A Brief Expose of the History, Culture and Migratory Patterns of Afro-Jamaicans

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Introduction

The paper modestly outlines the basic history, culture and migratory patterns of the descendants of the captive Africans in Jamaica, with a view to understanding their behavior. This historicizing does not present a comprehensive history of the Africans in Jamaica. The paper instead, identifies some basic patterns over time as it relates to their history, and culture, and their local and international movements. I commence with a brief review of selected literature on the notions of culture, migration and Diaspora which set the conceptual framework for the paper. This framework is followed by a synopsis of the situation in Africa, before and after the violent arrival of the Europeans; and the capture and forced migration of millions of Africans to work on commercial plantations in the Americas. The synopsis locates the genesis of the history, culture and migratory patterns of Afro-Jamaicans in Africa.

There are three critical periods in the history of the Africans after they arrived in Jamaica. These periods are (1) the period of colonialism and slavery which lasted from 1494-1838, (2) the post-emancipation to independence period which lasted from 1838-1962 and (3) the post-independence era which started when Britain granted Jamaican political independence in 1962 to the present. The historical forces that affected the captive Africans and their descendants; their socio-economic, political and cultural struggles; and the internal and external factors that led to several periods of migration, are interwoven within the three broad historical periods, to understand the culture and behavior of the contemporary Africans of Jamaica. I deliberately call Black Jamaicans, Africans, because the migration of the Africans to the Americas did not change the race of their descendants. Similarly, I refer to the kidnapped ancestors as captives on the plantations, because they viewed themselves in bondage rather than the pejorative term slave which is how their captors viewed them.
Culture

A culture is a socially transmitted or socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices; competencies; ideas; schemas; symbols; values; norms; institutions; goals; constitutive rules; artifacts, and modifications of the physical environment (Fiske, 2002, 85).

The definition of culture above suggests that culture arises from the adaptive interactive synthesis of people and their environments, but there are some common or shared elements among the people, and there is the inter-generational and historical transmission of the culture (Cohen, 2009). Each culture has a pattern through which its members view experience. The customs of the culture shapes the behavior and thinking of each member of the culture starting at birth (Benedict, 1954). Culture also influences people through what they perceive to be consensually held beliefs and the societal institutions that sustains the self (Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010; Zou, Tam, Lee, Lau & Chiu, 2009). However, each person in the culture is like all people (human culture), like some people (the people of his or her culture), and is like no one else, (because of his or her unique personality) (Kluckhohn & Murray, 1953). A change in one part of the culture affects the values in other parts. Culture is not only dynamic it is also systematic because each person in the culture responds differently to the various facets of the culture (Mead, 1955).

There are individualistic cultures with an independent model of the self where individuals autonomy, rights and freedoms, supersede the group; and there are collectivist cultures, with an inter-dependent model of the self, where the autonomy, rights and freedoms of the group take precedence over the individual (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2010). The collectivist cultures unlike the individualistic cultures, are embedded cultures where strangers in need are less likely to be
helped, because of the in-group orientation which is the key social unit (Knafo, Schwartz, & Levine, 2009). Freedom is a universal value in both cultures because the people of collectivist cultures will react when their collective freedom is threatened, and the people in individualistic cultures will react when individual freedoms are threatened (Jonas, Graupmann, Kayser, Zanna & Traut-Mattausch, 2009). These cultures are not homogenous because there are pockets of individualism in collectivist cultures and vice versa (Vandello & Cohen, 1999). The foregoing means, there are many forms of culture which denotes variability based on class, religion, and region, (Cohen, 2009) among other factors. Language is also important because the familiar cultural elements are given prominence and salience by dialogic commonality which creates a common ground, thereby reinforcing the culture (Fast, Heath & Wu, 2009). People carry these familiar cultural elements when they migrate.

Migration

Migration is the medium to long term or permanent movement of people from one place to another, which takes place locally and internationally. International migration involves emigration which is the movement of people from their home country; and there is immigration which is the arrival of the migrants in the host country. There are push factors which influence the migrants to leave their home country, and there are pull factors which attract the migrants to the host country. Some of the popular push factors are poverty; unemployment; high rates of violent crimes; natural disasters; political and religious persecution, and civil wars. Some of the popular pull factors are a high standard of living; employment opportunities; a low rate of violent crimes, and the effective rule of law; the resources and capacity to respond effectively to natural disasters; the entrenched respect for individual liberties and freedoms, and societal stability (Waugh, 2000). There is also the involuntary migration of people, like that which occurred in the
transatlantic slave trade, and is occurring to a much lesser extent in some aspects of human trafficking in the contemporary period (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). However, the transatlantic slave trade and contemporary human trafficking are not synonymous. Butler (2000) argues that the people who migrate and their descendants create a Diaspora and some of these migrants maintain ties to their home country or homeland.

Diaspora

A Diaspora consists of the dispersal of people to several locations internationally. Some of these people have a collective memory of the home country and they experience alienation in the host country. Some immigrants idealize their return to the home country, with which they maintain a persistent relationship. There is multi-generational identity formation, and involvement with the home country (Butler, 2001). The Diaspora in particular and the host country in general, are the beneficiaries of the brain drain, but the process of globalization has led to the process of brain circulation, because of the free movement of talent across international borders (Tung, 2008). Some members of immigrant groups build and sustain their communities through religious place making, which involves place rituals, design, organization and planning (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009).

Some migrants acculturate or adapt to the host country’s culture, and others internalize the host country’s culture through the process of assimilation. The racial landscape is a critical factor which influences the processes of acculturation or adaptation and assimilation, (Bhatia & Ram, 2009) because some immigrants articulate radical multiculturalism, that critiques injustice and inequality, and demand honest dialogue and respect, for all the groups in the host country (Nesbitt-Larking, 2008). Some members of the Diaspora develop a Diaspora
consciousness which they use to navigate the host country, and maintain varying ties with the home country (Thomas, 2007), two of which are remittances to relatives and friends (Rapoport & Docquier, 2006), and genetic genealogy testing (Nelson, 2008). Other migrants subsequently repatriate to the home country or homeland as returnees or Diaspora migrants, after many years abroad in which case they face another acculturation process (Silbereisen, 2008; Small, 2005).

The ideas discussed above about culture, migration and Diaspora, inform this paper and should be taken as an integrated conceptual whole. The captive Africans who were forcefully brought to Jamaica to work on the plantations took their cultural baggage with them. This baggage included their tools; skills; values; norms; customs; traditions; music; musical instruments, songs and dances. It also included their diets; worldviews; belief systems; herbal medicine; religions; languages; mating practices; family structures, and practices (Warner-Lewis, 2003). The interaction of the captive Africans with their British oppressors, and the peoples of other cultures created a Creole culture (Brathwaite, 1978). The descendants of the captive Africans, inherited these cultural practices, and the collective orientation with African continuities, and discontinuities (Warner-Lewis, 2003). The Jamaican born Africans have experienced a series of socio-economic; political, and cultural struggles in contestation with other societal groups; and a series of migration episodes throughout their history, which shaped their behavior. We begin, however, by centering the evolution of Afro-Jamaican history, culture, and migration patterns within the context of their African origins.

In the Beginning there was Africa

Before the Europeans arrived in Africa there were the ongoing rise, expansion and decline of kingdoms; empires; states, and polities, that had various forms of governance structures, some of
which were parts of various vibrant, and relatively stable pastoral; commercial; fishing and agricultural, textile and mining societies, some of which had metallurgical industries (Austin, 2009a; Hall, 2005; Hine, Hine & Harrold, 2006; Warner-Lewis, 2003). These societies were linked by not only commodity markets which led to factor markets, but also inter-ethnic alliances; conflicts, and wars that shaped the relationship among the various ethnic groups and the Europeans (Austin, 2009a; Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003). The first of these powers were the Portuguese who kidnapped Africans in Senegambia in 1444. The Portuguese were joined four centuries later by the British, French and the Dutch among other powers. The majority of the Africans were free people who were captured (Hall, 2005). Domestic slavery in Africa was radically different from the inhuman captivity practiced on plantations throughout the Americas. See (Austin, 2009b; Gertz, 2004; Hall, 2005; Kanpeyeng, 2009; Perbi, 2004).

The Europeans desire for African captives as laborers followed Christopher Columbus’ arrival in the Caribbean in 1492. This encounter led to competition among the English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch to get labor for agrarian colonization in the Americas, to develop their societies. The majority of indigenous Indians were exterminated by European diseases; forced labor, and war, so there was a huge demand for labor (Williams, 1970). The Europeans acquired African captives in several ways. The captors, acting alone or in concert with some African Kings, conducted wars and raids inland. Some ethnic groups sold their own people, some of whom were accused of illegal offenses. Other Africans were sold because they were in debt to others, including relatives. African demands for goods and guns from the slave traders linked the continent economically with the Americas (Curto, 2008; Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003).
The Africans were taken from the greater Senegambia (Upper Guinea); the Ivory Coast; the Gold Coast (Ghana); the Slave Coast (Bight of Benin) and Lower Guinea (The Bight of Biafra); the Bantulands (West Central Africa and Mozambique); Central Africa and Southwest Africa, among other regions (Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003). In some instances, children were killed after the capture of their parents because they were thought to be a liability, but, over time an increasing number of children were taken as captives (Lovejoy, 2006). During the trek of the captives to the coast some were given rum and molasses to sedate them. At the coast, the captives were held in crowded pens with animals, until the slave ships arrived (Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003).

There was ongoing armed resistance against the captors which took place along the rivers; in the interior and along the coast; in the pens holding the captives; against the ships docked in the harbor and, on the horrible voyages across the Atlantic, which continued on the plantations in the Americas. For more details see (Hall, 2005). The captors viewed the resistance as an occupational hazard and the cost of doing business. Despite the resistance, an estimated 11-15 million Africans were forcefully removed from Africa during the transatlantic slave trade from 1519-1867 (Eltis, Lewis & Richardson, 2005; Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003) and an estimated 100 Africans lost their lives because of this trade (Hall, 2005). This traumatic involuntary migration was the genesis of the African Diaspora. Despite the trauma of the middle passage, the Africans took their culture with them to the Americas, many components of which have survived to the present day (Hall, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003).

Hall (2005) and Warner-Lewis (2003) showed that although the captives shipped to Jamaica came from a variety of ethnic groups and regions, there was a preference for captives from the Gold and Slave Coasts. During the 1780’s and the 1790’s, the Bight off Biafra was an important
source of captives to Jamaica. There was a strong preference for Akan speaking captives in the British Caribbean colonies in general and Jamaica in particular (Hall, 2005). Some of the subgroups among the Akan were Ashanti, the Fanti and the Koromanti. The captives from the Gold Coast and the Congos, were deemed to be excellent field laborers and expert fishermen. There were also Bantu ethnic groups such as the Timbambu, Mabiwi and Mabere (Warner-Lewis, 2005).

Colonialism and slavery: 1494-1838.

The first European colonizers were the Spaniards who arrived in Jamaica in 1494 and exterminated the indigenous Indians. The Indians were replaced by captive Africans some of whom ran away and created the first maroon community. The Spaniards were expelled from Jamaica by the British in 1655, but the English themselves continued to import captives Africans for plantation labor. The cheap plantation produce were sold to England, and the value added manufactured goods were resold to the colony. The colossal profits from plantation labor fueled the industrial revolution in Britain. The Jamaican economy, culture and politics, were oriented towards the mother country, which gave Jamaica an external orientation. The British justified their exploitative presence in Jamaica, as a civilizing mission. The Africans, brought involuntary to Jamaica during British colonialism, constituted the first wave of migration that has made the Africans and their descendants the largest racial group in Jamaica (Patterson, 1969; William, 1966, 1970).

The captives were socialized into plantation work through the process of seasoning by an experienced African. Since the captives came from various ethnic groups, they developed a pidgin to communicate, which was a make shift language between the English they were taught
and their African languages. The pidgin developed over time into the Jamaican Creole language. The majority of the captives, worked on the plantations, with the Black majority working in the fields, and the majority of the Mulattoes (the offsprings of slave mothers and white fathers) working in the great house and in the trades. The captives worked on average 12 hours a day. Many of the captives, influenced by their West African tradition, saw marriage as a process of several years where the relationship was expected to prove itself and produce children, before it was considered a marriage. The captives were deemed property or legal non-persons, which gave them limited control over their lives and contact with their families. This contact was discouraged by the planters, so stable African family units were rare. Despite efforts of the planters to socialize the Africans into individual orientation, the captives from the same ethnic group would seek out each other, when they lived nearby (Braithwaite, 1978; Panton, 1992; Patterson, 1969).

Colorism which gave light skin people privileges over dark skinned people, backed by racism were pervasive markers of social power. The Africans had to defer to the Mulattoes. Whites were at the apex of the colonial society, and the Africans at the base, driven by the racist ideology of White superiority. Despite the stratification of Whites based on nationality and social class, there were only two basic societal groups of masters and captives, because an equality of consciousness developed among Whites, in the service of the continued subjugation of the Africans. This rigid complexion hierarchy influenced some captives, and Whites, to bleach their skin by flaying it with caustic cashew oil. On the plantation, flogging was a major punishment for the captives, but they would also be imprisoned, and in some cases hanged for fomenting rebellions. Flogging subsequently became a form of punishment in the legal system, and the
The racist ideology articulated by the British elevated their culture; games; dress; food; language; customs; values; norms; worldviews; business practices; education and politics, as the epitome of civilization, and denigrated all things African. The captives in the Diaspora had a longing for Africa, so they clutched their cultural baggage and resisted the imposed characterizations of their oppressors, and showed a preference for their own group and culture. The Africans participated in their own seasonal and non-seasonal recreations that involved among other things; storytelling; yam and John Canoe festivals; story telling; singing, dancing and drumming. The captives also engaged in relational religious dualism, by privately participating in African religious practices, alongside public conformity to Christian rituals; to meet the expectations of the planters, and the slave laws, that required that captives attend church to learn obedience. The African practices are Obeah, Myal, and Kumina, each with its associated herbal remedies and rituals. Obeah was common among the Twi, Edo, Efik and Akan ethnic groups in Africa. Obeah is derived from the Twi word *obeye*. It is driven by the belief that the phenomenal world comprises mysterious and powerful spiritual forces that can be harnessed for good or evil and be used to influence major live events and cure illnesses. The Myal Secret Society which originated in West Central Africa believed in the creator God and the African ancestral spirits. Ancestral spirits and divinities will possess the faithful when they are summoned to protect the ritual community from harm particularly the British. Myal was also used to counter the evil of obeah (Murrell, 2010). Kumina is Bantu in origin, and its adherents believe that the divinity and spirits that influences people’s daily lives, govern the created universe. The Africans also held informal courts to settle disputes, and they had their own
provision grounds from which they sold produce to the market. These African institutions, among others created a shared sense of community, which protected the social self (Braithwaite, 1978; Murrell, 2010; Patterson, 1969).

The food of the captives came from the planters who provided mainly rice, wheat flour, cod fish, pickled fish and guinea corn. The Africans also bought vegetables, fruits and yams, cassava, plantains and cocoa, and salted pork at the Sunday markets. They also sold bread, fish and chocolate near the harbors. Captives in Kingston bought cooked meals from rum shops, which included a bowl of rum and water, butter, coarse bread, and salted fish. Food was also obtained from theft, catching fish and crabs, and from livestock and poultry on the plantation, and the captives’ provision grounds. The captives’ use of salt and spicy seasoning, and consumption of foods high in carbohydrates have roots in West Africa, and continues today in the Afro-Jamaican diet (Talburt, 2004).

The captives continuously challenged their oppression through passive and active resistance. The strategies of passive resistance included refusing to work, strategic inefficiency, and behaving stupidly, feigning sickness, breaking tools, laziness and satire. Active resistance, included among other strategies, suicide, poisoning the Whites, which often involved using Obeah concoctions, running away, violent personal attacks against Whites, and collective rebellions. There were several collective rebellions which were the beginning of a long series of challenges by the Africans in Jamaica, against their oppressors. The three most serious rebellions were the first Maroon War; the rebellion of the captives in 1776, and the 1832 Christmas Rebellion led by Samuel Sharpe who was a Baptist deacon, and an undercover Myal man. These collective rebellions were not only fueled by the oppressive nature of the plantation system, but also the development of a black ethnic identity among the different captive groups, and their use
of obeah and myal practices to mobilize, inspire and protect the captives. The radical black self was also fostered by White terror, in response to rebellions as well as the payment of rewards to the traitors, among the rebels (Patterson, 1969; Murrel, 2010; Robotham, 1988). The three major reasons for the demise of African captivity were Whites’ fear of the constant rebellion, the abolitionist lobby and the increasing cost of slave labor. For more reasons see (Williams, 1966, 1970). The British government after negotiations with the planters paid them £20 million pounds for their lost “property” when the captives were given their freedom starting with an apprenticeship in 1834, which ended with full freedom in 1838 (Hart, 1985; Patterson, 1969; Williams, 1966, 1970).

Post-emancipation to independence: 1838-1962

Emancipation modified the rigid social structure, but there were still two Jamaicas, divided based on race and complexion. The Africans left the plantation to become small farmers who preferred to work seasonally on the plantations, to supplement their income. This situation created a labor shortage and financial problems for the planters, which was made worse by the 1846 Sugar Duties Act. This act removed preferential treatment for Caribbean sugar to the British market. The planters recruited White indentured laborers in response to the labor shortage, and a desire to increase the White population. The majority of European laborers came from Scotland, Ireland and England. Some 1,038 immigrant German laborers also arrived and settled in St Elizabeth between 1834 and 1836 (Alleyne, 2005; Curtin, 1972; Keith &Keith, 1979).

The White immigration policy failed, and the planters turned to the immigration of Indians and Chinese indentured laborers, who were pulled by the prospects of employment in Jamaica.
These new immigrants fell in the middle strata of the racial and complexion hierarchy with the Mulattoes, which gave them higher status and prestige compared to the Africans. Some 37,000 Indian laborers arrived in Jamaica between 1854 and 1916. However, when organized repatriation of Indians ended in 1930, there were 17,599 Indians in the country. Some 400 Chinese arrived in 1854; 696 in 1884, and between 1991 and 1911, some 2,111 arrived in Jamaica. These new immigrants, like the Africans before them also brought their cultural baggage with them, and their interaction with the Africans enriched the Creole culture. Eight thousand Africans were also recruited as indentured servants between 1840 and 1864. The majority of these new Africans were Igbo, Congo and Yoruba ethnicities (Alleyne, 2005; Warner-Lewis, 2003). There were racial and ethnic hostilities between the non-Black immigrants groups, and the Africans, but subsequently miscegenation between the Asians and the Africans occurred, because there were insufficient Asian women (Alleyne, 2005).

In the early post-emancipation period there was also tension between the Africans and the established churches. The tension occurred because the churches rejected African religious practices which were depicted as evil and barbaric. Despite the tension however, the churches began to co-ordinate the education of the African children (Campbell, 1970, 1971). The Baptist church also developed free villages in 1839 to foster “civilized” freehold townships of Africans and Europeans. But, drought, the government’s belief that free villages threatened the plantation system, and a lack of support from the planters, ended this program (Hall, 1993). This setback did not stop the Africans from supporting two Mulatto politicians, who met the property, tax and income candidacy requirements for the assembly. Edward Vickars and Charles Price were respectively elected to the assembly in 1847 and 1849. This successful democratic political
challenge alarmed the colonial government which changed the electoral rules, so Vickars did not seek re-election in 1860 and Price lost his seat in 1863 (Wilmot, 1988).

The deteriorating economic situation in the 1860’s influenced some of the Africans to petition the governor for relief, but the governor ignored the people’s plight. Paul Bogle, the Baptist deacon and Kumina adherent from St Thomas, led a group of protesters to Kingston and the governor refused to see them. The protestors subsequently turned up at the Morant Bay Court House and were accused of disrupting a trial. Warrants were issued for the arrest of the protestors, and the militia, sent to execute the warrant, destroyed the village, when they did not find the suspects. The destruction of the village infuriated the Bogle led group, who marched to the Morant Bay Court House yelling “cleave to the Black.” The militia fired on the protestors, and in the ensuing violence, the court house was set ablaze, three planters and fifteen White officials were killed. This riot was the first violent African challenge to the unjust colonial system in the post-emancipation period. Paul Bogle and other leaders were apprehended with the help of maroon trackers and hanged without trial. The colonial government in response to what it labeled the “notorious riot” established Crown Colony Government, abolished the assembly, and concentrated power in the office of the governor (Robotham, 1984).

The Christian revival in the 1860’s influenced the passing of the 1864 Offenses against the Persons Act which also outlawed buggery. This was the beginning of the militant and resilient homophobia in Jamaica, which was radicalized with fundamentalist Christian teachings in the biblical book of Deuteronomy, that homosexuals should be killed (Ministry of Justice, 2010; Charles, 2007). The revival also triggered the emergence of two Christian influenced Creole religious movements with African roots. These are Revival Zion in 1860 and Pocomania in 1861. Spirit possession in these two new religions was rebuffed by the established churches.
Several years later, the colonial authorities who labeled all African religious retention as Obeah, outlawed the practice of Obeah by passing the 1898 Obeah Act. This legislation pushed the practice of Obeah underground and stigmatized it further, but the Africans continued not only with Obeah, but with all their ancestral religious practices which are evident in contemporary Jamaica (Charles, 2009; Ministry of Justice, 2010; Murrell, 2010).

During this period Some 84,000 Jamaicans also went to Panama to work on the canal from the late 19th Century to the early 20th Century. The pull factor was prospects of employment, given the huge labor demand to build this modern transportation and engineering marvel. Also, others went to build railroads in Cuba, and to work in other parts of Latin America. These Africans who left Jamaican took their cultural Creole baggage, including African retentions with them, because elements of the Jamaican culture including linguistic retention and Jamaican food are evident in the parts of Latin America where the migrants went (Mclaurin, 1999).

The next significant challenge to the colonial system came from Alexander Bedward of the Native Free Baptist Church founded in 1889. Bedward was a deacon in the church who eventually became its leader, and created an African religious social movement where Africans from all over Jamaica visited the church in August Town. Bedward told the Africans to remember the Morant war, and tear down the White wall of oppression. He was arrested and tried for treason in 1895, but was acquitted. The social movement grew rapidly between 1895 and 1921. Bedward also had several confrontations with the colonial authorities in 1821, and he and 685 of his followers, were arrested for marching to Kingston on April 27, 1921. The members of the church were convicted for vagrancy and Bedward was found to be “mentally ill.” He was committed to the asylum where he died in 1930 (Post, 1978).
Another important social movement that challenged the colonial status quo was the creation of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) by Marcus Garvey in 1914. This Pan-African movement grew rapidly in Jamaica and took off in the United States in 1921. The UNIA did well in the United States and elsewhere, but Garvey was at odds with several African-American leaders because some of these leaders were jealous of his success. Garvey’s mistrust of Mulatto leaders, and his “Back to Africa” movement, circumvented the idea of racial integration. Garvey started the Black Star Liner shipping company in the United States, but it failed because the early ships purchased turned out to be useless. Garvey was charged, convicted and imprisoned for mail fraud because he had sold stocks of the failed shipping company to UNIA members. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment and a heavy fine. Garvey was subsequently deported to Jamaica where he continued his activities and won a seat in the city council. Garvey also heralded Ethiopia as the rallying point for African unity via the *Negro World* and *Blackman* newspapers and congratulated His Majesty *Ras Tafari* on his ascension to the Ethiopian throne in 1939. He later left for England where he was ignored by the British press. Garvey lobbied the League of Nations for land in Africa but to no avail. By this time, the UNIA was on the decline and Garvey died in London on June 11, 1940. Despite the setbacks, Garvey left a lasting legacy of racial consciousness and pride among Africans globally (Lewis, 1988, 1998a; Rogers, 1966).

One of the most significant legacies of Garveyism was the development of the Rastafarian movement in the 1930’s, which challenged White racism and British colonial domination. Rastafarianism arose out of the socio-cultural, economic and political struggles of the descendants of the captive Africans. Garvey inspired Africans led by Leonard Howell, and which included Archibald Dunkley; Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert, and Robert Hinds started
preaching that *Ras Tafari* was the King of Kings and the living God. This view challenged the superiority of the British monarchy and the white representation of God. The Rastafarians developed an African anti-systemic identity, worldview, and way of life, with its own hermeneutics, to counter the status quo interpretations of the bible. They also demanded repatriation to Africa from the Babylonian West. While the majority of the Africans in Jamaica are not Rastafarians the Rasta worldview, has had a tremendous impact on the Afro-Jamaican culture (Lewis, 1998a; Murrel & Williams, 1998; Price, 2003).

Another critical moment which influenced Afro-Jamaican history and culture was the 1938 labor riots because the Africans could not vote. They were not integrated in the society, and were paid starvation wages during the Great Depression. Between 1930 and 11938, there were hunger marches, the riot of banana workers, the strike of sugar and dock workers which were violently repressed by the colonial authorities (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1989; Post, 1978).

These Mulattoes, Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley co-opted the labor movement and rode to national prominence, and blunted the radicalism of the African poor, because they believed it was their right to lead the Africans. The agitation of the workers led to improved wages; safety standards at sugar factories; the legalization of trade unions, and the creation of the Workers Compensation Law and the Servants Law. In response to the crisis, Bustamante created the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union in 1938, and the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) in 1943; and Manley created the People’s National Party (PNP) in 1938 and later the National Workers Union. The parties and their affiliated unions became dominant and bitter rivals, which created tribal politics, where members competed like ethnic groups in conflict. The British government further appeased the African masses with constitutional changes in 1944 which led to universal adult suffrage and internal self government. The intense political rivalry in
the December 14, 1944 Election, led to political violence between JLP and PNP supporters, which set Jamaican politics on a destructive trajectory. Some African politicians also started consulting with obeah practitioners for political success (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1989; Murrell, 2010; Post; 1978; Ziedenfelt, 1952).

The political parties formalize and entrenched the informal pork-barrel system between colonial notables and the Africans, which they inherited. The parties enticed support from the uneducated poor with material rewards. This strategy created dependent supporters who attached their economic survival to the electoral victory of their party, so these supporters were willing to kill rival supporters to keep their party in power. The Hearne Report documented the PNP and the JLP co-optation of criminal gangs as instruments of violence to gain political advantage in the 1949 by-election in Eastern St Andrew (Sives, 2003; Stone, 1983). Violence up to 1944 was vertical, and progressive anti-system violence aimed at liberation, but violence in the post-1944 period was horizontal retrogressive intra-system violence, which left the status quo intact, as poor Africans fought among themselves (Charles, 1990).

During the 1950’s, the racism and colorism that began in the early colonial period, were rampant in employment practices in businesses throughout the country. Advertisements for domestic help in the Daily Gleaner also showed a preference for light skin help (Henriques, 1951; Johnson, 1996). Light-skinned partners were also the ideal in intimate-partner relationships, and some parents treated their light skin children better, compared to their dark skin siblings. Whenever some light skin family members were entertaining friends at home, they would ask their dark-skinned relatives to remain invisible. Some teachers treated African students with disdain at school and flogged them for speaking Jamaican Creole, which was tabooed. Flogging was the dominant form of punishment in schools. There were also regular
advertisements in the Jamaican *Gleaner* selling skin bleaching products. In addition, many White Jamaicans did not embrace the African political elite (Charles, 2010; Henriques, 1951). The foregoing led Smith (1961) to argue that colorism is driven by race. Jamaica is a plural society where the different racial and cultural sections mix, but they do not combine.

The African masses did not benefit from the economic boom in the tourism and a bauxite sectors, in the 1950’s which triggered another wave of Jamaican emigrants who went to Britain. These migrants were also pushed by the uncertainties surrounding the talk of independence, and the lure of a better life in the “Mother country” (McLaurin, 1999). During this time, the West Indian Federation (1958-1962) was one of the early victims of political tribalism. Neither the JLP nor the PNP engaged in a serious debate about the pros and cons of the political union and the electorate remained uneducated and uninformed about the issue, during the campaign for a referendum. The campaigns were conducted within the tribal political paradigm and the more popular JLP won the referendum. With that option for independence closed, Britain granted Jamaica its independence on August 6, 1962, after more than 300 years of colonial exploitation. The JLP won the April 10, 1962 General Election, and Alexander Bustamante became the first Prime Minister of independent Jamaica (Lacey, 1977; Williams, 1970).

The post-independence era: 1962-present

*The early post-independence period: 1962-1970.* The expectations of the Jamaican people soared with political independence granted on August 6, 1962, in particular the African masses which were at the societal base. The British left and unsophisticated economy which had an external orientation, but locally, the major sectors was not integrated. They also left a large part of the population illiterate and the civil service without the sufficient number of trained technocrats for
development. The powerful elite among the ethnic minorities (Whites, Chinese, Indians and Arabs) inherited the commanding heights of the economy (mining, tourism, manufacturing and banking). The colonial laws were maintained. Three of these laws which are crucial to this paper are the maintenance of flogging as part of the punishment for certain crimes; the 1898 Obeah Act, and the 1864 Offenses against the Persons Act which also outlawed buggery. Similarly, the independence constitution supported the status quo (Charles, 2007, 2009; Munroe, 1983; Williams, 1994). The old colonial order was removed and multiracialism was promoted, but a new privileged class of Whites and Coloreds emerged, so independence was a myth for many Africans (Lindsay, 1975, Norris, 1962). Despite these stinging criticisms, the government felt that Jamaica was a successful multiracial project, promoted folk culture and created the annual independence celebrations that included street dances, a street parade and the national festival song competition (Thomas, 2004).

There was rapid rural-urban migration, overcrowding and unemployment in Kingston. These pressures coupled with the high expectations of the masses, and the continued discrimination, led to a series of early challenges to the status quo of the “new nation” (Lacey, 1977). Claudius Henry created the Africa Reform Church. His son Roland Henry later called on the Africans to violently resist the system. The young Henry and a group of supporters were killed in a violent confrontation with the Royal Hampshire regiment in 1963. The elder Henry was subsequently arrested and convicted for treason (Gray, 1991). Some Rastafarians also clashed with the police at Coral Gables in 1963 because the White landowners did not want the Rastafarians to walk on their property to get to their community. Eight people were killed in the confrontation, and many more arrested (Campbell, 1987).
Political violence also escalated between armed JLP and PNP gangs after the April 10, 1962 General Election as the parties jockeyed for power, and their trade unions competed for the loyalty of workers. The government accused the PNP of orchestrating strikes. In addition, the Minister of Welfare and Development Edward Seaga removed PNP supporters from the Back O’ Wall squatter settlement in his constituency of Western Kingston. The squatters who clashed violently with the police dubbed Seaga the “Minister of Warfare and Devilment.” Modern housing units were built and issued solely to the JLP supporters of Seaga which created Tivoli Gardens, the first garrison community. These fierce and loyal supporters kept out the political opposition with guns and other weapons, and created a communal voting majority that established a secure power base for Seaga. The JLP and PNP gangs also clashed in Western Kingston, in the February 21, 1967 General Election. The PNP sent Dudley Thompson to compete against Seaga in Kingston Western, but he failed to unseat Seaga. He only managed to further militarize and entrench the Mathews Lane community, as the token PNP turf in the JLP dominated constituency. The development of garrison politics created communal political behavior and took tribal politics to new levels, which increased political violence, and cemented criminality in Jamaican politics (Gunst, 1995; Lacey, 1977).

This period also saw the emergence of Ska music and efforts to commercialize Jamaican popular music in the early to mid 1960’s, as well as the rise of rock steady music in the late 1960’s. These two genres of music were popular among the poor, which they used to celebrate important personal, social and community events. There were occasional violent clashes between rival rude boy gangs in the dances. The songs played at the dances dealt with a range of societal issues including the tensions in the society (Alleyne, 1988; Lacey, 1977; Seaga, 2010). The political tensions along with racism and colorism stalled the development of a Jamaican identity
and the situation was made worse, when the Whites and Mulattoes tried to prevent Marcus Garvey from becoming a National Hero. Many of these privileged people boasted that they did not entertain the Africans in their homes, and continued to taboo African beliefs, cultural practices and religions (Nettleford, 1965). This was context within which the anti-Chinese riot occurred in 1965, when two Chinese brothers flogged a female employee, because of a disagreement over the payment installments on a radio. The Africans refused to tolerate the whipping, which commenced with the kidnapping of their ancestors (Lacey, 1977, Lewis, 1998b).

Three years later in 1968, there was also violent confrontation between the police and university students and urban malcontents because the JLP Government banned university lecturer, and Black Power activist Walter Rodney from returning to Jamaica. Political tension increased further when the opposition leader Norman Manley strategically saluted the Black Power Movement (Campbell, 1987; Lacey, 1987). However, the two major political parties were struggling against Black Nationalism in the early post-independence period, so they created a multi-class alliance to curb Black Nationalism (Stone, 1988). The 1960’s also saw another wave of migration which turned mostly to Canada and the United States, with the passing of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, which lifted immigration restrictions. The low standard of living and the unfilled expectations after independence were the major push factors, along with the pull factor of the available economic opportunities in these two prosperous North American countries (Bonnet, 2007; McLaurin, 1999).

The democratic socialist period: 1970-1980. The PNP under the leadership of the charismatic Michael Manley won the violence-plagued February 29, 1972 General Election with huge popular multiclass support, because of the unmet expectations since political independence,
and the PNP’s platform of “better must come.” Edward Seaga won the leadership of the JLP from Hugh Shearer in 1974. The political chasm widened when the PNP declared the mixed model of democratic socialism the following year, to the chagrin of the JLP, as Cold War politics unfolded in the country. It was during this period, that garrison politics accelerated to the advantage of the PNP through its housing policy (Kaufman, 1985; Levi, 1990). Jamaicans more often than not, interpret this critical period using the tribal paradigm. PNP supporters use the external perspective which blames the country’s problems on the activities of the United States, and the international capitalist system. The JLP supporters use the internal perspective, which argues that the problems of the 1970s occurred because of the government’s mismanagement of the economy, and the “planned communist take-over” (Kaufman, 1985; Levi, 1990).

The declaration of democratic socialism emboldened the African masses. It was during this period, that reggae music emerged with a lot of protest songs, about the local and international situation faced by the Africans and African religious practices, and rituals, and gained greater ascendancy. Some Reggae artistes and dub poets were initially sympathetic to the PNP because of its progressive policies and programs. The government’s policies included a vision for self reliance, and Jamaicans growing what they eat, free education, and the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL) to curb the high rate of illiteracy. There was also the removal of the bastard stigma from Jamaicans born in common law unions; the inclusion of Sam Sharpe of the 1832 rebellion fame and the maroon leader and Obeah woman Nanny as national hero and heroine respectively; the support for the liberation struggles in Africa; the introduction of the minimum wage; the maternity leave and the equal pay for women laws, and the creation of the National Housing Trust (NHT) among other changes to the status quo. These radical social policies and Manley’s strategic use of Jamaican Creole backed by his
eloquence and charisma, further endeared him to the masses and secured a PNP victory in the violent December 15, 1976 General Election (Kaufman, 1985; Levi, 1990; Seaga, 2010).

Despite the popular social programs, the economy declined significantly after 1977, partly because of poor economic policy solutions; the struggle within the PNP because Manley signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and abandoned the Emergency Production Plan. There were other factors such as the political activities of the militant opposition JLP, which argued that the PNP was turning Jamaica into a communist country, and the PNP’s counter charge that the Central Intelligence Agency was destabilizing the country, which increased the political tension, and saw a decline in tourist arrivals. Other influences of the economic decline include rising crime and political violence; the lack of support for the PNP’s economic policy from the international financial institutions; Manley’s fiery socialist rhetoric and his close friendship with Fidel Castro of Cuba, alienated the majority of the private sector which formed the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica to protect its interests. This volatile situation was the push factor which triggered not only capital flight, but also the migration of a large portion of the middle class and members of the privileged White and Brown groups to the Jamaican Diaspora in the United States. This migration opened up opportunities for Africans in the society, but it was also a significant brain drain of the country’s human capital. The struggle between the JLP and the PNP culminated in the JLP defeating the PNP in the October 30, 1980 General Election where more than 800 Jamaicans were reportedly killed by political violence in nearly a year of campaigning. The new government inherited a country with depleted international reserves (Charles, 1990, 2010; Kaufman, 1985; Levi, 1990).

The neo-liberal period: 1980-1989. The Edward Seaga led JLP government blamed the PNP for destroying the country and promised to rebuild it with free market policies. However, by
1983 the JLP government was unpopular. Seaga called a snap General Election held on December 15, 1983 to make use of his situational popularity arising from his support of the United States invasion of Grenada and overthrow of the Marxist New Jewel Movement. The JLP won all sixty seats in parliament by default because the PNP refused to contest the Election. Seaga elected independent senators in the PNP’s senatorial slots in the upper house (Charles, 1990). Garrison politics escalated during this period. One notable example of this advance, was the “rats and cat war” in the 1980s between Tivoli Gardens and its satellite Rema, which attempted to break away. This ensuing violence left eight residents of Rema dead, and the truce between the warring communities was mediated by the prime minister.

On the cultural side, the government reinstituted the independence festival street parade and put on the grand gala. African religious practices were still alive and well and had a supporter in the prime minister who had researched these practices in Jamaica, in the 1950’s and continued to follow their development. Some Jamaicans went to obeah men to cure illnesses they thought were put on them by their enemies, only to find out later, that the medical condition was terminal. There was also the development of Creole laced roots plays scoffed at by the some members of the middle class and the elite, but widely supported by lower class Africans (Charles, 1990, 2003; Murrell, 2010). The early 1980’s also saw the ascendency of the new genre of Jamaican music, Dancehall. This new music dealt with a range of societal issues important to the urban poor (suffering and material advancement, militant homophobia, sex, misogyny, guns and violence among other issues) within the economic climate created by the government’s structural adjustment program directed by the IMF (Hope, 2006).

The IMF polices involved devaluation of the Jamaican dollar which increased food prices, and the divestment of government owned entities such as the Jamaica Omnibus Company
for the minibus system, among others, as well as the deregulation of the economy. There was a reduction in public spending which affected public works and the health and education sectors in particular. There was a freeze on public sector wages, and the layoff of public sectors workers, triggered strikes by the teachers and nurses (Charles, 1990). The increase in gas prices in 1985 triggered a union-backed national strike, which led to street riots and the imposition of tuition on university students a year later, led to street protests and riots. The government did not accede to any of the demands of the strikers and protestors. However, some African females made use of the harsh economic times by becoming informal commercial importers, who purchased foreign currencies which they used to travel overseas and purchased good which they sold in Jamaica. There was also the ganja eradication program funded and assisted by the United States government which alienated small farmers from the government. The harsh economic realities of the early to mid 1980s, made the violent 1986 Local Government Election very important. It was the first time since 1980 that the entire electorate had a chance to vote (Charles, 1990, 2010).

By this time, some members of the White and Brown groups that fled during the upheavals of the 1970’s, returned to Jamaica and re-established themselves which displaced some of the Africans who had benefitted from their emigration. The 1984 mobility survey revealed that all ethnic groups benefitted from the expansion of the middle class since 1944, but the economic differentials among the ethnic groups persisted. The largest changes occurred in the mass profession of nursing and teaching. For example, Africans working in the nursing profession moved from 43%-67% between the years 1943-1984. However, the racial composition did not changed significantly because Africans continued to dominate the manual professions, and they were under-represented in the upper tier of the middle class, compared to
the number of Africans in the general population (Charles, 2010; Gordon, 1988, 1989; Stone, 1988).

The JLP also implemented the food stamp program to cushion the effects of structural adjustment on the poor; the LEAP program for children, and the Human Employment and Resource Training program (HEART) for youth. The government maintained the NHT; established the free zone garment factories; and the Spring Farm agricultural project, which was a colossal failure. The prime minister rebuffed the IMF by refusing to further devalue the local currency, because it would be devastating to the poor. There was also a significant increase in tourist arrivals by the late 1980’s, and by then, the government had achieved economic stability with very minimal economic growth, and a huge debt burden. Economic stability did not prevent the unpopular JLP government from losing the violent February 9, 1989 General Election to the PNP (Charles, 1990; Stone, 1989).

The globalization period: 1990-present. Michael Manley failed to sideline the African managerial class in the PNP before his retirement in 1991, so Percival J. Patterson succeeded Manley and became the first elected African prime minister in 1993. Patterson in turn sidelined some members of the Brown group in the party. The PNP marketed Patterson as the young, gifted and Black which appealed to the primordial loyalty of the Africans in the General Elections of 1993, 1997, and 2002. The PNP blackened the nation by re-routing government contracts from the Brown elite to the African managerial class; renamed national symbols, and imbued the color black in the national flag with a positive meaning. A prominent member of the Brown ethnic group said the change demeaned the flag. Nevertheless, Emancipation Day was reinstated as a national holiday and Emancipation Park was built. The aesthetic expression of the Redemption song statue placed at the entrance to the park was criticized as being
disrespectful to the African ancestors. This period also saw the reemergence of the yam festival, the creation of the breadfruit festival, the curry festival and the Jerk festival. Spicy and high carbohydrate foods were now a part of commercial entertainment events. These festivals were in keeping with modern Blackness that arose from the Africans on the societal margins, who embraced dancehall music; migration, and Blacks in the African Diaspora (Charles, 2010; Cooper, 2004a; Robotham, 2000; Thomas, 2004).

Despite modern Blackness, skin bleaching became popular among segments of the African population during this period which found both support and criticism in dancehall music. Dancehall music and the sound systems became global, along with its fashion aesthetic in the 1990s (Cooper, 2004b; Stolzoff, 2000). However, the dancehall culture continues to be vilified by the elite, and some members of the middle class who argues that despite the presence of cultural artistes, the music promotes violence and moral decadence. The holding of dances has been contained with the enforcement of the Night Noises Act while the pastors of churches which violate the act are not prosecuted. This partiality in favor of the church suggest that the popular music of lower class Africans is being attacked (Jackson, 2006, personal communication). While many African pastors from the lower classes speak Jamaican Creole to their congregants, the making of a Jamaican Creole bible irked not only the sensibilities of high society, and the established churches, but also some of these same pastors and church members who speak Creole. Similarly, the few radio broadcasters who speak Jamaican Creole on air are often criticized for using “bad English” to the public (Charles, 2003).

This period has also seen militant homophobia, where some men accused of being homosexual have been attacked by mobs. One father even incited the children at his son’s high school to lynch his son because he believed his son was gay. Moreover, the Public Defender has
called on homosexuals to “hold their corners” (remain invisible) in the society. Some dancehall songs attack the homosexual lifestyle, and the church continue to condemn the lifestyle as well as the violence against gays (Charles, 2007). There is a subculture of violence because many Jamaicans are increasingly using violence to settle disputes. Therefore, Jamaica also has one of the highest homicides rates in the world (20/100,000 for 20 consecutive years) spurred by the warfare and criminality of garrison based gangs (Harriott, 2008).

The attack on members of the police and army in 1998 by a joint paramilitary force of gunmen backed by the rioting residents from the rival garrison communities of Tivoli Gardens and Mathew Lane (because the don of the latter community Donald “Zeeks” Phipps was arrested) suggest that the garrisons now threaten national security (Charles, 2002). There are now 13 garrison constituencies, the majority of which are controlled by the PNP. There has also been a backlash against garrison communities with the formation of Citizens’ Action for Free and Fair Election (CAFFE). The backlash has forced electoral reforms, and the use of local and international election observers. Civil society’s activism has developed further, with the formation of Jamaicans for Justice, and Families Against State Terrorism, to monitor the state and the police (Figueroa & Sives, 2002, 2003).

Some of the polices of the PNP government of this period are the building of highway 2000; the liberalization of the economy and telecommunications; the overhauling of the public bus system in Kingston, the building of a national transportation centre and the modernization of the international airports; a positive values and attitudes campaign; public sector modernization; attempts at modernizing the police force and the local government system; the legal protection of the rights of common law union partners of at least five years; government assistance to high school students taking the CAPE examinations; the building of new high schools; the reform of
secondary education; the strengthening of HEART, the inner city housing development and failed policies like Netserve and the Operation Pride housing program among others. Despite these policies, there has been negligible economic growth and a huge external debt burden because the government borrowed for consumption rather than production. Moreover, the country’s financial system collapsed in 1996 and the government has been accused of rampant corruption. The minimal economic growth, based on poor policy solutions, and inefficient response from governments from the 1980s to the present, have led to frequent protests by residents who block roads to be heard, increasing cynicism and declining trust in governance among Afro-Jamaicans. An average of 20,000 Jamaicans migrated yearly during this period to the United States, Canada, England. The Jamaican Diaspora is getting larger because of the rising homicide rate, and the very low standard of living which increases the brain drain. Patterson subsequently resigned as Prime minister in 2006 and was succeeded by Portia Simpson-Miller whose victory was a defeat of Brown power in the PNP in a fierce intra-party struggle. Simpson-Miller led the PNP to an electoral defeat by the JLP on September 3, 2007 (Charles, 2010; Robotham, 2000).

The brief outline of the historical forces, the societal struggles and tensions and the migratory patterns of the Africans in Jamaica, points us to some basic interrelated cultural elements which can be used to understand the behavior of Jamaicans. These cultural elements which have African continuities and discontinuities are outlined in table 1. They have led to several interrelated behaviors which have become a part of the cultural repertoire of Jamaicans through intergenerational transmission. These elements are sufficiently common so they are a part of the culture but all Jamaicans do not necessarily share them because there are competing values-driven cultural elements. The commonalities outlined suggest that successive governments have failed to develop Jamaica with the appropriate policy solutions because they
are always seeking foreign assistance and foreign loans. The underdevelopment has been exacerbated by the preference for imported goods over exports through local production. The strong work ethic and the lack of opportunities to achieve economic advancement at home and has frustrated generations of Jamaicans which has led to a several waves of outward migration. Therefore, Jamaicans place little trust in their governments and sometimes engage in street protests to be heard.

Jamaicans are very emotional about political differences, and some have engaged in political violence, murders, and electoral fraud in the service of their political party in the modern era. Jamaicans come from a very violent culture driven by poverty, the historical struggles against colonial oppression, and the retrograde means of pork barrel political mobilization in the post 1944 era. This culture of violence is also evident in the fact that may Jamaicans use violence to settle personal disputes. The high rates of stabbing and homicides are cases in point. This violence is also seen in the rampant use of corporal punishment in homes and schools and homophobic mob violence on the streets.

Jamaicans are very religious but their religiosity expresses the tension filled dichotomy between established high Christianity and the low status but popular African religions. This tension, which started in the clash between Afrocentric and Eurocentric values in the colonial society, is also evident in the use of language. The popular Jamaican Creole is often disparaged by its speakers as broken English. Similarly, the popular common law unions, which finds majority support in the African community has low status compared to high status formal marriage backed by high society. The various genres of popular Jamaican music have also been stigmatized by the elite but have been embraced by the African masses. These Africans, many of whom dress in flamboyant attire, use the music to celebrate the personal, social and community
events that are important in their lives in the dances and the churches. Many among the Afro-Jamaican community also display low health seeking behavior because they do not go to the doctor unless they are very ill. Some do not have the resources to go to the doctor and some use home remedies and herbal medicines and others visit Obeah practitioners to cure their illness. The diet of many the Africans consist of a lot of food high in carbohydrates which are flavored with salt and spices. These foods are prevalent in the contemporary food festivals. Despite contending African retentions, the social power of the complexion hierarchy persists which is evident in skin bleaching, preference for light skin partners and marrying up. The Africans born in Jamaica migrate with these and other cultural elements to varying degrees which influence their behavior in the host country.

The Jamaican Diaspora is a greater Diaspora because these contemporary Africans have migrated beyond the land to which their forefathers were forcibly taken. The extent to which members of the Jamaican Diaspora are guided by the Jamaican cultural elements is a function of their personalities, socialization and the degree to which they acculturate or assimilate in the host country. In addition to the cultural behavior outlined in table 1, some Jamaicans in the Diaspora maintain a persistent relationship with the home country through a shared collective memory. They attend Jamaican festivals and roots plays and shows with popular Jamaican artistes and dancehall DJs in the host country. Many of these migrants also visit and invest in Jamaica; follow the news in Jamaica via the newspapers and radio stations online, and they raise funds overseas to influence the electoral fortunes of their political tribe in the home country. They make donations to local schools through overseas based alumni associations and assist home country communities and public institutions. They also send remittances to families and friends. For example, the remittances from the United States in 2002 and 2005 were $1.2 and $87 billion
respectively (Reynolds, 2006; Small, 2005; Thomas, 2007). The greater Diaspora also provides a vibrant market for Jamaican goods. Despite their economic advancement and their resilience as a group in the metropolitan countries, the experience of racial discrimination alienates some Jamaican immigrants from the host country (Daily Gleaner, 2007; Gilkes 2005; Luton, 2007; Small, 2005; Taylor, 2002).

The Jamaican Diaspora has a long history, but it has taken on new meaning and purpose in the era of globalization. The movement and integration of people, ideas, goods, culture, services and finance across international borders in a flat integrated world driven by fast and efficient transportation, technology and unpredictable market forces (Berger & Huntington, 2002; Friedman, 2007) has created a vibrant Diaspora. Some of these overseas Jamaicans want to influence politics and economic development in Jamaica through the process of brain circulation. The Diaspora, unlike what happened in previous periods made concerted and organized connections with Jamaica.

Some Jamaicans in the Diaspora have moved beyond idealized return and have relocated to Jamaica. The returnees have established the Returning Residents Association to lobby the government on their behalf and act as an information clearing house for other returning residents and assist local communities (Davis, 2006). Just over 21, 247 Jamaicans returned home from Britain, Canada and the United States between 1993-2004 (Small, 2005). The biggest obstacle to more Jamaicans in the Diaspora returning home, is the fear of crime, especially after news reports that returnees were being targeted by criminals (Campbell, 2006; Green, 2006; Small, 2005).
Nevertheless, some Jamaicans in the greater Diaspora have developed Diaspora consciousness (Thomas, 2007) which integrates them with Jamaica and Jamaicans globally. These Jamaicans have formalized and legitimized their persistent relationship with their home country, through the formation of the Jamaica Diaspora Foundation (Mitchel, 2004). Therefore, the government has responded by making the Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade responsible for Diaspora affairs (Daily Gleaner, 2005). A Diaspora website has been launched and there is the proposal for a Diaspora Day to be celebrated in Jamaica and the Diaspora (Daily Gleaner, 2005). Members of the Diaspora have held conferences in the host countries and conferences in Jamaica with the support of the government and the private sector to address their interests and participate in the growth and development of the country by leveraging their skills and resources (Daily Gleaner 2006; Mitchel, 2004; Small, 2005).

The delegates at the Diaspora conferences, the majority of whom are Africans, express the need for a united approach to Caribbean problems, and their desire to be more involved in the affairs of the country, and help establish brand Jamaica. Some concerns are their ineligibility to vote in Jamaican elections; the collapse of the financial system in 1996, and the edginess of some in the Diaspora to invest in Jamaica, which requires the creation of a positive investment climate, improvement in the quality of policy solutions, and the removal of bureaucratic red tape to foster business opportunities. Some of the Diaspora delegates also express dissatisfaction with the adjustment difficulties experienced by returning residents, and the country’s inability to address their health care needs as well as the negative attitude that some Jamaicans have towards returning residents. One of their biggest concerns is crime, in particular the high homicide rate driven by the morphing of the garrison constituencies into counter societies that operate as
informal states which are undermining the internal security of Jamaica (Campbell, 2006; Charles, 2002; Mills, 2004; Richards, 2006; Sheil & Sterling, 2006; Small, 2005).

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*Ideaz, 1*, 19-28.


These shared elements and the associated behaviors are interrelated because they are a part of the same cultural system with African continuities and discontinuities. These behaviors are not unique to Jamaica but the constellation of elements which informs them is unique to Jamaica. These commonalities are not necessarily shared by all Jamaicans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural elements*</th>
<th>Examples of the Behavior</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong achievement orientation</td>
<td>Hard working, public displays of material wealth, illicit activities</td>
<td>History of exploitation, limited opportunities for personal economic progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High propensity for migration</td>
<td>Several waves of ongoing migration</td>
<td>Persistent poverty and a low standard of living,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendicant external orientation</td>
<td>Successive governments begging foreign aid. Always seeking external loans and help for local problems</td>
<td>The colonial economy serving the British economy, unsophisticated dependent economy that is not integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences for things foreign/metropolitan</td>
<td>Buy foreign goods over local ones, use of foreign consultants over equally qualified Jamaicans</td>
<td>British derogation of things African and local which is continued by the elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social ambivalence towards Jamaican Creole</td>
<td>Speaking Creole but associating its use with low IQ, identifies with Creole but calls it broken English</td>
<td>The derogation of Jamaican Creole during and after colonialism in favor of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong preference for common law unions</td>
<td>The majority engage in common law union which has strong support in the community unlike marriage</td>
<td>West African tradition-marriage is a process-the relationship has to prove itself and produce children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust in government and national institutions</td>
<td>Engage in road blocks to be heard, political apathy, refusal to stand for the playing of the national anthem</td>
<td>Persistent poverty and failed policy solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity for violence in disputes</td>
<td>Use of violence to settle personal disputes, high rate of stabbings and shootings, very high homicide rate</td>
<td>History of violent political struggles, weak rule of law, breakdown of societal institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency for strong emotions and aggression over political differences</td>
<td>Engage in political violence and murder, electoral fraud, cursing supporters of the rival political party</td>
<td>Pork barrel politics and political tribalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity for corporal punishment and authoritarian parenting</td>
<td>Flogging of children in the homes and schools, refusal to negotiate with children, rigid boundaries for children</td>
<td>Brutal plantation punishment, fundamentalist Christian teaching of spoiling the rod and saving the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militant homophobia</td>
<td>Ridicule of homosexuals, social ostracism, physical attacks against homosexuals on the streets</td>
<td>Fundamentalist Christian teachings of death to homosexuals, the Buggery law, hegemonic masculinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging propensity for civic activism</td>
<td>Formation of CAFFE, JFJ and FAST</td>
<td>Lack of government responsiveness in between elections, extrajudicial killings, electoral malpractices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong oral dimension</td>
<td>Story telling, use of Jamaican proverbs</td>
<td>Griots and story tellers of West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational religious duality</td>
<td>Attending church and practicing Obeah</td>
<td>Historical tension between high status Christianity and the stigmatized but vibrant and popular African religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for foods high in carbohydrates which are flavored with spices and salt</td>
<td>Frequently eat meals with rice, green bananas, yams, breadfruit, dasheen, coco, cassava, and flour.</td>
<td>West Africa, plantation diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to visit the doctor</td>
<td>Pray when one is ill, use home remedies/herbs, visits the Obeah man, visits doctor under duress from family</td>
<td>West African religious practices and herbal medicine, fundamentalist Christianity, poverty, socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to celebrate important personal, social and community events with Jamaican popular music</td>
<td>Having a dance or party for new born, christenings, birthdays, weddings, funerals and election campaigns</td>
<td>West African celebratory rituals continued with the various genres of Jamaican popular music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascination with the adornment aesthetic</td>
<td>Flamboyant dressing for church and dance</td>
<td>West African colorful and fashionable costuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to elevate brown skin people</td>
<td>Skin bleaching, dating only light skin partners, marrying up, treating light skin children better</td>
<td>Colorism gives privileges, opportunities and benefits and high status to Mulattoes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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