Social Dynamics of 'Foreign-Born' and 'Young' Returning Nationals to the Caribbean: A Review of the Literature

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Geographical Paper No 167

March 2003

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Introduction

This paper presents an overview of the literature on return migration, in the context of a current study of young returning migrants to the Caribbean, the overall scope of which has been outlined in Potter and Phillips (2002). This paper is mainly concerned with a review and assessment of the literature that is directly relevant to the study of returning nationals to the Caribbean region. However, as part of this primarily Caribbean-oriented discourse, extra-regional examples are introduced as and when they have a bearing on the current project. Such extra-regional materials are reviewed in two particular contexts. First, it is recognised that much of the early research on returning migrants was carried out in relation to European migration patterns, and to a lesser extent, migration to and from the USA, Canada and Australia. Second, in a few instances, research on migration outside the Caribbean is directly relevant to the aims and intentions of the current project (see Potter and Phillips, 2002), and is therefore discussed here.

Early Studies of Return Migration

King (2000) argues that return migration is the great unfinished chapter in the history of migration. King maintains that early writings inferred that migration in general was a one-way process with no return (Anwar, 1979). However, that is not to say that the issue of return migration has never been acknowledged in the literature. For example, in the nineteenth century, Ravenstein (1885) identified counter-current migration flows, and the scarcity of data about such moves. Generally, however, the neglect of return migration has been noticeable in the literature. Rhoades (1978) in Gmelch (1980:135) has offered several reasons for this neglect. For instance, he maintains that the limited academic attention given to the subject of return migration was due to a weak statistical base and ensuing problems of quantification. Moreover, this was compounded by the ontological weakness of viewing migration as a permanent movement rather than as a circular process. Gmelch argues that massive urbanization led to a rural-urban analytical framework in which geographical movements were viewed as occurring in only one direction, ie rural to urban. Further,

traditional anthropological research has often only allowed for fieldwork over limited time periods and geographic spaces, which may have led to migration being viewed as a static event. King (2000) reiterates this difficulty in quantification, arguing that many countries fail to even record returning migrants, and even more so their characteristics. Furthermore, attempting to define a return migrant has proven to be problematic for many policy-makers.

However, despite the limitations of earlier approaches, a conceptual definition of return migration has emerged in the literature. Return migration is typically viewed as the process whereby people return to their country of origin after a significant period of residence in another country. Even though there has been some acknowledgment in academic writing that "return" can be viewed as "voluntary" or "forced," generally, academic attention has centred on *voluntary* international return migration in which returnees cross national boundaries (King, 2000; Sill, 2000; Gmelch, 1980, 1992; Thomas Hope, 1992).

Research has been steadily accumulating over the past thirty years, presenting case studies of return migration in different countries, regions and villages over a range of historical periods (see, for example, Bohning, 1986; Bovenkerk, 1974, Gmelch and Rhoades, 1979; King, 1986; Chamberlain, 1997; Potter, 2003a, 2003b). In fact, Kubat (1984:1) maintains that there are now works on return migration, both descriptive and analytic, which make return migration an established sub-discipline of migration studies. Moreover, Kubat asserts that the *First European Conference On International Migration* (1981) served to channel interest and brought the subject into focus for scholars and researchers in various disciplines.

There are three ways in which to examine the literature on return migration: historically, geographically or in terms of the conceptual and theoretical framework addressed (King, 2000). This overview of the literature follows a similar structure. It focusses briefly on historical evidence from different geographical migration settings, before turning to the conceptual and theoretical approaches used to examine return migration. Hence, it provides an overall contextual approach for further study on return migration (see Potter and Phillips, 2002).

The academic literature on return migration has followed the evolution of return currents themselves. For example, King (2000) maintains that three groups of studies can be recognised: the first of return from the United States to labour supply countries such as Italy (Gilkey, 1967; Lopreato, 1967) and to other labour suppliers such as Puerto Rico (Hernandez Alvarez, 1967; Myers and Masnick, 1968) and Mexico (Hernandez Alvarez, 1967). The second category of studies was of British return from Australia (Appleyard, 1962; Richardson, 1968) and Canada (Richmond, 1966; 1968). The third group of studies was from Britain to the Caribbean (Davidson, 1968; Patterson, 1968). These trends in return migration flows are perhaps not surprising, given that migrants with a longstanding history of labour migration were likely to return when the economy of their adopted lands suffered a downturn, as was the case during the recession of 1966-1967.

With regard to conceptual and theoretical frameworks, King (2000) and Gmelch (1980) have both expressed the view that research on return has been mainly descriptive and lacking in theoretical development. Yet it must be acknowledged that attempts have been made to generate conceptualisations in the academic literature. For example, typologies and conceptual frameworks have been introduced with regard to defining the return migrant, his/her motivation for return, the adjustment process and impact of return on the country of origin.

 Moreover, Gmelch's (1980) synthetic review can thus be viewed as an attempt to bridge the gap between description and theory. Further, it provides a useful starting point for any consideration of the return migration literature. He offers conceptual approaches by which to analyse the return migrant, along with their motivation and adjustment patterns. For example, Gmelch's typology of the return migrant is based upon Cerase's (1974) earlier formulation and is derived from the return migration's intention to return. Essentially it comprises a three-fold typology distinguishing between:

1. Returnees who intended temporary migration. The time of their return is determined by the objectives they set out to achieve at the time of emigration.

2. Returnees who intended permanent return migration but were forced to return.

3. Returnees who intended permanent migration but chose to return owing to, for example, homesickness or adjustment problems. (1980:138)

With regard to motives for return, Gmelch's (1980) categorisation is based upon economic and socio-cultural factors. For example, unfavourable economic conditions such as unemployment in the country of origin due to increased industrialization can promote a 'push' factor for return (see, for example, Hernandez Alvarez, 1967; King, 1977; Rhoades, 1980). However, for the most part, return has been determined by socio-cultural 'pull' factors, for instance, familial and friendship ties; allegiance and strong identification with the home society (see, for example, Appleyard, 1962; Davidson, 1968; Brannick, 1977; Gmelch, 1979).

According to Gmelch (1980:142) two perspectives can be derived from the issue of adaptation. The first approach examines the extent to which actual social and economic conditions of return are satisfied, that is, the attainment of jobs, adequate housing and the development of social networks (for example, see Rhoades, 1980; De Vanzo, 1976; Kenny, 1972; Appleyard, 1962; Cerase, 1970). The second approach focuses on an interpretative perspective based on the returnees' own perceptions of personal satisfaction. The emphasis, Gmelch maintains, is mainly on the latter approach to adjustment.

There has been much debate and contention with regard to the impact of return migration on the societies of origin (e.g., Böhning, 1972; Bovenkerk, 1974; Rhoades, 1978; Swanson, 1979). Discussion has centred on whether return migrants bring back valuable work skills, capital, and new ideas which result in changes in societal structure. According to Gmelch (1980) empirical evidence does not support this overall claim. For example, evidence suggest that few returnees arrive back with skills that are important to development, since many work in unskilled jobs whilst overseas (Rhoades, 1978; Brannick, 1977; Cerase, 1974; Lee, 1966). However, it has been shown that this is not always the case; for example, Hernandez Alvarez (1967) found that a significant proportion of Puerto Rican returnees were white collared rather than manual, and as a group they represented the island's elite in all sectors.

Gmelch's (1980) review suggests that while significant strides have been made with regard to conceptualisation, little has been added in respect of the development of theory, by means of which a predictive base might be formulated. Therefore, this apparent neglect in the literature on return migration provides justification for a comprehensive project that seeks to respond to the challenge of theory formulation.

Research on Return Migration to the Caribbean

It is not surprising therefore that research in the sub-field of return migration to the Caribbean has, like the general field itself, suffered from a poor statistical base and ontological-theoretical weaknesses. For instance, De Souza (1998) views the issue of return migration as somewhat of a conundrum in West Indian demographic analysis. He explains that although widely accepted and acknowledged as a culturally pervasive element within Caribbean society, it remains poorly documented. Academics such as Gmelch, (1992), Pessar (1997), Byron and Condon (1996), Chamberlain (1997) and De Souza (1998) have all attributed this lack of documentation to the difficulties of accessing reliable data concerning the phenomenon, furthered by an added complexity of a prevailing dichotic view of (return) migration. In addition, Chamberlain (1997:16), argues that in respect of the Caribbean region, more emphasis is placed on the grander narratives of migration.

However, since the 1980s attempts have made to redress this imbalance and document the Caribbean "return" experience. Much of the research is framed within an historical macro-structural perspective. This historical macro-structure seeks to offer an explanation for the perceived "uprootedness" of Caribbean peoples. Thus, studies began to focus on predominantly older West Indians returning from the labour demanding countries of Europe, mainly Britain (for example, see Davidson, 1968; Philpott, 1968; Nutter, 1986; Gmelch, 1992; Chamberlain, 1995; Byron and Condon, 1996; Byron, 2000) and from the United States (for example, see Alvarez, 1967; Pessar, 1997), and the economic and socio-cultural impact of their return.

However, some critics (for example, Thomas-Hope 1992; Gmelch, 1992; Byron, 1994) have attempted go beyond the functional, macro-traditional approach of

viewing return migration as an outcome of mere push and pull labour factors. They have sought to incorporate "interpretation at the level of societal meaning and personal consciousness," (Thomas Hope, 1992:8). Thus, recent literature has utilised micro-interpretative frameworks of analysis with regard to understanding the return migrant and his/her experiences. Thomas-Hope (1992) argues that this type of perspective was neglected in early macro-historical studies of return migration. For instance, commenting on return migration as a whole, she notes that migration:

> *... is the product not only of international and national economies, but of the particular location of the individual within the historical-structural framework...Explanation of migration behaviour must not refer solely to the characteristics of the structural framework but to the dynamics of the connections between factors and the behaviour of the social group and individual.*

Commentators (for example, Gmelch, 1992; Byron, 1994; Chamberlain, 1997; Pessar, 1997; De Souza, 1998) have adopted interpretative ethnography to investigate Caribbean return migration. For instance, Gmelch's (1992) work offers an interpretative review of the experiences of return migrants to Barbados. He focuses on the return migrants, their motivations and adjustments, and the local perception of the returnees. In Gmelch's study the return migrants become "our narrators" (Gmelch, 1992:283) through pictorials, interviews and oral histories.

Although the recent literature on Caribbean return migration has focused on documenting the experiences of the returning migrants to the Caribbean through the use of narratives and life histories, it has remained largely empirically descriptive. However, a few theorists, for example, Pessar (1997); Chamberlain (1997) and De Souza (1998) have attempted to respond to the challenge of theory formulation. They have offered conceptual frameworks for a greater understanding of return migration and provide a useful context for any study on return Caribbean migration.

For instance, the conceptual approach involving the notion of trans-national identities utilised by Pessar (1997) deserves some mention. The study of returning Dominicans from the United States (in contrast to the predominance of English returnees in the

literature) regards return as one episode in an ongoing process of migration. Pessar maintains that return migrants have trans-national links and identities in both host countries and the countries from which they emigrated. Those who chose to return however keep social and economic links in New York, which may range from the simple retention of their United States visa, familial links, to running economic activities as a business. Hence they embrace more than one identity, and can be deemed to be trans-national.

Moreover, Pessar (1997:6) challenges researchers to incorporate a post-modern "decontructive" approach when defining the return migrant. She calls for a move away from the essentialized Caribbean migrant. Pessar urges for "a more nuanced analysis and portrayal of Caribbean migrants," based upon the recognition that they are an heterogeneous social group and, therefore, are differentiated by class, gender, age, race, regional origin and time of emigration and return.

The role of the Caribbean family has been viewed as significant in understanding migration patterns based upon international labour markets and host politics (Chamberlain, 1997). Chamberlain argues that there is a migratory ideology which continues to shape the perspectives, behaviour and identities of Caribbean migrants. She stresses that the story of Caribbean migration is both international and continuing. The research is based upon eighty-five life history interviews across two and three generations of families originating in Barbados. Chamberlain cautions that this research does not offer a grand theory of migration. Rather the work serves to challenge the assumption that most migrations stems from economic forces, when viewed in an historical context. She views the family as instrumental in shaping the migration identities of West Indians.

De Souza (1998: 232) has attempted to offer a typology of Caribbean return migration, and in so doing presents a useful categorisation for future research on the return migrant in the Caribbean. He maintains that these return migration patterns are useful with regards to assessing the extent, prevalence and commonalities of return in West Indian societies. He views the first conceptualisation as that of a "mobile livelihood system," where return is part of a circular or seasonal movement of around six months or less, and the main motivation is economic survival. His second

typology is that of the "double passage", a categorisation first made by Gmelch (1992), where return is regarded as the outcome of individual will rather than global economic factors. The third typology of "return visitation" is based upon visiting friends and relatives and business tourism where nationals undertake short visits to their country of origin and constitute the Diaspora's attachment to the homeland. His fourth category, which he terms "swallow lifestyle movement", is based on a "back and forth" lifestyle movement, facilitated by liberal citizen laws which allow residence status in more than one country. Drawing upon the life histories of Trinidadians, De Souza argues that return cuts across gender, age, race, ethnicity and social status. However, despite the uniqueness of the Trinidadian experience with respect to ethnic diversity and relative prosperity, DeSouza argues that the underlying forces of motivation for return are quintessentially West Indian, that is a strong migration ethos, the difficulties of expatriate life, strong social networks and creative mobility-based strategies of dealing with adversity (1998: 229).

Generally, within the past twenty years, researchers examining the Caribbean have attempted to bridge the gap between largely descriptive research and theory. However a reliance on interpretation via the use of largely qualitative techniques has resulted in limited success. A predominance of empirical research lacking in theoretical foundation has been presented with some notable exceptions. Moreover, little is known about the macro-structure of return migration, for example, the numbers and patterns of returnees and their socio-demographic characteristics. It is not difficult to ascertain where the road lies with regard to Caribbean return migration. Emphasis must be placed on research in which methodology and theory are interplayed to provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Work on "Young" Returning Nationals: A neglected topic

Much of the work on return migration in general has thus centred on retired returnees. Caribbean research is no exception. For example, the studies of Gmelch (1992), Thomas-Hope (1992), Byron (1994), Chamberlain (1995) have all focused on the socio-economic adjustments of returnees to their countries of origin in the wake of retirement. However, Potter (2001; 2003a, 2003b) and Potter and Phillips (2002)

have highlighted a relatively new migration stream that remains largely uncharted and unstudied in the Caribbean. They define this demographic profile as young returning nationals i.e., second generation (West Indians) who have decided to "return to" the countries of their migrant parents.

While until 2001-2003 there had not been a specific study of young return migration, as Potter and Phillips (2002) note, there had been some inclusion of young returnees as part of samples taken of the wider population of return migrants to the Caribbean. However, in 2001-2003 the first empirical studies appeared, conducted by Plaza (2002) and Potter (2001; 2003a, 2003b). These works will be reviewed shortly. However, it is worth noting that a study based on just five young returnees was carried out by Bueno (1997). Having considered this recent research, attention will be given to other work undertaken outside the region, focusing, in particular, on Tsuda's (1999; 2000) ethnographic study of young returnees in Japan. This research provides a useful comparative yardstick for future studies of young returnees to the Caribbean region.

Of the work that has been carried out, the study by Bueno (1997) has suggested the impact of gender on return. Thus, Bueno's ethnographic investigation focused on five female Dominican return migrants, all under the age of 40. They had migrated to the United States at a young age and had since returned to the Dominican Republic. The research, based upon a life history approach, argues that for women, return has meant significant loss of the social gains acquired while in the United States. In fact, it is shown that on return, gendered roles for many women are reduced to the traditional ones of home and children. Bueno further maintains that the ideology of return is relevant for Dominicans in the United States. Moreover, the decision to return is couched in the context of patriarchal privilege, and return facilitates the further entrenchment of these traditional gender norms. Bueno argues that additional research is needed with respect to the impact of variables such as race, class and marital status on return. Although Bueno's sample was small, consisting of only five women, what is important is his demographic focus on younger returnees and the specific experiences of this age group of migrants.

De Souza's (1998:228) study of return migration to Trinidad also included young returnees. His study served to demonstrate that gender, age, sex, social status and ethnic origin all impact on "return." His sample of 100 returnees included 85 under the age of 55 years. Utilising in-depth interviews, DeSouza looked at motivation to return and maintained that three important factors are common to the returnee experience, thereby reinforcing earlier work (for example, Gmelch 1980, 1992; Byron, 1994). Thus, DeSouza notes that many West Indians leave home intending to return. Secondly, life abroad frequently fuels and reinforces this desire to return. However, thirdly, DeSouza notes that homeland attachment often weighs heavily on the decision to return. De Souza offers four conceptualisations for what he sees as the West Indian ideology of return. These are the home-land milieu, familial reunification, return obligations and professional fulfilment. Of particular significance to the issue of young return migration is the conceptualisation of professional fulfilment. De Souza (1998:242) asserts that professional difficulties abroad or new career opportunities in the homeland tend to prompt return movements. Difficulties may include unemployment, racial tokenism and perceived glass ceilings, whilst new opportunities may be presented in the form of advertised requests for expatriate specialized skills.

DeSouza's study is set within the paradigmatic framework of trans-nationalism couched in the context of globalization. It argues that West Indians have developed double identities: one rooted in the original homeland and the other in the adopted homeland. Moreover, trans-nationalism facilitates return and reintegration by reaffirming homeland attachments. It also provides an escape valve for West Indians (see DeSouza 1998: 249-250). De Souza's study gives a tantalising insight into the largely uncharted waters of younger returnees, both methodologically and conceptually, and sets a context for a more detailed study with an explicit focus on younger returnees.

Turning to the results of recent pilot studies of youthful return, Potter (2001, 2003a, 2003b) interviewed forty young and foreign born returning migrants to Barbados and St Lucia between November 1999 and January 2000. The average age of the returnees was 30 years old, and four years had elapsed since they had migrated. In the case of Barbados, there was a pronounced excess of female over male migrants;

although the reverse pertained in the case of young returnees to St Lucia (Potter, 2003b), stressing the salience of gender variants. In the case of the females, the majority were professionally trained and qualified, reflecting DeSouza's emphasis on professional fulfilment. In both countries, few negative or push reasons were given explaining the reasons for the move from the UK/USA/Canada to the Caribbean. When racism and discrimination were mentioned, it was frequently in the context of saying that these were issues that are encountered everywhere, albeit in different forms, and have to be faced and dealt with. Several 'returnees' to Barbados cited the excellence of the Bajan secondary school system as a lure, especially in respect of the schooling of young boys. On the positive side, the fact of being in a black country and feeling at home in this milieu was mentioned by several interviewees.

In Potter's study, it was clear that the young returnees had found it relatively easy to obtain jobs and to change positions subsequently, if they so wished. In this context they stressed that their training and work practices were a direct benefit. Several who were working in the tourism sector stated that being seen as English and having an English accent were distinct advantages. Almost all argued that although they were less well-off financially in the Caribbean, their overall quality of life was better, and the prospects were there for advancement in the future, in terms of land, housing and possibly, starting a business themselves.

In terms of adjustment, however, a number of recurrent issues were cited by the young returnees. Turning first to the Barbadian interviewees, the most frequent issue was the difficulty encountered by females in forming new friendships. Female returnees reported that they were regarded as competing with the local population, both for jobs and for men. Further, having an English accent was seen as causing difficulties outside the workplace. The slow/relaxed way of life was mentioned on many occasions and was a positive factor for some, but a negative one for many others, in terms of getting things done. Inevitably, some returnees reported that they felt like outsiders, and stressed experiencing a culture shock; they also mentioned poor shopping in terms of the availability of goods, high prices and poor service. A recurrent theme for a number of interviewees was the strong and progressive Americanisation of Barbadian society. A major complaint expressed by many was that English returnees are regarded as 'mad'. The exact reasons for this seemed quite

complex to unravel, but the sentiment was general, and was evidently openly expressed in front of the returnees. Finally, several of the returnees were shocked by the operation of the colour-class system in the Caribbean, which strongly stratifies people by both skin colour and inferred social standing, and with a very strong link between the two.   However, most of the returnees inferred that they intended to stay in Barbados, although some who had only returned in the last couple of years were clearly emphasising their British identities.

It has already been noted that in contrast to those in Barbados, the St Lucian returnees were predominantly male. In common with the returnees to Barbados, those in St Lucia expressed major problems in forming friendships with members of the local population. However, in contrast, returnees to St Lucia seemed to be experiencing far fewer difficulties stemming from their accents and their national identity being seen as British. In fact, there was a much greater tendency for the returnees to state that having an English accent made them stand out, thereby rendering them an advantage both in the work place and socially.   However, the operation of the colour-class system and the existence of racism in society were issues of considerable concern to a third of those interviewed in St. Lucia. Negative reactions were also expressed in relation to the generally low level of wages, high land prices and St Lucia being an expensive place to live. What was construed as the narrow-mindedness of the local people was also pinpointed by several of the interviewees. The poor quality of education was expressed as a reason for possible re-return to the UK. But against this several informants stressed that they found St Lucia a tolerant society and had less hassle from the authorities and the police.

The Barbados and St Lucia studies suggested that these young migrants were trans-national in respect of their work experience in both the UK/US/Canada and the Caribbean. Most young returnees had parents who had returned to the Caribbean at retirement age.   However, several of the young returnees had retained property overseas and were renting this out.   Several appeared to be considering business ventures that would link between the Caribbean and their former homes. Some who had hailed from the UK were talking about the future possibilities offered by the United States.   In this sense they were very much part of a globalised network. However, in cultural and social terms, it was clear that they were not fully accepted in

their adopted homes: they were having to work very hard at this and were finding it difficult. Indeed, a few were re-asserting their British identity as a means of coping. Thus, outside of the sphere of work, there was a much greater feeling of difference. Moreover, the returnees seemed to show clear aspects of what is currently being referred to as 'inbetweenness' and 'hybridity'.

In an essentially similar study, Plaza (2002) interviewed twenty second generation returnees to Barbados and Jamaica. The interviews were carried out as part of a survey of 60 three-generation West Indian families between 1995 and 1997. The returnees grew up in London, Birmingham and Coventry. Seven had been born in Jamaica and five in Barbados. Despite the small number of interviewees, the results generally agree with those of the Barbados and St Lucia studies referred to above. Thus, overall, there were more women than men. Their average age at interview was 33 years. Again, the women were found to be well-qualified, to first degree level. With respect to motivation, the migrants felt that they would be more at home in the Caribbean. Somewhat in contrast to the study of Barbados and St Lucia, racism and discrimination in the UK were regarded as a major factor in explaining moves in Plaza's (1992) study. But in common with the Barbados study, having children was seen as a push factor by some interviewees.   On the positive side, this study also pointed to the generally good job prospects of the returnees, plus the relaxed atmosphere experienced at work. As noted previously, the latter was seen as more of a problem in Potter's (2001, 2003) study. Plaza also notes that the disparity between rich and poor was considered by some as a factor serving to unsettle the migrants, especially in the case of Jamaica. The separation from friends in the UK is emphasised in this study, and somewhat curiously the high cost of transatlantic travel is cited as a problem. Nevertheless parallels with the study carried out by Potter (2003) are witnessed in respect of the difficulties experienced in making friends, the incidence of competition, and the importance of social networks. Problems of class/colour stratification were mentioned by Plaza, but a strong emphasis is placed on the former rather than the latter. Some of the interviewees talked of feeling more British as a result of their move, presumably emphasising their inbetweenness. Plaza notes that some of the returnees show strong trans-national strategies, expressing the intention to move between UK and Caribbean for work and the like. Overall, Plaza's study places less emphasis on issues of identity.

The only other comparable study of young returning migrants has recently been carried out in Japan by Tsuda (1999, 2000). Tsuda's ethnographic field work on returning Japanese-Brazilians to Japan provides a significant contribution to the neglected field of youthful/foreign-born second generation return migrants. The study utilised participant observation and in-depth interviews in both Japan and Brazil. Although not explicitly stated, Tsuda's investigation focuses on young returning nationals, referred to locally as *Nikkejin*. These are the descendants of Japanese-born migrants to Brazil. Second generation Japanese who "return" to Japan to work, now constitute the second largest population of foreigners in Japan.

Utilising a social-cultural perspective, Tsuda (1998; 1999; 2000) stresses how these "foreigners" have become culturally Brazilianised and constitute an ethnic and cultural minority within Japan. Based on interviews and observation, his investigation focuses on issues of adjustment and the conceptual formulation of a "deterritorialized nationalism where national loyalties are articulated outside the territorial boundaries of the nation state" (2000:56). Tsuda views "deterritorialized nationalism" as a response to the negative ethnic and cultural experiences of Japanese Brazilians. The *Nikkeijin* culturally identify themselves as Japanese. However, on their "return" to their country of origin, they are regarded as ethnic minorities and discriminated against. As a response to this marginalisation, Japanese Brazilians disregard their former strong Japanese identity. Instead they assert their Brazilian cultural differences, thereby strengthening their national identity in the face of such marginality and attempts at assimilation. For example, on an individual level, many of the *Nikkeijin* wear distinctive Brazilian clothing, speak Portuguese and "act" Brazilian in an effort to display ethnic difference. Moreover, at the collective group level, ethnic difference is manifested in ritualised performances in the form of samba parades.

Moreover, Tsuda (1998) maintains that "return" often serves to challenge positive stereotypical images of Japanese culture and society, the very basis of their Japanese ethnic identity in Brazil. In so doing, elements of Japanese culture are brought under scrutiny. For example, Japanese nationals are criticised as being "cold" and impersonal in their social interactions. Moreover, Japanese work ethics and abilities

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are also criticised. The Brazilian Japanese view themselves as working more innovatively than the Japanese themselves. The unequal gender differences in the form of female discrimination in the work place and the generally more subservient role that women are expected to play within Japanese society are brought to the forefront and are generally lamented.

Tsuda's work challenges the trans-national conceptual framework of migration and identity. In this context, assimilation and reintegration were often considered as a means to an end, in terms of successful adjustment. He argues that the recent interest in trans-nationalism, with a focus on traditional conceptualisations such as "nation", "ethnic group," or "nation state," are best viewed as hegemonic constructions imposed on subordinate populations. These categorisations are increasingly being viewed as inadequate frames of analysis for the study of international migrants whose experiences do not always conform to such restrictive notions (Tsuda, 2000: 171). Tsuda's research suggests that, in practical terms, few migrants support the notion of trans-nationalism but rather tend towards their insular identities, and may even serve to bolster them.

Conclusions and implications for the current project

The present review of the literature on return migration has highlighted the dearth of academic literature with regards to the issue of young return migration to the Caribbean and elsewhere. Moreover, it suggests the need for the formulation and development of return migration theory based on sound empirical research. Further, it has provided a context for a critical approach where the deconstruction of such hegemonic notions such as "trans-nationalism", "home", "the returnee" and "return" has become paramount. In addition, it represents a call for exploring new ways in which to view return migration.

The approach suggested by Potter and Phillips (2002) although certainly not a solution to the theoretical and methodological limitations of earlier research, does propose a comprehensive study based on both qualitative and quantitative

investigations. As the literature reflects, these represent a neglected area with regard to Caribbean return migration. The current research project being carried out by the present authors will seek to address many of the unanswered questions pertaining to young returning nationals, concerning, for example, their socio-demographics, economic circumstances and experiences of identity and (re)integration in the context of the Caribbean region.

Acknowledgement

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