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Transnational Return Migration to the English-speaking Caribbean

Dwaine Plaza

- 1 The English-speaking Caribbean has been incorporated into the globalized system of capitalism since the fifteenth century and the region has experienced successive waves of immigration, emigration and circulation. Most of the early immigration flow was part of a system of coerced one-way movement from Africa. Later movements included voluntary immigration from India, Syria, Portugal, China and various parts of Europe. Over time, migrations of all descriptions have been a fundamental force in the creation of culture and maintenance of Caribbean societies (Conway, 1988). Common to the migration traditions which have become entrenched in the culture of the Caribbean is the desire of Caribbean people to circulate, but ultimately to return to their place of birth as a result of either wealth or old age (Thomas-Hope, 1985, 1992, 1999; Byron, 1994, 1999, 2000; Marshall, 1982, 1983, 1987; Gmelch, 1980, 1987, 1992). This paper examines the emergence of a transnational return migration culture in the English-speaking Caribbean since 1834. The transnational pattern of emigration and return migration fits into the notion of Caribbean people being truly global sojourners who are tooing and froing in response to conditions in different locations.
- 2 Until recently, migration was understood in terms of two opposing outcomes: permanent settlement or permanent return. Return migration especially was thought of as the final outcome of the migration process. This relatively static bipolar model is a simplistic and uni-linear depiction of migration and return migration which is not consistent with the realities of population movements in an increasingly transnational and interconnected world. These complexities, which characterize migration and return migration, are more aptly analyzed in a model that emphasizes migration as fluid and looping with an unpredictable backflow.
- 3 The transnational movement of people requires a more processual approach. Transnationalism refers to the multiple ties and interactions that link people and their institutions across the borders of nation-states. It is now understood to have many elements including “social morphology, as a type of consciousness, as a mode of

cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of place” (Vertovec, 1999). As a descriptive category or social morphology, transnational groups are those that are globally dispersed but still identify in terms of their original ethnicity and relate to both the host states in which they reside as well as the home countries from which they or their ancestors originated. They are tied together transglobally through a variety of social relationships or networks. Transnational diaspora communities are therefore characterized by combinations of ties and positions in networks and organizations that reach across the international borders to link people together. These communities are formed on the basis of dynamic social, cultural, political and economic processes such as those in transnational social spaces which involve the accumulation, use and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility. Migration and re-migration may not be definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions; transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy of survival and betterment. Transnational webs may also include relatively immobile persons and collectives. Even those migrants who have settled for a considerable time outside their country of origin frequently maintain strong transnational links. These links can be of a more informal nature, such as intra-household or family ties, or they can be institutionalised, such as political parties entertaining branches in various countries, both of immigration and emigration.

- 4 Caribbean transnational diaspora communities can perhaps best be understood as part of processes of global integration and time-space compression. This is partly a technological issue: improved transport and accessible real-time electronic communication is the material basis of transnationalism. Social and cultural issues are however equally important. Globalization is closely linked to the transnational changes in social structures and relationships as well as shifts in cultural values concerned with place, mobility and belonging. This is likely to have important consequences, which we are only just beginning to understand (Bauman, 1998; Castells, 1996).
- 5 One of the most intriguing features of transnational communities is the role that personal identity plays in the consciousness of its members. Some identify more with one society or another while others assume multiple identities. Hall (1988) has noted that the condition of the transnational immigrant provides for ever-changing representations or identities. Robin Cohen (1987: 123) observes that to a certain degree “a diaspora can be held together or re-created through the mind, through cultural artifacts and through a shared imagination.” Cultural products are important in maintaining identity – and such forms as music, religious practices, fashion, visual arts, films, language (accent and colloquial adages) and ways of cooking food are some of the most conspicuous areas in which such processes are observed.
- 6 Another important consideration influencing circulation or return migration is the notion of “transnational belonging.” This mindset is at the heart of the thinking that underpins the “deterritorialization of nation-states,” whereby dual – or multiple – citizenship is an essential aspect of transnationalism’s political threat to nation-state integrity and sovereignty (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1994; Besson 2002). In such an abstraction, Caribbean migrants can simultaneously belong to two or more worlds in a transnational social field characterized by its interconnectivity (New York, Port of Spain, Toronto, Bridgetown, London or Kingston). Caribbean migrants might base their allegiances on a fluid definition of where family, kin and fictive kin are located. Some Caribbean-origin people can now travel too and fro on any one of many

passports quite seamlessly. Certain passports can accord Caribbean-origin people virtually unlimited stays in foreign locations without harassment from the immigration authorities – American, Canadian or British citizenship accords individuals’ virtual freedom to move about the world. This new status of dual and multiple citizenship is very much akin to the footloose mobility privilege many “white” government officials enjoyed during the heyday of colonial rule and control of the Caribbean. These new legal statuses undoubtedly alter the mindset of many migrants living in the international diaspora, particularly in terms of where they can or want to live in the future. The new status opens previously closed doors for temporary or long term return to their place of origin without fear of any penalty or reprisals from the authorities in either sending or receiving areas.

Origins of the Transnational Caribbean Diaspora

- 7 When slavery ended in the Commonwealth Caribbean (following the legal proclamation of 1834), former slaves were eager to establish their own communities away from the plantations. Many moved to free lands on neighboring islands or at least off the plantation property. Most ex-slaves discovered that they could not survive without part-time or seasonal work on the plantations or at other places of employment. Circulation – a form of migration in which the migrant families live year-round in the home community while the migrant members of the family move away seasonally for work – became a part of the wider Caribbean culture.
- 8 Gradually over time, local circulation expanded to include regional circulation and longer periods of migrant residence away from home. Circulation within the Caribbean region expanded further to include, for example, the longer distance movement to Panama in the late nineteenth century, the United States in the period of 1900 to 1930, Britain in the 1950s, and Canada and the United States again from the late 1960s to the present. The longer distance moves were associated with longer-term residence abroad and in some cases led to permanent settlement abroad. Over this long period up to the 1960s, the genesis of a Caribbean diaspora in some major cities in the eastern United States (New York, Boston and Baltimore), Canada (Toronto and Montreal), and in the United Kingdom (London, Manchester and Birmingham) can be observed. The formation of large Caribbean-origin migrant communities in these cities and the resources that such immigrant communities provided to new migrants strengthened and transformed the Caribbean culture of migration. Caribbean peoples began to see themselves as both “here” and “there” – with the “here” being wherever they were living (in the Caribbean, Britain, Canada or the United States, say) and “there” being any of the Caribbean communities in another country to which they were connected through family ties, friendships and community linkages. “Home” began to be viewed not just as the place where one was born or where one lived, but more generally everywhere friends, relatives and members of the cultural community were to be found (Simmons & Plaza, 2006). In effect, what began as a Caribbean culture of migration expanded over time to become a diasporic Caribbean transnational cultural community.
- 9 Caribbean people in the international diaspora are quite diverse – they originate from different islands, ethnic groups, social classes and cultures within the Caribbean region, and many are now part of a second if not third generation in the metropolitan

countries where they have settled. Despite this diversity, they form cultural and social communities based on their identification with Soca and Reggae music, history, traditions and achievements of people from the Caribbean region and their participation in Caribbean community organizations, cultural events, churches and temples (Simmons & Plaza, 2006).

- 10 The Caribbean-origin communities in New York, Toronto or London are clearly transnational, drawing on strong links and support from family and friends in the Caribbean and other countries. Most Caribbean migrants who have legal immigrant status move about quite freely. Many make return trips to the Caribbean to vacation and to see friends and kin. They receive visits from relatives living in the Caribbean, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Family members in the metropolitan countries send large amounts of cash (remittances) and gifts (often in the form of “barrels” of clothing and household items) to support relatives in their respective home countries.
- 11 An impressive body of relevant research exists on diasporas (Clifford, 1994), “transnational social networks” (Fawcett, 1989; Boyd, 1989; Massey, 1987), “transnational communities” (Basch, *et al.* 1994; Vertovec, 2001) and global migration patterns (Castles and Miller, 1993). Studies of Caribbean migrants and their communities in Britain, the United States and Canada have contributed in important ways to this large body of research. (e.g. Plaza 2006b; Chamberlain, 2006; Simmons & Plaza, 2006; Henry, 1994; Waters, 2001; Richmond, 1993; Foner, 1997; Goulbourne, 2002) Previous studies have addressed such matters as the history of the Black diaspora in the North Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993) and its cultural politics in Britain (Gilroy, 1991, 2000). They have examined the evolution of the Caribbean culture and practice of migration from colonial times until the late twentieth century (Simmons and Guegant, 1992). These and other studies draw attention to the role of political, cultural and socio-economic forces from colonial times to the present in the formation of the Caribbean diaspora and the development of Caribbean transnational communities.
- 12 The pioneering study of transnational process among various Caribbean communities in New York by Basch *et al.*(1994) provided important new insights on the role of transnational migrants “who develop and maintain multiple relationships (familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political) that span borders.” Various studies have examined how Caribbean transnational migrants forge a complex matrix of intense social relationships that connect localities – Kingston, Miami, London, New York, Toronto, Montreal – in different nation-states – Jamaica, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada (for example, see Olwig-Fog, 1993; Portes 1996; Glick-Schiller, 1998; Foner, 1997; Ho, 1999; Plaza, 2000; Goulbourne, 2002). Previous researchers also point to the importance of occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time, and across national borders for their implementation (Guarnizo, 1997).
- 13 A moral obligation dimension is crucial to understanding the transnational caring for kin relationships within Caribbean family and kinship networks in the international diaspora. Finch and Mason (1993) advocate the concept of ‘kinship morality’ to suggest that a set of moral discourses inform the behavior of individuals towards their kin located in the international diaspora. Similarly, Williams (2004, p. 55) suggests that people negotiate their transnational familial relationships within these moral guidelines, and they act as moral agents involved in negotiating “the proper thing to

do” in and through their commitments to others. These caring commitments may “cross” the boundaries of blood, marriage, residence, culture and country (Reynolds, 2006).

- 14 Transnational caring about family members and kin seems to assume a crucial relevance in the context of Caribbean return migration particularly for geographically dispersed families. The very existence of transnational families does, in fact, rest on kin ties being kept alive and maintained, in spite of great distances and prolonged separations (Reynolds, 2004). Reynolds, (2005) adopts the term cultural remittance to advance the theory of transnational caring about relationships. She notes that cultural remittance represents people’s emotional attachments and the way in which migrants abroad utilize their family links to maintain cultural connections to their place of origin as a long term insurance policy against sickness or old age (Burman, 2002; Levitt, 2001). Other forms of cultural remittance include owning and building property “back home” so that one day the individual can return, the celebration of cultural rituals and national events in the new country of residence, and keeping abreast of national news “back home” through the Internet and newspapers (Horst & Miller, 2006). Cultural remittance reinforces ethnic identity and is viewed as a sign of continued commitment to the kin left behind, commitment to keeping kin together, and keeping avenues open for temporary or permanent future return.
- 15 These studies find that Caribbean migrants do not forget their home communities, nor do they lose contact with families, community organizations and political movements in their countries of origin, as they become part of a new society (Ho, 1993; Goldring, 2001; Olwig-Fog, 2002). Rather, Caribbean migrants take advantage of new opportunities, through travel and inexpensive telecommunications, to be simultaneously part of their home society as well as the society to which they have moved (Glick-Schiller et al, 1992; Portes, 1996; Vertovec, 2001). Both the home and migrant new settlement societies are in turn simultaneously transformed by these transnational links.
- 16 Much of the research on transnational social networks and communities assumes that these societies are particularly strong when they arise as part of an effort to overcome oppression. Transnational social networks and communities among formerly colonized and still radicalized minorities are understood to be part of their effort to resist marginalization, radicalization, discrimination, exploitation and segregation in the countries to which they have moved, in their home nations and in the international system generally.
- 17 As a direct result of feeling marginalized, radicalized or alienated many Caribbean migrants over the years experienced a sense of cultural mourning. The idea of cultural mourning has its origins in the theories of object loss as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud (1939). In most cases of object loss individuals are able to mourn their loss in a way that prevents derangement. According to Volkan (1981) the mourner eventually finds “linking phenomena” that provide, “a locus to externalize contact between aspects of the mourner’s self representation and aspects of the representation of the deceased”. Linking objects play a role in alleviating mourning in that they create “a symbolic bridge to allow the mourner to get over the situation” (Frankiel, 1994: 44).
- 18 Ainslie (1998) notes that immigrants living abroad often find a space to engage in activities, “that bridge the emotional gaps” created by their feelings of dislocation and loss (Ainslie, 1998: 289). This space allows first generation immigrants and their

children to restore the “object loss” they feel. This might include the engagement in activities that create the, “illusion of restoration of what was lost” (Ainslie, 1998: 289). For Caribbeans in the international diaspora this might include Caribbean carnival parades in New York, Miami and Toronto. These cultural spectacles are perceived to be more than simply efforts by a cultural minority to feel “at home” in a new place and to maintain cultural traditions. Such public displays of culture and other actions by the minority transnational community members serve to generate community solidarity, recognition and resources for social action and transformation (Ho & Nurse, 2005). Ainslie further notes that immigrants tend to fill this potential “empty” space with activities, objects or artifacts that keep alive the illusion of continuity with the homeland. In this regard, the potential space serves as a platform where immigrants can begin to negotiate their adaptation to the new environment.

- 19 Transnationalism plays a major part in the return migrants’ reintegration and mobilization for social development. Faist (2000) highlights the bridging function of social capital. This function occurs not only when groups are formed at home and overseas, but also when there is an active transnational exchange between these groups; that is, between migrants who are abroad and their families, kin and advocates who are in the origin country. Such transnational exchanges help the development of the origin community, even as these exchanges allow migrants to prepare for their eventual return and retain contacts with their family, kin, fictive kin, close friends, hometown or high school alumni associations.
- 20 As a theoretical perspective, a transnational approach is a robust framework for helping to unpack the complex and multidirectional orientation of Caribbean migrants in the international diaspora today. Over time, and because of technological innovations which have compressed distance, time and space; Caribbean sojourners have developed a unique idea of what it means to belong somewhere. For many their identity and sense of belonging is situational and fluid. For others, it depends on how long they have lived abroad, how many return visits they have made, and how many relatives they have still alive in their country of origin. For others it may depend on the degree to which they feel a sense of acceptance and respect in their place of settlement and or what conditions their place of return is in. These factors and many more all contribute in different ways to living a transnational lifestyle for Caribbean sojourners. These complex factors are unpredictable as to their importance or influence in the lives of individuals. What is most important to note is that most Caribbean-origin migrants in the international diaspora do to some degree or another live a transnational lifestyle.

Return Migration to the Caribbean

- 21 Although return migration on a global scale has been the subject of considerable study in places like Italy, Greece, Mexico, Ireland and Turkey, only a handful of studies have been done on return migration to the English-speaking Caribbean (Bovenkerk, 1974; King, 1986). Most research on the phenomenon of return migration to the Caribbean region has focused on Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic – primarily because these Spanish-speaking territories have sent larger numbers of their population to the United States – more than any other country in the region. As a result of their substantial numbers of migrants, these two locations have the largest number of

individuals as potential returnee migrants (Pessar, 1997; Muschkin, 1993; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1992; Guarnizo, 1997).

- 22 Return migration to the English-speaking Caribbean only began to receive serious attention from research scholars in the early 1970s. Most of the early studies concentrated either on the returnee's adjustment problems (Patterson, 1968; Davidson, 1969; Taylor, 1976; Nutter, 1985) or the development implications of return migrants and retirees (Gmelch, 1987; Stinner, 1982; Thomas-Hope, 1985; Byron, 1994). There have also been a few studies of return migration from Britain to the Caribbean that indicate the significance of the social and economic aspects of the return phenomenon. Peach (1968) points out how each wave of returnees fluctuated depending on the booms and busts in the British economy. Davidson (1969) found that the returnees to Jamaica experienced a shock upon return due to the realization that the cost of living had risen alarmingly and there was neither work, nor housing. Philpott (1968) reported similar results of disillusionment for return migrants from Montserrat who ultimately went back to England after a short return period. Studying the social adjustment aspect of return to the region, Taylor (1976) notes that there were differences in happiness and success between retiring returnees to rural versus urban areas in Jamaica. Returnees to the rural areas indicated much higher levels of satisfaction than individuals returning to the urban areas.
- 23 Another limitation of the existing return migration literature to the English-speaking Caribbean is that it has been focused on the experiences of the returnees, who are typically around retirement age (Rubenstein, 1982; Thomas-Hope, 1985, 1999; Gmelch, 1980, 1987, 1995; Byron, 1994). In looking at the economic impact of returnees on the host society, Gmelch (1980) found that retirees brought with them innovations and investments which benefited the Barbadian economy and society. Thomas-Hope (1999) noted a similar phenomenon in Jamaica whereby retiring return migrants had a dramatic impact in jump-starting the poor economy through the influx of foreign currency and, by hiring builders and other trades people, they also aided the local labour market. Abenaty (2000) also points out a similar pattern among seniors returning to St. Lucia. Many continued to be economically active by starting small entrepreneurial enterprises, many of which employed locals. Abenaty also notes that senior returnees experienced problems in terms of disappointment on their return to St Lucia. Many had high expectations for being welcomed back to the island of their birth. Most found, however, a great deal of resentment towards them for what the local population regarded as ostentatious displays of their wealth.
- 24 More recently, Thomas-Hope (2002) notes a similar disillusionment with the decision to return among a group of skilled returnees to Jamaica. During their stay abroad, the highly skilled group tended to develop livelihood expectations that could not easily be met in Jamaica, their country of origin. After living in their place of origin for more than a year many continued to maintain close economic and social links with their former country of residence. Many of the skilled returnees in the sample continued to maintain a foreign citizenship, thus suggesting that their return to Jamaica may not be the final move in the migration cycle.
- 25 Goulbourne's (2002) study of returning migrants to Jamaica in the 1990s further highlights new issues and problems for families and governments in areas that both receive and send migrants. The return of men and women in old age has a number of negative effects, starting with the absence of grandparents in upbringing and

development of the young who remain behind in Britain. The impact of the returnees on the local housing stock, the local communities and the medical facilities was seen as detrimental and resulted in a driving up of costs for local governments, particularly those hard hit by structural adjustment policies over the last ten years. The added drain on the system by these newly returned local-foreigners resulted in disillusionment among both the returnees and the local population.

- 26 Nutter (1985), Byron (2000) and Plaza's (2002) work has captured the most recent phenomenon of second-generation return migration to the Caribbean. Nutter's sample of return migrants in Kingston, Jamaica represents a significantly skilled minority with respect to the national workforce, and their success appeared to be related to their education and work experience obtained overseas. Byron's (2000) research finds that some young, economically active returnees to the region have tended to invest in small cluster business categories linked to the tourism industry. Others have sought jobs as employees within hotels. Most, however, have entered self-employment, providing accommodation, transportation, boutiques and bars to serve the tourism industry and, more generally, the service sector.
- 27 Plaza (2002); Potter, Conway & Phillips (2005) identified a growing trend of "return" migration to the Caribbean among second generation British Caribbean persons. Second generation "returnees" from Britain do not fit the typical profile of elder retired migrants returning to their place of birth. These individuals typically have a university degree or a specialized professional qualification and a desire to work once they move back to the Caribbean. The findings from Plaza's (2002) research suggest that a hoped for idyllic re-connection with the Caribbean has not manifested itself for second generation returnees because the issues of race, gender, skin colour and class politics prevent their smooth transition into their "home" societies.
- 28 More recently there has been an increased interest in the return migration phenomena by government officials in the English-speaking Caribbean because the circulation of these individuals appears to have impact on the local economy in terms of the growth of self-employed businesses, tourism and service sector industries (Plaza & Henry, 2006a; De Souza, 1998; Thomas-Hope, 1999; Potter, 2001). The future cohorts of returnees do represent a potential human and economic resource for local Caribbean governments since they often bring savings, skills and an entrepreneurial fervor that might be used to help kick start economies depleted by years of structural adjustment. See figure 1 (in the appendices) for a graphic representation of the factors which influence the transnational migration and return migration phenomenon from the Caribbean to metropolitan countries and then vice versa.
- 29 During the most recent period, a new phenomenon of transnationalism has emerged among older retired migrants moving back from the Caribbean to North America. These are typically individuals who went abroad for schooling or who spent a long enough time living abroad to get their citizenship status for Canada or the United States. These "successful" temporary migrants likely spent less than ten years in the metropolitan countries before returning to their place of birth. As legal citizens of both their countries of origin as well as the host migrant country, these people are free to live in any part of the world and still enjoy the protections of being a Canadian or American. These migrants returned to the Caribbean in the late 1970s and 80s and started their own businesses or worked in high profile positions within the government. In the late 1990s some of them reached retirement age in the Caribbean

and have now begun to return to North America in search of better medical care, to be reunited with children and grand-children, or to escape the rising levels of crime and social instability in the Caribbean (Plaza & Henry, 2006a). The pattern of migration – tooing and froing – include people who are moving in response to conditions in both locations. They are the new transnationalists whose legal movement out and back is likely to increase over the years as more individuals are desirous of taking advantage of the benefits offered in both locations.

Factors Involved in Making the Decision to Return

- 30 The decision to return to one's place of birth is very complex and often depends on an idiosyncratic set of facts about a migrant's life, cultural references and values. It is also a strategic choice made at a particular time in an individual's life. The path leading from *intention* to return (professed by the majority of migrants) to *actual* return is difficult to predict. Economic theory offers two different perspectives on return migration. Neoclassical economic theory views return migration as a cost-benefit decision, with actors deciding to stay or return in order to maximize expected net lifetime earnings (Todaro, 1976). In the neoclassical model, social attachments generally operate on the cost side of the equation. Attachments to people and institutions in the origin country lower the costs of going "home", both psychologically and monetarily, and they raise the costs of remaining abroad. In contrast, attachments (to grandchildren, family or kin) at the place of destination operate in precisely the opposite direction, raising the costs of return migration while decreasing the costs of staying.
- 31 Migrant motives for return to the English-speaking Caribbean have included strong family ties in the home country, dissatisfaction with present social status or conditions (typically in Canada, the United States or Britain), obligation to relatives, feelings of loyalty, guilt for living abroad, patriotism, perception of better opportunities opening up in the Caribbean and nostalgia (Sill, 2002). Some intervening factors that influence return include the following: changes in the social or political conditions in either homeland or receiving context (such as recession or political opposition to migration); marriage while in the destination country; marriage or relationship breakdown while abroad; having children in the new country of residence and the need to socialize them in the Caribbean; the number of family members who have migrated; ownership of property in the receiving country; the distance between the source and destination country; the number of return visits over the period of migration; the form of government in the home country; inequality in the source country; the acquisition of citizenship in the host country; length of stay in the host country; and the age at the time of migration.
- 32 Among the most important factors that encourage return are lasting ties with family and local society, and the education of migrant children. Among the conditions that prompt return include the maintenance of affective ties with the home country through frequent trips home, close relations with fellow absent compatriots, listening to local music, participation in traditional cultural events, the maintenance of the local language (dialects) and reading both newspapers and internet web sites from home. But these factors are only determinant when they compound a low degree of host country satisfaction.

- 33 Reagan and Olsen (2000), using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, compared patterns of return migration among both male and female immigrants. They did not find a gender differential but they did uncover lower probabilities of return migration among those who had arrived at younger ages, those with higher potential wages, those with more years in the U.S. and those participating in welfare programs. Duleep and Regets (1999) characterize the emigration of foreigners either as “mistaken migration”, whereby disillusioned immigrants return home soon after arrival or “retirement migration”, where immigrants return home after withdrawal from the labour force at an older age.
- 34 An observation on length of stay in the country of immigration implies that the process of integration is an evolutionary one that transforms the aspiration, ways of thinking, and interests of the émigrés. This realization enables Cerase (1974) to refine his observations and to outline three types of returns: failure returnees (return before two years), innovative returnees (returning after six to ten years), and retirement returns (return after eleven to twenty years). Failure returns are frequently prompted by disappointment and often follow short stays overseas. Failure is not an abstract notion, and many empirical studies have sought to determine its characteristics. Difficulty in adjusting to the host country is found to be the primary cause of failure. There are many facets to adjustment including migrant age: the older a migrant is at the time of departure, the shorter the stay abroad. The manifestation of racism in host countries constrains or limits access and opportunity for migrants of colour and is a strong factor in lack of adjustment.
- 35 Others, while recognizing the impact of racism, are able to accommodate themselves in the new, yet discriminatory society. Returns are also promoted by cataclysmic events such as loss of employment or housing, illness, divorce, death, and so on. These difficulties play the role of catalyst, transforming a potential choice into a positive decision.
- 36 Most return migrants in the English-speaking Caribbean cannot be viewed as failures, but as “successes”. That is, most returnees have met their income goals and are returning home to enjoy the fruits of their success. Therefore, unlike neoclassical economics, the new economics of labour migration predicts that return migrants will be negatively selected with respect to work effort – those migrants who work fewer hours per week will have to remain abroad longer to meet a given income target. Factors of attraction, although difficult to measure, are clearly determined and appear to be a stronger motivation than factors of dissuasion. This does not mean that dissuading factors are unimportant. On the contrary, they are often more mentioned in the literature and include racism, difficulty in integration, difficulty in finding work and difficulty in coping with climate.
- 37 The decision to return to one’s country of origin is essentially an affective one, tempered by a strategy for a higher socio-professional status. At the two extremes, failure returns and structural returns are each affected by emotional factors. The migrant negotiates between the affective nature of his or her decision for themselves, their family and the receiving society. See table 1 in the appendices for a summary of the factors which influence the decision about whether to return to the Caribbean. It is important to note that the factors involve a complex transnational web of interlocking and often idiosyncratic factors which range from conditions both in the home country

and in the metropolitan country of settlement. The decision to return can also occur for some individuals because of some more idiosyncratic combination of reasons.

Return Migration Intentions

- 38 Many reasons motivate Caribbean migrants to think about returning to their place of birth. Immigrant's return intentions will be influenced by their demographic characteristics and labor market outcomes, as well as the macro-economic environment. The fact that some Caribbean migrants plan to return while others do not, suggest to researchers that there must be some compelling differences within the population in terms of labor market behavior, skill accumulation, consumption patterns, acculturation, feelings of belonging, nationalism, and exposures to the ugliness of racism and radicalization. Added to these factors are of course the socio-economic and political stability of the "home" country that most would likely return to.
- 39 In order to examine the factors which appear to motivate migrants of Caribbean origin in the international diaspora to consider returning back to their "home" country a study undertaken by Simmons and Plaza (2005) on remittance practices of specific Caribbean-origin immigrant communities resident in Canada is instructive. Using a survey methodology, migrants from Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana living in Toronto (n=307) were questioned on their migration experiences and transnational linkages. There were significant differences in the remittance practice for each group. Results from the study also indicated that there were differences in return migration intention including such factors as place of birth, gender, age, ethnicity housing tenure, income, number of return visits, remittance practices, and membership in transnational social organizations. Each of these factors seemed to influence each ethnic cohort in terms of intentions to return. Some preliminary findings from this study also suggest that there is a significant number of both men and women who seem to desire to return to their place of birth in the future. There are however differences in terms of gender and country of origin. Guyanese migrants in Toronto are the least likely to indicate a desire to return in the future to their home country and this trend seems to be stronger among Guyanese women. Ethnicity and age also seem to be influential factors in terms of the desire to return but some are constrained by means and ability to return. Younger age people seek to return more strongly but this is greatly influenced by ethnic origin. Indo-Caribbean migrants seem to be less likely than Afro-Caribbean people to have a strong desire to return to a place of origin. Some of these differences might be explained by the history of ethnic divisions in the country of origin or the overt and covert racist practices that African-origin people in Canada experience compared to Indo-Caribbean people (Plaza, 2004). The general results of this study suggest that members of Caribbean communities in Canada are not homogenous in terms of their attitudes or desire to return. What is most interesting about the differences in return intention is that each cohort in Canada experience different degrees of success as well as having different experiences and reactions to radicalization, racism and discrimination. Their connections to their place of origin also differ based on number of return visits or sustained transnational connections. Some of these factors help to explain why there are different return intentions based on place of origin, gender, age, ethnicity and connection to the home country. See table 2 (in the appendices) for the correlates of return migration intentions among

Caribbean immigrants in Toronto. This table provides the percent of males and females from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad in 2004 who indicate a return migration intention. The cross tabulations show the percent from within each group that indicated a positive desire to return.

Factors which Increase Successful Reintegration to Home Country

40 Once returnees from the international diaspora return to their place of birth many factors help to increase the success of their reintegration. One of the most critical factors which influence re-integration and the entire return migration process is the role of financial capital. If earning more abroad is a primary reason for emigration, then bringing home significant savings and investment from abroad is important to sustain a migrant's intention of return and successful reintegration. In addition however, there are other factors that can make re-entry difficult or relatively easy. These include:

1. Length of stays abroad, the returnee's stage in the lifecycle, their socio-economic status and their access to resources on return all affect re-entry. Those who have stayed abroad a long time without making return visits in between find it difficult to reintegrate.
2. Socio-economic status and available resources – brought back, previously invested or mobilized on return – have a strong bearing on the degree and speed of reintegration to the home country.
3. Reintegration hinges on the capacity of the society of return to accommodate the returnees. Much depends on that society's security and stability, the state of its economy and its capacity to mobilize resources to assist or facilitate reintegration of the sojourner.
4. Return migrants who have not been significantly alienated from the culture and practices of their origin communities will have a greater chance to become reintegrated.
5. Maintaining a transnational connection over the period they were away plays a major part in reintegration into a migrant's birthplace. Such transnational exchanges help in the development of the origin community, even as they allow migrants to retain contacts with their hometowns and prepare them for their eventual return.
6. Reintegration often hinges on the presence of extended families, kin or co-ethnics in communities receiving returnees.
7. Sojourners who have stayed abroad a long time without making return visits may find it difficult to reintegrate. This is especially true for the children of returnees or those born and raised abroad. This may raise issues of what constitutes "home" for these so-called returnees.

Conclusion

41 Return migration and circulation has long been an integral part of the social and economic fabric of the English-speaking Caribbean region. Returnees in the past as well as the present play an extremely significant role in the region's development. Returnee groups, as a result of their lifetime of work overseas, are able to contribute to the region's experience and skill base. Many returnees are also parents and grandparents who add to the human and social capital of their "home" nations in a myriad of ways,

and they add to the transnational reciprocal linkages which serve to bind members of the diaspora together.

- 42 Several opportunities and problems are generated by the process of return and resettlement to the English-speaking Caribbean. These include both practical and psychological difficulties involved in the decision to move from one place to another, and these are often compounded by the returnees' memories and expectations of the idealized homeland that they departed from some ten or more years ago.
- 43 A transnational orientation has proven to be a robust framework for understanding the fluid circulation which is prevalent among sojourners from the Caribbean. Return migration should no longer be thought of as a final stage of the migration process. Rather, current and future waves of returnees are likely to be living a tooing and froing lifestyle that has them moving back and forth based mainly on personal circumstances. For those who returned to the Caribbean but left behind children and grandchildren their tooing and froing will be regular. For those who become ill or infirmed in older age their movement back and forth may be restricted. For others in good health, relatively young and mobile, their movements will be unpredictable and complex. Most will move back and forth in response to circumstances and opportunities in different locations. This fluid movement will be facilitated by the fact that many returnees hold dual citizenship status. Dual citizenship combined with technological innovations have compressed distance for many Caribbean people living in the international diaspora, as such, many will see their global movements in the future as fluid and seamless.
- 44 The long term future of return migration to the Caribbean is still very unpredictable. Demographically, there is a growing number of second – and third – generation Caribbean men and women living in the international diaspora. These are individuals who do not know the Caribbean as their place of birth or idealized paradise. Some of these men and women are the product of inter-ethnic non-Caribbean/ Caribbean relationships. Most, however, know the Caribbean as a region where they can visit distant family and kin. Their connection to the Caribbean region may be primarily based on their parents' or grandparents' experiences and reminiscences. It may also be based on their physical appearance, or their love of Caribbean foods and music which they have come to equate with being authentically Caribbean. As a consequence of the shifting demographic realities, the current phenomenon of return migration may diminish in the future because the pool of traditional "returnees" will become fewer and fewer.
- 45 One factor that might continue to fuel the desire for return among the future third and fourth generations in the international diaspora is the continued existence of racism, radicalization, and alienation in metropolitan countries where Caribbean people have settled. Faced with these unfortunate realities, many people in the future may continue to hold onto the same dreams as their ancestors – to return to the source where they will be accepted and feel at home regardless of social class, skin colour or ethnicity. This naïve desire does not, of course, recognize the stratification patterns of Caribbean societies that are also based on "race", gender, social class and sexual orientation. They are also societies which have had to weather the harsh problems created by structural adjustment economic policies which have helped to create a more individualistic society where it is "everyone for him or her self". Thus, we are left to question how long the return migration phenomenon will sustain itself among Caribbean-origin men and women now living in the international diaspora.

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APPENDIXES

Figure 1 : A Transnational Model of Return Migration to the English-speaking Caribbean

Source : Modified for the Caribbean context from Cerease (1974) and Sill (2002) general models of return.

Table 1 : Idiosyncratic Factors which Influence the Return Decision

Fluid Metropolitan Structural Factors	Fluid Caribbean Structural Factors	Strategic Mobility Factors	Individual Demographic Factors	Emotional Obligation Factors
immigration status-green card, landed immigrant, citizenship	degree of political stability in Caribbean	possibility of an entrepreneurial venture in the Caribbean	age of returnee	number of relatives in metropolitan to be left behind
experienced racism, radicalization, alienation or marginalization	degree of economic stability in Caribbean	perceived employment opportunities in the Caribbean	health status of returnee	number and age of children in metropolitan to be left behind
enjoy good quality of life and participate in exciting activities	degree of economic stratification or polarization in the Caribbean	stable pension or social security plan benefits from the metropolitan	number of return visits since migrating	number of grandchildren in metropolitan to be left behind

good job with benefits or mobility opportunity	infrastructural development in the Caribbean	ease for living a transnational lifestyle—cheap airfares	length of time living in metropolitan	maintained connection with Caribbean—through friends
appreciate the law, order and routine of metropolitan living	health and social services available in the Caribbean	perceived a better quality of carefree lifestyle in the Caribbean	degree of personal acculturation	Perception that one will get more respect, social status and have carefree living
difficulty having schooling credentials recognized	law, order and personal safety issues in the Caribbean	perceived upward social and economic mobility in the Caribbean	amount of wealth accumulated	alleviating feelings of cultural mourning and object loss
climate of harsh cold weather	“roots” maintained homeownership or family land in the Caribbean	alleviating feelings of guilt for migrating in the first place	marital status or partners ethnicity	maintained a link through alumni or hometown association
gender—women have more freedoms in metropolitan	number of friends who have returned or who never migrated from the Caribbean	promise of a better job opportunity in the Caribbean	regular remittances sent back to maintain connections	nostalgic romanticized recollections of life in the Caribbean
home ownership and other roots in metropolitan	local Caribbean governments incentive programs (duty free car etc.)	feel that skills acquired abroad can provide a better economic in Caribbean	schooling qualifications or professional accreditations	maintained a transnational connection to family and friends

Table 2 : Correlates of Return Migration Intention Among Caribbean Immigrants in Toronto by Place of Birth and Controlling for Gender

		Guyanese		Jamaican		Trinidadian	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age	18-34 years	76.9	33.3	60.9	50.0	58.6	52.9
	35-54 years	29.2	11.5	53.8	45.7	41.7	52.0
	55 over	14.3	18.3	20.0	71.4	14.3	0.0
Ethnic	African	36.4	0.0	57.1	44.6	48.3	29.6
	Indian	50.0	25.0	33.3	50.0	50.0	55.6

	Other	27.3	13.3	33.3	80.0	46.2	56.3
Marital Status	Single	46.2	0.0	61.1	45.8	48.0	42.9
	Married	39.3	16.7	47.4	58.3	58.8	45.5
	Divorced	33.3	36.4	50.0	42.9	16.7	33.3
Residence	Renter	50.0	38.1	56.0	52.3	54.8	44.1
	Owner	30.0	6.5	36.4	42.9	23.1	40.0
Education	High school	61.1	21.6	50.0	40.0	50.0	42.1
	College	35.7	7.1	55.0	61.3	33.3	40.9
	University	16.7	18.5	66.7	40.0	61.5	50.0
Household	<19,999	57.1	40.0	50.0	42.1	58.8	44.4
Income	20-39,999	54.5	7.1	61.1	45.5	50.0	38.9
2004	40,000 +	29.2	13.0	41.7	56.0	30.8	43.8
Return Visits	0 Return	33.3	16.7	71.4	42.9	40.0	28.6
Past 5 Years	1-2 Return	44.4	17.9	52.2	30.3	48.1	45.8
	3+ Return	50.0	21.4	45.5	75.0	50.0	42.9
Telephone	Zero	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Calls Back	1-2 calls	13.3	11.1	73.3	31.8	37.5	27.8
Each Month	3-5 calls	64.7	29.4	66.7	48.0	54.5	40.9
	6 or more	60.0	28.6	66.7	72.7	72.7	70.0
Money	Zero	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Remitted to	1-2 times	17.6	15.8	57.1	25.0	35.7	50.0
Home in past	3-5 times	63.6	6.7	52.2	58.3	56.3	31.6
18 months	6 or more	54.5	33.3	55.6	56.7	50.0	52.6
Alumni-Transnational	Membership	50.0	29.4	27.3	68.2	64.3	64.3
N=		44	54	41	68	48	52

ABSTRACTS

Using a transnational theoretical framework we examine the factors which have been involved in the emergence of a return migration culture in the English-speaking Caribbean since 1834. Caribbean emigration and return is not a simplistic bipolar movement, rather the flow is best understood as a fluid looping process which has some backflow. This paper presents a review of the return migration literature as it applies to the English-speaking Caribbean. By doing so, we make a strong case for the use of a transnational approach to understanding the current return migration phenomenon which has changed due to the ease with which migrants can move back and forth between “home” and abroad. Also presented are a theoretical model of decision making, and the correlates which predict the return migration intentions among Guyanese, Trinidadian’s and Jamaicans living in Toronto in 2004.

La migration de retour dans l’espace transnational caribéen anglophone. En nous référant à un cadre théorique transnational, nous examinons les facteurs de l’émergence d’une culture de la migration de retour dans la Caraïbe anglophone depuis 1834. L’émigration caribéenne et le retour au pays ne constituent pas un simple mouvement bipolaire, mais s’apparentent davantage à un processus cyclique marqué par des reflux. Cet article fait le point sur la recherche concernant la migration de retour appliquée à la Caraïbe anglophone. Ce faisant, nous mettons l’accent sur le recours à une approche transnationale pour comprendre le mouvement migratoire de retour actuel qui a changé du fait de la facilité avec laquelle les migrants peuvent circuler entre leur pays d’origine et l’étranger. Une présentation est aussi faite du modèle théorique de la prise de décision et des corrélations pouvant expliquer les intentions de retour des Guyaniens, des Trinidiens et des Jamaïcains vivant à Toronto en 2004.

Migración de vuelta transnacional al Caribe de habla inglesa. Usando un marco teórico transnacional examinamos los factores que han estado implicados en la aparición de una cultura de retorno de la migración en el Caribe de lengua inglesa desde 1834. La emigración del Caribe y el retorno al país de origen no es un movimiento bipolar simplista, mas bien un proceso cíclico con reflujos. Este papel presenta una revisión de la literatura de vuelta de la migración mientras que se aplica al Caribe de habla inglesa. Haciendo así pues, hacemos un caso fuerte para el uso de un enfoque transnacional para entender el fenómeno de la migración de retorno actual que ha cambiado debido a la facilidad con la cual los migrantes pueden moverse entre su país de origen y el exterior. También se presenta un modelo teórico de la toma de decisión, y los correlativos que pueden explicar las intenciones de retorno de los Guyaneses, Trinidadians y Jamaicanos viviendo en Toronto en 2004.

INDEX

Mots-clés: histoire, Caribéens, retour, Guyaniens, Jamaïcains, Trinidiens

Geographical index: Ontario – Toronto

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