Place Connections: A Study of the Dynamics and Planning Process of Remigration in Trinidadians and Tobagonians

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Place Connections: A Study of the Dynamics and Planning Process of Remigration in Trinidadians and Tobagonians

by

Lystra Huggins

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Environmental Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Abstract

Place Connections: A Study of the Dynamics and Planning Process of Remigration in Trinidadians and Tobagonians

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Lystra Huggins

Adviser: Professor David Chapin

The purpose of this dissertation is to study migration and remigration of Trinidadians and Tobagonians as it relates to the meaning, experiences, and attachment these individuals have with the different places they have lived. The research questions focus specifically on remigrants who have the choice to return to Trinidad and Tobago or not after long-term residence abroad and why they make the decision to return. Interviews and surveys were used to understand the roles of place identity, place attachment, and place dependence in choosing whether or not to remigrate to Trinidad and Tobago. Participants were asked about their understanding of dominant narratives of immigrants and how these narratives do or do not reflect their own perceptions and experiences of an immigrant’s life, thus showing the network of social and geographical connections these immigrants form and the value immigrants bring to the host countries. A key finding is that remigration is not solely an economic decision, but instead infused with the meaning of the Place Attachments, Place Identity and Place Dependence created in the home country. People’s migration experiences do not tell the whole story about their decision making process for remigrating. The findings suggest that remigration happens because of the social and cultural connections and place attachment individuals maintain through transnationalism.
Preface

This dissertation explores the migration and remigration of Trinidadians and Tobagonians. Because I was born and raised in Trinidad and lived in the United States for all of my adult life, 20 years, I recognize that my identity played a role in researching this topic and interactions with study participants. Sultana (2007) argues, “ethical research is produced through negotiated spaces and practices of reflexivity that is critical about issues of positionality and power relations at multiple scales” (p. 2). Therefore, from the onset of my research, it was important for me to understand that even though I grew up in Trinidad my participants may not accept me as Trinidian. In fact, many participants questioned my reasons for conducting a study on remigration when I had no intentions of returning, so I had to explain further. When one of my participants asked if I planned to return ‘home’ to live, I told them the truth, which is I have no desire to return and live in Trinidad and Tobago, but I am fascinated by the topic.

In September 2008, five of my friends in New York City contacted me about a group they were creating with other Trinidadians and Tobagonians. I attended the first meeting thinking it was a social networking group, but I found out that all five friends wanted to return to live in Trinidad and Tobago within the next five to seven years. The point of the meeting was to plan their eventual return. The six of us who attended the meeting were all professionals in our thirties and forties and nowhere close to retirement. I was interested in the fact that they all knew that if they returned they would not receive the same level of salary or have the kind of lifestyle they have in the United States. I was most intrigued with the excitement in their voices about the idea of going ‘home.’ At the time, it made more sense to me if my five friends desired to continue their lives in the United States and return to Trinidad and Tobago to retire. However, they all wanted to return in a few years and not wait until they reach retirement. I walked out of
that meeting thinking there was something pulling them to Trinidad and Tobago as opposed to pushing them out of the United States, something Carol Stack (1996) describes as a ‘call to home.’

During 2012, I went ‘home’ to Trinidad and Tobago three times to introduce myself as a researcher, meet potential interviewees, and conduct fieldwork. Initially, I met people interested in my topic of remigration, but questioned my loyalty to Trinidad and Tobago. I predicted this might happen. During my first two visits, I stayed about two weeks each and on my last visit I stayed for eight weeks. I conducted most of the interviews during this last visit.

About five of the interviewees wanted to know whether I was going to discuss the politics and high crime rate in Trinidad and Tobago in my final research paper. I told them that I would mention it in my dissertation, but it was not the focus of my research. This answer sufficed and all of them proceeded with the interview. Sultana (2007) states, “doing research at ‘home’ also brings in different dynamics, in terms of concerns of insider-outsider and politics of representation, across other axes of social differentiation beyond commonality in nationality or ethnicity” (p. 5). At first, I felt like an ‘insider’ in my childhood neighborhood when neighbors stopped by we would reminisce about our childhood experiences; however, this changed as more people joined the conversation. At this point, I became the center of attention and the ‘outsider.’ It felt celebrity-ish. It was not surprising to them that I was there visiting because I am normally there every year for no more than two weeks. The real surprise was that I was planning to stay for seven to eight weeks specifically to do research for my doctoral degree. This is what Sultana (2007) discusses as a dilemma when ‘field’ and ‘home’ are the same, but they feel incongruent.

While conducting interviews in Trinidad and Tobago—a place I was born, raised, and where my dad, sister, nieces, nephews and cousins still live—I had to negotiate between being a
professional researcher and, as one participant said, “come down to island living.” As an immigrant and researcher, however, I feel well suited for this research because I am familiar with the people, language and overall nuances of being Trinidadian. Luckily, everyone was warm and welcoming, even though some participants questioned my intentions for conducting research on return migration to when I did not want to return to Trinidad and Tobago. I did not know any of the participants before interviewing them, but I was always offered food and beverages when I conducted interviews in participants’ homes, or taken out for lunch or dinner if the interview occurred at a place of work.
Acknowledgement

I dedicate this dissertation to my nephews and nieces: Anthony, Kalifa, Divontay, Rowdel, Jaylin, Elizabeth and Anastasia, who I hope will one day experience this educational expedition.

I begin this acknowledgement thanking my advisor, Prof. David Chapin. He has not only been an inspiration, but also a Godsend. The word ‘advisor’ does not fully give credence to the commitment he has shown me over the years. Prof. Chapin has maintained a line of communication with me on a weekly basis, even staying in touch during his well-deserved spring and summer breaks. I am also especially grateful to my other committee members: Prof. Cindi Katz and Prof. Richard Alba, both of whom have stayed committed to my work over the years.

To Prof. Carol Stack and Prof. Deirdre Conlon, thank you for agreeing to be my external readers. I had the best examining committee members, and I truly value each of their work and personalities. Many thanks to you all!

I also thank my family starting with my mom, Angela. As an immigrant, she has sacrificed a lot to ‘pave a way’ for her children to have a better life. I would not have gotten to this level in my educational journey without her making this journey from Trinidad and Tobago to America first. Thank you mom for your love, tireless support, and confidence in making this dream a reality. To my dad and sister, who are still in Trinidad, and my brother, who lives in New York, thank you for believing that I had the ability to finish even when I felt I could not.

Noel, I thank you for your love, support and dedication. Every Wednesday after class you were there to pick me up from the Graduate Center and listened to my longwinded thoughts about my dissertation.
I cannot acknowledge anyone else without saying thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Vanderpool. I want to say a special and sincere thank you to Hyacinth for reading and editing the initial stages of my work and continuing to support me with your wise words and introspective conversations. I could not have persevered without my classmates from Dissertation Seminar: Carol, Sarah, Stacey, Chang, Anita, and others who have contributed to my work. I want to specially acknowledge Bijan Kimiagar who has edited my work in detail and was instrumental in helping me structure my final version.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introducing the Chapters

This dissertation begins with an introduction of migration, assimilation, and remigration. I believe it is necessary to mention the reasons people migrate because understanding why individuals leave their homeland also informs why they decide to return. I believe that immigrants’ stories do not start after arriving in a new country, but rather in the home country with dreams of traveling and being reunited with family members who have already made the journey. I also included a brief history of the migration of the people of Trinidad and Tobago in Chapter One, highlighting the history of first Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams. He was not only an icon in Trinidad and Tobago, but also throughout the Caribbean. Dr. Williams advocated for traveling abroad for education and work opportunities, as well as returning home to contribute to the social and political advancement of one’s country.

I use the terms *remigration* and *return migration*, but decided not to use terminologies other researchers who studied the same topic have used, such as ‘homeward bound’ and similar words and phrases. In Chapter Two, I discuss my rationale for using the concept of remigration instead of other terms and review the pertinent literature that informs this decision. My thinking is remigration carries with it the essence of being an immigrant. The status of being an immigrant does not end in the host country because the individual is going back home, but the migration experience is now a part of that person. I also discuss the concept of *transnationalism* in this chapter to understand migrants’ relationship with both home and host countries. In addition, the different theoretical frameworks of remigration are discussed, which, understandably, are grounded in a larger literature on migration theories.
In the second half of Chapter Two, I discuss theories of place identity, place dependency, and place attachment. I use these constructs to analyze data on how participants in this study experience and give meaning to the places they have visited and lived. From my previous research, I learned that most individuals desired to return to Trinidad because they felt a strong attachment to the culture of their homeland. I wanted to explore this further to determine whether or not the concept of place identity might explain their remigration. In my research, the concept of place includes the physical space and everything within that space, such as people, food, cultural norm and rituals, and just about anything that makes a place function. Many interviewees conceptualized place in terms of countries they traveled to and lived in. However, while all interviewees identified as Trinidadian or Tobagonian, they never described their place identity in terms of the local areas where they grew up. For example, someone from New York City might call himself or herself a New Yorker, but a Trinidadian or Tobagonian from Arima—a city in east Trinidad—would never say they are an Arimaian. However, when participants discussed attachment to family and friends in Trinidad or Tobago, some mentioned the particular neighborhood where they lived. Related to this, many immigrants depend on employment abroad to maintain their own lifestyle and also to send money to their family members living in their home country. My research addresses whether and when this dependency is strong enough to keep immigrants from moving back to their homeland.

In Chapter Three, I outline this study’s multi-method research design: I collected and analyzed qualitative data on remigrants, and also used these data to design a quantitative survey of both migrants and remigrants. In this chapter, I also described a mapping method I thought was initially useful to my interviewees. However, even though I wanted this to be an active process, I found that most of the interviewees wanted to talk about their migration experiences as
opposed to ‘mapping’ them. All the individuals talk, in details, about the movements of the various places they lived but were not enthusiastic about participating in the ‘place mapping.’

In Chapter Four, I analyze the quantitative data from the online survey of migrants and remigrants and compare these data with the qualitative data I gathered previously. I used basic descriptive statistics to analyze the quantitative data and attempted to offer answers to questions I raised after interviews with the 16 interviewees, specifically on: (1) the intention to return to Trinidad and Tobago, and (2) the process of actually returning. I summarize the factors that influence participant’s expectations, connections, and decisions whether or not remigrate to Trinidad and Tobago using the data from three subsamples of participants: (1) participants who have returned, (2) participants planning to return, and (3) participants not planning to return.

Chapter Five highlights some of the interview data with 16 remigrants. I introduce and narrate detailed migration stories for six participants, all of whom lived in New York prior to remigrating to Trinidad and Tobago. In this chapter, I also provide a summary analysis of data from all interviewees. I draw on Saldana’s (2013) book, The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers, as a guide and include the codes and themes that reverberated in each narrative.

In the final chapter, Chapter Six, I discuss the topic of remigration and my research analysis as a whole. I identify the limitations of this study, as well as future considerations for this area of research. There are multiple findings from this research worth highlighting; however, perceptions of immigrants—by others and by themselves—are something that surfaced in many interviews and seems most important to address here. Many interviewees discussed how they believed immigrants were perceived; however, their personal narratives do not match the common narrative of immigrants. These immigrants felt that television and newspapers portrayed them as outsiders, not belonging to the US even if they are American citizens, but did
not perceive themselves as such. This particular topic was not one of my initial research questions. However, I did include questions related to this in the online survey and discuss the resources and knowledge immigrants bring to the US in this final chapter.

Introduction

The world is a global village and part of what makes it so is the ceaseless migration of its people. However, the process of going back to the place one emigrated from has not been studied extensively (Cerase, 1974; Conway, Potter, & St. Bernard, 2008; Thomas-Hope, 1999; Piore, 1979). My dissertation, therefore, investigates the phenomenon of remigration in Trinidad and Tobago through interviews and survey of individuals who have remigrated, do not want to remigrate, or who are planning to remigrate. I used descriptive narratives of the places these immigrants lived and the people they interacted with in these places to show the migration experiences both in the host and home countries. These participants are originally Trinidadians and Tobagonians, many of whom have children who were also born in Trinidad and Tobago. I asked study participants, both in interviews and an online survey, to discuss their social and cultural connections to different places they lived before, during, or after migration. It was important to understand from both methods—qualitative interview data and quantitative survey data—the attachments and connections people form to places they have lived. Remigration and place connections are the main constructs of this research; however, place identity, place attachment, and place dependence are incorporated as they relate to the process of remigration and migration.

It is widely known and understood that individuals leave their homeland to migrate in search of a better life. Moreover, the phenomenon of migration suggests that individuals have a need to create a connection to the host place. Several studies have investigated individuals’
assimilation in the host country (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 1997; Logan, Alba, & Zhang, 2002),
and the main reasons people move locally or internationally, which are economic opportunities,
educational advancement, and family reunification (Massey et al., 1993; Castles & Miller, 2009;
Foner 2007). Surprisingly, there are only a few studies that look at the planning process and the
place experiences of individuals who returned to their birth country after settling in a new
country, and none about Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, my main question became the
following: What are the planning processes of individuals who have returned and whether after
resettling, their lived experiences match their expectations. While remigration and place
connections are the central concepts of this research, I use the experiences not only of remigrants
to Trinidad and Tobago, but also of individuals planning to return, and of individuals who have
no intentions of returning to fully address this question. I found for many of the individuals I
interviewed that the planning process was an integral part of the transition to return to Trinidad
and Tobago to live and the eventual adaptation process.

Berry (1997) poses the following questions in one of his articles on acculturation and
adaptation:

Do individuals continue to act in the new settings as they did in the previous one, do they
change their behavioral repertoire to be more appropriate in the new setting, or is there
some complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the
new society? (p. 6)

Berry’s questions focus on assimilation into the American culture; however, I explore the
readjustment of individuals who decide to move back or have moved back to their home country.
In looking at immigrants who spend many years acculturating and adapting to their new settings,
I pose the following questions: Upon returning to their place of birth, do remigrants re-
acculturate or re-adapt to their country of birth? Do they, as Berry (1997) suggests, revert to their previous ‘behavioral repertoire”? Or, do they have a different way of thinking and behaving?

All 16 individuals, who already returned indicated that they had some level of re-adjustment when they returned to live in Trinidad and Tobago. However, many individuals from the survey, who were planning to return, did not think that they would have to re-adjust to what they referred to as home. For example, about ten of the interviewees mentioned the frustration of the relaxed environment in the public services sector. They also commented that if they were in New York, they would have called the manager for faster service. The culture in Trinidad and Tobago is not one of urgency. The pace of work is different to that of the US. The everyday interaction is always one of a relaxed mode where everything is done without a need for swiftness. Participants also described readjusting to the quality of medical care, which I will discuss in the results section.

Assimilation and acculturation have been widely studied in terms of migration. At the onset of my research, I wanted to and proceeded to interview men and women who have experienced a sense of assimilation into the American culture and explore their re-acculturation processes. I agree with some assimilation theorists (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 1997; Friedman, 2008) who characterize assimilation in terms of language and cultural norms (Berry 1997; Friedman, 2008), and having “a good education, a good job, a nice place to live, interesting friends and acquaintances, economic security” (Alba & Nee, p. 41). I interviewed individuals who have assimilated into the American culture to ensure that these individuals were not remigrating simply because they were not ‘making it’ in the US. Again, having equal choice in staying in the US or returning to Trinidad and Tobago was an important aspect of this research.
The assumption of assimilation brings into the discussion the notion of racialization as it pertains to immigrants of color. Sanchez (1999) postulates that the 1965 Immigration Act has been instrumental in the rethinking about the role of immigrants in American society. As a result of the Act, the US opened its doors to immigrants from Latin America, Asia, as well as Africa, and the Caribbean. This shifted awareness of racialization and disparity such that “emergence, growth, and maturity of scholarship focusing on African American, Latinos and Asian American have changed the treatment of race and ethnicity from a peripheral concern to one of central importance in understanding justice and equality in American history” (p. 3).

The drastic institutional change for the inclusion of minority immigrants in American society was not predicted by, but rather a product of the Immigration Act of 1965 (Alba & Nee, 2003). Immigrants who were previously denied the opportunity to enter the United States were now allowed based on labor shortages, educational and professional qualifications and family reunification processes. This is not to suggest that these immigrants had an easier time assimilating into their new society. There are many factors used to determine whether or not they did assimilate and how long it took for them to do so. For example, the economic viability, working conditions, social networks, the structure of society, history of discrimination or prejudice for the group in question, generational status and environmental demands of the immigrant group all played a role in whether and how the immigrants would assimilate (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 1997; Logan, Alba & Zhang, 2002; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008). The individuals interviewed for the current study are unique in that they have the resources to choose between their home and host country and have chosen to return to their place of birth. In this case, it is also important to understand the re-acculturation process when
they return to their home country after individuals have assimilated and acculturated into their host country.

Although some remigration studies focus on individuals who have remigrated as deportees (Plaza & Henry, 2006; Miller, 2004), this study focuses on voluntary remigrants. Specifically, I examine the migratory and social lives of Trinidadian and Tobagonian remigrants who have returned or are planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago. Also, I examine a third group of individuals: individuals who have migrated to the United States, but do not have a desire to return to Trinidad and Tobago.

This dissertation is an extension of my second year research project titled, “An Individual Search for Place Identity: The Dynamics of Migration and Remigration among Trinidadians Living in the United States.” This preliminary research explored Trinidadian-Americans’ reasons for returning or not returning to their country of birth. All participants lived in the United States and either had a desire to return to Trinidad to live, or had no desire to return to Trinidad and instead wanted to continue living in the United States even though they all had family connections in Trinidad. The results indicated that even though the reasons for returning or not returning were diverse, all participants maintained their identities using cultural tools such as eating local foods and reading local newspapers. For example, even though some participants desired to return home for retirement and other participants did not want to return at all, all the participants in both groups purchased and cooked Trinidadian foods, listened to Trinidadian music, and maintained ties with other Trinidadians, both in Trinidad and in the US, even after many years living in the United States.

The findings from this previous work also indicate that regardless of whether participants desired to return in a few years or did not want to return at all, there was an underlying
attachment to the culture and place of Trinidad. All interviewees had lived in the United States for over 10 years and maintained full employment while also maintaining strong connections to Trinidad. Interestingly, all participants referred to Trinidad as ‘home.’ These connections are maintained through cultural forms, such as Trinidadian food and eating customs, the environment they lived and played in the United States, and the type of music to which they listen. Participants often mentioned music as something that connects them to Trinidad. One interviewee said, “I like Lite FM.¹ It is still the type of music I listened to in Trinidad because it is soothing. But I also want to listen to my Soca and my Parang, perhaps not as much as I did before, but I do listen a lot.” Another interviewee stated, “I have CDs with calypso that I play in my car.” These cultural forms help participants define who they are and continue to act on their lives even though they are away from the environment where they were first introduced to it.

The “Trini” foods, the calypso music, the local newspaper, the Trinidadian organization, the weekly and sometimes daily phone calls to Trinidad are cultural tools which connect many Trinidadians living in America to home. Therefore, for those who indicated no desire to return to Trinidad, there may be no need to return because they foster place attachment everyday through cultural tools.

While the goal of my second year research study was to determine the reasons why Trinidad-Americans living in the U.S. desire to remigrate or not, the current dissertation research focuses on the experiences and meaning of place connections for Trinidadians and Tobagonians. Moreover, place identity, place dependence, and place attachment were fundamental concepts in my initial research, and I explore these further in this dissertation. However, the qualitative data in this study is strategically different. I identified the social and cultural connections in the

¹ Lite FM is a radio station that plays music from the 70s & 80s
different places in Trinidad and Tobago and the United States where remigrants have lived to understand the experiences and connections to each place. Additionally, since perceptions of oneself as an immigrant can be a factor for a smooth migration and remigration process, I asked participants to describe their perceptions of themselves as immigrants to understand the role of this factor. The predominant perceptions of immigrants, especially in media, is that immigrants move back to their home countries because of deportation or failure to be successful here in the United States (Cerase, 1974 & Thomas-Hope, 1985). However, I have found that the participants in my study decide to leave the United States because they felt more attached to the people and places in their countries of birth. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics immigrants’ experiences in both the places they immigrate to and emigrate from. In his book, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, Juan Gonzalez (2000) recounts the experiences of Latinos in America. He highlights the journeys of Latinos and the reasons they migrated. Although these experiences are marked by prejudices against Latino immigrants, Gonzalez shows the value and significance of Latinos immigrants’ contributions to the economy and history of the United States. Gonzalez also describes specific push factors for remigrating, such as language barriers and feelings of being an outsider. In relation to this scholarship, I wanted to explore how Trinidadian and Tobagonian immigrants’ perceptions of how the media portrays them, along with the ideas of migration and remigration.

**Highlights of Trinidad and Tobago**

Trinidad and Tobago comprise one country even though they are separate islands. At times scholarship refers to the country, Trinidad and Tobago, as Trinidad. At other times, authors make a distinction. In this paper, I discussed the experiences of participants recruited from Trinidad and Tobago; therefore, I portray a snapshot of the twin-island nation. The country of
Trinidad and Tobago is a cosmopolitan region that was colonized by the Spanish from 1532 to 1797 and by the British from 1797 until its independence as a sovereign state in 1962 (Waters, 1999).

Since Independence, Dr. Eric Williams, the country’s first and most renowned prime minister, encouraged nationals of the Republic of Trinidad to travel abroad for economic or educational reasons and, more important, to return home. Dr. Eric Williams established a sense of national identity in Trinidadians and Tobagonians after the islands achieved their independence from Britain. He wanted the citizens to feel proud to be called “Trinidadians” and, thus, he encouraged education for all. He encouraged his citizens to earn higher education degrees abroad and provided scholarships to individuals with the stipulation that they must return home to work at least five years in public service. He himself obtained his doctoral degree in London and, after serving many years as an expert on West Indian history and professor of political and social science at Howard University in the United States, returned to a life of service in Trinidad. Dr. Williams served as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1956 until 1981, both before and after the twin islands gained independence. During his 27 years in office, he instilled a sense of national pride in his many inspirational speeches. He encouraged loyalty to the country and created the motto, “Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve.”

Dr. Williams was most lauded for the integration of different ethnic groups in Trinidad. Specifically, he forged a unified Trinidadian identity amongst people of African, European, and East Indian origins. Today, most holidays celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago honor the various ethnic and religious identities of people from these various backgrounds. For example, Divali (a Hindu celebration), Hosay (Muslim New Year festival), Chinese Arrival Day, Baptist Day and others holidays highlight specific groups of people, but each is celebrated by the entire country.
Notably, Christians take part in the Hindu and Muslim celebrations while Hindus and Muslims join in Christian holidays, such as Easter and Christmas. Tobago is distinct from Trinidad in that even though different ethnic groups have colonized them, the current population is mostly of African descent. One reason is because earlier in the history of Tobago mostly Africans were brought into the country as slaves.

Trinidadians and Tobagonians have a history of migration, initially to England and then expanding to the United States. The first known examples of migration date back to the seventeenth century, however documentation of immigrants from the Caribbean was kept on a regional basis, rather than an island-to-island basis. Over the centuries since then, the number of Trinidadian immigrants has increased tremendously. Interestingly, Tobago’s migration story is different. Many Tobagonians left their homeland and went to the more industrialized island of Trinidad for work or for educational advancements. Similar to Dominicans who migrated from rural to urban areas of their country in search of employment, so too Tobagonians migrated locally to Trinidad before moving abroad to the United States, England, or Canada. In spite of their different immigration histories, Trinidadians and Tobagonians identify strongly with their homeland. This is something I confirmed in my earlier field research. Even in the current dissertation research, some participants did not want to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live, but felt a strong connection to the country.

Some of the factors that affect identification with a place or country are place identity, place attachment, and place dependence. These place constructs will be defined and discussed in the latter part of Chapter Two. Based on the history of Trinidad and Tobago, there appears to be a shared attachment and identification to each island. Even though the islands are separate there are similar feelings of attachment to the culture and everyday practices in Trinidad and Tobago.
Therefore, a question for this research is since Trinidadians and Tobagonians are connected to place in their country, then are there concerns which occur for these individuals as they reintegrate to life in Trinidad and Tobago after living in the United States?
Chapter Two: Literature Review

**Remigration**

Thomas-Hope (1999) states, “it is important to appreciate the complexities of the process and to try to understand the nature of the dynamic of migration in its entirety, including return as being not simply a further element of population displacement but as a phenomenon itself” (p. 201). The phenomenon of returning to the place one lived in early childhood or identifies as their home has not been researched extensively. In fact, “immigration scholars have tended to analyze population flows as unidirectional: migrants leave the sending society, immigrate and settle in the host society, and eventually assimilate” (Tsuda, 2009, p. 8). However, I wanted to study immigrants who, after assimilating into the host societies for many years, decide to move back to their place of birth. More research is needed in this area to provide a deeper understanding of the connections immigrants have or do not have with their place of birth and how this affects their decision-making. In this dissertation, I discuss the concept of return migration and various theoretical frameworks on return migration, including transnationalism, meaning of place, and typologies of returning immigrants, as well as the dilemmas returnees face upon moving back.

Duval (2004) references the various terms Gmelch (1980) used synonymously with return migration, such as return flow, reflux migration, homeward migration, second-time migration, remigration, and repatriation. Return migration describes the experience of immigrants who have left their homeland, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to reside in another place and, at a later time, move back to their homeland. The movement back to the original place is the process of remigration. Even though many researchers have studied this phenomenon (Cassarino, 2004; Colton, 1993; Conway & Potter, 2009; Duval, 2004; Gmelch,
there are few accurate statistics on remigration trends. Instead, voluntary remigration or return migration has been studied from a temporary or transnationalistic point of view because of the difficulty collecting accurate data on returnees who actually plan to stay in their place of birth. Massey (1987) explained that the two major sources of immigration data in the United States are from Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), which is now called United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the U.S. Bureau of the Census. While these two entities are the overarching experts on many aspects of immigration processes, there is a lack of data collection of individuals who leave the United States. Massey (1987) explains that, “the INS has not tabulated data on emigration since it abandoned departure inspections in 1957, and U.S. censuses only enumerate migrants who happen to be in the country on census day” (p. 1502). While there are some individuals who may decide to voluntarily visit a USCIS office to submit their resident cards and inform the officials there that they are returning to their place of birth, most will not. Moreover, there are strict enforcement, restrictions, and data collection on persons entering the United States; however, there are no formalized techniques to capture persons who decide to leave the United States voluntarily return to their country of birth to live.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of the Ministry of Planning and Economy located in the Capital of Port-of-Spain collects data on trade and travel. Officials at the agency collect data on the number of people traveling to and from Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the purpose of their travel such as business, school, investing, and vacation. Even though they do not have a category for permanent returning nationals, data from the CSO office (2012) highlighted 297,945 returning Trinidadians and Tobagonians from 1965-2009. The office has collected data since 1965, but they do not have official record regarding how much time was
spent away or the nature of what that time away was. Figure 1 depicts the numbers of residents returning to Trinidad and Tobago from 1965 to 2009. These data include all residents spending some time out of the country and includes individuals who were deported and residents returning from vacation or long stay outside of Trinidad and Tobago. In general, the number of residents returning is increasing.

![Graph](image)

**Figure 2.** Number of Residents Returning to Trinidad and Tobago from 1965 to 2009. Source: Raw data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) in Trinidad and Tobago

In addition, there is no differentiation between voluntary or involuntary returnees. Therefore, there are no formal records of individuals returning to Trinidad and Tobago, nor a record of their readjustment issues, social support network, challenges, and triumphs. However, there are informal records, such as those of Conway, Potter and Bernard (2008) who studied the dual identities of young Trinidad and Tobago migrants, what they call an ‘invisible sub-population,’ by conducting interviews in bars and other local social places. Conway et. al.
describe this group as ‘invisible sub-population’ because the remigrants do not fully return into
the general population but create a network within themselves.

In the process of interviewing individuals for my research, I realize that it is not so much
that this population is ‘invisible’ but more so under-researched. Many of the individuals who
remigrate have connection with others who have remigrated as well. In my study, three male
interviewees who were friends mentioned using each other as guides. They all went to graduate
school in New York City and, even though they worked in different fields, 10 years after one of
them returned to Trinidad, the other two contacted him for advice on how to navigate the process
of remigration. For example, he advised them to buy a house in Trinidad while still living and
working in the US so when they do return they have some level of comfort. He also advised
them to visit Trinidad and Tobago at different times of the year so that they can have varied
experiences when they finally decided to return. One of the interviewees specifically warned
about visiting only during Carnival, since the country dresses itself for many tourists, making it
not a good time to determine the kinds of adjustments one would need to make after returning.

Ley and Kobayashi (2005) explain, “return migration extends the linear model of
migration to a circular model with an imputed readjustment and assimilation to the country of
origin” (p. 112). Constant and Massey (2002) discuss return migration from an economic and
social perspective and in their study found that “return migration is quite selective with respect to
attachment to employment. A lack of attachment, as indicated by marginal employment,
unemployment, or noninvolvement in the labour force, strongly predicts return migration” (p.
22). However, this was not part of my finding; instead I found place attachment to be an
important pull factor.
In her book, *Call to Home*, Carol Stack (1996) investigates how a place has a life of its own and calls its people back home. Over a period of eight years, she interviewed hundreds of the half a million individuals who initially migrated to the Northern cities in America for a better life, only to return to their rural homes in the US South years later. Although her study does not focus on international migration, it does fully address the concept of remigration. Stack indicates that interviewing her study participants about their decisions and experiences of moving back to the South allowed her “to understand the phenomena associated with return as […] saturated with dread and longing” (p. xvii). Her book, a mixture of personal storytelling and historical data, uses census data from the 1970’s to show the substantial number of black Americans returned to the South to live. The most compelling part of her book is made up of the stories of the remigrants. Through these stories, she finds that many people move back to be part of remaking the South. Stack indicates that others return because of family complications, such as parents’ or grandparents’ illness. One of her interviewees states that she moved back “to better things for others, if at all possible” (p. xvii). According to Stack, the reasons these individuals moved back are diverse, including “a dream of running a restaurant, a passion for land, a midnight epiphany, rumors and lies, weariness, homesickness, missionary vision, community redemption, fate, romance, politics, sex, religion” (p. 7). The reason I found most interesting is the call to home—a “calling on the ties to home that have persisted through the generations” (p. 7). This ideology goes beyond the racism and unstable economy of the South to the simple (or complex) notion of the pull and meaning of the place individuals were born and grew up in. Stack refers to these places as *home*. All 16 individuals I interviewed for this dissertation research also expressed that sense of wanting to return home. The attachment they felt to the
home country, culture, day-to-day living, nuances, and relationships eventually pulled them back to their homeland.

Remigration issues cannot be explored without giving voice to the place where immigrants originally lived. Many immigrants, upon migration, have a belief that they will return to their homeland after saving enough money (Piore, 1979) or acquiring an education from the host country (Foner, 2007). Most immigrants do not voluntarily leave their homeland because they do not love it, but rather they are looking for better opportunities. Therefore, an immigrant’s homeland is an integral part of understanding the migration process. Migration does not start when the individual migrates but it involves the culture, childhood memories (Proshansky, 1983), schooling, family, friends, community (Plaza & Henry, 2003), and the politics of the place in which the immigrant lived and grew for some part of his or her life (Tucker, 1994). Understanding place concepts and the meaning of birthplace in relation to the place of migration helps explain why immigrants may or may not want to return home.

Transnationalism

A study on return migration must include an exploration of transnationalism. According to Plaza and Henry (2006), transnationalism may be defined as “the multiple ties and interactions that link people and their institutions across the borders of nation-states” (p.7). In a paper on Jamaican return immigrants, Thomas-Hope (2009) states that, “the return of migrants to Jamaica is conditioned principally by the strength and persistence of the transnational household, which is established between the individuals abroad and the family which remains in Jamaica” (p. 184). This practice of traveling back and forth between the host country and birth country before making the decision to move back permanently is solidified by social connections. In Ley and Kobayashi’s (2009) look at transnationalism in Hong Kong, they find that “transnationalism
invokes a travel plan that is continuous, not infinite” (p. 122). Their data on middle aged migrants in Canada returning home to Hong Kong showed that there were many facets of changing residences in different countries as well as different purposes for such changes. Most of the participants returned to Hong Kong for economic viability, while Canada offered them a sense of peace and quality of life. The benefits of both countries cannot be understated as experiences in both countries helped to shape the migrants through different cycles of their lives. The conclusion from this specific study of transnationalism is that the process of migration is dynamic, not static.

Foner (2005) emphasizes the importance immigrants place on maintaining ties with their home country while establishing ties with their new residence. She states, “the focus is on how contemporary immigrants maintain familial, economic, cultural, as well as political ties across international borders, in effect making the home and host society a single arena of social action” (p. 63). The notion of not relinquishing ties with one’s original country of emigration while still forging attachments in the current country of residence really speaks to the strength and rate of integration. Indeed, immigrants are no longer simply assimilating or marginalizing, as Berry (1985) theorized, but because of technological advances, they are able to travel back and forth between countries and stay in contact virtually through the internet.

In reference to work by Schiller et al. (1995), Foner (2005) conjectures that “transformation in communication channels and transportation systems have increased the density, multiplicity, and importance of transnational connections and made it possible for the first time for immigrants to operate more or less simultaneously in a variety of places” (p. 70). Technologies such as email, online chat, and texting have made communication instantaneous and circumvent the delay of postage mail. These new technologies allow smoother access to and
sharing of norms, political and social changes, as well as family updates, such as who married, gave birth, passed away, and emigrated. All of the participants I interviewed were involved in some level of transnationalism. While some of the interviewees travel back and forth once or numerous times a year, others were engaged in email, text, and video chat communication with family and friends on a regular basis. Even older interviewees in my study said they keep in contact with others in Trinidad and Tobago via the phone and internet while they were living in the United States.

Although, the idea of transnationalism is discussed within the sphere of return migration, Ley and Kobayashi (2009) argue transnationalism “undercuts conventional accounts that portray return migration as circular with its own logic of arrival, assimilation and closure. Instead, there is a perennial openness to further movement at distinctive passages in the life cycle”(p.123). Thus, transnationalism opens ongoing travel and experiences between two or more countries, whereas return migration conjures up a final stop in the migratory cycle. For remigrants, whether voluntary or involuntary, there is final destination and not cycle of moving back and forth.

Some researchers argue that many immigrants decide to wait until after they have retired to remigrate (Brown 2006; Conway & Potter 2008; Ley & Kobayashi, 2005; Plaza & Henry, 2006; Tsuda, 2009). Upon retirement, a large percentage of immigrants then return home to live out the remainder of their lives in the place in which they were born and/or grew up. Small (2005) posits that every Caribbean immigrant, no matter the destination of migration, is a potential returnee. Byron (1999) points out that returning to their land of origin is an integral element of any immigration process, and Foner (2005) adds that “many immigrants came to the United States with the notion that they would eventually return” (p. 64). More recent research
suggests that a growing number of immigrants are deciding to return home in their early thirties to mid-fifties, long before they retire (Conway, Potter & St. Bernard 2008; Hugo, 2009).

Conway, Potter and St. Bernard (2008) look at the transnational practices of young Trinidadians who have decided to remigrate to their or their parents’ place of birth. Similar to my dissertation, these researchers investigate the experiences of younger, professional Trinidadians and chose not to interview deportees or those returnees who had no choice in their decision to return. These criteria were important to my research since there are two clear subgroups of remigrants: voluntary and involuntary remigrants. However, within those two areas there are numerous and complicated sub-categories of return migration. In recent years, many return migrants have experienced forcible departure from the host country. Plaza and Henry (2006) point out that some “newer categories include such individuals as short-term guest workers, forced repatriation of refugees, deportees, transnational seasonal returnees, second-generation professionals” (p. 3). All the participants in my study are working or retired individuals who freely decided whether or not to return to Trinidad and Tobago.

Conway, Potter and St. Bernard (2008) were able to interview 36 individuals about their dual and multiple identities and transnational practices. They recruited participants using snowball sampling and conducted the interviews at the participants’ homes and in bars. Most important, their research aim was to understand the value and advantages of the transnational experiences for the returnees. The kinds of interview questions they asked focused on whether a participant had “maintained his dual identity” and “kept his ties with the host country” after the participants already remigrated. Most of the questions dealt with transnationalism and the idea of dual or multiple identities. The participants were all returnees and considered themselves either dual citizens or multiple citizens of Trinidad and United States, or Trinidad and other
Caribbean countries and Canada. Conway, Potter and St. Bernard’s work is only study I have read that closely relates to my research. Their work is helpful for appreciating the flexibility of having multiple identities for returning Trinidadian immigrants. However my dissertation looks at other dynamics of return migration to Trinidad and Tobago, such as the meaning of home, place concepts, re-acculturation processes, and expectations for return. Also, even though my dissertation includes participants from a younger, professional cohort, I also include retirees. Additionally, I also surveyed individuals who are planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago. Most important, my research focuses on individuals born in Trinidad and Tobago and later migrated to the United States after having lived in Trinidad for most of their early lives. This gives a more detailed exploration into the experiences and changing aspects of their place identities, place dependence and place attachments, as well as the re-acculturation processes upon their return to Trinidad and Tobago.

**Theoretical Framework of Return Migration**

Although there are only a few original, well-established theories that attempt to explain return migration, researchers apply general theories on migration and expand them to better understand the concept of return migration. Many researchers utilize the theory of “push-pull factors” as a foundation to build other theories. *Push factors* are elements pushing individuals out of their home country and *pull factors* are the elements that pull individuals to the host country. Typically in migration studies, immigrants are ‘pushed’ out of their home country by civil disruption, lack of economic opportunity, or limited educational opportunities. On the other hand, they are ‘pulled’ to the host country because of the opportunities afforded via the economic and educational attainment, and familial ties. In his study of migration from rural to urban labor migration in China, Zhao (2002) agrees that most returnees’ decisions involve the same push-
pull factors. He states that “the push force stems from under-rewarding migrants’ human capital in cities, due probably to the migrant’s lack of access to skilled jobs” and “the pull force comes from family separation and the expected higher likelihood of obtaining decent nonfarm jobs by the more educated in their home villages” (p. 392).

Furthermore, he discusses the reasons and consequences in terms of its financial and human resources and highlights two opposing viewing platforms of return migration in China for individuals in his study:

One considers return migrants to be a negative factor because it exacerbates the problem of surplus labor in rural areas. The other considers return migrants to be carriers of capital, technology, and entrepreneurship, factors that will contribute to the development of their native communities. (p. 377)

Through discussing the idea of brain gain, Ley and Kobayashi (2005), agree more with Zhao’s second viewpoint. Brain gain theory suggests that returning migrants bring a wealth of information and skills gained from having lived and worked for many years in their host countries. This resonates with Stack’s (1996) finding that remigrants to the US South took with them political skills and expectations of being listened to quite different from those who had stayed in place. For retirees, they can find work at home or provide consulting avenues. In 1999, Zhao (2002) used interview surveys to collect data on 824 households in six Chinese provinces. The length of time the migrants were away working and the fact that they return home for at least eight months were important recruitment guidelines. Interestingly, Zhao finds that “return migrants tend to be older, married, better educated, and with a spouse who has not migrated” (p. 384).
While this is logical, they do not mirror results from my research. I found that a few of my younger interviewees indicated desires strong enough that they were willing to leave their spouse in the United States to return to Trinidad and Tobago. All interviewees who were married were living with their spouse in the United States at the time of the interview. In fact, one of my interviewees specifically said, “I have to move back home and live the rest of my life there,” when asked if that meant getting a divorced, he indicated that he loved his wife and did not want a divorce even though he always desired to move back home.

Both Cerase (1974) and Thomas-Hope’s (1986) typologies focus on the reasons return migrants fail in host countries, such as feeling like an outsider, unemployment, and racism. There are, however, other reasons that focus on the meaning places have for individuals. Therefore, remigration can be viewed as a purposeful move, driven by a desire to be in the place where the individual grew up, as opposed to a move only for higher labor wages, which is highlighted in many migration theories.

Castles and Miller (2009) outline various other migratory theories, including the neoclassical theory, which is based on an economic model of wage maximization. They suggest, “the individual decision to migrate [is] based on rational comparison of the relative costs and benefits of remaining at home or moving” (p. 22). Further, Constant and Massey (2002) extend the understanding of this migratory theory; emphasizing the importance of social attachments of the immigrants: “attachments to people and institutions in the origin country lower the costs of going home, both psychic and monetary, and they raise the costs of remaining abroad” (p. 10). Cassarino (2004) outlines migration from neoclassical economics theories, such as the new economics of labor migration, structuralism, transnationalism, and social network theory. He states that neoclassical economics theory looks at return migration in terms of cost and benefits
to the immigrant, but because the immigrant may have other issues in his or her life, he or she may or may not find economics determining. Rather, the immigrant looks at the gains, such as education and the economic viability of moving to another country.

Further, the neoclassical theory, as it relates to return migration, positions immigrants’ desires to return as a failed migration experience. This theory—unlike that of the new economics of labor migration (NELM), which highlights the return as intentional and occurring because of the success during the time the returnee was abroad—views return migration as “the natural outcome of a successful experience abroad during which migrants met their goals (i.e. higher incomes and accumulation of savings)” (p. 255). In addition, it appears that individuals within this model of NELM, “seek to migrate abroad temporarily for limited periods of paid labour, either to remit earning or accumulate savings in anticipation of an eventual return home” (Constant & Massey, 2002, p. 10).

Herzog and Schottman (1982) tried to create new theories to explain the phenomenon for return migration. Their disappointed theory fits within neoclassical theory and looks at a returnee’s journey as being a failure because of limited or no employment. This theory holds that “people move with the intention of settling in the new location but with limited information before migration, some may have miscalculated the benefits of migration and then decide to return” (p. 4). Plaza and Henry (2006) do not support this particular theory because they believe “improvements in communication technology and low-cost airfares have provided an avenue for real-time information sharing for family and kin in both the sending and receiving countries” (p. 4). Regardless, failure in the host country is a plausible reason for the immigrant to return to the home country.
Target income theory speculates that there are some immigrants who intentionally migrate for the sole purpose of accumulating assets to eventually return to their country of birth (Borgas, 1994; Lindstrom 1996). These immigrants leave with a target goal and intend to fulfill it before moving back home. Plaza and Henry (2006) state that “this cohort of immigrants plan to stay in the new country for as long as it takes to accumulate enough savings to reach a particular level of income; they then return to their place of origin” (p. 5).

Structuralist theorists look at the macro factors of the returnees’ encounter. Therefore, return migration is not only about why the returnee goes back, but also about the structure and dynamics in the home country. There are expectations that the returnee holds about how he or she should behave and react in the home country. These factors do not happen on an individual basis, but rather have an effect on the social and structural core of the home country. This theory does not argue whether the returnee experienced success or failure. Instead, it focuses on “the extent to which returnees may or may not have an impact on their origin societies once return takes place” (Cassarino, 2004, p. 259). In essence, this approach looks more at the reintegration period between the returnee and the society. It analyzes the factors in a smooth or difficult readjustment: amount of time away, loss of thinking of original culture, and social networks.

Although I discuss transnationalism above, Cassarino (2004) highlights a third model that deserves mention here. He argues that structuralist models separate the experiences in the host country and the experiences in the home country, and never look at the strong ties between both countries. However, transnationalism does make this link. He insists that “one of the main contrasts between transnationalism and structuralism lies in the fact that, according to transnationalists, returnees prepare their reintegration at home through periodical and regular visits to their home countries” (Cassarino, 2004, p. 262). A sense of dependence is felt in both
places and the returnee uses both places to fulfill different needs. Al-Ali and Koser (2002) add, “another characteristic of transnational migrants is that they maintain economic, political and social networks that span several societies” (p. 10). The first two theoretical models look at return migration as an end, but transnationalism theory emphasizes a continued relationship between the host and home country. Therefore, the reintegration period can appear seamless owing to the maintenance of relationships and investments in both places.

Plaza and Henry (2006) also highlight circular migration theory, which is similar to transnationalism. Circular migration theory describes the benefits of migration for both the home and host countries. It does not look at any one place for permanent residence. Cyclical returnees “can maintain a home in North America while at the same time having a winter residence in the Caribbean” (p. 5).

One final theory of return migration is social network theory. Massey et al. (1993) note the network theory but only in terms of migration, not return migration. It relates to the success of one immigrant paving a way for other migrants to follow. They also state that “migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin” (p. 448). The idea here is a group of people assists the migrants or return migrants with resources and information for a smoother transition. Cassarino (2004) retains the idea of a dual role between the host and home country within the social network theory, as in the transnationalist theory. However, he states that the “configuration of linkages, is of paramount importance to examine the fundamentals that define and maintain the cross-border linkages in which return migrants are involved” (p. 265). The return migrant holds social capital and is able to engage and negotiate with family members and other individuals in the society and ultimately
benefit. This theory holds that there is a web of connection, which is deliberate and “complementary” (p. 267).

Cassarino (2004) charted out the different theories in a condensed fashion illustrating the previous theories, using several variables in order to elucidate the dynamics within each theoretical framework. These variables include a returnee’s (1) characteristics, (2) motivation, (3) financial capital, and (4) human capital. Using neoclassical economics theory, Cassarino clarifies that one of the motivation for return is solely based on the failure migrants experience; therefore, the only recourse is to return home. This is unlike other theories (Bow and Buys, 2003; Proshansky), which suggest motivations for return migration lie in the attachment process of the immigrant to his or her original place of birth. These returnees miss their connections to place, home, and social interactions. Home is used in referencing the kind of attachment—not just to the place itself but also to the people they left behind when they emigrated. Cassarino (2004) also mentions that the social and economic stability of returnees in the host country propel them to believe they will be successful when they return. Immigrants may feel this motivation while living in the host country for many years. They miss their home country and dream of going back; however, the move back is not what many returnees envision. In addition, the type of returnee also determines the nature and success of the move.

**Typologies**

Cerase (1974) created a typology of returnees to understand the motivations of immigrants returning back to Italy from the United States. This typology, which is similar to Thomas-Hope’s model, includes: (1) return of failure, (2) return of conservation, (3) return of retirement, (4) and return of innovation. Return of failure describes returnees who have a family and home in their country of origin and did not succeed in the host country. Return of
conservation describes individuals who, after emigration, never assimilate into the host country. Instead, they focus on working and saving so they may move back home with enough money to buy a home or land. Return of retirement refers to those individuals who return home to retire: “they have lived a full life in the United States; they have taken part in its economic, social, and political life, and many of them have served in the military” (p. 257). Cerase’s final type of returnee, the return of innovation, describes someone who considers him or herself an agent of change with the skills he or she has acquired in the host country. Again, this resonates with the return migrants in Stack’s (1996) research. This type of returnee also detaches from his country of migration, and usually lives in a segregated neighborhood in the society of reception, which Logan et al. (2002) describe as an ethnic community. This particular type of returnee has resources to choose his or her neighborhood, and they did not want to assimilate while in the host country. Moreover, this returnee continues to hold onto his or her cultural or ethnic identity while increasing his or her skills.

Thomas-Hope (1985) also created a typology of returning immigrants, but she studied Caribbean immigrants and linked typologies to development. Here, development describes the gains an immigrant makes in the host country in terms of education, human capital, and the “capacity to remit resources to the Caribbean for immediate consumption and for saving and investment” (Small, 2005, p. 127). The typology consists of four categories. First, there are settlers who establish households in the host country with duration of stay of about 30 to 40 years. The second category consists of students and circulators who, after making progress and gains, decide to return home permanently. The third category is long-term circulators. These individuals travel back and forth, repeatedly entering and re-entering the job market. They view their country of origin as the home country and the host country as the workplace. Finally, there
are transients who travel overseas for short periods of time followed by return. For them, migration in either direction is never seen as final. In addition to these typologies, “returning residents fall into a number of distinct groups including retirees and early retirees, displaced employees, employment seekers, entrepreneurs, goal achievers, family carers, disaffected, identity explorers, idealists and deportees” (Small, 2005, p. 127).

Gmelch (1992) argues that most typologies of return migration deal with two “dimensions along which there is considerable diversity: the length of time immigrants intended to remain abroad and their reason(s) for returning” (p. 137). In general, each typology creates a basic distinction between migrations with the intention of permanent versus temporary migration. Individuals who intend to migrate for a short period of time are seen as ready to return when they have accomplished specific objectives. Most often, this involves accumulation of money or completing some level of education. Immigrants who intend to stay permanently are, at times, forced to return home because of family circumstances, such looking after elderly relatives, or faltering economic conditions in the host country.

While Cerase (1974), Thomas-Hope (1984), and Gmelch’s (1992) typologies include young and old returnees who want to contribute to the improvement of their home countries, most of the immigrants they consider invested more in their home countries than in the United States. However, the participants in my study described having ties and investments not only in the home country, but also in the host country, which adds an additional condition to Cerase’s model.

**Concerns of Return Migration**

Connell (2009) looks at return migration of Health Workers in Polynesia and, even though he shows the gains of returning to one’s homeland, he also states that there is some
anxiety and confusion as well. He states that “return results in some degree of confusion and uncertainty about identity, enhanced by the expectations placed on returnees, by individuals and by social institutions, their own recognition that they had changed and their inability to meet others’ expectations” (p. 157). In their chapter on return migration of Trinidadians, Plaza and Henry (2006) discuss the *returnee’s dilemma*. This describes the dilemma of the returnee’s reintegration into the society of their homeland. Of course, the time the returnee spends abroad matters, as well as how often the returnee travels between their host and home country. For many returnees, there is *reverse culture shock*. They feel they do not fit into their previous way of life anymore. These returnees have difficulties readjusting to public social settings more so than familial interactions. Plaza and Henry (2006) note that readjustment to family life is not difficult, but this is not the case with other factors, where returnees “instead experienced value conflict with regard to social and interpersonal relationships” (p. 83). Financially stable returnees feel isolated because many local people do not interact with them. Many returnees rationalize that their possessions have changed the way their friends and neighbors perceive them. The perception they had of their home, the country from which they emigrated, is not the same anymore. It may be that the country or people have changed, but perhaps it is the returnee who is not the same? Regardless, the expectations of the returnee are not realized.

Gmelch (2006) conducted a study with 135 Barbadian returnees who had moved back home from Britain and found that the return was a massive readjustment in itself. Of the migrants surveyed, those who went abroad to work were away an average of 15.3 years, and those who went to study were away an average of 9.7 years before moving back. The results suggest that:
Fifty-three percent of the respondents were so dissatisfied during their first year at home that they believed they would have been happier abroad. Friendships did not materialize as hoped. Relatives and friends from their youth often proved, at closer quarters, narrow, and greedy. Neighbors who had appeared affable or chummy during return holiday visits (when presents were distributed) became distant or disinterested once the migrants returned. (p. 57)

The dilemmas returnees face are unexpected and new. Individuals expect and anticipate adjustment issues when they emigrated, but not when they remigrate. Because many remigrants occasionally visit their home country, they do not foresee major changes when they return. Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) argue that the longer someone is away from their country, the more integrated they are into their host country, and the less likely they are to remigrate. In regard to Dominicans, “the journey from the home community to the protection of the Hispanic community, especially in the New York area, is expensive; hence Dominican migrants tend to stay for relatively long periods” (p. 83). The make-up of the Dominican returnees also differs, as more females than males are dissatisfied with the move. Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) posit that migration and remigration highlight gender inequality and power structures. While the oldest or married men are typically sent to the US by their parents, no consideration is given to women. A woman must simply wait on her husband to gain economic viability in the US and then send for her. However, upon migrating to the US, these women are able to reverse some of the inequalities they experienced in the Dominican Republic by working and earning their own money, which is why most females are reluctant to move back.

For many, returning to one’s country signifies failure. However, it may also be an opportunity to reunite with people, place, and culture. As noted above, even though most
remigration theories imply that individuals who return voluntary do so based on the economic situation of the returnees, there are few theories that point to a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging can be looked at on many levels. Thomas-Hope (2006) explains that some of the Jamaican returnees, mention the sense of being Jamaican. One returnee in Thomas-Hope’s study exclaims, “Jamaica is home and I am glad that I returned, even though I did not have any bad experiences abroad.” The idea of returning for more than economic viability, familial connections, or to enact social change has been deemed by researchers as a desire for a sense of belonging. One concept that emphasizes this idea of returning because of a connection to the physical aspect and good feeling of the home country is called place identity.

**Place and Social Connections**

Place identity is a substructure of self-identity and a “process by which place experiences become a part of individual identities” (Rivlin, 1986). Thus, when one identifies oneself as a “Trini” or as a Brooklynite, one is invoking place identity. Proshansky et. al. (1983) argue place identity is a psychological concept, and Rivlin (1992) postulates that “an important component of these experiences is the attachment of people to places, the connectedness to settings such as homes, schools, parks, play areas, natural areas and countries” (p.4). Developing a sense of place identity takes into consideration the emotional ties to a particular place and how that affects the core of one’s own self-identity. Tuan (1977) views place as “an archive of fond memories, and splendid achievement” (p. 154), and emphasizes that it may be looked at from different scales. Specifically, he conjectures the homeland to be “at the medium scale and that human beings have a strong attachment to homeland such that home is the focal point of a cosmic structure” (p. 149). The idea that home has such a strong pull can be applied to immigrants’ need to return to their homeland regardless of the economic gains the host country
may continue to offer. The immigrant is, therefore, returning to a place as he or she once saw it and, perhaps, idealizes it. This return is largely the result of a cognitive stamp or memories of how the place used to be. Place identity is not the only place concept that aids understanding of the strength of a particular place to individuals. Nanzer (2003) theorizes two other place concepts: place attachment and place dependence. These two place constructs are related to place identity, but each has separate meaning.

While it is sometimes difficult to distinguish place identity from place attachment, it is useful to view place attachment as more of an emotional connection or bond between an individual and a particular place. The place, the people, and things in that place create emotional bonds over time. Someone might say that place identity is “part of who I am,” while place attachment might be “what I care for.” Multiple factors are needed before place attachment may emerge. As Nanzer (2003) points out, “the activities of daily life create the conditions through which individuals develop relationships with other individuals or groups and with elements in the environment through which emotional attachments to a location or place happen” (p. 364). Additionally, place attachment is dynamic and may have different meanings for different researchers and individuals.

Fullilove (2012) defines place attachment as “a mutual caretaking bond between a person and a beloved place” Just like a person; a place has a life of its own that can be simultaneously a part of the person (Fullilove, 2012). In fact, Fullilove argues that “place is embodied in us.” This can be seen in the consistent interactions of people and things in a particular place that often times lead to memories that produce the attachment to that place. Many individuals are attached to places from childhood memories, but the attachment is more than just to the spatial environment. Place attachment occurs with the people, experiences, norms, and values of a
specific geography. All these form the symbolic meaning of a particular place. Although place identity and place attachment can be difficult to distinguish, place identity is how someone sees a place as part of themselves, while place attachment is the connection a person has with a particular place.

Another place concept that helps understandings of the movements of migrants and remigrants is place dependence. This refers to “the degree to which a person perceives themselves to be strongly associated with or dependent on a particular place” (Moore & Graefe, 1994). This type of place acts as the safety net and satisfies the many needs of the individuals. For example, two indicators of whether or not an individual is dependent on a place are if they must have a job or complete their education in that particular place. Someone may feel a sense of dependence on a particular place because the place satisfies the individual’s needs. Also, someone might feel a sense of attachment to one place and a sense of dependence on another place. The place to which there is an affective bond may not offer financial security or the opportunity for furthering education but can satisfy the need for psychological stability.

The place constructs I used are place identity, place attachment, and place dependence. They are important constructs for understanding the adaptation processes of many return migrants. Moreover, the meaning of place and home are critical issues in understanding the circulatory process of migration. Even though the many experiences in the host country are important to the immigrant, the meaning (Mallet, 2004), culture, ties, and memories (Tuan, 1977) of home, which immigrants bring with them as they migrate to the United States, are also valuable to demonstrate the many facets of migration. The migration process really starts from the immigrant’s homeland and takes him or her through the experiences (economic, psychological, social networking, assimilation) of the receiving country and can involve
transnationalism (where there is a continued connection with the homeland) and return migration (where the immigrants decide to move back temporarily or permanently). The process may end in return migration, as seen in some retirees (Thomas-Hope, 1999; Ley, 2005), or it can be a continuous process whereby immigrant goes back and forth from the country of origin to the country of migration (Foner, 2007). This dissertation attempts to understand and tell the place stories of not only retirees, but younger immigrants who have moved back to their country of birth and are re-adapting to a place they left but still call home.

From my earlier research I found that some respondents saw a great gap between their experiences and how they saw themselves being perceived by the society in the US. Here, I refer mainly to media representations that form what I call a dominant narrative. In my survey, I asked respondents to answer questions such as, “How do you think the media explains the reasons Trinidadian and Tobagonians come to the United States?” I thought this question might tap into how participants think they are portrayed in the media. I discuss the results of this question in Chapter Four. In some of the interviews I conducted with individuals who returned to Trinidad and Tobago, I found many of them had invested in the positive development of the United States. Even so, they stated that they had read articles, which portrayed immigrants as people who came only to deplete the resources of the United States. This disconcerted these participants and ran contrary to their reality. Similar to United States-born citizens, they had participated in productive activities common to the American lifestyle. These included voting, volunteering, teaching, and being immersed in the American culture by engaging in national pastimes such as football, baseball and basketball. Their bond even extended to a shared sense of national outrage, grief and hurt when tragedies occur in the United States. My goal is a further
exploration of how these return immigrants, as well as those who choose to stay in the United States, see themselves compared to how the media portrays immigrants as a whole.

Return migration is a complex phenomenon to discuss and only some of its facets have been explored extensively. This dissertation explores the theories, typologies, reasons, and dilemmas encountered when addressing return migration to Trinidad and Tobago. Individuals may decide to remigrate because of forced mandates such as is the case for deportees, or voluntarily because of failure, retirement, family connections, or a need to assist in social change as expounded by scholars such as Cerase (1976) Thomas-Hope (1999; 2006), and Ley (2005). Additionally, place identity, place attachment and place dependence are concepts that are highlighted in this research in order to understand the dynamics and nuances of return migration.

**Research Questions**

The research questions in this study focus on the meaning, experiences, and connections my participants have with the places and people during their migration and remigration. The following are two main research questions and several sub-questions that guided my study:

1) How do migrants describe, voice and explain their migration, and remigration experiences?
   a) How do individuals upon returning to their place of birth re-acculturate or re-adapt to their original or past settings?
   b) What are the expectations and planning process like for Trinidadian and Tobagonians returning to their country of birth, and do the actual lived experiences in Trinidad and Tobago match the expectations before remigration?
c) How are place attachment, place identity and place dependence significant to the returning individual? In terms of how participants identify themselves, where do they feel most connected and where do they feel most economically secure.

2) How do groups of people who have not made the decision to re-migrate compare with those who have made the decision to re-migrate but have not yet done so; and are these two groups similar to or different from those who actually have re-migrated?
   a) How are the descriptions of migration and remigration similar or different from the dominant migration stories?
   b) What are the social networks available in various places immigrants have lived which aided or not aided a smoother social and economic transition both in the host country and in the homeland?

This study hopes to contribute an understanding of the dynamics of place on immigrants and remigrants. In addition, the findings may inform officials in Trinidad and Tobago and can create structures to successfully absorb returnees.
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

In order to appreciate the experiences and complexities of remigrants, I designed this research to include both remigrants, as well as people who have migrated, but may or may not have made the decision to remigrate. I recruited only individuals who were born in Trinidad and Tobago and migrated to the United States, specifically in the New York area. I used a multi-method approach to collect data. Participants who already remigrated took part in an in-depth qualitative interview, as well as quantitative survey. Participants who had not remigrated took part in the survey alone.

Qualitative Methodology

I interviewed 16 individuals (nine women, seven men, $M_{age}=37.1$, age range: 38 – 82) who returned to Trinidad and Tobago after living in the United States for three years or more. All interviews took place in Trinidad and Tobago. I started with two individuals who returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live and found other participants through them. I asked about the various places they lived and the experiences they had in each place. Seven participants were 65 years old or older, and nine were younger than 65. The seven older returnees retired from institutions in both in the United States and Trinidad and Tobago. Four of these retirees became entrepreneurs and opened their own businesses in Trinidad and Tobago. I chose to engage a limited number of individuals in order to go into considerable detail with each interviewee. I wanted to create a deep, nuanced description of their remigration experiences.

Interviews

I conducted the semi-structured interviews between September 2012 and August 2013. All 16 interviews took place at the homes or work places of each participant. The length of interviews ranged from 45 minutes to four hours. Before answering any open ended questions,
participants answered basic demographic questions, including questions about their age, gender, marital status, education, employment, home ownership status (owning or renting), years lived in Trinidad and Tobago before migration, years lived in the United States, and years living in Trinidad and Tobago after remigration (see Appendix A).

While all participants lived in the New York area, there was no similar limitation on location in Trinidad and Tobago once individuals returned. The locations in Trinidad and Tobago where the participants settled were not as important as the experiences they had while living there; therefore, I interviewed individuals in areas around Trinidad and Tobago. While many Trinidadians and Tobagonians returned to their hometown or where their families live, some had moved to a different neighborhood or town. The aim of the interviewing strategy was to tap into the experiences of returnees who live in a variety of areas in Trinidad and Tobago reflecting a range of experiences and a more complete picture of the complexities of return.

The data collection tools I used to record participants’ interviews and make notations were a computer, notepad, sketchpad, marker, pen, and digital sound recorder. During the interview process, I initially asked each individual to map the places they lived over the course of their lifetimes while talking about the meaning of each place. I call this process *place mapping*, and wanted to use it to learn about the following: the places the participants lived in his/her childhood and adulthood in Trinidad and Tobago, the place he or she lived after he or she migrated to the United States, and the place the participant was currently living since remigrating. More important, in depicting their mapping stories participants described the people who were associated with each place. However, at the beginning of the interview process, a few of the individuals were willing to use the sketchpad to draw and link the places they had lived. These individuals had no problems drawing the different places and the
connections within those places, but when it came to mapping the places none of these individuals appear willing to complete this task. After sketching the information, most participants wanted to simply talk through the information, than to map it on the pad. I, therefore stopped the mapping, kept the recorder on and continued the interview.

I found out from the interviews that New York was not the only place some of these individuals had lived in the United States. Some migrated from Trinidad or Tobago to New York, and then back to Trinidad or Tobago, but others lived in various other places after they emigrated from Trinidad or Tobago. I was hoping that the mapping would help visualize the interview data by showing the most significant people in the participants’ lives, as well as individuals who emigrated or remigrated with them. Even though the place mapping did not come out the way I envisioned, I definitely learned more than I expected from the process of interviewing.

During the interview, experiences in New York City and Trinidad and Tobago were discussed separately and the social networks, structure, and attachments of the places were discussed along with the meanings participants assigned to each place. The first places talked about were the participants’ childhood places along with the significant people and milestones in that place. Subsequent places were based on where the participants lived after childhood and this was used to gather a record of the significant people and experiences in those places. The last place of interest for each participant was her or his current residence in Trinidad and Tobago. For each participant, this last place discussed showed a mixture of current and past social connections with people who are an important part of each participant’s immigrant story and re-acculturation after remigration.
I asked participants to discuss a maximum of six places; however, in most cases it was fewer. Choosing a maximum of six, as I did in my earlier work, seemed to reduce the unnecessary complexities of considering too many places someone may have lived and instead to focus on the most significant places. The semi-structured interview questions tapped into the three place concepts discussed earlier—place identity, place attachment, and place dependence. The full list of questions is listed in Appendix A-1; however, some examples of the questions were:

1. How old were you when you first migrated to the United States?

2. What place would you identify as your home? (United States, Trinidad, both United States and Trinidad, or neither). Please explain.

3. Was there a particular place in Trinidad and Tobago that made you feel like you belonged here? If yes, where?

4. In which place did you feel most connected? The United States or Trinidad and Tobago? What about that place made you feel this way?

5. What were your expectations for returning to Trinidad and Tobago?

While these were some of the specific questions I used to probe deeper, many of the respondents elaborated on their migratory stories without a need for these questions.

Recurring themes from each interview were analyzed for the following: reasons for migrating and remigrating; expectations after returning; adapting to and re-adapting to Trinidad and Tobago; and the perceptions of self and others as immigrants living in New York. The voices of immigrants telling their own narratives seem more than just an experience. It was an adventure! Their stories came to life and each place the participants discussed had some kind of
connections to family and friends. In Chapter Five, I highlight some of these adventures using interview profiles and present my overall analysis of the interviews.

**Quantitative Methodology**

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to understand why individuals returned and the experiences they have had since returning. In order to fully address the issues of returning, I decided to use the responses of the qualitative data to design a survey to further explore this desire to return to Trinidad and Tobago. Three types of individuals participated in the surveys: (1) participants who were planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live, (2) participants who were not planning to return, (3) and those who had already returned and were now living in Trinidad and Tobago. The survey gathered information about individuals’ motivations for migration, planning processes, and desires to return or not to return to Trinidad and Tobago.

Seventy-nine respondents started the online survey. Of these 79, 59 respondents (forty-one females, eighteen males, $M_{age} = 28.2$, age range 27 to 74) completed all 22 survey items. Nineteen respondents started the survey and stopped generally after answering a few questions. Some of those 19 respondents completed all of the demographic questions, while others only answered the first three questions. It is unclear as to why these respondents chose not to complete the entire survey. All 79 respondents are native-born Trinidadians and Tobagonians who have lived in the United States for at least three years. Of the 59 respondents who completed the survey, 54 lived in Trinidad and Tobago between 18 to 55 years. The remaining six respondents lived in Trinidad and Tobago for less than 18 years. The requirements were that the individuals participating in the survey had to be first generation immigrants of Trinidad and Tobago who lived in their homeland for at least 17 years of their childhood. This length of time ensured that respondents experienced the values and culture of their homeland before migrating.
I recruited participants with a notice on my Facebook page during the summer of 2013. I also sent a call for participants to 70 of my Facebook contacts. Only ‘Friends’ who identified themselves as Trinidadians were sent messages about the research and encouraged to participate. I also sent the call for participants via email to 75 friends and family who were not on Facebook so that they would complete the survey and distribute to other Trinidadians and Tobagonians they knew. Brief explanations of the study and consent forms (See Appendix B-1 & C-1) were included in both the Facebook and email version, along with links to access the survey (See Appendix B-2 & C-2). There were three links to three versions of the survey. One survey link was open only to individuals who were planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago. The second link was open to participants who did not want to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live. The third link was open to individuals who had returned to Trinidad and Tobago for a year or more.

The first few questions of the survey gathered demographic information, which included questions about gender, the desire to go home, years in the United States, age, marital status and income level. I recruited individuals who have lived in the New York area and wanted to stay, those who are planning to remigrate, or have already remigrated to their country of birth, Trinidad and Tobago. I selected individuals who were living and assimilated in New York or surrounding areas because this allowed for more similar experiences and because this area has a high concentration of Caribbean enclaves. I determined assimilation using measures of employment satisfaction and sense of economic security, length of time since migration, and having close connections to family and friends in both countries (Alba & Nee, 2003).

Surveys

Survey items were created using responses and themes from the interviews (see Appendix A) and offered deeper understanding of the following topics discussed during
interviews with remigrants, including the migration experiences while living in the United States, traveling back and forth between the United States and Trinidad and Tobago, the kinds of expectations they have when they eventually move back, and the perceptions they believe the media have of Trinidadian immigrants.

The online survey was created with the web-based software company, Survey Gizmo. This online tool was instrumental in creating the format and layout of the survey. I chose Survey Gizmo as opposed to Survey Monkey or other online tools because it was more student-oriented. Each of the 26 questions had to be constructed individually and then formatted into one of several types of survey question: multiple choice, short text, yes or no responses, check boxes and 5-point Likert scale type. Some of the questions from those categories included questions such as, “How long have you lived in the United States?” and “How often did you visit Trinidad and Tobago after settling in the United States to live?” These questions attempt to understand the impact transnationalism has on the participants’ return to their country of birth. Another group of questions look at the experiences within the United States and these questions were intended to uncover the initial motivations for the immigrants moving to the United States and the subsequent experiences within the host country. These experiences are determinants in giving immigrants a push to return to their country of birth or a desire to stay in the United States. The idea of push or pull is relative to the position from which the person is speaking. That is, what pulled me to the United States may not be what pulls me back to Trinidad and Tobago. In his analysis of the push and pull theory, Zhao (2002) suggests that negative experiences in the host country aids in the immigrant returning to what they refer to as home. Others have argued that it is not so much the experiences in the host country but the experiences and memories (Proshansky, 1983; Tuan, 1977) of the home country. Therefore, survey items about the
experiences and expectations of those who are planning to return and of those who do not want to return but instead want to stay in the United States are important to understanding the dynamic of remigration. An example item is: “I expected that when I returned to Trinidad and Tobago that things were going to be about the same as when I left for the United States.” Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using one of the following Likert-scale style responses: strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree.

Because the notion of social networks kept recurring from the interview process with the earlier participants who returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live for over a year, it was necessary to include in the survey the people who are significant to the migration and remigration process. An example of these questions in this section is: “The people in Trinidad and Tobago, who are supporting my decision to move back to Trinidad and Tobago to live were: my mom, dad, uncles, aunts, siblings, intimate partner, friends, and other.” Participants were asked to choose all that applied and also to write in the relationship of the person referred to as “other.” Since these individuals were able to answer who, the next question focused on how. Therefore, they were asked for the ways and frequency of staying connected to these individuals over the years such as by phone, video chat, letters, Facebook, etc. Multiple studies have shown that social connection (Conway, Potter & Bernard, 2008; Constant & Massey, 2002; Hugo, 2009) and the “configuration of linkages” (Cassarino, 2004) are strong motivations for immigrants moving back or wanting to move back to their original home country.

Using the qualitative data then creating the survey really helped in further answering the questions on remigration. Since a few of my participants spoke about racism during the interview I wanted to know whether it was a push factor to remigration. However, from the survey I found
that for most of the participants racism was not a factor at all in making a decision to return.

Additionally, when I recognized that the married men I interviewed always wanted to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live but their wives did not, I also created a question to learn more about this dilemma. Similar to the interviews, I found that more married men did not want to stay in the US, however married women felt differently and indicated that they wanted to stay in the US and not return to Trinidad and Tobago. This is intriguing to me and in further studies using a larger amount of participants for both the interview and the survey will help to understand whether there is truly a difference with married men and women when discussing remigration.
Chapter Four: Quantitative Results and Analysis

I initially started this research with qualitative data, but was advised to include quantitative data as well. Hence, I used the themes, questions, and concerns from the interview responses of the 16 individuals who had remigrated to Trinidad and Tobago to help guide the creation of survey questions. My focus was on two main research questions:

1. How do migrants describe, voice and explain their migration and remigration experiences?

2. How do groups of people who have not made the decision to re-migrate compare with those who have made the decision to re-migrate but have not yet done so and are these two groups similar to or different from those who actually have returned to Trinidad and Tobago?

I answered the first question using the in-depth interviews of the individuals who had returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live for over a year. However, a sub-question of this main question focused on three place constructs: place identity, place dependence and place attachment which and I answered using both the qualitative and quantitative data set that I collected. The second question could only be answered using the surveys I collected from individuals who had re-migrated, were planning to re-migrate and did not want to remigrate. The idea was to look at those social networks that might have assisted participants in making a smoother transition whether in the host country or the place of remigration.

Some clear descriptive data emerged from the quantitative survey data. However, since that data set for this study is small, the results and analysis cannot be generalized to the overall population of Trinidadian and Tobagonians who have migrated to the United States. My target was to have 150 individuals complete the online survey. Of the 59 individuals who fully
completed the surveys, five had already returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live; 25 had the intention of moving back to Trinidad and Tobago and 29 had no intentions of ever moving back to Trinidad and Tobago to live. The number of survey respondents who had actually returned to Trinidad and Tobago was too small to analyze as a group although they did not appear to be different from other groups. On the other hand, of the 54 people who were currently living in the United States, the nearly even split between the 25 who intended to move back to Trinidad and Tobago and the 29 who do not intend to move back makes these two groups easy to compare. The three most popular reasons given both by respondents who had moved back as well as those who had the intention of moving back were that they wanted to retire in their home country; missed their culture, such as food, music, and everyday living; or felt there are too many stresses in the U.S.

Migration research has shown that the top three reasons individuals leave their homeland to migrate to the US were to pursue an education, to find a job or get a better job, and to be re-united with family members who had already migrated. While the most cited reason for migrating among participants (67.9% of the 54 respondents) was pursuing an education, the same number of individuals also indicated that they wanted a change in their lives. Little research, however, has focused on the notion of “wanting a change in my life.” This type of motivation has not been studied and should be further explored to understand in more depth what kind of ‘changes’ the individuals were thinking of or what sorts of things prompted the desire for change. While some may have wanted the change to be pursuing an education or getting a different job, others listed ‘feeling adventurous’ as an important motivation for leaving their homeland. While feeling adventurous was shown to be a motivator, a deeper question is, “What propels it?” Were these individuals feeling bored in their lives, were they lured by the idea of “If
I can make it there, I can make it anywhere”? Did they feel they had accomplished all they could in Trinidad/Tobago, or were there other factors? Since the survey questions did not probe into what was meant by “wanting a change in my life” or “feeling adventurous,” I speculate that this desire, along with the desire to pursue an education, has a lot to do with the philosophy and cultural thinking which came from the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams. He encouraged education as the key to success and spoke to his citizens about seeking opportunities to study abroad and after completing their studies to return to their homeland of Trinidad and Tobago. I discuss this further in the next chapter.

Respondents who had returned or who had the intention of returning indicated that traveling back and forth to Trinidad and Tobago was the most likely way they made preparations. Looking for job opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago was the second way most of the respondents prepared to return. Three of the respondents were speaking to another person who had already moved back. These explanations were similar to those of one of the individuals whom I interviewed, Blair C, and Blair’s friend Roxanne participated in the interview to learn more about returning. Roxanne said she traveled to Trinidad and Tobago once or twice a year and was also getting tips from Blair C. to make arrangements for what she believed would be her final move. Roxanne was fortunate to have gotten the basic knowledge and experiences from someone who had already made the move and it seemed she was preparing her for a smoother transition than Blair C. herself encountered.

I also note the generally robust communication via a wide variety of media that allowed respondents to keep in touch with family and friends. Of the nine different choices of communication media offered on the survey, 54 respondents indicated 203 total choices. That is an average of nearly four different forms of media for each respondent. Also, nearly every
participant communicated with family and friends at least monthly, and nearly two-thirds indicated that they were in touch at least weekly! Examining the survey data led to considering a number of questions. I share some of them below.

**Are retired Trinidadians and Tobagonians more likely to return or intend to return?**

Of the 30 individuals who indicated that they were planning to return to Trinidad or Tobago or had already returned, 15 indicated that retirement had nothing to do with their decision to return, and 5 indicated that they were returning before retirement. The remaining 10 were waiting until after they retire to return. For the 25 individuals who were planning to return, 15 wanted to return many years before retirement. This finding indicates that there was something other than retirement that was ‘pushing’ the individuals to return or ‘pulling’ their desires to return (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Numbers of study participants who have returned or plan to return in relation to their retirement plans*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plans to return</th>
<th>Return migrants</th>
<th>Planning return</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before I retire</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After I retire</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my spouse retires</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement had nothing to do with decision to return</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who is more likely to return to Trinidad and Tobago after migrating to the US?**

Even though only five individuals, who returned, totally completed the survey, 15 individuals initially consented and started the survey. Ten individuals stopped after the demographic questions. Of the 15 people who indicated that they had remigrated to Trinidad and Tobago, 10 individuals responded to the question of the age they migrated to the United States.
All of the ten respondents who returned came to the United States when they were between the ages of 18 and 55. None had migrated before 18 years old or over 55 years. Moreover, the majority of the individuals who answered the question on how long they lived in the United States before moving back, 6 of the 9 individuals who answered—lived in the United States between 5 to 20 years. The data for those intending to return was a bit different.

The 59 individuals who intended to return, had returned, or were not returning were evenly distributed according to the age they migrated to New York. Twenty-one respondents who wanted to return and 21 respondents who did not want to return came to the United States between the ages of 18 and 55 years. There were three individuals who wanted to remigrate, but who came to the United States under 18 years of age. Also, there were eight individuals who did not want to return and came when they were under 18 years of age. None of the respondents came when they were over 55 years of age. All five of the individuals who had returned came to the United States between the ages of 18 and 55. In retrospect, the age range created was so broad it proved to be too limiting and did not capture any significant patterns. The actual ages of the individuals when they first moved to the United States should have been asked instead of the age range.

Looking at the 59 individuals who had the intentions of returning, had returned, or were not returning, 30 lived in New York for over 20 years and 29 lived in New York less than 20 years. However, of the 30 who lived in New York for over 20 years, 18 were not planning to return while five who were living in New York between 5 to 20 years did not want to return and six who were living in New York less than five years did not also want to return (see Table 2).
Table 2

*Numbers of study participants who have returned, plan to return, or do not plan to return in relation to their length of stay in New York*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of stay in New York</th>
<th>Return migrants</th>
<th>Planning return</th>
<th>Not planning return</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5-20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the individuals in this study, it seemed the longer they lived in New York, the more they did not want to move back to Trinidad and Tobago. Also, if they were newcomers, living in New York less than five years most were not intending to return. These results are unlike that of Thomas-Hope’s (1999) in his study with Jamaican returnees. He found that “professionals were more likely to return in 1 to 5 years. If they remained abroad for longer periods, they were less likely to return” (p. 190). Individuals in my study who stayed for a period of 5 to 20 years were the ones planning return or who had already returned, but after 20 years the decision to return changes and most do not want to return. It appears, therefore, that length of stay in the host country does have an impact on the immigrant’s decision to return or not to return. Interestingly, most of the individuals in my study indicated that their social connections were either evenly distributed in both Trinidad and Tobago and the United States, or mostly in Trinidad. The notion that the longer one lives in the United States, the more likely one would stay can be a result of assimilation. As immigrants begin to have satisfactory employment, create close friendships and establish relationships with individuals in their workplace and neighborhoods the more connected they feel to that particular place. Also, because New York has a strong Caribbean enclave, it could be that many of the participants who did not want to
return felt that they were connected to their culture in the areas they live. Still, these individuals did not cut ties with their homeland, but they continued to keep in touch via Facebook, phone, and other online social networks.

**How does owning a house, in the US or in Trinidad and Tobago influence one’s decision to move back or not?**

Owing a house in a particular place shows a degree of rootedness and stability in that place. In this study, most of the individuals who owned houses in the United States did not want to return to Trinidad and Tobago. However, there were a few participants who owned houses in the United States and still wanted to return. Only nine of the 59 respondents owned houses in Trinidad and Tobago and four of them wanted to return to live but one did not want to return to Trinidad and Tobago. Of the five who had already returned, four owned houses in Trinidad and Tobago, while one owned a house in the United States. Owning a house in the place one wants to live plays a part in whether the immigrant will remigrate or not, and the qualitative data suggest this consideration is part of the planning process to return. Most participants began to consider buying property many years prior to their eventual return.

**What about transnationalism and remigration? Are people who have visited before moving back more likely to return to live in Trinidad and Tobago?**

For both individuals who do plan to return and those who do not plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live there was an even distribution as to how many times they visited Trinidad and Tobago since they migrated to the United States. In fact, the 25 respondents who plan to return visit Trinidad and Tobago frequently--between a few times to multiple times a year. Twenty-nine respondents who had no intentions or plans of returning also visited between a few times to multiple times a year. For the five who already returned four of the respondents also
visited between a few times to multiple times a year before they actually remigrated. All respondents visited their country of birth since living in the United States. For the ten survey respondents who returned to Trinidad and Tobago, eight visited Trinidad and Tobago a few times to multiple times while they lived in the United States, but two did not visit at all. For these two respondents, the time of remigrating to Trinidad and Tobago was the first time they had been back since initially migrating to the United States. From the qualitative data, 14 of the 16 individuals who returned indicated that they traveled back yearly before they made the final decision to actually remigrate.

**How do individuals stay in touch and does that influence the intention to return to Trinidad and Tobago?**

Foner (2003) uses the notion of transnationalism to cover many ways of keeping the connection between the home country and the host country. In my survey, I asked individuals to check and list ways they stay updated on social norms and political news in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as how they stay in contact with people in their home country. Everyone indicated that they received their home country’s local news from newspapers, radio and television programs, and daily internet programs. Since there have been advances with technology and reductions in cost, staying in touch has gotten easier and phone calls, emails, social media like Facebook and twitter were used on a daily and weekly basis by most respondents. Staying in touch via cell phones was the most checked option. However, of the 59 individuals who answered this item of the survey, 41 checked that they used Facebook as the second option to stay in touch. Only six of the 59 individuals indicated that they continue to use letter writing to stay in touch with their loved ones in Trinidad and Tobago. Regardless of
whether the participants returned, had intentions of returning, or did not have intentions of returning, all respondents kept in contact on a daily basis (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Numbers of study participants using different types of communication before returning in relation to return status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of communication (before returning)</th>
<th>Return migrants ((n = 5))</th>
<th>Planning return ((n = 25))</th>
<th>Not planning return ((n = 29))</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-line phone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online websites/Social media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers from home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does the gender of the individual have any impact on remigration?*

Looking at the data on male and females, men were more likely to say that their closest friends were in Trinidad and Tobago. This could be one of the reasons males tended to return to Trinidad and Tobago, whereas females who returned, both survey respondents and interviewees, indicated that family was the main reason they returned. When comparing the data with individuals who had intentions of returning with those who had no intentions of returning, 21 of the 38 females were not planning to return whereas 8 of the 16 males were not planning to return.

In this sample, there are more than twice the number of females than males, married or in committed relationships, who are not planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago. This is the only clear difference between males and females in the quantitative data as it relates to remigration.

Most married women do not plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live than those who plan to
return, but most married men plan to return than those who do not plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live. This finding supports findings from the qualitative data that the majority of female participants have no desire to return to Trinidad and Tobago if their spouses were not returning with them. Conversely, the male participants in the interviews who returned to Trinidad and Tobago indicate that they moved regardless of whether their spouses or children desired to return (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Numbers of study participants across marital status in relation to intentions to return*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Plan to return</th>
<th>Do not plan to return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This gender dynamic brings up many questions about how married men and women make decisions. I think in Trinidad and Tobago the roles are more defined than the United States and many married women feel more independent living here. They can be known and respected in their professional and personal lives. Men on the other hand experience more a sense of professional status in Trinidad and Tobago’s work environment than do women.
Chapter Five: Qualitative Results and Analysis

Sample of Profiles of Returnees

All the interviewees were recruited based on the criteria of having some similar characteristics. For example, all the interviewees were born in Trinidad and Tobago and migrated to the United States, where they lived for a number of years, and decided to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live. In addition, they were employed in the States and since moving back were all employed or retired in Trinidad and Tobago. None of the interviewees were forced or coerced to return to their country of birth to live but instead made the choice to return and were clearly in a financial position to return. This study does not attempt to draw a representative sample for migrants’ or remigrants’ experiences, since there are many migrants who would prefer to stay in the United States who are deported. However, even though all the participants I interviewed were economically stable in Trinidad and Tobago, not all of them were college educated. There were a few nurses, professors, teachers, and a politician, but there was also a construction worker, a factory worker, and a nurse’s aide. I am interested in these individuals because I want to learn more about their experiences in the United States, their planning process before they returned, and the reasons they choose to return to Trinidad and Tobago instead of staying in the United States. Even though the length of time the returning immigrants were living in Trinidad and Tobago varied, they all expressed a sense of wisdom in their experiences. That is, they had reflected on their migration and remigration experiences and instead of viewing everything negatively, they tried to learn from their experiences and share it with others, they knew, who were remigrating as well. There are two individuals who remigrated three years ago, but all other participants had lived in Trinidad and Tobago between 7 to 33 years after living in the US.
All the interviewees agreed to be interviewed for this research project without compensation. However, three of the interviewees were apprehensive because of concerns about how I would represent them or Trinidad and Tobago in what I wrote. They gave full consent after reassurance that the discussion would focus on their experiences not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but also when they migrated to the United States.

Since the country of Trinidad and Tobago is made up of two separate islands, I was encouraged to interview people from Tobago after interviewing a few people from Trinidad. Luckily, I met someone in Trinidad who referred me to four individuals in Tobago whom I interviewed during August 2012 and July 2013. I found that the experiences were unique in each island even though the histories of Trinidad and Tobago are linked and they share the same Prime Minister. In Trinidad, interviewees were more professional at the beginning of interview sessions whereas in Tobago all interviewees were extremely open and welcoming at the onset. Another difference was that the participants in Tobago had migrated first to Trinidad before making the decision to migrate to the United States. This is because Trinidad is viewed as more urban and Tobago is viewed as more rural. Many Tobagonians have migrated to Trinidad for job opportunities and education advancement. For example, the main University is located in Trinidad and all nursing and education students have to migrate to Trinidad to complete those professions after high school. Most Trinidadians go to Tobago to enjoy the beaches but would not go there for economic viability instead they would go to the United States.

All the interviews took place in either interviewees’ homes or their place of work. All except one interview were conducted with only the interviewee and interviewer present. The exception was the first interview where the woman I interviewed asked to include her friend in our discussion so that she might gather information to officially remigrate in a year’s time. All
the interviews lasted from 40 minutes to two hours and the average interview time was an hour and a half. In my research proposal, I proposed recruiting 16 individuals representative in terms of gender and employment status—four retired males, four employed males, four retired females, and four employed females. Ultimately, the sample consisted of three retired men, six employed men, three retired women, and three employed women.

The main criteria for recruiting individuals were: (1) New York was their place of initial migration to the United States and (2) all individuals had the choice to return or to stay in New York--none were being forced to return. I decided that it was important to use qualitative methods for this research in order to hear from the immigrants themselves about their experiences and connections with different places during the processes of migration and remigration. This approach is unlike most previous research on migration, which focuses mainly on census data. However, in more recent studies on return migration, researchers have drawn on structured and semi-structured interview methods (Conway, Potter and Bernard, 2008; Gmelch 2006; Potter, 2005; Plaza and Henry, 2006). While census data is an important component of understanding the large-scale movement of migrants entering the United States, interview data are vital to give voices to these immigrants and collect more dynamic and colorful information on their experiences and concerns. I decided to begin my research using semi-structured interviews, as well as getting a description of the places and migratory histories of the interviewees to get an intimate picture of the remigration process. However, I also used a quantitative survey to include information not only from Trinidadians and Tobagonians, who have returned, but also those who were planning to return and those who were not planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago.
Initially, I was concerned about how I would find individuals to interview since I did not have many contacts in Trinidad and Tobago who had returned from New York. Therefore, I sent emails and called friends and family to inform them that I was coming to Trinidad and Tobago to do research. I asked them to contact me if they knew of anyone who had returned to Trinidad and Tobago over a year ago and had lived in the New York City area for some time. A few of my friends emailed me the names and numbers of people they knew and told me to contact these individuals. I decided that I would wait until I was actually in Trinidad, since my schedule for traveling was not finalized and my research was awaiting Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) approval for the ethics of my study. I was also trying to find appropriate accommodations, as I planned to stay in Trinidad and Tobago for a few weeks. I also reached out to friends in New York and New Jersey, and they also sent me names and numbers of people they knew who returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live. I created an excel spreadsheet with each potential interviewee’s name and contact information, as well as the name and contact information of the person who referred them. I also contacted a childhood friend and arranged for him to drive me to the different interviews. He would be my ‘go to’ person while in Trinidad and Tobago. He is an electrical engineer who contracts different jobs, so his work schedule was flexible. I initiated this contact because I did not feel comfortable driving in Trinidad and Tobago. Also, I wanted to have someone with me at all times, since I did not know any of the people I would be interviewing. Even though I drive in the United States, the dimensions and conditions of the roads are different. In addition, people in Trinidad and Tobago drive on the left side of the road, as in most other Caribbean countries, whereas in the United States, people drive on the right side of the road. Moreover, car accidents in Trinidad have increased over the years.
I started the process of planning qualitative data collection in early 2012 when I traveled to Trinidad and Tobago for a ‘dry run.’ I met a few professors at one of the colleges in Trinidad who were interested in my research topic. Three people gave me their business cards and told me to contact them when I was ready to start interviewing participants. A few months later, I returned to Trinidad and Tobago with IRB approval, consent forms, and ready to begin data collection. I interviewed 10 people on one visit and six people on another visit. I created 2 spreadsheets of all 16 interviews (See Tables 5 and 6), on which I organized the information I collected about migration to the United States, as well as remigration to Trinidad and Tobago. In the following section, I give an overview and general analysis of all 16 individuals. However, I wanted to show the in-depth stories of the interviewees so I decided to report on the narratives and analysis of six of the 16 interviews I conducted. The responses of these six individuals covered the range and themes of the 16 participants but offered greater detail. Each of these six participants have returned to their birth country and represent both diverse experiences and similar views on life as an immigrant in the US and remigrant in both Trinidad and Tobago (see the tables below).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Residence</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Current occupation</th>
<th>Years in NY</th>
<th>Years in T&amp;T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stacey K</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Charlottesville, Tobago</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Retired Nurse</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. S</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Trinicity, Trinidad</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Belmont, Trinidad</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Scarborough, Tobago</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenny</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Laventille, Trinidad</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Network Engineer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Barataria, Trinidad</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Owns Construction Company</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Smith</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Point Fortin, Trinidad</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Entrepreneur: Owns 2 apartments</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merle</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Arima, Trinidad</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Maraval, Trinidad</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Chief Economist</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collos</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Laventille, Trinidad</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Arouca, Trinidad</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Retired Nurse</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Arima, Trinidad</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Dean of Business at a College</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>San Fernando, Trinidad</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Faculty Coordinator</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Maraval, Trinidad</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Political Analyst</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Arima, Trinidad</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>College Dean</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Barataria, Trinidad</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Construction worker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6

**Participants’ migration experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why migrate</th>
<th>Adjustment in NYC</th>
<th>Remigration reasons</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Adjustment in T&amp;T</th>
<th>Enjoyment in T&amp;T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stacey K</td>
<td>Gain knowledge</td>
<td>Train transit; weather</td>
<td>Always planned</td>
<td>Better healthcare</td>
<td>Poor healthcare; crime rate</td>
<td>Freedom; friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. S.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>Never felt at home</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Murder rate</td>
<td>To relax/mentor students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair C</td>
<td>Betterment for children</td>
<td>Apartment living</td>
<td>Cultural nuances</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No issues</td>
<td>Community organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Sue</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Inappropriate dressing of young people</td>
<td>Left daughter in Tobago</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Freedom/rotary club for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenny</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Did not feel like ‘home’</td>
<td>Always planned; missed home</td>
<td>To be successful at home</td>
<td>Poor Healthcare</td>
<td>All fours club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Wanted to open new business</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No issues</td>
<td>Social life; liming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Smith</td>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Moved back w/ new wife</td>
<td>To teach young adults</td>
<td>Bad attitudes toward change</td>
<td>Peaceful; alumni group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merle</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Cold weather; eating patterns</td>
<td>Teaching opportunity</td>
<td>To inspire young people</td>
<td>No issues</td>
<td>Contributes to the lives of young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Re-unite with parents</td>
<td>No time for socializing</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>To give back</td>
<td>Poor Healthcare</td>
<td>Social life; liming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collos</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>T&amp;T school for children</td>
<td>To give back</td>
<td>Poor Healthcare</td>
<td>Freedom; politics; steel pan group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Cold weather</td>
<td>Difficult job adjustment</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Crime rate</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Weather missed father, family</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>Help to open more businesses</td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Culture; community group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Missed father, grandmother</td>
<td>Ill grandmother</td>
<td>To be successful at home</td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Liming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Divorced; lost job</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>To be successful at home</td>
<td>Crime rate</td>
<td>Political group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>Missed home</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Crime rate</td>
<td>Freedom; friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias</td>
<td>Work; wife wanted migration</td>
<td>Daily life in NYC difficult; divorced</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>Live peacefully at home</td>
<td>Healthcare; unstable young people</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Overview of Interviewees

In doing my analysis of the 16 individuals I interviewed, I created 2 spreadsheets with recurring categories taken from the conversations. Table 5 provides demographic information about participants, and Table 6 presents important information related to the migration process as well as on place constructs.

As stated before, the 9 male interviewees and 7 females were not chosen but were recruited based on the referral of two individuals who remigrated. Even though the average age was 58, only 3 individuals were retired and the other 13 were working. In studies such as Cerase (1974) the focus was broader in that the participants were more varied in ages and economic including employed as well as unemployed individuals. I purposefully wanted to work with individuals who were employable because I wanted to be sure they had a choice in wanting to remigrate or to stay in New York.

Interestingly, all the individuals I interviewed were doing work that they said they loved. The 16 individuals had various professions but all were working within the professions they started in New York. A few of the interviewees were in academia and medical fields. Two had moved away from their professions and started their own businesses in Trinidad and Tobago. One person, who was a realtor in New York, opened a construction company building houses for the government. The other person decided to take ownership of a family bakery. Given their ages and their work experience, they had lived most of their productive lives in New York. Part of the reason all these individuals were gainfully employed in Trinidad and Tobago was the fact that most of them had spent their time productively in the United States. This experience in turn gave them choices to engage in a planning process to return. The ability to have the choice to plan their return was important to the ultimate success of these returnees. Not everyone gets this
type of choice. Deportees, for example, are one group of immigrants who return to their homeland without being given the choice to return or stay, and their reentry may be more difficult as a result.

Another category from Table 5 looks at the “Years in New York”. Of the 16 interviewees, only 2 lived in New York for less than 10 years. Twelve of the interviewees lived in New York between 10 to 20 years and 2 were there for more than 20 years. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, one is more likely to return after living abroad for some time, rather than a short time (less than 5 years) or too long (over 20 years). This finding can be explained by understanding that it can take many years for immigrants to established themselves economically and get to the point where they feel comfortable about having the choice to return. On the other hand, those immigrants, who have lived in the United States for over 20 years may not hasten to return home as they have accumulated a retirement fund and strong connections to family and friends in the United States. Also, as one of the individuals mentioned in the interview, “. . . at home old people are not respected in the workplace.” In Trinidad and Tobago older people are looked upon as grandmothers, grandfathers, caretakers, or even bosses, but not as workers. Older people are more respected as entrepreneurs. They are looked at as intelligent and full of wisdom but most people would not hire them as workers. In the United States people work into their 70s and are respected as workers, but the thinking in Trinidad and Tobago is different and this was one reason older individuals who want to work into their retirement years decide to stay in the United States. However, if they want to retire and relax then most choose to return to their homeland.

The last category in Table 5, I titled “Years in T&T” and in it listed the years individuals who had remigrated had been living in Trinidad and Tobago after their return. The years
remigrated varied from 3 years to 33 years but when I compared this to other category, i.e. Expectations, there are no outstanding differences. I am making this observation fully aware that I am dealing with a small number of people and I am not thinking of this as a representative sample. There were 3 individuals who lived in Trinidad and Tobago for a longer time than they lived in New York, but these individuals were not much different from the others who had lived in New York for a longer time. One thing that is consistent with all 16 individuals is that no matter how long they lived in Trinidad and Tobago or in New York they had difficulty adjusting to the weather in New York. Remigrants were concerned about issues such as healthcare and the crime rate, which I expected to decline the longer they lived in Trinidad and Tobago; however, this was not the case. Regardless of how long they had moved back to live in Trinidad and Tobago, they all had the same concerns.

Now I want to move onto table 6 which is titled, “Why Migrate”. The first category looks at why these immigrants migrated in the first place. There are 3 main reasons that appear in that column: to work, to complete higher education, and to be reunited with family members, which is similar to the reasons given in broader immigration literature. There is something within that place that made them want to be there. I am taking this to mean that what drew them to New York had to do with what I am calling a sense of ‘place dependence’. When discussed in the literature, place dependence is focused on economics, but I am seeing place dependence a bit more broadly. The sorts of place dependence mentioned by participants were more focused more in New York than in Trinidad and Tobago. One aspect of place dependence centers on certain things a place offers that are functional. Yes, ultimately it is about getting a job or an education but it can also be about connecting with friends and family. The emigrants were expecting or depending on this place, New York, to make their lives better in a variety of ways. Like most
immigrants, when these individuals first migrated they thought they would return eventually, but unlike most immigrants they actually did return after living in New York for some time, often many years.

There are several other categories I want to analyze in more depth to get a better sense of the remigration process. Another category I looked at was adjustment to New York which mostly describes the difficulties of living in New York. Participants commonly mentioned weather, culture change, it not feeling like ‘home’ and divorce as issues they experienced as migrants. These adjustment issues will be analyzed individually in the next chapter. However, I do want to highlight that these adjustment issues in general suggest that many emigrants did not develop a sense of place attachment in New York at that particular time. This lack of place attachment often resulted from events that tainted their experiences in New York. I thought racism would be highlighted as an adjustment issue living in New York, but even though it was mentioned as something that occurs, it was not spoken about as a problem for any of the interviewees. This was a similar finding with the individuals from the quantitative data from my survey.

The reasons for remigration were different from the reasons for migrating to the United States. Five of the 16 interviewees indicated that they simply “missed home” so they moved back, while others said that even though they always wanted to return a particular event propelled them to return faster. For example, one person said that her grandmother became ill, and she had to return to take care of her. It was more important to take care of her ill grandmother than to keep her job in New York. Two men said that they had gotten divorced while living in New York, and wanted to live somewhere familiar and friendly so they decided to move back ‘home’. Two other individuals returned for business opportunities. Even though
these are different reasons than when they first migrated, I am still calling this ‘place
dependence’.

Their economic place dependence may have still been in New York but their
remigration depended on the people and connections in Trinidad and Tobago to make their lives
more fulfilling. Again, I want to point out that place dependence includes factors in addition to
economics.

The column that I titled “Expectations” focused on what the interviewees were hoping for
before returning. Some of them talked about things they had hoped to see upon their return. One
person indicated that poor healthcare was a concern but expected to see improvement in that
area. Two others wanted to work with younger people within their communities teaching and
inspiring them. Others talked about expecting to be successful when they eventually returned.
What is interesting is that most of these individuals not only expected or say they wanted to be
involved but were actually doing it. They were active members of various organizations and
community groups in Trinidad and Tobago. Most mentioned that they viewed this involvement
as giving back to their homeland. This involvement is similar to that of Dr. Eric William’s
philosophy, the notion that one can migrate to further educate oneself, but return after achieving
some level of accomplishment to give back. This is part of improving oneself, but at the same
time improving the country of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the next category, “Adjustment to Trinidad and Tobago,” received a variety of
negative responses, which fell into three categories: high crime rate, lack of healthcare and poor
customer service. These issues were reiterated in many different conversations when talking
about living in Trinidad and Tobago. These issues can also be seen as a lack of ‘place
attachment’ to Trinidad and Tobago. Returning did not mean that remigrants were attached to
everything in Trinidad and Tobago. There are definitely events and things both in the United
States and in Trinidad and Tobago that made these individuals feel a lack of place attachment. It is interesting that their adjustment issues are in contrast to what they experienced in New York. While living in New York they grew to have certain expectations regarding crime, healthcare and customer service and they seemed to have carried these expectations when they returned to Trinidad and Tobago.

Many of the individuals I interviewed talked about different aspects of Trinidad and Tobago that stood out to them and that they really liked. I titled this category, “Enjoyment in T&T.” For some, they felt a sense of freedom living there and for others it was simply being near their family and friends. The responses in this category have the feeling of ‘place identity.’ Part of place identity encompasses how that place makes you more of who you are and for many of these interviewees interacting with their friends and family, the freedom they feel there, the familiarity of the culture and the everyday socializing gives them a comfort level to be more of who they are. Most of them indicated that they enjoyed giving back in various ways; some were active with young people in the neighborhood while others were involved in politics. These returnees were not only interested in being successful but also helping others.

The lives of all 16 individuals are interesting to view in general. These columns tell a story of the migration experiences of these individuals and how place constructs are interwoven in that process. Individuals leave their homeland searching for something within a particular place. However, most of these individuals, they still held on to their place attachment in Trinidad and Tobago through their connections with friends, family, and culture. While living in New York, they have adjustment issues, which in turn interrupt the formation of strong place attachments in New York. Interestingly though, this lack of place attachment is also seen when they return to Trinidad and Tobago. They want to return because they feel attached to Trinidad
and Tobago, but when they return they feel a lack of place attachment. I think an important point is that place constructs mean different things as they go through the migration process. While I am comfortable using the place constructs, I also feel people were trying to express something more about this pull back to home that is not so easy to define. It is a sense of belonging to that particular place, feeling attached to the everyday life of that place, but being aware of the negative aspects of that place as well. Carol Stack (1996) refers to this notion as a ‘call to home’.

The following are the stories of the six individuals I selected to discuss in depth:

**Stacey K**

Stacey was born in Plymouth, Tobago in 1943, 19 years before Trinidad and Tobago gained independence. Stacey greeted me by the gate of her home and invited me to conduct the interview either on the porch or in the living room. The soft feel of the breeze made me choose the porch for the interview. The neighborhood appeared quiet. Except for children playing lower down the street, everyone seems to be doing their own activities. We talked briefly about my research and my doctoral program, then, Stacey offered me a drink. After bringing a tall glass of water, we proceeded with the interview. She was very open and relaxed when answering the demographic questions, then, she began to talk about her first migration experience. She left her home in Tobago and went to nursing school in San Fernando, Trinidad to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. After she completed her nursing degree, she worked in one of the hospitals in Trinidad for a number of years. Later, she migrated again, this time internationally and lived in the Brooklyn area and worked at Kings County Hospital for 33 years.

Currently, Stacey lived alone in Tobago in a beautiful yellow house, which she bought on one of her many visits to Tobago when she lived in the United States. The house was big, but
not pretentious. The porch was adorned with mesh chairs and the living room had African artifacts on the walls along with pictures of her family. Stacey indicated that when she first bought the house, it needed major work. Over the years, she renovated the house then rented it until she decided that she was returning to live. Stacey also owns a co-op apartment in Brooklyn, which she plans to keep so that when she visits she has a place to stay. When I asked about her plans to return to the United States to live, she said that she will only visit, but had no plans of ever leaving Tobago again. Stacey’s ties to the United States are her children, grandchildren, and cousins; and she visits them yearly. She does not have any siblings, but her mother lives in Tobago where Stacey grew up. Even though her mother needs assistance, she does not want to leave her house, so Stacey visits her mom every morning. Her father, to whom she was close, died over 20 years ago while she was in the United States. She said not being in Tobago when her father was ill and eventually passed were the most difficult parts of migrating to the United States. Even though she and her father spoke everyday when he was ill, not seeing his laughter and not being able to hug him affected her tremendously. In those moments, she said she just wanted familiar surroundings and faces. She looked up and without any trace of a smile said, “I wanted to be home.” She was not able to go home for her father’s funeral, but she knew that she wanted to live her life closer to the place she had memories with him.

Stacey’s place attachment is grounded in memories of her father. She reminisced about her childhood with her mother and father, and said that her father would always protect her from her mother’s beatings. She talked about her parents’ cooking and how much she missed local foods when she lived in the United States. When asked how she identified herself, she said, “I was born Tobagonian, lived as a Tobagonian, and will die Tobagonian.” Stacey stretched out her
hand and said, “I missed all of this,” pointing to the people on the street, the breeze whistling, and the relaxed setting.

Returning home was something she knew she always wanted to do, so after “increasing my knowledge and getting experience” through education and job opportunities in the United States, she was ready to retire and move back to Tobago. Stacey viewed the United States as the land of opportunities—a place where, “…yuh can become exposed to different areas in yuh field of interest.” Trinidad and Tobago, though it offered degrees in nursing, did not offer her any specializations. After migrating to the United States for the “opportunities,” Stacey had to adjust to the weather, living in an apartment instead of a house, allergies from the pollen, and the transportation because she did not feel safe on the trains. The most difficult aspect of life for Stacey was the changing clothing during the winter season. She complained about the amount of clothing she had to wear to combat the coldness, as well as the expense: “the coat, then the boots yuh have to adjust to de boots… Then you can’t put de boots on like dat with yuh stockings. Yuh have to wear sometimes tree pairs ah socks. Yuh have to wear a t-shirt without sleeve, then one with long sleeve…den yuh have to wear a sweater. Then sometimes depending on de weather condition, yuh have to wear ear muffs…and then yuh have to have scarf…and the gloves.” Stacey adjusted quickly in other aspects of life, but took a few years to adjust to the weather. She found her readjustment to Tobago to be easier because of her yearly visits. Stacey’s major concern in returning home was the healthcare system. When she returns to New York to visit her children, she receives her yearly check-up at the same time. She believed that more retirees would return to live in Trinidad and Tobago if the healthcare system was better. Stacey did not differentiate between Trinidad and Tobago because she said she experienced living in both islands. In fact, she also described herself as Trinidadian even though she was born.
in Tobago. She explained that when someone says they are Trinidadian, they mean the country of Trinidad and Tobago.

Stacey maintained ties to her children, grandchildren, cousins, friends, and colleagues in the United States mostly by telephone, but she writes letters to them as well. The father of her children never left Tobago and they are not connected anymore. However, the children do have ongoing contact with him. The people whom she admired the most were two elementary school teachers who died a number of years ago. She has no one in her life right now that she particularly admires. Throughout the interview, Stacey indicated that she always knew what she wanted. When the opportunities came, she took them, because these special teachers inspired her. She clearly exhibits a sense of independence and self-motivation. When asked about her decision to migrate and remigrate, she responded by saying, “yuh do what yuh have to do [...] it all depends on the individual and what yuh want.” She appeared certain about her decisions, what she wanted, and how she would get it. If this meant leaving Tobago and moving to Trinidad for nursing training, and then moving again to the United States for more training and opportunities, she would do it. Stacey described herself as “a loner,” even though she is currently involved in different types of organizations and associations in Tobago. In fact, it was a bit difficult to interview her, since her schedule was so hectic. At the end of the interview, Stacey talked about the importance of helping each other. She said when she first migrated to the United States, she had nowhere to live, but her cousins took her into their one bedroom apartment where she stayed for a few years before getting her own apartment. She said there were times earlier in her life that she wanted to return to Tobago, but her cousins encouraged her to stay and reminded her of her goals. Finally she said, “ah did dat and it paid off.”
Dr. Merle Hoyte

I was told to expect to be entertained during this interview, and it turned out to be truly entertaining. Dr. Hoyte is a somewhat retired, animated 82 year old. She remigrated to Trinidad 21 years ago. She is definitely not the typical 82-year-old Trinidian who stays at home and spends her time growing fruits and talking to her plants. Instead, she is the Dean of Students at a college in Trinidad and Tobago. She started her career in the late 1950s as a primary school teacher in Trinidad, and then she migrated to London because she received a scholarship to do her baccalaureate degree in guidance education. Her main reason for migrating was to pursue higher education and the love of learning. She completed her degree and returned to Trinidad and taught for 24 years. Then, one of her professors in London offered her the opportunity to move to New York to complete her PhD and work with the provost of a university. The next chapter of her life began in upstate New York where she reentered academia.

Dr. Hoyte took her time and articulated her migratory story, pausing in between to notice whether I was listening. I took it as my cue to ask more about her timeline, and she was even more enthused about being sure that I got the dates and locations correct. She seemed to have a full academic life, starting from teaching counseling psychology, to working with the disadvantaged minority program, then to becoming a dean. She was very proud of her 15 years of working in the minority program at a university in New York. Dr. Hoyte indicated that the best part of her job was working and learning about different cultures from students who came from Vietnam, China and Africa. Even though she retired from the university, she still goes every year for Thanksgiving to reunite with close friends and colleagues.

What makes Dr. Hoyte unique from the other interviewees is the fact that she went to London and had no family members or friends there, and then she moved to upstate New York
where she also knew no one. Overtime, she developed solid relationships with many people. When she lived alone in upstate New York, an older, White neighbor cut her lawn and took care of her yard on a weekly basis. Interestingly, she said that he never spoke to her, but continued to do it for many years until she remigrated to Trinidad. When she was selling her house and returning to Trinidad, he came over and wished her safe travels. She never knew much about him, but said that she always felt that he was her friend. This connection was made solely on the basis of the cleaning and maintenance of her yard. Dr. Hoyte did not appear to be lured to migrate because of family connections, but traveled to places where she felt she could improve her life and make a difference in the world.

Dr. Hoyte’s biggest challenge when she lived in New York was not the students she taught who had deficits in their intellectual and language abilities, but simply the constant accumulation of the snow and ice. In fact, she said her greatest joy was meeting the students “at their lowest level and getting them ready for a degree in a professional career such as law, medicine and engineering.” Her university had a predominantly White student body, and she enjoyed and found great satisfaction working with minority students. She told me many stories of students who wanted to drop out of college because of financial and cultural reasons and return to their countries, but whom she encouraged them to stay in the United States by telling them her own story. Dr. Hoyte would always mention to her students that she had no family members in London or New York, but she stayed and accomplished her goals. She met people who were friendly and supportive of her. Now, she said these same people are her family. Dr. Hoyte never married, nor did she have any children, but she said that some of her students felt they were her very own.
She told me a story of one particular young man who wanted to study medicine, but signed up for the Army because his guidance counselor told him that he would do better using his hands. His other classmates, who were White, were all told that they should go into medicine and law. Dr. Hoyte looked at his grades and told him that to do medicine he needed to use his hands, so maybe he should reinterpret what the guidance counselor meant. Dr. Hoyte helped him complete his graduate exam and statement to apply for medical school. She said that the next time she heard from him was when he was graduating from medical school four years later.

After telling this story, she looked up at me and said, “I want to make a difference with Black men.” The only phrase I could muster after that story was, “Wow!” She has a serious concern for education, especially the education of Black men. She never mentioned the word ‘racism,’ but most of the battles she had at the college that she spoke about were issues of race. All her minority students had encountered some level of racism, and she said that her colleagues shunned her when she went to court to advocate for one of her Black students. Still, she never mentioned racism, but talked about people’s perception on issues of race and discrimination.

Now that Dr. Hoyte has returned to Trinidad, she goes to the prison and speaks to the men about reading and educating themselves. You could see passion in her face when she talked about improving the policies in Trinidad so that more young men would have access to education. She showed it in her actions when she mentioned her four nieces and nephews whom she helped come to the United States to complete their college education. You can witness it in her life as she endeavored to obtain her doctoral degree in counseling psychology. Education is serious business for her and it was one of the reasons she is still working in Trinidad today even though she is not entitled to any pension or benefit there when she retires. Dr. Hoyte shared that she had worked for 24 years in Trinidad when she broke her service and migrated to New York.
to complete graduate school. However, she said that even though she is entitled to receive Social Security from the United States, she does not intend to live there anymore. She said Trinidad is and was always her home. She maintained ties by traveling to Trinidad every summer and Christmas to spend time with her mother, and two sisters and their children. Also, she completed her dissertation on adolescence and made career choices so she was able to work and spend more time with her family.

Dr. Hoyte said that even though she can live anywhere, she wants to live in Trinidad. Some of her close friends who went to school with her are still alive, but she looks after them since they have lost their children. She also has friends in New York who she calls and visits yearly. She mentioned that they all flew to Trinidad for her 70th birthday. Dr. Hoyte said that she knew the differences between New York and Trinidad, so she never compared the two places. She was very curious and enthused about my dissertation topic and asked quite a few questions on my thoughts about acculturation. Her voice increased to high pitch, as if she was in a classroom, when she said that Trinidad has not changed, but the mindset of the people who return has changed. That is where the true adjustment had to be made. Dr. Hoyte noted that when you walk down the streets in Trinidad at midday, everyone is either eating or going to buy their food. That is the time the country stops and eats lunch. That has not changed. She said no one eats lunch at any one particular time in New York. Lunch could be 12pm or 1pm or even 3pm. She said it is different in each place, and you have to know and adjust to the differences. When I finally asked her why she thought anyone would leave a comfortable life having a good job and owning a house in the United States to return to Trinidad to live, she replied, “We all have unfinished business.”
Sandy Sue

I met Sandy Sue in Tobago on the day before I had to return to Trinidad. I was anxious and excited to meet her since we had spoken briefly over the phone a week earlier and I was excited when she said that she was a person who migrated a lot and have experienced living in both Trinidad and Tobago, among other places. During our phone conversation, she explained that she was the owner of a bakery and could only talk with me early in the morning since later in the day she would be busy with business meetings and preparation for the next day so we were set to meet on a Thursday morning at 10:30.

Tobago has an area of approximately 120 square miles and the guesthouse I stayed in was three miles away from Ms. Sandy’s bakery. On my way to meet her at work, I was mesmerized by the trees and the long stretch of beaches that appeared never to end. The water was clear, inviting, and aquamarine in color. I remember wanting to stop to touch the water, but after looking at the time—it was 10:00 and—I needed to be there by 10:30—I did not ask to stop, but longingly waved the water goodbye. This I knew was one of the most beautiful places I had seen so far.

Ms. Sandy’s bakery was situated in Scarborough, which is the capital of Tobago. It is a few minutes away from the Port where we landed on the ship that brought us from Trinidad. You must walk down about 15 stairs from the streets to get to the bakery, but as you reached to the landing, a sea of coconut drops, sweet bread, raisin bread, cakes of all kinds, and other sweet delicacies awaited. There were a few customers so I joined the line. I introduced myself to the person by the counter and she smiled as if she knew me and called out to Ms Sandy. A woman with short hair, wearing a long skirt with matching shirt came in from the back and extended a firm shake then ushered me to the back. As I was walking towards the back of the bakery, I
noticed how huge and active the bakery was. There were a number of people in white coats, white hats, and gloves kneading flour. It looked like a mini factory as I walked past about 15 workers and who all said, “good morning” as I was about to enter Ms. Sandy’s office. Her office was also huge, but congested with papers everywhere. She cleared a chair for me and pulled her leather chair away from the desk so she could sit closer to me. She smiled and asked if I was comfortable. Until then, she was very professional, and I figured that this interview would be a bit more formal than the others. I started by explaining my research topic and asked her to read the consent forms. She read it, took out a pen, signed it then called for someone to make a copy for her.

The first question I asked Ms. Sandy was how long ago she returned to Tobago to live and she immediately replied “29 years ago.” She became part owner of the bakery immediately upon her return, since the owners, her daughter’s grandparents, were old and needed someone to manage the business. In fact, not long after returning, their grandfather passed. Even though, running a business was something new to her, she was excited about this endeavor and dedicated herself to continuing the legacy as well as expanding on the business. Her past experiences in teaching did not exactly prepare her for business, but she said she was ready for the challenge. In the United States, she worked different odd jobs including being a home health aide. However, her migration story did not start in the United States. She first left Tobago for Trinidad with her siblings so they could go to school and she could find a job. In Trinidad, she started attending Teacher’s College, but later migrated to the United States where she also pursued education. Ms. Sandy knew she would eventually return home to Tobago, because she had an 11-month-old daughter whom she left with her daughter’s grandparents when she moved
to the United States. Her daughter would be her main reason for returning home to Tobago, but she did not know when she would return, only that she was definitely returning.

Adjusting to the United States was not difficult. The only issue she talked about was how people dressed. She was a bit perturbed at how students dressed for school and wondered if proper dressing was ever taught. She also mentioned the tension around American Blacks and Caribbean Blacks, and she felt there were problems that were never addressed. She said she adjusted though, and she lived in the United States from 1976 to 1981. At the end of her 5th year, she got an offer for a job in Tobago. However, she also heard many stories about Africa from her roommate and decided to apply for a position there. Soon she was on her way from the United States heading for the Sudan to teach with an international voluntary agency. Ms. Sandy explained that she first worked in the northern Sudan before moving to southern Sudan, where she stayed for four years teaching nutrition to girls. As she talked about the differences between the North and South, I began outlining her travel adventures in my mind and was most impressed with her humanitarian undertakings. Not only did she leave Tobago for Trinidad to help her siblings pursue education, but she left Trinidad for the United States to educate herself, and then to the Sudan to volunteer and teach young girls about nutrition before finally returning to Tobago to take over the business for her daughter’s grandparents. When I asked her about her migration to Sudan, she said it was not planned, but she learned a lot from the experience and commented that when she looked back at her life she thought she was “adventurous.” But I would add courageous.

Ms. Sandy had been very involved in the places she lived. While in Sudan, she connected and assisted many of the girls, and now in Tobago she was a Board member of many professional women clubs and was also involved with the Alzheimer’s Association. She said she
wanted to help build confidence in women since being part of the group helped her with her confidence, and so she is now able to stand in front an audience and talk. We were interrupted a few times as she was talking to me, but she answered the questions of her employees and smoothly returned to our conversation. Her multi-tasking was effortless and actually helped me to understand how effective she is as a leader and manager. I did not feel that she was not interested with the interview or that she was rushing me. As we begin to talk about her return to Tobago and how she adjusted, she said that the only advice she has for someone who wants to return home is, “to slow down and understand dat yuh coming back to something different.” To expand on her point, Ms. Sandy told a story about one of her visits to Tobago and then her return to Sudan. She said she was in the airport when her flight was delayed because of the weather. People awaiting the flight started cursing and yelling at the representatives of the airline, but she just sat there and waited. She said living in Sudan taught her patience since there were times when there were sand storms in Sudan and everyone had to wait it out. She learned how to accept things that cannot be changed to reduce stress. However, she emphasized that there are things that can be changed, such as better customer service in Tobago. She said there is a need to train employees in the public sector who are only friendly to the people they know personally. She said the lack of customer service was her biggest readjustment to Tobago. The interview lasted one hour, but it felt longer as her migratory story took me from Tobago, to Trinidad, back to Tobago, then to the United States, followed by Sudan, and back to Tobago.

**Michael P.**

Michael knew at nine-years-old that he would eventually live in the United States. Both his parents migrated to the United States to make a better life for him and his siblings. After he graduated from high school in Trinidad and Tobago, Michael’s parents sent for him. Even
though he was excited to be reunited with his parents, he was scared of leaving his siblings with whom he had spent the last nine years. His parents planned to send for all their children, one at a time. Michael was the youngest sibling and the first one his parents sent for. By the time Michael was 18 years old, he knew he wanted to return to Trinidad and Tobago at some point. He left Trinidad and Tobago when he was nine years old. He attended Brooklyn College for both undergraduate and graduate school before finding a job as an Assistant Manager at Citibank. Later, he was promoted to Chief Loan Manager.

Michael met and married someone from graduate school, and they had two children. They bought a condominium and lived comfortably in Brooklyn for 17 years. Even though Michael loved living in New York, especially the variety of restaurants, activities, such as Broadway plays, and the many shopping deals, he felt something was missing. He said, “Something more than the mango trees.” When I asked about his social network in Trinidad and Tobago, he said that presently he only had his father because his wife, children, siblings and close friends lived in Brooklyn. He indicated that it was more than just family. After one of his closest friend returned to Trinidad and Tobago, he felt the urge to do the same. He said, “Around 1991 or so I decided I was coming back, but I knew it was just to put everything in order.” At that time he had his son and decided he wanted to have another in the United States before eventually moving back. He explained that he spoke to his friend who had already moved and settled in Trinidad and Tobago after living in the United States for 15 years. He then spoke to his wife and parents and began to plan. When I asked him about the planning process and whether it was a conscious decision he said:

Yes, it was a conscious decision. I mean obviously, you don’t put all your eggs in one basket. So I did not want to move back here (Trinidad) and have children and they are
not dual citizens. I wanted them to have the opportunities of both places. Also, I needed to complete my graduate degree, get a bit more experience, get some more money and during that time…having an eye down here (Trinidad) to see what’s going on. And then after a while we started to point to a date.

I was amazed at the detail in having another child before returning to Trinidad. We were doing the interview in a conference room at his job, Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT), and I was concerned about taking too much time, but he reassured me that he had no more appointments in the afternoon and planned to go ‘lime’ after our interview.\(^2\) I asked about his job. He indicated that he traded bonds locally, regionally, and internationally. He said as the senior person in his department, he was given a new car and free parking facilities—perks he believe he would have never received in the United States.

What was different about Michael compared to the other remigrants I interviewed was the fact that his closest family members migrated to New York and remigrated to Trinidad together. Michael, his wife who was also from Trinidad, and their two children remigrated in 1996. His parents remigrated two years after he did. His father wanted to leave New York earlier, but Michael said his mother encouraged his father to retire first. When his father retired in 1998, his parents moved back to Trinidad later that year. His mother passed on and his father went to live with him. Like the other remigrants I interviewed, Michael identified himself as Trinidadian; even though, he said his friends frequently call him “a watered-down Trinidadian” because he lived in the United States for 17 years. Michael argued that even when he lived in New York, he only wanted West Indian food and spent most of his free time with his family or

\(^2\) Trinidadians and Tobagonians use the term ‘lime’ to describe spending time with friends and family.
his Trinidadian friends. When I asked him about whether he thought he assimilated into the American culture, Michael said he was very satisfied with his job, his condo, and friendships he created in college, but also emphasized that he missed living in Trinidad. He whispered, “There is no place like home.” We both laughed, since there was no one in the room.

I still felt Michael’s relaxed personality even with the very business-like conference room with a rectangular table and eight chairs. He was very open and introspective when answering all my questions, and he even volunteered personal information. For example, when I asked him about his wife and children’s adjustment to Trinidad, he told me that was one situation he never expected when he returned. Michael told me the story of when he and his wife met at college, their courting, and their eventual marriage. They had a son and then a daughter before moving back to Trinidad together as a family. However, after living in Trinidad for a few years, his wife decided that she could not adjust to the way of life in Trinidad and wanted to return to New York. He said he was devastated, but respected her decision. She moved back with the children and then returned to try to maintain their relationship, but she eventually asked for a divorce in 2003, seven years after Michael remigrated to Trinidad. His voice lowered as he talked about his family, but said she was happier in New York. His children have visited every summer, but he said they have no plans on returning to live in Trinidad. For many years he wondered if he made the right decision by moving back, but after many years of living in Trinidad again, he said he is very happy. He said even though he lost his family, he believes he would not have earned the same level of professional success in Trinidad if he remained in New York. He explained:

Those jobs…those Wall Street jobs go to the people coming out of Wharton and those types of business schools, and I went to Brooklyn College. So I know that I would never, never in my wildest dream be able to do this.
He also felt a sense of pride with the relationship he established with his father, who after his mother passed, came to live with him for a number of years. He never remarried after his divorce but said he would like to meet someone and have another family.

Michael’s place identity was clearly Trinidadian, but his place dependence fluctuated between Trinidad and New York. Economically, he was doing better in Trinidad and had a high job satisfaction rate in Trinidad, but connection to his wife and children made him dependent on New York. In terms of place attachments, he was more attached to the culture, friendships, and everyday nuance of living in Trinidad.

D. Smith

I attempted to call D. Smith while I was preparing to leave for my trip, but I didn’t get in touch with him. However, when I arrived in Trinidad, I called my close friend who had referred D. Smith to me and we noticed that my friend had given me the wrong number. After dialing the new number, I heard Mr. Smith’s his pleasant baritone voice. I introduced myself and explained my research briefly before asking if he would grant me an interview. He sounded honored and suggested we meet early the following week since he had a few community meetings to attend. I took his address and we scheduled to meet on a Wednesday at 10am. During the week, I continued to hear D. Smith’s voice ringing in my ear. I thought that perhaps he was an opera singer in the U.S. and left Trinidad early in his life to pursue singing. His voice was definitely distinctive and powerful. I found out later that he was a radio announcer in the U.S. for a period of time and now volunteers as a radio announcer in Trinidad.

On the Wednesday we were scheduled to meet, my friend drove me to Point Fortin where D. Smith lived. Point Fortin is in the southern part of Trinidad. It is very country-like—single lane traffic and lots of fruit trees. While driving, I saw mango trees, avocado trees, cashew trees,
guava trees, and other fruit trees lining the roadway. In all my years that I lived in Trinidad, I had never been to the southern part of the island, so I was amazed to see the big houses in most parts of the area we drove through. The houses are basically mansions. The southern area of Trinidad is very rich in natural resources, and it is where the country extracts much of its oil, gas, and asphalt. I had my recorder, pen and pad, a sketchpad, and a camera to take photos of any places or people who are or were closest to Mr. Smith. I felt prepared and excited about this interview mainly because of his voice and also the beautiful Victorian houses.

As I approached a huge, moss green house, a tall, slim man approached me and extended his hands. His voice vibrated under the four pillars that held the house. Even though D. Smith said he was a 68-year-old retired man, he looked more like 48 years old. I asked him about his job and he said that he worked for a Japanese company in the United States for over 25 years, but retired a few years ago. In Trinidad, he is actively involved in the community organization to help young people find an activity they love to focus on. He talked about his love of radio and the fact that he did workshops with the children in the neighborhood for them to understand how it works. D. Smith talked about his concern for the increase in the crime rate in Trinidad and felt that the only way to make a difference is to have something for the young people to do after they were finished with high school. Along with other alumni from his elementary school, Mr. Smith decided to get involved with the youth in their neighborhood. He was not alone, but he sounded as if he was the driving force behind these activities.

I asked D. Smith why he left Trinidad. He said, “Having relatives in the States who my parents communicated with from time to time, I always got a brighter picture of the States than Trinidad. And I have absolutely no regrets.” He left when he was 17 years old, but stayed connected with people in his neighborhood. He married when he was 29 years old and had two
daughters in the US who are now in their thirties. He lived in the U.S for 43 years and owned a house on Long Island. After he and his wife divorced in 2002, he bought a condominium in Queens. His daughters from this marriage both continue to live in the U.S. One lives in his condominium in Queens, and the other is married and lives with her family in Maryland. He talked about missing both daughters and that he was planning to spend Christmas with his daughter in Maryland.

I asked him about income and he said that he gets social security from the U.S but was not eligible for pension in Trinidad since he never worked there. His main reason for returning was to spend time with his mother before she passed away. Four years ago, he met and married a woman from England, and they decided to return to Trinidad to live. They moved back three years ago after his mother became ill. After his mother passed, his new wife was having difficulties adjusting to Trinidad, so they talked about it and finally she returned to England. His voice lowered as he said, “It didn’t work out as I thought it would.” Luckily, he invested in the house where we conducted the interview, and he had two tenants living there so that he feels he has more than sufficient income. He bought the house during a trip to Trinidad in 1985 and believes it was the best investment he ever made. It is now worth over 10 million TT dollars (60 million USD). He has no living siblings, but he has connections to the few friends who still live in Trinidad. He also said that his love of Trinidad makes him want to spend the remainder of his life there.

Blair C.

Blair, too, said that her love of Trinidad propelled her to return ‘home.’ She was the first person I interviewed when I went to Trinidad and Tobago after receiving IRB approval for my research. I was eager and excited, and Blair fueled my enthusiasm with her encouragement and
openness. Since our interview took place on a Sunday, and most people tend to go to church or the market, she called a few times to be sure that I was still coming to interview her. She also asked if a close friend, Roxanne, might sit in on the interview since she was planning to move back to Trinidad in 18 months. This was Roxanne’s second visit to Trinidad that year, and she hoped to make definitive plans and to connect with people who would be helpful in her move. Blair appeared to be the key person for Roxanne’s return, and she casually talked about the different places she had to take her before she moved back. Blair wanted Roxanne to get new birth papers and a passport in order to apply for a Trinidad and Tobago identification card. Blair was very knowledgeable about the process of transitioning back to Trinidad and Tobago. She never hesitated in her responses. The first question Blair asked me was, “Are you planning to move back home as well?” I smiled and told her what I said to the other 15 interviewees, which was I had no plans to return to live, but I felt the idea was intriguing. Blair, like most of the other interviewees, raised her eyebrow, as if perplexed.

When Blair and Roxanne initially drove into the driveway of her yellow, two-story house I knew exactly who was Blair. She was tall, full-bodied, and walked confidently towards me as I was standing outside her gate. She looked at me directly into my eyes and said, “Good morning. Welcome to my house.” She appeared very much in control, thorough, and deliberate with her movements: opening the front door for her friend, walking up to me and greeting me and my friend who dropped me off. She smiled and told him that I was in good hands and that he should pick me up at 1pm. I looked at the time and realized it was now 10am and wondered how she knew it would take three hours to complete the interview. She skated in front of me, her multi-colored, flowing skirt following her every move. As I entered Blair’s house, everything was neatly organized. She had house slippers for us to put on after I took off my sandals inside of her
front door. Both Roxanne and I were invited to the big, open office space, and after we were seated, Blair went into the kitchen. Ten minutes later she came out with a tray full of triangular shaped sandwiches, the crust of the bread was shaved off. Some had a cheese paste while others had egg salad in them. After giving both of us a drink, she sat down on a single chair with her legs crossed and asked if I was ready. I nodded and took out my pad and pen, and then pressed the red button on my recorder.

Blair’s migration history first started at the age of three when her mother moved her and her siblings to where her father was living at the time, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. They lived there for over 10 years before moving back to Trinidad. Her formal education was completed in Trinidad, and at the age of 18 she got married and had two children. Fifteen years later she got divorced and decided that she wanted her children to have a “proper education.” Blair, like many other Trinidadians and Tobagonians, wanted her children to attend elementary and high school in Trinidad because she felt the education system in Trinidad was more writing intensive than in the US. However, she wanted the diversity of majors and careers in the United States, so she migrated to Brooklyn, New York with her two children. They all lived with her uncle. Blair did not have her legal documentation to work, but a friend arranged for her to work as a baby sitter, so that the parents of the child could sponsor her and assist her during the documentation process. Blair did not talk much about the process of how she eventually got her documentation, but she did say that it took many years. During those years, she thought about giving up and returning home with her children.

After she got her green card, Blair went to college to become an occupational therapist. At the same time, she continued to work as a baby sitter. She worked full time for many years and attended school part time, which ensured that both children might also attended college. Her
daughter completed a Master’s degree in counseling psychology, and her son completed his Doctorate in chemistry. Both children still live in the United States, but her daughter plans to return to Trinidad in a year, while her son, who lives in Chicago, does not plan to return to Trinidad.

Now an occupational therapist in Trinidad, Blair lives in an area closer to the city where she grew up as a child. Despite several warnings about the dangers of living in that particular area, she wanted to live among her local people. During our conversation, Blair talked about the gated communities where international workers and some return migrants decide to live when they move to Trinidad. She said that even though these gated communities are very secure, they are also very expensive and do not have a local feel of home. Blair said ‘home’ in Trinidad does not have gated communities, but rather open houses, roads, schools, and people that she has grown familiar with over many years. Gated communities, she said, divide people because only those who earn high incomes can afford to live in such an area. For her, being ‘home’ did not simply mean the country, but included the varying types of people in the neighborhood. When I asked about the high crime in that area, she shook her shoulders and said, “Anywhere you go, there is crime. I don’t stay out late at night or do anything foolish.” Blair also showed me her electronic security system, which makes her feel safe. The system she installed has panoramic views of every side of her house.

She gave me a tour of the first floor, which had three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, a big room that she uses for her business, an eat-in kitchen, and a porch. I asked her about the second floor, but she told me that she rents it to a woman and her 6-year-old son. Blair expressed to me and advised her friend—who was listening to our interview intently—that the only way to really make money is to open a business. She said whatever school and specialty
you have should be used to create a business plan so that you can own something. When she first bought the house, she wanted not only to own a house, but also to become a landlord. Therefore, she bought a big house on two acres of land. She turned to her friend and said, “Write this down: ‘Always have a plan.’”

Even though Blair and I were talking, she turned to her friend multiple times to give advice and to tell her to write down something. I was really impressed that she had this knowledge about the guidelines of planning to remigrate. She mentioned that Roxanne was not the first person she assisted in moving back. It was clear that Blair encountered challenges and spent money unnecessarily while remigrating. She did not want others to experience the same unfortunate process. She turned to Roxanne and said, “The process of returning home is easy if you know how to do things. Just follow a few steps.” It was almost like she was giving the ingredients for a recipe:

1. First, you should buy land or a house in the area you want to move back to;
2. Then you travel back and forth while you are still living in the United States to make the necessary repairs to the house. [She paused and said] you don’t ever want to send money back home to do construction, you always want to be there to supervise the work.
3. Get your Trinidad passport so that you can then get your official ID card. Nothing can get done without a driver’s license, or a Trinidad ID card.
4. When you do return to Trinidad to live, let the immigration people know that you are a ‘repatriate’ so that you can get all your belongings shipped to Trinidad in a container without paying any taxes.
5. Bring all your furniture, fridge, oven, microwave and everything else. Also, if there
is additional furniture or other household fixtures you need, buy it in the United States and put it in your container. For returning immigrants you get some benefits, but it only lasts for the first six months that you are in Trinidad so you can’t waste time.

6. Ship down your car. Don’t buy a car in Trinidad because you already have a car in the States, but you have to get it licensed as a left hand car.

7. Don’t expect anyone to do anything for you. Use the time you travel back and forth to take care of business.

Blair paused for a minute and asked if we wanted something to eat. I asked her for another glass of sorrel, a local drink, and her friend asked for a glass of water. After she came back with the drinks, she continued:

8. Join a group or an association now so you can get to know people who can help you with jobs. Many of these associations would welcome your membership even though you are still living in the United States. I am a member of an organization for autistic children since most of my clients came directly from this network. I have 6 autistic children I have been working with for over 3 years and their parents are also members of this association. Join something in your field or something social.

9. [Finally, to make the ingredients all come together] Be nice to everyone. They may not all consider you Trinidadian, but after some time they will get used to you and treat you like one of their own.

Blair stopped at this point and asked Roxanne if she had written everything down. Roxanne said yes and looked at me for other questions. I asked Blair how she identified herself, and she talked about what it meant to her to be Trinidadian. It wasn’t exactly what I asked, but she responded
by explaining how she took her accent and the closeness of people for granted until she migrated to New York. Blair mentioned that when she first migrated to Queens, her uncle was living in an apartment building and though she lived there for over six years, she really did not know her neighbors. She said she heard some conversations, arguments, and crying children through the walls of the building, but did not know the names or any other information about the people who lived there. Like Blair, most of the other interviewees talked about not feeling a strong connection to people in New York who were living close to them.

**Analysis**

One of my research questions focuses broadly on the experiences of migrants and remigrants, and though there were lots of similar immigrant experiences amongst the 16 interviewees, I found that there were also differences. All interviewees left Trinidad and Tobago voluntarily to pursue educational endeavors or to obtain a job for economic improvement or stability. Their financial status was instrumental for the immigrants to be able to send remittances back to their country. It was important for most of the returnees to acquire new skills so that when they returned they would be able to contribute to the improvement of Trinidad and Tobago. For some, this meant having a degree, but for others it meant learning the ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ of different types of businesses. For example, D. Smith was a radio announcer when he was a young man in Trinidad and went to the United States to learn more about the radio business. He said he knew he wanted to return to Trinidad, but also wanted to be a professional in his field. He not only studied communications, but also worked at a radio station in New York. There, he was able to hone his skills. Austin also had a similar story. He received his real estate license in New York while he was employed as a construction worker. He worked for a brokerage firm and sold houses for eight years. He was able to use the skills he learned in New
York to open his own construction company in Trinidad. During the past seven years since he returned to Trinidad and Tobago, he has acquired over 10 contracts to build houses and government buildings. Austin says he is confident in his abilities to procure a contract, build, and complete the structure in the time allotted. Similar to Cerase’s (1974) research, which looked at the typologies of return migration in Italy and highlighted the ‘return of innovation,’ I too interviewed individuals who desired to acquire skills and expertise to bring back to Trinidad and Tobago.

In analyzing the interviews, I conducted a ‘detailed line by line coding’ (Saldana, 2013, p. 24), which highlighted codes or themes I thought were relevant to the migration and remigration experiences. After listing all the codes for each interview, I looked at the common codes I found and also those that were totally contrasting from one interview to another. I then developed several themes and concepts, which I used to analyze the qualitative data. Saldana (2013) advises, “The final number of major themes or concepts should be held to a minimum to keep the analysis coherent, but there is no standardized or magic number to achieve” (p. 24). In thinking through the research questions, immigration theories, and the overall experiences of all the remigrants, I underscored two general themes: (1) push factors and (2) re-adaptation. However, within those themes, there are several other concepts I analyze and discuss. Even though I started with multiple codes and themes, I broke each into manageable concepts. It was important for me, and recommended by Saldana (2013), to discuss one thing at a time, which helped keep me focused as a writer, and I hope will keep others focused as readers (p. 256).
Push Factors

Racism

Even though all of the returnees talked about race as an issue in adjusting to New York, none indicated that race was truly a push factor in their decisions to return to Trinidad and Tobago. In Potter’s (2005) research, race was clearly a push factor for many of the second-generation Bajan returnees. These returnees experienced racism regularly in the United Kingdom, their parents’ place of migration. Most of them acknowledged that they wanted to return to Barbados so that they would not have to deal with the racism any longer. Even though all the interview participants in my research experienced racism while living in the United States, whether directly or through a close family member, they maintained that it was not enough to cause their return to Trinidad and Tobago. For many, racism is seen as a challenge, not as a deterrent. According to one interviewee, Cheryl, “Of course there are other things [like racism] that will wake you up and tell you that you’re not a part of this society.” She went on to say later in the interview that you cannot allow those things to make you uproot yourself, after overcoming so many other tests.

Cold weather

Despite the fact that most of my interviewees did not highlight race as a glaring push factor for returning, some talked a lot about the cold weather in the United States as an uncomfortable reality. Most insisted, however, that the weather did not push them to return. They had plans to return, but the weather propelled them to return sooner. For example, SM, who had initially planned to return to Trinidad in about two years, decided to return within one year after a very bad snowstorm. He said the day he made his final decision was not as cold as the previous days, but he said to himself, “I’m cold. And was like, you know I don’t want to
spend another winter here so by the summer of the next year I was back in Trinidad.” Like SM, the interviewees talked about the amount of clothing they had to wear in the winter, which made them uncomfortable and long for the sunny weather in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Missing the Sense of Home**

Other researchers discuss the sense of home, that is, a sense of belonging (Stack, 1996). Participants expressed a clear distinction between feeling as an outsider while living in the United States and a sense of belonging and home in Trinidad and Tobago. Cheryl, who, left Trinidad for Montreal to study, and later lived in New York for over five years before remigrating to Trinidad said, “Yea, Trinidad is home. Montreal probably will not be home at all. I experienced Montreal as a very cold place and that had to do with the winters.” In New York, however, she felt comfortable—not quite home, but not an outsider either. “In some ways you are American, you feel that you are part of the society, um…But you can fool yourself into saying yea I am, I feel like a New Yorker. In Montreal, you can’t fool yourself.”

**Family Connections**

This sense of belonging can also be directed to missing family members. Laoire (2007) finds that many immigrants move primarily because of family ties. Similarly, when most individuals migrate to another country one of the main reasons is family reunification. However, Laoire (2007) also finds that returnees also seek a sense of community. Other researchers agree that many people return to be reunited with children, aging parents, and siblings (Condon, 2005). While I found this to be true for some of my interviewees, (e.g., Lisa who returned to be close to her ailing mother; S.M. who missed the closeness of his father; Steven who initially migrated to reunite with his parents and returned when his parents retired and decided to remigrate), most respondents said their closest family members were in New York or deceased. Blair’s children,
for example, were still in New York and her parents had both passed on. Cheryl had no children and her parents were also deceased, but her brother, with whom she lived with for most of her life, still lived in New York. She does not have a husband, but she does have two close friends from school friends who live in Trinidad. Three of the seven males I interviewed had spouses and children living in New York. They maintained their relationships through travel, video chat, text messages, email, and phone. The three men insisted that they had no intentions of moving back to the United States, and hoped that their spouses and children would eventually join them in Trinidad and Tobago. Though I agree with most researchers (Condon, 2005; Cerase, 1974; Laoire, 2007; Potter, 2005) that missing family pushes many immigrants to return to their home country, my findings suggest remigrants go beyond family ties and also emphasize the physical aspects of their home country. For example, the way houses were constructed; having a backyard for children to play; weather; the dirt and fruit trees; the community; everyday norms; cultural nuances; close connections not just family, but also friends. All of these cultural factors of place play a role in the act of returning home. And, as I will be explaining below, some of what people meant by “home” seems to go beyond any set of “factors” and into a realm of deeper meaning—“home” is meaningful as a metaphor as well as a physical place.

The intricacies of a place, including culture, are factors that returnees miss beyond the connections with family members.

Re-adaptation

All the remigrants I interviewed were dependent on their jobs and/or family in New York, but still they all desired to return home even if that meant giving up or lowering their salaries. In addition, although all interviewees spoke with family and friends, traveled back and forth to Trinidad and Tobago, mailed barrels of household goods, and made accommodations for
housing before actually remigrating to Trinidad and Tobago, many contended that they had to readjust to living in Trinidad and Tobago again. Not so much in terms of the physical or environmental aspect of living there, but more in terms of business and the professional aspects of life in Trinidad and Tobago. Stacey K., who worked as a nurse in both Trinidad and New York, talked a lot about the deprived health conditions in the hospitals in Trinidad and Tobago. She said she could not get accustomed to the poor conditions of most hospitals because she remembered how the hospitals functioned better 20 years ago. Since, Stacey K. is now 69 years old, she said poor health care is something she has difficulty adjusting to, so she travels to New York once a year for routine check-ups and medication.

**Time**

The most significant issue of the re-adaptation and acculturation process for all the remigrants was getting used to the relaxed “take your time” atmosphere of Trinidad and Tobago. Stacey K. indicated that even though she likes that attitude, she gets frustrated because, unlike New York, no one is in a rush to do anything. Also unlike New York, she feels nothing gets done fast enough. Blair also experienced the same readjustment issue as Stacey K., but commented that she quickly realized that she had to “come down to island living.” All the interviewees mentioned the New York way of life was opposite of Trinidad and Tobago’s daily pace. Although timeliness surfaced in all 16 interviews as a readjustment issue, no interviewee felt that this issue would make them want to move back to New York. As Blair said, “It is just part of the culture.”

All other readjustment issues interviewees mentioned point to the issue of time. For example, six participants indicated that when they had scheduled appointments with various business places, they sat there for hours before being attended. Some were told numerous times
to come back for another appointment. The remaining interviewees discussed having to plan weeks in advance when they needed something done at a particular time. Dr. Hoyt said patience is important in Trinidad because everyone there does not think about time the same way as people in New York. She said in some cases when someone says, “I will get it done,” that means at some point today, but may not mean right now. Therefore, when asking for something ‘as soon as possible’ can mean it will be done in a week or so. When I asked Dr. Hoyte whether or not she felt a sense of inefficiency in getting things done, she looked puzzled. She shook her head and said, “No, things get done, but it may not be in the time period you want it done.” Dr. Hoyte, who is now 82, emphasized that this issue has always been a part of culture in Trinidad and Tobago; however, she admits she never recognized the dilemma until after she lived in New York for over 20 years. Even during her transnational period prior to her permanent return, Dr. Hoyte said that she did not expect time would be the readjustment issue it proved to be. For the most part, the interviewees did not describe this process as ‘re-adaptation,’ but rather, they talked about having to ‘get used’ to being in Trinidad again.

**Adapting to the United States Versus Re-adapting to Trinidad**

For the most part, all the returnees re-adapted very quickly and felt invested in the area, people, and country as a whole. As Kevin S. said, “I never felt at home in New York even though I felt I was changing the way I eat, talk, or how I spent my time,” but he went on to say that in Trinidad he did not have to work at fitting in, but can be himself. He said he knew how to be Trinidadian—it is in his blood. Most participants talked about the multiple ways they had to adapt when they first migrated to New York. In some cases, especially in regards to food and eating patterns, they never fully adapted. For example, Lisa, who migrated to be reunited with her father and to go to college, said that even though she cooked the same kind of food, food
never tasted the same during all 15 years of living in New York. Lisa said, “I missed my seasoning and, when I buy it from the Korean store, it does not taste the same.” She went on to talk about picking limes from the tree in the back of her house and making ‘mango chow’ with the mangoes from the neighbor’s yard.

One’s eating pattern is one of the cultural norms that surfaced in every interview. The idea of eating breakfast, a big lunch, and small dinner was something Lisa said is ‘etched in her system.’ She said she maintained this eating pattern while in New York and only diverged when she would have a big dinner with friends. All the interviewees agreed that even though they experienced major adjustment issues, such as increased crime rates, poor customer service, and a lack of efficient health care system, it was still an easier transition than when they migrated to New York.

These six migration stories of Trinidad and Tobago remigrants really bring out the importance of transnationalism in the process of staying connected to family, friends and overall cultural norms. For all sixteen interviewees staying connected was a step in maintaining place attachment to Trinidad and Tobago. Moreover, even though all the respondents identified as Trinidadians or Tobagonians, it is interesting that they were all very much committed to the New York experiences by being actively involved with the people, work, organizations and everyday New York experiences. This commitment goes beyond merely living as a resident in New York and can be looked at as a sense of place identity because the sixteen remigrants are identifying with other New Yorkers by engaging with the people and culture of that place. In the next chapter, I will discuss more on the relationship of the place constructs and transnationalism.
Chapter Six: Discussion

“The resolve to return home is not primarily an economic decision
but rather a powerful blend of motives” (Carol Stack, 1996)

I started this research to learn more about the many facets of remigration, not just about the reasons for whether or not to return to one’s country of origin and refashioning that experience. The process of remigration is complex and means more than just returning. It involves an accumulation of experience, an evolving development over time, a changing geographic position, and bringing the experience of migration back to the home country. The data collected in this dissertation are not representative of all Trinidadians and Tobagonians living in the United States, however my research touches on some of the intricacies of living as an immigrant and a remigrant. My research has enabled me to understand the act of remigrating as something that goes deeper than simply a planning process or relocation. It is about the meaning of the interaction of experiences between the home and host countries. Additionally, the connections migrants have to the people they leave behind, the process of adjusting to the ways of life in the host countries, their transnational experiences while living in the host countries, the social and economic networks created in the host country, the media perception of immigrants, and the impact of place and home on the decision to remigrate to the home country are all areas that resonate from my data. Further, people and their points of view change given their positions and changes experienced over the life course. These shifts also affect the processes of remigration. After migrating to the United States, an individual can have place attachments in Trinidad and place dependence in the US; but that could change over time and that same individual could decide to open a business in Trinidad shifting their place dependence to Trinidad.
Earlier, I gave a brief history of Trinidad and Tobago, which included information about Dr. Eric Williams, the country’s first Prime Minister. When I started the research for this dissertation, I never expected to find the encouraging philosophy of Dr. Eric Williams underlining the experiences of the individuals I would interview. Looking back at these data, I see Dr. Williams’s view on education, includingattaining study abroad opportunities and returning to one’s home country, was embedded in many participants’ responses. Now I think of Dr. Williams’s notion of education and migration when I reflect on an interviewee stating they wanted to migrate to complete higher or secondary education, but knew they would return to their homeland after accomplishing this goal.

"Home is Where the Heart is"

Many individuals in this study who returned or had intentions of returning to Trinidad and Tobago referred to the country as 'home.' Their feelings about their home country are not without recognition of some of its serious problems. Trinidad and Tobago "is one of the most prosperous countries in the Caribbean, primarily due to significant oil and natural gas resources," it "faces considerable security challenges and is an active transit point for regional and extra-regional irregular migration to North America and Europe. People smugglers are active, taking advantage of porous borders" (IOA, 2014). In addition, murder rates in Trinidad and Tobago have increased significantly over the years. It has the 13th highest murder rate in the world and third highest in South America (BBC, 2012). Many participants in my study who remigrated to Trinidad and Tobago were aware of these overwhelming statistics, but it appears that the high crime rate is not a deterrent in deciding to return.

In general, voluntary remigration to the Caribbean is a difficult phenomenon to study because most countries in the region do not maintain accurate statistics on the number of
individuals visiting versus returning to live. Also, since the United States no longer maintains departure records for remigrants, even those who are legal residents or citizens of the United States, there is a greater need for more studies on remigration. In fact, most of the original studies on remigration were conducted in the 1970s and at that time the Caribbean was not a focus. For example, Cerase (1974) conducted a study of Italians remigrating from the United States. His main focus was characterizing the types of return migrants, specifically: (1) return of failure, (2) return of innovation, (3) return of conservation, and (4) return of retirees. The main difference among the four types is the degree of assimilation when individuals migrated. Cerase explains that individuals who return to failure never found a stable job in the host country, but felt confident that returning to their homeland would place them in a better economic situation. On the other hand, the individuals who return to conservation always had the intentions of returning, so they never felt the need to assimilate in the host country. They would work and save money for their eventual return to their homeland. What is unique about this type of returnee is that they are typically uninvolved in political or community issues in either their host or home country. This is unlike any of the individuals I interviewed who were all involved in their community in both countries. Even though participants who returned identified as Trinidadian or Tobagonian, they were highly invested in community life while in the United States. Many of these participants voted in elections, were active members of community and occupational organizations, and socialized and dined with others of different backgrounds. Basically, none of the 16 individuals isolated themselves or stated that they were in the United States simply to save money to return to Trinidad and Tobago. However, individuals who returned after retirement did have some resemblance to Cerase’s return to retirement type. They “lived a full life in the United States; they have taken part in its economic, social, and political
life, and many of them have served in the military.” Moreover, “as they grew old, as their health waned, as their desire and need for security developed, their thoughts turned to the place they had come from” (Cerase, 1974, p. 257).

Cerase’s idea of return to innovation may also characterize the experiences of many participants in the current study. This type of returnee highlights individuals who acquire skills in the host country and take those skills and ideas back to the home country to enable social change and their own advancement. However, the data collected for this dissertation suggest that these returnees will be discouraged after realizing that the people, social institutions, and economic conditions in the home country have not changed much. Although many study participants mentioned that they knew many things within Trinidad and Tobago had not changed during the time they were away, they still wanted to return. For those who had already returned, they also knew that the healthcare system and customer service at many businesses were terrible, that the political atmosphere unstable, and that murder rates were high. Yet, they still wanted to be home.

These similarities and differences between participants in this research and participants’ in Cerase’s study are interesting; however, it is important to go deeper than simply identifying a specific reason for return migration. Many participants in my research migrated to pursue education and to find better jobs. Most of them succeeded. However, beyond the economic viability of education and jobs was the idea that returning to Trinidad and Tobago would make them feel at home. Carol Stack (1996) writes about this notion. She says, “People returning […] are not fools; they are not seeking a promised land. They know that home is a vexed unchanged place” (p. xv). But they return anyway because of the attachment and belonging they feel in their home country. Stack continues to say that she “came to understand the phenomena associated
with return as both extraordinary and extraordinarily complex” (p. xvi). A theory of voluntary return migration cannot simply be a typology or an economic perspective. It must be a broader view of the connections individuals establish in the many places they have lived. This wider view helps to understand the complexity of the voluntary return migration phenomenon.

Thomas-Hope (1999) states, “Data on the returning migrants to Jamaica have been officially collected only since 1992; other information is derived from field studies” (p. 183). Likewise, data for Trinidad and Tobago on return migrants are scarce. The officials at the Central Statistical Office (CSO) located in the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, Port-of-Spain, stated that they have been collecting data on returning migrants, but do not specify whether these individuals are voluntary returnees or involuntary returnees, that is, deportees. In fact, there are no records of whether or not these remigrants ‘returned’ from the United States or other parts of the world. In Trinidad and Tobago, remigrants have the choice of indicating to custom officers if they are a ‘returnee’ or a ‘repatriate.’ Repatriates receive tax exemptions on any large containers with their personal belongings, including vehicles, but not every returnee knows about this and may not report this to custom officers. Therefore, these data are inaccurate and incomplete. Regardless, of the economic benefit of a tax exemption, returnees require many other social and psychological forms of assistance. Further research is needed on the implementation of services offered to returnees that help them achieve a smoother transition and contribute to the advancement of the home country.

In Cerase’s (1974) work, the economic sustainability of the returning immigrant was the most important factor. Cerase argues that an immigrant’s participation in ‘consumption’ of the host society is an important factor in understanding the types of returnees. Other theorists view Cerase’s notion of consumption as assimilating into the host countries. Economic stability is the
key to the success of immigrants. Therefore, having a job in the host country is important in determining assimilation in the host country and the type of returnee the individual may become.

Similarly, economic consumption in both host and home countries was important in my research; however, this is only part of the full story. For many interviewees in the current study, the social and cultural attachment and connections to a place are overwhelmingly important. Place attachment is not an abstraction, but rather a fundamental component of how people live their lives no matter where they live, whether in a host country or their home country. Similar to findings from my previous research on reasons for remigration, many individuals migrated to Caribbean enclaves in other countries to feel a sense of attachment of their homeland. Even after many years, they often decide that they really want to live in their homeland. I found that even people with exciting careers and strong social networks in the United States said they missed living in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Value of Immigrants

The most significant insight from this research is the notion of the value of immigrants in the host country. It is clear that many immigrants are not respected as valuable members of society despite their social and economic contributions. For example, the documentary film *Harvest of Empire*, which is based on a book by Juan Gonzalez (2000), focuses on the immigration experiences of Latinos. Most of the immigrants in the film talk about how they or their parents entered the United States in order to gain an education, find a good job, and secure a better life. These immigrants describe how the US society does not value their contributions. Instead, they believe they are perceived as taking from society despite much evidence to the contrary. Many immigrants, for example, serve in the United States military which is not commonly recognized by the population in general. The participants in my research expressed
similar ideas. In their rich narratives, I was able to capture how they believe immigrants are devalued despite experiences that show their contributions to society. Perceptions of the value of immigrants vary depending on an immigrant’s race and educational or economic background (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003), so it is important to investigate perceptions of the value of immigrants in more depth.

In a *New York Times* article titled, “The Markers of Outside Status,” Michael Jones-Corra (2012) outlines three components that contribute to the narrative of immigrants as outsiders in US society. He argues that immigrants should have a pathway to becoming citizens, participate in a shared language, and change of their perception of themselves so that they may participate in ‘social and political engagement.’ Basically, he is advocating assimilation. What I found more fascinating than the article itself were readers’ comments on the online version of the article. One respondent who identified herself as “Olivia” wrote:

Here is how my 3 immigrant grandparents (my paternal grandfather’s family came here in the 17th century) became insider Americans:

*They came here legally.

*They learned English.

*They embraced American holidays, traditions, food, etc.

*They wanted to be Americans, nothing else.

*Travel back to their country was difficult, so they never went back and forth, like today's immigrants.

Most of today's immigrants don't meet all of the above.

Thirty years after Berry’s (1985) idea that immigrants should give up their original culture and embrace only the American culture, Olivia’s comment and the comments of other readers are
evidence that this sentiment remains common. Aspects of transnationalism—traveling back to one’s home country while participating and living in the host country—were viewed negatively by many readers. An immigrant’s homeland traditions and cultures are not viewed as valuable by many in the larger population. Another respondent to Jones-Correa’s article contradicts Olivia and many other commentators: “It’s ironic to me that in a country that celebrates individualism to be [considered] an "American" we should all act the same way and leave behind what makes us unique!!”

Perceptions about immigrants are at times misconstrued and negative. It is important to remind ourselves that immigrants bring value to American society when they share their cultural traditions, among many other things. The fact that many immigrants are educated, employed, and participated in their community while living in America should be viewed as an asset to the American society. Critics argue that immigrants send remittances back to their countries, thus shipping away American resources. But immigrants also pay taxes, own houses, and contribute to local community and political activities. In fact, I was surprised to learn that two retired individuals I interviewed who worked for over 20 years in the United States did not receive social security benefits. One person said she did not want to take anything from the system. She said she knew she was returning to Trinidad and would obtain a job there and supplement her living expenses with savings earned in the United States. Even though we talked about entitlement, she was happy, even adamant, that she was paid well while living in New York for 20 years. The media often portray immigrants as parasites or aliens coming to the host country to take resources without giving anything in return. The current study tells a different story. Immigrants struggle and sometimes assimilate. They obtain an education or job, buy a house, join different groups and associations, and live full lives in their host country. Some decide
continue their migratory experiences and return to their place of birth. These immigrants are commonly working professionals, homeowners, and contribute to society in a variety of ways. I found the immigrants with whom I worked to be flexible while they lived in the United States, not marginalized from society as Berry (1985) suggests. They participate just as fully as any other citizen. This is an aspect of the immigration story that is not often told. The degree to which immigrants are assets in the economic and social development of American society deserves further exploration.

**Place Concepts and Remigration**

As people recounted their decisions about migration, the different place constructs became visible. Place dependence, which is seen as basically economic, can be social as well. Many survey and interview participants indicated that they migrated to find job opportunities or to gain knowledge through education, and get a better job. When asked about their reasons for remigrating, place dependence also surfaced, but focused more on the connection they felt to the people they left in their country of origin and a connection or sense of belonging with the place--‘home.’ Rubinstein (2005) eloquently explains why, “It is about the desire for a place where we feel we belong, or more accurately, the image we carry in our minds of such a place” (p. 113).

Even though the individuals I interviewed had varying senses of place dependence and place identity, each felt they were more attached to Trinidad and Tobago than to the United States. All identified themselves as Trinidadian, Tobagonians, or Trinbagonian. No one who had returned to Trinidad and Tobago identified as Trinidadian-American. Even though place identity can be linked to a sense of place or place attachment, I distinguish it in this study in the way they make specific assertions, such as “I am Trinidadian” or “I am American.” Each phrase gives an understanding and sense of pride in being a part of those places. Most of the
interviewees were quick to point out that they talk and think like a Trinidadian, but some indicated that their friends would tease them about being a ‘watered-down’ Trinidadian. Because of the years spent in the United States, most said that others viewed them as Trinidadian-American, but they believe that regardless of the number of years they spent in the United States, many maintained their identity as either Trinidadian or Tobagonian.

The memory of the place they lived in during childhood was influential in participants’ decisions to return. Tuan (1977) writes about the difficulty of relying on memories of childhood places, and it is clear that visiting the place of childhood and keeping different types of connections are instrumental in forming this strong relationship between the individual and the place. The problem, according to Tuan (1977), is that there can be a disconnection between memory and reality. Many of the individuals I interviewed had positive memories, but also talked about the harsh reality of the place they love and the dangers of living there. In line with Carol Stack’s (1995) notion of the pull of place, people were more critical of their current reality, they were aware of the negative things such as unemployment and racism, which continue to be a problem in the place they longed for. Moreover, the experience of a childhood place is important for individuals’ place identity. It would be interesting to know if the types of experiences in the childhood places influence a person’s place identity or decisions to return to that place to live. More research is needed to know whether individuals have only positive experiences growing up and, if they had any negative experiences, if it would make a difference.

There is a clear finding from the data I analyzed that the interaction of social connections, weather, closeness of houses, degree of laid-back atmosphere, food, and everyday nuances point to a sense of place attachment. In their discussion of bonds and places, Bow and Buys (2003) argue that place identity and place dependence are both components of place attachment. While
I agree there are overlapping meanings among the three constructions, based on my interviews I find each has independent characteristics. For example, Stacey K. identifies as Tobagonian and indicated that she likes the natural environment of living in Tobago, such as the fruit trees in her backyard, as well as her neighbors’ backyard. She likes the accents of her people and interaction within her community. She is clearly attached to being in Tobago. She feels a strong bond to the things and the way of life in Tobago which shows a sense of place attachment. When it came to how she thinks and identifies herself, it is a Tobagonian so that is her place identity. Place attachment focuses more on the connections to culture and lifestyle and place identity looks more on how she sees herself in relation to place.

Childhood experiences in Trinidad and Tobago appear to be part of what pulls remigrants back home. Even though most of the individuals in this dissertation were financially and socially dependent on the American economy, that is, place dependent on the United States, they are also attached to people, traditions, and cultures of their home country (place attachment) and believe Trinidad and Tobago is part of who they are (place identity).

In the analysis of the 16 interviews, there is a clear distinction as to what is pulling people to the United States, such as work, education, re-unification with parents but these can also be seen as a form of place dependence. The individuals are dependent on these factors in a particular place--New York. On the other hand place dependence in Trinidad and Tobago can be seen in the reasons individuals remigrate, including such things as cultural nuances, ill family members and many others. Therefore, even though place dependence is seen in both places, it really depends on how the person’s point of view changes over their migration experiences and life course.
Place Dependence, Place Attachment, and Place Identity, Relative to Times and Location

It is interesting that in the stories told by my participants and my analysis of them there is a different sense of pull and push depending on where one is and in what part of the migration or remigration process. That is, as I described above, people recalling what first drew them to New York—some of the “pull” factors such as employment and education as well as family ties—can be seen as place dependence. But once in New York, there is a sort of pull back to Trinidad and Tobago that comes from negative affective feelings towards the New York weather, missing “home,” plus family ties that can be seen as “place attachment,” but attachment to the place one is away from, not to the place where one is. But once one has remigrated back to Trinidad and Tobago, there is a negative experience of crime and poor health care. These experiences can be read as a pull back to New York, a sort of anti-place dependence. But when folks describe what they like in Trinidad and Tobago—what it is that keeps them there—it is about subtle “affective” issues of feeling at home; freedom and friends and the pace of life. These affective issues revolve about “who I am,” and can be seen clearly as place identity. For remigration to happen there needs to be a sense of place identity to the home country. All my participants who returned identified with Trinidad and Tobago as their home and not New York even though they were actively engaged in both societies.

Transnationalistic Experiences

There seems to be a dearth of information on what I am calling the transnational experiences of immigrants ranging from familial contacts, remittances, technological advances in transport and communication, economic and political networks, and social and cultural linkages (Portes, 1999; Foner, 2007; Castles & Miller, 2009). Transnational experiences, which involve maintaining ties with the home country whilst living in the host country, seem to be the most
common migration experiences for all the individuals in my research, whether or not they were returning. The act of maintaining ties with family, friends, and social and political happenings on a frequent basis, shows an extension of the immigration experience. Castles and Miller (2009) note that globalization is an important factor in transnationalism since there is “rapid improvement in technologies of transport and communication, making it increasingly easy for migrants to maintain close links with their areas of origin” (p. 30). All the participatees in this study did not simply cut off connections with their place of birth, but continued to keep ties via internet, phone, traveling, and to some extent letter writing. Even individuals who had no immediate family members living in their homeland and indicated that they were not planning to return to Trinidad and Tobago still kept in touch with friends and received news from the local newspaper, radio station, or the Internet. For some immigrants, the frequency of contact depends on the relationships migrants have with people in their home country. For example, one of the individuals I interviewed, Sandy Sue, left her young daughter in Tobago in the care of her mother. She called about three times a day and always before going to bed. This consistent communication helps to maintain the relationship an immigrant has to their home country.

Because my study involved a small number of people, I cannot say that the very high level of communication and travel that my participants engaged in is part of a larger trend, but it might be. That is, in my participants we may be seeing a shift in family structure which makes families a bit less dependent on living in the same place at any given time, but able to survive as families even though various family members are moving from one place to another, from one part of the world to another.

Duval (2004) explores the literature that links return visits to the ultimate act of returning. He argues, “The return visits may not be explicitly causal, but may instead be the means by
which social relationships are maintained, and in this way some degree of influence on the reasons being considered for returning” (p. 52). Duval also looked at the different kinds of transnationalism immigrants experienced and emphasized that in today’s society “technological innovation and their role as facilitators of contact between the external homeland and overseas migrants” (p. 52) tend to be the most used. Still, he cautions, “The actual physical movement of migrants back and forth between multiple localities is still deserving of exploration” (p. 52). Duval’s research supports my findings that participants believe the best way to understand the homeland is to travel back and forth on a regular basis. Like other researchers (Basch et al., 1994; Castles & Miller, 2009; Gmelch, 1983; Vertovec, 2001), I found that social networks and “interconnected social experiences” (Basch et al., 1994) were important to an eventual return and current feelings of ‘home.’

Likewise, the planning process seems to be important for deciding to return. It is also helpful for being successful in returning. Nothing is ever perfect, but those individuals who planned their return to Trinidad and Tobago over the course of a year or more reported having an easier adjustment to living in Trinidad and Tobago. In her conversation with her friend, Blair C., advised her to follow various planning steps. All the participants in my study indicated that having a specific plan was the key to a smooth return.

For some individuals, relationships, both familial and friendships do play a huge role in deciding to return to one’s home country. Many immigrants migrate to the United States to be reunited with family members and some continue maintaining ties with the people they left behind. The degree of connection depends on the individual, but the key is that the interactions and connections within the home and host countries can be instrumental in determining remigration and satisfaction with their lives and living situations in either locale.
Immigrants come to the United States to pursue education, get a better job, re-unite with family members, or to fulfill their desire for a change in life. However, while some immigrants may remigrate for some of the same reasons, others may not have any specific reasons beyond “wanting to go home.” While I found that place attachment to Trinidadian and Tobagonian’s culture called many remigrants home, more research on the relationship of childhood home experiences and place attachments before migration deserves further exploration. This would add to the discussion on remigration and the meaning of the experiences of immigrants in both home and host countries.

**Conclusion**

During the process of completing this dissertation I learned about three interesting issues related to the migration experiences: (1) the complexities and dynamics of the place constructs, (2) a counter narrative to the dominant narrative of immigrants in America, and (3) the mystical sense of belonging. These issues are important for understanding both how immigrants adjust to the host country and then readjust to their home country after remigrating.

**Complexities of Place Constructs**

For me, an important finding was the flexibility of the three place constructs—place attachment, place dependence and place identity—to the migration experience. Some scholars write about place attachment in connection to the culture and everyday norms of a particular place (Nanzer, 2003; Proshansky et. al., 1983). In my research, participants living in New York maintained place attachment to Trinidad and Tobago through food, including eating patterns and daily rituals. For example, many of the participants continued to cook food typical in Trinidad and Tobago, and they eat meals in the same manner as if they were living there.
I also found that individuals have attachments to several aspects of a place, but may not feel a similar bond to all aspects. For example, many participants had difficulty adjusting to the weather in New York. Also, experiences of racism and lack of a sense of belonging lessened their feelings of the attachment to New York. Nevertheless, they felt attachment to New York because of their family and friends there. Conversely, even when participants felt a sense of place attachment to the culture of Trinidad and Tobago, upon returning, some felt a lack of place attachment specifically because of the poor healthcare and high crime rate. This is similar to Stack’s (1996) descriptions individuals who left the South for opportunities in the North who both long for and dread returning to the South. She mentions that these individuals did not feel total attachment to the South and were, in fact, horrified with what was happening there.

In terms of place identity, all the participants in this study identified as Trinidadian or Tobagonian, but not as Trinidadian/Tobagonian-American, or American, or even as a New Yorker. However, even though they did not self-identify as American or New Yorker, they were actively involved in life in New York and, over time, this became part of who they are. In this way, the definition of place identity can be flexible and include not only how connected an individual feels towards a place, but also how that place makes you more of who you are. For example, participants who stayed connected to family and friends while they were abroad enjoyed socializing more than participants who did not maintain communication before returning to live in Trinidad and Tobago. The participants who kept regular communication felt that they belonged back in Trinidad and Tobago, and they felt comfortable with the person they had become.

Place dependence is another construct that is intertwined with the meaning of migration. It is defined as the place where individuals’ goals and needs are met, especially in terms of
economic viability (Nanzer, 2003). However, I found that the need to connect with family and friends is an important component of place dependence as well. Indeed, most immigrants look to America as a place they can find employment and pursue education, but their dependency place goes beyond economics to include individuals’ expectations and dependencies on the relationships in a place that improve their lives.

**Counter Narrative to the Dominant Narrative of immigrants**

The dominant narrative that all immigrants come only to ‘take’ from America is a myth that must be dispelled. The counter narrative is that there are many immigrants, including all the ones I interviewed, who are hardworking individuals and contribute to American society. Many immigrants who are educated in America now work, pay taxes, and participate in different types of activities in America. Most immigrants do not participate only for the economic benefits, but rather because they have a genuine interest in contributing positively to life in America. These immigrants have infused their customs into America and, reciprocally, enjoy participating in American customs. Although most immigrants are perceived as coming to America to deplete resources, there are many immigrants who are acknowledged for their contributions. For example, a few revered and famous immigrants include: Albert Einstein, well-known physicist; Madeline Albright, former secretary of State; Hakeem Olajuwon, famed basketball player; and the Mighty Sparrow, prominent Trinidad and Tobago calypso singer. However, celebrity should not be a prerequisite to acknowledge or appreciate immigrants for their contributions to the United States.

Because of transnationalism, immigrants can contribute simultaneously to their home country and to their host country. In many cases, these immigrants are equally connected to both countries through their relationships with family and friends. Therefore, the counter narrative
that acknowledges immigrants as productive members of society should replace the dominant narrative that incorrectly views immigrants as destructive to American society.

**Mystical Sense of Belonging**

I conclude this dissertation with the notion of a mystical sense of belonging, which I gathered from talking to participants in my research. During interviews, participants described home as a place that a person feels attached to and can identify; and they said this even while acknowledging the negative aspects of a place. For example, many participants returned or desired to return regardless of the fact that Trinidad and Tobago has a poor health system and customer service, as well as a high crime rate.

Additionally, the pull to return to the homeland from where an individual emigrated appears stronger for men than for women. Even for some married individuals, there was still a sense that they wanted to return even though their spouses did not want to return. Interestingly, most of the married men were willing to return without their wives. However, wives who desired to return made the decision to stay with their husbands if their husbands did not want to return. This dynamic has a lot to do with differential levels of power between genders, which may be related to gender norms in Trinidad and Tobago. For example, men in Trinidad and Tobago are typically perceived as the ‘man of the house,’ and the women in their lives are expected to follow them or stay behind. Not surprisingly, many of the wives I interviewed expressed not wanting to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live because they felt a sense of independence in America. When the men return, they sustained marriages through transnational connections: traveling back and forth, phone, Skype, Facebook, and other social media.

Beyond place constructs, beyond decisions of whether or not spouses would also return, and even beyond earning higher salaries in New York, many Trinidadians and Tobagonians still
desired to return. I feel this expresses something about the pull back to home that is not so easy to define. It is a vague and seemingly mystical sense of “belonging” to Trinidad and Tobago. It is a feeling of attachment to the everyday life of that place even with full awareness of the negative aspects of living there. I can only define it as similar to what Stack (1996) refers to as a “call to home.”
Appendix A

Demographic Questions for Interviews:

I am going to first ask some demographic questions:

1. What is your gender? | Female | Male
2. What is your age?
   Retired? | Yes | No
   Working for Income: | Yes | No
3. What is your Marital Status?
   Married | Divorced
   Single
   Other
4. If married, where does your spouse live?
   Trinidad and Tobago | United States
   Another Country
5. Employment History: Please describe the kind of job you currently have? And your spouse?
6. Housing: Do you or have you ever owned a house? Yes or No
   Where? | Trinidad and Tobago | United States
Appendix A-1

**Interview Questions:**

**Migration and remigration:** I am now going to ask questions to better understand your migration story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants living in Trinidad and Tobago</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How long have you been living in Trinidad and Tobago?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How long did you live in the US?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How did you stay connected when you lived in the US?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Do you stay connected with individuals in the US? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Why did you decide to migrate to the US?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Why did you decide to remigrate to Trinidad and Tobago?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Do you believe you adjusted to the US while you lived there? If yes, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Do you believe you have adjusted to living in Trinidad and Tobago? If yes, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Was the decision to remigrate spontaneous or did you have to think about it for a while? How long did it take for you to plan to return?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) How often did you travel to Trinidad and Tobago before returning? How long was your stay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) What was the planning process like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Was the decision to move back an individual decision or a family decision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) What were your expectations when you thinking of moving back?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Do you still maintain ties to people in America? Please tell me how.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Were there people you admire or you looked up to in the United States. And in Trinidad and Tobago? Do these people still live there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16) Do you identify yourself as a Trinidadian, American, or Trinidadian/American?
17) Do you think your gender (being male/female) had any impact on your experiences in Trinidad and Tobago? If yes, how?

18) How do you think people identify you, as a Trinidadian, American or Trinidadian/American?
19) Was there a particular place in Trinidad and Tobago that made you feel like you belonged here? If yes, where
20) In which place did you feel most connected? The United States or Trinidad and Tobago? What about the place made you feel like this?
Recruitment Script

(This was posted on my Face Book account to recruit participants)

My name is Lystra Huggins. I am a graduate student at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York and I would really like you to participate in my research project. The purpose of this project is to study the meaning and connections within the different places people live. The following are the criteria for participating:

- If you were born in Trinidad and Tobago
- If you left Trinidad and Tobago and came to the United States, specifically New York area, after the age of 18 years
- If you worked or retired in the United States
- If you returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live after having lived and worked in the United States OR plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago in the future to live but are currently working or retired in the United States AND those who do not want to return to their homeland of Trinidad and Tobago.

This information will help me to understand the role different “Places” play for people who migrated and remigrated. As a participant in this research, you will be agreeing to complete an online survey which should last about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decide not to participate at any point without fear of prejudice or penalty. If you would like to participate, please click on the link below to consent and complete the survey.

Thank You!
Appendix B-1
(Individuals who are planning to remigrate and individuals who are planning to stay in the U.S.)

Consent Form

By clicking on the “I agree” button below I am consenting to completing the following survey for a study on immigration issues.

This study is conducted under the direction of Lystra Huggins, a doctoral student at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The purpose of this dissertation research project is to study the meaning and connections within the different places migrants and re-migrants presently live and formerly resided. This is an anonymous survey, so no identifiable marks will be obtained from you. Also, all surveys will be securely stored so no unauthorized person will have access to your answers.

As a participant in this study, the risks to you may involve no more than those encountered in everyday life. You may find it a bit stressful to answer questions about your past; if you feel uncomfortable you can stop at any time. The researcher has made every effort to limit stress and psychological or interpersonal harm to you the participants. However, if you decide not to continue with this study the incomplete survey will be shredded.

If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Lystra Huggins, at 718-552-6633, or at Lystrah@gmail.com. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, 1(212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.

By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are giving consent to this survey
☐ I agree ☐ I disagree
By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that you were born in Trinidad and Tobago
☐ I agree ☐ I disagree
By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that you are over the age of 18 years old and living in the United States for over a year
☐ I agree ☐ I disagree
By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that there is a possibility that you might want to leave the United States and return to Trinidad and Tobago to live, or do not want to return at all
☐ I agree ☐ I disagree
Appendix B-2

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your gender?  
   - Female  
   - Male

2. What is your age? 

3. What is your Marital Status?
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Single
   - Committed Relationship
   - Other

4. If married, or in a committed relationship, where does your spouse live?
   - Trinidad and Tobago
   - United States
   - Another Country

5. Is your income from? Please check either “yes” or “no” for each below:
   - Work?  
     - Yes
     - No
   - Retirement?  
     - Yes
     - No
   - Other means?  
     - Yes
     - No

6. Housing: Do you currently own a house?  
   - Yes  
   - No
   If so, Where?  
   - Trinidad and Tobago  
   - United States

7. When I first moved to the United States, I was:
   - Under 18 years
   - Between 18 – 55 years
   - Older than 55 years

8. I have lived in the New York area for:
   - Less than five years
   - Between five –twenty years
   - Over twenty years

9. How many times did you visit the United States before actually settling to live here?
   - None, that was my first move
   - Once
   - More than once
10. Since moving to the United States to live, I have visited Trinidad and Tobago: (Please check the one answer that best applies)

- Not at all
- Once
- a few times
- Multiple times a year

11. My most important family members now live in: (Please check the one answer that best applies)

- Trinidad
- Tobago
- New York
- It is about even, both Trinidad and Tobago and the US
- Other parts of the US
- Other parts of the World

12. (a) I plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago: (Please check the one answer that best applies)

- In less than a year
- In more than a year
- not planning to return

(b) I plan to return to Trinidad and Tobago: (If you do not plan to return please skip this question and the next one)

- Before retirement
- After my retirement
- After my spouse’s retirement
- Retirement had nothing to do with my decision to return

13. The people, in Trinidad and Tobago, who are supporting my decision to move back are my: (please check all that apply. Those not planning to return please skip this question)

- Mom/Dad
- Siblings
- Uncle and Aunts
- Friend
- Intimate partner
- Other (please note the person/s)________________________
The following questions are related specifically to your experiences here in the United States:

Please check the category that best fits each response below:

1) **My thoughts about the United States are affected a lot because, Since living in the United States, I:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>found a good job</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>missed the “Trini” music and food</td>
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<tr>
<td>from home</td>
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<tr>
<td>missed family members home</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gained social skills</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>gained educational skills</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>encountered racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>had difficulty adjusting to the</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>way of life here</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) **A strong motivation for me to move to the United States was:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To pursue education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To find a job/ better job</td>
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<td>To be reunited with family members</td>
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<td>Because I wanted a change in my</td>
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<td>life</td>
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<tr>
<td>To escape racism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I was feeling adventurous</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) **Most of my close friends in United States are originally from:** (Please check the **ONE** answer that best applies)

- [ ] Trinidad
- [ ] Tobago
- [ ] New York
- [ ] It is about even, both Trinidad and Tobago and the US
- [ ] Other parts of the US
- [ ] Other parts of the World
Note that the next 2 questions focus on how the media portrays Trinidadians and Tobagonians

Please check the category that best fits each response below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4) How do you think the media explain the reasons we Trinidadians come to the United States? (Remember, we are asking you to say what you think the MEDIA is saying, whether you believe it to be true or not)</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because there are great job opportunities here</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because it is freer here politically</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because it is a more equal and less racist society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to exploit the welfare and education system</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to take all they can without contributing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to become responsible members of society</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) What do you think the United States media portrays about Trinidadians who are residents here? (Remember, we are asking you to say what you think the MEDIA is saying, whether you believe it to be true or not)</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians have contributed a fair share just like every other immigrant group that has built the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians don’t fit into the society—they stick to themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidadians and Tobagonians enrich</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
America with their culture –the food, the music

Trinidadians and Tobagonians are a big drain on the economic system and contribute nothing

Trinidadians and Tobagonians have lots of children who become U.S. citizens

Trinidadian and Tobagonians families are strong and they take care of each other

The following questions are important to gather your beliefs about eventually returning to Trinidad and Tobago to live (If you do not want to return please skip this question)

Please check the category that best fits each response below

1) I expect that when I do return to Trinidad and Tobago that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things are going to be about the same as when I left</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is going to be a different political leader so I expect upheaval in the country</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I should be able to find a good job since I was educated in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could “lime” more often than I do here in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic conditions will be better now compared to when I left years ago</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would be accepted back in my network of friends and relatives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There would be some hard times since I have heard stories of how difficult it can be to go back.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) I want to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live because: (Please check all that applies)

- [ ] I miss my family
- [ ] I accomplished all that I can here in the U.S.
- [ ] I want to retire in my country
- [ ] I miss my culture (music, food, everyday living)
- [ ] There is too much stress in the U.S.
- [ ] Others not mentioned:
- [ ] I do not want to return to live

3) In preparations for moving back: (Please check all that applies)

- [ ] I am trying to sell my house
- [ ] I have bought a house in Trinidad and Tobago
- [ ] I am speaking to someone who has already returned
I am looking at job opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago
☐ I am travelling back and forth to Trinidad and Tobago
☐ I have started moving some of my belongings back
☐ Others not mentioned_______________________________________________________________

☐ I do not want to return to live

4) **It is important for me to stay in touch with family and friends in Trinidad and Tobago via:** (Please check all that applies)
☐ Land line phone
☐ Cell phone
☐ Skype
☐ Facebook
☐ Letters
☐ Newspaper from back home
☐ Radio Programs
☐ Others not mentioned

5) **For me, it is important to keep in touch:**
☐ Several times a day
☐ More or less daily
☐ About once or twice a week
☐ Every month or so
☐ Not all that often
Appendix C-1

(Individuals who have remigrated)

Consent Form

By clicking on the “I agree” button below I am consenting to completing the following survey for a study on immigration issues.

This study is conducted under the direction of Lystra Huggins, a doctoral student at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The purpose of this dissertation research project is to study the meaning and connections within the different places migrants and re-migrants presently live and formally resided. This is an anonymous survey, so no identifiable marks will be obtained from you. Also, all surveys will be securely stored so no unauthorized person will have access to your answers.

As a participant in this study, the risks to you may involve no more than those encountered in everyday life. You may find it a bit stressful to answer questions about your past; if you feel uncomfortable you can stop at any time. The researcher has made every effort to limit stress and psychological or interpersonal harm to you the participants. However, if you decide not to continue with this study the incomplete survey will be shredded.

If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Lystra Huggins, at 718-552-6633, or at Lystrah@gmail.com. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, 1(212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.

By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are giving consent to this survey

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree

By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that you were born in Trinidad and Tobago

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree

By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that you are over the age of 18 years old and lived in the United States for over a year

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree

By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are stating that you are now living in Trinidad and Tobago

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree
Appendix C-2

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. This is an anonymous survey and any information obtained will be used for research purposes only.

**Demographic Questions:**

1. What is your gender? □ Female □ Male
2. What is your age? ______________
3. What is your Marital Status?
   □ Married     □ Divorced
   □ Single      □ Committed Relationship
   □ Other_________________________
4. If married, or in a committed relationship, where does your spouse live?
   □ Trinidad and Tobago □ United States
   □ Another Country_________________________
5. Is your income from? (Please check either “Yes” or “No” for each)
   Work?      □ Yes □ No
   Retirement? □ Yes □ No
   Other means? □ Yes □ No
6. Housing: Do you currently own a house? Yes or No
   If so, Where? □ Trinidad and Tobago □ United States
7. When I first moved to the United States, I was:
   □ Under 18 years □ Between 18 – 55 years
   □ Older than 55 years
8. I lived in the New York area for:
   □ Less than five years □ Between five and twenty years □ Over twenty years
9. How many times did you visit the United States before actually settling to live there?
10. After moving to the United States to live, how often did you visit Trinidad and Tobago: (Please check the one answer that best applies)
- None, that was my first move
- Once
- More than once

11. My most important family members now live in: (Please check the one answer that best applies)
- Trinidad
- Tobago
- New York
- It is about even, both Trinidad and Tobago and the US
- Other parts of the US
- Other parts of the World

12. (a) I returned to Trinidad and Tobago to live:
- less than a year ago
- Over a year now

(b) I returned to Trinidad and Tobago: (Please check the one answer that best applies)
- Before I retired
- After I retired
- After my spouse retired
- Retirement has nothing to do with my decision to return

13. The people, in Trinidad and Tobago, who were supporting my decision to move back to Trinidad and Tobago to live were my: (please check all that apply)
- Mom/Dad
- Siblings
- Uncle and Aunts
- Friend
- Intimate partner
- Other (please note the person/s)

The following questions are related specifically to your experiences in the United States:

Please check the category that best fits each response below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) My thoughts about the United States are affected a lot because, while living there, I:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>found a good job</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>missed family members home</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>had difficulty adjusting to the way of life there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please check the category that best fits each response below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2) A strong motivation for me to move to the United States was:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To pursue education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find a job/ better job</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I was feeling adventurous</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others not mentioned:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8) Most of my close friends while I lived in the United States were originally from:
   (Please check the ONE answer that best applies)
   - [ ] Trinidad
   - [ ] Tobago
   - [ ] New York
   - [ ] It is about even, both Trinidad and Tobago and the US
   - [ ] Other parts of the US
   - [ ] Other parts of the World

9) Most of my close friends in Trinidad and Tobago are also remigrants:
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

Note that the next 2 questions focus on how the media portrays Trinidadians and Tobagonians
Please check the category that best fits each response below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10) How do you think the media explain the reasons we Trinidadians come to the United States?</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Remember, we are asking you to say what you think the MEDIA is saying, whether you believe it to be true or not)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because there are great job opportunities here |       |       |                             |          |                   |
| Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because it is freer here politically         |       |       |                             |          |                   |
| Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. because it is a more equal and less racist society |   |       |                             |          |                   |
Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to exploit the welfare and education system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to take all they can without contributing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians come to the U.S. to become responsible members of society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please check the category that best fits each response below:

1) **What do you think the United States media portrays about Trinidadians who are residents here?**
   (Remember, we are asking you to say what you think the MEDIA is saying, whether you believe it to be true or not)

Trinidadians and Tobagonians have contributed a fair share just like every other immigrant group that has built the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians don’t fit into the society—they stick to themselves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians enrich America with their culture—the food, the music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians are a big drain on the economic system and contribute nothing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadians and Tobagonians have lots of children who become U.S. citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trinidadian and Tobagonians families are strong and they take care of each other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The following questions are important to gather your beliefs about your return to Trinidad and Tobago to live

Please check the category that best fits each response below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I expected that when I returned to Trinidad and Tobago that:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Things were going to be about the same as when I left for the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was going to be a different political leader so I expected upheaval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should have been able to find a good job since I was educated in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could “lime” more often than I used to in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic conditions would be better compared to when I left years ago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be accepted back in my network of friends and relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There would be some hard times since before returning I heard stories of how difficult it would have been if I returned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) I wanted to return to Trinidad and Tobago to live because: (Please check all that applies)

- [ ] I missed my family
- [ ] I accomplished all that I could while I lived in the U.S.
- [ ] I wanted to retire in my country
- [ ] I missed my culture (music, food, everyday living)
- [ ] There was too much stress in the U.S.
- [ ] Others not mentioned: __________________________

2) When I was preparing to move back: (Please check all that applies)

- [ ] I sold my house/apartment
- [ ] I bought a house in Trinidad and Tobago
- [ ] I spoke to someone who had already returned
- [ ] I looked at job opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago
- [ ] I travelled back and forth to Trinidad and Tobago
- [ ] I started moving some of my belongings back months before I returned
- [ ] Others not mentioned_________________________________________
3) Prior to moving back, it was important for me to stay in touch via

☐ Land line phone
☐ Cell Phone
☐ Skype
☐ Facebook
☐ Letters
☐ Newspapers from back home
☐ Radio Programs

4) For me, it was important to keep in touch:

☐ Several times a day.
☐ More or less Daily.
☐ Oh, about once or twice a week
☐ Every month or so
☐ Not all that often
Bibliography


realities. Harvard University Press.
