

Jamaican Hands Across the Atlantic

Elaine Bauer and Paul Thompson

Elaine Bauer is an Anthropologist researching on black-white couples and their families. She is a Fellow at the Young Foundation, London. Paul Thompson is Research Professor in Sociology at the University of Essex. He is founder-editor of *Oral History* and founder of the National Life Story collection at the British Library. His many books include *The Edwardians*, *Growing Up in Stepfamilies*, and *The Voice of the Past*



In this vivid and readable text, Elaine Bauer and Paul Thompson provide a wealth of new insights into the pivotal role played by the Jamaican family in transnational migration. Using extensive interview material and oral testimonies, they track the complex pathways by which the family connects different experiences and generations, sustains networks and links pasts and future across the vicissitudes imposed by separation, time and space.
Stuart Hall

Leaving aside the forced migrations of the slave era, Jamaican migration goes back over a century initially within the Caribbean to countries like Panama but it was the post-1945 trek to Britain that signalled a new phase in Jamaican and West Indian migration. Large scale migration of Jamaicans to North America began later in the 1970s and there are now reported to be over a million Jamaicans in New York alone. Although there have been valuable studies of West Indians in Toronto and New York, none have looked at the triangular family connections between Britain, North America and Jamaica.

This book is a study of some 45 families originating in Jamaica who also have members in both Britain, the US and Canada. Oral interviews with these families provide insights into the dynamics of transnational families. The authors conclude that Jamaican transnational families are important as key witnesses to understanding the experiences of migration, global living with family members scattered between continents, the instability of parents' shifting relationships and encounters with both racial mixing and racism.

Further, because of the modernity of their family structures, they provide important clues for the future of the majority of white families of the twenty-first century both in difficulties and in solutions. **The book is written in an accessible style and is rich in vivid quotations from family members.** It will appeal to several readerships including the broad audience interested in Caribbean families and culture, Black Cultural Studies, Race and Diaspora Studies.

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