemony of the colonial power. In the United States, Canada or England, as Jamaicans struggle to negotiate their multiple identities, they are in a continuous process of psychological resistance and reconstruction, discontinuity and continuity (Ashcroft et al. 2; Shome 117). This is the life of the post colonial migrant. Jamaican independence did not rid her of the colonial burden, of the confused identities and the unequal power relations she must deal with. She leaves Jamaica with these tensions and complexities and enters the new place of residence with them, often feeling as though she is in a position of exile, as an outsider. This notion of feeling as “other” is something that the post colonial subject is constantly struggling with. Under colonialism, the British were on a quest to “civilize” and “modernize” those in the colonies. The colonized were always the “other,” always inferior.

The colonial process is always at work in the Jamaican migrant. Even the language of the Jamaican migrant is the language of the colonizer (Lamming 15). As George Lamming points out, “Colonialism is the very base and structure of the West Indian cultural awareness” (15). When Jamaicans migrate, the strong cultural identity they embody and categorize as Jamaican is historically influenced by British traditions. In “Whiteness and the Politics of Location: Postcolonial Reflections,” Raka Shome argued that, “A colonial culture can remain even when the colonizer has physically departed from the colonized space” (119). When they migrate, Jamaicans may leave the country with the notion that the white, colonial, Western power was superior to their own African ancestral culture. Some Jamaicans may migrate believing that they will always be inferior to the predominantly white culture. In this way, we see how notions of whiteness and the superior/inferior dichotomy travel (Shome 108). The colonial history of the country has also played a significant role in the formation of cultural traditions in Jamaica. It is these elements of culture that travel with the migrant to the new environment and eventually play a crucial role in the formation of the new diasporic identity they adopt.

#### Culture Impacting the Diasporic Identity

As is the case with identity, the perceptions and definitions of culture are also evolving—always evolving. That is, these are persons who are trying to navigate the cultural identity they bring with them from their homeland, the cultural identity of the new host environment as well as the new identity they assume as a migrant who remains connected to the homeland. This hybrid cultural identity is also highly contextualized and therefore dependent upon the environment in which Jamaicans migrate. Also, following

the premise of New Social Movement theory, it is understood that for many of these contemporary collectives, cultural reproduction and not material reproduction is the main goal. McGee (1990) argues that the conventional wisdom of culture, “doxa,” has very reaching effects on people, sometimes silencing them, but in many instances empowering them to act. As he argues, rhetors (or in this case, movement leaders) often ground their arguments and appeal in doxa, the taken for granted rules of society. We saw this very evident in the discussions on *The Gleaner* as well as the biennial conferences where constant reference was made to Jamaicans with assumptions about the understood rules of the Jamaican culture.

There is sufficient research to suggest that when it comes to Caribbean migrants, and Jamaicans in particular, cultural values of the home country are largely retained after migration (Onwumechili et al. 2003). On a daily basis, Jamaican migrants have continued to find ways of resisting pressures to acculturate or assimilate in a manner that is not acceptable to them. In the introduction to his popular song, “Carnival Please Stay,” Shurwayne Winchester states “A people without a culture, is a people without a soul.” For many Caribbean migrants and Jamaicans in particular, this is true. In referring to the unique “rhythm” of Caribbean peoples, Amardo Rodriguez (2004) remarked, “Regardless of how hard we try, we can never embody a rhythm that is alien to us. You just can’t mandate the spirit. To interfere violently with our rhythms is to interfere violently with the constitution and integrity of our humanity. We have to fight.” (70). This seems to be the general sentiment, based on my participation and observations at gatherings of the Jamaican Diaspora. It is as if there is a special kind of “spirit” or element of the Jamaican heritage that is thought sacred and is held on to tightly, as if the possibility of this culture

being lost will result in calamity. Those in the movement generate some consensus concerning which aspects of the Jamaican culture and identity are worth protecting and preserving. This includes observing Jamaican holidays (such as Emancipation Day and more recently Independence Day); something that the Diaspora has made efforts to support and promote since its inception. The idea that the Jamaican cultural identity must be revered and defended becomes grounds from which others are invited and attracted to join the movement. Recall also that one of the common features of New Social Movements is that the members often feel that there is a salient identity that must be preserved and protected.

A good example of the way in which specific cultural elements become sacred is with a Jamaican Diaspora gathering I attended in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on November 12, 2010. It was what the Diaspora members referred to as a town hall meeting and was hosted by then Jamaican Diaspora leader for South East USA, Marlon Hill. At the beginning of the meeting, the national anthem of the United States was played. As I have observed in other Diaspora meetings and gatherings, some persons made snide remarks and comments when the anthem was being played, saying things such as “I don’t know this song” and “Why they playing this now?” It was almost as if they were somewhat disappointed that the Jamaican “space” was being intruded upon. Although many persons there knew the anthem, it seemed that they enjoyed the idea of having some kind of private space in which the Jamaican culture could be showcased and revered without the presence of the host culture in the room.

This was quite evident especially when considering the fact that as soon as the Jamaican anthem was played, Diaspora members present sang it with what tremendous



vigor and pride, some persons at the end of the song even saying a resounding “Amen!” It seems as if the Jamaican migrant is constantly resisting the alien culture that is being imposed on her, something she has possibly been doing since the days of colonization. This desire to hold on strongly to the culture of the homeland, something certain and known (especially in the new country with myriad cultures and ethnicities) is what inevitably results in the decision of Jamaican migrants to actively participate in the Diaspora movement. But the response to the playing of the Jamaican anthem is also symptomatic of the larger argument made in this study, that the Jamaican Diaspora movement has a strong nationalist basis to it. My own experience with the movement suggests that this kind of strong loyalty and expressions of nationalistic loyalty were not as pronounced when the members were living in Jamaica. Instead, this loyalty to the Jamaican culture developed more vigorously within the diasporic space after migration.

Many Jamaicans who have migrated tend to exude vast amounts of pride when there is any reference to their Jamaican identity and believe that it is the unique Jamaican culture that is the foundation for who they are. Such aspects of traditional Jamaican culture or heritage, including food, music or even names of roads, tend to resonate with members. Using the last example above, the way that members responded to the playing of the national anthem (“Amen!”) is a further example of the type of pride that is displayed at Diaspora gatherings. This is evident in virtually all the Diaspora conferences I have attended between 2007 and 2011. The majority of participants in the Jamaican Diaspora welcome any occasion where they can display the colors of the Jamaican flag, sing popular reggae songs, showcase their world famous food or communicate in Jamaican Patois. Members take pride in the fact that they continue to eat “authentic”

Jamaican food for most meals, attend Jamaican plays, listen to Jamaican music and support Jamaican artists whenever they perform in their communities.

Others remain involved in the political affairs of Jamaica, constantly reading the Jamaican newspapers, listening to Jamaican radio stations and having lengthy conversations with relatives in Jamaica to be updated on the latest state of affairs of the country. These are both private and public displays of important elements of the new diasporic identity that is developed after migrating—they truly live in between Jamaica and the new place of residence. At both formal and informal Jamaican migrant gatherings, it becomes clear that these performances of identity are not limited to individuals, but become a shared experience among many Jamaican migrants. They are collectively proud of the way they talk, the food they eat, their camaraderie with each other and their shared vision for Jamaica. Cultural studies scholars have always asserted that culture plays a significant role in helping persons define themselves, especially after migration. According to Stuart Hall, “[Culture] provides a kind of ground for our identities, 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, “Negotiating Caribbean Identities,” p.4). It is this connectedness to an understanding of culture that is frequently displayed among members of the Jamaican Diaspora.

Jamaica’s motto is “Out of Many, One People,” and is a mantra that many in the Jamaican Diaspora remain committed to after migration. They stress the importance of remaining connected to each other despite the different trajectories they have endured in life and the different geographical locations they reside in. That is, no matter where they

go, what they do, or who they are, many Jamaican migrants believe that they will always be intricately dependent and reliant on each other, they are one unit. This notion of remaining connected despite the passage of time, place or distance is at the core of the diasporic experience. This has resulted in a connection that has helped to propel the Jamaican Diaspora movement to life in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

In an address at the 2006 biennial Diaspora conference, Jamaican public intellectual, Barbara Gloudon discussed this notion of culture, and pointed out that the Jamaican culture is not simply an essentialised notion of entertainment, performance or food. She connected the Jamaican culture to the history of Jamaica, a history that she pointed out cannot be discovered by “watching CNN” (Franklyn 246). The culture of the country she argued was located in the collective memory of Jamaicans and their understanding of their unique history and where they came from. Like cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall, Gloudon linked culture and identity. The Jamaican culture is at the foundation of how this unique identity develops. The Jamaican culture is the reference for the collective memory that many in the Jamaican Diaspora share. This becomes quite clear in the informal discussions among members of the Jamaican Diaspora. It seems that they are of the belief that their common place of birth, history and heritage (a shared contextual history), will result in them having a shared migrant identity. Some scholars (Jones 2008, Hintzen 2001) have spent considerable amounts of time examining the significance of Jamaican migrant public social gatherings (such as carnivals and parades) in a bid to understand how migrant identities are performed.

West Indian scholar Perry Hintzen (2001) discusses what he considers the contextualized nature of identity construction and the importance of location in the recreated identity in diaspora communities. He describes the various ways in which the cultural identity of West Indians in New York differs from the cultural identity of West Indians in California. His argument is that location and the new cultural environment that Jamaicans migrants is instrumental in shaping the ways in which the new identities are developed (Hintzen 5). In his research he showed that West Indians are much more dispersed over a larger geographical area in California and tend to be less united as a collective community in comparison to West Indian migrants on the East Coast of the United States who tend to be more concentrated in very densely populated West Indian communities and as such are more connected to each other. In a similar but much broader vein, an earlier chapter looking at the context out of which the Jamaican Diaspora emerged in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada explored such nuanced contextual and environmental differences that facilitated the emergence of the Jamaican Diaspora in the respective countries. This discussion also demonstrated that the environment often impacts the interests and priorities of different participants in the movement. Indeed, there are unique factors that shape the experience and identities of Jamaicans in the smaller geographical regions in each country (a full exploration is beyond the scope of this dissertation). Yet, despite these idiosyncrasies that exist in the Jamaican diasporic communities, there are enough similarities such as migrants connection to Jamaican culture that they hold sacred which impact their desire to become involved in the Jamaican Diaspora.

Those involved in the Jamaican Diaspora are people who have collectively volunteered their time, money and talent in an effort to contribute positively to Jamaica and Jamaicans regardless of their new cultural location. For example, the Jamaican migrants continue to celebrate Jamaican holidays, support Jamaica in sports and attend cultural seminars and events. I have been fortunate to have participated in many of these celebrations in Florida and hear remarks from other observers who seem amazed at how many Jamaicans attend the annual Jamaican Jerk Festival held in Fort Lauderdale. It is not unusual to see thousands of Jamaicans at these events. They recognize that they have differences, but their common bond, their love and appreciation of their Jamaican culture and upbringing brings them together in one location and under the umbrella of the Jamaican Diaspora. Even so, as they adopt this new identity of being a Jamaican and a migrant, as said earlier, they are also beginning to explore what it means to be a resident or citizen of the new country that they live in and to share in that new culture and identity.

#### “Double Consciousness” in the Jamaican Diasporic Identity

Migrants, Salman Rushdie (1991) posits, root themselves in their memories of their past, of the life they left behind and define themselves by their feeling and experience of otherness. Similarly, the Jamaican migrant finds herself negotiating between a Jamaican identity of the past and the new identity of the present that places her in the position of “other”—it is an internal conflict. She is constantly going back and forth between the distinct cultural worlds of Jamaica and the new place of residence, not truly feeling connected to either (Hegde 35). As such, she struggles to find some common ground between the cultural contradictions that take place outside and within herself.

Jamaican migrants can be said to experience Dubois' notion of "double consciousness" that can be defined as "The existential ambivalence of living as the other" (Hegde 45). They find themselves caught between displaying loyalty to either their Jamaican identity or their new American, Canadian or English identity. They embody what Dolores Tanno (2000) refers to as "dual vision" in that they simultaneously view the world through two different lenses and experience it as such (Tanno 39). Like the Mexican Americans Tanno discusses, Jamaican migrants and in fact most migrant groups, share this "dual vision" sentiment. They experience the simultaneous existence of being both Jamaican and something else.

Being Jamaican and American/Canadian/English simultaneously means that they learn to be progressive and defensive at the same time. The new migrant goal is to advance in the new culture while defending the Jamaican culture. In essence, those in the Jamaican Diaspora are constantly in a position of trying to defend that which they know to be true and are reluctant to do away with, since that is all they know. When this occurs, a new collective and often idealized nostalgic imagination of an ideal homeland comes to the fore. Since those in the diaspora are simultaneously dealing with these contradictory identities, then they can all join forces to preserve what they all still hold sacred—their collective memory of the Jamaican culture and identity. In the end, embracing and learning to navigate these multiple identities becomes a survival mechanism for Jamaican migrants. For a good understanding of this concept, I will quote an interview of a Jamaican migrant living in Canada conducted by researcher Frances Henry. The Jamaican migrant said, "They think you are always like this all the time. They don't realize the unrevealed side of yourself—your alternate personality—this side you adopt

living here, your Canadian self. Like you are two personalities, two cultures. You show the adopted self” (qtd. in Wooddall 122). What this Jamaican migrant is really talking about experiencing is DuBois’ concept of “double consciousness.” As the migrant eloquently put it, she is negotiating two personalities and often ends up repressing one aspect of herself in order to claim loyalty to another. It is not unusual for the Jamaican migrant to consciously repress her “Jamaicanness” during interactions with natives in the new country of residence and contrarily emphasize her Jamaicanness when around others from Jamaica or those of Jamaican heritage.

Being Jamaican and something else (American, Canadian or English) also suggests that the Jamaican diasporan must engage in some form of “implicature” where she recognizes that her experiences and world view are interrelated and connected to the experiences and world views of others (Dace and McPhail 1997). It is in this sense that DuBois describes the process of “double consciousness” as one that includes looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, “Measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (DuBois 45). And so it is for those in the Jamaican Diaspora who often start developing conceptions of what it means to be Jamaican only after migrating when they come in contact with those who do not share their heritage. For the first time, the migrant must define for herself and for others what it means to be Jamaican and what it means to embody a Jamaican identity. For many Jamaicans, migration inevitably means that they encounter persons who can help them to learn more about themselves. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Dubois stated that leaving the North Eastern area of the U.S. to reside in the South presented him with an opportunity to learn more about himself and discover what he understood as new definitions of what it

meant to be African American. In a similar fashion, when Jamaicans migrate and interact with others from similar racial brackets and ethnicities, they also learn new ways of being themselves.

Inevitably, Jamaican migrants are constantly negotiating their multiple identities. As Terry-Ann Jones (2008) stated, “With the flexibility to define themselves Jamaican, American, English, Canadian or a combination of these, Jamaican immigrants forge unique identities that differ from those of their peers at home, as well as from other national groups in the host societies” (146). Possessing these multiple identities is further evidence of the Diaspora movement falling under the category of New Social Movements. Proponents of NSM theory argue that movements in this category have participants who openly possess multiple identities and are in fact constantly searching and navigating these identities. It is because of this intricate position of navigating multiple identities that members of NSMs feel special, feel unique, have the impulsive desire to seek connections to those like themselves and feel the need to become activists on some agenda.

#### Diasporic Identity, Nationality and “Otherness”

One of the issues frequently raised at the Diaspora conferences is the question of why so many Jamaicans with permanent resident status are so reluctant to apply for U.S. citizenship even when they are qualified to do so. It seems that there is a fear that by becoming a U.S. citizen, the migrant is less Jamaican and more something else or that formally becoming a naturalized US citizen will mean a loss of the Jamaican identity. In this sense, national identity is closely linked to cultural identity, though some argue that the two are separate entities (Moon 1998). This is a significant point, because as New



Social Movement theorists argue, oftentimes it is the national identity that becomes a point from which meaning in the movement is derived and out of which the identity of the movement is formed. This brings proof to the claim that in some respects, identity is political. As Woodall (2007) noted, cultural identities are negotiated in political spaces (123). At the same forum, Diaspora movement leaders were stressing the importance of becoming citizens to gain access to more rights and political benefits in the host country. Still, most Jamaican migrants do not apply for U.S. citizenship. They believe that being a U.S. resident and having only Jamaican citizenship will enable them to retain the best of both worlds. They can enjoy some benefits in the U.S., but retain an authentic allegiance to Jamaica. That is, they want access to some of the economic resources available to them with permanent residency, but still be 100% Jamaican citizens.

After migration, some Jamaicans experience a new interest in racial identity. Especially in the U.S., they find themselves faced with at least two veils—being Black (a racial minority) and being an immigrant. An in-depth study by Nancy Foner (1998) on Jamaican migrants in New York and London showed that it is neither uncommon nor unusual to see Jamaicans going through extreme lengths to differentiate themselves from African Americans, claiming that is often advantageous to do so (177). In one interview, Nancy Foner recalled a Jamaican explaining this concept. He said, “You’re black, but you’re not black...once you say something and they recognize you’re not from this country, they treat you a little different” (178). The “different” treatment is usually something more desirable and often entails receiving more respect, or simply a nice attitude. And so some Jamaicans may see themselves in a position of advantage because of their ability to speak the “Queen’s English” (as a result of colonialism) and

communicate in a way that sets them apart from African Americans. However, despite her efforts to receive superior treatment, the Jamaican migrant remains an “other,” an outsider, an invisible person in American society. Although she may try to establish her difference, uniqueness and Jamaican cultural identity, Jamaican migrants are often thrown into the category of Black, immigrant, minority, inferior, other, or “you people” (Hegde 43). This suggests that there is still a screen that continues to separate all communities of color and all “foreigners” from dominant White cultures. So for some Jamaican migrants, there is a disadvantage to being considered, for example, African American, but others try and secure benefits of the American dream by being included and accepted in the Black American community.

One way to obtain this acceptance is through “passing.” Many Jamaican migrants, because of their African heritage, are able to “pass” as Black Americans/Canadians/English. According to Dreama Moon (1999), “Passing as an inter/cultural practice, allows for shifting among identities and competences and takes into account the power relations that usually undergird inter/cultural interactions” (219). In the United States, there are times when Jamaican migrants find themselves in a position requiring them to be as “American” as possible when it is advantageous or even necessary to do so. It is not unusual for migrants to use passing as a method of survival as they negotiate their “otherness” in the new, dominant society (Moon 219). However, passing is not a panacea to the difficulties Jamaican migrants face and engaging in passing does not necessarily result in acceptance by those in the dominant culture.

As Moon’s thorough assessment of interclass passing showed, the dominant group may still reject the person trying to pass, invariably reminding them of their “out-

group status” (229). For example, many Jamaicans, when trying to assert their “Americanness” and “pass” as Black Americans, are often rejected as their “foreign-born” status is evidence of their inauthentic US identities. In “Positioning the Postcolonial Subject as Illegitimate” (2004) Jennifer Keane-Dawes, a Jamaican migrant and a university professor recalls that when she was trying to understand the behavior of some of her students in the classroom, was told by her African American colleague, “You don’t understand our students” (96). She recalls feeling that her colleague, who did not particularly have malicious intentions, was subtly reminding her, that despite her qualifications and years of experience, her migrant status will remain an obstacle to her being able to understand yet alone be accepted by those in the dominant culture. The African American colleague was situating Jennifer Keane-Dawes as “foreign” and “other” without the ability to understand the experience of African Americans.

#### The Complexities of Identity Negotiation in the Jamaican Diaspora

When Jamaicans migrate they remain subject to varying forms of “otherness” for being immigrants and for not being White. They are “foreigners” and remain under the scrutinizing eyes of the white dominant society. As DuBois argues, there are those, such as Jamaican migrants, who have also learned to look at themselves through the scrutinizing eyes of the dominant, hegemonic culture and have defined themselves accordingly. Their identity, consciousness, worldview and understanding of their purpose in society are connected to the lens through which others view them (Shome 126). Under colonialism, it was unthinkable to “return the gaze” so to speak and even when migrating as post colonial subjects, Jamaicans, because they are “other” and “foreign” remain in a

position where they are unable to “return the gaze.” Colonialism seems to follow the post colonial migrant.

The scrutinizing eyes remind the Jamaican migrant that she is a foreigner and is expected to adhere to certain stereotypes or norms about what it means to be a Jamaican migrant. As Shome accurately surmises, the migrant is marked for difference but is expected to express the right kind of difference (Shome 124). Jamaican migrants are expected to conform to certain stereotypes held about the Jamaican culture, for example, smoking marijuana and being a Rastafarian. And so, it is no surprise that as a Jamaican migrant professor in the United States, one of the first questions that students asked Jennifer Keane-Dawes was, “Do you smoke marijuana?” (Keane-Dawes 87). As she noted, the Jamaican migrant is always being placed in a position to prove legitimacy. This is not just something limited to students, but legitimacy is required of scholars, peers and even some prominent leaders in the society (Keane-Dawes 94). This pressure to prove themselves worthy to the ever scrutinizing eyes of the citizens of the host country often results in Jamaican migrants feeling as if they will never be fully accepted in the new culture. As such, they tend to gravitate to those communities where they are likely to be more accepted—the Jamaican Diaspora.

Identity negotiation is also about a “search for home”, a search for who the Jamaican migrant is and a search for where she belongs and what definition of herself she should hold dear. This is also an essential element of the diasporic identity; home is no longer a geographical space that can be easily found or defined. At the Diaspora gatherings, I have often heard members talk about the fact that they feel “different” sometimes when they are in Jamaica, as if they are no longer completely accepted there

and they do not feel accepted as a true national of the new place of residence. They constantly struggle against the tendency to be marginalized or exoticized and considered ‘other’ (M.Hall 16). Many find themselves in a position where they are teaching others about themselves, about who they are and their ties to the homeland and to the host country and why this situates them in a “*diasporic space*.” They remain stuck in between worlds. In a similar fashion, the Jamaican cultural identity becomes situated in between worlds as well, no longer bound to the national borders of Jamaica or the physical land of the host country. Instead, the Jamaican identity has begun to move between countries finding residence somewhere between Jamaica and the new place of residence, the new identity is in diasporic space (M.Hall 22). This movement of identity results in the creation of multiple identities. When Jamaicans migrate, they not only discover what it means to be Jamaican, they discover what it means to be Black, Asian, Caribbean and West Indian (Foner 1998).

The experience of Jamaican migrants is not homogenous and it is not the intention of this chapter to suggest this. Following from Fanon’s thesis in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) describing the tendency for blacks to aspire to become white, not all migrants want to maintain or negotiate their Jamaican identity in a particular fashion. As I discussed earlier, some are willing to repress their Jamaican identity as much as possible to integrate and assimilate into the new culture. There are also some who remain uncomfortable with categorization and do not subscribe to any form of labeling whether Jamaican, Jamaican migrant or combination. It cannot be assumed that every Jamaican migrant undergoes this identity negotiation process or wants to. Despite the fact that

Jamaican migrants experience and negotiate identity differently, many remain connected to some understanding of their Jamaican identity and their love for the country.

Additional factors influence the identity negotiation of Jamaican migrants. For example, there are significant gendered differences in migrant identity development as suggested by Hegde's (2002) research with Asian Indian Immigrant women. A more thorough discussion of the differences women experience after migration will be explored in the final section of this study. There are also differences based on the generation of the migrant (something that is also explored in more detail in the final section). The reality is that many second and third generation migrants do not share a common sense of "back home" (Woodall 122). For example, younger persons in the Jamaican Diaspora do not necessarily cling to a similar nostalgic vision of home or a similar notion of "Jamaicanness" as other members of the Diaspora do. Therefore, they do not necessarily embody post colonialism or "double consciousness" in the same way as the first generation Jamaican migrant. However, just like the older generation before them, the younger members of the Jamaican Diaspora also share the diasporic identity and understanding of what it means to be a Jamaican living outside of the country. So they also manifest some version of this new identity. In the last section of this study which outlines recommendations for the Jamaican Diaspora, a full investigation of the need to engage the younger generation within the movement is outlined. There is a need for more in-depth research to gain better understanding of the unique case of second generation Jamaican migrants who still consider themselves members of the Jamaican Diaspora and embody a diasporic identity despite the fact that they were born in the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom.

Other factors including religion and sexual orientation also significantly influence the negotiation of a Jamaican diasporic identity. For example, because of the prevailing heteronormativity in Jamaica and the severe negative stigma and marginalization they experienced in Jamaica, some lesbian, gay, transgendered and bisexual Jamaicans may not desire to maintain a strong Jamaican cultural identity and on migration, may be less resistant to assuming the new national identity of the host country. Such migrants would not be keen on joining the Diaspora movement. There is still the possibility of discrimination and prejudice that such persons could become subjected to in a large gathering of persons from Jamaica who have maintained their stereotypical attitudes and beliefs from Jamaica.

For the Jamaican migrant, the process of identity negotiation is an ongoing process. As she learns about her new environment and the new geo-political space she finds herself in, she also discovers elements of her identity rooted in a colonial past. She discovers that within her, many identities exist. She must therefore engage in the continuing cycle of navigating being a post colonial subject, a Jamaican and a member of the new society every day she wakes up. It is indeed important to recognize differences and the heterogeneity of identity creation of Jamaican migrants. Still, there are also salient similarities that should not be overlooked. Despite the fact that Jamaican migrants will develop their sense of being both Jamaican and American/Canadian/English differently, the majority tend to formulate an identity more in keeping with the one they had in Jamaica. Ting-Toomey (2005) notes, "In an unfamiliar environment, it is inevitable that most individuals would fall back on their familiar ethnocentric nets or habits and put on their stereotypic lens to help them adapt more efficiently to an

unfamiliar cultural environment” (220). This is a process many migrants endure in their new, unfamiliar environment as they negotiate their identity, picking and choosing those characteristics they will adopt, those they will keep and those they will ignore. While this is a process that happens at the individual level, the process of identity negotiation is also evident in the Diaspora movement where individuals get together to negotiate and discuss the collective identity of the movement.

#### Forming a Collective Identity in the Jamaican Diaspora

The importance of the collective identity in modern transnational movements is something that has already been explored in the literature on New Social Movements. Melucci for example, has repeatedly argued that contemporary society has resulted in a homelessness of person identity, such that people want to reclaim some sense of who they are, and become attracted to collective actions that help them to develop and define that identity. At the 2006 Diaspora biennial conference, one member of the movement tried to describe the collective bond that members share, particularly when a member of the movement achieves something positive. She stated, “A Jamaican achievement gives us all an incredible lift, an enormous feeling of pride and an unshakeable sense of belonging. What could this magic be, if not something that resides in the very fiber of our beings and flows with stimulant-like properties through our blood” (Franklyn 326). Here we hear members of the movement also acknowledging that indeed there is something significant and special about the connection that each member has to Jamaica as well as the connection that each member has to each other. The special quality it is believed is resident in their DNA and genetic makeup.



The importance of the communal identity is not unusual in persons coming from more collectivist, group-oriented cultures (Ting-Toomey 212). Hence, as Ting-Toomey also argues, for those from more collectivist oriented cultures such as Jamaican migrants, there is a significant emotional attachment to the identity that belongs to the larger culture—*cultural identity salience* (214). They want to become part of a group where they will feel accepted, valued, affirmed and understood (Ting-Toomey 229; Tanno 40). This is why many have made the decision to become actively involved with the Jamaican Diaspora. They see their involvement in such a movement as evidence of their desire and commitment to promote and support issues that are pertinent to the Jamaican community both at home and abroad; in this sense, their involvement often grants them social capital and acceptance among other Jamaican migrants. Again, it is important to stress that members of the Diaspora experience a strong bond with each other based on their shared belief of having a unique and distinct identity and a connected future because of this common identity. This shared understanding of the world translates into the key ideology that helps to propel the movement.

But in these communities, questions of authenticity and legitimacy also come into play. Jamaican migrants may find themselves questioning what it means to be truly Jamaican and what characteristics can qualify one as Jamaican and who determines these. For example, in “Learning to See What I was Never Supposed to See,” Jacqueline Martinez (2002) discusses the tendency in the Mexican American community for some persons to believe that “real Mexicans speak Spanish and live in barrios” (68). In a similar manner, some Jamaican migrants focus on how frequently other Jamaican migrants speak and understand Patois to determine if they truly qualify as Jamaicans. It is

not unusual for migrant communities to use language as a marker and qualifier for cultural identity. But these so called markers also highlight the ways in which Jamaican migrants in the Diaspora often possess an idealized image of what it means to be Jamaican. So there is some tension and controversy as to what factors make one true a Jamaican? Is it the accent? Is it the ability to cook Jamaican food or recall significant historical events? Possibly none of these, or maybe all. The problem of legitimacy is always with the Jamaican migrant who also has to prove to her Jamaican counterparts that she is Jamaican as well as to natives of the new place of residence that she is equally qualified to be a part of the new culture. These issues of legitimacy remain some of the less spoken about tensions that exist in the Jamaican Diaspora movement where some persons seek to establish themselves as “true” Jamaicans differentiating themselves perhaps from those who they consider not authentic enough.

While the discussions here specify some of the more pronounced identities Jamaican migrants negotiate, it is important to remember that many Jamaicans also develop “West Indian” and “Caribbean” identities after migrating. All of these contribute to their complex identity negotiating process. That is, Jamaican migrants, in trying to find some connection to a solid identity tend to join culturally and socially with migrants from other parts of the English speaking Caribbean (West Indians) or the wider Caribbean. Many Jamaican migrants will admit that they never thought of themselves as so connected to other persons in the Caribbean until after they migrated. They often form lasting friendships with other migrants from the Caribbean and build on these new friendships and relationships in their identity negotiation. They feel connected to other migrants from the region, and while they are sympathetic to their missions and recognize

the need to work collaboratively on some issues, they believe strongly that the future of Jamaica is their responsibility and no one else will secure it but them.

### The “I AM JAMAICA” Campaign

A wonderful example of how this identity is embodied, articulated and promulgated by the Jamaican Diaspora is the “I AM JAMAICA” campaign that was launched by the movement in 2008 at the third Jamaican Diaspora biennial conference. This is the movement’s most sustained effort to define the purpose and mission of the Jamaican Diaspora as something inextricably linked to the unique identity of those within the movement. It is also the most pronounced effort made to define the persons who become part of this Diaspora movement and is intended to reach a wide cross section of Jamaicans, both within Jamaica and in the diaspora. More importantly, this campaign is truly a recruiting tool in the sense that it is intended to attract those who have not gotten involved in the movement either because they see it as an elitist movement, or because they do not see what they can contribute to it. This is an issue that will be explored in the recommendations and conclusion chapters. As scholar Jackie Smith (2008) states, “Strong movements are those that can reach people in the *spaces of their everyday lives*, namely in the more informal and non-movement spaces where people socialize, recreate, worship, and nurture their families and communities” (116). This campaign is seeking to do just that, to meet potential sympathizers where they are. The other unique thing about this campaign is that it is certainly not just an effort to attract new members from within the diaspora, but it also seeks to evoke a similar sense of commonality and identity among those living in Jamaica.

This campaign was launched informally at the 2008 biennial Diaspora conference held June 16-17, 2008 in Kingston, Jamaica. At this conference, leaders of the Diaspora movement began distributing t-shirts with the slogan on the front saying “I am Jamaica” and on the back, “The Jamaican Diaspora—Unleash the Potential.” Members in attendance at the conference were asked to wear these t-shirts and to carry them back to the host country and wear them as frequently as possible. This campaign was also the movement’s first marketing campaign effort to advertise the movement in a more prominent and notable way. Many would see the t-shirt, or see this “I AM JAMAICA” statement in press releases and enquire about it. To date, this has also been one of the most crucial frames that the movement has employed trying to generate a common sense of identity, and purpose of the movement. The idea is that if somehow Jamaicans in the diaspora feel that they have equal claim to the envisioned Jamaican identity, then they are also more likely to want to get involved with the Diaspora and feel more confident in effecting change. Significantly, this frame is also the place where we see identity meet the call to action of the movement.

The purpose behind the “I AM JAMAICA” campaign is an identity imbued statement—no matter where they are, where they live or when they left, they embody in every respect a legitimate claim to the Jamaican nationality, culture and identity. Hence, as a recruiting tool, this campaign is a call for Jamaican migrants in the host countries to regain their sense of “Jamaicanness,” regardless of where they live now or how long they lived or did not live in Jamaica, they should still become active in the affairs of Jamaica and join the Diaspora movement. Simultaneously, it is also a statement to others, especially those in Jamaica and particularly Jamaican government and policymakers that

the Jamaicans in the diaspora remain Jamaican citizens and as such are deserving of the same amount of attention, respect and value awarded to those living in the country. This is interesting in light of the history of the relationship between Jamaican migrants and those living in Jamaica. It is almost as if members of the movement are reclaiming their Jamaican identity, something which they felt was taken from them. If we recall the discussion on articles in *The Gleaner* and the adverse sentiments expressed about Jamaican migrants in the 1970s and 1980s, then this campaign can be described as a definite counterframe to that one, with migrants appealing to local Jamaicans to recognize their equally legitimate claim Jamaican identity.

The campaign appeals to those persons, letting them know that they have just as much claim to the Jamaican identity as anyone else whether living in or outside the country. The synecdoche “I AM JAMAICA” is an example of the strategic incorporation of language that is used to inspire members. This is evidence of a mobilization tactic used in movements—the use of simple linguistic synecdoche and catchy slogans which can be readily and easily understood by a variety of persons. The synecdoche “I am Jamaica” is a very persuasive tool suggesting where just a small element of Jamaica is used to refer to the entire entity. This language creates a unique relationship between the two clusters in this slogan, “I” and “Jamaica” and proposes a new argument that the individual remains connected to Jamaica and is, in fact, a total representation of the country. Among Jamaicans, this framing campaign has had great success in terms of resonance and relatability and has certainly helped to attract migrants who see this campaign as a reminder of their importance and their ability to become agents for change regardless of how others judge their authenticity as Jamaicans. Furthermore, the synecdoche evokes a

specific type of imagery that visually connects the individual with Jamaica, suggesting that the two are inseparable...I am Jamaica; Jamaica is me. The idea is that all persons who have Jamaican heritage have the right to join in the efforts to influence the affairs of Jamaica. This frame is inclusive in the sense that it encourages Jamaican migrants that despite the critiques of the movement being elitist and exclusionary, the movement is open to all persons and that there is no criteria for joining. All those with a connection to Jamaica are being encouraged and invited to join and to take their stance as legitimate Jamaicans. Evidence of this can be found in the way in the description of this campaign by movement leaders and is also contained in the message promoted in the campaign's song.

In the official launch of this "I AM JAMAICA" campaign a song with the same title ("I am Jamaica") was released in 2010. The music video has been made publicly available on the popular social media sharing website YouTube and showcases a multitude of Jamaican artists who are recognizable both locally and internationally. Artists singing on the track and shown in the music video include Shaggy, Freddy McGregor, Hopeton Lindo and Marcia Griffiths. Having many artists on this track with various backgrounds and success as artists, but yet a common connection to Jamaica is significant in the sense that those watching the video get a sense of unity and camaraderie among the entertainers, the same sense of unity and camaraderie that the Jamaican Diaspora seeks and displays. Regardless of their personal stories and pasts, they come together on this "I am JAMAICA" track, turning it into a lively and catchy song with deep rooted sentiments. This song has not surprisingly been chosen by the Jamaican Diaspora movement as its official theme song. The chorus of this catchy roots rock

reggae song is as follows (The original lyrics to the left and the English translation to the right):

Jamaican Diaspora “I am JAMAICA” Theme Song

<p style="text-align: center;">It nuh matta weh wi come from, I am Jamaica A our country and we island, I am Jamaica And it nuh matta weh we live seh, I am Jamaica Cuz we have so much love to give yea, I am Jamaica”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">It does not matter where we come from, I am Jamaica It is our country and our island, I am Jamaica And it does not matter where we live, I am Jamaica Because we have so much love to give, I am Jamaica</p>
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As stated earlier, these lyrics are directly reflective of the message of the Jamaican Diaspora movement. The use of terms such as “our country,” “our island,” “much love” are all indicative of the unifying message that the Diaspora movement proclaims, trying to encourage a sense of oneness among all Jamaicans (both Jamaican migrants and Jamaicans living in Jamaica). The message is that regardless of where they were born, it remains “our” Jamaica that they all can claim, love and give back to. The song has been featured on a local television station in Florida (2010) and at the time of this research had already had over 20,000 views on the popular video sharing social site, YouTube since being posted on the website in July 2010.

## SECTION IV: THE FUTURE OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA (2011 AND BEYOND)

### Overview of the Section

This final section of the study outlines steps that the Jamaican Diaspora can engage in to ensure that it has far reaching positive effects in the future. It is included also as a benefit to all Diasporas, that while not sharing the exact trajectory as the case of Jamaica, have a lot in common with how the Jamaican Diaspora can improve itself and become sustainable. The section begins by outlining specific recommendations for the Jamaican Diaspora, based on the researcher's own experience with the movement. This is followed by an outline of specific internal tensions that will need to be addressed by the movement. The section ends with a summary and conclusion of the study that includes a thorough discussion of the study's implications and suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 9: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA

### Introduction to the Chapter

The preceding chapters provided a portrait of the Jamaican Diaspora, exploring how it came into existence. This next section shifts from the more historical, explorative narrative and incorporates a futuristic focus by presenting recommendations for the movement as it moves forward. As stated in the introduction, this dissertation embodies the notion of public intellectual work by moving beyond a mere reflective discussion of what is happening and instead becoming engagement research that is purposefully and positively involved in the phenomenon explored.

One of the things about being a participant in the Jamaican Diaspora, and writing and researching about it, is that I believe I have an obligation to conduct research that will be beneficial to the participants in the movement. It has always been important for me, to figure out new strategies that we can use to propel this important movement forward. This dissertation is intended to be beneficial to those who are involved with the Jamaican Diaspora and those who are interested or concerned about its well being. Hence, the next few paragraphs present proposal recommendations for ways in which the Jamaican Diaspora, and by extension, all Diaspora movements and communities, can become more proactive in their efforts to ensure a prosperous future. The proposals are based on my involvement with the movement and other research carried out, including an examination of what other Diaspora movements are doing.

First, an argument is made for the elements that need to be in place to sustain the movement. As is the case with most other transnational movements, youth and women are becoming the more frequent faces of participants; they are authentic and legitimate members of the Jamaican Diaspora. The first subsection outlines various ways in which the movement can be more inclusive of younger persons. Following this is a discussion of the need for the Jamaican Diaspora to reach out and appeal specifically to women, considering the feminization of Jamaican migration and the increasing roles women are assuming in the movement. Youth and women will need to be granted greater levels of access and voice in the movement. Different voices and different viewpoints need to be present to take the movement to the next level of success. Next, the discussion moves to proposing other means through which the movement can ensure sustainability. An important modification will be the incorporation of information technology; specifically the internet and social media. Currently, the internet is an underutilized mobilization mechanism within the Jamaican Diaspora and yet it is essential to the future of this movement.

The fourth recommendation is an appeal for the Jamaican Diaspora to become more involved in advocating for human rights in Jamaica. This is an important issue for the Jamaican Diaspora (and is for many global Diasporas), since they have become strategically positioned to negotiate with the Jamaican government on behalf of Jamaicans still living in the country, who may not have the same socio-political influence. By tapping into the global Diasporic discourse as other migrant communities fight for improved human rights conditions in their homeland, the Jamaican Diaspora movement can gain allies and garner support from other Diasporas. Finally, I consider

some other potential difficulties that the Jamaican Diaspora faces in its quest to be a successful transnational movement and how overcoming these obstacles is essential to the future sustenance of the movement. While the outlined recommendations require immediate consideration and attention, the obstacles discussed also will need to be addressed for the movement to remain viable. These include the ongoing debate as to how much involvement the movement wants to have from the Jamaican government; internal political divisions in the movement; the issue of having too much bureaucracy in the movement; and how to acquire the requisite funding to achieve the movement goals.

#### Proposal 1: Involving the Younger Generation in the Movement

This subsection considers what I argue is an overlooked population in the Jamaican Diaspora—youth. As a participant in the movement, this has been one of my platform positions, constantly articulating the need for the Jamaican Diaspora to do more outreach to the younger Jamaican migrants. In discussing the youth, I adopt the definition put forth by the United Nation at the mark of the International Youth Year in 1985, which defines youth as those between the ages of 15 to 24 (United Nations 2012). This age group is reflective of students of Jamaican heritage in high school and college. The need to incorporate youth in this movement is examined, since it will be unable to sustain itself or continue without ensuring that the next generation of members and leadership remain engaged with the Diaspora. Some efforts are being made to incorporate youth in the movement, but this discussion outlines a much more urgent need for the Jamaican Diaspora to move with greater levels of alacrity in this endeavor. Personally, I initially became involved with the movement because I saw the need for someone with my age and unique experience to have a voice in the Jamaican migrant population, to articulate

what needs I had and how I wanted to contribute to Jamaica, from the US. I recall that when I first came to the United States to study at 17 years old in 2002, I felt truly abandoned, not just because my family was no longer with me, but also because I felt that I had no resources, no remnant of Jamaica to reach out to or hold on to. I realized that there were many other students like myself who needed a community of individuals with a similar identity; we needed to feel connected to Jamaica even though away. What we needed was a sense of support from other Jamaican migrants who could provide us with some of the resources and tools we needed to ease our period of transition. Persons such as me, truly discovered our Jamaican identities after leaving—we never left Jamaica in our minds, we just felt that Jamaica left us. Also, I believed then, and continue to believe now, that the most important thing the Diaspora can do is to ensure that it works to help counter the brain drain Jamaica currently experiences, by ensuring that youth with Jamaican heritage, studying in the host countries, see Jamaica as a viable place of settlement.

After attending conferences and gatherings with the movement, it is encouraging to note that there are more emerging discussions about how to get younger Jamaican migrants involved in the movement. This is because current members also recognize that the majority of persons who are at the forefront of the Jamaican Diaspora tend to be first generation Jamaican migrants who are middle-aged professionals. Still, while I acknowledge the attempts to talk about involving younger people, the efforts to do so are without a sustaining framework or plan. Although there are no clear numbers or statistics detailing how many second or third generation Jamaican migrants are involved in the movement, there seems to be less enthusiasm and support for the movement from the

younger generation. Nevertheless, I maintain that efforts to involve youth in this movement will be essential to the future survival not just of Jamaica but also the Jamaican Diaspora. One of the most important characteristics of any successful movement is the ability of the underlying message and framing ideology to travel across generations.

### *Why Involve Youth in the Jamaican Diaspora?*

Unfortunately in many movements in many social movements, youth remain a marginalized and underutilized resource. The even more surprising part is that the recognition of the disempowerment of youth is only a recent phenomenon (Delgado and Staples 2008). The involvement of youth in any organization or movement is crucial to its success. As Delgado and Staples argue, “There is no nation on earth that can afford to neglect its youth and still hope to play a viable role in a global economy and meet the social and educational needs of its citizens” (3). The need to include youth is equally important and essential to any country desiring meaningful contributions from its Diaspora. Involving youth will help to change the traditional power relations, attain positive socio-political change and develop more effective leaders within the Jamaican Diaspora. Traditionally the youth have been assigned a position of passive consumers as opposed to active participants and actual shapers of the interventions. For example, on the advisory board to the government, there were future leader representatives from the UK, Canada and the USA, but for the first few years, they were not entitled to voting rights. To this day, I do not quite understand the rationale behind this decision. Now is the time to capitalize on the contributions of the youth and encourage them to become involved.

The future of the Jamaican Diaspora movement rests in the ability of the current youth to provide effective and responsible leadership. The manner in which the current leadership seems to be becoming complacent and losing steam suggests that it is important to find responsible replacements soon. At the Global Diaspora Forum I attended in Washington DC in July 2012, representatives of the Jamaican Diaspora stated that they were very interested in getting fresh ideas, new perspectives and thoughts on new directions from the younger migrants, because as one of the attendees put it, “Some of the old folks have a hard time letting go.” With the advent of globalization, more Jamaicans of younger ages are migrating to countries in the Global North, predominantly the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, and there is a greater need for social support systems in these host countries to help them adjust. Issues of cultural adjustment and assimilation are pertinent to many youths of Jamaican heritage. Providing some avenue for support and encouragement for the youth will help normalize their feelings and help them work through them. Furthermore, if the Diaspora can reach out to them at the integral time when they come to the host country, then they will be more likely to want to remain involved in the affairs of Jamaica and see a future that includes Jamaica in some format.

This call for more active and meaningful youth involvement in the Diaspora movement is echoed by current leaders of the movement such as the Jamaican Canadian Diaspora representative, Philip Mascoll. In his address to the 2006 biennial Diaspora conference, he noted that it is crucial to involve the younger population, despite their differing and somewhat unorthodox views on how to accomplish goals and tasks (Franklyn 142). Jamaican public figure, Barbara Gloudon, also advocated for greater

involvement and participation of youth. She stated, “If we [Jamaicans] do not turn on the young to the cause that we are serving, we are not going to get very far” (Franklyn 245). At the 2008 Jamaican Diaspora Youth Forum that I helped to organize, many young Jamaican youth raised concerns about the need not only to involve youth in the movement, but also to support current youth in the diaspora by taking a proactive approach to support young Jamaicans who migrate and begin attending schools in the diaspora. Currently, while there are some efforts to involve youth in the movement<sup>19</sup> and present a platform for them to speak, more needs to be done. As Mascoll argued, “We will clash with them because we have the arrogance of age and they have the arrogance of youth, but it is a good arrogance and it makes us great” (Franklyn 142). As he explained, the youth in the diaspora become the next cultural ambassadors who help to define the Jamaican culture and identity to persons in the host countries. When the youth embrace the cultural identity of being a part of the Jamaican Diaspora, they want to become more involved in shaping the future of Jamaica.

Increasingly, sympathizers of the movement are making greater appeals to ensure that youth are at the discussion tables. In fact, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, the last the role of youth and future leaders dominated discussions at the biennial conference in 2011. The next few paragraphs are dedicated to a discussion of the manner in which youth, or what the movement refers to as “Future Leaders,” assumed great levels of importance at this conference.

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<sup>19</sup> Within the Jamaican Diaspora discourse, youth are referred to as “Future Leaders.” Currently, there is a Jamaican Diaspora Future Leaders forum and initiative that is always recognized at Jamaican Diaspora Conferences (including the conferences in Jamaica, as well as those held in the host countries). There is also one Future Leaders representative from the three geographical regions on the Jamaica Diaspora Advisory Board.

### *Involving Youth at the Jamaican Diaspora Biennial Conferences*

One thing that was strikingly clear at the 2011 conference was that there was a sense that the older members of the Jamaican Diaspora movement were making an effort to reach out to the youth. Notably, at the youth caucus and forum there were nearly as many “non-youth” members present as well as there were youth. It seemed as if they were just as excited and interested in being part of the youth caucus, they wanted to hear the concerns expressed, and help bridge the gap between the older members of the movement and its younger members. In particular, Don Cunningham, one the movement leaders representing the United Kingdom stated, “I am happy to see the young people here.” Consider what was mentioned earlier, that many adults in such movements are distrusting of youth and are reluctant to work alongside them. Yet, the sentiment at this conference was that members were beginning to realize that they could no longer ignore or overlook youth involvement. While the intentions seemed genuine, there is still the concern that at the end of the day, it may be mostly lip service. The youth are energized, organized and ready, the only problem now is integrating them in the movement.

Prior to the biennial conference held in 2011, the last major event that involved the youth was the Future Leaders Diaspora Conference held in Jamaica in 2009. One of the things that came out of that meeting was the Future Leaders diaspora website that is discussed in more detail in the section looking at the websites. While attending the 2011 biennial conference in Ocho Rios Jamaica, I noticed that I was the sole participant, representing the future leaders from the United States. This was not particularly a surprise to me, since the case was similar at the previous biennial conference in 2008 when there were only four of us representing the United States Diaspora future leaders. Recall from



the earlier discussion on Jamaican migration to the United States that it is the most fragmented of all the arms of the movement and also have a difficult time really assembling members.

At the conference in 2011, there was one representative from the United Kingdom and approximately seven future leaders representatives from Canada. We concluded that it was difficult for many high school or college aged students to afford the plane tickets or the conference fees that were being charged. As many members present noted, more needed to be done to ensure that a greater numbers of youth had access to the needed resources to be able to attend these crucial Diaspora gatherings. Many of us present stressed the importance of utilizing information technology. Through video conferencing and live streaming, more persons, including the younger migrants, would have access to these gatherings and participate although not being there physically. Youth in the Diaspora are also more concerned with seeing immediate results from their involvement in the movement. So for example, during the 2008 biennial conference, the youth who attended created their own agenda to go into the communities, work with dilapidated schools and public buildings, painting them, helping to clean up the grounds, handing out treats to the students etc. The reality is, they want to see immediate results; instant gratification. They are not as eager to become involved in a movement where the goals and action plans are not clearly defined with specific plans on achieving them. I found youth also much more interested in the issue of employment, another area currently missing from the Diaspora agenda. They want to know that there are opportunities available to them in Jamaica to invest their talent, skill and expertise in Jamaica.

## Conclusion

The preceding discussion presented a case for the need to make the younger generation an integral part of the Jamaican Diaspora and its future. Although the lack of active involvement of the youth is a potential shortcoming of the Jamaican Diaspora movement, there is reason to believe that before long, youth will come to the forefront of this movement. Evidence can be found in the significant number of youth in attendance at the third conference gathering in Jamaica in 2008 and the number of interested youth in attendance at the 2011 conference. These attendees have established very vibrant and active social networks, we constantly make contact with each other and are always promoting involvement in things that concern Jamaica. Furthermore, youth involvement in the movement, has sent a message to movement leaders that the circumstances and issues that youth face must be considered when making crucial decisions.

## Proposal 2: Gendering the Jamaican Diaspora

As a transnational movement, the Jamaican Diaspora will need to consider the importance of incorporating different actors and participants at various times and places. Movement leaders must recognize that there are different types of participants in the movement, despite the common identity and purpose that it promotes. Being more inclusive of the different actors is crucial to the survival of a global movement (Smith 116). After participating and observing this movement over the years, I remain concerned with the manner in which the goals often reflect a male dominated ideology that does little to acknowledge more female oriented concerns or the many women that keep this movement viable. As such, this subsection brings a gendered analysis to the movement

and articulates why, like the internet and youth, overlooking the important role of women and their issues may hinder the movement's progression.

*The Feminization of the Jamaican Diaspora*

In recent years, more women are first generation migrants; this is reflected in the number of women active in the Diaspora, as well as the number who attend the biennial conferences in Jamaica. In the case of Jamaica, historically speaking, men tended to be the first to migrate in an effort to achieve their goals, leaving behind their families who then followed in their footsteps and joined at a later time (Migration Information Source 2010). However, in the last 30 to 40 years, this trend has reversed, with women being the ones most likely to migrate to achieve their goals, with their male spouses joining them afterward. This is partly due to the greater demand for female professional workers, particularly as domestic servants, nurses and factory workers (Migration Information Source, 2010).

Table 5. Percentages of Jamaican-Born Male and Female Migrants in the United States,

1970s to 2000s

1970s		1980s		1990s		2000 to 2006	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
48.2	51.8	48.4	51.6	47.1	52.9	45.4	54.6
Source: Glennie and Chappell "Migration Information Source" 2010							

From Table 5, we see that more women than men have been migrating to the United States the past three decades. Although the data for the United Kingdom and Canada remains somewhat scant, I think it safe to assume that this is the case for those

countries as well. If more women than men are migrating from Jamaica, then it is also likely that there are actually more women than men joining the Jamaican Diaspora. Again, more research and data collection needs to be done to verify the exact numbers. This does not mean that women in the movement are ignored or that they are not in leadership positions. What it means, however, is that there seems to be some level of incongruence between the demographic of the Jamaican Diaspora movement and its stated interests.

#### *Why Gender the Jamaican Diaspora?*

The current era of globalization has brought with it new perspectives and outlooks on the lives of women around the globe. Globalization has exposed feminist discourse to different feminisms and the different realities women experience within and outside their countries based on demographic factors. Particularly, more attention has been paid to the role and experiences that women, and particularly women of the Global South, face as international migrants. This new focus on fluid, complex hybrid identities developed in studies of Diaspora share commonalities with recent feminist scholarship that also seeks to deconstruct and reconstruct linear understandings of the experiences of female migrants around the globe. Scholars like Chandra Mohanty argue that there is a need to resist tendencies to universalize the experiences of women of the Global South. But she also finds some similarities in the experiences of women whose struggle against patriarchy and colonialism allow women of the Global South to be united through an imagined community (Huang et al. 392).

Additionally, not all scholars are comfortable with the focus on the concept of “homeland” that are included in the current definitions of Diaspora. The idea of

Jamaican migrants being connected to a central “homeland” is clear in the earlier discussions of the definition of the term as well as the discussions on identity formation. Evans and Bowlby (2000) problematize this idea of “homeland” that is inherent within conceptualizations of “Diaspora” arguing that focusing on absolute notions of beginning and starting constitutes a patriarchal model that homogenizes people and overlooks issues related to gender, class and generation. Earlier, the issue of class was briefly discussed to remind the reader that many Diasporas, including the Jamaican Diaspora are led and populated by middle class migrants who tend to be more educated, have professional careers and have the resources needed to partake in such a movement. This reality, however, does not mean that the movement excludes other migrants who do not share these privileges. At the conferences I have attended, there is always mention of the Jamaican Diaspora seeking ways to become more inclusive and to encourage suspicious migrants who themselves may be undocumented, that they too still have a role to play in the future of Jamaica. While such persons often share the same cultural connection and redefined nationalistic identity, they are often unable to participate fully in the movement. More must be done to make sure that such persons still feel that they have a voice in this movement.

Avtar Brah (1996) posits, we must be mindful of looking at who is being empowered and who is being disempowered in the discourse on Diaspora. Floya Anthias (1998) also argues that traditional definitions of Diaspora have tended to suggest that the homeland is a parent; in fact, a father figure who scatters his seed around (569). She therefore problematizes this idea of a mythical fatherland as patriarchal concept. Nevertheless, this is not to say that all understandings of homeland

embody the idea of a patriarchal “fatherland” figure. The sentiment therefore is that there is a kind of “old-boys” club where men gather to discuss their future together in the homeland. There are examples of Diasporas, such as those connected to countries in Africa, that reference the homeland as a female figure—motherland. Hence, despite the fact that some of the literature refers to diaspora as a fatherland figure, it would not be accurate to suggest that the members of the Diaspora necessarily have this patriarchal understanding. Still, there is some scholarship that continues to promulgate a somewhat masculine vision of the homeland in the definition.

Traditional patriarchal paradigms of Diaspora scholarship may dichotomize the homeland and the new place of settlement where the homeland becomes authentic and the receiving country becomes inauthentic (Hua 195). This is problematic because for many women, the new place of settlement is equally authentic and represents a renewed hope for the future. Also, unlike men in the Diaspora, women are less likely to view the homeland or a return to the homeland in a completely positive light especially when they have established ties, financial investment and acquired educational accomplishments in the host country. Research conducted with Mexican, Dominican, Salvadoran, Jamaican and Haitian female migrants in the United States suggests that women are more likely to engage in strategies that will prolong their stay and help bring their family abroad (Pessar 7). Despite this, women also are not necessarily maintaining a set focus on the new place of residence and therefore do not always feel fully assimilated or acculturated into the new culture. They tend to embody the notion of “(trans)migrant” where they continue to maintain emotional and economic links with the homeland while living in the host society (Huang et al. 394).

The literature on Diasporas has not always privileged the tensions of class and gender in Diaspora movements, instead, often putting the emphasis on what Diaspora can do to help development<sup>20</sup>. By focusing on displacement instead of placement and the experiences of traveling as opposed to dwelling, these accounts have normalized travel and displacement in ways that preference the male experience (Huang et al. 392). This is not to say that there is not literature describing the experience of female migration or the experience of women in the process. There are certainly examples of accounts on the experiences of female migrants in sociology, in women's studies and other related disciplines; too many to name. On the contrary, because diaspora studies as an independent academic field is relatively new, little has been done in the way of bringing an analysis of gender relations to the center, although we are aware that women leave gendered societies and enter gendered societies when they migrate (Anthias 1998). As Huang, Teo and Yeoh remind us, "Diasporic spaces and experiences are always gendered" (392). In diaspora communities, women deal with the intersection of gendered relations within the larger host society as well as within their diasporic group. Still, women have a difficult time making their issues central. As Jackie Smith (2008) notes, "Women have generally faced an uphill struggle to keep gender issues on the agenda of the global network" (102). This is the case with the Jamaican Diaspora.

Yet, women are the ones in the Jamaican Diaspora who (re)define the diasporic identity, maintain and sustain the connection with the homeland and strengthen and legitimize the claims of the diaspora community. After migration, the statuses of women tend to change, as they have access to higher wages which improves their

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<sup>20</sup> See for example Anthias 1998; Barber 2000; Beoku-Betts 2008; Evans and Bowlby 2000

position in the household. Wages become a bargaining tool in terms of more autonomy and increased control over decision making, a broadening of their social horizons and an enhancement of their sense of independence (Foner 1998). Hence, they tend to assume more leadership roles at home, becoming not just the bread winners, but often the decision makers as well. Women are the caretakers and transmitters of the diasporic culture. As such, it is the women who frequently write letters, send Christmas and birthday cards, make lengthy telephone calls, send remittances, organize visiting trips, arrange marriages and send children home in the summer (Huang et al. 394). Maintaining links with the homeland becomes significant as it relates to their negotiation of identity in the new land. Despite these realities of women's experiences, the current agenda and goals of the Jamaican Diaspora, including those outlined earlier, still have at their center a "developmental" focus that tends to exclude issues that are most important to the Jamaican women.

#### *How the Jamaican Diaspora can benefit from bringing Women to the Center*

The intention in this recommendation is not to reify women's experiences, but to bring recognition to the importance of acknowledging women's accounts and practices of diaspora and the ways in which they differ from men's. At the Diaspora biennial conferences, and even the national conferences and informal gatherings in the host countries, the agendas almost always look the same and despite the variety in goals of the movement. Nearly every agenda has the following topics: health, education, crime and justice, economic growth and investment, the role of the church and a panel on youth and future leadership engagement. Additionally, recall from an earlier chapter the verbalized and documented goals that the movement tends to promote include: more



political influence in the home and host countries, voting rights in Jamaica, reevaluation of adverse deportation laws, fundraising for projects in Jamaica and protecting “brand Jamaica” among others. While women certainly participate in these discussions, the agendas reflect a certain “business as usual” mindset of the male participants.

In my participation with the Jamaican Diaspora, it seems that the desires of the women are more collective and less individualistic; constantly striving for the improvement of not only self, but also of children, family and community. Jamaican women in the diaspora are more concerned with issues of survival. They are more likely concerned with issues related to welfare and social justice. At the conferences, women frequently bring up human rights abuses including those that come at the hands of the police, and what can and should be done about this. And yet, these kinds of issues have yet to appear on the agenda at any of the biennial diaspora conferences. When such issues are briefly addressed by the men in the diaspora at the conference, it usually takes place on the panel on crime and violence and the discussions invariably involve methods to grant police more power and authority to “clamp down” on the criminal elements in Jamaica. Another issue in which women tend to be more interested is education and how best to contribute positively to education efforts in Jamaica using resources available in the diaspora. I recall an experience at the Diaspora Youth Forum in 2008 that I helped organize and how willing the women present were when it came to initiating programs to provide social and mentoring support to students from Jamaica in the host countries. The focus was more on how to help those students in the host country.

Additionally, the issues addressed on the conference agendas reflect the male desire to “fix” the country in preparation for their return; hence the focus on infrastructure development such as new railway systems and so on. However, women are less likely to view the homeland or a return to the homeland in a completely positive light, especially when they have established ties, invested finances and acquired education in the host country. In other words, although they identify as belonging to the Jamaican Diaspora and feeling connected to Jamaica, they are much less likely to want to return there to live. At the conferences and events I have attended, it is the men who tend to have the more nostalgic memories of an idealistic perfect Jamaica; women have those same attitudes, but are also more likely to remember the patriarchal attitudes, customs, violence and unequal power relations that victimized them in the home country. In fact, in their interviews with Jamaicans, Paul Thompson and Elaine Bauer, noticed that the men were the ones most likely to emphasize their use of Jamaican patois at these events and during the interviews, whereas the women were most likely to speak in English. The men, it appeared, were more determined to prove their “authentic Jamaicanness.”

Women usually have more to lose when they return to the homeland and therefore more frequently tend to be engaged in strategies to prolong their stay in the host country as they make attempts to reunite their families. For men, diaspora tends to be about loss and something left behind; they tend to embody this “homing desire.” On the other hand, for women, it is the host country that is more desirable since it represents a source of possibilities and new perspectives. As such, women are more focused on the present and future familial relationships. Since women are more

concerned about cultural discontinuity, they are more likely to be focused on ways in which the Jamaican identity will continue through their marriage to Jamaican men in the host country and on ways to raise children there who will subscribe to a Jamaican cultural identity. If women consider returning home, it is usually for their children's sake or for retirement. For example, women in the diaspora are more likely the ones who desire to send their children back to Jamaica to be educated and to be reared in a "good environment" where they will learn to love and appreciate the Jamaican culture. While the women often see Jamaica as a good place for their children, they are much less likely to view Jamaica as a good place for adult women due to the social pressures and unfavorable job market.

In an interview with Jamaican migrants, Nancy Foner asked one woman, if she wanted to return home. In her response she stated, "To Jamaica...oh please. That was slavery. Bring the man his dinner and his slippers, do the laundry. You're kidding." And this is the case for many women who feel that they have greater cultural freedom and less scrutinizing in the host country. Those women brave enough to return to Jamaica and get jobs in the business industry and private sector often discussed the very gendered environments to which they returned. Beverley Mullings (2010) interviewed some of these women who had returned to Jamaica to live and found that, "All the women interviewed stated that they needed to be particularly mindful of how they shared information about industry best practices, or made suggestions to improve the work process because their contributions were often perceived as being either too threatening or altogether insignificant" (36). So as stated earlier, wherever they are, however far they have traveled and however deep rooted their sense of Jamaicanness

and diasporic identity, Jamaican women still face the gendered dimensions of the geographical boundaries they navigate.

### *Conclusion*

Following the work of Avtar Brah, among others, I therefore propose a gendering of the Jamaican Diaspora; a gendering that brings women and issues related to women equally to the fore and center of the movement, challenging the business as usual agendas that are more reflective of a male imagination of what Diaspora is and what the movement should do. The Jamaican Diaspora must work at reclaiming the alternative space and maybe retract from attempting to be partners with the Jamaican government if there is any hope for resisting the tendency to promote a hegemonic discourse that is exclusive. It is important to pay attention to the gendered relations in the Diaspora as well as differences of class, location and other differences that are embedded in any diaspora formation.

The Jamaican Diaspora, which began as a collective, identity based movement, centered around notions of culture and Jamaicanness, has to be careful not to merely become another strategy to promote certain agendas. If the Jamaican Diaspora does not become more inclusive and step away from this dangerous path, women may break away to create other spaces where they can resist the oppressive processes. There already are examples of sub groups of Jamaican women in the diaspora who have resorted to their own means to achieve their goals such as the, “Jamaican Women of Washington.” Such female led groups promote more spaces through which women can come to the fore and get their voices heard while promoting the kind of engagement that they deem necessary.

### Proposal 3: Incorporating the Internet and Social Media in the Movement

It will be difficult, in this era of rapid advances in information technology, for the Jamaican Diaspora to remain a viable or successful movement without serious incorporation of the internet and social media. The new transnational movement status of the Jamaican Diaspora necessitates new modes of interaction and participation that can only be fulfilled with the incorporation of social media. Previous sections of this dissertation were dedicated to an examination of the more traditional communication avenues of such movements including conference speeches, print media and networking among friends which are equally important to the understanding of this movement. The internet, however, and social media in particular, are important because of the ease and convenience with which they facilitate communication. The internet, and not word of mouth, as it seems to be currently, should be the primary mobilization mechanism that the Jamaican Diaspora utilizes if it intends to ensure that it has a large participant base and support. This incorporation will not only play a role in showcasing the movement and its goals and mission, but it can also be used to attract new members, disseminate information rapidly, and facilitate interaction among participants.

The Jamaican Diaspora has suffered from the dispersed geographical location of its members, despite their best attempts to overcome this. It has been difficult for members to feel completely united and to develop common goals when they feel so separated. One such example is the US arm of the Jamaican Diaspora that has been lacking behind Canada and the United Kingdom in organizing national annual diaspora conferences and meetings. The problem is that the persons in South Florida feel somewhat disconnected from the issues facing those in the Midwest and the Northeast

USA and vice versa. Getting everyone together under the same roof is nearly impossible; the internet remains the best avenue for gathering and coming together. This problem has also discouraged members getting to know exactly what members in other regions are doing, what their issues are and the best solutions. It is not simply the logistical difficulties that get in the way, but also, members are not necessarily communicating with other members as well and often as they should. This is the kind of problem that one would expect to find in any movement of this magnitude, but remains an area that needs to be addressed with greater alacrity. Geographical obstacles are exacerbated by the fact that in some ways it is difficult to convince many Jamaican migrants that joining the Diaspora movement is of vital importance. Members have complained that potential participants often feel that Jamaica is undeserving of their skills and talents and others simply feel they do not have enough time to dedicate. For various reasons it remains difficult to get such persons to join the movement.

#### *The Importance of Information Technology in the Diaspora*

Beginning in the 1990s, information and communication technologies (ICTs) became integral to social movements as an alternative means of ensuring democracy and political engagement (Donk et al. xii). ICTs became essential to movements in terms of the ability to organize as well as disseminate, gather, share, store and retrieve information quickly. Today, ICTs are integral components of many movements, especially those that exist on a global scale. Technology is a key facilitator of social movements that brings new opportunities and is becoming a supplemental medium through which movements can voice grievances (Donk et al. 17).

Not only can the internet serve the purpose of documenting the achievements of the Diaspora, but it can also serve as a prime tool for the dissemination of information. Since the Jamaican Diaspora operates as a transnational movement, mobilizing across geographical borders and in fact, growing in numbers, it will necessarily rely more and more on the internet as the fastest, cheapest and most convenient way to disseminate information. According to Donk et al. (1992), the internet is used by movements that have a large geographical reach as well as those that are big, powerful and have some formal organization (18). This point is validated by a comment made by one of the Jamaican Diaspora movement members in attendance at one of the biennial conferences. In discussing the importance of information technology to the sustenance of the movement, he stated, "This inter-connectivity is very important for us. We must use the technology because once we are inter-connected and we can share this information, create mentor/mentee relationships, the opportunities are boundless!" (Franklyn 182). Currently, the movement utilizes the internet and social media to a fair degree. Most common are the email lists movement leaders use to send intermittent emails and reminders to movement members and participants. However, one major shortcoming is the fact that most of the meetings and gatherings where important information is discussed are conducted as in-person gatherings. The reason this is problematic is because it is difficult for many members to attend these meetings in person. One thing that could be considered is a move towards more video conferences and discussion rooms where all members can participate from wherever they are, provided they have access to the technology.

By placing a greater emphasis on incorporating social media and the internet, the Jamaican Diaspora can have a greater appeal to younger generations of potential participants who may be more comfortable with participating and voicing their opinions virtually and not in person. The internet is a “virtual network” that has been a prime source for attracting younger persons to the Jamaican Diaspora and getting them involved. As such, the ICTs are valuable, not only in organizing the movement, they are also essential to mobilizing new members and recruiting new empathizers and supporters.

#### *Improving the Jamaican Diaspora Websites*

Websites become are crucial for all movements because they are by nature information-oriented, mobilization-oriented and community-oriented (Rosenkrands 73). One of the areas in need of improvement is the websites that are utilized by the Jamaican Diaspora. In conducting research for this study, I came across several websites associated with the Jamaican Diaspora. They were found after entering “Jamaican Diaspora” in the search engine and then browsing through the first results. The first website is [www.jamaicandiaspora.gov.jm](http://www.jamaicandiaspora.gov.jm). This website tends to have more affiliation and connection with the Jamaican government, it also has more information about the biennial conferences including updates about the upcoming conferences and conclusions from the previous ones. The second is [www.Jamaicadiasporaconnect.com](http://www.Jamaicadiasporaconnect.com) which tends to be the research and informational website. This website features newspaper articles published about the Jamaican Diaspora and other research conducted. This website primarily features the Jamaican Diaspora in the UK and emerged out of the Jamaican Diaspora Knowledge Network which has received funding



from the EC-UN collaborative initiative. That said, it is unlikely that this website will survive for a long time since the funding for the site is not expected to last permanently. The third website is [www.movejamaica.com](http://www.movejamaica.com) which is maintained by the youth members (future leaders) of the Jamaican Diaspora and features different events that are promoted by the youth including updates on what they are doing in the diaspora. The future leaders are also active on the social network site, Facebook, and have a fan page, which they also use to connect to Jamaicans in the diaspora and beyond.

The problem is that it is difficult to find the central and unified voice of the movement with so many different websites that are affiliated with the Jamaican Diaspora. This also means that potential participants will not be able to ascertain the purpose and mission of the Jamaican Diaspora easily on the internet. While it is understandable for different websites to have varying focuses, there still needs to be one central website where all members, sympathizers and prospective members can go to and get the latest information and updates about what the movement is doing. These websites have achieved some amount of success in publishing important conference dates and information, but it is still disorganized. There is much improvement that needs to take place with regards to the development and utility of the websites. At the biennial conferences, members continually expressed what they see as the shortcomings of these websites. For example, some members argue that more needs to be done in terms of development to publish crucial links to important business endeavors and investment opportunities—the very things the movement advocates for.

#### Proposal 4: The Jamaican Diaspora Advocating for Human Rights

This final proposal includes a discussion of a specific action plan that seems to have been overlooked on the agenda of the Jamaican Diaspora—the issue of human rights. I argue that the Jamaican Diaspora, like other diaspora movements globally, is in a strategic position with great levels of influence and can make positive strides in addressing human rights concerns in the home country. Currently, it would appear that movement members are concerned about “disturbing the status quo” and are reluctant to address many of the controversial policies and laws that have a negative impact on Jamaican citizens. However, there is much the diaspora, as a unique transnational movement placed in an advantageous conjuncture, can do to put both internal and external pressure on the Jamaican government to work seriously on alleviating the often overlooked negative human rights conditions there.

#### *Why is Human Rights an Important Issue for the Jamaican Diaspora?*

Developing countries like Jamaica have a way to go in ensuring that all Jamaicans, including those living in Jamaica, are living a comfortable life and have access to basic survival necessities. According to Richard Falk (2009), “Most persons on the planet remain preoccupied with traditional challenges associated with sustaining life itself, finding the food, housing, clothing, education, and health care needed to eke out a tolerable existence under conditions of impoverishment” (2). This is often the case in Jamaica, yet, most migrants who left the country trying to move away from these very conditions and often seem to forget the many who still live in the country in this manner. The conferences and gatherings hosted by the Jamaican Diaspora largely have overlooked matters concerning human rights. As Beverley Mullings (2009) also

observed in her interactions at the Jamaican Diaspora conferences, few delegates express concern with regards to human rights abuses being committed, especially those at the hands of the police and military authorities who are awarded greater and greater power. She stated, “The lack of attention to the question of human rights in the context of the discussion on crime and policing is just one instance of the silences that the conferences produced” (10). However, I believe that this issue needs to come from under the cover of silence since the Jamaican Diaspora has the potential and indeed a moral mandate to become engaged with human rights campaigns and efforts. They are positioned in a unique way to become quite influential in this arena.

Watching the media we hear about human rights atrocities being committed all over the world where countries are undergoing civil war – insurgencies, abusive treatment to women, female genital cutting; the list goes on. These violations of human rights often are articulated in a way that defines them as crimes against humanity; therefore, immediate attention and intervention no longer become preferable but necessary. This sense of urgency when it comes to human rights is not always allocated to countries such as Jamaica—it is not a perfect model for human rights but it is not “as bad” as some of the other countries. While the world overlooks the human rights conditions in Jamaica, Jamaicans do not. Jamaicans are struggling to solve problems of high rates of domestic violence, high rates of unemployment, politically motivated gang rivalry, environmental degradation, and unequal educational standards. But Jamaicans also face adverse human rights conditions as a result of natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes, which have devastating effects. In the end, survival

mechanisms and cries for obtaining basic human rights have remained of utmost concern to the majority of Jamaicans even before it gained independence in 1962.

To fully understand how and why this is the case would mean a thorough exploration of European colonization of Jamaica (1492-1962) as well as an exploration into structural adjustment programs and “development” policies enforced in the country, post independence, through its engagement with the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO. That discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, these issues are quintessential to understanding the need to explore ways in which the Jamaican Diaspora can mobilize efforts to complement already existing movements and organizing efforts as well as push for the need to assure that basic human rights are allocated to all citizens of the island. The call for human rights improvements also will have significant implications for the lives of Jamaicans living outside the country as well. Conditions in the home country continue to affect the lives of the diaspora regardless of their geographical location.

#### *The Jamaican Diaspora Advocating for Human Rights*

Diasporas, like other transnational movements, have been able to bypass (though not overlook) the state and communicate directly with residents of the home countries. So studies like the one conducted by Jennifer Brinkerhoff (2005) looking at the mobilization of the Egyptian diaspora assesses the way in which the Egyptian Copt community (a community of migrant native Egyptian Christians) has been able to use improvements in communication and information technology to advocate for improvements of human rights for Copts living in Egypt. This discussion is complementary to the earlier section addressing the need for the Jamaican Diaspora to

utilize the internet in a much more involved format. The internet, Brinkerhoff argues, is instrumental in the rapid information exchange that takes place within the diaspora community and is crucial to the coordination of collective action. Because of this, the Copts community successfully mobilized the efforts and resources of its members to put pressure on the Egyptian government to improve governance in the country and improve the quality of life for Copts living in Egypt.

Although this organization is trying to improve conditions for a selective group in the country, it is worth noting that they have been successful in their attempts. The founder and CEO of the U.S. Copts Association, Michael Meunier, has been able to organize not only those in the Copts community but also anyone outside Egypt who sympathizes with the cause. Part of the call of this diaspora group is that the government in Egypt should and must not discriminate against Christians applying for governmental jobs, against those looking to enroll in public schools, and so on. The website launched by Meunier constantly is disseminating news and information about the treatment and experience of Christians in Egypt. Website content is available in both English and Arabic. In a similar vein, the Jamaican Diaspora will benefit significantly from revisiting the way it incorporates the internet and other forms of social and mass media to interact more efficiently in the global public sphere. As Jackie Smith (2008) notes, “Movements must appeal to the mass media to help convey their messages to publics with which they lack channels for direct interpersonal communication” (137).

The Copts website developed by Meunier is “geared to educate the Copts in Egypt about their rights....things they would never hear about in Egypt” (Brinkerhoff 199). Similarly, there are many Jamaicans who remain oblivious to their basic human

rights, but it will be difficult to use internet sites to get this information to them since many Jamaicans are without access to computers, yet alone the internet. So Jamaicans in the diaspora must realize the need to enter into collaborative relationships with those in Jamaica who have access to the information and encourage them to relay the information to those without the privilege of access. All Jamaicans should be encouraged to become a part of this Jamaican diaspora community, if not directly, then indirectly. This open invitation (as we saw in the case of the Copts diaspora) is crucial to ensuring that the diaspora community speaks with, and not to or for, Jamaicans living in the country. Furthermore, by ensuring that Jamaicans living in the country are able to participate in this process of improving human rights conditions, the movement will be strengthened and gain legitimacy.

Another example of a diaspora community utilizing is Drishtipat, which is a focused Diaspora movement interested in human rights in Bangladesh. On the homepage of the movement's website it states, "Drishtipat is a non-profit, non-partisan volunteer organization committed to safeguarding human rights in Bangladesh through action-oriented projects that provide direct assistance to those individuals whose voices remain unheard today" ([www.drishtipat.org](http://www.drishtipat.org)). Also on this homepage is the slogan, "Hear Speak Out and Help." There also are links leading to the way this diaspora is being mobilized in various states and countries including Chicago, Virginia, Boston, Canada, Australia, and London as well as a charter of rights that Drishtipat has issued to the new Bangladeshi government with the expectation that the Bangladeshi government will take heed if they want continued support from their Diasporas.

In this charter, the Diaspora calls for economic and human security for all citizens of Bangladesh. The charter calls for rights for religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities as well as rights for the indigenous people in the country. The website details actions in which the community is engaging, on issues ranging from business development to climate change. It also has a very active and lively blog (in both Bangla and English) targeted specifically to the younger generation. This appeal to the younger generation on the internet is important, since younger members of the diaspora may feel more comfortable voicing critical opinions and contributions on cyberspace. The website also discusses ways in which the diaspora community is engaging in talks with global human rights advocates such as Amnesty International.

It is important to articulate the local violations of human rights in global languages to make them more attractive to those who otherwise would not care about what is happening in Jamaica. The Diaspora must bring the local issues into the global agendas to mobilize support. Although often portrayed as a tropical paradise rich in sand, sea, sun, and reggae, and with a laid back cultural philosophy, Jamaica is plagued with poverty; this is another direct consequence of imperialism and structural adjustment programs, among other things. Jamaica also has enormous debts to international loan organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank as well as to developed countries including the United States, Canada, and the EU, among others. One of the things Jamaicans in the diaspora can do is to use the language of human rights to insist that some intervention take place to alleviate the effects of poverty on the island and to call for some of these debt holders to, if not abolish, at least significantly reduce the amount of debt owed.

On first sight, this task seems tremendous but there already is a global movement advocating for debt abolition, such as the Poor People's World Summit to End Poverty and the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC). The Jamaican Diaspora would benefit from making connections with such groups, seeing where it can draw alliances and gain support. Fortunately, this kind of work already is beginning to happen in the country on a smaller scale. For example, the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians All-Sexuals and Gays (JFLAG) often appeals to global organizations with similar platforms in countries such as the United States and Canada in order to form alliances and to voice their concerns on an international scale. With this kind of support, they will have more legitimacy and chances of actualizing the human rights they seek to attain.

What this means for the Jamaican Diaspora is that it needs to make a conscious effort to try to join in the efforts of these already established and recognized groups—there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The Jamaican Diaspora will be able to gain support, credibility, and legitimacy when it can draw a connection between the local issues in Jamaica, such as poverty, with larger global ones. For example, the movement must become fluent in the language and causes of organizations like the International Court of Justice, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966). Many organizations have begun to link their cause to a human rights cause that has been articulated explicitly in the documents of these organizations. We see this with many environmental organizations; for example, those bringing awareness to climate change argue that the right to a healthy



and safe environment is a universal human right (Smith 2008). As Jackie Smith comments, by articulating local needs as global human rights needs, governments not only are being asked to conform to local constitutions but also to international standards as well (171).

The Jamaican Diaspora then has the potential to reinforce the importance of some universal conceptualization of human rights in Jamaica. It can be expected that as diaspora movements become more visible on the global stage, they will articulate their grievances using universal definitions and understandings of human rights. As they advocate for policies and lobby for legislation that will benefit their homelands, they appeal to a multilateral understanding of laws, norms, and rights.

In the end, the diaspora is not the panacea for overcoming human rights abuses in the Jamaica. However, what it does, or should at least attempt to do, is to get more people both at the local and global levels informed and concerned about the human rights abuses and poor human rights conditions in the home country. The goal is that eventually, after much effort, persistence, and commitment, the diaspora will have mobilized enough resources and enough support to be the movers and shakers of the twenty-first century by getting engaged in the most worthy of causes—improved human rights for all people. As Marian Wright, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund states, “You just need to be a flea against injustice. Enough committed fleas biting strategically can make even the biggest dog uncomfortable and transform even the biggest nation” (qtd. in Mariam 2009). What this means for members of the Jamaican Diaspora is that they must remain committed to the cause.

## Other Issues for the Jamaican Diaspora

### *Setting Boundaries with the Jamaican Government*

As already has been determined, the Jamaican Diaspora is the result of a unique conjuncture of transnational and national contexts—it operates in a space that reflects both influences. The members as well as the goals and internal mechanisms of the movement embody and reflect the tensions that result from this “third space.” Yet, despite this, there hardly is comfort or ease trying to determine which front is the most advantageous from which the movement should operate. Members of the movement seem to be comfortable advocating for change on the transnational level in their host countries around the world as well as simultaneously in their home country. During some of the informal townhall meetings and gatherings, some members criticize the Jamaican government for wanting to steer the course of the movement. I recall that during the lead up to the 2011 conference, some of the other future leaders considered boycotting the conference because they felt the government was being too involved in planning the agenda. These negotiations remain ongoing because, while home country governments are the most captive audiences and partners that Diasporas have, these governments also tend to be the most dangerous in terms of causing movements to lose independence and autonomy.

In trying to find the best type of relationship to have with governments, many members of diaspora communities and movements are concerned about the intentions the governments have. As has been noted earlier, some governments tend to be interested primarily in the investment opportunities and other financial benefits that Diasporas have to offer. Although collectives like the Jamaican Diaspora often have

their own agendas, it is clear that governments show bias when it comes to supporting the various initiatives that originate in the diaspora. Too often the diaspora community is seen as a viable panacea to solve the economic and fiscal deficiencies of the country. As Beverley Mullings (2009) states, “Recasting diaspora members as agents of development raises a number of concerns about the inclusions, exclusions and inequalities that these formations potentially have on the way that development is imagined and the types of policy interventions that are endorsed” (5). This study has already elaborated on such shortcomings in the section addressing women in the Jamaican Diaspora and the unfortunate position in which the Jamaican Diaspora may find itself if it continues to perpetuate and reproduce the business as usual hegemonic discourse. This is certainly an area that the Diaspora must seek to change.

Some members of the Jamaican Diaspora are of the opinion that the Jamaican government is more concerned with migrants who have specific skill sets and investment potential. They may not be as concerned with those from lower classes with limited education, and with little to offer financially. This class division is something that is explored in the conclusion. But yet, it is something that remains a defining feature of Diasporas and the manner in which governments reach out to them. As has been noted, the Jamaican Diaspora may have to engage in specific efforts that challenge the way they are being categorized primarily as agents of development. Mohamoud (2006) also suggests that by getting involved with the government and political affairs in the homeland, the diaspora community could be contributing to governmental corruption and division already existing in the political arena (7). Likewise, there are voices, even within the Jamaican Diaspora, that believe that getting involved with the

government was a bad move. Such persons have little faith in the Jamaican political arena and believe that the Diaspora should stay clear of partisan politics. But this is certainly not a view shared by all. Most persons truly believe that bringing the government on board, rather than trying to operate without it, is a much more effective move to help improve human rights in Jamaica. While the movement members remain skeptical about the intentions of the government, some members of the government also are beginning to reevaluate the government's relationship with the Jamaican Diaspora.

The remarks from the representative of the Opposition Leader at the 2011 Biennial Conference were indicative of some of the mixed feelings government officials have towards the Diaspora movement. During his remarks at the conference, Opposition representative A. J. Nicholson mentioned that he felt that the government needed to make all important decisions about the conference in consultation with the members of the movement. As Nicholson argued, the initial goal was to work alongside the movement in partnership, moving towards a consistent and coordinated collaboration with the Jamaican Diaspora. Nicholson also suggested that the government has a responsibility to hear the voices of those in the Jamaican Diaspora and not ignore them, treating all voices with respect when planning events in which the Diaspora participates.

This message is in keeping with the most recent concerns about the future of this movement and whether it will remain an organic, people-based movement or if it will be co-opted as another resource and supportive tool for the political party in power in Jamaica. Other politicians present at the 2011 conference reiterated this sentiment, all suggesting that the movement be careful not to allow politics to destroy the cohesion the

members have established. The goal is for such differences to be set aside and for the movement to put Jamaica first.

### *Overcoming Internal Political Divisions*

In keeping with the question of how much governmental participation the movement should allow, there also are questions of who gets to participate and whose voice gets heard? Within the movement recently, there also has been is strife and rivalry along political lines. While living in Jamaica, many had become loyal to one of the two main political parties, and many still retained these loyalties even after migrating. The movement always has labeled itself as a non-partisan movement. However, it is not unusual to hear movement members expressing concern that political conflict is beginning to emerge, especially in the movement's leadership. Those in government are hopeful that the advisory board members will be able to efficiently and effectively work at ensuring that consensus and some kind of constructive momentum are maintained. As mentioned previously, the Diaspora is not a homogenous group and differences with how best to achieve goals inevitably will arise. Since one of the purposes of the diaspora community as a public sphere is to facilitate meaningful dialogue among all interested parties, that will help the community come to some consensus as to the best mode of action. As Mariam (2009) argues, polarization, partisan politics, and personal attack only serve to weaken the Diaspora movement. In reference to the Ethiopian Diaspora movement, she states, "We aim to change the terms of Diaspora engagement from debate to dialogue, from competition to cooperation, from criticism to appreciation, from secrecy to openness and from distrust to collaboration." Similarly, the Jamaican Diaspora will have to work to overcome internal divisions in order to

work together to become positive change agents in Jamaica. But as Miriam also reminds us, it is ineffective to wait for the development of a “perfect Diaspora” before taking action. These internal divisions and differences of opinions are unlikely to disappear anytime soon. However, members of the movement still have to find a way to make sure the movement remains as democratic as possible to ensure all voices are heard.

#### *Addressing “Class Tensions” and Inequalities within the Movement*

While the Jamaican Diaspora movement has been making strides with organization and participation, one of the critiques is that there may be too much hierarchy preventing true democratic participation resulting in inefficiency. Class cannot be overlooked, since throughout the study, the issue of class has come up in the way in which the movement functions and its goals and mission. At some of the conferences I attended, this was often discussed by movement participants who viewed the movement as “top heavy,” having too many in leadership roles who have no clear job description or protocol of responsibilities.

Some members see the leadership appointments as fundamentally undemocratic and inherently preferential, favoring higher socio-economic migrants. That is, there are some who believe that the leaders of the movement are themselves elitist and as such the entire movement is permeated with upper middle class Jamaican migrants who join the movement to garner social capital and personal benefits. Of note is one of the initial movement leaders, Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams who served as one of the Canadian Diaspora advisory board members. Shortly after her appointment to her role as a movement leader and advisory board member, she returned to Jamaica and ran in a political race as a candidate for the Peoples National Party (PNP) in the local elections.

With occurrences like this, many in the movement are skeptical about the appointment of movement leaders while there are some who see the movement as exclusive. They have put forth a counterframe to the one developed by movement leaders, suggesting that the Jamaican Diaspora simply is another elitist movement that essentially does little or nothing for the Jamaican migrants who are less well off.

Not only is the criticism that little is being done to reach out to Jamaican migrants in lower socio-economic statuses, but some observers believe that the Diaspora is not concerned about low socio-economic status Jamaicans living in Jamaica. That is, they argue that the Diaspora has middle class intentions, middle class goals, and not really reaching out to Jamaicans in the country trying to understand their wants and needs. I noticed at the 2011 biennial conference, that there were certainly many more seats there reserved for local groups in Jamaica in both the private and public sectors, but also from youth and community groups. This was encouraging to see, but still, there needs to be much more done to convince Jamaicans in the country that they need not be distrustful or skeptical of the movement. Otherwise, even to those living in Jamaica, the movement will simply appear very elitist and unreachable for lower classes. Although this is indeed a valid critique of the movement, we also must recall from earlier chapters that the majority of Jamaican migrants who have migrated legally tend to be more educated, employed, and possessing a relatively high amount of wealth and prestige in the neighborhoods in which they live. These are the majority of people who get involved in the Diaspora in the first place. As such, it may be an unfair criticism to make since, generally speaking, a high percentage of Jamaican migrants are from the middle class. Of course, there are many Jamaican migrants who are not living

in such privileged conditions, but they are also the less likely to become involved in the movement, though their love for Jamaican and identification with Jamaica is not any less.

Others feel that the movement is not democratic enough and does not allow all members of the movement a fair and equal say in important decisions. For example, the way Diaspora advisory board leaders are appointed is through voting at the biennial conferences held in Jamaica. One would have to physically be at the conference in order to vote for the Diaspora representative. At one meeting, a member discussed the need for the Diaspora movement to maintain its organic nature and spontaneous approach, guarding itself from becoming too bureaucratic. They argue that the same voices at the head of the table are being privileged at the expense of other rank and file members who either have less time or resources.

Also the large size of the movement across multiple geographical regions, has resulted in the creation of internal class divisions and conflicts that often derail the movement from its intended focus. For this reason, one of the questions circulating among Diaspora members is whether the movement's arms in the geographical regions should continue to attempt to form one voice and one singular message and mission or if they are better off being divided based on region. At the center of this debate is the question as to whether persons living in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom can or should have an identical understanding of the purpose and mission of the Jamaican Diaspora.

Along these lines is the problem of the best way to decide democratically which members of this large Diaspora movement should travel to represent the movement's



interests at the biennial conferences held in Jamaica. There has been a growing criticism from members in the movement that the movement simply is not transparent enough and that not all participants have access to the different facets of the movement. Each time the conference is held, one of the main problems is that those who have the necessary resources, those who are active in the movement, and those who want to attend simply cannot do so. There is not a facility on the island large enough to host all the Jamaican migrants involved in the Diaspora. This has become a problem with delegates often filing complaints with leaders of the movement, the government, and the advisory board and claiming that there is a biased process involved in deciding how members are selected to attend. Currently, persons who are interested in representing their region at the conference in Jamaica submit an application to their advisory board members explaining why they want to attend, what panels they expect to participate in and how they will ensure that they represent others in their region.

In fact, at the 2006 biennial conference, nearly all government leaders who spoke on the stage pointed out that they did not want to be accused nor blamed for the decision making process that determined who was able to attend. They all made it clear that the advisory board in the respective chapters of the Jamaican Diaspora were responsible for deciding who should attend. There also has been some controversy surrounding the appointment of the advisory board members. This is a point already discussed in a previous section. Nevertheless, it is important to revisit this issue since it frequently comes up as an area of discontent. As a reminder, advisory board members of the Diaspora movement are democratically voted to their positions at the biennial Diaspora conferences held in Jamaica. Thus far, this has been the most effective method

the movement has found, simply because it is the only occasion where so many members of the movement gather under one roof.

### *Dealing with the Issue of Financing*

The issue of how the Jamaican Diaspora movement will be funded remains a critical area of concern for most members. This is because many of the movement's goals such as the development of the country's infrastructure and investment in education require large sums of money. Those in the movement have had a difficult time coming to some consensus about how to acquire these funds. At the conferences, there have been suggestions to allow private agencies to sponsor the movement. However, some persons are wary of the kind of involvement and control corporate sponsors will want to have once they have a financial voice in the movement. Movement leaders still are attempting to find willing partners and other organizations that have resources to dedicate to the mission of the Jamaican Diaspora.

Related to the problem of finances is the issue of how the biennial conferences held in Jamaica will be funded. Previously, the Jamaican government and various agencies in the Jamaica private sector sponsored the biennial conferences. However, it is unlikely that these entities will be able to find the necessary resources on an ongoing basis to stage future conferences. Movement members therefore are concerned that without the sustained ability to have these conferences, which are so crucial to the mobilization strategy of the diaspora, the movement spirit will diminish significantly.

At many formal and informal gatherings, the need to start a Jamaican Diaspora bond is on the agenda for discussion. The idea of the bond is for movement members to pool their financial resources and create a bank account from which the conferences and

events crucial to the movement would be funded. This account also would be a source from which the Jamaican government could borrow money at a fixed interest rate and, under certain conditions, fund projects in Jamaica. Those in the diaspora who invest in the bond would be able to receive interest on their investment. This would be the main incentive to encourage those in the movement to consider this alternate way of investing in Jamaica. At the last biennial conference in 2011, advisory board members noted that they still were in the process of deciding whether this diaspora bond would be a good idea, since it remains difficult to get members to commit to the investment.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

### Overview of the Study

This project developed out of the necessity to understand the mechanisms through which groups of migrants utilize global and local socio-political opportunity structures, negotiate new identities, and transform into transnational Diaspora movements. The need to explore migrant collectives has become pertinent due to the increased number of self-identified Diasporas that are attracting sympathizers and gaining international recognition and publicity. Scholars in political science, geography, sociology, and cultural studies also have joined the dialogue on Diasporas and are dedicating special issue journals and conferences to exploring the impact and reach of these collectives. The common understanding is that we have embarked on an era of cultural incorporation and renewed understandings of how change can occur. Migrants frequently are mentioned in discussions on how existing political, social, and cultural status quos are being challenged and brought under investigation. They are demanding acknowledgment and recognition and proposing new ways of social, economic, and political sustainability.

As an example of this recent surge in global interest, the U.S. Department of State hosted its inaugural Global Diaspora Forum in Washington D.C. in 2011, inviting leaders of Diasporas as well as related intellectuals to discuss best practices for how migrants can contribute to their home country. In 2012, this conference took place July 25-26 with the identical purpose of helping Diasporas engage more effectively in their home countries. This forum gained popularity and momentum after the first year and is an exemplary

showcase of just how organized, connected, and involved Diasporas have become. The forum hosts not just politicians and intellectuals, but is open to the very migrants and leaders of these migrant collectives. It encourages dialogue and partnering among the various Diasporas that, while representing different geographical regions, have a common goal—to improve the home country. Additionally, on a political level, the 2010-2011 Arab Spring brought significant attention to the very real and far reaching impact and influence migrants can have within home countries. As a result, intellectuals and journalists began to utilize the term “diaspora” much more in their writings and their analyses of how change comes about. Explorations of these recent incidents often highlight the very real political involvement of Diasporas as either “peace makers” or “peace wreckers.” This renewed focus on Diasporas, the way they come into existence, and their influence and impact have justified the need for this dissertation.

Although the existence of migrant collectives engaging with their homeland is not a new concept, what is new is the manner in which these migrants claim new diasporic identities, demand recognition, and get increasing attention from politicians, academics, and the general public. Using the case of the Jamaican Diaspora movement, this study brought clarity to the following research questions: What factors contributed to formation of the Jamaican Diaspora? What elements sustain this movement? What is the role of identity and discourse in the Jamaican Diaspora?

In addressing these questions, the study was divided into four sections that progressed chronologically. The first section provided an introduction to the research and theoretical framework exploring the rise in Diasporas and their influence on both a global and local scale—something that is becoming more significant today. The argument is that

we can implement elements of already existing theoretical frameworks to gain a more in-depth understanding of Diasporas. For example, social movement theory is appropriate for assessing the mechanisms through which migrants come together in a collective manner, articulate specific goals, and make demands that involve changing the status quo. Under the umbrella of social movement theory, new social movement theory is possibly most applicable to the study of migrant collectives due to the important role it places on identity. One of the things the study uncovers is the way in which migrants come together with the common desire to reclaim who they are and to be recognized as such by others. Theories of rhetoric and the rhetoric of movements are appropriate in exploring the way in which specific language becomes a mobilizing force within the movement, especially the way the term “diaspora” assumes a more action orientated role not just for the migrants, but also for those that engage with them, primarily governments in the home countries. Lastly, the first section presented the chosen methodology and qualitative methodology, and argued why a case study is most suitable when obtaining detailed information that allows us to determine what factors make Diasporas unique. The methods utilized also included participant observation and discourse analysis, which are employed substantially in the chapter examining the local newspaper in Jamaica as well as in the chapter on the Jamaican Diaspora conferences. By engaging with these methods it was possible to focus on the impact and meaning of language utilized in the Jamaican context as well as at the conferences and to determine how much these migrant collectives mobilize around a new understanding of their role in society.

The second section of this dissertation outlined the important contextual factors and socio-political opportunities that facilitated the Jamaican Diaspora. In doing so, it

examined both the global and local forces that make Diasporas transnational-national entities. Beginning at the global level, the discussion outlined the history of Jamaican migration to the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. This history is important as it allows us to understand how the Jamaican Diaspora has its largest roots in these three geographical locations and how the socio-political climate in those countries influenced the attitude of migrants and their decision to form a global collective. For example, the United Kingdom hosted the first mass wave of Jamaican migrants in the early 1960s and 1970s. As a result, Jamaican migrants there possess there is a more deep rooted understanding of separation and longing for home. For this reason, they were the first to call for a collective Jamaican Diaspora. They also, not surprisingly, are the most organized subgroup of Jamaican migrants, followed by the group in Canada, and then by those in the United States. Other global influences include already established Diasporas that have impacted the Jamaican Diaspora: the Indian Diaspora, the Jewish Diaspora, and the Haitian Diaspora.

The discussion revealed that Jamaican migrants look to these older, larger, and more established Diasporas for clues about best practices and how to articulate their goals and demands. This is evident in the way in which these other Diasporas frequently are referenced as models at the biennial conferences. Following this was an analysis at the local level of those factors within Jamaica that had equal influence on the way in which Jamaican migrants formed a global collective. Of significant importance is the way in which the media in Jamaica framed the discussion about migrants and the Diaspora. To this end, one chapter was devoted to using discourse analysis to explore the way in which articles in *The Gleaner* (1962-2004) have set the tone for the discursive field for how

Jamaicans view and relate to their migrants. The analysis revealed that Jamaicans initially held very negative views towards migrants whom they considered traitors. However, as the rest of the world began to take note of migrant communities and reevaluate their impact and potential to assist countries develop, the Jamaican government and media began to do the same. The shift in the socio-political climate coincided with the shift in this global thinking around the year 2000. This is when the Jamaican government began taking proactive steps to reach out to Jamaican migrants, inviting them to take a more active role in the country. This was evident with the government establishing diaspora institutions and constructing different committees with the sole purpose of attending to the needs of migrants.

The third section of this dissertation moved from the contextual factors to a direct analysis of the internal sustaining structures of the Jamaican Diaspora, highlighting those factors that currently maintain the movement. What has been evident in the historical analysis is how Jamaican migrants redefine who they are as migrants and what it means to live outside Jamaica while maintaining a strong sense of “Jamaicanness” and belonging to Jamaica. Jamaican migrants mobilize around this common sense of maintaining their cultural and national identity and use this feeling of connection to get organized and form a common voice. This also can be found in the discussions at the Jamaican Diaspora biennial conferences that are the most visible force of the movement and where over 500 Jamaican migrants from around the globe gather to reinforce their purpose and present their ideas and goals to the Jamaican government. These conferences, held in Jamaica, also serve to promote a particular discourse; a new rhetoric of Diaspora that is inherited by those in Jamaica.



The final section considered the next step for the Jamaican Diaspora and presented specific ways for the movement to become more effective. This section was included to augment the public intellectual element of this study and acknowledged that it is not enough only to study an organization. There needs to be active engagement to present real practices that migrant collectives can adapt so they become more successful in their stated agendas. The recommendations for the Jamaican Diaspora include paying more attention to getting youth involved; developing a more purposeful agenda recognizing the needs of women in the movement and the important role they play; utilizing social media and other technology to facilitate easier communication; and articulating their goals, such as improving human rights, within existing global discourses. Based on participant observation, the section also highlighted specific areas that the Jamaican Diaspora should review and amend to increase efficiency. These include developing a more nuanced definition of the partnership they want to have with the Jamaican government, overcoming internal divisions, and making more purposeful decisions for how to secure funding for the movement.

### Implications of the Research

#### *Redefining Diaspora*

In terms of theoretical implications and contributions, this research calls for a redefinition, or at the very least a reinterpretation of Diasporas. This study demonstrated the possibilities to engage in more concrete, empirical explorations of the mechanisms through which these entities develop and come into existence. In the early theoretical section, a comprehensive operationalization of the term “diaspora” was presented. The discussion showed that migrants often endure a unique and significant experience as they

negotiate their new identities, but then actively and voluntarily decide to participate in a specific Diaspora movement. By bringing the theories of social movements to Diasporas, this study built on the premise put forth by Martin Sökefeld (2006), who suggests that we can gain a more nuanced understanding of Diasporas by using elements of social movement theory to explore these transnational migrant communities.

Movements like the Jamaican Diaspora mimic contemporary understandings of new social movements in the sense that they often have no set opponent or issue they aim to defeat. Jamaican migrants primarily have focused their efforts on mobilizing around a common sense of purpose, identity, and nationality to gain recognition and acknowledgment from the government and the public. Despite the absence of a “target opponent,” they have these stakeholders as their intentional audience and in the first six years of its existence, the movement has been able to keep this audience keenly interested. Although unable to make a definite claim that all Diasporas are social movements, the study engaged with the possibility of bringing the literature on Diasporas and the literature on social movements together. As argued earlier, we have to be open to the changing, transnational nature of these migrant collectives. Rather than reinventing new methods to study these emerging phenomena, we can utilize already existent frameworks to explore and understand them.

Previous scholarship has tended to suggest that Diasporas are not real, but instead are imagined communities (Anderson 1991). Through participant observation and actual interaction with the movement and its participants, this scholarship has shown that Diasporas are real and are real movement phenomena. The idea of an organized migrant collective began as a virtual or imagined community, but it has evolved into a

phenomenon with real effects. As Sökefeld notes, “Imagined communities—nations, ethnic groups or others—are real because they are imagined as real, because they are taken as real and because they therefore have very real effects on social life” (266).

*Diasporas as Transnational-National Identity Based Movements*

The study showed that Diasporas and more specifically the Jamaican Diaspora, can be likened to transnational movements, and can be likened to new social movements due to the significant role of identity in movement formation as well as the fact that many have no clear oppositional target. The majority of the mobilization efforts employed in the Jamaican Diaspora appeal to a common identity and a collective sense of a valued Jamaican culture that is considered something special and unique to be protected and preserved. Evidence of this was found in the discussion of the “I am JAMAICA” campaign and the push for Jamaican migrants to engage with their Jamaican culture and assume a Jamaican identity, regardless of where they live. Furthermore, the discussions in the first section revealed that this movement, like many New Social Movements, is intent on gaining public recognition, especially from those in Jamaica.

The bulk of the participant observation data presented in the third section examined the remarks and speeches made at the Jamaican Diaspora Biennial Conferences to uncover the role of language and the specific discourse employed. The discussion showed that there is constant reference to a significant identity that Jamaican migrants possess. They made frequent references to the fact that Jamaican migrants still embody that “unbreakable Jamaican spirit” and culture that allowed them to carry the Jamaican identity with them wherever they went. Such appeals to a renewed understanding of who can claim to possess the Jamaican identity encouraged others to see the Jamaican migrant

community as part of Jamaica. The conversations declared what it meant to be a migrant and described Jamaicans in the Diaspora as special people who had much potential to offer the country. Such discussions helped to attract both new participants and new sympathizers to the movement and allowed those in Jamaica and government officials to form more favorable relationships with the members of the movement. What the discussions told us, however, is that these identities being claimed and valued by Jamaican migrants are negotiated and redefined constantly. The examination of diasporic identity in this study showed that the diasporic identity for Jamaican migrants is connected to national identity and citizenship. Considering that identities always are in transition and transformation, our own understanding of identity and the process of identity formation therefore should remain open. The identities that these Jamaican migrants possess are a reflection of their desire to maintain their Jamaican culture and heritage while navigating the new environment in the host countries.

While identity was the most pronounced element throughout as the research unfolded it was discovered that the Jamaican Diaspora exhibits qualities of a transnational social movement in that it does not operate within the domain or boundaries of any specified state. The Jamaican Diaspora movement obtains large numbers of its membership from geographical regions in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (primarily) as well as many other countries around the world. The members have come together, redefining what it means to be migrants, assuming new roles of importance, and declaring that they can contribute positively to all aspects of development in Jamaica. This idea of a Diaspora is in keeping with what Jackie Smith (2008) calls a transnational entity where members operate outside of the traditional realm

of government and commercial settings and are influencing the structures that govern the world. According to Smith, “The network concept helps draw attention to the various types of identity-building and organizing work that is part of any social movement” (21). In keeping with this description, this study demonstrated that the Jamaican Diaspora is indeed a distinct type of migrant movement that has a strong and significant (re)created diasporic identity as its foundation.

Going beyond the realm of transnational social movements, however, this scholarship even further demonstrated that the connection between the Jamaican Diaspora dispersed globally and the local population in Jamaica suggests that the Jamaican Diaspora most resembles a *transnational-national* movement. That is, it is a movement that started outside Jamaica, but has generated significant support of persons living in Jamaica, such as Jamaican politicians, intellectuals, and other residents who are beginning to partake in the movement. Furthermore, the government’s redefinition of nationhood and the borders of Jamaica played a role in infusing feelings of nationalism within the migrant community. These feelings of nationalism become pronounced in celebratory events, such as holidays and sports. A good example of this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations that took place in the Jamaican diaspora in 2012. While I was unable to visit England or Canada, I was fortunate to have attended some of the “Jamaica 50” celebrations in South Florida. At one event I attended in August 2013, an ecumenical thanksgiving service, I was truly astonished at the displays of Jamaican pride and culture that permeated the large building. Not only were there numerous Jamaican migrants present, but they were sporting full Jamaican colors, they had flags flying and were singing and shouting with a kind of nostalgic fervor that was astonishing. Arguably, the

celebrations of Jamaica's independence were just as big or even bigger in the diaspora. The migrants seem to join in solidarity with Jamaica for these moments.

These Jamaican migrants living outside of Jamaica fight to claim the Jamaican identity – it is an ongoing tension and negotiation process. Although presenting itself as a migrant led and initiated grassroots entity, it frequently presents itself as a nationalist movement with a nationalist agenda. This ambiguity in how the movement defines itself also was visible in this dissertation, which at different times tried to resolve the conflict and determine what elements are most prominent in the movement – its transnational elements or its nationalist focus? The fact that no conclusion could be reached demonstrates the uniqueness of the phenomenon—it is both! That is, although the members come together on a larger global scale originating from multiple countries outside of Jamaica, the significant mobilization mechanism, the essence of the movement, and how members define their identity as well as the goals of the movement are rooted in the national boundaries of Jamaica. This study exposed these tensions that are embodied within Diaspora movements and the discussion on identity showed the way in which members try to reconcile the different manifestations of identity that abide within them. It is this desire both to claim and to maintain the Jamaican identity that provides the largest impetus for becoming part of the Jamaican Diaspora. As such, it is through this medium of the Jamaican Diaspora that who they are as migrants becomes imbued with who they are as Jamaicans...the two are no longer separate, irreconcilable identities. As a result, a new hybrid diasporic identity develops, a product of both entities. It is almost as if there is a shift in the way that these “outsiders” have begun to embody

an “insider” status when they proclaim their Jamaican national identity as the most prominent characteristic in their migrant status.

Again, this is my reading of the Jamaican Diaspora and the study is a result of a desire to enhance our current understandings of Diasporas through employing elements of movement theory. In discussing movements, the study appropriated the work of traditional social movement scholarship that considers the real existence of collective action. Additionally, the study incorporated alternative understandings of movements presented by scholars such as McGee (1975) and Anderson (1991) who are more concerned with the way in which meaning is created in the consciousness of people, resulting in a more fictional kind of movement or collectivity. The fact that two different camps of movement theory can describe the Diaspora suggests that very thing which was stated at the onset of this study; Diasporas are both categories of people as well as processes through which migrants endure. The purpose of using these models was really to confirm that we can use movement theory to gain more in depth understandings of Diasporas including how they come about, how they are maintained and the impact they are having.

#### *Diasporas as “Publics”*

Another area for which this study had implications is the question of how people come together and form a public? Diasporas are claiming alternative spaces and resemble what can be considered new forms of public spheres where persons come together and engage in meaningful consideration and discussions about different ways of changing the world. The discussions of the local media, the biennial diaspora conferences, and the “I am JAMAICA” campaign pointed to this significant implication of the research by

suggesting that there is a unique third space, a transnational discursive space, where diasporas get imagined, produced, and disseminated. Although the Jamaican Diaspora exists in other ways, this study showed that we indeed can select particular avenues or institutions that have the responsibility for legitimizing the movement. In doing so, these institutions open new public spaces and spheres.

Although the initial focus of this study was movement formation and social movements, it became clear by the end of the study that it also was addressing the subject of how people become a public. Diasporas, and particularly the Jamaican Diaspora, are comprised of thousands of people who do not know each other and may never meet each other, but yet they identify with each other and the group. Michael Warner (2002) in the abbreviated version of his famous essay “Publics and Counterpublics” also considers and explores the question of how strangers come together to form a public. Warner’s explanations about the public was used to inform this discussion about how this study’s detailed investigation of Diaspora formation also informed not merely our understanding of movements, but also more broadly of publics. Additionally, Michael McGee’s (1975) thesis, “In Search of ‘The People’: A Rhetorical Alternative,” was incorporated in the discussion.

According to Warner (2002), a public is a self-organized group of people who envision themselves sharing some common space. The members of the Jamaican Diaspora may not know who the other members are, but they share a common understanding of their Jamaican identity and potential to help the country. As Warner posits, although the members of such publics may not know each other, they did not organize randomly; there were specific mechanisms in place that propelled them to



emerge. The case of the Jamaican Diaspora demonstrates that, like publics, diasporas are self-organized entities, “independent of state institutions, law, formal frameworks of citizenship, or preexisting institutions such as the church” (Warner 414). The detailed chapter on identity concluded that members of the Jamaican Diaspora, similar to the publics Warner describes, share a strong component of a common social imagination.

This was evident at the biennial Diaspora conferences held in Jamaica, where members who have never seen each other before feel quite comfortable voting with each other, discussing key issues, and setting goals for the movement. They trust each other and feel connected because of that common social imagination of who they are as members of the Jamaican Diaspora. This common sense of imagination, the same one Anderson (1991) describes in his book, *Imagined Communities*, is what makes such gatherings of people, such publics, unique. It is quite possible, based on the information gathered in this study, that the Jamaican Diaspora can be likened to a community of strangers—and can possibly continue to maintain itself as such. The resistance to the efforts of the Jamaican Diaspora leaders to acquire an official list of members of the Diaspora, as well as the extensive geographical distance that makes it virtually impossible for all members to ever know each other, may result in the Diaspora always maintaining its status as a community of strangers. But this strangeness is not necessarily problematic or detrimental. According to Warner, “A nation or public or market in which everyone could be known personally would be no nation or public or market at all” (417). In the same way, Diasporas are the kinds of collectives that maintain an appeal and function well, despite the fact that members remain strangers for the most part.

The knowledge that members of the Jamaican Diaspora mostly are unaware of each other, unaware of the number of people in the movement, is what makes it a quite interesting phenomenon. One recommendation discussed earlier was that the movement incorporates more social media and technology in order to enable members to interact more efficiently and in order to attract a larger number of participants. Yet, the fact that the Jamaican Diaspora is operational in spite of the existing strangeness among participants is what likens it to Warner's articulation of what a public is.

According to Warner, "Publics, by contrast, lacking any institutional being, commence with the moment of attention, must continually predicate renewed attention, and cease to exist when attention is no longer predicated" (419). Such publics, Warner argues, must find a way to grab attention and circulate through time in order to survive. The recommendations discussed above are ways to ensure that the Diaspora continues to exude high levels of appeal and interest. If we follow the trajectory of the movement outlined in this study, what is clear is that the Jamaican Diaspora emerged when people started paying attention. That is, the migrants themselves started paying attention to their own identities and ability to become involved in the homeland through a new avenue, the Jamaican government started paying a different kind of attention to the migrants, and the Jamaican public also began to display renewed interest and attention to the migrants. Once these variations of attentions dissipate, the movement can be expected to dissolve. If the movement can consider these recommendations and incorporate them somehow, then we can expect that it will receive some attention, at least for the time being.

## Diasporas Beyond the Twenty-First Century

The goals of this dissertation have been, from the outset, dual intentioned. On the one hand, it seized the opportunity to describe a new, exciting, and emerging global phenomenon, exploring emerging migrant communities that have adopted social movement qualities and characteristics. The realization that Diasporas are beginning to take various shapes and occupy multiple spaces is at the core of this study and justifies the relevance of examining of these collectives. In fact, real world understandings and influences of the term “diaspora” continue to evolve. As time progresses, and migrants become more important, we certainly can expect new terms and understandings of migrant collectives will arise. For example, there is a newspaper article written by Mark Tutton (2012) entitled “Young, Urban and Culturally Savvy, Meet the Afropolitans.” The article describes groups of migrants in the African Diaspora who are claiming yet another aspect of their diasporic identity: the combination of their African descent and their new cosmopolitan lifestyle in the diaspora. Tutton interviews various persons who describe themselves as Afropolitans, concluding that “An Afropolitan is someone who has roots in Africa, raised by the world, but still has an interest in the continent and is making an impact, is feeding back into the continent and trying to better it” (Tutton 2012). The term “Afropolitan” clearly is another attempt to find a way to encapsulate the essence of a migrant who also remains committed and connected to the home country. It is quite similar to the definitions of “diaspora” that suggest that these persons have a unique and deep rooted connection to their homelands and intend to be recognized and to contribute positively, though not necessarily monetarily. Just like those in the diaspora, the Afropolitans also claim a new space out of which they operate and make sense of the

world. In the article, one person who is a self-described Afropolitan stated, “I have African roots but I’ve kind of been raised by the world, and that’s helped form my identity” (Tutton 2012). Again, we see the significance of multiple formations and understandings of identity that migrants embody. These identities invariably influence their world view. As a result, migrants around the globe from various homelands are beginning to embrace the uniqueness and complexities of their identities, identities that have serious implications for the role they see themselves playing in the world and the way that they engage with their homelands and host countries. That said, this study has come at a pivotal time when migrant identity politics and migrant relationships to homelands are beginning to catapult and are seeping into everyday discussions and debates.

### Future Research

Today’s Diaspora movements are quite young, many less than five years old at the time of the writing this dissertation; yet they have become recognizable on a global scale. This study provided comprehensive data from which information about the intricate processes involved in the formation of diaspora communities can be gathered. Studies like this, which have chosen a more qualitative based approach, provide the foundation and invaluable knowledge from which inferences about these transnational movements can be made and further research can be conducted. Still, there is a need for research that focuses primarily on evaluating the actual successes and outcomes of what these movements have set out to accomplish. Such studies should evaluate the shortcomings of Diaspora movements, perhaps determining the actual impact (whether positive or negative) that these movements are having in the home countries as well as in

the host countries. This type of research will be best aided by the inclusion of more in-depth statistical data that will provide conclusive information about the parameters of such movements, outlining their initial goals and aims and how much of these aims they were able to accomplish and in what time period.

Obtaining such statistical data may prove difficult since there is limited data available that provides official recordings of the successes or failures of Diaspora movements. This is one of the limitations of this study, since any statistical information on the Jamaican Diaspora movement is sparse. Yet, this also is one of the factors that make this movement unique – it exists, is fluid in nature, and hard to define. Most diasporas have yet to collect official data about what their accomplishments have been and the tangible impact that they are having on their home country. In the case of the Jamaican Diaspora, I was able to conduct research and compile some idea of such lists through my participation with the movement. However, the movement does not seem to possess any formal information or statistics on its actions and achievements. In order to determine the best policies and practices for engagement it will be beneficial to ascertain exact numbers of how many persons are in the Diaspora movement, where they live, and what needs they have. The Jamaican Diaspora currently is working on obtaining an official list of all the members of the Jamaican Diaspora, where they live, their professions, from where in Jamaica they come, and what they want the Diaspora movement to achieve. However, understandably, there is some difficulty getting members to sign such a list and provide this personal information. Many (especially those who may be undocumented), are scared of giving their information, while others simply prefer to remain anonymous as they participate in the movement.

### *Alternative Interpretations of the Jamaican Diaspora*

Additionally, it is important to note that throughout this study, what I have presented is essentially a thorough investigation of my reading of the Jamaican Diaspora based on my interaction with the members, my own participation in it as well as my general and overall observations. This does not mean that all those in the Jamaican Diaspora share my view or my interpretation or share the perspectives I present. Additionally, not everyone will see it as a viable movement or one worth exploring. However, the argument I make throughout is that the significance of Diasporas warrant more than a passing glance and their global relevance suggests that we can no longer overlook these migrant collectives. My discussion of the Jamaican Diaspora is also presented with a particular audience in mind: the participants of the Jamaican Diaspora, the leaders of the movement as well as the Jamaican government and public intellectuals. The reality is that, in its embryonic stages, the Jamaican Diaspora has primarily sought to leverage its relationship with the Jamaican government. The focus of the movement is on harnessing this relationship in a way that puts them in a more beneficial and influential status. As such, this study reflected that bias and focused on this main aspect and audience of the Diaspora. This study is expected to appeal more to those stakeholders (middle class professionals in the movement, Jamaican intellectuals and politicians), as well as their counterparts in other Diasporas. Again, this does not mean that active participants are not concerned with the general population of the country, because indeed they are. All accounts of remittances and the work of home school associations suggest that what Jamaican migrants have been concerned with in the past is the local population and the individual family members and relatives. What the emergence of the Jamaican

Diaspora has brought about is a focus that goes beyond the local population and has set its sights on the higher authority and decision makers in the country.

The time constraints of this particular study, that has thoroughly explored the initial years of the Jamaican Diaspora, does not allow for more comparative, longitudinal analyses that may highlight other variants and aspects of the phenomenon. That said, future studies may want to investigate alternative readings of Diasporas or different interpretations held by other observers of the Jamaican Diaspora and also by Jamaicans of other classes including the poorer classes as well as the more wealthy classes.

#### *Return Migration and the Diasporic Identity*

Historically, return migration has been a major part of the Jamaican migrant experience. In fact, there are some migrants who have moved between Jamaica and the host country multiple times. For scholars who are interested in pursuing an understanding of the case study used in this dissertation, one possibility might include assessing the trajectory of the Jamaicans in the diaspora who decided to return to Jamaica following their involvement and participation in the Diaspora movement. Their return to Jamaica is important as a signifier for how successful the Diaspora has been at improving conditions in Jamaica that make the country more inviting for returning migrants. As was discussed in the study, one of the key reasons why persons get involved in the Jamaican Diaspora, apart from the opportunity to reclaim an identity that was once lost, is to partake actively in the future of what they believe to be their “road to retirement” in Jamaica. Many in the diaspora continue to state that their ultimate motivator for getting involved with the Diaspora movement is to create the conditions that make it more likely for them to return to Jamaica to live. Furthermore, my involvement in the movement has shown that this is

truly an area of interest for many in the Jamaican Diaspora. It is not just those in the movement; however, who are beginning to pay closer attention to what happens when these migrants return to the home country.

In the case of Jamaica, this study discussed the fact that in the mid-1990s the Jamaican government formed a department solely focused on issues related to what they term “return migrants.” However, since the formation of the Jamaican Diaspora, the government has revisited the efficiency of this department and has assumed new levels of interest and concern with the way in which those who return to Jamaica are treated. As the Prime Minister at that time, Bruce Golding noted in an address at the 2006 Biennial Diaspora Conference, “We glorify the tourists when they arrive and we roll out the red carpet treatment for them but too often we are indifferent and, sometimes, downright disrespectful to Jamaicans when they arrive home” (Franklyn 41). Considering the fact that many in the diaspora movement have a goal of ultimately returning to the island, this issue is of greater importance today.

Some scholars, such as Beverley Mullings (2011), already have started this discussion in her work with returning Jamaican migrants who joined the labor force in Jamaica. Such studies demonstrate that some of the persons who return to Jamaica express unsatisfactory experiences on their return and state that they often experience the racism and labor market exclusion they had dealt with in the host country (Mullings, “Diaspora Strategies” 33). So an exploration of such findings may prove interesting. Some other considerations worth exploring include whether those who returned remain connected to the Jamaican Diaspora, continue to advocate for Diaspora movement goals, and retain the qualities of the identity. This research has shown the importance of identity



for Jamaican migrants who participate in the movement. They both re-create and reclaim their Jamaican heritage in forming their new diasporic identity. An important question for future research is: What happens to this identity once they return to Jamaica, once they become an insider (again), not just consciously (as when in the diaspora), but physically too? How does the hybrid diasporic identity further metamorphose once they return?

*Examining the Discourse of the Jamaican Diaspora in Other Media Outlets*

One accomplishment of this study was looking at the *Jamaican Gleaner* to discover the ways in which Jamaicans historically changed their views on the Jamaican Diaspora and incorporated the discourse of diaspora in their everyday lives. The decision to use this newspaper as a resource was based on the fact that it is one of the few media bodies that have a complete and well dated account of its publications, and therefore could provide an accurate historical account of the way in which the Jamaican Diaspora entered the local media and, by extension, the local discourse in Jamaica. Perhaps a future study could take this a step further and assess more contemporary discourse by incorporating a variety of media outlets, including talk show programs, particularly those programs on radio stations that discuss political affairs. These radio talk show programs are extremely popular in Jamaica and boast solid and consistent engagement with the wider Jamaican public as they provide an avenue through which they can raise concerns and discuss critical issues. Future research could focus on those conversations that describe public feelings and thoughts about the Jamaican Diaspora. It has been my experience that in the weeks and days leading up to the staging of the biennial Diaspora conferences, a number of persons call into radio talk shows inquiring about the purpose of the conferences and the role of the Jamaican Diaspora in Jamaica's social and political

affairs. Such information will supplement the data gathered and presented in this study and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Jamaicans living in the country currently feel about the Jamaican Diaspora.

Another area of research that could be of future importance is a thorough consideration how the internet and social media have impacted this movement. Earlier, an argument was made for why the movement should integrate social media and information technology if it wants to progress positively in the future. However, a future study could focus solely on the impact of such incorporation, looking on the Jamaican Diaspora websites and what is said, how it is said, and any references declaring the movement as an identity based movement, as well as the way in which members of the movement communicate among themselves on these websites. It will be of interest to see how successful the movement is in using social media as a mobilization and recruiting tool to appeal to potential members and sympathizers.

#### Reflections on Participant Observation

Part of the challenge and pleasure of conducting this research, is that I was in essence studying myself. As a Jamaican student, who has lived in the United States for 10 years, I lived through the process of becoming a migrant. As I explored my own renewed identity as a Jamaican and experienced a more pronounced commitment to Jamaica, I discovered that there were others like myself who had a similar journey. This inspired my decision to become a part of the Jamaican Diaspora. When I first became involved, I remember the feelings of excitement, of pride and the boundless possibilities of things to come that would permeate the rooms in which we would meet. I also recall being one of the youngest persons there, but still feeling that I had a voice, that I too had something to

contribute. I looked around and remembered saying that the older ones there would someday need to pass the baton on to younger persons who could continue the quest. I took everything seriously and I took notes and recorded sessions of our meetings and interactions as if my life depended on it. I also remember bringing others into the network and encouraging my peers to become part of this emerging phenomenon. Participating with the Jamaican Diaspora was always more than just research for my dissertation, it meant connecting with other migrants with whom I identified, people who brought me into their circles with open arms and welcomed me to the table of discussion and debate.

I am proud to be one of the first future leader delegates of the Jamaican Diaspora to represent the interests of youth in Southeast USA. I remember one of my first engagements in 2008 was organizing a panel for Caribbean youth in the Diaspora. I can recall the excitement that filled the lecture hall at the University of Miami. I specifically remember the way in which we all collaborated to invite speakers who would be able to encourage more young persons to speak up, articulate needs and make an impact in Jamaica. Four years later, I still continue to represent the interests of youth and was privileged to receive an invitation to attend the Global Diaspora Forum in Washington DC in July 2012, where I was one of a handful of representatives of the Jamaican Diaspora.

The next biennial conference is schedule to take place in Jamaica in 2013, and I plan to present my findings of this research at this conference. I will highlight the recommendations for the movement. Also, after attending the Global Diaspora Forum, I have formed new relationships with youth from other Diasporas, including the Haitian Diaspora, Guyanese Diaspora and Tunisian Diaspora, among others. We are planning to

have an electronic brown bag forum where we will share thoughts and ideas as well as brainstorm more efficient way to encourage other young persons to use their talents and expertise in the movement. Participating in the movement was not just a benefit to me, I also played a role in enhancing the mission and focus of the Diaspora. As a future leaders representative, I constantly expressed concern about the lack of social support for Jamaicans coming to the United States, Canada and England on student visas. The students acquire very defined skill sets and talents and we need to encourage them to give back to Jamaica, whether by going back there physically when they graduating, serving as mentors or brainstorming ideas for the country's development. I have frequently argued that if we neglect these students, and refuse to get them involved in the movement, then they will less likely have a desire to stay involved in Jamaican affairs.

Still, I feel privileged to have been afforded this opportunity to grow personally and academically while giving back to Jamaica. I am excited that my feelings are shared with many young migrants from other homelands. The energy that exudes at Diaspora conferences and events suggests that the desire for change making is far from dissipating, what is lacking, however, are the exact methods to produce the results.

APPENDIX 1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE JAMAICAN DIASPORA

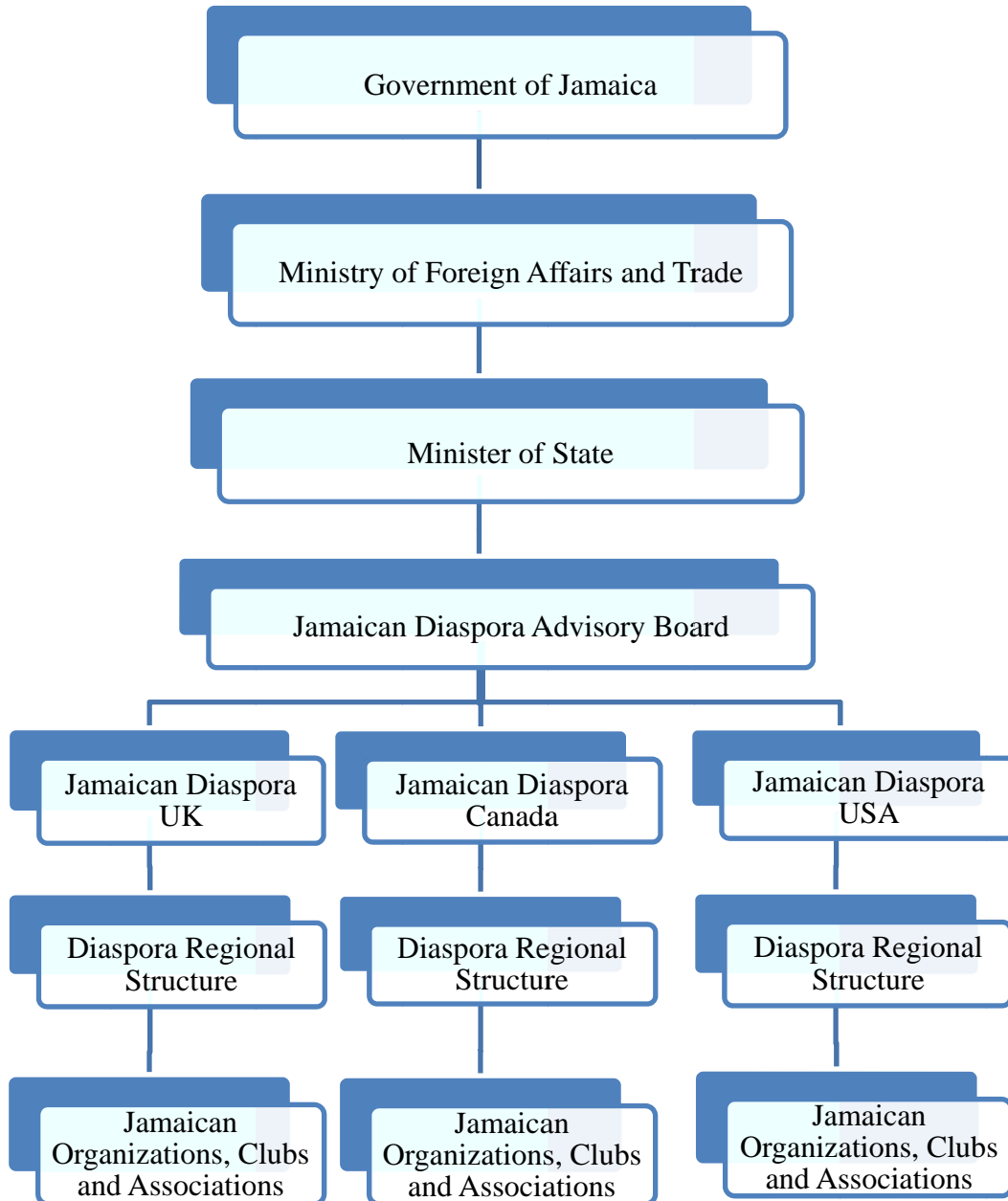


Chart adopted from Delano Franklyn (2010)

APPENDIX 2: LYRICS TO PLUTO SHERVINGTON'S "I MAN BORN YA"

<p>One more Jamaican gaan abroad          One more disciple leave the yaad          but if you think seh we ago stand up and wait          no way while we hold the gate fi yu          no think so at all.</p> <p>But I man on ya, I man born ya          I nah leave ya fi go a Canada          No way sah, pot a bwayl ya, belly full ya          Sweet Jamaica</p> <p>But when you stop and check out the facts          its a whole heap of things Jamaica lack          but when you run from a problem it neva          solve          no man want fi get involved at all          we sit down and bawl</p> <p>But I man on ya, I man born ya          I nah leave ya fi go a America          No way sah, pot a bwayl ya, a belly full ya          Sweet Jamaica</p> <p>Five flight a day to Miami          Don't mean a thing to this man          As long as, man give labour honest work fi          money          There is not a man can move me from my          land.</p> <p>So, all yuh Jamaicans gaan abroad          When last you really check a yaad          Remember saltish friters bulla and pear          Wash it down with a nice cold beer          a true, it nuh bad at all.</p> <p>But I man on ya, I man born ya          I nah leave ya fi go a Canada          No way sah, pot a bwayl ya, belly full ya          Sweet Jamaica.</p>	<p>One more Jamaican has gone abroad          One more disciple has left the yard [Jamaica]          But if you think that we will stand and wait,          While we hold the gate for you,          Not at all</p> <p>But I am here, I was born here,          I will not leave here, to go to Canada          No way sir, the pot boils here, my belly is full          here, Sweet Jamaica</p> <p>But when you stop and check the facts,          There are a lot of things Jamaica lacks,          But when you run from a problem, it will          never be solved, many don't want to get          involved,          They sit down and cry</p> <p>But I am here, I was born here          I will not leave here to go to America          No way sir, the pot boils here, my belly is full          here, Sweet Jamaica</p> <p>Five flights per day to Miami,          That means nothing to me          As long as I work honestly for my money          No one can move me from my land</p> <p>Jamaicans who have gone abroad,          When was the last time you examined          Jamaica?          Do you remember saltfish fritters, bulla and          pear?          Wash it down with a nice cold beer, it is true,          it is not bad at all</p> <p>But I am here, I was born here, I will not          leave here to go to Canada,          No way sir, the pot boils here, my belly is full          here, Sweet Jamaica</p>
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