'FOREIGN-BORN' AND 'YOUNG' RETURNING NATIONALS TO ST LUCIA:
Results of a Pilot Study

Robert B Potter

Geographical Paper No 168

April 2003

The author is Professor of Human Geography
at The University of Reading
email: r.b.potter@reading.ac.uk

Abstract.- The focus of this paper is the study of a relatively new group of Caribbean migrants, namely those second generation overseas-born St Lucians who have decided to migrate to the country of birth of at least one of their parents. After a brief review of the circumstances surrounding this relatively new and innovative migratory path, the insights gained from an exploratory investigation of such migrants are presented, focusing in particular, on their socio-economic and demographic characteristics, the reasons for their move and the adjustments they have made and those which they feel that they still face. Through the analysis, issues of racial identity within the context of the colour-class system are shown to be particularly crucial. In conclusion, the results are set along side those of a similar study carried out by the author in Barbados. In unison with the returnees to Barbados, those to St Lucia expressed major problems with forming local friendship patterns. However, in contrast, they seemed to experience far fewer difficulties stemming from their national identity being seen as English, and their different accent.

Introduction

This paper presents the findings of a first study of St Lucians by descent, that is those second generation St Lucians, born in the UK or USA and elsewhere, who have decided to migrate and settle in the country of birth of one or more of their parents. Such 'returning nationals', 'return migrants' or 'returnees' can be further defined as 'foreign-born' and 'young' returning nationals. These terms are fully explained in the body of the present paper. Funded by the British Academy, the author interviewed forty foreign-born or young returning nationals to the Caribbean states of St Lucia and Barbados during late 1999 and early 2000. To that point, this relatively new and innovative migratory path had not been the subject of specific investigation. The results of the survey carried out in Barbados have been presented in another paper (see Potter, 2003). The present paper is concerned with the empirical results of the research carried out in St Lucia during the first half of 2000. Throughout the analysis, which is principally qualitative, similarities and contrasts between the experiences of the citizens by descent in St Lucia and Barbados are highlighted. However, before the methodology used in carrying out the research is explained, the work is set in its wider context by considering the salience of migration in the context of Caribbean development. This is a parallel account to that presented at the outset of the paper dealing with the Barbados component of the research project (Potter, 2003).

Migration and the Caribbean Region

Successive migrations have been a fundamental correlate of Caribbean social and economic development and change since the age of discovery (see, for example, Marshall, 1982; Conway, 1994). Indeed, some writers have referred to the "uprootedness" of Caribbean peoples. This expression is helpful only in so far as it serves to stress the fact that migrations, both great and small, permanent and transitory, have been an integral component of Caribbean social and economic change through time. However, any suggestion that Caribbean migration can somehow be characterised as uncoordinated and essentially chaotic, has to be firmly rejected at the outset.

The creation of the contemporary Caribbean region was premised on the largest enforced migration, that of black West African slaves by Europeans. On the abolition of the slave trade and emancipation in 1834, this inhumane movement, reckoned to have accounted for 6-10 million people, was followed by the migration of indentured labourers, in particular, those from India. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this movement was followed by the strong intra-regional migration of West Indians, most conspicuously in relation to the building of the Panama Canal between 1879 and 1914 (Richardson, 1985, 1992; Newton, 1984).

In the twentieth century, there has been an almost non-stop movement of Caribbean nationals to major metropolitan regions in North America and Europe, although, the former has now become much more important than the latter due to various immigration acts. As the twenty-first century opened, the mass movements to the 'North' in the immediate post war period have been complemented by the return migration of a proportion of those who made the journey from the Caribbean to major metropolitan centers in North America and Europe. At first, it was envisaged that the original movement would for the most part be circular, with migrants to the UK eventually returning to the Caribbean. However, current evidence remains far from conclusive on this point (see Anwar, 1979; Byron, 1994, chapter 4).

As Conway (1998) has observed, since the incorporation of the small island nations of the Caribbean into the external spheres of influence of European mercantilism in the sixteenth century, the region has experienced successive waves of immigration, emigration and circulation. As implied above, the range of migratory movements has been wide and varied, extending from enforced permanent movements to transient or shuttle migrations. Such has been their diversity, they have consisted of short-term, circular and recurrent migrants.

This paper deals with a relatively new migration path to the Caribbean, which up to now remains entirely uncharted and unstudied (see Phillips and Potter, 2003 for a review of the literature). This is the movement of comparatively young returning nationals to the Caribbean, drawn from the progeny of the twentieth century migrants who went to Europe, North America and elsewhere, in the wake of the Second World

War. Before examining the characteristics of this new cohort of migrants, the better-known and studied phenomenon of retiree return migration to the Caribbean is briefly reviewed.

Return to the Caribbean Region

There has been a good deal of interest in that cohort of men and women who first migrated from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom in search of gainful employment and the chance to better their lives in the 1950s and 1960s. Most interest has focused on that sub-group of the displaced population that has either returned to the Caribbean on reaching retirement or during late middle-age. This situation has been true of the mass-media coverage of such _Return Migrants_, or "_Returning Nationals_", as they are now frequently known. In addition, a mounting, although by no means extensive volume of academic research since the late 1970s has also focused on older return migrants to the Caribbean (see, for example, Thomas-Hope, 1985, 1992; Gmelch, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1987; Byron and Condon, 1996; Nutter, 1986; Byron, 2000).

With respect to much of the developing world and southern Europe, an extensive literature has developed which documents return migration to national homelands and its impacts on housing and agricultural landscapes (see King, 1986). While abroad, such nationals have remitted large amounts of capital back to their countries of origin, although some writers have argued that these remittances do not always serve positive ends. It has been argued that these monies from overseas have generally served to fuel conspicuous consumption, especially of imported goods, elaborate and luxury housing, along with investment in what some have referred to as marginally productive enterprises, such as shops, bars and taxis (Gmelch, 1980; Gmelch, 1985c; Lowenthal and Clarke, 1982; Richardson 1975).

The argument has been forwarded, that such capital has not always served to rejuvenate the rural economic sector. Indeed, in many circumstances, it has led to the ownership of land by those living overseas, and thereby, the creation of what are referred to as "idle lands" (see Potter and Welch, 1996; Brierley, 1985). This situation has given rise to the suggestion that some small Caribbean countries have become

"remittance-dependent" and that returnees cannot be regarded as significant agents of change (see Bovenkerk, 1981; Brana-Shute and Brana-Shute, 1982; Stinner *et al.*, 1983). However, in the Caribbean context, Gmelch (1980; 1987; 1992), De Souza (1998) and Conway (1993) have disputed this argument, and have written strongly in favour of the developmental efficacy of remittances from overseas. In this connection, it is salient to emphasise that when settled back into the country of their birth, such returnees continue to bring in substantial amounts of money in the form of pension payments and investment income. For example, in the case of Barbados, it was estimated by the Central Bank that in 1996 remittances from overseas and returned nationals amounted to $Bds 125 millions. For the same year, the estimated revenue lost as the result of the duty free importation of the household effects of returnees was just in excess of $Bds 9 millions (FURN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ca 1997; Potter, 2003).

In fact, these arguments run parallel with those concerning the social impact of returning nationals themselves. Thus, local populations frequently regard returning nationals as interlopers who have "had it all too easy abroad". Such feelings of resentment and suspicion have been well-documented by Gmelch (1980) in the case of returning nationals as a whole. Such negative reactions to returnees have to be viewed in the light of a situation where Caribbean migrants faced a tough time in metropolitan societies, having to overcome poverty and racism in their efforts to earn a better living. As is well-documented, most West Indians formed a replacement population, that is they frequently undertook jobs that the bulk of the indigenous UK population was largely unprepared to tackle (Peach, 1967, 1968; Brooks, 1975). In addition, there is evidence that West Indians have not done as well in the United Kingdom, when compared with the ultimate career placements of essentially the same population that moved to North America.

One of the issues which is seen as contributing to resentment concerning returning nationals is that, as alluded to above, returnees are eligible to bring their household contents, including cars and consumer durables, into the country without having to pay import duties (in the case of Barbados this is detailed in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Barbados, 1996: and St Lucia is following the lead offered by this publication). Further, there is a view that returnees are relatively well-off, and this

has led to accusations that they are routinely over-charged by traders and craftspeople.

Despite such problems, and notwithstanding the fact that elderly retirees are coming to the end of their working lives, Gmelch (1980, 1987, 1992) and Conway (1985, 1993) have taken up the argument that returning nationals and remittances should be considered in a much more favourable light than hitherto. As such phenomena have long been an integral part of the social and economic fabric of the region, they argue that returnees have in the past, and are likely in the future, to play extremely significant roles in the region's development. This is in addition to the considerable amounts of foreign currency that is being brought into the country. For example, such groups should be able to contribute wider experience and skills, developed over a lifetime of work and domestic experience. Many of them are parents and grandparents able to add to the human and social capital of the nation in a wide variety of ways, enhancing the reciprocal linkages that serve to bind members of the society together.

A New Migration Path: Young Returning Nationals to the Caribbean

As noted in the previous section, virtually all of these studies have focused on returning nationals of retirement age. On research trips to the eastern Caribbean in the late 1990s the author met a growing number of "*Young Returning Migrants*" to the Caribbean, most of whom could be described as "*Foreign-Born Returning Nationals*" (see below for a precise definition). These are primarily second generation West Indians, those born in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada or elsewhere of first generation West Indian immigrants, who for a variety of reasons, have decided to "return to" the countries that they themselves had not come from, but from which their parents had originated. However, this cohort of migrants has never been the focus of a specific study, and although aware of the existence of such migrants, neither the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St Lucia, or the High Commission in London have precise details as to the number of such migrants, their migration histories, their employment and wider socio-economic characteristics. As noted over

twenty years ago, while nations collect precise statistics concerning 'aliens', the same seldom applies for returning citizens (Rhoades, 1979; Gmelch, 1980).

An exploratory research project, the first of its kind, was therefore carried out, from 1999 to 2000 by the present author (Potter, 2000b). The aim was to provide a first analysis of the nature of this new movement, its duration and socio-economic impacts. In particular, by means of open-ended semi-structured interviews, the project sought to investigate the experiences and attitudes of young returnees. As such, the project had important policy implications, including the possible contribution of young returnees to social and human capital and the skills base of small developing nations. The project sought to establish whether this new cohort of young returnees is regarded in a different light to the better-known category of older returnees. What motivates them, and why are they prepared to leave the country of their birth? Are they more skilled than their older counterparts and do they effectively represent a "reverse brain drain" for the Caribbean region? How well-prepared are they and what stages have they gone through in order to effect the migration process? How are they received locally, and does their reception accord with their prior expectations? How do they adjust and are there discernible processes or stages of adjustment? Do they experience different processes of adjustment in the economic (workplace) and social spheres? How important are extended family support networks? Are there differences by age, gender and family-life cycle status, or by country of destination? What are the specific needs of such returnees and how best can they be assisted? How many of them find adaptation too difficult and return to metropolitan societies?

The Research Design

The principal target group for the study was what the present research refers to as <u>Foreign-Born Returning Nationals</u>, those who were born in the United Kingdom (or the United States, Canada etc) and who have decided to make St Lucia their home. They might also be referred to as 'British or American St Lucians' or 'citizens by descent'. All those who have a St Lucian parent can claim nationality by descent. Another group are those who were born in the Caribbean, but who later travelled to the United Kingdom (or elsewhere) with their parents. If after ten years or more they

return to live in the Caribbean, they also qualify as returning nationals. In the present research, members of this group are described as <u>Young Returning Nationals</u>.

They are frequently individuals who return when their parents reach the age of retirement. A third, but smaller group comprises those who are married to a St Lucian national.

The research was carried out from October 1999 to February 2000, with the assistance of a grant from the British Academy. Work focussed on both Barbados and St Lucia, and the present paper deals with the latter. Formal discussions were held with senior civil servants within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St Lucia, and the Ministry gave the author formal research clearance. As already noted, the overall aim of the project was to provide the first ever socio-economic and demographic examination of this cohort of foreign-born and young returning nationals. The project sought to understand their motives for migrating, and their experiences on migration. What do they see as the advantages of such a move, and what adjustments do they feel that they have to make? Do they feel that they have started to be assimilated into St Lucian society, and what do they feel they can bring to the country to which they migrated?

This was the first comprehensive study of young returnees to the Caribbean region. The process of migration has major policy ramifications both for the countries of origin and destination, socially, culturally and economically. The processes relating to young returning nationals may be regarded as important new elements of globalisation and transnationalism (Robotham, 1998; Portes, 1999; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999; Vertovec, 1999).

Using background information provided by the Customs Department, and snowballing contacts thereafter, fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with foreign-born and young returning nationals in St Lucia. Some of the informants were contacted initially by telephone. Where it was the wish of the informant, they were interviewed over the telephone. Reflecting the issues that such returnees feel they face, a number preferred the relative anonymity provided by the telephone. However, in St Lucia the majority of informants were happy to be interviewed face to face. The informants were asked why they had left their country

of birth and why they had decided to settle in St Lucia. They were asked about their patterns of visits to the island, their migration histories, and those of their close family. The main focus was placed on discussing the adjustments they felt they had to make and what problems they faced. Their employment histories, and basic socio-economic and demographic circumstances were also considered.

The fact that foreign-born and young returning nationals are considering moving to St Lucia is a measure of the relative economic progress that the country has made over the last twenty years. Notwithstanding the problems experienced in the banana industry, St Lucia has made considerable progress as a tourist destination, and now has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of approximately $US 4,300 per capita. In particular, since 1980, cruiseship tourism has shown a substantial increase (Potter, 2001), and jobs are available in the tourist-oriented service sector.

The Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Foreign-Born and Young Returning Nationals Interviewed in St Lucia

Of those interviewed, the majority were males, amounting to eleven out of fifteen (Table 1). This was in direct contrast to the situation in Barbados, where female young returnees predominated. The majority of those interviewed were foreign-born, with 7 having been born in the UK, and one in Canada (Table 1). Six informants had been born in St Lucia and one in another Caribbean territory, but had subsequently been brought up in the UK. The majority of returnees had parents who were St Lucian, specifically amounting to 27 out of 30 biological parents (Table 1). One parent came from Guyana, another from Dominica, and one from China.

The foreign-born and young returnees ranged from 27 to 51 years of age at the time of interview. The mean age was 38.93 years, with a median of 39 years. Clearly, the returnees are second generation West Indians. Reflecting the average age in their early thirties, eight stated they had children. Further, the sample was divided almost equally between those who had partners and those that did not (Table 1).

Table 1 Basic Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Foreign-Born and Young Returning Nationals to St Lucia

(i) Sex:

Female	4	Male	11

(ii) Place of Birth:

United Kingdom	7	Other Caribbean	1
St Lucia	6	Canada	1

(iii) Parent's Place of Birth:

St Lucia	27	Guyana	1
Dominica	1	China	1

(iv) Age of Young Returning Nationals:

Range 27-51 years

Median	39 yrs	In their 20s	1
Mean	38.93 yrs	In their 30s	8
		In their 40s	4
		In their 50s	2

(v) Age on Returning to St Lucia:

Range 24-46 years

Median	35.50 yrs	In their 20s	10
Mean	34.93 yrs	In their 30s	12
		In their 40s	3

(vi) Period Lived in St Lucia since Return:

Range 0.17-10 years

Median	3.5 yrs	Over 8 years	4
Mean	3.94 yrs	4-5 years	3
		3-4 yrs	1
		2-3 yrs	1
		1-2 yrs	2
		Less than 1 year	4

(vii) Country of Domicile of Parents:

St Lucia	12	Deceased	2
United Kingdom	7	No data	9

(viii) Family Status of Young and Foreign-Born Returnees:

With partner	7	Partner from UK	1
Without partner	7	Partner from Barbados	4
Divorced	1	Not stated	2
No children	5		
1 child	4		
2 children	4		
No data	2		

(Source: author's survey 2000)

Of those with partners, four said their partners had been born in St Lucia, and one was married to a UK national.

The median age at which the informants had "returned to" St Lucia was 35.5 years, with a mean age of 34.93 years. At the time of interview, they had lived in St Lucia from less than a month to 10 years. The median duration was 3.5 years, with a mean of 3.94 years. The influence of first generation parents who had returned to St Lucia in attracting their offspring is implied by the fact that 12 out the total of 30 parents of the young returnees were living in St Lucia at the time of the interview (Table 1). Seven of the parents were still living in the UK, two were deceased and data were not to hand for nine other interviewees.

The occupations of the returnees at the time the interviews were conducted are listed in Table 2. The majority were in employment, with only one stating they were unemployed. Most of the males interviewed were in relatively skilled jobs, including a civil engineer, an assistant manager of a hotel, self-employed businessmen, car sales executives and the head of watersports at a prominent hotel. On the other hand, two were working as part-time barmen or waiters. The occupations of the four females interviewed are also listed in Table 2, and ranged from a secretary/personal assistant to a Manager in the public sector. As previously noted, one female reported she was unemployed at the time of interview.

Table 2 The Occupations of the Foreign-Born and Young Returning Nationals to St Lucia by Sex

Males:	Females:
Self-employed Businessman	Public sector Manager
Assistant Manager of a Hotel	Currently Unemployed
Part-time Barman	(qualified fashion-buyer)
Civil Engineer	Secretary/Personal Assistant
Self-employed Businessman	Hotel Office Manager
Barman/waiter	
Head of Watersports at a hotel	
Car sales Executive	
Car sales Executive	
Office Manager	
Self-employed businessman	

Reasons for Leaving the Country of Birth and for Migrating to St Lucia

As in the survey of Barbadian returnees (Potter, 2003), when asked why they had decided to migrate to St Lucia, the young returning nationals cited relatively few negative or "push-oriented" reasons for moving (Table 3).

Table 3 Reasons stated as to why the Young Returning Nationals had Decided to Leave the UK/USA or Canada

Reason stated	Number of Citations
No real negative reasons for leaving	4
Things bad for black people/racism	2
Never felt at home in the UK/US etc	1
Son's education	1
Wanted a change of lifestyle	1

Indeed, four informants specifically noted that they could not cite specific negative reasons for leaving, implying that they were attracted to St Lucia by positive factors. These informants commented:

"I had no problems in the UK"

"I really liked it there"

"I never experienced racism directly"

"No real negative reasons. I did not really experience racism in the UK. In fact, I miss England"

However, two respondents were noticeably more equivocal, arguing that things are bad for black people in the UK, and they specifically mentioned issues of racism.

Both of these respondents were males and both cited the activities of the National
Front (NF):

> "I had few direct problems. I am English, black English. I encountered racism.
> From every group, from the NF to 'mods' in Croydon"

> "Things were pretty shitty for blacks when I grew up, due to the NF and the
> like"

Another informant was more ambivalent about the situation, reporting that whilst he
was more sanguine about issues of racism, he was never fully comfortable in the UK:

> "I never felt fully at home in the UK. But racism was not the real issue. You
> sometimes got annoyed – you know, a tool used against you"

The only other push factor was mentioned by a mother who emphasized the need to
provide an appropriate education for her son. Another respondent observed that they
wanted a change in lifestyle.

**Table 4 Reasons stated as to why the Young Returning Nationals had Decided to
Live in St Lucia**

Reason stated	Number of Citations
Start up a business/potential for small businesses	7
Family here/due to family circumstances	6
Weather/climate	5
To improve quality/way of life	5
Open way of life/outdoors way of life	2
Beauty of the island	1
Slower pace of life	1
Better education for son	1
Purchased land	1

Table 4 lists the migratory 'pull' factors cited by the young returnees to St Lucia.

Clearly, the desire to start a small business was a critical motivation for many, along

with the feeling that in St Lucia this might be an achievable goal. This was cited by seven of the respondents and thereby came out in pole position. One informant commented:

> "I always intended to come back. There is a great potential here for small business, relative to the UK"

At the very least, the general feeling seemed to be that there was the chance of better things in the future. As one respondent summarised:-

> "I was struggling in the UK"

Family being in St Lucia (seven informants), plus the climate (five informants) were the next most important factors cited as promoting migration. But noticeably, a strong accent was also placed on enhancing the overall quality of life experienced ('to improve quality/way of life', open/out-doors way of life', 'beauty of the island', 'slower pace of life') (Table 4). Typical comments made by the foreign-born returnees included:

> "I feel freer in St Lucia"

> "Life here is more relaxed, there's no rat race"

> "I like the open way of life…the beach, open doors, popping in to see relatives"

One informant seemed to sum up the prevalent mood among the foreign-born and young returnees to St Lucia, when he balanced the overall quality of life against his pet hates:

> "St Lucia has lived up to expectations. Yes, there's politics, nepotism, frustrations due to my work, too much traffic and idiot drivers!"

The salient point highlighted by Tables 3 and 4 is that in general, the informants cited relatively few push factors in explaining their migration, although where such

factors were cited, they reflected issues related to racism. The overwhelming influence was attributed to the possibilities of starting up a business, and in the case of St Lucia, this was cited more frequently as a factor influencing relocation than the fact that parents and other family members were living on the island. In the parallel study carried out in Barbados, the fact that parents and other family were living in Barbados was more salient (Potter, 2003).

Overall Reactions with Regard to Adjustments to Living in St Lucia

The informants were asked if there were particular adjustments that they felt they had to make in settling into living in St Lucia. The range of adjustments cited by the respondents is indicated in Table 5. Having already explained the push factors that had led them to migrate, overall reactions related primarily to problems of adjustment. However, several positive reactions were cited. These included three informants who commented on the slow pace and laid back way of life in St Lucia. In addition, one informant mentioned adjusting to the weather and another specifically mentioned experiencing less hassle from the police in St Lucia (Table 5).

The most frequently cited adjustment among the young returnees was the operation of what is referred to as the colour-class system, associated with issues of racism in society. The difficulty experienced in making friendships with local St Lucians was the second most frequently cited issue of adjustment among the young returnees, followed by the 'laid back way of life/slow pace of life'. Problems relating to competition with members of the local indigenous population, along with issues of resentment, were also mentioned. Interestingly, the argument that an English or American accent marks returnees out was specifically mentioned by two of the informants. However, this was mentioned in a primarily positive context, suggesting that possessing such an accent bestowed specific advantages. This is in direct contrast to the results of the research in Barbados, where having an English accent was frequently cited as a major problem in the context of social relations, although the accent was seen as helpful in the context of work. The only other adjustments

Table 5 The Adjustments Foreign-Born and Young Returning Migrants to St Lucia felt that they had had to make

	Adjustment	Frequency of citation	
1	Colour-class system/racism in society	5	
2	Difficulty of making 'local' friends	4	
3	laid back way of life/slower pace of life	3	
4	Competition with locals/resentment	3	
5	Accent makes you stand out/gives an advantage	2	
6	Narrowmindedness of the people	2	
7	Poor quality of education	2	
8	Work ethic being different	2	
9	Being seen as an outsider/not St Lucian	1	
10	Low wages	1	
11	High land prices	1	
12	Expensive place to live	1	
13	Earnings lower	1	
14	Need to moderate views	1	
15	Large gender differences	1	
16	The weather	1	
17	People assuming you have money	1	
18	Lack of a middle class		1
19	Difficulties in relationships with local women	1	
20	Who you know in society being so important		1
21	Less hassle from the police in St Lucia	1	
22	Americanisation of society	1	
23	Dependency culture	1	
24	Problem of having an English accent	1	
25	Bosses not liking you exercising your rights	1	
26	Need to speak patois to be fully accepted	1	

(Source: author's survey, 2000)

mentioned by at least two of the respondents were what was referred to as 'the narrowmindedness of the people', the perceived poor quality of education, and inferred differences in work ethics between St Lucia and the UK/USA (Table 5).

Specific Issues of Adjustment

As might be expected, strong feelings were expressed by the informants in relation to several of these issues of adjustment. In an early review of return migration, Gmelch

(1980) noted that even retiree returnees who were originally raised in a territory often seemed to be poorly prepared for return, and frequently suffer what he referred to as 'reverse culture shock' in returning to the societies into which they were born. How much more of a problem then is this process for those who have never lived permanently in a country in which they are going to settle, but have only visited and heard about it via the stories and reminiscences of their parents?

In the account that is presented here, the eight most frequently mentioned issues, those gaining at least two citations in Table 5, are considered in turn. In this account, the narratives provided by the informants are drawn upon, in what is essentially a qualitative analysis of the return experience among citizens by descent. However, the issues discussed are presented in order from the most frequently mentioned to the least.

The Colour-class system and Racism in Society

In common with the rest of the post-colonial Caribbean, the continued operation of a strong colour-class system is openly acknowledged in St Lucia, whereby skin shade is frequently directly correlated to occupational standing and inferred social status. St Lucia has a mixed French and British colonial history, the island having changed hands between these two colonizing powers as many as 14 times. There has been a greater incidence of miscegenation, leading to a more racially diverse population than is found in Barbados, for example.

The interviews indicated that the operation of some facets of such racial distinction and labelling in St Lucia had come as something of a shock to several of the young returnees. Thus, one respondent who was living on the island, but who had been moving backwards and forwards in a peripatetic manner noted with some surprise how:

> "The racism thing is bad here. It's this that keeps me away from moving here permanently"

Another talked about the operational expression of this at work, whereby, when visiting his office, some St Lucians would tend to discount his presence, presumably because of his dark skin:

> "Some St Lucians ignore me at work. They ask for my partners who are white, and complain about 'nobody' being around!"

Interestingly, two of the informants, in relating their experiences vis a vis race in St Lucia directly mentioned the operation of the colour-class system:

> "There is a lot of racism in St Lucia – black and white judged by the colour-class system"

> "There's an in-built class system in the islands: a colour-class system…racialism is wherever you go"

But there was a further interesting turn on this. One light-skinned foreign-born returnee noted how whilst he had been seen as black in the UK, locally in St Lucia he was regarded as white, and this labelling was the source of some annoyance to him:

> "There is racism here. I am seen as white in St Lucia. Local people refer to 'you people'. That really bugs me!"

Perhaps the most important interpretation is that the young returnees become acutely aware of the existence and the operation of the colour class system in the Caribbean region, thus dispelling any simple notion that class alone has displaced the combined influence of colour-class.

Difficulties in Making Local Friends

Four of the informants emphasized what they regarded as the problem they were having making friends with indigenous St Lucians. One reported that most of his friends were drawn from those who had migrated from the UK and the same individual implied that a lack of local identity was a fundamental obstacle:

> "Most of my friends are from the UK. I tried to be St Lucian for the first year, but it just did not work"

The feeling that some local St Lucians regarded young returnees, like older returnees, as relatively affluent, and the linked feeling that this might lead to exploitation was clearly expressed by one individual:

> "I have made a few friends, but it isn't easy. It is difficult to be friendly with local St Lucians. I made some local friends but they wanted to use me. If you are from England, they think you are rich…They think you feel you are better than them. They give you a real hard time"

One female interviwee emphasised that she found it particularly difficult to make female friends in St Lucia, and there appeared to be the suggestion that this reflected aspects of sexual rivalry:

> "I do not have St Lucian female friends. It's their way of thinking. They are insecure and there is much narrowmindedness. If you are friendly with a man, people immediately think something's going on. I keep myself to myself…the attitude is different"

In the case of the interviews carried out in Barbados, difficulties of making friends were cited by some 76 per cent of the respondents. In particular, in the case of Barbados there was a strong gender component in that it was female informants who reported extreme difficulties in making local female friends. So, although expressed in very similar terms by this individual, this was far less prevalent in the case of St Lucia. Indeed, one respondent specifically commented on the welcoming nature of St Lucians and implied the operation of reciprocity:

> "A lot of the locals are very nice. They are happy to welcome you. You are going to give back"

The "Laid Back" Way of Life
Another similarity with the Barbadian sample was the feeling that it had been necessary to adjust to the generally slow and laid back pace of life experienced in St Lucia. In the case of Barbados, this was also the third most frequently cited issue of adjustment. Also, as in the case of Barbados, whilst at the outset some found the slow pace of life a difficult adjustment:

"Can I live in such a laid back society?"

Others had clearly come to terms with this, and saw it as one of the principal reasons why they wished to live in St Lucia:

"In the beginning, I found it a long-winded process. As I slowly pieced together what was happening, I accepted things on their grounds and the laid back way of doing things"

Competition and Feelings of Resentment

As already noted, in the Barbados research, having an English accent and identity was seen as being connected with a number of problems. In the interviews carried out in St Lucia, the issue of being English and a degree of anti-English feeling towards the foreign-born returnees only emerged when discussing the world of work. Thus, one informant emphasized that:

"There is anti-English feeling. When they see the English come and work, they are resented"

This connected to the wider issue of rivalry in the work place, and for at least one respondent connected with issues relating to differences in work ethics between employees in St Lucia and the UK:

"Some worry we are going to take their jobs. People go out of their way to give you stick…Some would not be employed in the UK"

Yet another young returnee pointed to what he clearly saw as the divisive nature of competition between the indigenous population and returnees, suggesting that on occasion people are inclined to attribute success to illegal activities:

"Competition can bring things to a head: we can be our own worst enemies. If you do well, some ask how: was it through drugs?"

Issues relating to Accent

The fifth issue raised by the interviewees, which related to the fact that an English accent serves to make returnees stand out from the crowd, proved to be of some interest. The salient point was that most of those who mentioned their English accent argued that in St Lucia this posed no problem. Indeed, several informants saw this as a distinct advantage:

> "You can get served faster in shops if you have a light skin and accent"
> "With an English accent you can get in anywhere. The accent makes you sound like a tourist"

> "English people can go into all the hotels, because of their accent. You can be a tourist and a local at the same time!"

One young returnee who had been brought up in Canada even commented on the fact that her accent was sometimes confused for an English one, and that this was frequently commented on favourably:

> "They say, 'what a nice accent – is it British'?"

Such reactions to an English accent were in contrast to those expressed in Barbados, where although it was accepted that this might bestow certain advantages in the job market, it was generally a problem within the realm of social relations.

One informant pointed to what he saw as a subtle nuance relating to the possession of a strong regional accent with the class connotations associated with this, in suggesting that he could make the transition from a St Lucian to an English accent:

> "I can slip from St Lucian to English with ease. But a strong London accent might be a problem"

Another informant suggested that whilst there might be some teasing regarding his accent, that he found it easy enough to turn a blind eye to this:

> "If people do take the mickey, they are people I don't want to know"

Just as in the general social context there appeared to be a somewhat more positive view about an English accent in St Lucia, compared with Barbados, so two respondents seemed to be arguing against the proviso drawn in the context of Barbados that having an English accent might bestow advantages in the workplace. In this connection it was contended that:

> "St Lucian employers will pass you up due to your English accent, especially in Government"

Yet another respondent seemed to be widening this issue in suggesting that her former employee had said that he would not hire people hailing from the UK in the future as a direct result of their tendency to take action in the workplace:

> "My ex-boss said he would never employ another English person. He said this because English people exercise their rights"

Although expressed primarily in relation to the issues of accent, the view expressed points a finger at the existence of macho bosses, an allegation also encountered in the Barbados pilot study.

The "Narrowmindedness" of the People

Two of the respondents argued that they had to adjust to what they referred to as the 'narrowmindedness' of the local population. This accusation related mainly to those members of the indigenous population who had not traveled beyond the island. Typical was one informant who argued that:

> "Local people are not used to discussing big issues. And if you disagree, people take it personally"

The Caribbean island are frequently charcterised by their essentially insular nature, and so such attribution of parochialism is perhaps only to be expected. One well-connected female returnee stressed how she had been forced to moderate her views since living in St Lucia. In the metropolitan society in which she had lived before she had actively campaigned in respect of gender issues. The inference was that her well-connected family had reminded her not to 'rock the boat', as it were. She noted that gender differences are marked and summarized these as "women in the kitchen, men on the terrace".

Another comment was that:

"There is a 1950s culture here"

By which it was meant that issues such as homosexuality were as hush-hush in today's St Lucia as they had been in the Britain of fifty years or more ago.

Poor Quality of Education

Two of the respondents were quick to stress that whilst state education up to the age of eleven was generally adequate in St Lucia, they regarded the situation in respect of secondary education to be far from acceptable. In discussing her English-St Lucian friends who had returned to the United Kingdom, a female informant specifically stated how:

"Most have gone back for schooling"

Indeed, this particular mother was at the time of the survey actively considering moving to Martinique as part of the Francophone Caribbean, where she clearly felt that her children would receive a better education. The fact that her sister was currently living in Martinique encouraged her to consider taking this step.

A young returning St Lucian who had studied to degree level in the United Kingdom was generally condemnatory regarding the state of the education system in St Lucia, in commenting that:

"Education is the big problem in St Lucia. The quality of teaching is poor, and bilingualism is a big problem. The average St Lucian is poor at English. And there is a shortage of vocational training"

The idea that secondary school education was an issue that was promoting re-return and onward migratory movements was of particular interest. In the case of Barbados, what was generally perceived to be the excellent education system was regarded as one of the factors promoting return, as well as serving to retain those who had returned. This was an interesting difference.

Differences in Work Ethic

The argument that there are marked differences in the general work ethic revealed in the UK and St Lucia was mentioned above in relation to revealed Britishness via accent. Essentially those trained in England were likely to see a job through to completion and would routinely report back on progress to line managers, without the latter having to request such information. It was argued that in the St Lucia workplace that this was rarely something that happened spontaneously. As a result, it was argued that citizens by descent were more likely to be given a larger work load than their indigenous colleagues. One respondent summarily concluded that:

"The work ethic is not the same here"

The Experience of Return: Wider Issues and Theoretical Implications

Despite the specific adjustments cited by those interviewed, on balance, the members of the sample of young returnees to St Lucia seemed to be experiencing fewer problems than those in Barbados. Thus, while making new friends was considered as the predominant problem among the sample of Bajan foreign-born returnees (Potter, 2003), this issue occupied second position among those in St Lucia. In the case of the Bajan sample issues relating to accent and language for those of English origin occupied second place. By contrast, the possession of an English accent was seen in a more positive manner in the context of St Lucia. In Barbados, the association of

English returnees with 'madness' was a strong theme (Potter, 2003). But this did not emerge in any way among the foreign-born St Lucians. There were similarities among both the St Lucian and Barbadian returning national samples in that they had to adjust to the slower and more relaxed way of life, faced competition and some resentment in respect of the job market and felt that they suffered from the relative insularity and parochialism of the society into which they had migrated. By far and away the most salient set of issues that the St Lucian citizens by descent felt they had to face involved the operation of the colour-class system and what they perceived to be racism in society. A graphical summary of the results of the research is provided in Figure 1.

What appeared to be a somewhat more positive experience of return was emphasized by the fact that a number of those interviewed referred to what they regarded as the basically tolerant nature of St Lucians and St Lucian society in general. Typical comments summarizing this were:

"I think St Lucians are very tolerant. They are good natured people"

"St Lucia is a very tolerant society"

"I have never been refused help"

UK / Canada / USA;
20s / 30s / 40s / 50s → Average 35yrs → 4yrs since return
Half have partner; over half have children;
Many have parents in St Lucia (40 percent)
♂ MORE MALES THAN FEMALES ♀

♂ OFTEN IN BUSINESS OR SERVICES RELATED TO TOURISM

MAINLY SECRETARIAL OR MANAGERIAL ♀

FEW NEGATIVE REASONS FOR LEAVING UK / CANADA:
But: Things bad for Black people / Racism / Education of son

Potential for starting a small business

Family living in St Lucia

Weather / Climate

Better Quality of life / Way of life

Outdoor / Open way of life

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT/ACCULTURATION

HOW MANY RETURN TO UK / CANADA etc?
One informant argued that a high percentage return to the UK after 2 - 3 years - especially for secondary education

Colour - class system / racism in society

Difficulty of making local friends

Slower pace of life

Accent makes you stand out / gives advantage

Narrowmindedness of the people

Competition with local people / resentment

Poor quality of education

Differences in work ethic

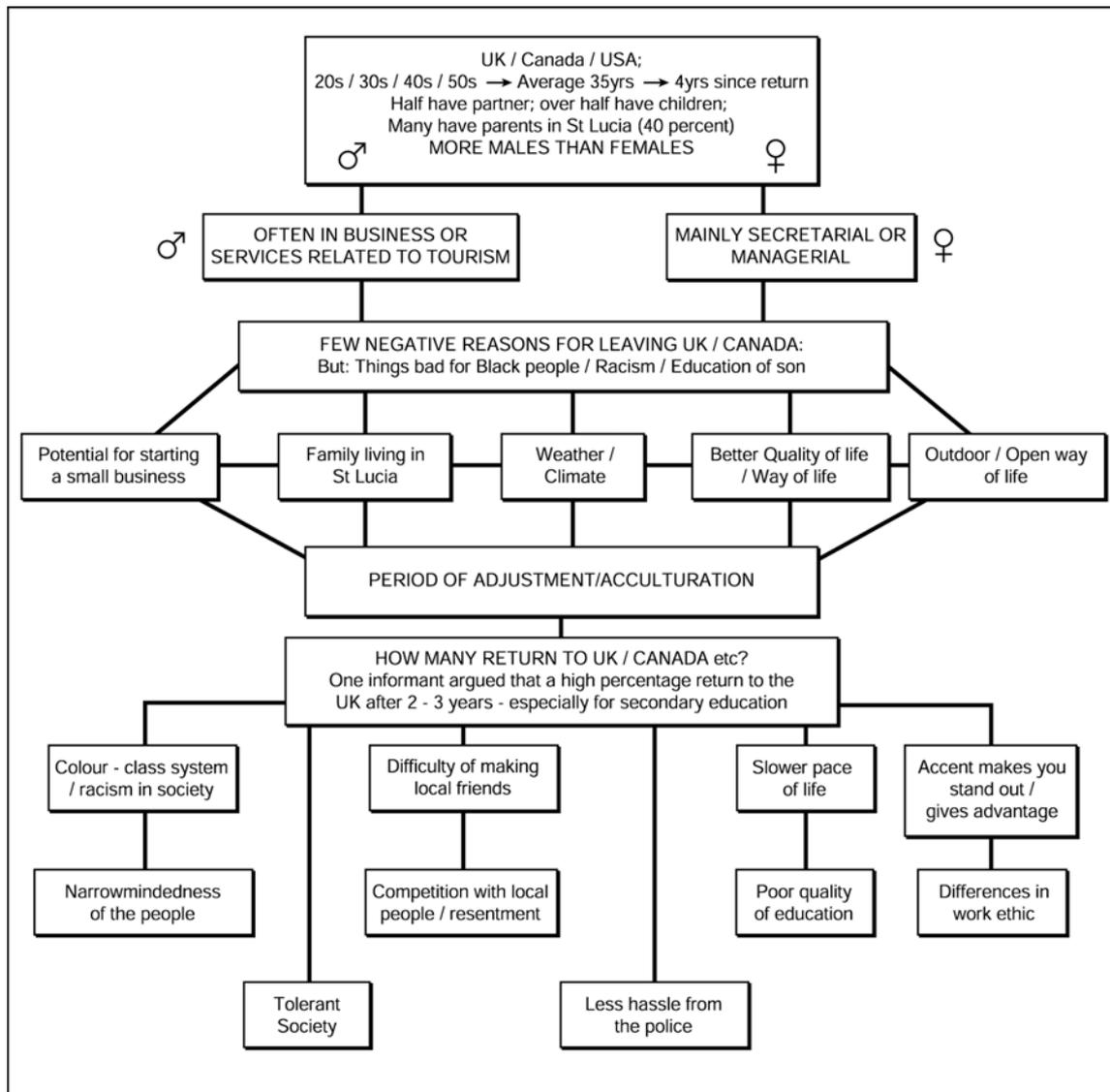Tolerant Society

Less hassle from the police

Figure 1 A graphical summary of the findings concerning young returning nationals to St Lucia

As exemplified in the main analysis, issues of national identity seemed to be less marked in the case of the St Lucian citizens by descent, who generally felt that they could experience the best of both worlds, effectively being local by virtue of being black, but at the same time tourists who could enter spaces designated as elite by virtue of their accent. In general, therefore, over and above the specific issues of adjustment mentioned by the informants, feelings of fitting in with the society were expressed, especially it seemed for the male members of the sample:

"I get less hassle from the police in St Lucia"

"You stand out, but it does not matter"

Such feelings even gave rise to one expression of St Lucian national identity among the respondents, something that most certainly did not occur in the Barbadian case study (Potter, 2003). In the specific quote, elements of a dual national identity are emphasized once again:

"I see myself more as a St Lucian. But I still want to be English too"

Saliently, one informant stressed how much relatives had served to help as part of the process of adjustment:

"My relatives are very supportive, without wanting anything in return"

Again, this runs somewhat counter to the experiences of some foreign-born returnees in Barbados, where it was stated that after the initial 'honeymoon' period there had been little contact with relatives other than parents. Some even commented that once the barrels were unpacked and empty that their Bajan relatives were no longer interested in them.

Telling positive comments about the process of adjustment were made by two of the interviewees:

"I feel on equal terms with my surroundings. I am equal here"

"Coming here is a birthright"

On the basis of the two exploratory studies of foreign-born returnees carried out in St Lucia and Barbados, therefore, it certainly appeared that the St Lucian returnees appeared to encounter less severe obstacles to their integration within society. On the other hand, as the main analysis has shown, there were issues that the foreign-born returnees had to face. But for several informants, this seemed to evoke a strong pragmatism in dealing with the day-to-day realities of their lives:

"I focus on things other than those that are missing"

"I came with no illusions. I believe you can overcome problems, but I can't change St Lucia. You have to live with the system"

The young and foreign-born returnees to St Lucia were aware that they had to face a range of difficulties and issues within St Lucian society. One issue mentioned was nepotism. Typical comments were:

"Who you know is most important"

"Unfortunately my son does not have a name"

In the Barbados research, the Amercianisation of society was a major issue played out in the analysis of Barbadian foreign-born returnees. However, this was specifically mentioned by only one of the St Lucian sample members:

"American colonialism has replaced UK colonialism"

Another respondent in stressing how difficult he found it to meet a St Lucian girlfriend made the following comment:

"How deep is your pocket, that's the issue. Women here want the lifestyle money can buy. If they can't get it, they will go to the next one"

But the strongest warning came from one interviewee who felt that the bottom had fallen out of the property market for foreign-born returnees from the UK. Specifically, he warned that:

"You are now fighting with the US Dollar. I now advise friends from home not to come out. If they turn up with £50,000 they're just not going to be able to buy anything"

The same informant hazarded that 90 per cent of those he knew who had come to St Lucia, had re-returned to the UK, commenting that:

"They last for two or three years, then most go back"

However, as yet, no research has looked systematically at data relating to issues such as the incidence of re-return to the UK/USA. The current project being carried out by Potter and Phillips (2002) and funded by The Leverhulme Trust is specifically looking at these issues of long-term adjustment and possible re-return to metropolitan centers.

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