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DISTANT CLOSE TIES: JAMAICAN IMMIGRANTS, MEDIATED

COMMUNICATION, AND THE PRIMACY OF VOICE

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Distant strong ties: Jamaican immigrants, mediated communication, and the primacy of

voice

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Jamaican immigrants in New York City and returned migrants in Jamaica have a wide

array of information and communication technologies that they can deploy to

communicate with their close ties overseas. Close ties were self-defined were variously

defined as kin and non-kin, and their communication was frequent, intense, and enduring.

Telephonic communication was used most frequently to meet these individuals' needs for

synchronicity, spontaneity, vocal cues, and immediate turn-taking. Such reliance on the

telephone reinforced their communicative goals for relational communication such as

phatic, routine conversations, intimate romantic and platonic exchanges, and conflict

enactment and resolution. Jamaican immigrants and non-immigrants alike developed

strategies to cope with separation from their close ties by exercising emotional

pragmatism and emotional resiliency. They also engaged in acts of commitment and

reciprocity to support their communicative goals, to reaffirm their bonds with each other,

to exchange material resources, as they negotiated the distance between them.

As a qualitative thematic analysis, this research focuses on two countries as research sites: the U.S.A. and Jamaica. It seeks to discover the ways in which Jamaican returned migrants in Jamaica and Jamaican immigrants in New York City communicate with their close ties overseas, and the information and communication technologies they engage to do so. This study employed communication ecology (Ball-Rokeach, 1998) as its theoretical framework to inform this two-country study of communicative goals and ICT choices. This qualitative study arranged respondents in pairs and interviewed each partner. Face-to-face interviews, using purposive snowball samples inform the findings of this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

I chose to conduct research on migrants' uses of information technology to maintain close ties because immigration is firmly rooted in my family's history. My maternal and paternal family members emigrated from Jamaica to Panama, Cuba, and New York City in the early 1900s. All of my immediate family migrated to the U.S.A. between the 1960s and 1980s, and my son and I migrated to New York City in 1998.

As I reflected on these cross-generational experiences, I was struck by how migration from the Caribbean has presented the migrants in my own family with tremendous challenges with regard to maintaining their personal networks at a distance. These networks were critical as they sought to maintain emotional support and financial and material aid while encountering the challenges of a new environment. Such personal networks existed, and were maintained after migrants left the Caribbean, but this was an extremely difficult endeavor. Contact between migrants and their social networks in their countries of origin consisted of slow communication via letters and packages transported by sail, and later by steamships, within and between the Caribbean, Central America, and the United States (Senior, 2014).

I was also inspired by Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) study of the letters of Polish immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1910. This study was the first exploration of how immigrants maintained cross-border social ties with their sending communities. With these historical precedents in place, this dissertation explores in greater depth how such cross-border communication between immigrants and their close ties continues to operate in the context of 21st century innovations in information and communication technologies.

DEDICATION

To my paternal grandfather Charles McKinley Stewart, carpenter, born in Dry Harbour, St. Ann parish, Jamaica, who arrived in New York City on the "Danube" at Ellis Island, at age 29 on April 30, 1917; to my maternal grandmother Sara May Aarons, née Smart, dressmaker, born in Preston, Cuba, who arrived in New York City on the "Munargo" at Ellis Island, at age 25 on October 31, 1922. They started the journey. And to my son Noel Lancelot Titus, who arrived in New York at John Fitzgerald Kennedy International Airport on January 10, 1998, at age six, who continues on the path.

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Introduction

In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which people engage with communication media and information technology over distance. This study is of mediated communication in the context of cross-border communication, and how migrants are using information and communication technologies to stay connected to their personal and social networks in their sending countries.

In this dissertation, I am primarily concerned with how new information and communication technologies (ICTs) are implicated in migrant communication, but consider these alongside more traditional forms of long-distance contact that the literature have established as being central to maintaining close ties over time. By new ICTs, I refer to mobile phones, email, Voice Over Internet Protocols (e.g., Skype), texting, and online chat platforms. Landline phones continue to be important ICTs for migrants (Baldassar, 2007a, 2007b; Dreby, 2010). Furthermore, while financial remittances and mailed material objects are not ICTs in the traditional sense, material items such as money transfers, clothing, food, and household goods exchanged across borders convey messages of strong emotional and symbolic importance. Remittances and material objects are both signifiers of emotional content and tactile demonstrations of devotion to family and close non-kin ties (Baldassar, 2008).

The introduction of new ICTs has dramatically compressed this landscape of migrant connection in terms of time and space (Wajcman, 2008). The slow passage of cross-border communication, which occurred mainly through mailed letters at the turn of the last century, has been transformed by these new ICTs. Such compression has

accelerated the speed, intensity, and frequency of communication across borders, thereby fundamentally altering the quality of those communication experiences.

Systemic and structural circumstances in migrants' home countries have long motivated them to seek economic opportunities elsewhere (Carnegie, 1987; Levitt & Nadya Jaworsky, 2007; Thomas-Hope, 2006). While migrants leave loved ones behind, they enact creative and determined communicative behaviors to maintain their close ties even over long distances. Today, migrants can pick and choose from a broader range of available ICTs than has been available to prior generations, as tools for maintaining ongoing social contact with those who are important to them, even if they are not physically co-present.

Macro-level factors that influence migration are not the direct focus of this dissertation.[1] However, these factors include forces of globalization, such as greater economic activity in developed world regions, and its associated demands for cheap labor from poorer regions. These factors form part of global, vertically integrated production systems[2], and are integral to the everyday decisions that individuals make to leave their home countries and seek better lives elsewhere. Immigrants work to contain the effects of these structural forces of globalization—labor force demands and insufficient economic opportunities at home by retaining control of their personal communication networks.

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[1] International labor force movements are an immense subject. However, for cogent and comprehensive summaries, see Massey (2003) and Cohen's (1995) detailed survey of global migration.
[2] Globalization has often been defined as an extension of colonialism. For a fulsome explication of the intersection between developed regions, often former colonial powers, and the systemic economic dependency of poorer countries, often former colonies, see Beckford (1972), and for a Marxist interpretation of this symbiotic relationship, see Rodney (1972).

This dissertation focuses on Jamaican migrants who have returned to Jamaica permanently, and others living in New York City. There are also a small number of Jamaican transmigrants in the study, who routinely move between the two countries, as opposed to emigrating once or returning to their place of origin after a long sojourn abroad. Jamaican migration patterns are explained more fully in the Appendix.

Objectives of the Study

Given this study's focus on migrants living in Jamaica and New York City, and specifically, on the close ties that they attempt to maintain between these two locations, this research project seeks to uncover the reasons that motivate respondents' communication patterns with their close ties, as they define these reasons. These reasons, as I will discuss, range from social and emotional to instrumental goals, with the associated rituals for maintaining intimacy and closeness by which this communication is enacted. Maintaining such overseas connections is difficult, and requires ongoing effort and will on the part of respondents.

The Broad Questions Being Addressed

This study investigates why maintaining close relationships continues to be so important to migrants, and the motivations behind their tie maintenance strategies. The content of these communicative exchanges is also explored to assess the range of topics and issues shared—and not shared—across borders. There may be topics of great significance, such as conflict or grief, which are difficult to articulate from a distance. Conversely, distance can potentially be efficacious when such difficult matters are shared. This study considers how respondents use ICTs to maintain these connections,

assesses the range of these ICTs that they use and do not use to do so, and investigates how the affordances of these ICTs relate to respondents' ICT preferences.

This project also considers the extent to which respondents' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, educational level, occupation, presumed income, marital and visa status influence, enhance or limit their efforts to maintain their close communicative ties. These demographic variables are also assessed insofar as they play a role in respondents' ICT choices and preferences.

As this study is conducted in two countries, it also determines the extent to which the country respondents live in, and their particular social and cultural context, constrain or enable the ICT choices they make to maintain their close ties.

Importance of these Questions

Maintaining close social ties across national borders is still difficult, despite the plethora of new ICTs and their improved affordances. This study investigates how mediated communication within the landscape of migrant connections plays a critical role in how migrants negotiate their lives across two countries and balance binary identities (Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007). One identity is that of the immigrant, and mediated communication is a way for them to maintain their social and emotional equilibrium as part of their lives in the host country. The other identity is that of the potential returnee. Immigrants use mediated communication with close ties back home to put financial or material plans in place in order to re-create their lives in the home country, to which they plan, or hope, to return.

Conducting research in two countries makes it possible to compare their respective ICT infrastructures, and provides rich insights into how varying infrastructures

enable or impede transnational social connections. Such cross-country comparisons are rare, and can shed light on how the relationship between the ICT infrastructure in each country and how users navigate such systems may engender a new hybrid ICT system. Migrants and their close ties may appropriate and then mutually reconstitute the ICT infrastructure in each country, to make them better able to meet their respective communication goals.

The Focus on Close Ties

This study looks at what individuals separated by borders are doing with mediated communication, and how they have appropriated ICTs and the affordances that work best for them as resources to pursue their social and relational goals (O'Sullivan, 2000). As a result, I have focused this study on close or intimate ties, rather than weak or distant ones. Closeness and intimacy are defined in both physical and emotional senses, as constituting the building or maintenance of close connections between people (Jamieson, 2011). The quality of these close or intimate connections refers to the ways by which these sentiments are enacted and experienced between individuals. Close ties can be kin or non-kin, romantic or platonic connections.

Jamaica's culture of migration results in the continuous dispersal of individuals with intimate or close ties across borders. Out of a total population of 2.7 million, it is estimated that an additional one million Jamaicans live outside the country (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013). The active and ongoing social relations between a home country and a diaspora one-third the size of its population merits systematic scholarly attention.

Close ties play a crucial function in maintaining social connectivity, emotional support, and help to stave off alienation and depression, especially in migration contexts (Fortunati, Perierra, & Vincent, 2013; Ros, 2010). Therefore, close ties demonstrate the rich potential of mediated communication channels in reinforcing long-distance social networks. Whereas weak ties provide individuals with bridging capital, assist in finding jobs, and reduce social fragmentation (Pfeffer & Parra, 2009; Putnam, 2000; Sanders, Nee, & Semau, 2002), close ties provide the bonding capital not available elsewhere (Baym, 2010).

Close or intimate ties are much rarer than weak ones, and most interpersonal relationships consist of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Close ties encourage frequent and intimate contact, are voluntary, mutually reciprocal, are supportive of each partner's needs, and endure over the long-term (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Given this dissertation's research population, and the two country research design, weak or distant ties as a form of bridging capital would be less likely to endure over time than close bonding ties.

Close or intimate ties in a Caribbean and Jamaican context are more broadly defined than would be the case in Eurocentric terms. Close ties include a wider array of kin and non-kin relationships that are similar to formations that have been documented in lower-income African American communities (Stack, 1974, Stack & Burton, 1993), a population that shares a similar history of transatlantic migration—albeit coerced—with Caribbean immigrants to North America. Jamaican household structures, like Caribbean households more generally, are highly complex, with a dense interweaving of multigenerational household members living together or in close proximity.

In her seminal work, Edith Clarke's 1957 study of Jamaican life identified a myriad of household formations. These ranged from female-headed households, whether mother or grandmother, to other female relatives, close friends or "godmothers" as parental figures, to a minority of households with fathers as the head. Non-kin ties were established with informal child fostering, a common practice in both rural and urban areas, where older relatives "adopted" a niece or nephew, or a child not related to them, whose biological parent(s) were in dire financial need or had abandoned the child (Clarke, 1957). Blended families were common, as either spouse would bring children into the household from previous relationships, and raise these children with other siblings of the primary union (Clarke, 1957). These family practices that Clarke identified over 50 years ago are still evident today, and establish the wide array of close ties that permeate Caribbean communities from which migrants originate.

How This Study Differs from Prior Research

When most of the prior studies of mediated communication across borders were conducted, mobile use and mobile Internet service were not yet being widely used (Dreby, 2010; Horst & Miller 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2012). The current study contributes to filling this important gap by responding to Donner and Bezuidenhoudt's (2013) argument that researchers should acknowledge the mobile-centric Internet use in developing countries by refraining from privileging PCs as the default pathway for Internet access (p. 94).

This is certainly the case in Jamaica, where PC and landline Internet use are still scarce and expensive, but data-enabled phones are facilitating affordable WiFi Internet

access, as part of the "fragmentation of media platforms, affordances and contexts" (Donner & Bezuidenhoudt, p. 83).

Two of the most comprehensive studies of cross-border mediated communication to date are Madianou and Miller's (2012) examination of Filipino parents in the U.K., and their children left behind, and Dreby's (2010) research on Mexican migrant parents in the U.S. parenting their children in Mexico. As the most recent of these studies, Madianou and Miller's (2012) study is a valuable point of comparison for this dissertation. Between 2007 and 2010, these researchers interviewed 106 respondents in the Philippines and the U.K., out of whom they were able to pair 20 Filipino mothers and their children. The types of media channels that their respondents used initially included letters, audio cassettes, and expensive landline telephone calls, and later, emails and mobile phone calls, as these last two channels became more widespread towards the end of their fieldwork.

The focus of my dissertation is similar to Madianou and Miller's (2012) work, as it explores intense and repeated mediated communication practices between respondents in two countries with long and active migration histories. My study also concentrates on paired respondents who are close to one another and some share kin-ties, as was the case with the Philippines/U.K. study. Unlike Madianou and Miller (2012, this study does not focus on parent/dependent child relationships, but looks beyond these to a wider array of interpersonal relationships between adults who are both kin and non-kin. This wider focus is a valuable contribution as, whereas kin and non-kin relationships may share similar communicative patterns, such relationships demonstrate differences regarding

message content, and varying levels of emotional intensity that may not be captured in kin pairs.

Horst and Miller's (2005; 2006) work on mobile phone use in Jamaica established a baseline for mediated communication use within that country, and between Jamaicans and their overseas connections. This dissertation extends Horst and Miller's (2005; 2006) work by focusing not only on mobile phone usage as a tool for social interaction, surveillance, and emotional support, but considers this as part of a wider array of ICT options that are used by individuals separated across borders. In moving beyond long-distance parenting and elder care, and the social dynamics of mobile phones, this dissertation adds to existing work on mediated communication by presenting another two country study with a broader array of life experiences enacted in mediated communicative space.

The Research Sites and Rationale for an ICT-focused Study

This is a study of migrants using mediated communication to maintain connections with their close ties across borders. As the respondents in this study were primarily migrants living in two countries, and separated from each other for extended periods, they had little opportunity to interact face-to-face with their close ties. However, despite this predominance of mediated communication space, these interactions were still effective and meaningful in the eyes of my respondents. The distinction between mediated and interpersonal communication and the off-line versus on-line worlds has become less rigid; Baym (2010) argues that the binary perspective on mediated communication and face-to-face interaction should be reframed.

Mediated communication can no longer be seen as impoverished vis-à-vis face-to-face interaction. This perspective ignores other factors that come into play in mediated communication such as individuals' prior knowledge of ICTs and each other, the nature of their relationships, and whether they are face-to-face rarely, or intermittently (Baym, 2010). Mediated interaction has become "a new and eclectic mixed modality" (Baym, 2010, p. 51), combining elements of face-to-face communication and writing, rather than as an inferior second to co-present interaction.

Jamaica. Jamaica is a compelling setting for the study of immigrants and how they use ICTs in their communicative practices, as ICT use, especially mobile phone use and texting, are well established in that country. Jamaica differs from other countries where studies have been done on mobile phone use across borders (including the Philippines and Mexico), as it has one of the highest mobile phone penetration rates worldwide, with far more mobile phone than landline subscribers. Internet connectivity has become widespread via a mobile-centric rather than a landline route.[3]

Jamaica's diaspora is primarily located within North America and the U.K., as a result of the Caribbean's pronounced labor mobility (Beckford, 1972; Chamberlain, 1998). This country has a long, unique, and entrenched tradition of migration, both within the Caribbean, and between Jamaica, North America and the U.K., dating back to the late 19th century (Bauer & Thompson, 2006; Chamberlain, 1997, 1998, 2006; Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004; Foner, 1998; Thomas-Hope, 2002, 2006). The

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[3] In 2013, the most recent year for which data are available, mobile phone penetration in Jamaica was 102 per 100 individuals, and 37.8% of Jamaicans were using the Internet (International Communications Union (2014). Internet penetration has lagged behind mobile phone access, due to systemic landline infrastructure constraints and the economic insecurity of potential subscribers. In 2010, the leading Jamaican mobile phone distributor Digicel introduced an inexpensive, portable wireless modem for households without landline telephones, and in 2014, introduced a 4G service on their pre and postpaid mobile phones.

Caribbean generally and Jamaica in particular have been more deeply and continuously affected by migration than any other world region (Foner, 2005), and scholars have largely neglected these unique circumstances (Urry, 2007).

Jamaica, like much of the Caribbean, has long been characterized by ongoing labor force migration. Given the systemic economic constraints following colonialism—that still persist today—migration from Jamaica has been a safety valve for the country since the late 19th century (Carnegie, 1987; Marshall 1987; Plaza & Henry, 2006). Its black majority has sought economic opportunities outside the country, either in the wider Caribbean, or further afield (Williams, 1984).

Jamaican migrants in the U.S. are concentrated in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Florida (Crowder, 1999; Foner, 2000; Kasinitz, 1992; U.S. 2010 Census; Vickerman, 2002; Waters, 1999). Compared with other Caribbean and Central American-origin groups, Jamaican migrants have the highest levels of U.S. citizenship, at 61% followed by other Caribbean countries (58%); Cuba (56%); Haiti (50%); Dominican Republic (48%); Mexico (23%) and Honduras (21%) (Acosta & de la Cruz, 2011). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the U.S. population born in Jamaica was approximately 660,000, or 18% of the Caribbean total, a proportion exceeded only by Cuban- and Dominican-origin migrants (Acosta & de la Cruz, 2011). Kasinitz (1992) claims that the number of Jamaican-born Americans may actually be as high as 800,000 to one million, due to the large number of undocumented Jamaicans in the U.S.A. The Jamaican diaspora spans Canada and Britain as well (Foner, 2005).

New York City. This location was selected for strategic reasons. New York City has been the major migration destination for Caribbean and Jamaica immigrants for over

a century (Crowder & Tedrow, 2001; Kasinitz, 1992; Waters, 1999). The city still attracts a large percentage of immigrants to the U.S. (Foner, 2005). The region has a large Jamaican immigrant community and so respondents who maintained close ties with people in Jamaica could be easily located.

Migration networks between New York City and Jamaica are extensive, and doing research in both countries was a workable strategy. Jamaican immigrants in New York City can be found in distinct, residential enclaves either within larger black neighborhoods, or in discrete West Indian pockets. As a Jamaican by birth, and an immigrant to New York City, I am intimately connected to both research settings and the issues being studied. Therefore, gaining entry into this study population and securing their trust were informed by my familiarity with their life experiences, and the cultural and residential dynamics of their lives.

An Innovative Methodology

Interviewing respondents on both sides of international communication exchanges between close ties presents a more credible and complete picture of how long-distance communication is really enacted. I began my fieldwork by conducting interviews with Jamaican immigrants who have returned to Jamaica and with Jamaican immigrants living in New York City. I then conducted interviews with the close ties of both of these groups. This meant interviewing close ties who were either immigrants living in New York or who were non–migrants who had always lived in Jamaica.

While there is much scholarship on Caribbean migration (see Appendix B), the lived experiences of Caribbean migrants and how they enact cross-border communication in practice have not been examined in detail. This study proposes to fill a gap by

exploring how Jamaican migrants are (re)constructing their communicative behaviors to make, maintain, and negotiate their close relationships. Furthermore, this research contributes to a better understanding of the extent to which communication across borders is being enhanced or undermined by new systems of networked computers and mobile media platforms. The focus is on ICTs in a broad sense, and how they are implicated in these tie maintenance strategies.

Overview of Dissertation

This Introduction has provided the rationale for the mediated communication study I conducted in Jamaica and the U.S. Jamaican migrants have been selected as the study focus because of the country's long migration history which has resulted in a wide geographical dispersal of its population. Such dispersal is fertile ground to investigate mediated communication as an ongoing and permanent feature of cross-border relations. Migrants do not discard their home country connections. Rather, they maintain them by adapting communication technologies to suit their new demands for cross-border contact and to negotiate their dual identities. In seeking to examine how Jamaican migrants communicate with their close ties overseas, this dissertation is organized as follows.

Chapter Two reviews literature from a range of disciplines related to mediated communication, and to Caribbean and Jamaican migration, which draws on research from sociology, anthropology, and Caribbean studies. These diverse literatures are considered with a particular focus on how they relate to communicating across distance, and how this practice is enacted as part of migration. Research on close ties is also reviewed, including how these ties are defined, and how communication sustains them.

Chapter Three presents communication ecology as the theoretical framework for this project. Since this study explores how engagement with media and technology over distance evokes tensions between human agency and larger structural systems, the chapter begins by assessing structure and agency in a migration context, and how communication ecology extends these two dimensions to the communicative behaviors that are the central concern of this project. Against the background of this theoretical framework, the research questions are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the methodology and research design for the study. Detailed information is provided about how the samples were selected in both countries and the sequence of data collection. The demographic characteristics of all respondents are also provided, and how these relate to the wider migration trends reviewed in Chapter Two. The methods for analysis are outlined, along with information about the ICT infrastructure in each country and how these resources have influenced respondents' communicative behaviors with their close ties overseas.

The research findings are presented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Chapter Five examines the first main theme in the findings: negotiating distance across borders. This chapter examines how respondents overcome challenges associated with being physically distant from their close ties, and how they develop creative strategies to circumvent these obstacles. A related theme is explored in Chapter Six, with a focus on how respondents negotiate closeness from a distance, by engaging ICT affordances to their advantage in their cross-border relationships. Chapter Seven explores the third main theme in the findings: commitment and reciprocity. This chapter examines how respondents—despite the difficulties of maintaining cross-border relationships—invest

immense emotional energy to preserve them, and reap considerable emotional and
material well-being from doing so. Throughout the three Findings chapters, discussion of
the findings is integrated with analysis and interpretation of their significance. As part of
these discussions, relevant literature is integrated as appropriate, and the theoretical
framework is engaged to address the research questions guiding the work in the analysis.

Chapter Eight offers conclusions from the findings, and evaluates the
contributions that this work makes to the literature and how it advances theoretical and
methodological concerns. Limitations of the study are explored, implications are
discussed for existing mediated communication research, and recommend directions for
future research are proposed.

The Appendices contain additional contextual information on Jamaica's history
and social structure, migration trends, detailed descriptions of each interview site in both
countries, summary charts with biographical information about the respondents,
conceptual charts, maps of Jamaica and New York City showing the interview sites, and
the interview guides.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In seeking to investigate why and how Jamaican immigrants currently living in New York City, or who had returned to Jamaica, communicated with their close ties overseas, several relevant literatures were considered for guidance, and to assess where there were gaps in scholarly understanding that this study could fill. These literatures were from mediated communication, sociology, anthropology, and Caribbean studies, with specific reference to migration and cross-border communication.[4] These three latter disciplines relate to this research project as they deal with social networks, the study of relationships, and the processes of such interactions in real community or individual contexts. Furthermore, these disciplines are becoming more connected with the mediated communication literature.

This chapter is organized as follows: the first section is the most extensive, and explores previous research on mediated communication using ICTs across borders. Within this section, literature related to mediated communication from the communication and transnational disciplines will be reviewed. These literatures are important to my research questions because the mediated communication literature establishes a baseline as to whether research questions similar to mine have already been explored and if these could be extended. In addition, literature from migration-related disciplines inform my research questions as they present new opportunities to investigate mediated communication practices through cross-border frames.

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[4] In mediated communication, these include mobile, long-distance, and dispersed family communication within and between countries.

In the first section, I also review research on presence, media richness. and leanness. These characteristics are most relevant to this study of cross-border relationships, as these relationships shape how migrants choose technology, based on their affordances, to maintain close and durable mediated connections. This section also discusses how mediated or dispersed communication networks are being re-shaped by new ICTs, given increased media convergence across wireless Internet platforms.

The second section reviews relevant research from mediated communication literature in order to tease out people's motivations for communicating from a distance, how these motivations influence their strategic use of ICTs, and how ICT affordances reinforce these communication goals. Migration-related literature related to these same communicative practices is also reviewed and elements that relate to this dissertation.

By interrogating user motivations and ICT characteristics, the third section argues how this study seeks to re-frame mediated communication with close ties in a context specific to migration between countries. The fourth section reflects on the trends emerging from this review, and the fifth and final section assesses the gaps in the literature which I have used to inform my research questions, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

By close ties, I refer to strong attachments between individuals that are intimate (Ito & Okabe, 2005; Jamieson, 2011; Stack & Burton, 1993), provide bonding capital (Baym, 2010), encourage frequent contact, and are voluntary, reciprocal, and enduring (Guerrero, 2008; Haythornthwaite, 2002; 2005). Some of the relationships examined are more voluntary than others; family obligations often make those relationships

involuntary. Close ties are most often between people who are homophilous in terms of values, attitudes, and demographic attributes (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001).

The common elements of these definitions of close ties: namely, that they are as defined as intimate, reciprocal, frequent, kin-like, and enduring are primarily relevant to my research project. Homophily between individuals, is of secondary interest to while applicable to my research questions. Homophily in some cases is used with specific reference to relationships and subject matter more applicable to a public, rather than private sphere (McPherson, et al., 2001).

Communication across Borders and the Role of ICTs

This section reviews literature on new ICTs and how they have revolutionized mediated communication, by enriching existing patterns of interaction rather than transforming them. Historically, communicating across borders for individuals attempting to maintain close relationships was slow, expensive, and infrequent. Print vehicles such as letters, cards, telegrams, and material resources such as packages, money, and gifts were common forms of contact for immigrants around the turn of the 20th century (Morawska, 2011; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918; 1958). Later, telephone calls augmented these other modes of communication, which had the advantage of being synchronous but remained prohibitively expensive.

The extant literature firmly establishes that new ICTs have powerfully affected the extent, intensity, and speed of cross-border connections (Appadurai, 1990; Baldassar, 2007a, Basch et al., 1994; Bashi, 2007; Castells, 2010; Foner, 2002; Fürsich & Lünenborg, 2011; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Horst, 2006a; Miller & Slater, 2000; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004;

Vertovec, 2004, 2009). By "new" ICTs, these literatures refer to personal computers, mobile phones, texting, email, social media, Skype and similar applications. As mobile communication and web-based platforms have compressed time and space, long distance communication has become more simultaneous, synchronous, convenient, affordable, accessible, and spontaneous (Horst, 2006a; Vertovec, 2009).

Despite this time/space compression, the basic processes of maintaining social relations across distances have not radically changed. New ICTs are not recreating society, but instead are enabling existing social patterns to be maintained more seamlessly (Harper, 2003). Fischer (1992), in tracing the development of the telephone in the United States, noted that, prior to 1940, Americans used telephones "to widen and deepen existing social patterns rather than to alter them...[resulting] in our reinforcement, a deepening, a widening of existing lifestyles more than in any new departure" (p. 263).

It should be noted that the diffusion of earlier communication innovations increased social cohesion in similar ways as well. Raymond Williams (1975) argued that photography in particular took hold in the early twentieth century because of "greater mobility, with new separation of families and with internal and external migrations, it became more centrally necessary as a form of maintaining, over distance and through time, certain personal connections" (p. 22). Similarly, Ling and Donner (2009) observed that mobile phones were more evolutionary than revolutionary, and introduced a new mobile logic into social interaction. Individuals' social networks have not significantly expanded because of new ICTs, and in fact, most mobile calls and texts were made to a small circle of family and friends (Brown, Campbell & Ling, 2011; Fortunati, 2002).

New ICTs have enabled evolutions in mediated communication that have enriched long-distance communication. One dimension of that enrichment is presence, or how the state of being with another person takes place, or is experienced (Lee, 2004). New ICTs have amplified presence in ways that earlier technologies could not, by simulating the experience of individuals being together even when they are not physically together. For people maintaining close relationships across borders, this re-enactment of presence renders the distance between partners less stark than in the past.

Co-location versus co-presence. Much of the literature on mediated interpersonal communication across borders uses the terms co-presence and co-location interchangeably. This literature also defines co-presence as both off-line co-presence, and virtual co-presence (Baldassar, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Horst & Miller, 2006; Miller, 2011; Miller & Sinanan, 2014). Co-location refers specifically to individuals being in each other's physical presence (Beaulieu, 2010). Traditionally, interpersonal communication occurred through face-to-face interactions and allowed for offline co-presence.

Co-presence, whether achieved by physical or virtual means, enhances the richness and intensity of communication between individuals. The communication literature traditionally emphasized the desirability of face-to-face communication as the gold standard for communication effectiveness, because it facilitates real time, co-presence where verbal and visual cues are optimal, and turn-taking is assured. As a result, all other mediated exchanges fall short of this ideal (Baym, 2010; Klebe Trevino, Daft & Lengel, 1990).

While being physically together facilitates face-to-face communication, it is no longer an essential prerequisite for interpersonal communication to take place. Older ICTs, such as letters, material objects, and landline telephones enabled individuals to exchange messages or interact without being physically together (Baym, 2010). In a literature review of studies on co-presence, Lee (2004) concludes that "the feeling of presence", that is, being in someone else's company, or feeling close to someone else, whether they are in one's physical presence or not, is at the center of all mediated experiences, although different terms from different disciplines are used to define presence.

Newer ICTs, such as the Internet, mobile phones, and social network sites offer increased opportunities for individuals to engage in relationships that create a new form of co-presence or co-location that operates in virtual rather than physical space. Communication via these new technologies de-contextualizes presence from a physical space but without excluding it (Beaulieu, 2010), by creating an "absent presence" (Gergen, 2002). Co-presence can be facilitated through modes other than face-to-face encounters, and given the ubiquity of new ICTs, into mediated settings such as virtual spaces as well.

Given the preceding discussion, the definition of co-presence has been substantively broadened, whereas co-location is still limited to being in someone else's physical presence. The former is more applicable to my study than the latter, and I am therefore using the expanded definition of co-presence as potentially being a physical/offline experience or a virtual state, as the relationships in my study are intense co-present experiences, albeit enacted primarily in virtual spaces.

Co-presence, whether achieved by physical or virtual means, enhances the richness and intensity of communication between individuals. The communication literature traditionally emphasized the desirability of face-to-face communication as the gold standard for communication effectiveness, because it facilitates real time, co-presence where verbal and visual cues are optimal, and turn-taking is assured. As a result, all other mediated exchanges fall short of this ideal (Baym, 2010; Klebe Trevino, et al., 1990).

Media richness and leanness. Just as co-presence can be established across geographic distance, another aspect of communicative effectiveness across borders is the quality of the communicative experience that a medium provides for individuals. This medium can provide a rich or intense, or lean or detached experience. A rich medium is defined by its ability to: facilitate shared meaning by instant feedback, transmit multiple visual and verbal cues, use natural language, reduce uncertainty, achieve equivocality, and its personal focus (Klebe Trevino et al., 1990). This theoretical framework organizes media into a richness hierarchy, with face-to-face considered the richest, followed by the telephone, email, and hard copy, written media as the leanest.

An individual's choice to use rich or lean media in mediated settings is multilayered because new ICTs both enhance and impede long-distance communication. Internet-based platforms such as Skype, Facetime, Google chat, YouTube, Flickr, Tumblr and music sharing sites exhibit various characteristics of media richness (Klebe Trevino et al., 1990) including (varying degrees of) synchronicity, nonverbal social cues, strong social presence (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976), and online co-presence.

Walther's (1996) perspective on the potential of mediated communication to be as rich as offline co-presence paved the way for less binary interpretations of face-to-face communication versus everything else. The rise of geographically dispersed work teams and the ubiquity of social network sites for informal interaction have diluted this divide between offline and online interaction, no longer privileging face-to-face communication (Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006; Gibson & Gibbs, 2006; Haythornthwaite, 2002; Miller & Sinanan, 2014).

Given that presence has evolved as a tension between physical co-location and more varied forms of co-presence, presence can be more effectively framed as social interaction, whether mediated or otherwise. Physical presence is not equivalent to offline availability for interaction to take place (Beaulieu, 2010; Goffman,1971).

Facilitating dimensions of rich/lean media in mediated communication. Individuals strategically select between available communication technologies in order to encourage a greater sense of co-presence through richer media, but on occasion have incentives to use lean media in order to maintain some social distance. In times of intense emotion or longing to be together, individuals may want to simulate intense co-presence (Baldassar, 2008; Carling et al., 2012; Dreby, 2010, Madianou & Miller, 2012). Conversely, when individuals want to save face or minimize worry, they may prefer to create distance from their close ties (Balsdassar, 2007a; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Such individuals develop their own alternatives to off-line co-presence, and in order to maintain their relationships, they come to accept that offline co-presence will be minimal. To compensate for this, they may choose to achieve virtual co-presence on some occasions, with all the visual and verbal cues that this brings. In the case of

parenting across borders, when rich media are very desirable, both landline and mobile telephones have become the most popular, and verbally rich medium for transnational parents to stay connected with their children back home, and mobile phones in particular allow for synchronicity (Boccagni, 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Madianou & Miller, 2012). Migrants generally rely on the telephone to maintain their emotional and social connections from a distance (Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Thomas & Lim, 2010; Vertovec, 2004).

There are also times when users would rather avoid the heightened visual cues that rich media afford. In these instances, lean media like email, text messages, and Facebook, which are not synchronous and partially visual, can become powerful tools for exercising individual self-determination. Lean media can allow for more customized self-presentation (Gibbs, et al, 2006; Papacharissi, 2002; Turkle, 2011) and even for deception.

New ICTs can be used to deliberately maintain distance in the communication exchange. For example, Facebook users often continuously reinvent themselves online, thereby causing doubt, anxiety and jealousy in off-line circles (Gershon, 2011). In staying connected with their kin in Italy, Italian immigrants in Australia used mobile phones, texting, email, and older ICTs such as letters, gifts, audiotapes, and photographs (Baldassar, 2007a). Like Gershon (2011), Baldassar (2007a) observed that participants purposely used ICTs without visual cues—that is, leaner media options—to avoid sharing negative information and to save face, as their lives in Australia were more difficult than they expected.

Constraining dimensions of rich/lean media in mediated communication.

While migrants make strategic choices about which ICTs they engage to communicate with faraway loved ones, their control over these choices is constrained by how their other ones elect to use these technologies. New ICTs can replicate co-presence to such an extent that their electronic tether can become tyrannical. For example, Horst (2006a) documents Jamaican immigrants in North America as regularly screening phone calls from relatives back home asking for money, in the same ways that Senegalese immigrants in Spain were plagued by constant material demands from home (Ros, 2010), and Italian immigrants in Australia felt pressured to communicate with family members in Italy they preferred to avoid (Wilding, 2006). Such cross-border intrusiveness can become pathological, as in cross-border stalking (Horst, 2006a), or technology obsession can lead people to abandon it altogether where people stop using Facebook because of its voyeuristic potential (Gershon (2011).

New ICTs, because they so successfully simulate offline co-presence and enable perpetual contact (Katz & Aakhus, 2002) within and between countries have, for migrants in particular, increased expectations for social support. Migrants are often not economically secure enough to meet these needs for emotional nurturance (Wilding, 2006), nor to provide material aid (Baldassar, 2007a) from a distance. Mobile phone ubiquity and intense use have also raised relationship expectations to impossible levels of overdependence, entrapment, and dissatisfaction (Hall & Baym, 2012), and reduced work-life balance (Crowe & Middleton, 2012; Wajcman, Brown, & Bittman, 2009).

In communicating across borders, as in other mediated exchanges, individuals choose ICTs that are rich or lean based on their strategic communication goals. Migrants who used rich media for emotional connections with family members across borders

make distinctions between voice-based (telephone, VoIP) and text-based (email, texting, instant messaging) communication, depending on their communicative goals (Madianou & Miller, 2012)**.**

Long-Distance Communication: Motivations and ICT Choices

As part of maintaining close ties across distances, individuals are motivated by their goals for particular interactions and their broader goals for the relationship itself. As migrants in particular seek to maintain emotional connections with close ties at a distance, their communication goals may range from routine acts of intimacy, bonding and closeness, to instrumental goals for business-related purposes. The motivation to reassure a loved one that they are in one's thoughts may result in an impulsive text message. A telephone call may be motivated by an intense longing to connect and share an anecdote or troubling experience.

These motivations may manifest as discrete actions, but viewed collectively, they serve to solidify the relationship and ensure its durability over time. These wide-ranging and more specific goals influence how individuals view particular ICTs, and based on their assessments of that medium's affordances, which ones they select to serve their purposes.

Media affordances. The affordances of different media offer opportunities for rich or more detached exchanges, in offline or virtual co-present spaces. However, what matters more when considering media affordances, such as their richness or leanness, and how well they facilitates co-presence, is the communication goal being pursued, and the nature of the communication relationship which dictate the choice of medium (Baldassar, 2007a; Åkesson et al., 2012; Horst, 2006a; Klebe Trevino et al., 1990). Therefore, social

context is key to understanding how people use ICTs, as people use them differently within different social contexts. Alternatively, one could ask what individuals *are doing*[5] during mediated communication exchanges (Baym, 2010), rather than focusing on which specific media they use to do so.

Affordances as strategic. It should not be assumed that because new ICTs have so many beneficial affordances that individuals would always be willing to use them for their intended purposes, or even use them at all. Madianou and Miller (2012), in their study of Filipino mothers in the U.K. with children back home propose a theory of polymedia, where they argue that individuals choose one medium over another because of a particular affordance of a medium that suits them best, based on their communication goals.

These authors assert that with polymedia, users' motivations and communicative goals are more pivotal than the affordances of the technology itself, whereby individuals have regained much of their control over the technology rather than the other way around (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Donner (2007), in a review of 200 studies of mobile phone use in developing countries, concluded that mobile ICTs were best understood as "co-constructed phenomena between what the technology is and how people choose to use it" (p. 15).

A practice lens. In keeping with this strategic, user-centered view of media affordances, Orlikowski (2000) proposes an approach that considers a practice-oriented understanding of how people, technologies, and social action interact recursively. Orlikowski (2000) distinguishes between technology as a static, material artifact, and its actual use. She argues that technology does not become stabilized after initial

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[5] Emphasis mine.

development, and that technology has no utility in and of itself, unless it is used in ongoing human action.

People are motivated to invent new ways to use a technology, as the mobile phone beeping phenomenon in less developed countries has demonstrated (Archambault, 2011; Donner, 2008). Orlikowski (2000) argues that individuals are "purposive, knowledgeable, adaptive and inventive agents" (p. 423), and are motivated to achieve certain goals, such as Italian migrants saving face with family back home (Baldassar, 2007a), or may choose not to use a technology at all, even if it is available, or abandon technology that doesn't work for them.

Technology use may become routinized in personal relationships and users have emotional and intellectual attachments to certain technologies, which are shaped by their motivations for communicating, their experiences with various ICTs, and their social and political contexts (Orlikowski, 2000). People tend to use the same ICT devices for the same purposes over time, even though they could change them frequently. Such routines can become integral to intimacies shared between close ties, such as a standing weekly or nightly telephone call which signifies ongoing interest, intimacy, and commitment facilitated by technology (Baldassar, 2007a).

Managing close networks from a distance. Another major motivation for long-distance communication, whether within one country, or across borders, is that individuals exist as part of personal networks, and they want to stay connected to these networks. As Boase (2008) observed, individuals draw on various commonly used communication media along with in-person contact to stay connected to such networks. For this purpose, they create a 'personal communication system' of ICTs embedded in

social networks as part of a larger communication system (Boase, 2008). Although Boase was not explicitly considering migration contexts, his 'personal communication system' is durable enough to apply to a variety of dispersed communication settings, including that of migrant networks.

The literature on ICTs, such as social network sites, mobile phones and the Internet has confirmed that as these technologies have become embedded in everyday life, such users are solidifying their connections to their networks (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Users now have larger social networks, are more trusting of others, feel more supported, and are more politically involved (Hampton, Rainie, Lu, Shin, & Purcell, 2015; Ling, 2008). Closeness between social media users can be deepened, as social media use can heighten awareness of stress in other's lives (Hampton et al., 2015), and promote greater relational persistence with, and sustained awareness of other individuals (Hampton, 2015).

As indicated previously, social media in particular have been seen as having benefits for weak, bridging ties. However, as social media relationships consist of both weak and strong ties, these sites also facilitate strong ties to maintain relationships, through a process of "social grooming" (Ellison, Vitak, Gray & Lampe, 2014), or activities that signal attention, build trust and social bonds, and create expectations of reciprocal attention (Ellison, et al., 2014). Such social grooming occurs via interactions between connected members, with message content, frequency, and length signifying the strength and context of the relationship (Donath & boyd, 2004; Donath, 2007). Social grooming enables social media users to maintain close relationships, many of which are offline, where bonding capital is especially important.

Maintaining networks of intimacy. As an extension of how these mediated social networks are maintained and managed, scholars recently have identified one distinct type of network. These are not necessarily situated in migration contexts, but can be found there, as the way they operate is not culture-specific. Termed 'networks of intimacy', they follow the same logic as the personal communication system (Boase, 2008). Communication between individuals who share close ties in these networks is mundane, frequent, and often intense: intimacy, or phatic communication on the move, and occur in both private and public spaces. These networks are also defined as mobile intimacies, or full-time intimate communities (Matsuda, 2005), or communities of presence (Ito, 2005), and such virtual spaces can consist of two to five close ties, accessible via one's mobile device.

Even though messages shared in these communities, by texting and voice calls, are often banal or mundane (Ito & Okabe, 2005; Madianou & Miller, 2012, Pertierra, 2005), or virtual small talk, they serve a critical relational function with close ties. Donner (2008) identified the practice of "beeping", or missed mobile phone calls in developing countries, where individuals would call someone and hang up, to indicate to the other party that they had just called, and wanted a call back. Beeping was a strategy to both reduce mobile phone costs—a major concern in the developing world—and to strengthen relationships and social norms, with small numbers of close ties.

These discursive practices of frequent text exchanges, photo sharing (Ito & Okabe, 2005), and beeping (Archambault, 2012; Donner, 2008) have become a form of "selective sociality" (Matsuda, 2005), where individuals prefer to connect to people who are not physically co-present, rather than engage in small talk with co-located strangers.

In the case of migrant communication, this selectivity in who is admitted into one's private social sphere is further extended to absent friends and kin overseas when necessary (Baldassar, 2007a; Ros, 2010; Wilding, 2006).

These increasingly networked individuals are now increasingly mobile as well (Fürsich & Lünenborg, 2011). As a result, the private, intimate sphere is seeping into the public sphere (Byam 2010; Goggin & Hjorth, 2014). As media continue to converge across wireless Internet-based platforms, the way we imagine and navigate the online with physical public space has shifted (Hjorth & Lim, 2012). The mobile intimacy of mobile phones which led to "more frequent exposure of private matters and intimacy in the public sphere" (Fortunati, 2002, p. 48) now increasingly applies to all mobile media, with mobility no longer limited to phones.

Migrants' social networks as efficacious. Migrants in particular have a compelling incentive to rely on mediated communication, as this is their primary means of sustaining their connections to those left in home countries. Therefore, they use mediated communication to create new hybrid spaces between physical co-location (which is rare for them) and distance (which is their new reality). These spaces redefine space and place as dense, personal, relational, socio-cultural, and economic connections, extending between communities within and across borders (Boase, 2008; Kennedy & Wellman, 2007; Kennedy, Smith, Wells, & Wellman, 2008; Urry, 2007).

Despite the physical separation inherent to these networks, they are still cohesive and sustainable. Much of the early research on mobile phones demonstrated their integral role in sustaining these networks, irrespective of place, such as the micro-coordination of everyday life (Ling & Donner, 2009; Ling & Yttri, 2002) and parental hovering

(Merriman, 2007). Mobile phone users also maintained emotional connections with family members and transformed interpersonal communication from being defined by co-location, to instead operate as a communication system as mobile as the people who use these devices (Kennedy & Wellman, 2007; Palen & Hughes, 2007; Turkle, 2011).

The personal communication system has become emblematic of the way migrants stay connected to their social and emotional networks in home countries. Migrants draw on the emotional and social support of these ties back home, to cope with the new exigencies of their host countries (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Ros, 2010; Clark & Sywyj, 2012), or to extend comfort from abroad, such as in times of natural disasters (Horst, 2010). Immigrants' personal communication systems enable them to maintain close connection with their now-virtual personal networks, given their movement across borders.

Immigrants regard these ICTs as essential prerequisites of immigrant life. Because of ICTs' affordances for connectivity and simultaneity, immigrants are prepared to spend time and large sums of money on them, even if their economic resources are meager (Kalba, 2008; Ros, 2010). Immigrants also broaden their personal networks to include weak, heterophilous ties in host countries, which are instrumental for getting jobs or making important connections to smooth their transition into their new communities (Granovetter, 1983; Clark & Sywyj, 2012). As indicated previously, such weak ties are not the focus of this study.

A migrant's personal communication system has expanded from letters and infrequent telephone calls of the past to a wider repertoire of voice and text-based media, and offline co-present visits today. Diminescu (2008) argues that today's migrants have

created a culture of remote or virtual bonds, which they have founded and maintain,

typical of relations of proximity, which they often activate daily. As a result, "the figure

of the uprooted migrant is yielding to another figure: the connected migrant" (Diminescu,

2008, p. 1). Now, migrants can choose from a variety of media within their personal

communication system. These are primarily voice-based ICTs, useful to express

emotions, with visual cues when synchronicity is needed (Åkesson et al., 2012; Dreby,

2010; Horst, 2006a; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Vertovec,

2004), and text-based when emotional distance is more desirable (Baldassar, 2007a;

Horst, 2006a; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Reframing Mediated Communication with Close Ties in a Migration Context

The previous discussions on co-presence, media richness, leanness, and

affordances exposed the challenges to communication effectiveness—the successful

sharing of meaning as my respondents defined this, which these dimensions present to

maintaining dispersed communication networks. Against this background, mediated

communication in a migration context can be an extremely difficult process, but does

assume a distinctive quality as a result. Migrants have to be persistent and work harder at

maintaining connections, as geographic separations are enduring states. When migrants

share close ties with relational partners overseas, both parties have an expectation that

their connection will endure. However, without ongoing contact, this connection can

weaken and unravel.

This final section explores how this connection is maintained by considering

literature on mediated communication between close ties as communicative partners,

mediated communication between migrants, and dispersed family communication. This

literature informs my research goals by interrogating the nature of close ties,

demonstrating how individuals who are close, whether kin or kin-like (Stack, 1974)

maintain their connections, and evaluating the extent to which family or kin-like

obligations play a role in influencing relationship maintenance.

Close ties as intimate bonds. Close ties are variously defined across cultural

contexts (Jamieson, 2011). However, the commonalities between these definitions

include reciprocal obligation, bonds of trust and profit (Stack, 1974), emotional intensity,

intimacy, reciprocity, and large time commitments (Granovetter, 1973, 1983), exchange

of goods, services, social support, high levels of self-disclosure (Guerrero, 2008;

Haythornthwaite 2002, 2005; Stafford, 2008), and homophily between pairs (Baym &

Ledbetter, 2009; McPherson et al., 2001).

Close ties are usually synonymous with kin, but can also be close, non-kin bonds

such as romantic relationships or close friends. Close ties can exist in self-selective

groups such as same sex communities (Weston, 1991), in Caribbean family contexts

(Clarke, 1957; Smith, 1988, 1996), and in lower-income African American communities

(Stack, 1974, Stack & Burton, 1993).

The decision to migrate does not indicate either a wish or need to sever close ties

with those left in the country of origin. In this dissertation, I focus on close ties that

respondents maintain between Jamaica and New York City. Migrants establish and

nurture such close ties in multiple places across distance (Larsen, Axhausen, & Urry,

2006), and by so doing, are creating new models of social organization within migration

(Ros, 2010).

Close ties can be effectively maintained across distance, and using new ICTs to do so in no way undermines the strength of these ties. Hampton, Sessions, and Her (2011) sought to refute previous claims, as Katz and Rice (2002) had earlier, that people have become increasingly socially isolated as a result of Internet and mobile phone use. In exploring the relationship between the use of new ICTs and the size and diversity of core networks, Hampton et al. (2011) concluded that whereas network size and the number of non-kin members had declined, specialized social media use strengthened certain close kin ties. Therefore, as non-kin close ties have decreased, maintaining close kin ties over distance is more likely to be a universal aspect of transnational life than other relationships, either strong or weak (Hampton et al., 2011).

The focus of this research is on ties that are most likely to be core to migrants' lived experiences. However, it should be borne in mind that Hampton et al. (2011) defined 'kin' in the purest sense as blood relatives, but in the Caribbean context, 'kin' includes a wider net of individuals, but who nevertheless share intense bonds based on reciprocal obligations.

Close ties in the Caribbean context, whether between kin or non-kin, have an extra dimension. The Caribbean's history of colonialism and cross-border labor systems also demonstrate a cultural openness, which Mintz defined as "the expectation of cultural differences" (as cited in Wardle, 2007, p. 568). Transnational migrant networks and social relations are offshoots of such cultural openness, as they transmit new cultural ideas and forms of commitment, thus representing a departure from the post-colonial status quo (Wardle, 2007). In Jamaica, an example of this new form of commitment was the "link-up" (Horst, Miller, AustinBroos, Bauer, Carrier, Chevannes, & Miller, 2005), or

extensive mobile phone networks of both strong and weak ties that low-income

Jamaicans maintained. These authors observed that very little differentiation was made

between kin and non-kin in these link-up networks, and that what mattered most was

making the connection with other people via a large number of very short calls, rather

than the content of the communication.

Long-distance family communication: The enduring connection. Family

connections continue to be the enduring example of close ties. And while family ties in

transnational contexts are challenged by extended physical absences, they often remain

strong and central to personal networks. The literature on long-distance family

communication within and between countries is extensive and still emerging, establishing

that families are using a range of ICTs in support of their communicative and relational

goals.

Dispersed families are operating as far-flung social networks within countries

(Ballagas, Kaye, Ames, Go, & Raffle, 2009; Baym, 2010; Boase, 2008; Christensen,

2009; Gentzler, Oberhauser, Westerman, & Nadorff, 2011; Kennedy & Wellman, 2007;

Ling & Ytrri, 2002; Kennedy et al., 2008; Lee, et al., 2009; Licoppe, 2004). Families are

able to maintain a "connected presence" (Christensen, 2009, p. 433), with frequent calls

and text messages between family members, which buttress their new temporal and

spatial dispersion (Livingstone, 2002).

Between countries, studies of family communication concentrate on members

separated by migration in several world regions. Such communication has three

additional purposes specific to physical separation and distance: to exchange information,

for family members to engage emotionally with each other, and to confirm the

relationship itself (Åkesson et al., 2012). These studies include remote parenting and elder care between Philippines and the U.K. (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parreñas, 2005), Ecuador and Italy (Boccagni, 2012), Mexico and the U.S. (Dreby, 2010; Lima, 2000), El Salvador and the U.S. (Mahler, 2001), Italy, the U.K., and Australia (Baldassar, 2007b); Singapore, India, and the Philippines (Thomas & Lim, 2012), and the U.S. and Turkey (Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009).

In the early 2000s, email was used most often for such cross-border contact (Baym, 2010). However, since then, international mobile phone and texting costs have declined significantly—especially in developing countries—thus solidifying the popularity of the phone as the medium of choice (Baym, 2010; Åkesson et al., 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Vertovec, 2004).

Long-distance family communication mirrors offline co-present relations. This sub-section concludes with a consideration of certain demographic variables that influence how such communication is enacted between countries. Based on a review of these variables in the literature, I assessed the extent to which they resonated in migrants' communication with their close ties, and I structured my research questions accordingly. These variables will be examined in turn.

Intergenerational communication and age are variables that emerge as prominent features in the literature on family communication across borders. Several studies look at Italian migrants in Australia caring for elder parents in Italy (Baldassar, 2007b; 2008; Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007; Wilding & Baldassar, 2009) and between the U.K. and Italy (Zontini, 2007). These migrants attempted to balance their family obligations— for kin at home and abroad—and work commitments in their host countries. Age and

generation are also central to studies of parenting across borders, as these studies allude to the emotional vulnerabilities that young children experience when separated from parents.

Life stage and ICT preferences play a major role. In a study of transnational families in seven countries, Wilding (2006) found that different forms of communication had different consequences for the family relationships they sustained. Email in particular improved the quality and quantity of contact, but was used more by younger family members. Older people preferred the telephone out of habit, and had difficulty using computer keyboards due to failing eyesight or arthritic joints (Pew Research Center, 2014). Although new ICTs offer promising possibilities to mitigate the constraint of distance, ironically, these cross border communication flows demonstrate the same gender, age-related, and power dynamics of offline co-present interaction

Finally, gender is another variable that has been highlighted in prior studies, as mothers experience transnational communication and separation from their children differently from fathers. Parenting across borders is highly gendered, and migrant mothers are expected to bear more of the responsibility than migrant fathers for parenting children back home, both materially and emotionally. Studies of Filipino migrants in Europe (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parreñas, 2005), Ecuadorian migrants in Italy (Boccagni, 2012), Mexican parents in the U.S. (Dreby, 2010), Caribbean migrants in the U.S. (Chamberlain, 1997, 1998; Fog Olwig, 1999, 2005; Gouldbourne, 2002), and their social networks of children and family in home countries concluded that migrant mothers nurtured their children via phone calls and letters. Mothers in particular grappled with

guilt (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2010) and anxiety that came with their decision to leave their children behind.

Long-distance elder care, like parenting, is enacted across borders, and this process is highly gendered as well, with women acting as the main caregivers (Baldassar, 2007b; 2008; Baldassar et al., 2007; Wilding & Baldassar, 2009; Zontini, 2007). These studies demonstrate the challenges that old age generates when caring for elderly parents, or being cared for by adult children from a distance, and the intense longing that older relatives experience when separated from their remote caregivers.

Closeness from a Distance: Emerging Trends.

Except for the mediated communication literature, the communicative behaviors of transnational migrants in the sociology, anthropology and Caribbean Studies literatures were not always explicit, were often alluded to only briefly, and had to be extrapolated from these literatures. However, what is evident is that migrants are using primarily mediated, and to a lesser extent, face-to-face communication, in purposeful, strategic, and instrumental ways.

Across all the literatures reviewed, these patterns were clear and consistent. Communication is a way to manage family and other close or intimate relationships; to both provide and receive social and emotional support; to erect social and emotional boundaries; to achieve economic opportunities; to provide economic and material support for their social networks in home countries; to perform long-distance parenting; to transact businesses; to preserve or create new identities, either in the host or home countries, and to exercise collective or individual agency.

Whether long-distance communication between close ties is the direct focus of the studies discussed previously, or is tangential to other research foci, it is evident that such communication practices are strong, thriving, and enduring. Families have been able to construct new mediated patterns of interaction, bonding, parenting, and caregiving, given the reality of the permanent distance between their members. Individuals with non-kin close ties are also sustaining networks of intimacy in mediated spaces.

Both kin and non-kin individuals who share close ties and are communicating across distance are motivated by personal and wider social goals, whether mundane, routine, or of greater import. They are able to reconfigure co-presence in multiple ways to meet these motivations. They are selecting from an array of media vehicles, strategically evaluating their affordances and these vehicles' abilities to purposively enrich, enhance or moderate their long-distance interactions.

Gaps in the Literature

The literatures in mediated communication, sociology and anthropology of migration, and Caribbean studies have established that cross-border relationships have been transformed by advances in communication technologies. Despite the growing number of studies on mediated communication networks in several world regions, persistent gaps remain in the literature relating to communication behaviors and technology use in cross-border settings. These gaps are examined in turn, in order to reinforce their relevance to my research questions.

Preponderance of single country studies. Studies of communication in immigrant communities have focused on sites in host countries, as opposed to considering both host and home sites through a cross-border frame. Several scholars

have called for more research on ICT use in families within and across borders

(Fitzgerald, 2006; Lee, Meszaros, & Colvin, 2009; Mahler & Pessar, 2001; Meszaros,

2004).

Studies of Caribbean migrants have also confined to single research sites, and

therefore do not document the interplay of relationships between countries from both

sides. Among these are two quantitative studies of mobile phone use in Jamaica (Dunn,

2007; Dunn & Dunn, 2007); an analysis of an online forum for diasporic and home-based

Haitians (Adams Parham, 2004); and migrants globally using prepaid phone cards for

overseas calls (Vertovec, 2004). Although the latter two studies are situated in virtual

space, the sense of a physical place as a reference point is absent.

There are a few studies of cross-border communication that provide rich

perspectives on relationships between individuals living in the Philippines/U.K. and

Mexico/U.S.A., by Madianou and Miller (2012) and Dreby (2010), respectively. In their

study of webcam use between a small village in Trinidad and Tobago and the U.K.,

Miller and Sinanan (2014) argue that people's relationships with each other and with

technology cannot be disentangled. The authors assert that there is no pure face-to-face

communication, as even this type of exchange is "culturally inflected" (p. 6). These

authors believe that mediation should be re-defined, as Baym (2010) has also observed,

because mediated communication is no longer separate from, but has become "an

intrinsic condition of being human" (Miller and Sinanan, 2014, p. 11). With the

exception of these studies, cross-border studies are still rare. My study, with its two-

country, paired-respondent methodology, contributes to this handful of studies that

demonstrate the importance of considering cross-border interactions from both geographic locations.

Caribbean communication across borders understudied. There are well established Caribbean-origin communities in major North American and British cities, and their members engage in intense cross-border relationships: familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political (Appadurai, 1990; Baldassar, 2007a, Basch, Glick Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1994; Bashi, 2007; Foner, 2002; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Horst, 2006a; Miller & Slater, 2000; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004; Vertovec, 2004). These relationships all implicate communication across borders, and although the literature seldom focuses on the nature of these interactions, we can assume that much of this communication is mediated due to geographic distance. In addition, Caribbean migrants regularly travel to their countries of origin, thereby enabling physical co-presence as well.

Despite this considerable scholarship on Caribbean migrants, the literature on their specific communication behaviors, including their use of communication technologies, is sparse. The older studies examine the ICT infrastructure, media affordances and effects, rather than the processes of particular communication technologies as these are enacted in relationships. My study attempts to tease out the processes—rather than the effects—as the focal point in Caribbean cross-border communication, including interpersonal communication patterns such as turn-taking and conflict resolution, as these are enacted in mediated spaces.

Emphasis on remittance, rather than communication flows. Flows of financial remittances across borders are a major research focus in migration literature for

the Caribbean and other world regions (Donner, 2008; Dreby, 2010, Madianou & Miller, 2012). Such material support is an essential element of maintaining obligations to close ties. Remittances serve as a form of communication in a material sense, in that they signify ongoing commitment and affection, and a kind of presence by proxy (Baldassar, 2008). The sociology, anthropology and Caribbean studies literatures repeatedly credit the proliferation of communication technologies as maintaining and strengthening both remittance flows in particular and cementing diasporic relations in general (Basch et al., 1994; Bashi, 2007; Dreby, 2010; Horst, 2006a; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Thomas, 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2002, 2006). Such technologies include online networks—comprising a plethora of Caribbean blogs numbering in the hundreds (Plaza, 2010). However, the communicative potential of remittances as signifiers of communicative content is rarely the research focus in these studies, and therefore the communicative behaviors arising from these ICTs have to be inferred.

Emphasis on cross-border parenting. Within the migration literature generally and Caribbean Studies in particular, there is an extensive literature on migration and families (Åkesson, Carling, & Drotbohm, 2012; Chamberlain, 1997, 1998; Fog Olwig, 1999, 2005; Gouldbourne, 2002; Horst, 2006a; Kasinitz, Waters, Mollenkopf, & Anil, 2002; Panagakos & Horst, 2006; Waters, 1999). Much of this scholarship focuses on migrant parents separated from children, and on family dynamics and issues of adjustment in host countries, rather than on transnational families as a unit of analysis. However, there was little if any research attention paid to maintaining non-kin relations across borders.

In Jamaica, Horst (2006a) observed that "the mobile phone has been particularly important in increasing access and communication between relatives, partners and families living abroad" (p. 148). She noted that mobile phones were a boon for emigrant Jamaican parents who were able to communicate with their children in Jamaica, and therefore remain more involved in their children's academic and emotional growth. According to Horst (2006a), mobile phones enabled emigrant parents' capabilities for remote parenting on a daily basis, in conjunction with the caregivers in Jamaica to whom they had entrusted with their children (p. 149).

As a vehicle of cross-border communication, mobile phones had "collapsed the distance" between family members in home countries and overseas as both groups were able to create a sense of involvement in each other's daily lives (Horst, 2006a). This practice of cross-border parenting was replicated and documented among Filipino migrants in the U.K. (Madianou & Miller, 2012), Filipino migrants in Singapore (Thomas & Lim, 2010), and Mexican migrants in the U.S. (Dreby, 2010) as well.

There is one notable exception in the literature on Caribbean families adjusting to immigrant life, in that it employs a rare comparative view of generation, culture, and country, and was a valuable point of reference for my research. Kasinitz et al.'s (2002) study of second generation Dominican, Chinese, Russian Jewish, and Anglophone West Indian migrants in New York City confirmed the positive influence of close geographical proximity as a predictor of maintaining close cross-border relationships.

This finding influenced my research questions, given the close proximity of the two countries I selected for this project. Kasinitz et al.'s (2002) study looked at these immigrant families as their unit of analysis, focusing on the durability of

transnationalism[6] in second generation immigrants. The researchers found that second generation Dominicans and West Indians demonstrated the most active transnational ties, arising from frequent cross-border travel and extended stays as compared with their Chinese and Russian-origin second generation contemporaries.

Kasinitz et al.'s (2002) study did not examine the consequences of these extended periods of co-location for subsequent communication across borders. Therefore, its comparative approach, although useful, was limited in terms of my other research interests, as it emphasized frequent in-person visits between countries, rather than ICT use.

Despite the broad array of studies of Caribbean migration and families, there is little systemic research on communication practices in Caribbean diasporic families. One exception is Bauer and Thompson's (2006) study of Jamaican migrant families resettling in the U.K. These researchers noted that there are no reliable statistics on the prevalence of Jamaican transnational families in particular. The existing literature documents the viewpoint of emigrant parents with children left behind in the Caribbean (Chamberlain, 1997, 1998; Fog Olwig, 1999, 2005).

However, these studies have limitations; only some of these parents were active transmigrants, these studies were all situated in only one country, and there is little reference to migrants' use of communication technologies. Given the age of these studies, the range of ICTs that the researchers explored was particularly limited.

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[6] Transnationalism is defined as intense and frequent cross-border engagement between immigrants and their home countries. See Basch, et al. (1994).

This research focus on parenting across borders, while important[7], has resulted in little work on other kinds of close ties, which I believe reflect a more rounded and multidimensional quality of migrant life. My study is different as it does not examine parenting across borders, nor is it limited to kin ties. None of my respondents were parenting children under 18 from a distance, and the nature of the close ties examined included kin, and non-kin networks. Parenting relationships concentrate on nurture, support, and discipline, and differ from more horizontal, intra-generational close ties, which reflect a wider array of interpersonal relationships.

Focus on single rather than multiple technologies. Some studies have paid specific attention to dispersed Caribbean communication practices using the newer ICTs such as mobile phones, or social media, or the Internet, but rarely more than one technology in a single study. Horst and Miller's (2006), and Horsts' (2006a) in-depth qualitative work in Jamaica focused on mobile phone use as a material artifact with tremendous potential for social connectivity. Miller (2011) assessed Facebook's benefits and perils in cultivating and dismantling Trinidadians' relationships in and out of the diaspora on and off-line, and concluded that Facebook reduced social isolation among older Trinidadians. Miller and Slater's (2000) ethnographic study of Internet use, also in Trinidad and Tobago, argued that the Internet naturally fits Trinidadians' intensely diasporic personal relations, as most Trinidadians lived in families that were international (even nuclear families), so the Internet enabled them to be involved in family relations such as active parenting across national borders.

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[7] Jones, Sharpe, and Sogren (2004), and Pottinger (2003) reported that in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, school community samples indicated 10.5% and 35% respectively of children had parents who had migrated. It is difficult to find conclusive figures on the proportion of Caribbean migrants who leave children behind, given the high percentage of undocumented individuals in host countries (Kasinitz, 1992).

My study will address these gaps in the following ways. First, I will select several research sites in two countries. Then I will consider a broader set of communicative practices apart from remittance flows, and interrogate a wider array of close relationships apart from transnational parenting between adult migrant parents and their minor children. I will examine a wider range of social connections in addition to kin such as close non-kin, and intimate relationships.

My study focuses less on one particular ICT such as the mobile phone, or the Internet, or social media, as these aforementioned studies have done, but surveys more broadly the range of ICTs used. The benefit of this approach is to interrogate how communication ecology, the theoretical framework for this study (see Chapter Three) presents an avenue for understanding multiple technologies in context of each other. Finally, as part of my two country methodology, I will consider the ICT infrastructure in two countries, and how these influence cross-border communication. Considerations of ICT infrastructure receive less attention in single country studies, as such ICT infrastructure is seen as a given, and the focus is more on the ICT affordances, prevalence, and effects of their use.

This study has identified five major gaps in the interdisciplinary literatures on long-distance and cross-border communication: a focus on single country studies, a paucity of data on Caribbean diasporic communication processes, a focus on remittance flows, transnational parenting, and on single rather than multiple technologies used across borders.   This study seeks to help close these gaps, and by using a cross-border frame, my goal is to present a new and more inclusive perspective of long-distance communication within a Caribbean and American context. This communication-centered

perspective is a useful contribution to the well-established literatures on migration

patterns between these two regions because it will provide a more complete and nuanced

view of these processes.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

Having reviewed relevant literatures in the previous chapter, in this one I focus on how maintenance of close cross-border ties can be meaningfully interrogated using communication ecology as a theoretical framework.

Given that my work focuses on migrants and involves data collection across two countries, consideration of how the macro context of migration influences personal communication practices is fundamental. Migration experiences invoke immutable social and political structures in both sending and receiving states, and these structures constrain and enable individual behaviors in a variety of ways.

Against this background of structural forces, I am exploring how respondents recognize these structural rules of their life circumstances, and how they respond agentically to them, by engaging with ICTs strategically to meet their communication goals. This investigation reveals the natural connections between structure and agency and communication ecology. Communication ecology refers to the array of interpersonal and media connections that individuals use to achieve goals in their everyday lives (Wilkin, Ball-Rokeach, Matsaganis, & Cheong, 2007). As will be discussed in more detail within this chapter, communication ecology provides a theoretical framework that is robust enough to account for the context-dependent and goal-driven behavior of individuals as they choose ICTs to maintain close ties across distance.

Structure and agency are integral to the migration narrative. At the macro level, structural rules like the globalization of labor force movements trigger out-migration from lesser to more developed regions. At the meso level, migrants construct diasporic

support systems in context of these rules in order to preserve community solidarity, national, and ethnic identity. At the micro level, migrants negotiate, modify, or transform these structural rules, in order to maintain their communicative support systems across borders.

Structure, Agency, and Communication Ecology in a Migration Context

The communication dimensions of migration cannot be separated from migration as a system that constrains individuals' abilities to maintain their social relations across borders. Up to the 1970s and 1980s, the historical view of migration—primarily from Europe to North America in the late 19th century—as a 'push and pull' process, and the assimilation of migrants into their host countries as the final desired outcome, dominated migration scholarship. This perspective ignored the migrants' agency within the structural factors that influenced their decisions and actions (Diminescu, 2008; Ros, 2010; Thomas-Hope, 2002).

Structure and agency have been defined as two integral pillars of the social sciences. However, Giddens (1979) argues that these two phenomena are not mutually exclusive, and that social science is neither the experience of individuals nor a larger social structure, but rather an interplay between the two. Giddens (1979) defines human social activities as recursive, in that social actors do not bring these activities into being but continually recreate them as they express themselves as actors. Therefore, human actors redefine and reproduce the contexts and activities around them; both states exist as a dynamic, interrelated condition. As both the individual and society are constituted recursively, part of this recursivity means that human agents act intentionally within their structural contexts (Giddens, 1979).

For migrants in particular, such recursivity resonates with communication ecology. At macro and meso levels, migrants act intentionally as they choose from available media options within larger structural constraints such as cost and ICT access. Migrants must also consider micro structural concerns such as interpersonal resources, individual habits, preferences of both communicative partners, and their ICT competencies. These macro, meso, and micro structural concerns form part of, and influence migrants' communication environment.

In migration communication spaces, structure, agency, and communication ecology are further intertwined, as time and space are reconstituted as a new form of distanciated relations (Giddens, 1979). Social and communicative relations are still situated in local contexts, but have also been re-constituted across indefinite tracts of time and space. The communicative environment has expanded to include new, in-between spaces operating as virtual relationships in addition to local, discrete places which still matter considerably (Giddens, 1979; Urry, 2007). For migrants, distance between communicative partners—a critical macro feature of their communication environment—becomes another structural rule that has to be managed as part of a migrant's communication ecology.

Communication Ecology

Communication ecology refers to the web of interpersonal and media connections that people construct in the course of their everyday lives to achieve everyday goals (Wilkin et al., 2007). Communication ecology was originally developed as a community-based theory arising out of media system dependency theory (MSD). MSD theory suggests that individuals rely on different media to various degrees in order to

accomplish particular goals, such as making sense of one's internal world and the larger

social environment (Ball-Rokeach, 1998).

Communication ecology extends MSD theory to the community and individual

levels of analysis, and is more inclusive of new and old media, mainstream, local, and

ethnic media, interpersonal and community-based channels (Wilkin et al., 2007). It is

defined as:

> …[A] network of communication resource relations constructed by individuals in
> pursuit of a goal and in context of their communication environment…[A]
> communication ecology…is focused upon a network of communication resource
> relations, and those resources may include but may go beyond media and
> interpersonal resources to include organizational, expert, and other resources
> germane to the particular goal in question. As such, this network…is multilevel
> in that it allows the inclusion of micro (individual and interpersonal), meso (local
> media and organizations etc.) and macro (supra local level media and
> organizational) level resources. (Ball-Rokeach, Gonzalez, Son, & Kligler-
> Vilenchik, 2012, p. 4)

Wilkin et al. (2007) argue that people develop their own communication systems

or ecologies, whereby they establish connections to other people and to media to achieve

their everyday goals. The goals being referred to in communication ecology are those of

understanding, orientation, play, or health (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012). As Ball-Rokeach

et al. (2012) argue, these goals include those that individuals have to make sense of the

internal world, and other goals to better understand their social environment or the

external world.

Goals of communicative acts. Ball-Rokeach et al. (2012) highlight goals of

understanding, orientation, play, and health within the context of their study of

communication ecology within immigrant communities in Los Angeles. These goals can

apply to cross-border settings as well, particularly understanding, orientation, and health

in the form of emotional well-being or social support. Individuals communicating across borders define their own reasons for initiating or sharing in interpersonal interaction, and these goals drive the choices they make between communication channels available to them in their communication ecology. Understanding of self is an ongoing goal. When two individuals communicate regularly, mutual understanding is developed or maintained via shared routines and intimacies. At times, these understandings may be undermined by disagreements and conflict, or advanced by how these are resolved.

Understanding of, and orientation towards the immediate community and wider society are essential for migrants, especially when they first move. Migrants are also motivated to get oriented early on, but the stresses of migration can cause isolation unless they are well supported by close ties—which is why this dissertation focuses on close ties, as they are such a vital form of bonding capital for migrants (Baym, 2010). The goal of health, or social support and well-being resulting from staying connected, is also relevant to cross border settings such as those of my study. When migrants maintain connections to close ties, they are able to mitigate the risk of alienation and safeguard their emotional stability in the midst of understanding and orienting themselves to a new environment.

The first research question guiding this study is therefore concerned with the following:

RQ1: What are Jamaican transnational migrants' communicative goals with regards to their close ties overseas?

RQ1a: How are ICTs engaged in their efforts to achieve these goals?

Diaspora, agency, and demographics. Individuals deploy their communication ecologies in ways that are goal-dependent and goal-driven, and influenced by micro, meso, and macro level factors (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012). At the macro level, migrants are engaged in a complex matrix of intense social relationships, which connect people and multiple locations, new modes of transacting, and activities that require sustained cross-border travel and contacts (Basch et al., 1994, Foner, 1998, 2002; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Kasinitz et al., 2002; Parreñas, 2005; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Zontini, 2010).

This complex matrix of cross-border relationships, also known as transnationalism, emphasizes migrants' agency, whereby they can simultaneously, and intensively, be involved in social activity within host and destination countries. Much of this concurrent activity is communicative in nature, and as part of migrants' goals to stay connected across distance, options within their communication ecologies include interpersonal resources such as off line co-present visits, or ICTs which enable virtual co-presence.

At the meso or community level, Caribbean, and migrants from other world regions have always sought to maintain transnational social fields (Basch et al., 1994) by using their agency to create a migration space or diaspora for themselves. They form networks to retain strong connections to their home communities while integrating with their new host communities as well. Caribbean migration has largely been a migration of networks—of families and neighbors (Bashi, 2007; Plaza & Henry, 2006; Small, 2006), which occur among other groups such as Europeans migrating to North America in the early 20th century (Tilly, 1990).

Migration from the Caribbean has always been characterized by migrant agency, with their intense and ongoing pattern of host-home country engagement. Within this diaspora, migration has been more cyclical than permanent, as evinced by seasonal migration, short-term guest workers, forced repatriation of refugees or deportees, and second-generation migrants returning home (Bauer & Thompson, 2006; Chamberlain, 2006; Horst, 2006a; 2006b; Plaza & Henry, 2006; Small, 2006; Thomas-Hope, 2006; Thompson & Bauer, 2000).

These levels of influence within a communication ecology also interact with each other, such that they can constrain or enable the choices individuals make about what communication avenues and tools they engage to pursue their goals. Included within an individual's communication ecology are important interpersonal communication avenues such as family, friends, service providers, and professional experts, as well as mediated channels such as Internet-based platforms, and organizational channels such as local or national broadcast media networks. A communication ecology lens also enables researchers to evaluate the relative importance of a particular medium in context of an individual's larger communication ecology, because the options individuals choose provide insight into their relative usefulness for addressing particular goals (Wilkin et al., 2007).

When engaging with their communication ecologies, people operate in the context of the best media choices available to them to try to achieve particular communicative goals (Wilkin et al., 2007). They weigh their media choices according to the relative importance of all other available and appropriate options. Their choices may also be enabled or constrained by other individual factors, such as technical skills related to using

an ICT, the ability to pay for a device or service, or long-embedded routines or patterns related to ICT use.

These variations may be systematically related to demographic factors as enabling or constraining, age being chief among them (Baldassar, 2007b, 2008; Baldassar et al., 2007; Wilding & Baldassar, 2009). Age often determines which media options people prefer, where older adults may be less inclined to use social media or texting, but prefer the telephone. Gender also plays a role in ICT choice (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Wilding & Baldassar, 2009; Zontini, 2007).

Other demographic factors can influence the ICT choices in an individual's communication ecology. Income and educational level can affect ICT choices by dictating the affordability and ease of use of certain media. Other socioeconomic variables such as comfort with ICTs (Pew Research Center, 2004) can predict ICT use, where one partner in a communicative relationship may defer to the other who is less comfortable with, or lacks access to certain ICTs, and purposely restrict his or her communication ecology with that person as a result.

A medium's affordances, another structural consideration, will guide an individual's media choices in assembling their communication ecologies to meet different communication goals in various situations. The second research question explores these variations:

RQ2: To what extent do demographic characteristics[8] affect Jamaican transmigrants' communication with their close ties overseas?

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[8] Demographic characteristics refer specifically to age, gender, generation, educational level, occupation, marital and parental status, country of residence, presumed income, visa status, and social class. Respondents' income was presumed based on their occupation and educational level, as these three variables are correlated. Social class was extrapolated based on education and occupation as well.

RQ2a: How do variations in demographic characteristics explain variance in how transmigrants engage ICTs?

An individual's ICT choices and how they choose to construct their communication ecologies are not only goal-directed. Beyond demographic differences, these choices are also influenced by a person's own habits and routines, preferences, ICT affordances, and the personal dynamics that exist between communicative partners. Individual routines can be a primary driver of how long-distance relationships between close ties are maintained. According to Baym (2010), close ties encourage frequent, companionable contact, create long-term bonds, and may involve significant outlays of emotions and time. Routinized communicative behaviors become more entrenched, and individuals use media that offer more cues to enrich these ties, as individuals get closer and mutual trust deepens (Baym, 2010). These individual routines are affected by personality styles, such as a preference for email or phone calls for introverts or extroverts respectively, or by cultural norms, such as ingrained mobile phone use in Scandinavia (Baym, 2010; Ling, 2008), or a preference for texting in quiet, orderly Japanese society (Byam, 2010; Ito & Okabe, 2005).

Considering location. Communication ecology focuses on how individuals engage a range of media to address their goals, rather than on the particular media themselves. Individuals select different channels within their communication ecologies to achieve different goals. Such a goal-based approach is valuable in understanding how close relationships are enacted over distance, as it allows for an assessment of the relative utility of different ICTs and other media. Individuals assemble ICTs that work best for them at the micro, meso, and macro levels, based on their residential setting, life stage,

relationship priorities, ICT access and preferences, cost, and their respective

socioeconomic situations.

From a communication ecology perspective, it is instructive to assess the nature

and influence of these study respondents' communication environments in New York and

Jamaica, and how they are interacting with their available communication resources in

each country. Individuals' communication ecologies are thus influenced by what

communication channels are available and accessible within their local community

environments (i.e., meso-level influences) and by what infrastructures influence ICT

availability, including price, at the national level (macro-level influences). My third set

of research questions therefore address the following:

RQ3: How do Jamaican transmigrants located in the U.S. and Jamaica explain

variations in their strategies for managing different communication goals with their close

ties overseas[9]?

RQ3a: How do these variations in strategies affect their ICT choices?

These macro- and meso-level influences intersect with individual (micro-level)

agency in that individual's choices regarding use of ICTs and other communication

channels will be influenced by their personal enabling and constraining factors. These

may relate to demographic variables such as income and/or technical skills and comfort

levels, as discussed previously.

When considering the communication dynamics of two countries as this study

does, communication ecology extends from a consideration of media choices to achieving

everyday goals to comparative national contexts. This theory also takes into account the

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[9] As part of country of residence, this question also seeks to determine how U.S. visa and citizenship status affects respondents' ability to travel between both countries.

individual and social structures within countries, and the larger ICT infrastructural constraints, benefits, and social structures between countries as well.

The next chapter lays out the research design for this study, including the sampling strategy, respondents' characteristics and research locations, and the process of data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four

Methodology

The goal of this study was to examine how Jamaican transnational migrants in New York, or who had returned to Jamaica, maintained cross-border contact with their close ties via use of ICTs. This chapter outlines the research design. The strategies for sample selection, the interview sites, and the sample characteristics are presented in detail. The three phases of fieldwork in Jamaica and New York City are outlined. The chapter concludes with some observations on data collection, data analysis procedures, and considerations for replicability of this study.

Permission was granted by Rutgers University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this research. Two submissions were made to the IRB, the first for permission to carry out qualitative, face-to-face interviews with human subjects generally, and a second submission to conduct research overseas. The IRB reviewers were particularly concerned with protecting respondents' immigration status, and therefore prohibited asking questions about respondents' residency status in the United States or other questions that could have exposed respondents to legal sanctions. Consent forms advised potential respondents that their information would be confidential; names and easily identifying details have been changed in order to preserve their confidentiality.

Research Design

This dissertation uses a paired design to address the research questions, as opposed to the more common individualized and one-sited approach. This paired approach has several strengths. It presents a multi-sited, bi-national perspective, offering a broader view of the full scope of the migration experience and its impacts, as these

relate to cross border communication. Furthermore, Fitzgerald (2006) has long argued

that such cross border research integrates both sending and receiving country sites, which

can better explain the effect of place on a variety of outcomes. A multi-site, bi-national

design also reduces the danger of national blinders, or "methodological nationalism"

(Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002), which transnational scholars have seen as an

impediment to research on intense social interaction across borders. By interviewing

both respondents in dyadic relationships, the goal was to go beyond looking at just one

side of the cross-border conversation and to qualitatively analyze the dynamics of these

contextualized relationships.

　　　While paired designs are uncommon, they have previously been used to strong

effect. Madianou and Miller's (2012) study of Filipino migrant parents in the U.K., and

their children left behind in the Philippines, also used a dyadic approach in order to

compare the perspectives of migrant parents and their left-behind children regarding their

separation, and to compare the use of older media such as audiocassettes and letters with

newer, less expensive media. The researchers found that migration from the Philippines

was triggered by motivations to earn money for their children to attend private schools,

and to build houses, as well as by spousal abuse from the partners left behind. These

revelations would not have been found by interviewing one side of a pairing, as has been

done in the past.

　　　Between June 2013 and January 2014, I conducted qualitative interviews with 17

pairs of close ties living between Jamaica and New York. Data collection was divided

into three phases, occurring in two 12-week periods and one four-week period,

respectively. I followed the migratory patterns of Jamaicans by starting with 13

interviews in Jamaica from June to August 2013 (i.e., Period 1). This first group was all migrants, most of whom had returned to Jamaica to retire, and others who still lived in New York but were visiting Jamaica at the time. These respondents were mostly over age 50, as they had reached, or were nearing, retirement.

Returning to New York City, 15 additional respondents were interviewed between September and November 2013 (i.e., Period 2). This set of respondents comprised 14 Jamaican immigrants, and included close ties identified by the first Jamaican sample in Period 1. This group in Period 2 also included a new set of respondents, and one non-immigrant from Jamaica visiting New York at the time.[10] I then returned to Jamaica in January 2014 to interview the close ties there identified by the New York sample in Period 2. Most of the nine respondents interviewed in Period 3 were not immigrants and had never lived outside of Jamaica.

For the first Jamaican (Phase 1) and the New York City (Phase 2) samples, Jamaican transnational migrants were selected, defined as those individuals who maintain ongoing connections between their host and home countries, whether by frequent communication or regular visits. The intention was to interview individuals who could recommend others who they were close to, were in contact with at least once per month (and generally more often), and who did not live in their country of primary residency. These close ties did not have to be a family member. For the second Jamaican sample (Phase 3), close ties identified by the New York City sample were interviewed.

This study is a qualitative analysis rather than an ethnography. However, this staged approach to data collection was loosely following an ethnography of migration approach (Fitzgerald, 2006). The goal was to examine Jamaica and New York City as

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[10] This non-immigrant from Jamaica was the close tie of one of my Period 2 New York respondents.

sites of simultaneity; that is, sites that allowed for simultaneity of connection, or a way of being between relationship pairs that was not confined to one place (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Using two countries as research sites provided the opportunity to dynamically capture migrants' and non-migrants' lived experiences in maintaining close ties in both countries.

By moving back and forth between the two countries—as opposed to, for example, conducting all the interviews in New York followed by all interviews in Jamaica—the goal was to reduce the methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) that pervades much single-country research. As Fitzgerald (2006) and Marcus (1995) have advocated as a methodological mandate, the intent here was to "follow the people" as they travel between their origins and destination.

By the conclusion of Phase 3 of the fieldwork, 17 out of 20 planned pairs of interviews were completed. These comprised seven pairs between Jamaica and New York, and 10 between New York and Jamaica. Three respondents living in New York City, who were the close ties of the first Jamaican sample, refused to be interviewed. Therefore, the Jamaica-based partners of these three pairs were not included in the data analysis. This means that data from 34 of 37 respondents were analyzed.

Interviews

All interviews were conducted face-to-face, and all were audio recorded. Interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes in length, and were conducted in respondents' homes, workplaces, and public recreational spaces. In three cases, respondents were interviewed a second time, as these pairs were in the midst of a conflict during the first interview; two of these follow-up interviews were conducted face-to-face and one by

telephone. The second interviews lasted between 20 and 35 minutes; the face–to-face

interviews were audio recorded, and the telephone interview recorded in handwritten

notes.

The interview protocol consisted of primarily open-ended questions related to the

content and frequency of their communication with close ties overseas, the ICTs they

used for these interactions, attitudes towards separation from close ties, techniques used

for conflict management, their migration histories and experiences. There were also

questions concerning demographic characteristics such as primary country of residence,

age, education, marital and parental status, and occupation. For the three follow-up

interviews, respondents were asked for more details about conflicts with their close ties

that they had mentioned in the first interviews and whether or not these had been resolved

in the interim.

During all interviews, I took note of respondents' physical surroundings, as I met

most of them in their homes, three in their offices, and five in public spaces. I was able

to glean much more about respondents' life circumstances when I met them in their

private spaces (homes or offices), where personal mementos and physical artifacts

provided rich insight into their lives.

In two cases, the public spaces where I interviewed respondents reflected their

respective levels of personal agency. In one case, the absence of a private space for our

interview provided important insights as well. I interviewed Preston, 51, a gardener in

Hanover parish, in my rented car, parked off the highway at the staff entrance to his

resort workplace. He could not have accommodated the interview at his workplace, as he

had no office or other space there that was exclusively his. Nor would he have wished

me to visit his home, as he could sense the differences in our social class. After we finished, I offered him a lift to the unpaved roadway a mile away that led to his home.

In contrast, I interviewed Alex, 47, a partner in an accounting firm at his country club in an upper middle-class Kingston neighborhood. We sat outdoors by the pool and golf course, and many club members sitting nearby greeted him during our interview. He had his iPhone and iPad on the table between us at the ready, and fielded a few calls during our interview. When it was over, we left at the same time, he in his late model BMW, and I in my rented car.

Sampling Strategy

I employed a snowball sampling strategy because the population of interest was highly specialized and hard to identify, making probability sampling methods unfeasible (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). A major limitation of snowball samples can be their lack of demographic diversity and limited generalizability (Krathwohl, 2009; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Therefore, these samples were constructed purposively to maintain diversity on demographic factors the literature had indicated were important: namely, gender, socio-economic status, occupation, and in the case of the interviews with immigrants in Jamaica, an equal mix of rural and urban residents.

Inclusion criteria. In Phase 1, individuals were identified who demonstrated a transnational lifestyle, in that they had returned to Jamaica after living as immigrants in New York City, but still traveled from time to time to New York, and maintained connections with close ties there. To do so, several individuals with different income and educational levels were approached to initiate the sample, as I describe in more detail in the next section. A fairly equal number of men and women were identified, of varying

ages, educational levels and occupational statuses in Jamaica. After interviewing them, I asked them to refer me to a close tie in New York.

In Phase 2, I not only interviewed their close ties in New York, but also followed similar methods to identify multiple initiators who could help me develop a diverse snowball sample of New York-based Jamaican immigrants who still had close ties in Jamaica. I interviewed their close ties in Jamaica in Phase 3.

Since close ties were identified by interviewed respondents, gender parity or diversity in their age, education and occupation could not be ensured. Demographic information is provided for all respondents later in this chapter.

Period 1 Sample selection. In keeping with the goal of purposively developing the snowball sample, I began by seeking respondents in both rural and urban areas of Jamaica. I selected Kingston, the capital city, and the rural parishes of St. Mary and St. Ann, where I met my first set of respondents. The Kingston urban area and neighboring parishes of St. Catherine and St. Thomas are major emigrant-sending regions, although Jamaicans migrate from all parishes in varying degrees (Plaza & Henry, 2006; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Kingston has a high percentage of returning residents, but most prefer to settle in rural areas, particularly in the parishes of St. Mary, St. Ann, and Manchester. Returnees see these parishes as highly prized locations because of their higher elevations, cooler climate, low population density, less crime, and more land to do small-scale farming (Horst, 2006b, 2008). ICT infrastructure is better established in Kingston than in rural parishes.

I began by locating individuals who had returned to Jamaica after living in New York for an extended period. I chose individuals who were living in Kingston and in two

rural parishes—St. Mary and St. Ann—with a large concentration of returning migrants. In order to interview equal amounts of men and women of varying occupations and levels of education, I had to assess whether potential respondents met the inclusion criteria. In my first telephone calls to introduce myself and request an interview, I asked them about their occupations, rather than education, and how long they had lived in New York.

Occupation proved to be a more neutral screening filter than educational level. Asking potential respondents about their education in initial phone calls may have embarrassed or offended those with limited schooling. Since education levels and occupation are correlated, securing respondents with a broad range of occupations also achieved considerable educational diversity. I was also able to determine respondents' social class from their diction and the extent to which they used Standard English with me in these initial conversations.[11]

Jamaica – rural sites. To identify the rural sites for the sample selection, I began by visiting the website for Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, which is the government entity responsible for diplomatic relations and the welfare of Jamaican citizens either living overseas or returning to Jamaica. There, I found information for several returning residents' associations across Jamaica. Based on my literature review and anecdotal evidence, I had identified the community of Oracabessa, located in St. Mary Parish on the country's northeastern coast, as one of my two main research sites in Jamaica, as there was a high concentration of returning residents living

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[11] Diction as an indicator of social class, whether lower, middle, or upper, is not always a reliable indicator of the socioeconomic status of many Jamaicans. There is much nuance here. Jamaican returned migrants may be comfortably middle-class regarding income, but not have many years of schooling. Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. often work as trades people, housekeepers, or babysitters, with only a high school education or less, but earn lucrative incomes vis-à-vis Jamaican incomes, and can retire to Jamaica in relative comfort.

there. I phoned several of the contact people on the Ministry's list for Oracabessa

without success. These numbers were either out of order, or no one returned my calls.

My email messages to these people were either unanswered, or returned as undelivered.

Next, I phoned one of the executive members of another returning residents'

association in a neighboring parish of St Ann. I reached the president of the local

association. He did not meet my sample criteria, as he had migrated to the U.K. rather

than the U.S. before retiring in Jamaica. However, he had current telephone numbers for

several St. Mary returnees, and I was finally able to reach the president of one of the

other St. Mary organizations. Mr. Morgan[12], 67, became my first respondent. He had

returned to Jamaica after living in New York for 25 years where he had worked as a

museum security guard, and with a courier company. Mr. Morgan was difficult to reach,

as he was very active in voluntary projects in his community, and therefore rarely at

home. Mrs. Morgan always answered my calls, and at first, was suspicious of who I was,

and the nature of my intentions. However, I managed to placate her and establish a

degree of trust with her, after which she was more cooperative in leaving messages for

her husband.

Mr. Morgan served as my entrée into the returning resident community in St.

Mary parish and referred me to other individuals in neighboring communities to

interview. I subsequently learned that the returning resident community extended along

Jamaica's entire northern coast, rather than being confined mainly to Oracabessa, as the

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[12] All names of respondents have been changed to ensure confidentiality. However, their ages, education, marital and parental status, and occupation were not changed.

extant literature had suggested.[13] I met the rest of my respondents in my Phase 1 sample

from others who referred me to their friends and acquaintances.

Jamaica – urban sites. I know several Jamaicans who have returned to Kingston

after living in the U.S. for many years. In order to gain access to this community, I

contacted one of these individuals: Pauline, age 59, who I met in New York where she

had worked as librarian for an international organization for over 30 years. In 2009, she

relocated to Jamaica. She agreed to be interviewed and referred me to other respondents

in Kingston, all of whom were U.S. immigrants whose primary residences were now in

Jamaica, but who regularly traveled to New York to maintain family, social, and business

connections.

I completed 12 interviews in Phase 1 of the study, nine in the rural sites and three

in Kingston. However, only nine of these interviews were included in the data analysis,

as in three cases, their close ties in New York did not agree to be interviewed.

Period 2 Sample Selection. After completing these interviews in Jamaica, I

proceeded to the second phase of my fieldwork in New York City. My first step was to

locate the close ties that Phase 1 respondents had referred me to. All of these close ties

were Jamaican immigrants to New York City.

New York. I began my data collection in New York by contacting the close ties

my Period 1 respondents had identified. Three of these individuals—all men—refused to

be interviewed. I phoned and emailed each of them several times, with no response. I

contacted my three respondents in Jamaica and explained the difficulty I was having

reaching their close ties. My Jamaican respondents promised to investigate further on my

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[13] Returning resident communities are located all across Jamaica. These are concentrated in the parishes
along the north coast, from the west to the eastern tip of the country, in the central town of Mandeville and
its environs in the parish of Manchester, and in the southern parish of St. Elizabeth.

behalf. Finally, two of the close ties sent messages through my respondents in Jamaica indicating that they did not want to participate in my study. The third never replied. The seven respondents' close ties who I did interview—all women—were Jamaican immigrants living and working in New York, who were either family members or close friends of their Jamaican counterparts.

To begin my New York-based snowball sample for Period 2, I approached an executive member of the local alumni association of my first alma mater: the University of the West Indies (UWI), of which I am a member. This person agreed to be interviewed and referred me to several other UWI alumni in the New York area. I emailed and telephoned to secure interviews with some of them.

In order to ensure that my New York sample was not limited to college-educated respondents, I approached an elder caregiver who assisted my late mother in the Bronx. She agreed to be interviewed, and enabled me to reach two additional elder caregivers in Brooklyn who agreed to be interviewed as well. By the end of my New York City fieldwork, I had interviewed respondents across the boroughs of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Nassau County. This mirrored my goal of geographic variation in my purposive sampling in Jamaica.

In total, I interviewed 18 individuals in Phase 2; seven who were close ties of Phase 1 respondents, 10 New York-based respondents, and one non-immigrant, a close tie of a New York-based respondent visiting New York at the time.

Period 3 Sample Selection. In January 2014, I returned to Jamaica to interview the remaining nine close ties of the New York sample: three women and six men. Eight were non-immigrants, and all nine were living permanently in Jamaica. These

respondents lived in Kingston and in the parishes of St. Ann in the north, Manchester in the center, and Hanover to the extreme west of the island. Their socio-economic status varied widely: one respondent was a partner in the Jamaican subsidiary of a major global accounting firm, two were teachers, some were retired or self-employed professionals, and one was a gardener at an upscale tourist resort.

More detailed descriptions of communities where Phase 1, 2, and 3 respondents lived are included in Appendix C.

Sample Description

The final sample consisted of 17 close tie pairs, or 34 total respondents, living in the U.S. or Jamaica. As indicated previously, I have not included my interviews with three individuals whose close ties were not willing to be interviewed in my analyses.

Gender and age. The sample was predominately female: 22 women (59%) and 15 men (41%), as outlined in Table 1. Respondents ranged from age 18 to 80, with a median age of 61. Twenty-three respondents (62%) were 55 and older. The youngest was Junior, an 18-year old community college student in the Bronx who had migrated to the U.S. in 2012, and the oldest (age 80) was Miss Cordelia, a retired housekeeper in Brooklyn, who had migrated to New York in 1991.

Occupation. Respondents' occupations ranged from highly trained professionals to hourly paid workers, as presented in Table 1. There were 16 retirees in the sample, including a medical doctor, three nurse/midwives, a housekeeper, an investment banker, a teacher, three secretaries, a human resources director, a farmer, a publisher, a landlord, a school bursar, and a trucker. The other 21 respondents were: a college professor with a Ph.D., a certified accountant, two teachers, a social worker, a marketing executive, a

cable installer, two secretaries, an architect, two elder care-givers, an oncology nurse, a

college admissions advisor, three entrepreneurs, one librarian, a welder, and a gardener.

The final respondent was an unemployed full-time college student.

Table 1. *Gender, Age, Occupation, Marital Status, and Educational Level of Sample Respondents by Gender*

Measure	New York-based respondents	Jamaica-based respondents	Total (N=37)
Gender			
Male	10	5	15
Female	12	10	22
Age			
18-44	1	2	3
45-64	6	10	16
65 and over	6	12	18
Occupation			
Student/not employed	1		1
Employed	6	14	20
Retired	6	10	16
Marital Status			
Never married/divorced	6	10	16
Widowed	-	4	4
Married	9	8	17
Educational Level			
High school diploma or less	3	6	9
Vocational/trade school	3	4	7
BA degree	3	9	12
Graduate school	7	2	9

Marital status. Twenty of the 37 respondents (54%) were single, of whom six

women and four men had never been married, four women were divorced, and four

women were widowed. One respondent, Mr. Robert, 67, a landlord, and non-immigrant

living in Jamaica whom I classified as single, had been separated from his wife who lived

in Hartford for over 25 years. They were ostensibly divorced, but neither partner had

made any move to formally dissolve their marital union.[14] Of the 17 respondents who

were married, 10 were men and seven were women. Three men and one woman living in

Jamaica had spouses living in the U.S. Cheryl, 65, a retired nurse and returned U.S.

immigrant, was farming for export on family land in northern Jamaica. Her husband had

started a landscaping company in Florida and spent most of the year there. She visited

him in Florida every three months, and used these visits to schedule medical

appointments with her health care providers in the U.S. All the other married

respondents in New York and Jamaica lived with their spouses.

Education. Twenty-one of all respondents (56%) were college-educated, as

presented in Table 1. Of these with college degrees, most had attended high school in

Jamaica (20), and 10 had completed a college degree there. Three others had earned their

college degrees in the U.K., and seven in the U.S. Thirteen had attended graduate school

in the U.S. Of the 10 respondents who lived in Jamaica and had never migrated, five had

earned college degrees, and the remaining five left school between grades 9 and 12.

All respondents in the sample spoke both standard English and Jamaican Creole.

During interviews, respondents who had not attended university tended to use Jamaican

Creole most often. I am fluent in Jamaican Creole and so could converse meaningfully

with them. Most of the college educated respondents switched between these two

languages, often using Jamaican Creole to emphasize a point, or when they became

emotional while relating their experiences as immigrants in New York.

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[14] It is very common in Jamaica for married couples who are separated to live apart for many years without getting divorced. Divorce is expensive, and estranged husbands are more likely than their wives to create informal unions with other female partners, unless this cohabiting partner puts pressure on the married individual to dissolve the legal union (Clarke, 1957, 1999). Furthermore, Jamaican widows and divorced women are far less likely to remarry than widowed or divorced men (Rawlins, 2006).

Parental status. As shown in Table 2, 25 respondents (67%) had children, with a range of one to 13 children, and a median of two. Given that most of my respondents were older adults with adult children, they did not experience the stresses of child-rearing across borders, as other scholars have reported in their studies of families divided by borders (Dreby, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Several respondents had blended families, with children from previous marriages or relationships counted as part of their family units. Norbert, a welder in Jamaica whispered to me during our interview that he had four children and not three, but his wife didn't know about his "outside child".[15] Not all respondents were married to the parents of their children, who lived in other parts of the U.S. or in Jamaica. Among non-immigrant respondents in Jamaica, most had adult children living in the U.S.

Eleven of the 37 respondents—of whom nine were women—had no children. Eight of these women were college educated professionals, and one worked as an elder caregiver. The only men without children were Junior (age 18), and his brother Rafael (age 32), a high school teacher in Mandeville, Jamaica. Both brothers were born- again Christians[16], and single.

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[15] The term "outside child" is commonly used in Jamaica for a child born out of the legal marital union, who may or may not be known to, or acknowledged by the legal spouse.
[16] A reference to members of the Evangelical religious movement, the largest religious group in Jamaica. Born-again Christians disavow alcohol use and premarital sex. Jamaica is predominantly Protestant comprising Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Baptists, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglicans (known as Episcopalians in the U.S.), Roman Catholics, and minority Jewish and Muslim groups.

Table 2. *Parental Status and Immigration Status by Gender and Country of Residence*

	NY-based respondents		Jamaica-based respondents		Total (N=37)
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	
Parental status					
No children		10	1		11
Adult children	11	8	1	3	23
Children <18 living with parent		1	2		3
Children <18 living with relatives abroad			2		2
Primary Residence					
U.S.A.	4	12			16
Jamaica	5	6	6	3	20
Both equally	1				1
Immigration Status					
U.S. Citizen	6	9	2	5	22
U.S. permanent resident	2	3	1		6
Jamaican citizen only			4	5	9

Residential patterns. All respondents were born in Jamaica. Twenty eight had migrated to the U.S. as young children or teenagers to join family members who were living there. At the time of my interviews, 28 (75%) had U.S. permanent residency; the remaining nine were Jamaican citizens and lived in Jamaica. Of the 28 U.S. immigrants, 16 lived in New York and one in New Jersey. The remaining 11 had returned to Jamaica, but travelled to the U.S. from one to five times per year. Trevor, 75, an immigrant entrepreneur, owned a house in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. and a condominium in Ocho Rios on Jamaica's north coast. He spent equal time in both countries, as he was operating a nonprofit organization in New York and an energy conservation company in Jamaica. Miss Cordelia, 80, a retired housekeeper, shared an apartment with her daughter and son-in-law in the Flatbush area of Brooklyn, and occasionally spent the winter in a four bedroom concrete house she had built in St. Ann, near to Ocho Rios. For most of the

year, she locked up this house, and her son (and close tie) Norbert, 47, who lived nearby, stayed there from time to time. Norbert was a U.S. resident alien whose wife and three children had migrated to Brooklyn.

Immigration status. Although respondents were not asked about their residency status in the U.S. (as the Rutgers IRB specifically prohibited this question), immigrant respondents freely volunteered this information. There were more U.S. citizens than U.S. resident aliens (22 and 6, respectively). No respondent indicated that they were currently living, or had ever lived, in the U.S. without legal authorization.

Two immigrant respondents admitted without any prompting from me that they had entered into business marriages in order to live legally in the U.S. Nordia, 52, an oncology nurse, paid a Jamaican in the U.S. Navy US$2,000 to marry him in order to gain permanent residency and qualify for financial aid to complete a nursing degree in New York.[17] Her spouse's mother felt that Nordia should have paid more, and demanded that she cover additional bills for vacation airline tickets that her spouse incurred while he was deployed overseas. After her spouse returned to the U.S., he wanted to make their union permanent. She rejected his advances, and terminated the marriage after three years. Berris, 56, a social worker, could not afford to pay his mortgage and car payments while working in Jamaica as a teacher, despite his college degree. He went to New York City on a visitor's visa and sought out a legal resident who agreed to marry him and sponsor him for a green card. He dissolved their business marriage amicably after the statutory marital separation period ended.

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[17] Nordia explained that she and her business spouse got married in Mexico, and she returned to the U.S. alone after her spouse departed from Mexico to his military engagement overseas. Her immigration lawyer advised her that as a Jamaican, getting married in Mexico instead of the U.S. would raise less suspicion from the U.S. immigration authorities about the veracity of their union. She could claim they wanted to marry and honeymoon in Mexico before his overseas deployment.

There was no possibility of these respondents experiencing any adverse consequences as a result of their disclosures about their business marriages. These marriages had taken place and been dissolved over two decades ago in both cases. Any legal statutes of limitations would have expired during this time. Both respondents had become legal U.S. residents, and their names and other identifying details have been changed.

Ethnic identity. All respondents defined themselves as ethnically black, although some saw this category as more nuanced. Several of the immigrants qualified their responses by telling me that how they identified depended on which country they were in. Donna, 55, was an entrepreneur living in Jamaica who described herself as a mixture of Chinese, Jewish, Latina, European, and African. By contrast to the freedom she felt to define herself as multiracial in Jamaica, she felt that when she was in the U.S., "you were either black or white," reflecting Waters' (1999) findings that Caribbean migrants felt that they become "black on arrival" in the U.S.

No immigrant respondent identified as African American.[18] Several told me that they had a hard time answering this question, and mentioned that the U.S. Census categories did not make allowances for Caribbean immigrants' felt identities. Immigrant respondents most often used the term "Jamaican," as many felt Jamaicans had an identity in the U.S. that was distinctive from the black category. For the nine respondents in Jamaica who were non-migrants, they identified primarily in terms of their nationality, with most calling themselves Jamaican.

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[18] Waters (1999) noted in her study of Jamaican and other Caribbean immigrants in Brooklyn that they maintained their national identities, and deliberately avoided identifying as African American. They felt their Caribbean heritage gave them a competitive edge over U.S.-born blacks in the labor market and society generally, as U.S.-born blacks were on the lowest rung of U.S. society.

Nature of close ties. Table 3 indicates the close ties that respondents identified in the other country, most of which are kin ties (71%). In my interviews, three of the six non-kin dyads loosely defined themselves as kin, as these were very intense relationships. For example, Nordia, 52, referred to her close tie as "Aunt Myrtle," even though they were not related by blood. Aunt Myrtle was a close friend of Nordia's late mother, and Nordia regards her as a surrogate parent. Likewise, Karen, 48, and Mr. Robert, 67, were not family members. However, Mr. Robert had known Karen since she was a child, as they grew up in neighboring communities. He was the son of the local public health nurse and she was the daughter of farmers. In their rural community, a nurse enjoyed a higher social status than a farmer, even though both families' incomes may have been similar. Karen therefore regarded Mr. Robert as having a higher social status than her, which explained her use of the prefix "Mr." The honorific also signified her respect for his age. The third non-kin dyad, Marcia, 50, and Preston, 51, were involved in a romantic relationship.

Table 3. *Summary of Close Ties by Age, Occupation, and Primary Country of Residence*

New York-based respondent	Age	Occupation	Jamaica-based respondent	Age	Occupation	Relationship
Aunt Hyacinth	79	Nurse/midwife*	Pauline	59	Entertainer	Kin
Paula	46	Secretary	Everton	69	Trucker*, farmer	Kin
Maxine	50	College advisor	Cheryl	65	Nurse*, farmer	Kin
Beryl	66	H.R. director*	Colleen	65	Private banker*	Kin
Aunt Iris	72	Nurse*	Errol	56	Architect	Kin
Marlene	72	Nurse/midwife*	Sharon	64	Publisher*	Kin
Trevor	75	Entrepreneur	Maureen	75	Teacher*	Kin
Berris	56	Social worker	Joan	66	Secretary*	Kin
Barbara	67	Medical doctor*	Alex	47	Accountant	Kin
Junior	18	College student	Rafael	32	Teacher	Kin
Miss Cordelia	80	Housekeeper*	Norbert	47	Welder	Kin
Karen	48	Elder care giver	Mr. Robert	67	Landlord*	Non-kin
Nordia	52	Nurse	Aunt Myrtle	73	School bursar*	Non-kin
Marcia	50	Elder care giver	Preston	51	Gardener	Non-kin
Gladstone	67	College professor	Donovan	53	Entrepreneur	Non-kin
Alexis	56	Marketer	Donna	55	Entrepreneur	Non-kin
Desmond	48	Cable installer	Lorna	39	Teacher	Non-kin

Note. *These respondents were all retired.

Sample Diversity

Despite my efforts, the sample skewed towards older, female respondents, with relatively high incomes. To some degree, these imbalances reflect the homophily so common between close ties (Baym & Ledbetter, 2009; McPherson et al., 2001); my original respondents generally gave me information for a close tie who was very much like themselves.

The sample skewed older and middle-class because the returned migrants I interviewed in Jamaica during Period 1 had been able to afford to retire and relocate from host to home country (Jamaica Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, 2014; Plaza & Henry, 2006; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Respondents were therefore more likely to

be people who had become financially comfortable after years of working overseas. The sample was also predominantly female for a couple of reasons; first, most respondents were older adults, and Jamaican women's life expectancy exceeds that of men (Population Reference Bureau, 2013). The skew also reflects the feminization of Jamaican migration (Foner, 1979b, 1998, 2000, 2005; Thomas-Hope, 2002) discussed in the literature review.

Nevertheless, I was able to capture diversity in the sample across several dimensions the literature review indicated were important for this study: occupation/income, ICT use, and geography. These variables compensated somewhat for the non-probability nature of the sample and the predominance of female and older respondents. By purposively seeking out these forms of diversity, I was able to expand the current literature beyond its emphasis on long-distance parenting, long-distance romantic relationships, and distributed work teams, which has dominated mediated communication and immigration research.

Geographic variation. While pragmatism required that I confine my research sites to various locations in New York City and Jamaica, where I could interview respondents and their close ties in person, I was still able to capture considerable geographic variation in both sites. These variations are important because prior research has established that local environments affect settlement experiences (Kim, Jung, & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2002; Portes & Zhou, 1993), and that rural or urban residency influences likelihood of migration or of return migration (Plaza & Henry, 2006; Senior, 1978a, 1978b; Small, 2006).

While some Jamaica-based respondents may have had even closer ties in other U.S. locations (e.g., Florida), because New York has been and remains a primary context of reception for Jamaican migrants and transmigrants, I was still able to capture close ties between Jamaica and the U.S. Furthermore, because my sample spanned much of New York City and the island of Jamaica, I was also able to capture a considerable amount of geographic diversity across the two broader research sites.

Finally, as Fitzgerald (2006) notes in his call for ethnographies of migration to be multi-sited in order to capture both "here" and "there," the sampling method for this study mimicked the back-and-forth experiences of the transmigrants themselves. The sampling method began with a Jamaican sample and followed up with their close ties in New York, before sampling from New York and following their close ties in Jamaica.

Data Analysis

I conducted a total of 42 interviews with my 37 respondents. All were transcribed verbatim, resulting in 420 single-spaced typewritten pages for analysis, supplemented by detailed field notes compiled after completing each interview. As I started the analysis, I detected common themes. Such themes emerged from the content of the paired conversations as reported by respondents, which varied widely according to the types of dyads, such as family matters for kin pairs, to community gossip, to national politics, to more abstract discussions about values for both kin and non-kin pairs. Other themes directly related to the paired conversations included respondents' perceptions of the distance from close ties, presence and absence, loneliness, coping mechanisms, ICT preferences and affordances, conflict, relationship dynamics, financial issues, and routine and mundane rituals.

There was also a rich cluster of themes concerning respondents' experiences of immigrant life in the U.S. which were not included in the data analysis. These topics, although compelling, were not immediately relevant to the study's research questions. A detailed chart of the sample codes is in the Appendix.

Based on these common themes, I formed root categories based on the theoretical focus and research questions. I then identified emerging themes from these root and sub-categories. The data were analyzed based on the emergence of common themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) with the themes identified inductively via the constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). What resulted was a thematic analysis rather than grounded theory. This was one reason that I became less concerned about the lack of gender parity in the final sample, because I reached theoretical saturation halfway through the fieldwork, with patterns that were consistent across both genders.

I played both insider and outsider roles in this project (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I was an insider, as I am a member of the group I studied. I have had the experience of living in Jamaica as a citizen, and as an immigrant in New York City, for extended periods. At the same time, I was an outsider in my role as a researcher, casting a dispassionate eye—as much as this is possible with qualitative research—on my data.

Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that the intimacy of qualitative research does not allow researchers to remain true outsiders to the experience under study (p. 61). Conversely, the researcher cannot be a complete insider either. Therefore, what matters more is the space in between, what they see as a fluid space as an insider-outsider, and "the costs and benefits this space affords" (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 61). Such

costs could include overlooking cultural nuances in my respondents' experiences that seemed obvious to me, but would not be obvious to another researcher who was more of an outsider. On the other hand, there were numerous benefits of my insider status and cultural immersion that deepened my analysis. These included my fluency in Jamaican Creole; my empathy in being able to put respondents at ease as I too was an immigrant; and my familiarity with their urban immigrant neighborhoods and the minutiae of their daily lives, as I live in one of these neighborhoods myself.

In the next chapter, I focus on the first emergent theme in the data, which was the way respondents negotiated distance from their close ties overseas. This is the first of the three Findings chapters which explore this and other major themes.

Chapter Five

Findings - Negotiating Distance

This chapter presents findings related to the first emergent theme in the data: how respondents perceive and manage distance from their close ties overseas. The chapter begins by defining distance, and discusses the relationships between how respondents treated distance and the research questions guiding this inquiry. I then synthesize the findings by examining the patterns across all respondent pairs related to this theme, before providing an in-depth analysis of five respondent pairs—four kin and one non-kin—in order to illustrate the range of ways that distance was experienced in the broader dataset. In doing so, I argue that respondents have developed deliberate coping strategies to either re-conceptualize or minimize the impact of distance on their cross-border relationships.

Distance is at the core of the migration experience, and I follow the broader migration and transnational literatures in defining it as a rupture in family or other close ties resulting from the international movement of a loved one (Dreby, 2010; Pottinger et al., 2008). The focus here is on physical distance and separation—and more specifically, on the communication behaviors that evolve to deal with geographic dislocation.

Negotiating Distance: Common Trends

My first set of research questions (RQ1 & RQ1a) aim to uncover respondents' communication goals as they relate to their close ties overseas, and the ICTs they engage to support these goals. Across the sample, these goals were primarily relational, in that respondents were driven by a desire to reinforce the close bond they shared within their

pairs. To a lesser extent, their goals were instrumental, in that they sought material or financial assistance from their close ties.

Diverse communication goals. Within respondents' communication goals to support relationship maintenance were topics such as intellectual stimulation, frequent routine and mundane connections, and conflict enactment and resolution. Relational maintenance was a priority for all 17 pairs, both kin and non-kin, but was a particular concern for the one romantic pair in the dataset who maintained intense and intimate contact daily, and for whom distance was a major impediment to their relationship.

Relational maintenance had various permutations. Both kin and non-kin pairs shared communication goals of intellectual stimulation, and the sharing of values. These were goals which were not necessarily constrained or enhanced by distance, but could be shared in both offline and online co-present contexts. Furthermore, non-kin pairs who were not romantic partners, and kin pairs who living apart for long periods could more easily achieve these cerebral goals.

To meet these goals, respondent pairs preferred voice-based ICTs with limited visual cues, but which were synchronous, immediate, spontaneous, convenient, and portable, such as the mobile or landline telephone. Voice-based ICTs were the most valuable medium for traversing distance. While they are not defined as the richest of media, vocal cues are essential for synchronous communication in mediated space, whereas visual cues are less so (Klebe Trevino et al., 1990). In situations where visual cues are minimized or absent, vocal cues are all that communication partners can rely on to share meaning.

Another goal that pairs shared was that of conflict enactment and resolution, in particular by kin and romantic pairs, and respondents did not see distance as a barrier in articulating these kinds of exchanges. Mediated conversations that involved conflict formed part of the negotiation of family crises and other kin dynamics that erupted on occasion across distance. In times of conflict, feuding respondents needed to use ICTs that allowed for spontaneous contact, as well as synchronous and simultaneous dialogue, which the telephone was best suited for.

This ICT was not necessarily the richest route, as it lacked visual cues, but during an argument, one did not have to see the other party, whereas the telephone's vocal cues such as turn-taking, immediate feedback, voice inflections, and pointed silences were essential. Distance was less important during a conflict, as it was verbal exchanges that were paramount to achieve the mutual goals of expressing anger, hurt, disappointment or reproach, and of talking these conflicts through.

When resolving conflict, these pairs generally managed to restore their relationships to a place of equanimity, again by talking the conflict through to resolution. Such equanimity was a vital communication goal for them to achieve, as they needed to maintain their long-distance connections with their close ties for their mutual emotional well-being, and the related goal of preserving family or romantic bonds. Not working hard to resolve arguments could risk their relationships in ways that were tied directly to the physical distance between them. There was little or no chance for face-to-face meetings between most pairs to diffuse conflicts. Therefore, respondent pairs had to engage ICTs more frequently, creatively, and intensely to preserve these bonds that were already under stress because of distance.

Routinized communication bridges distance. Distance from one's close tie was an ever-present threat to the survival of these relationships, and had to be considered as an invisible third partner within the pairs. Therefore, all 17 pairs engaged in the goal of maintaining routine and mundane communication, which were ways to confirm and reaffirm their relationship with their close ties. Both kin and non-kin pairs demonstrated these routine efforts to connect, which were well supported by ICT options such as texting and short mobile phone calls, which enabled frequent and spontaneous contact.

Not every effort to reach out to one's close tie needed an extended mediated conversation. A short one-line text message was often enough to confirm to these pairs that they were in each other's thoughts. Spontaneity and immediate contact were much more important goals than being able to see their close ties virtually via Skype or related applications, because spontaneity more effectively overcame distance, and better enabled impulsive contact.

This tradeoff between lean versus richer media speaks to the entrenched nature of routinized communication behaviors to create companionable contact and maintain long-term bonds (Baym, 2010). These behaviors are extremely time-consuming and short text messages and phone calls better achieve such frequent contact. These time-intensive and routinized behaviors further emphasize the goals of health and social support/well-being inherent in communication ecology. Distance could never be erased, but could be diluted as a constraint with the goal of checking in, sometimes several times daily between kin and non-kin pairs, as this signified communicative intent and interest.

Efficacy of the telephone. In order to maintain their close connections across borders, respondents showed little variation in ICT use ((RQ1a). They all relied

primarily on the telephone—whether mobile or landline—and to a lesser extent, on e-mail, to meet their communicative goals related to supporting their relationships. Across these diverse relationship types, respondents deliberately limited their ICT choices to those they felt best met their needs for relationship maintenance. The affordances they most wanted were spontaneity, immediacy and synchronicity, as manifest in opportunities for immediate turn-taking, as well as convenience and portability.

Respondents were not as interested in visual cues, but voice-based communication was paramount for all of them. When immediacy and synchronicity were not essential, and respondents' goals were less urgent, text-based forms of communication such as email and texting were useful. Email offered a convenient and inexpensive opportunity to have mediated conversations about values, or current and wider social developments which did not need to be synchronous, immediate, or visual. Some respondents actually preferred the asynchronicity, distance, and convenience that text-based messages provided for discursive exchanges.

The primacy of the telephone for cross-border communication with close ties is consistent with findings from other world regions, and for Italian, Filipino, Singaporean, Latin American, and Turkish migrants (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parreñas, 2005; Şenyürekli & Detzner, 2009; Thomas & Lim, 2012; Vertovec, 2004).

The second set of research questions was concerned with how demographic factors influenced respondents' communicative goals and ICT choices to maintain their close ties (RQ2 & RQ2a). Although the data were skewed towards women (59%) and respondents over 55 (62%), most respondents had access to a wide array of ICTs, despite

their preference for the telephone in managing distance. There were few, if any appreciable differences in respondents' goals and how they managed distance based on gender and age.

Occupation and presumed income were the exceptions, in that respondents with fewer years of schooling, non-professional occupations, and presumed lower incomes were the only ones with goals for financial assistance from their close ties. Sometimes this goal could be urgent, and they managed the distance from their close ties using ICTs that traversed this distance as quickly as possible: telephone calls and to a lesser extent, text messages that guaranteed immediacy.

Some older respondents were reluctant to use the Internet because of discomfort with technology, even though they had Internet connectivity. So in order to achieve their relational goals across distance, older respondents relied on their routinized ICT choices: the telephone, which was familiar, convenient, and easier for them to use. For older respondents, spontaneity of communication was another important goal. When considering health, or social support and well-being as important goals in communication ecology, such discomfort with newer ICTs led older respondents to rely on simpler ICTs options. For them, an ICT's spontaneity in quickly overcoming distance to achieve their goal of social support and well-being, was more important than other richer ICT affordances such as a visual component.

Distance defined by relationship type. What was most pronounced when considering the impact of demographics on respondents' communication goals across distance was the type of relationship the pairs were engaged in: whether kin, non-kin or kin-like, and their stage in the migration trajectory This finding reinforced prior

theoretical claims that relationship type was the most influential predictor of the quality

of an interaction (Baym, 2010).

The length of their separation was a related factor that influenced respondents'

goals and their management of distance. Less intimate connections, such as those

between non-kin or non-romantic pairs, had a relatively less intense emotional

investment, and consequently, their goals ranged from fellowship to routine exchanges

discussed previously. These respondents therefore found it easier to accept distance as an

inevitable reality, and a dimension that did not interfere with their achieving these less

intense relational goals. Furthermore, pairs who had lived apart all of their adult lives

were more likely to minimize or overlook the difficulties of their separation.

Conversely, pairs in intense romantic or kin relationships, and/or who had

relatively frequent face-to-face contact, had greater difficulty coping with distance.

Whether respondents were new or seasoned migrants determined their communication

goals as well. There was only one recent migrant in the data set, having arrived in New

York City the year before, compared to all other migrant respondents who had lived there

for decades. For this recent arrival, frequent and spontaneous contact with his older

brother in Jamaica was essential for his goals of understanding—making sense of his new

environment—and health, or his emotional well-being.

None of the pairs in the sample were parenting children across borders, so

distance for them was not as fraught with grief (Madianou & Miller, 2012) or guilt

(Dreby, 2010), as other researchers have reported. These close ties were one component

of respondents' otherwise varied lives; unlike children left behind, who would be uppermost in migrant parents' minds.[19]

Distance as the new normal. The third set of research questions explored differences in strategies for maintaining close ties based on respondents' primary country of residence (RQ3), and how these difference affected their ICT choices for achieving their communicative goals (RQ3a). Irrespective of location, respondent pairs shared similar goals for relational maintenance, routine exchanges and conflict management, as these occupied the spectrum from daily verbal contact between kin and non-kin pairs, to less intense, frequent, or mundane exchanges.

Where location mattered was in the area of instrumental goals. Jamaican-based respondents with less years of schooling and less presumed income were the only ones who had the goals of needing financial assistance from their close tie in New York City. Their financial instability reflected the stronger correlation between income, education and greater financial hardship in Jamaica than in New York City. But the distance between the two countries was not an impediment to these goals of financial need being met quickly and regularly. A telephone call or text message were all that were required to achieve them. Other systems such as money transfer services in both countries facilitated the delivery of this assistance.

For New York-based respondents, their location, and the distance between the two countries were major constraints in how they could achieve their goals to establish or preserve investments in Jamaica. These goals were much more extensive than relational

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[19] Being separated from aged loved ones overseas can be as trying as being apart from children. It is the intensity of the relationship and relatively frequent face-to-face contact that feeds this intensity. One New York-based respondent, Desmond in one pair discussed in this chapter was separated from his elderly father in Jamaica. This was not who he referred me to interview as his close tie in Jamaica, but Desmond's close tie who was a female friend, was in regular contact with his father on Desmond's behalf.

goals, or requests for financial help, as these could not be met only by mediated channels, but went beyond media and entailed additional interpersonal responsibilities for their close ties in Jamaica. New York-based respondents had to rely heavily on their close ties, either kin or non-kin, and engaged ICTs to provide instructions to these ties to meet these instrumental goals.

The close ties in Jamaica were entrusted to go a step further within their respective communication ecologies to employ organizational, expert, and other resources such as logistical, legal or construction services to meet these goals (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012) on behalf of their New York-based ties. Between both countries, voice-based communication achieved the goals of regular updates, making quick decisions, or resolving unexpected crises. Text-based messages such as email and texting achieved the goals of reinforcing verbal instructions or confirming the progress of projects.

Respondents in Jamaica were more likely to initiate telephone calls to their close ties in New York, given Jamaica's less expensive mobile phone rates. These calls were both for routine interaction, as well as for financial assistance and logistical or investment matters. Some respondents in Jamaica would have liked to use the Internet with their close ties in New York, but meso-level factors such as lack of Internet connectivity in their neighborhoods, rendered this option unavailable, and limited their media choices in their communication ecologies.

Distance had become normalized and acceptable in most respondents' relationships over time, and the relationship type and related level of intensity were predictive of how normalized this distance had become for different pairs. Most

respondents in the sample regarded distance from their close ties as a way of life and adapted their emotional responses accordingly. Even for respondent pairs engaged in business activities with their close ties where distance was a major constraint, they used ICTs that circumvented this distance, such as enabling precise documentation, or swift resolution of crises, to better support their investment goals.

Distance viewed through a pragmatic lens. The final trend emerging from the data set was that respondents shared a similar perception of distance. For migrants and non-migrants alike, geographic separation from their close ties meant making do with imperfect circumstances, but also working to reconstitute the spatial and emotional realities of the distances that divided them. Therefore they developed goals that both maintained these relationships and their emotional equilibrium. All respondents purposely adopted a pragmatic and resilient outlook, given the permanent distance between pairs. This outlook was evident in the majority of my interviews.

These goals of emotional pragmatism and resilience enhanced respondents' goals of understanding of themselves and others, and of health, or their well-being. This pragmatic outlook was a deliberate attempt on their part to remain positive despite the structural impacts of migration on their lives and relationships. Such pragmatism in the face of distance was also evident with Italian immigrants in Australia (Baldassar, 2007a), Cape Verdean families with migrant relatives overseas (Åkesson et al, 2012), and Filipino immigrants in the U.K. (Madianou & Miller, 2012).

By emotional pragmatism, I refer to the sociological definition of pragmatism as a philosophical orientation that emphasizes practical consequences, rather than the metaphysical origins of ideas (Smith, 2009). This definition is highly abstract, so I am

reducing it to a more practical application of pragmatism as a flexible, negotiable, and alterable view of one's current circumstances and the future (Smith, 2009).

As part of this emotional pragmatism, I observed in respondents a related dimension of emotional resilience, or the human ability to withstand challenge, crisis, stress, or trauma (Stout, 2008). There are characteristics that resilient individuals demonstrate, including a sense of purpose and direction, life satisfaction, contentment and optimism, competence and environmental mastery (Klohnen, 1996).

Emotional resilience has been explored in migration and transnational literatures as a dependent variable, influenced by behaviors that immigrants develop in order to better integrate into their host countries such as monoculturalism or biculturalism, parental and family influence, group affiliation, and ethnic versus American identity (Crispin, 1999; Rogers, 2001; Waters, 1999).

Such emotional pragmatism and resilience were manifested in the cross-border identities and lives of many respondents, which resulted in a considerable adaptability and a sense of realism in how all of them negotiated the distance that characterized their long-distance communicative relationships, and the ICTs they engaged to bridge this distance. This pragmatic and resilient outlook formed the bedrock of their goals for relational maintenance. Respondents well understood that distance was inimical to maintaining the close bonds within their pairs, and so they had to reframe and overcome distance, albeit in cognitive terms.

Discussion

This section provides more detailed discussions of five respondent pairs that enacted these common trends. These pairs were selected from the data set of 17 because

although their close tie relationships were quite varied, they demonstrated very similar

behaviors and attitudes with regard to how they managed distance from their close ties,

revealing the pervasiveness of these trends across very different relationship types. Two

of these pairs were anomalous in the sample, as they were the only respondents that had

engaged in serious conflicts from a distance. Most of these pairs saw each other with

relative frequency—which makes their preference for relatively rich ICTs that supported

synchronicity and verbal cues, something that needs to be considered within this broader

context.

The discussion of these first three pairs illustrates that they never appeared

preoccupied with the reality of the distance between them. Rather, they were more

concerned with their efforts to maintain their relationships. Some respondents even

claimed to prefer and welcome distance, as offline co-presence required more emotional

energy than they are willing to expend.

Distance Preferred: "She Would Be Too Much Under My Foot"[20]

Boundaries are as important in long-distance relationships as they are in offline

co-present ones, and are certainly easier to erect and maintain from a distance. The

following pair demonstrates that distance could be advantageous in circumstances when

emotional caretaking required in a relationship is overwhelming.

Marlene (age 72), who lives in Queens, New York is Sharon's (age 65) aunt.

Marlene had worked as a nurse/midwife in the U.K. and then in New York City before

she retired. Sharon had worked as a production manager for several fashion magazines in

New York City and established a printing company. After selling the company, she sold

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[20] This quote, and those that follow as section heads in this and subsequent chapters are in vivo quotes
from respondents.

her house in Queens and relocated to Jamaica to care for her elderly father before he died. Sharon is retired and volunteers for her church.

The women speak almost daily and discuss family matters most frequently. Sharon's communication ecology is extensive with Skype, email, social media, and the phone at her disposal. She visits the U.S. at least twice each year. However, she and Marlene only communicate by phone (both mobile and landline). According to Sharon, her aunt "refuses to have a computer in her house because she's not open to change, she thinks she has to learn something new."

The ICT options in Marlene's communication ecology are limited to the telephone and annual overseas visits to Jamaica. As an energetic retiree, Marlene justifies her refusal to use email and social media by saying, "I don't like anything to tie me down you know, like I have to come home and check email." Another niece had recently given her an iPad, which she wasn't using. She resists using the tablet, as she feels adding Internet costs to her monthly cable and telephone bills is too great an expense.

Marlene and Sharon shared contrasting perspectives of their conversations with me. Marlene is an avid church member in her Queens community, and Sharon revealed that Marlene and several of her congregants were constantly feuding, due to what Sharon described as Marlene's inquisitiveness. Whereas Marlene portrayed their conversations about family matters as benign, with few disagreements, Sharon was more forthcoming:

> The only time I feel I have to exercise restraint [with Marlene] is when she's getting beaten up. She means well, but she's always getting into other people's [family members] business. I'll tell her it's their business, and she'll say, well, you're the only person who will listen. So that's the kind of disagreement we will have. We're very open with each other. And she's the key confessor for me too.

Their accounts were congruent in that both agreed that Sharon was a trusted confidante for Marlene, and also served as Marlene's informal caretaker. This was evident when Sharon built a house in Jamaica for another aunt who had been recently widowed, using money that Marlene and her sisters in America had provided. Sharon assumed full responsibility for the project from start to finish, despite Marlene's presence during the construction:

> She was the financier and I had to do all the work. She had no clue about anything; she just put the money over. We had to agree on the size and design and that was a joke. She came down and she turned into the architects' mother. When she and him supposed to be talking business, she and him talking about his future. She was detached from the whole project.

Sharon therefore prefers to be geographically separated from Marlene. She admits that she plays a role in her family, "where I'm like the arbiter…and I've had to shave it down by telling people to grow up and make their own decisions." Due to these emotional demands from her family members, Sharon believes that she and Marlene have a healthier relationship with distance between them:

> She would be too much under my foot. She'd be coming to my doorstep and saying, come follow me here, follow me there. And I'm not that kind of person. The two weeks I was in her house [in New York] she kept hauling me to the street every day, browsing in the mall, making things to do.

For Sharon, closeness from a distance is preferable, as she is very pragmatic about her need to limit offline co-presence with Marlene because of her aunt's emotional demands. Marlene's goals for Sharon's emotional and social support from Sharon, albeit from a distance (Baldassar, 2007a), makes distance an effective way for Sharon to maintain this relationship amicably. Sharon works actively to negotiate and preserve physical distance from Marlene. Sharon engages ICTs to achieve her similar goal of

providing emotional support to Marlene from a distance. Therefore, she relies on phone calls to offer advice or listen to Marlene's secrets—the main communication resources that they share. By engaging this rich vocal medium, Sharon manages to minimize her face-to-face visits to her aunt in New York.

Marlene is equally pragmatic about Sharon being far away in Jamaica. She admits that they speak much more now by phone than when Sharon was living in New York. Marlene feels they have become closer, despite the distance. For Marlene, the more emotionally dependent of the two, her phone calls to Sharon meet her goals for emotional caretaking and social support, which older kin members often need when separated by borders (Baldassar et al, 2007b).

"[Distance] is Not Really a Problem"

Desmond (age 48), married, and a cable installer, lives in Mount Vernon, New York, and speaks with his family friend Lorna (age 39), a teacher in Jamaica several times each week. They are not kin, but are tied together by long standing, informal, and extended family bonds. Lorna met Desmond through his close male friend, who had fathered Lorna's sister's child. Both her sister's baby father[21] and Desmond have become close friends of Lorna's family. They speak multiple times per week when Lorna calls him from her mobile phone to his, given cheaper mobile phone rates in Jamaica.

They use email primarily for instrumental interactions, like when Desmond asks Lorna to send messages, packages, or money to his elderly father in Jamaica.[22] They use

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[21] The term "baby father" and 'baby mother' are common Jamaican expressions for the biological parents of children born out of wedlock. These unmarried parents often become informally integrated into their children's extended families as the baby fathers/mothers—in the best cases—provide material and emotional nurture to these children as they grow to adulthood.

[22] Desmond regularly sends Western Union money transfers to Lorna, which she takes to his elderly father in Manchester parish to pay his utility bills. Desmond emails Lorna the money transfer transaction number so she can collect it.

the phone for their more frequent social and emotional exchanges. Much of their conversations are about banal topics relating to their daily work activities, and they exchange news about his father and siblings who still live in Jamaica, as well as about her family. Desmond is an informal mentor for Lorna, as she relies on him for guidance and emotional support.

Desmond's communication ecology is extensive at home but less so during work hours, when he is always on the road connecting cable service in different parts of New York City. He therefore relies heavily on his mobile phone. Lorna has the Internet at home, but uses her mobile phone extensively, as she drives 30 miles each day to and from work. To communicate with each other, they confine themselves to very frequent mobile phone calls, texts, and to a lesser extent, email. For their communication goals of relational maintenance, and given their mobile lifestyles, their ICT choices are ideal. Desmond in particular has created a discrete personal—and portable—communication system for himself (Boase, 2008), as he is able to maintain this mobile phone contact with Lorna completely away from his home.

Desmond completed college in Jamaica and then taught in a high school. He migrated to New York in 1996 to join his wife and children who had migrated earlier, thereby reflecting the pattern of female-initiated and serial migration flows (Bashi, 2006; Foner, 2005; Pottinger et al., 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Eventually, he was hired by a major telecommunications company as a line installer, which Desmond saw as "a step down, as the pay wasn't so great" but he was still working there. He feels he has

experienced downward mobility[23] after moving to New York, but over the years, his salary has increased significantly, and it suits him to stay until he retires.

Lorna is a single parent of a young daughter and has been teaching in an elementary school for 16 years after graduating from a teachers' college. She lives in the dormitory town of Portmore in St. Catherine parish, neighboring the capital Kingston. She has several siblings and other relatives living in New York, earns very little, and is struggling to survive financially in Jamaica. Given her lean circumstances, Lorna wants to leave Jamaica, but prefers not to do so illegally, and has procrastinated in asking her siblings in America to sponsor her residency application. In her phone conversations with Desmond, she often feels desperate about her situation:

> Sometimes I'll say, "Desmond you can't find me a man fi marry? I need a way to get out of Jamaica." I've been asking everybody I know. [He'll say,] "You mean for all the people you know, you can't find one man fi marry?" I've been teaching for 16 years and I tired of it, burnt out.

Desmond and Lorna are both comfortable with the distance between them, as each has their lives and family responsibilities in their respective countries. They recognize that their friendship will always be defined as such, and according to Lorna:

> It's quite fine because, put it this way, he's there [in the USA] because he can be there, that is where his life is, and my life is in Jamaica, so we communicate and keep in touch and know pretty much what's going on, so it's not really a problem.

Desmond has a similar view of their cross-border friendship, in which he invests significant amounts of time and effort:

> It doesn't feel any way, I mean I accept that this is the way it has to be, I live here and she lives in Jamaica. It doesn't bother me. And we talk so often on the phone that it doesn't seem like she's far away. It's not hard at all.

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[23] See Rogers (2001), Stuart (2013), and Waters (1999) for more discussion about Caribbean immigrants' experiences with downward mobility, especially for men, in host countries.

Desmond rationalizes the inevitability of this distance with what Giddens' (1979) calls a "rationalization of action" (p. 71). Both pairs of respondents (i.e., Marlene and Sharon, and Desmond and Lorna) accept their reality and make do with their living situations in their respective countries which they either choose not to, or cannot, alter. Giddens (1979) also alludes to a "dialectic of presence and absence" (p. 71) when reflecting on the duality of structure, where minor forms of social action are tied to wider structural properties in society. For these four respondents, their inevitable physical separation has led each of them to choose a pragmatic emotional outlook as a workable response to the structural rules that separate them.

"Loneliness is Never My Problem"

Just as emotional pragmatism discussed in the previous section is a world view that respondents adopt to make sense of their long-distance relationships, emotional resilience is a coping mechanism that they frequently employ to keep their emotions manageably contained. This emotional resilience deeply influences how they define their communicative goals, and how they manage contact with their personal ties to meet these goals.

The following kin pair shares deep emotional bonds with each other. They had undergone a period of serial migrations during which mother, father, and children were separated between Jamaica and New York, and then reunited. These respondents' experiences underscore the disconnections that result from the enormous upheavals that Jamaican families undergo during migration, and their largely uncritical acceptance of such family separations. Caribbean child development experts have observed this denial of emotions surrounding loss, rupture, and separation among migrant families as

common. They argue that the culture's tacit disapproval of such grief adversely affected children's psychological health (Pottinger et al., 2008). Since this pair was reflecting on what their family went through during the early stage of migration, their memories of how painful their separation had been, had dimmed over time.

Paula (age 46), single, a church secretary in the Bronx, and her father Everton (age 69), a married, retired trucker in Bamboo, Jamaica, share an intense long-distance relationship. They phone each other almost every day, often several times a day. Paula uses Google Voice, a prepaid service on her mobile phone, and replenishes her account as needed. She also texts Everton several times a week, and if she can't reach him by phone, she texts him to find out his whereabouts. Everton migrated to the U.S. in 1984 to join his wife who had left Jamaica some years earlier, after which they sent for their seven children, one by one, to join them in the U.S.

Everton had worked in Florida and New York for over 25 years. After he retired in 2003, he moved back to Jamaica where he prefers to live alone. He told me that he is "used to being alone, I don't have a problem if the wife is here or the kids are here, everything fine, because if they are not here everything [still] fine." His wife and their adult children live across several U.S. states, reflecting a common pattern of family dispersion among Caribbean and Jamaican migrants (Bauer & Thompson, 2006; Chamberlain, 1997).

Paula migrated to New York as a teenager in 1984, and finished high school and attended college in New York. Paula's early life reflected the gendered experience of many Jamaican migrants, with her mother being the first family member to migrate, and Paula and her siblings being left behind. During this family separation, she attended

boarding school in Jamaica and her contact with her family overseas was limited to letters. By her own retelling, she became accustomed to relying on her own emotional resources. As a result, she manages her current long-distance relationship with her father in Jamaica with little difficulty. Separation and rupture have always been features of this family's life, and emotional resilience is a purposive strategy they use to manage the difficulty of such separations.

Both Paula and Everton view their separation as unavoidable, and therefore do not consider it a major concern. Paula feels that talking to her father daily compensates for not seeing him in person, and so she does not consider it hard to be away from him. Offline co-present visits supplement their telephone conversations, as she had visited Jamaica three times in the previous year, and her mother spends every winter with her father in Jamaica. She admits that it "would be really hard [to be separated] if I didn't talk to him a lot." She worries about his health and lean financial resources, and sends him money regularly to supplement his Social Security payments. Everton, who is a Rastafarian and repeatedly affirmed his strong Christian faith, is very content with his solitude in Jamaica:

> Well, I don't feel no way, they [my children] all big people now, and you as a parent suppose to know that, and you have them from toddlers until they reach, some gone [from home] from adolescent or when they become adult, so most of the time you will be left alone or you may have a grand kid around you. Mi have the big man [God] up a top deh you know, dat's the real man dat I want to be around, he makes everyting, right…I tell my wife that already, say loneliness is never my problem.[24]

Paula told me that she talks to Everton about family matters, her struggle to meet her financial commitments from paycheck to paycheck, mundane events, and the daily

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[24] I have chosen to keep respondents' quotes in Jamaican patois whenever this is used, for the sake of authenticity, with Standard English translations as footnotes when needed.

challenges of her life in New York. She prefers not to share details about her personal

life with him, and confides in a close female friend about such matters. Paula believes

her gender is a barrier to her being more open with her father about certain topics. In

talking with him:

> [We discuss] Everything, just everything. If I have a complaint about something
> or someone, I'll call him and say "Dad, I need to tell you this." And sometimes
> I'll just call and say "Dad what's happening?" or "me just a call and say morning"
> or whatever. It all depends. If I don't hear from him for a while, I'm definitely
> calling to make sure he's OK, to touch base, if I have something to tell him, like
> important stuff … [and] of course to complain as well, if I have gripe, something
> is bothering me, I need to talk to Dad, I'll call him. I'm very close to him.

However, Everton perceives their conversations differently. According to him,

the focus of these exchanges is religion, and the different ways in which each of them

interpret the Bible. Everton believes that Paula always talks about religion because as a

single woman with no children, "she doan have a love life goin' with nobody, so really

and truly, I doan tink I have nuttin else fi talk bout".[25] Paula paints a very different

picture of these religious conversations. She revealed that they are centered on her

disapproval of her father's lifestyle. She feels that he is not living his life the way a

Christian should, and even though he "has a personal relationship with Jesus…if he's out

on the street, [he thinks] he can have a drink, some rum, whatever, he's not doing

anything wrong, but I disagree."

As this pair communicates almost daily, it is inevitable that disagreements will

arise. However, Everton states that their disagreements about scripture are not significant

as "we never have a flare up problem; we argue, you know, decently, and ting." As a

way of reinforcing their respective states of emotional resilience, father and daughter use

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[25] Standard English translation: "She doesn't have a love life going with anybody, so really and truly I
don't think I have anything else to talk about."

a conflict resolution strategy of agreeing to disagree. By so doing, they can maintain amicability, diffuse tensions across the distance, and meet their mutual goal of preserving their relationship.

The choices that Everton and Paula make within their communication ecologies to support their long-distance relationship are effectively limited to mobile phone calls from Everton to Paula, and beeping via mobile phone, phone calls, and texting from Paula to Everton. Paula has access to a wider range of ICTs at her workplace and at home in the Bronx. However, since her father only uses the phone, she effectively limits her choices to the same. Everton is less comfortable with regular texting, and so Paula uses this form of communication only to set up a phone call when she hasn't been able to reach him.

Paula uses a wider range of ICTs in her communication ecology to support her connections with other family members, co-workers, and her church colleagues. She told me that she and her siblings have a group texting service; whenever she texts her father, the entire family receives these messages as well. When her mother spends winters in Jamaica with her father, she uses an iPad, so mother and daughter frequently Facetime together. Paula deliberately confines her ICT choices to accord with her father's communication ecology, which is limited by what he can access, afford, and is most comfortable using, and in deference to his elder status.

Conflict Management from a Distance

Conflict between individuals is problematic in any setting, but when the parties are separated for protracted periods, conflicts can be exacerbated with little chance for resolution. The two pairs to be discussed here are kin, and represent broad differences in how conflict is enacted and resolved. Presumably, the non-voluntary nature of kin ties

gave these pairs the luxury of arguing at a distance, without fear that they would never reconcile (Dainton & Zelley, 2006). In contrast, none of the non-kin pairs in my entire 17 pair sample spoke about any conflicts in our interviews. Examining conflict, as a non-routine condition that pairs work to repair, provides important insights into their mundane practices to maintain their relationships over distance.

This first pair reveals the underlying tensions and conflicts that commonly exist in Jamaican extended family networks. The high prevalence of informal conjugal unions (Chevannes, 2001; Leo Rhynie, 1993), and the blended families that result can create strife between parents and children, and between siblings. The discussion of the second pair provides insights into some of the dynamics of transnational families, when strong kin ties are put under pressure.

Both pairs chose to enact their conflicts over the phone. For the mother and son, their communication ecologies were limited and similar—the mobile phone—as neither had access to email or Internet-based media. The mother had an additional communication resource that gave her a distinct advantage over her son: telephone calls from her friends and neighbors in the Jamaican community where her son lived. The aunt and nephew each had an extensive communication ecology, with access to the widest array of ICTs, but opted to confine their argument to the phone. Nevertheless, this visually lean but vocally rich medium in no way diminished the power of these pairs' exchanges, and the strong emotions that were expressed.

"She beat me on the phone!" Miss Cordelia (age 80), widowed, and living in Brooklyn speaks almost daily by phone with her son Norbert (age 47), married, in Helicon, Jamaica. Formerly a live-in housekeeper, Miss Cordelia now lives with her

daughter and son-in-law in a West Indian neighborhood in Flatbush. Their apartment has

Internet access, but she has never used a computer. She owns two houses in Jamaica.

Norbert works as a welder with a bauxite mining company in St. Ann Parish.[26] Internet

service in Norbert's rural community is irregular and he does not own a computer.

Norbert initiates most of their phone calls from his mobile phone, which suits Miss

Cordelia, as she relies on a modest Social Security income.

Miss Cordelia's and Norbert's countries of primary residence significantly

influence the ICT choices they make to communicate with each other. At the macro

level, the ICT infrastructure in Jamaica, with its inexpensive prepaid mobile phone rates,

is more advantageous than those of New York City for making frequent overseas phone

calls. At the micro level in this ICT infrastructure, cost is more of a constraint for Miss

Cordelia than for Norbert, and so she welcomes his paying for their telephone

conversations.

Mother and son exchange information about family matters, utility bills to be paid

for her Jamaican houses, and whether Norbert is maintaining them properly. She assigns

these forms of kin-work (Stack & Burton, 1993) to Norbert; she also regularly asks him

to send her regards to her Helicon neighbors, several of whom phone her in Brooklyn

from time to time. Within Miss Cordelia's communication ecology, these friends, family,

and other community members are important interpersonal communication avenues

(Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012), as their regular phone calls from Jamaica keep her abreast

about local gossip and how well her son is managing her affairs.

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[26] Up to the 1980s, Jamaica was one of the top three bauxite and alumina producing countries in the world.
Bauxite ore and its by-product alumina are the raw materials used to manufacture aluminum. Recent
worldwide gluts in aluminum supply and increased aluminum recycling have depressed prices.

Miss Cordelia and Norbert had had a major conflict recently, which was enacted over the phone. In order to understand the gravity of their dispute, some cultural context is necessary. Before migrating to New York, Miss Cordelia had 13 children with two different common-law husbands.[27] Both of her children's fathers had other children outside of their relationship. Norbert's father had a daughter from a previous union, and the child was abandoned by her birth mother.[28] Miss Cordelia raised this child together with her own children. This stepchild was rebellious and, according to Miss Cordelia "her father wasn't that much for her".[29]

When Norbert's father died, he left the marital home to Miss Cordelia, and divided his family land in Helicon equally among all his children, including Norbert's half-sister. This sibling was dissatisfied with her inheritance, and threatened to burn down Miss Cordelia's house. From then on, Miss Cordelia and her stepdaughter kept a distance from each other, and the young woman moved to America. Recently, the stepdaughter had contacted Miss Cordelia, asking to stay in her house in Jamaica, and she refused her request. Through a phone call from a neighbor in Jamaica, Miss Cordelia then learned that Norbert had allowed his half-sister to stay in her Helicon home. She confronted Norbert over the phone. She saw his action as a personal betrayal, as she believed that her role as family matriarch required respect. The synchronicity, immediacy and vocal richness of the telephone were ideally suited for this heated exchange:

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[27] Common law unions are those where the partners are not legally married, but live together for many years and can assume some legal rights similar to married couples. Such unions are very widespread in Jamaica. This practice has changed very little since Clarke (1957, 1999) highlighted it in her work.

[28] Stack (1974) observed a similar pattern of children being dispersed among kin after the dissolution of a legal marital or common-law union among poor African Americans in her study population in the Mid West.

[29] Her father did not care for her.

Leaf is life, and I am the head[30], so, <u>say</u> something!(emphasis hers). She [her stepdaughter] stay there, but I never agree. I hear when she land there [in Jamaica] and was somebody call me, somebody who live in the yard[31], and tell me say she was there. Some of my children did know, but them didn't want to tell me.

Miss Cordelia told me that Norbert did his best to placate her by urging her to calm down during their telephone conversation. Norbert never told me about this quarrel. When I asked him if they ever had disagreements on the phone, he replied with the following cryptic remark:

It will happen from time to time, you know. Like other brothers or whatsoever, why it shouldn't be and whatsoever, you know. We talked about it, yeah, we talked about it…She like beat me on the phone; she said you <u>shouldn't</u> be doing that! (emphasis his).

He added that they ended this heated exchange without rancor, and used a curious co-present reference "On the phone, when me talk to her, me say: "Look me now in the face and tell me if it right or wrong."" Both of them have no choice but to use the phone for these highly charged exchanges. But Norbert, with his comment, "look me in the face" tries to stretch the vocal affordances that the phone provides to new levels of efficacy.

Norbert feels he will never be able to escape his mother's presence and panoptic scrutiny. Given her community ties in Helicon, there is constant surveillance of his actions. He admits wryly that, "from time to time, I have my faults, I won't tell her, [but] she will hear someway." Miss Cordelia maintains an upper hand in their relationship because of her supplementary, meso-level channels in her communication ecology: her

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[30] A Creole expression meaning that as the mother and head of her family, Miss Cordelia saw herself as the source of life for all her children, and should be respected.
[31] "Yard" is a physical compound in rural and urban Jamaica where several houses are situated in close proximity to each other. Residents may share a common water supply.

telephone network with her neighbors in Jamaica, which Norbert knows constrains his behavior.

Strangers welcome, but not kin. Barbara (age 68) and divorced, lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and had retired from her medical practice 15 years earlier following a debilitating road accident. She supplements her disability income by renting three spare bedrooms in her house to overseas visitors using Airbnb.

Her nephew Alex (age 47), is a partner in the Jamaican branch of a top-five global accounting firm. Barbara has no children and regards Alex as a son. Alex remarried recently and is balancing a demanding career requiring frequent overseas travel, a blended family with four children from both marriages, and a retail store as a sideline business.

Both Barbara's and Alex's respective communication ecologies are extensive, comprising the full gamut of ICT options. However, they communicate mostly by phone and email. Barbara told me that Skype isn't convenient nor spontaneous enough for her; it takes too long to set up as she would have to alert Alex beforehand that he should be available. Alex could only use Skype on the weekends because of the demands of his work, and therefore finds the phone and email more convenient.

Barbara's quarrel with Alex took place by phone a few months before. The conflict was still fresh in her mind, and dominated much of our interview. Alex and his wife had stayed in Barbara's Brooklyn home while visiting from Jamaica. During their stay, Barbara's personal trainer arrived. The couple had met this person on previous visits, but this time, both chose to ignore him. Alex did not acknowledge the trainer's presence when he greeted Alex. After the couple returned to Jamaica, Barbara phoned

Alex to express her disappointment and displeasure with his behavior. According to her,

"he tried to pass if off as nothing", but she persisted:

> How I put it to him on the telephone was, because I thought about how I would approach this with him: "If your children did that to somebody who came to your home, or your office staff did something like that, you'd write them up!" That's how I presented it to him. I don't think he has ever accepted it. But for whatever reason, he doesn't seem to like this person or think he's in his intellectual bracket, but that's not the point. You must be courteous and show manners to everyone you meet because you never know. That's basic, basic breeding. For him, he said he's not friends with everybody. I said it's not a matter of friends; it's a matter of basic manners!

Alex's failure to acknowledge Barbara's guest was the critical incident that

showed her that her relationship with Alex was unequal (Stafford, 2008). Alex had

disrespected Barbara's visitor in her own house. Furthermore, this conflict arose because

Alex had violated her expectations that he would behave respectfully in her home

(Dainton & Zelley, 2006).

Barbara told me that she hadn't realized how much more effort she had put into

their relationship than Alex had exerted in return. Just prior to the conflict, she had

offered several social resources to Alex: allowing him and his then fiancée to stay in her

Brooklyn home, providing all meals for them, allowing them to use her in-house gym and

her personal trainer's services, and offering them her car for their wedding party[32], all at

no cost. Barbara felt she had significantly under-benefited from their relationship by

comparison (Stafford, 2008).

Barbara believes that this incident has damaged the nature of their relationship,

but, as they are family, she resolves to still interact with Alex, and safeguard his

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[32] Alex and his second wife had been married in New York the year before.

welfare.[33] Barbara, by her own telling, was now seeking to equalize the balance in their

relationship by insisting that Alex, his wife, and his family are no longer welcome in her

home as overnight guests (Stafford, 2008). She now uses the excuse that her Airbnb

guests, who are virtual strangers in every sense, can share her private sphere, but not her

nephew.

Alex never mentioned this conflict in our interview. When I asked him whether

he and Barbara ever had any disagreements on the phone, he was evasive:

> Typically it's going to be, hmmm. Family relationships typically, re things that
> would be the most awkward, hmmm, and challenges in terms of those
> relationships, because family relationships, like any others go through ups and
> downs. Some things don't even require sorting out (chuckles). Some things are
> so minor, if that's the right word, [that] one party or the other, or both, just say
> that's life, and move on. Some things may require a conversation, some things
> you agree to disagree. A conversation is not going to solve it and you move on,
> and the relationship doesn't get stuck on that issue, because both parties realize
> the relationship is bigger than that one issue.

Their perceptions of what constitutes conflict are clearly different. Barbara

expects Alex to behave respectfully towards her guest, but he did not.[34] Alex does not

regard their disagreement with the same intensity or gravitas as Barbara does.

Three months later, I interviewed Barbara again and asked her if she and Alex had

managed to resolve their differences. They had seen each other a few months after the

argument in New York. Before he arrived, Barbara pointedly told Alex that she couldn't

accommodate him and his family, as she was fully booked with her Airbnb clients.

Barbara told me that they met at a Manhattan café, exchanged pleasantries, and have

resumed their regular telephone conversations.

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[33] Family relationships are the most permanent type of interpersonal relationship, as individuals don't
routinely sever ties with family members as they would with non-kin (Dainton & Zelley, 2006).
[34] Interpersonal conflicts such as this often result from different meanings or values placed on the
resources exchanged (Stafford, 2008).

Respondents' communicative goals were dynamic, and could change at any time, as this scenario illustrated. Barbara felt that meeting Alex face-to-face in public places, in addition to their telephone calls and occasional emails will suffice to meet her revised goals for a more distanced relationship, which she has relegated to a less intimate sphere. By exercising her agency to limit Alex's future access to her home, she engages the telephone, email, and meetings in public rather than intimate spaces. These communicative choices fortify her new goals for their relationship.

Conflict, gender, and power. The preceding discussions of these two respondent pairs demonstrate that conflict enactment and resolution across distance is more likely to occur between kin members than non-kin. Conflict management in a Caribbean context is highly gendered—it is the women in the pairs who act agentically to air the problem, initiate the arguments, and are more emotionally expressive (Chevannes, 2001; Pottinger et al, 2008; Rawlins, 2006).

Although these two conflicts differ in terms of gravity, they both center on power in families, and how that power has been violated or abused. In Miss Cordelia's conflict with Norbert, she felt that he had overstepped her power as the family matriarch and disturbed the family's collective goals of peace and stability, which supersede the needs of individual family members (Stack & Burton, 1993). Miss Cordelia exercises her agency by creating certain access rules to her family home. By contrast, Norbert's agency is limited, as he does not own the family home. Therefore, he is anxious to make peace with his mother, and restore equanimity to the family.

Barbara and Alex have been engaged in kin-work all of their lives, in terms of intergenerational role responsibilities and the reinforcement of shared family values

(Stack & Burton, 1993). Barbara, as the sole head and elder kin member in her own house, occupies a position of power in this pair that requires respect, which Alex did not acknowledge. As with Miss Cordelia, Barbara's power is also tied to her age, seniority, and gender as a surrogate matriarch for Alex (Leo Rhynie, 1993; Stack and Burton, 1993).

This power influences the decisions both women make about ICT use across distance. Within their respective communication ecologies, they engage the telephone as their first choice for their long-distance relationships with their close ties. Furthermore, they have firm goals regarding interpersonal access to their respective homes, and enact strict rules in support of these goals.

"It is what it is": Living With Distance

There were times when despite the pragmatism and the rationalizations that respondents made, distance could be poignant and difficult to endure. Celebratory events such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and birthdays were difficult times to be separated from close ties. Times of illness created anxiety in all pairs, both kin and non-kin.

There were several pairs where one respondent withheld information that their close tie chose to share with me. This willingness to disclose, versus non-disclosure, was noticeably gendered. Paula, Miss Cordelia, and Barbara all openly shared the full extent of their conversations and the nature of conflicts that arose; Everton, Norbert, and Alex did not. Male respondents' lack of disclosure may have been an effort on their part to save face or to ingratiate themselves to me as a female interviewer. Alternatively, perhaps the women were more comfortable talking to another woman.

Among the 17 respondent pairs in the sample, the five respondent pairs discussed in this chapter demonstrated the widest array of close tie relationships. Nevertheless, all respondent pairs shared a common outlook. They worked hard to accept distance in their relationships, and to stay positive and emotionally stoic in the face of this reality. These five pairs had goals aimed at maintaining their relationships, and they expended significant amounts of time and effort to preserve both intense and routine or mundane contact. They used ICTs that provided them with spontaneous and immediate connections, with vocal cues that they valued much more than the visual cues of newer ICTs.

The next chapter, addressees the second emergent theme in the data, which was the ways in which respondents negotiated closeness with their close ties overseas. This is the second of the three Findings chapters.

Chapter Six

Findings - Negotiating Closeness

In this chapter, I address the second emergent theme in the research findings:

factors that explain how respondents negotiate closeness in various types of relationships.

I begin by defining closeness, and discussing how respondents' strategies for negotiating

closeness across geographic distance address each of the research questions. To illustrate

the patterns in the data with regard to this theme, three pairs of respondents will be

discussed in detail to illustrate the variations and similarities in how closeness was

managed. As part of this discussion, I propose that closeness consists of several

permutations along a continuum of presence, and that the need for offline co-presence in

particular is most acute in highly intense emotional relationships, both kin and non-kin.

Closeness refers broadly to both the physical and emotional aspects of intimacy,

which constitute the building or maintenance of close connections between people

(Jamieson, 2011).[35] This definition of closeness includes practices shared between

individuals such as giving to, sharing and spending time with, feeling attached to, and

expressing affection for another individual (Jamieson, 2011). In situations where

individuals are separated, such as migration contexts, emotions of 'missing' and

'longing' are evident in close and intimate relationships (Baldassar, 2008).

Negotiating Closeness: Common Trends

The first set of research questions (RQ1 & RQ1a) sought to examine respondents'

communication goals as they related to their close ties overseas, and the ICTs they

engaged to support these goals. As a corollary to negotiating distance which was

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[35] By quality of close connections, I mean the ways or degrees by which intimacy is enacted between individuals.

examined in the previous chapter, all respondents regarded closeness as integral to their primary goal of relational maintenance.

Closeness strengthened by synchronous communication. Respondents' goals were to construct networks of closeness and intimacy (Ito & Okabe, 2005; Matsuda, 2005) in support of maintaining their relationships (RQ1). These relationships had existed prior to the migration of one partner in each of the 17 pairs, and varied from non-kin platonic and intense kin bonds to romantic connections. Respondents' goals for these networks of closeness were multifaceted: they had to be enacted synchronously in real time, accessed easily, regularly available, and fulfill a variety of emotionally supportive functions related to this goal for closeness.

In response to the first research question (RQ1a), respondents selected ICTs that supported their efforts to achieve this closeness by ensuring consistent patterns of contact (Baym, 2010), and established ongoing routines with their close ties. At times, such routines were quick exchanges via mobile telephone calls or texts, or when time allowed, more extended conversations via telephone or email. About half of all respondents were able to visit each other in person either once or several times annually, which solidified this closeness.

Frequent vocal and temporal synchronicity was essential for respondents with romantic or strong kin ties in particular, and these two affordances narrowed the range of ICT options that they favored for meeting this goal for intense closeness. Affordances for synchronicity were highly efficacious for meeting this goal, as synchronicity can reinforce the sense of placelessness that digital media can facilitate; the in-between or

distanciated spaces (Giddens, 1991; Urry, 2007). Synchronicity makes individuals feel together even when apart and creates immediacy and personal cues (Baron, 2008).

The telephone's affordances aligned most closely with respondents' desires for such immediate turn-taking, full expression of mutual emotions, and immediate feedback if misunderstandings occurred, all achieved only by synchronous, real-time access to the other person. Respondents' heavy reliance on the telephone also reflected the demands of Jamaica's highly oral cultural context (Chevannes, 2001), and its 100% mobile phone penetration rate, a dynamic that was reflected in other cultures where media choices were culturally influenced (Ito & Okabe, 2005; Ling & Yttri, 2002).

In pairs with less emotionally charged ties, the goal of staying close within pairs was best achieved using ICTs that also enabled vocal cues, spontaneity, and synchronicity, although these respondents also used asynchronous texting and email to stay close within their pairs. These leaner asynchronous media could also meet their goal for closeness, as all pairs shared much prior information about each other including relational contexts and shared history. These institutional memories did not need to be expressed during every interaction.

All respondent pairs knew each other offline before they embarked on this new mediated stage in their relationships, and their ties were already close to begin with. Therefore, they were less likely to engage in media multiplexity (Haythornthwaite, 2005), which is defined as adding other media as their connections developed. Their shared histories accounted for their preference for limited ICT choices, and respondents kept their respective communication ecologies spare in achieving closeness within their pairs as a result. What was essential for them to meet this goal was to select rich media that

ensured instant feedback, enabled the use of natural language, and had a personal focus

(Klebe Trevino et al., 1990). However, they did not need media with multiple cues all

the time, the fourth hallmark of media richness. Despite it being a low-cue medium, for

them the telephone could still achieve strong levels of self-disclosure (Walther, 2008), as

it met the other three criteria of media richness, and allowed for pairs to 'read between

the lines' of vocal messages, given their deep levels of mutual understanding.

My second set of research questions (RQ2) focused on how demographic

variations enabled or constrained respondents' communication with their close ties

overseas, and how these demographic variations explained the variance in the ICTs they

engaged to do so (RQ2a). These variables included educational level, occupation,

presumed income, age, gender, and visa status.

Text-based ICTs not dependent on education level. Respondents with more

years of education and in professional occupations generally used text-based email more

often than those with less schooling. This reflected some level of homophily regarding

education and income when it came to email, as a more educated partner would be

constrained from this choice if their tie was less literate. However, education level was

not the only variable enabling such email use, as other structural factors played a part. At

the macro and meso levels, the availability of wireless and email access in respondents'

homes or wider communities respectively was also an enabling factor. At the individual

level, respondents' comfort with a particular ICT and their routinized behaviors

influenced their ICT selection.

For respondents with business-related interactions, a certain professional level

was implied, and email was an ongoing ICT choice. This medium allowed pairs to focus

more on accurate message production to ensure unequivocality and reduce ambiguity,
and ensure storage and replicability of their communication for later use. For achieving
other instrumental goals, this depended on who was communicating with whom and for
what purpose. For example, a non-migrant who was minimally educated would be more
likely to have instrumental goals for financial or material support from the migrant in
New York City, but would have little facility with, or access to email.

Although email is text-based and its frequent use reflects higher education levels,
another text-based medium—text messaging—was popular with all respondents of all
educational levels. Despite Jamaica's literacy level reported at between 91.7% (Planning
Institute of Jamaica, 2013), and 88% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015), these
percentages do not truly reflect the country's significant level of functional illiteracy, or
an individual's difficulty managing daily living requirements and problem-solving, which
render the official rates less than accurate.

The five respondents in the data set with no more than a grade 9 education did not
use email at all because they had very limited communication ecologies, consisting
mainly of the mobile phone and the postal service. However, in addition to phone calls,
they texted their close ties regularly, and could tailor their text messages to suit their
limited literacy levels, by relying on the unorthodox but socially accepted norms of
language in texting such as abbreviations, acronyms, local slang, and emoticons to
effectively achieve their goals for closeness.

The popularity of texting also reflected affordances of convenience and the low
cost of this medium. Furthermore, texting, if frequent and sustained, could come close to
achieving synchronicity (Baym, 2010). Convenience and affordability would be

important benefits for respondents with lower incomes, as these affordances easily facilitated their goals for enacting closeness within their pairs.

Communication ecologies created specifically for closeness. Due to the paired nature of the sample, and respondents' self-selection of their close ties, there was little variation in age and gender among respondents in the data set. Therefore, it is not possible to make any definitive claims about these variables in this study. However, despite this proviso, older respondents had a strong preference for using the telephone with their close tie over any other ICT, even though they used other ICTs with other individuals overseas. Given respondents' goals to maintain closeness with synchronous interaction with their close ties, this medium was easiest for all respondents to access and use, required no specialized IT capabilities, was portable, and could best achieve this goal compared to other media (RQ2a).

This preference for the telephone, or any other ICT which respondents would have favored, also speaks to the entrenched nature of routinized communicative behaviors and their importance in achieving the goals of closeness and maintaining long-term bonds (Baym, 2010). For older respondents who were uncomfortable with, or lacked access to email and other virtual media, the telephone enabled them to easily and successfully achieve this particular goal.

These routinized behaviors also led each partner in most pairs to create a specific communication ecology to achieve their shared goal for closeness, which often differed from their communication ecologies for other goals. For example, one older respondent only used the phone to stay close to her kin-like tie, who was much younger than her, but disliked using email with her close tie. Yet, this older respondent regularly participated

in online Scrabble games with large numbers of other players in various countries, and was much more proficient with email and social media than her younger close tie. For this online activity, her goal was not to preserve closeness, but to have fun with large numbers of online strangers, for which impersonal online contact would suffice.

Higher income facilitates more offline closeness. Respondents' presumed income was the strongest predictor in determining the range of ICTs they could use to communicate with their close ties (RQ2a). An important relationship maintenance goal for several respondents was a strong desire for offline co-presence with their close tie. Respondents varied with regard to how frequently they were able to realize this goal by traveling overseas to spend time together. Immigrant respondents in Jamaica and New York enjoyed the economic means necessary to travel internationally, and were unfettered by visa restrictions required for such mobility. Respondents with high incomes in both countries were able to travel overseas to visit their close ties fairly often, as opposed to those who were less affluent.

Income was also positively correlated with visa/citizenship status, which was another predictor of overseas travel. Although respondents were not asked about their U.S. residency status, they freely volunteered this information unprompted. Therefore, these variables of income and visa/citizenship status were major demographic factors in constraining or enabling how all 17 pairs achieved their goals of staying close, and achieving offline co-presence at times (RQ2a).

Greater emotional needs drive closeness. The second set of research questions also considered generation as a demographic variable, and respondents' life stage and migration histories played a role in how important maintaining closeness was as a major

goal. Younger and more recent immigrants to New York City needed more emotional support from their close ties in Jamaica. Conversely, older and more seasoned immigrants who had become well established financially and socially over many years had less of a need to enact behaviors or initiate contact to reinforce closeness within pairs, even though staying close was still important.

The length and type of relationship between pairs were additional demographic variables which influenced how important closeness was as a goal. Among all 17 pairs, the goal of staying close was most intense among kin pairs actively doing kin-work, and between romantic partners. An elder sibling in Jamaica acted as a surrogate parent to his younger brother in New York City by giving him advice and emotional support, and comforting him as he adjusted to life as a new immigrant. For romantic partners, their primary goal was to preserve their relationship by staying close, and so they needed to reassure each other that their relationship still existed, and that their mutual affection had not dimmed.

Kin ties influenced how important staying close was as a goal within pairs, what they felt was expected of them, and what they wanted to expend to ensure such closeness differently from romantic ties. While romantic partners and siblings were all determined to remain close, the intensity of such closeness varied between these types of pairs.

Synergies between location and demographics. The third set of research questions (RQ3 & RQ3a) explored variations in strategies for maintaining close ties across borders based on respondents' primary country of residence, and how these variations impacted their ICT choices for achieving their goals. Among all respondents, negotiating closeness with an intimate tie was determined by several structural or macro,

and individual or micro considerations. The impact of respondents' country of residence on their goals for staying close within pairs was not the determining factor in and of itself. Rather, country of residence was intertwined with the previous set of research questions regarding how demographic variations enabled or constrained respondents' communication with their close ties overseas (RQ2 & RQ2a).

In considering the impact of respondents' country of residence, other structural factors (i.e. visa status), demographic (i.e. income, age), personal (i.e. health status, family commitments), and time, collectively had an impact on their attempts to negotiate various forms of closeness. From a structural perspective, living primarily in Jamaica or New York City affected respondents' strategies for managing their communication goals in the following ways. First, regardless of their country of primary residence, all respondents shared the same primary goal: maintaining closeness within their pairs.

For most respondents, maintaining closeness was primarily mediated by ICTs, as regular offline co-presence was rare. For some non-migrant respondents in Jamaica, individual demographic factors such as financial limitations, visa status, time constraints, and work commitments impeded their ability to travel overseas more than once per year, if as often, in order to be physically co-present with their close ties.

Closeness as presence. In respondents' negotiations of closeness across borders, forms of *presence* fall along a continuum. This continuum closely mirrors media richness theory in the specific context of cross-border communication, where presence was a richer or leaner experience and closeness was more effectively achieved or minimized, depending on the type of ICT used. For example, sharing material artifacts is

a detached activity that falls on the low end of the continuum, and in-person, offline co-presence is located at the other end.

Along this continuum, there are *temporal* (i.e. real-time telephone exchanges), *virtual* (via Skype and similar applications), and *emotional* (i.e. ICTs with vocal cues) forms of potential presence, all of which respondents engage a variety of ICTs to achieve, depending on the level of closeness desired. These technologies may enable exchange of rich visual and/or verbal and vocal cues, may be synchronous or asynchronous, and can facilitate intense, hyperpersonal communication (Walther, 1996), or more detached and lean exchanges.

I refer to presence operating along a continuum because some respondents had fewer options within their communication ecologies to realize their goals of closeness, and were necessarily limited to only a few places along this plane. Other respondents could maintain closeness by engaging a broader range of ICTs at more points along the continuum, and could also afford to send material artifacts (at the one end) and to travel regularly to visit each other (at the other).

Whether respondents lived in Jamaica or New York City affected the ICTs they could choose to manage closeness, but this wasn't as simple as more ICT choices being available in one country than the other.[36] Jamaica's less expensive mobile phone infrastructure and pricing plans meant that some respondents there initiated phone contact more often than their close ties in New York did, even though they had more limited communication ecologies in Jamaica. Respondents in both countries with higher presumed incomes and more years of education had access to a broad range of ICTs

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[36] Jamaica has well-developed ICT infrastructure in large urban areas, with WiFi/Internet and mobile phone penetration rates similar to those of the U.S. (International Telecommunications Union, 2014).

along the presence continuum. Nevertheless, they still chose to limit themselves to just a few options, with the telephone as their first choice, due to the importance of vocal synchronicity in meeting their goals for closeness.

The omnibus nature of the telephone. The overarching rationale for respondents to limit themselves to the telephone was due to the primacy of its vocal cues for effectively articulating their goals for closeness. The telephone was a medium that was versatile and nimble enough to achieve their wide ranging communication goals, as it facilitated both intense and detached connections. Whereas a visually and vocally rich medium such as Skype would have created a much richer interactive experience for both parties, such a medium would be especially appropriate for close kin or romantic ties rather than for routine exchanges between a wider range of relationship types.

And yet, for maintaining closeness with close ties, all respondents in both countries still preferred the telephone because its vocal affordance was more essential for them to stay close to their close ties than any other cues (RQ3a). The telephone was also better able to circumvent the structural factors of Internet access, cost, literacy, visa status, and individual IT competencies that could constrain their choices for richer ICTs.

Close ties separated by distance also had a wider array of goals for maintaining closeness which the telephone would support, as they were reconstructing their relationship with separation as a permanent element in their interactions with their close ties. Given the wide spectrum of socioeconomic attributes of the respondents in the data set, and the two countries under study with the varying IT infrastructures in rural Jamaican sites, the telephone was the only ICT that they all would undoubtedly have as

part of their respective communication ecologies, whether these were extensive or limited.

Whereas the previous chapter demonstrated that all respondents were pragmatic about distance as a reality, all of them would not compromise on their need for ICTs with vocal richness, as closeness was best achieved with vocal synchronicity. Respondents well understood that in order to maintain their overarching goal of closeness within their pairs, the components of this goal—ranging from intense intimacy to frequent, routine, and brief contact—had to always be met, if their relationships were to survive.

Discussion

The following three pairs were selected for detailed discussion because their desire to maintain closeness was the most intense and poignant among all the 17 pairs, and include the only romantic pair in the sample. These pairs illustrate variations in factors at the macro, meso, and micro levels that influence how they met their goals of closeness in romantic and kin relationships. The romantic pair in particular was an outlier in the study, and merited further examination.

Love across Borders

Marcia and Preston are a romantic couple, and the only such relationship in the sample. Staying close to each other was a daily preoccupation for them, and an ever-present source of anxiety. The couple had been physically co-present only twice for a few weeks each time in their four-year relationship. In the absence of co-present contact, this pair had devised several innovative ways to remain close, which were confined to only a few points on the presence continuum.

Marcia (age 50), migrated to New York City in 2003, after her mother filed residency papers for her. She works as a caregiver for two elderly women in the Bronx. She had not finished high school in Jamaica, and so has been confined to minimum wage jobs. She had worked in home health care for several years since arriving in New York. For six days a week, she provides personal care for her two clients in their homes, starting her first shift at 8:00 AM, and traveling by bus to her second client for an afternoon shift which ends at 8:00 PM. Marcia is divorced with four children, two of whom live with her in a two-bedroom apartment in a middle income community in the northeast Bronx. Due to financial constraints, she is not able to travel to Jamaica frequently, and her last trip was in 2011.

Since 2007, she had been involved in a long-distance romantic relationship with Preston (age 51), who works as a gardener at a luxury resort villa in western Jamaica. Preston told me they met "out of the blue, on the phone" through a male friend of his in New York who also knew Marcia. Preston's friend in New York told him that Marcia:

> was talking like she want a Christian guy, having a Christian husband so the guy call me and tell me that he will give her my number and a month after I get the first call from her because she was like afraid. He [his friend] know my temperament, know exactly what me need because we go to sea[37] together, we do everything together, so we always reason[38] and all those stuff.

Their telephone conversations focus on learning about each other and sharing their personal goals. Initially, they exchanged fairly superficial information with each other, but over time, they disclosed more about themselves. After a year of these exchanges, the couple met when Marcia went to Jamaica, and they spent two weeks together. Preston said that when they met each other for the first time in person, "It was

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[37] Go fishing together.
[38] Jamaican Creole expression for sharing hopes and dreams with someone.

like we know each other from [a long time ago], because we were on the phone and we have everything legit, and we send pictures. It was like we know each other."

Preston's observations about how comfortable they felt at their first meeting reflect some dynamics of mediated communication. Visual cues are not always needed to develop a strong long-distance relationship, once the couple has ample time to achieve this (Walther, 2008), which this couple did. In addition, the language that this couple shares: its style, and the verbal content of their shared messages via their phone conversations, serve to engender the social functions of intimacy that form part of interpersonal relationships (Walther, p. 394).

The couple had been able to establish their relationship by way of telephone calls, and then to build closeness via this vocally rich but visually lean medium. They entered their long-distance relationship with some degree of trust and minimal apprehension, as they had been introduced by a mutual friend, underlining the role of homophily in relationship formation (McPherson et al., 2001). By the time they met in person, this closeness had been further solidified by their discursive exchanges and by exchanges of hard copy photographs. As Walther (2008) states, relationships are developmental, and communication fosters their evolution over time (p. 397).

Since the second of their two meetings, the couple has continued to exchange photos of their respective children via the postal service, and Preston frequently speaks with Marcia's children when he phones her at home. By sharing these family photos, the couple are achieving another layer of closeness, that of presence by proxy (Baldassar, 2008). The photographs are tangible artifacts which act as substitutes for the emotionality that they share with each other. These photos also provide physical

evidence of the love and affection that has been growing between them, as photos can be held, stroked, carried in a pocket or purse, and looked at repeatedly.

By talking to Marcia's children on the phone, Preston is evoking another kind of closeness. He is extending his feelings from Marcia alone to include her children, thereby forging an emotional connection with them discursively, and widening the net of closeness. In speaking to her children his actions signal to Marcia the depth of his commitment by showing consideration for the people most important to her. Furthermore, by both of them recognizing each other's children, this signifies the potential seriousness of the relationship. In a sense, both Marcia and Preston are working to create a long-distance blended family, which could be sustained by phone conversations, photos, and texts.

Marcia uses pre-paid phone cards on her mobile phone to call Preston, and he buys pre-paid overseas minutes for his mobile phone in Jamaica to call her. However, since prepaid mobile phone rates in Jamaica are much cheaper, even in relative terms, Preston is able to call Marcia more often. He also frequently tops up her mobile phone credit from Jamaica. In some ways, this is one end of the presence continuum as they are exchanging and sharing costs for a physical or material item— phone credit—that facilitates communication. According to Marcia:

> I used to use the phone card but is too much to buy, because we talk so much I can't afford to buy phone card. The $5 one give you sometimes nearly an hour. But the top up is almost for a month. I would put a little on the phone, and he do his own down there. He have to help me. He stay from down there and top up my phone here. Is like we share it.

The couple call or text each other for a few minutes every day; these are the only forms of connection they utilize. Some conversations with Preston last for two hours, but

more often they speak for about 20 minutes at a time. Marcia often calls Preston when she is on the bus going home at night. They share their daily experiences about their respective work situations, via brief synopses of how "rough," "hard," or tiring their days were, until they have longer stretches of time to talk at length, which usually occur on the weekends.[39]

In these brief evening exchanges, they are enacting another form of closeness, that of internalized or imagined co-presence (Baldassar, 2008; Honeycutt, 2008; Wilding, 2006). Thinking about each other will precipitate these telephone calls and texts. The emotions each of them feel of missing the other and longing to connect (Baldassar, 2008) reaffirm to both of them that their relationship exists, is tangible, and is valid. These daily verbal intimacies resemble those of an offline co-present couple, but in their case, Marcia and Preston have no choice but to use imagined presence as a substitute. The presence that matters most to this couple is a synchronous, vocal presence that their phone calls facilitate, and these calls simulate co-presence more effectively than other ICTs they are both able to access.

Marcia told me that being separated from Preston is extremely difficult for her. She misses him greatly, especially on her birthday and on holidays. As they are more often separated than together, they are grappling with issues around trust. She sometimes expresses her doubts to him about whether he is faithful to her: "I would say to him, I don't trust you" and he would say, "I would say the same thing about you."'

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[39] Viewed through the lens of imagined interaction theory in interpersonal communication (Honeycutt, 2008), individuals think about their relational partners outside of their physical presence, which sustains their relationships. This is especially applicable to long-distance relationships, where Honeycutt states that such imagined interaction compensates for the absence of co-present interaction.

Misgivings about trust are not limited to fidelity. Marcia and Preston share a commitment to the Christian faith, but sometimes she is concerned that he is not attending church regularly enough, and she questions him about that. She had met a few of his family members when she had visited Jamaica, and it turned out that some of them were acquainted with some of her relatives in other parts of Jamaica. She calls Preston's relatives in Jamaica from time to time, and they keep her abreast of his activities.

Marcia is able to engage additional avenues in her communication ecology by making phone calls to Preston's relatives in Jamaica—both to remain close to him, as well as to keep tabs on him. Her phone calls to his relatives are about control, designed to monitor his actions, as she doubts how regularly he is attending church and how committed he really is to her Christian values. In contrast to Marcia's surveillance calls, I believe that Preston's phone calls to Marcia's children are motivated by his desire to establish a discursive, regular and reliable presence with them, in order to strengthen the emotional connection that he and Marcia share.

Negotiating closeness for this couple also means that, for Marcia, doubt about whether Preston's intentions towards her are honorable is often in the back of her mind. This doubt interferes with their attempts to preserve their sense of closeness. Preston resents her intrusiveness and judgmental behavior, particularly because he does not have an equivalent ancillary communication network that he can draw on to monitor her behavior in New York. She admits that he is short-tempered by nature; "He will say, "Oh, I don't like your ways either you know," like he will say, "You acting like you are perfect.'" Marcia told me that sometimes they end these fractious conversations by her hanging up on him, after which he would call her back at a later time. However, she

would persist in reviving the contentious topic, despite his unwillingness to discuss it further: "I'll say no, we have to finish it because I want you to understand me and me to understand you, so just settle it."

Preston's perceptions of these conflicts mirror Marcia's, although he assumes a more diplomatic stance. Their forms of verbal response during these fractious conversations are highly gendered: it is Marcia who is more persistent and verbally expressive in her desire to prolong conversations about disagreeable topics. Preston is more reticent; he knows when to be silent, when to postpone such discussions, and when to resolve such disputes in the moment. But, he said, "we don't let it escalate." Having synchronous, verbal contact by phone enables the couple to resolve disputes quickly. They are grappling with the normal issues that intimate, co-located partners would deal with regularly, but these are exacerbated by their ongoing physical separation.

For Preston, the separation from Marcia is also very painful, as he doesn't have a visitor's visa to travel to the United States. He left high school at grade 8 and is going through a divorce. He has four children who live with their mother in the community where he lives and works. His job as a landscaper is hard, as he and a co-worker manage the villa's three acres of gardens alone after the full complement of four gardeners was reduced. He told me his salary is woefully inadequate as "the pay finish as you even think about it."

In Jamaica and New York City, Preston and Marcia operate within their respective structural constraints related to limited income and physical separation, reified by U.S. visa restrictions. The communication infrastructures in the countries where they live both enable and constrain their potential for agentic action (Ball-Rokeach et al.,

2012). Preston told me he has no Internet service in his rural community and does not own a computer, so email and Skype are not available options for him. Marcia's teenage son has Internet access at home, but she told me that she is not comfortable using it. So the channels in their respective communication ecologies that they select to maintain their relationship consist primarily of mobile phone calls and texting, and to a more limited degree, of mailed materials and very rare co-present visits. Marcia resists using her teenagers' computer because of her stated anxiety towards technology, and since Preston has no computer or Internet access, neither of them uses the Internet or computers to stay connected.

In terms of estimated income, Marcia earns approximately US$450 per week, much more than Preston's weekly salary of approximately US$50. Yet it is he who assumes the lion's share of expenses for their telephone calls. Low prepaid mobile phone rates make it much cheaper to call the U.S from Jamaica than the reverse. Preston pays J$1,200 (US$10) for 600 prepaid overseas minutes for 30 days to keep in touch with Marcia.

Preston's actions seem illogical and non-intuitive. Marcia is better able to finance these calls, but Preston is willing to extend himself financially. It is likely that Preston is adopting a traditionally gendered positioning in providing for his romantic partner and therefore assumes most of these costs for their connections. He wants to signal that he is not taking advantage of Marcia, thereby maintaining her sometimes fragile trust in him. Even though Jamaica's social structure is heavily matrifocal, Jamaican men still cling to patriarchal notions of power and control (Chevannes, 2001; Leo-Rhynie, 1993). Preston

can ill afford the expense of these telephone calls, but the cost to preserve his manhood and dignity is more important, and one he views as worth the financial sacrifice.

The couple has differing perceptions of their future together. Marcia admits to being ambivalent about continuing their relationship, and when I asked her if she thought it was worth it, she replied by rationalizing her attempt to make the best of an imperfect situation, given that her life as an immigrant could be alienating:

> I don't know. Is just because sometimes in America, people lonely and you want somebody to talk to. You want somebody who you can trust to say things to, yeah. I don't have a lot of friends. I have kids, but they big and you can't be their friend. They have their lives.

Preston is convinced that he wants to forge a life with Marcia and wants to marry her, but he is impeded by not having a U.S. visa to join her in New York. She is less sanguine about his motives, as she admitted to me that as a legal resident of the U.S, she is an attractive prospect to many men in Jamaica like Preston, whose economic options are limited.

Marcia is more uncertain about the future of their relationship than Preston is. In admitting that her immigrant life is lonely, Marcia is continuing this relationship because she believes that it is better than any other alternatives to managing her loneliness and difficulties in finding male companionship in New York. She has already emotionally invested heavily in this relationship over the previous six years. Therefore, she is reluctant to end it, because she gains more rewards from the relationship than she believes she would receive without it (Rusbult, Drigotas & Verette, 1994; Stafford, 2008).

Misgivings about trust have emerged as an unresolved hurdle in how this couple continues to negotiate closeness. Marcia's status as a U.S. permanent resident strengthens her own sense of agency, and simultaneously increases her appeal as a form of safe passage (Marshall, 1987) from Jamaica for Preston. Her doubts about his integrity and his intentions are rooted in a structural rule that was well recognized in immigrant communities, where both male and female suitors from 'back home' would ill-treat, be unfaithful to, or abandon their legal resident spouses in due course. Her doubt is also evidence of her agentic force, in that it prevents her from agreeing to marry Preston, as she recognizes she had greater leverage in their relationship.

This couple expects that they will continue to negotiate their closeness along limited points at one end of the presence continuum (i.e., through regular telephone calls and exchanging photographs), with rare periods of physical co-presence (Baldassar, 2008; Baldassar et al., 2007; Urry, 2007) to maintain their relationship.

My Brother's Keeper

Raphael (age 32), is a single, high school teacher in Mandeville, Jamaica, and his brother Junior (age 18), is a single man living with his family in the Bronx, and a community college student. They are the first and last-born of six children and the brothers have been physically separated for just over a year. Junior had graduated from high school in Jamaica and moved to the U.S. in 2012. Raphael is the only member of his family still living in Jamaica.

Both brothers find their separation difficult. They bridge the distance with frequent mobile phone calls that Raphael initiates from Jamaica. If Junior needs to reach him, he uses his mobile phone to "beep" Raphael. They also communicate via Facebook,

but much less often. They rarely use Skype as Junior's computer camera isn't working, and Raphael's Internet service is very irregular. With no landline telephone service in his community, Raphael has to use a portable modem on his laptop, which does not always provide an uninterrupted WiFi signal.

Despite the 14 year age difference between them, the brothers are very close. Raphael is a surrogate father to Junior, even though Junior lives with his parents in New York. As a new immigrant, Junior is experiencing a great deal of stress as he adapts to life in a new country. This early stage of migration is a period that can be especially difficult, and where immigrants require increased moral and emotional support (Baldassar, 2007a; Robertson-Hickling & Hickling, 2009).

During their telephone conversations, Raphael frequently gives Junior advice on how to relate to people in his new American environment. Junior admits that he had been reluctant to leave Jamaica, as he has a well-established network of friends there. But his parents had filed for his visa, leaving him with no choice but to migrate. Close ties influence behavior in significant ways; in this case, Junior's parents saw his move to the U.S. as the best choice, as it created more opportunities for him.

What is evident here is a tension between structure and agency at a micro level, influenced by meso level factors. Junior feels he had no choice in the matter, that he was compelled to migrate, as part of a structural rule defined for him by his parents and by wider Jamaican cultural norms. However, by having a U.S. permanent visa, Junior will in time be able to exercise his own agency within this structure, by taking advantage of new opportunities open to him in the U.S.

Junior told me that he struggles with his new cultural milieu. He encounters language differences in the U.S., even though English is his native tongue. He has spoken Jamaican Creole all his life, and finds it difficult to speak the Standard English necessary to be understood by Americans. He also finds the bluntness of New Yorkers disconcerting and is still adjusting to new social norms around social interaction. Phone calls with Raphael are an important part not only of maintaining their close bonds over distance, but also as a regular forum for Raphael to support and ease his younger brother's culture shock. The brothers also discuss what Junior termed as "man stuff".[40] Raphael said, "Sometimes I really do wish I could be there like physically to see him and talk with him physically. Sometimes, I really do feel that way."

Junior mirrors Raphael's feelings, sharing his intense need to be physically co-present with his older brother, and said he finds mediated forms of communication inadequate. The telephone is too lean a medium for him, despite its simultaneity and spontaneity. As a new immigrant in great need of emotional support, Junior longs for more visual cues with his closest sibling:

> Talking to him on the phone is different from actually physically speaking, seeing someone. You feel the presence; you pay more attention to them. When you on the phone, you're doing something else like watching TV. You not, like, in tune to the person. Sometimes like I want advice, I want to be able to physically interact with someone like my brother, so it can be difficult.

From what Raphael told me, the advice and emotional reinforcements he shares with Junior during their phone calls cover a wide array of practical life skills. His interactions with Junior provide insight into the dynamics of an immigrant family in

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[40] Junior didn't elaborate on what this "man stuff" was. I assume he meant romantic relationship matters.

which parents are overcommitted to work, and surrogate parenting by a sibling—albeit

from a distance—often has to substitute:

> *Marian: What sorts of things do you talk to him about?*
> Raphael: Things like avoiding violent movies and explicit sex things [on the
> computer], how to prepare for exams. I try to advise him not to wait until exam is
> coming to look over his notes, and to get him in the habit of reviewing his notes
> after each class, and he seemed to have accepted it…[And] not to hang out with
> people who are time wasters. I tell him to make sure he talks to his Dad and his
> Mom. Mommy or Daddy [have] to be out all the time, so from he was in Jamaica
> I'm the one who is always around, the one who is always closest to them [his
> other siblings], so things that they [my parents] would not seem to understand
> about him, I totally understand. And so he is more comfortable talking to me or
> calling me if he wants something done.

Junior, as a new immigrant to New York City, is experiencing isolation from his

many friends in Jamaica, who he told me he still interacts with on Facebook when he has

Internet access. His immediate communication goals are to become oriented to his new

American environment, as well as reduce his social isolation by securing emotional

support from his older brother in Jamaica. Junior's engagement of his communication

ecology to support these goals concentrates on interpersonal and email communication

with his peers and professors at his college, mediated communication via phone calls,

beeping and texting his older brother in Jamaica, and via Facebook with his extensive

friend network in Jamaica.

The stress of the early migration period is exacerbated for new immigrants

because the multitude of new experiences can be perplexing. Unfortunately, there are

few avenues for them to articulate their feelings about this transition. Junior had not been

adequately prepared for what his life in the U.S. would entail. Caribbean immigrant

parents have little time to prepare or assist their children or adolescents with settling into

this new environment as they are often working at more than one job (Pottinger et al.,

2008), and are overextended in other ways. Children in turn are often discouraged from grieving for their old lives as such disruption is framed as a positive step for the family.

As a result, Caribbean immigrant families often fail to acknowledge the deleterious effects on children of migratory separation and re-unification of families. These experiences can result in children's poor school performance[41] and behavioral problems after they arrive in host countries (Pottinger, 2005; Robertson-Hickling & Hickling, 2009).

For adolescent immigrants like Junior, already seeking to understand themselves and their emerging identities, re-settling into a family can involve confusion, ambivalence, and disharmony. While Junior was still living in Jamaica and physically separated from his parents in the U.S., it was Raphael who offered him ongoing emotional support. By leaving Jamaica, he had left behind a sibling who in effect, had become his major caregiver. Junior has few opportunities to express his feelings about what he is experiencing. Seeking counseling is not a common practice in Caribbean culture as it is perceived as emotional weakness, and there is severe stigma associated with mental illness (Pottinger et al., 2008; Pottinger, 2005; Robertson-Hickling & Hickling, 2009). As migration is seen as normal in this social context, such recognition of the negative effects of migration is rare.

According to Wilkin et al. (2007), knowing a person's communication ecologies can provide understanding of the cultural positioning of new immigrant individuals and groups. Junior engages his communication ecology to balance needs for understanding

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[41] Waters (1999) observed that many newly-arrived Caribbean immigrant children were placed in special education and/or remedial classes, as Brooklyn teachers couldn't understand the Jamaican Creole that they spoke. Paula (see Chapter Five) told me that when she first came to New York and started middle school, she was badly bullied as she spoke only Jamaican Creole. See Robertson-Hickling and Hickling (2009) for discussions of similar adaptation challenges among Caribbean immigrants in the U.K.

himself and others, connection, and assimilation, and to avoid isolation from his social networks in the U.S. and Jamaica, as well as within his own family. Rafael, in describing their family dynamics, refers to this problem of isolation within their family, which has been exacerbated by migration. Family dispersion is a common byproduct of migration. This pair demonstrates various consequences of such family separation and re-unification, and the importance of family members staying close during a difficult transition period.

For both brothers, negotiating closeness is difficult. They never feel as close enough through ICTs, which can only simulate physical co-presence to a limited degree. They are both constrained by limited incomes from visiting each other. Given the unreliable WiFi infrastructure in Rafael's community in Jamaica, and Junior's non-functional webcam in the Bronx, they rarely enjoy virtual co-present visits via Skype. Therefore, they are confined to only a few lean ICT choices, which feel less than optimal for both brothers, as their need for closeness is so acute.

"We Are Always Talking!"

Unlike the previous two pairs, sisters Beryl and Collen have access to all the ICTs along the continuum of presence. When they were employed, they both earned high incomes and as U.S. citizens, can afford to travel frequently and freely between the U.S. and Jamaica. Beryl (age 66) and Colleen (age 65), both married and retired, are extremely close and talked to each other on the phone daily, even though Beryl lives in New Jersey, and Colleen in Oracabessa, Jamaica. They see each other in person four times per year or more, as Colleen travels to the U.S. regularly, where most of her friends and family are located. Beryl also travels to Jamaica regularly to visit Colleen.

The sisters talk about everything: personal issues, shopping, fashion, everyday events in their lives, sports, family matters, American and Jamaican politics, and investment strategies. They have many other ICT options available including email, texting, Facebook, Skype and Google Hangout. However, despite the benefit of this wide array of media, Colleen most prefers the phone because it best replicates emotional presence:

> I find it more personal to be able to have a conversation and an exchange with someone than to sit on a computer or to text. I can't hear the inflection; we are not having a dialogue so the old way of communicating is the way I choose to do it, that's the preferred way for me. We can have a conversation as opposed to an exchange of thoughts on paper, to me I am not feeling it when I do that, you know.

Beryl concurs that this vocally rich medium enables her to feel much closer to her sister, as it facilitates shared meaning by instant feedback, transmits multiple verbal cues, uses natural language, and has a personal focus (Klebe Trevino et al., 1990):

> It's more personal, we get more out of that form of communication. We would spend half an hour, sometimes an hour on the phone and I prefer that method of communication. The other methods are so impersonal, and don't seem to lend themselves to really getting all the information of what's going on in Jamaica and what she heard from her friends. I mean, we get to the point where we joke, where I tell her I write stuff down to tell her so that I don't forget.

For both sisters, the distance between them is a normal state of affairs. Both wish they were closer to each other, but as Colleen notes, "the phone and talking to her all the time make it easier, and you kinda get used to the fact that it is what it is right now." Beryl admits that, "we talk so often on the phone that I don't really feel like, oh my God, you know, I am so far away." Colleen has recently discovered Google Hangout, "and

now I am telling Beryl to get on Google Hangout so I can actually see her and she can see me, and that would make it even a little closer."

This pair feels that the phone is the richest medium for achieving their shared goal of maintaining intimacy. A lot of their conversations are about mundane subjects that they would have discussed if they were physically co-present. Part of the process of maintaining intimacy is the result of both of them sharing, spending time together virtually on the phone, feeling attached to each other, and expressing affection (Jamieson, 2011). They are continually enacting a network of intimacy (Ito & Okabe, 2005, Matsuda, 2005) as the closest ties in an intimate network of families and friends. For both of them, it is more convenient to phone one another, as opposed to planning a time for a Skype connection. Synchronous voice cues are the richest media affordances for them. Colleen told me that she greatly misses being physically co-present with Beryl between visits, during which they would attend the theater and sporting events together and go shopping in New York City. She longs for such co-present camaraderie on an even more regular basis.

The sisters are also enacting the work of kinship (di Leonardo, 1987), as they dedicate a tremendous amount of time, intention, and effort to preserving their closeness. This kin-work as a form of emotional labor is not commoditized in the way that Hochschild (1983) defines it, but instead involves the ongoing work of maintaining cross-household kin ties to achieve closeness by using a range of communicative behaviors: visits, telephone calls, letters, or in this case, emails, exchange of gifts, and organizing holiday gatherings (di Leonardo, 1987).

Not only does this pair exchange emotional support, but they have established daily, mundane, predictable communication routines with each other, which are the bedrock of the intimacy they share. Such phatic exchanges have also been noted as common in other cross-national circumstances of extreme closeness, such as transnational parenting (Dreby, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012). An important part of their connection is their mutual need to contact the other spontaneously, as Beryl puts it:

> We talk sometimes not once a day you know, several times a day. It's almost like I am in the town next door to her. We actually pick up the phone and talk to one another, you know, and that helps me.

When they really long to be together, both sisters are in a position to easily travel overseas. Colleen admits that they are extremely fortunate to be able to visit in person so frequently, and that "We are blessed that we can go back and forth, and you know, we are able to do it because she was there and she just left in January, she is here now, she is coming back in August, and she's coming back in December." Their respective communication ecologies are extensive; and yet, because their shared communication goals for their relationship are to preserve and sustain their close sibling bond, they choose one medium—in their case, the telephone—as the option that best meets this need between times that they can be physically co-present.

Intimacy as the Bedrock of Closeness

All pairs in the study wanted offline co-presence, but these three pairs had an even greater need for this, given the intense nature of their respective relationships. In reviewing how they negotiated closeness and how often they could achieve offline co-presence, their income—whether high or low—was a major predictor of their ability or inability to travel overseas when desired. While the income disparities across these three

pairs were considerable, income did not differentiate how they engaged with ICTs to a major extent. One of the pairs (Colleen and Beryl) had access to all potential forms of communication ranging from lean media to co-present visits.

Nevertheless, it was the telephone that this pair used most often, as was the case for the other two less affluent pairs who had few other choices other than the telephone (Marcia and Preston, Junior and Rafael). This ICT best met all their common relational goals for closeness and emotional support, because this medium afforded vocal cues, synchronicity and immediacy.

In negotiating closeness, the three pairs discussed in this chapter could engaged a variety of rich and lean media to maintain closeness. The sisters in particular could enjoy offline co-presence via frequent overseas visits, unlike the other two pairs. In fact, these sisters were the only pair in the study with the financial means, favorable citizenship status, and free time to travel overseas to be with each other as often as they did.

Offline co-present visits solidified the closeness between pairs, but were a rarity for about half of the respondent pairs. For pairs that couldn't afford to, or were unable to travel overseas to refresh their closeness face-face so frequently, their mediated communication practices presented limitations. No mediated exchange could replicate a co-present visit in all its experiential dimensions, even though applications like Skype could come close.

For all respondent pairs, and more so for those which rarely made overseas visits, there was a dialectical relationship between closeness and distance. As a way to resolve this conundrum, all pairs had to accept that their relationships were valuable because they shared close bonds, yet imperfect, because they were separated. Therefore, they had to

make tradeoffs, pairs which visited infrequently, if at all, had to make do with vocal synchronicity as a vital element of offline co-presence. Furthermore, all pairs had to accept the difficult reality that for their bonds to survive, their relationships required constant attention.

In the next and final of the three Findings chapters, I turn to the third emergent theme in the data. This was the manner in which respondents enacted commitment and reciprocity with their close ties overseas.

Chapter Seven

Findings - Commitment and Reciprocity

This chapter explores the third major theme in the findings, related to respondents' goals to engage in acts of commitment and reciprocity with each other. I begin by defining commitment and reciprocity, and considering how they are interrelated. Commitment and reciprocity are then discussed with regards to how these are addressed in the research questions. I then discuss five respondent pairs who demonstrated strong and varied forms of commitment to their close ties.

Commitment is defined as a motivation to interact with the same partner repeatedly, in the face of an alternative to that interaction (Rice, 2005). As part of this definition, levels of commitment vary from exclusive fidelity, such as the emotional motivations for commitment that exist between a romantic pair, to more casual connections between friends, motivated by friendship and fellowship. Even in these very different cases, commitment involves motivations by both parties for the relationship to endure over time.

One of the primary mechanisms by which commitment is enacted is *reciprocity*, which is most basically defined as a mutual exchange of goods or services (Mallios, 2008). Reciprocity also presents the opportunity to develop realistic expectations of a partner's future behavior, which can raise questions about their commitment to the relationship, or serve to reinforce it (Rice, 2005). Furthermore, reciprocity promotes a strong sense of obligation in individuals to behave likewise when they receive rewards from others (Stafford, 2008).

As was the case in the previous two Findings chapters, these goals of commitment and reciprocity at the individual level were enacted within context of the macro structural rules of migration as a Jamaican cultural norm. All respondents also navigated issues of commitment and reciprocity within structural rules operating at the meso and micro levels respectively: migration as a necessary sacrifice for Jamaican communities, and Jamaica's elastic definition of kin relations between individuals.

Commitment and Reciprocity: Common Trends

The first set of research questions were intended to uncover respondents' communication goals with their close ties (RQ1), and the ICTs they engaged to achieve these goals (RQ1a). As evinced in the previous discussions on negotiating distance and closeness, for all 17 pairs of respondents, maintaining their long-distance relationships was a primary communication goal, despite their physical separation. Expressions of commitment represented the enactment of this goal, and verbal expressions or communicative acts of reciprocity were how such commitment was manifested in practice.

Commitment reifies connections. Respondents' primary goal of relational maintenance carried with it commitment as a major criterion. Their commitment to their close tie was a choice, rather than a random and infrequent act, and entailed certain obligations, sacrifices, and responsibilities. All pairs in the sample shared the goal of staying firmly committed to each other, and their commitment operated at two levels.

First, at a relational level, respondents demonstrated this goal to stay committed by caring for and wanting to stay in touch with each other, even though this required great outlays of their time, effort, and significant emotional labor (Baym, 2010; di

Leonardi, 1987). However, respondents saw these outlays as necessary, given their closeness prior to migration. These expressions of emotional labor reinforced the strength of their mutual bonds. They had few other individuals overseas who they were as close to, as they simply had neither time nor emotional energy to maintain such close ties to many other people (Baym, 2010; Haythornthwaite, 2002).

Commitment between several pairs also had an instrumental component, which was primarily of a communicative nature in some cases, or extended beyond this to achieving material goals. Maintaining such committed relationships was an essential prerequisite to achieving these financial, family, and other goals in Jamaica for immigrants living in New York, and for the financial stability of several non-migrants living in Jamaica. Material goals were a major priority for these non-migrants in Jamaica experiencing financial hardship, and who needed help from their close ties in New York. Commitment was the foundation of reciprocal actions such as emotional and financial support, advice, implementing material projects, and the basis for providing and receiving material help.

With regards to the ICTs that respondents used to meet these goals (RQ1a), they chose media that enabled them to demonstrate or achieve acts of commitment and reciprocity appropriate to their particular needs and circumstances. Across all 17 pairs, their communication ecologies were spare in meeting these goals, in that they purposively and strategically engaged the phone, texting, and to a lesser extent, email, for reciprocal exchanges.

The phone, email, and texts served different goals: the phone enabled pairs to communicate immediately and synchronously, and allowed for feedback when decisions

were needed or emotions were shared. Email and texts provided a permanent, asynchronous record of these exchanges for personal, business, and archival purposes. Other meso-level ICTs played an essential role in these emotional and material exchanges across borders, such as money transfers and the postal service.

Respondents also engaged interpersonal resources as part of their communication ecologies to meet these goals of commitment and reciprocity. These consisted of trusted friends acting as couriers, and infrequent in-person visits to transport money, gifts, and other goods to facilitate these reciprocal arrangements.

This segmentation of ICTs served an important function for interaction with close ties. Respondents' communication ecologies were constantly being influenced by macro and meso social forces in their respective lives in both countries. The ICTs that all pairs chose to engage met their goals for the fellowship and intimacy needed to sustain commitment, and also met their goals for material exchanges by calibrating the logistics of these exchanges.

My second set of research questions focused on how demographic variations enabled or constrained respondents' goals with their close ties oversees (RQ2), and how these demographic variations explained the variance in the ICTs they engaged go do so (RQ2a). Among these variables were educational level, occupation, presumed income, age, gender, visa status, and nature of close tie.

Demographic predictors of commitment and reciprocity. Three demographic variables—income, gender, and nature of close tie—appeared to directly influence respondents' goals of enacting commitment and reciprocity over distance (RQ2). As discussed in Chapter Five, respondents' income level either enabled their ability to

provide material assistance to their close ties, or predicted their need for such help. Within pairs, more affluent respondents were better able to help their kin partners with money and material goods.

There were some gendered dynamics as well. Women in kin pairs automatically took on self-sacrificial roles (di Leonardi, 1987), and tended to assume more of the burden of carrying out reciprocal acts for their close ties. In contrast, men in both kin and non-kin pairs were far less deferential, and assumed a more authoritative role vis-à-vis their female close tie in how advice or emotional support were shared. For such expressions of commitment, respondents most preferred synchronous ICTs with vocal cues (RQ2a). Some male respondents stated that they saw their gender as an advantage in maintaining their close ties from overseas as they felt that men were more likely to manage long distance relationships without rancor than women would be able to do.

Conversely, the closer the tie, the more gender appeared to complicate the relationship. In some kin ties, male and female respondents felt that their gender interfered with their ability to be totally frank and open with their close ties. As they were communicating primarily via telephone calls (RQ2a), this medium's immediacy and synchronicity could be a mixed blessing. Respondents had little opportunity to revise how they discussed awkward subjects, and impulsive and insensitive remarks or unexpected emotional responses could not be edited out, as they could with asynchronous email. Such discomfort between genders was also driven by persistent Caribbean norms of patriarchy and gender role stereotypes (Chevannes, 2001; Rawlins, 2006). Both male and female kin respondents felt that some delicate subjects such as romantic relationships

or sexuality were better discussed with same gender individuals, and sometimes not even with kin.

Kin bonds strongest predictor of resource exchanges. Respondents' goals to stay committed to their close ties, and their willingness to engage in reciprocal acts varied, depending on the nature of their relationships. Some kin and non-kin pairs shared strong goals of commitment based on mutual family obligations and had high expectations of reciprocal behaviors from each other based on those kin ties. Other pairs, both kin and non-kin had commitment goals that were less binding and less intense, and had fewer expectations for reciprocal goals.

Nevertheless, acts of commitment were strongest between kin ties, where expectations were also greatest for the intensive exchange of various types of resources. When these expectations were not met, some kin pairs experienced discomfort and guilt, but preferred not to openly voice these feelings. Some respondents elected to instead depend on non-kin in their networks more heavily after their expectations for kin reciprocity were not met. Nevertheless, reciprocity was still tied to the non-voluntary nature of family ties, as is consistent with the literature (Dainton & Zelly, 2006).

The telephone played a major role when respondents decided to reassess the best interpersonal resources to meet these goals of commitment and reciprocity. New York-based respondents learned of these disappointments, or worse, betrayals, by kin either by direct investigations that the prompted others to do for them or by surprise, always during telephone calls with weaker ties in Jamaica. The telephone was a useful surveillance tool as it allowed respondents to quickly reach, or to be contacted, by other interpersonal

resources in their communication ecologies, as they monitored their close ties overseas when needed.

The changes that some individuals made to trust non-kin ties with kin-work—the collective labor expected of family networks across and within households for them to survive (di Leonardo, 1987)—which relatives had failed to carry out revealed the malleable nature of the ties that migrants maintain at a distance. Some respondents' efforts to review the dependability of their interpersonal resources also reflected the dynamic nature of their communication ecologies. Here, individual or micro-level factors such as a kin member's unreliability influenced the efficacy of one interpersonal resource over another.

Reciprocity as kin-work. Kin-work, involves certain expectations and behaviors. These behaviors reflect negotiated exchanges of power, capabilities, and conflict within families that become part of a familial framework of kinscripts (Stack & Burton, 1993). Kinscripted duties are both an expectation and an obligation that kin members share among themselves. In some cases, kinscription results in considerable self-sacrifice, and kin-work is often feminized (di Leonardo, 1987). Nevertheless, kinscripts are still undertaken to ensure the survival of the family unit (Stack & Burton, 1993).

One common form of kinscription between immigrants and their kin in home countries is sending remittances and other forms of material support from the country of settlement. Several kin pairs in the sample were engaged in these money transfers. In return, non-migrants at home were implicitly expected to reciprocate with acts such as

meeting migrants at the airport when they visited, providing free transportation and accommodation during their stay, and arranging social activities.

Irrespective of demographics, reciprocity operationalizes commitment. In addition to the goal of commitment that respondent pairs shared with each other, reciprocity was an associated goal which occupied an important place in maintaining their relationships. Reciprocity had two dimensions: the communicative and the material. Acts of reciprocity within kin and non-kin pairs in a communicative sense comprised mutual exchanges of intangible resources such as emotional support, advice, gossip, trivia, and knowledge.

Within pairs, respondents signaled their mutual commitment using ICTs that enabled one partner to initiate spontaneous and short contact, such as phone calls, 'beeping' and texting. The other partner reciprocated quickly by responding in kind (RQ2a). Reciprocity in a material sense was manifested in respondents' mutual exchange of goods and services, and instrumental resources such as practical and logistical assistance with errands in the other country needed to meet their goals (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012).

These reciprocal exchanges—communicative, material and/or logistical—were rarely overtly formalized, but there was an unspoken obligation between pairs that there would be give and take on both sides (Stafford, 2008). The particular nature of the close tie pairs shared determined how much they could ask from each other, and how much they could expect in return. As with the goal of commitment, among all respondents, kin pairs were the most explicit in their expectations of giving and receiving money and

goods, but non-kin pairs also asked a lot of each other, especially when they shared longstanding bonds that had become kin-like in intensity and longevity.

Respondents' goals in support of commitment and reciprocity, whether communicative, material and/ or logistical, determined their ICT choices (RQ2a). Communicative goals were met by both impulsive and pre-planned telephone calls, which facilitated synchronicity with vocal cues. Material goals were best met by asynchronous media such as emails or texts, which produced messages that were permanent, retrievable, and replicable. For logistical goals, respondents engaged both synchronous and asynchronous media. Individuals and resources outside the ambit of their close ties could be unpredictable and unreliable, and had to be carefully managed, especially financial transactions or professional services.

Reciprocity was not always equally enacted within pairs, as some individuals had more resources to offer than others. More affluent respondents naturally assumed the role of benefactors, and those less affluent expected this largesse, even in non-kin pairs. Nevertheless, imbalances were experienced as more acceptable for some non-kin pairs, as their expectations were less value-laden or emotionally intense. Kin pairs accepted these asymmetries as a given, and non-kin partners assumed kinwork in some pairs without resentment, as their close bonds had become well cemented over time.

Location complicated achievement of instrumental goals. The third set of research questions asked how respondents' primary country of residence explained variations in their strategies for managing their communication goals with their close ties (RQ3), and how these variations affected their ICT choices (RQ3a). Country of primary residence influenced how acts of commitment and reciprocity were engaged depending

on whether the communication goals were relational or instrumental. All kin and non-kin pairs demonstrated commitment through sharing communication resources such as advice and intimacies as a form of mutual emotional support. For these communicative goals, country of residence was not a major influence in how these resources were exchanged.

However, for respondents' goals of material and logistical help, country of residence had a major influence on how these goals were met, and reflected the synergies between demographics and country of residence that were evident in how respondents negotiated closeness, as was discussed in Chapter Six. For respondents in New York, their goals to stay committed to their close ties were intertwined with altruistic acts. If they were better off financially, they regularly assisted their close ties in need in Jamaica. Within kin and non-kin pairs, non-migrant and less affluent partners in Jamaica demonstrated their commitment and reciprocity in the form of administrative oversight of migrants' investments in Jamaica, rather than material exchanges.

Having to transact matters of various types in Jamaica from New York was no easy feat. Jamaica's socioeconomic circumstances as a developing country with weak social safety nets were a constraining macro element for New York-based respondents to consider. Goals that extend beyond communicative acts that had to be ascribed to the Jamaica-based tie included the administration of family estates, buying land, building houses, and managing ongoing financial affairs in Jamaica.

There had to be a trusted ally on site in Jamaica to navigate potential perils associated with such complicated and sensitive transactions, which include a slow, inefficient bureaucracy and unscrupulous functionaries (e.g., realtors, lawyers, customs brokers, building contractors, and caretakers) who had to be retained to get things done

(Small, 2006; Thomas-Hope, 2006). Without such an ally on the ground, immigrants were often exploited, as locals saw them as affluent and gullible (Dreby, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Markowitz & Stefansson, 2004; Potter, Conway & Phillips, 2005). Therefore, migrant respondents often particularly welcomed support in their personal business dealings from their close tie in Jamaica. Such commitment and reciprocity from someone in Jamaica were valuable benefits.

The influence of respondents' primary country of residence on their ICT choices (RQ3a) in support of acts of commitment and reciprocity varied, at macro and micro levels. For example, their communication, mainly by phone, and to a lesser extent email, had to allow for synchronous dialogue and turn-taking. Pairs often discussed practical matters involved in instrumental aid, where they needed immediate feedback concerning decisions to be made, instructions to be followed, or wanted closure on these matters. Unexpected crises that did arise had to be resolved quickly, and synchronous, vocal dialogue was best for these exchanges.

At the macro level, respondents in Jamaica were better able to initiate telephone calls, 'beeps', and texts in support of material exchanges and projects, given that country's relative inexpensive phone rates. However, while this cost structure enabled respondent pairs to maintain their commitment, other macro and meso influences within the Jamaican setting, such as logistical inefficiencies and widespread corruption, impeded migrants from achieving their instrumental goals without their close ties' oversight and input in Jamaica.

Discussion

The following five pairs: two kin and three non-kin, were selected from the data set because they articulated the most active and sustained efforts to support the goals of commitment, social support, and reciprocity. Three of the pairs had maintained deep friendships for many years, despite their physical separations. Two of these friendships were characterized by strong emotional and intellectual bonds. These emotional bonds were further manifest in mutual affection, trust, and a genuine desire to maintain their close connections. An intellectual bond refers to shared traits such as intellectual humility, empathy, courage, integrity, fair mindedness, and self-questioning (Elder & Paul, 1998). These intellectual bonds were also characterized by commitment to a shared value system and worldview that sustained a mutual sense of well-being for each partner in these pairs.

Similarity breeds connection (McPherson et al., 2001). Whereas McPherson et al. stressed geographic proximity as a primary determinant of homophilous relations; three of these pairs shared similarities in education, occupation, and place of origin, as well as similar attitudes, values, beliefs, and aspirations.   The other pairs represent a range of scenarios where reciprocity operated as a core element of their commitment to their relationships, by way of their exchanges of social support and physical resources.

Shared Values

Trevor (age 75), a married entrepreneur, lives in Mount Vernon, New York, and communicates with his cousin Maureen (age 75) a divorced, retired teacher in Kingston, primarily by phone. Trevor and Maureen are kin, but both frame their relationship in more voluntary terms, describing themselves as friends and kindred spirits.

Trevor's communication ecology is extensive, and he uses the telephone, email, Skype, web-based conference calls, and courier to stay connected to other members of his extensive professional and personal networks, in addition to his frequent visits to Jamaica. However, he told me that for older relatives like Maureen, he prefers to use the phone, as he feels she is less comfortable with Skype and that the phone is more familiar and convenient for her.

Maureen's communication ecology, though not as extensive as Trevor's, is more varied that he realizes. She noted that she would email Trevor from time to time, and uses Skype with her cousins in Florida and the U.K., and to keep in touch with a close friend in New Zealand who once taught high school with her in Jamaica—but not with Trevor. She finds that Skype visits require a lot of planning; she has to email her contacts to establish mutually convenient times to connect, given the different time zones in Jamaica, the U.K, and New Zealand. Maureen rarely travelled overseas anymore, so co-present visits to close ties were no longer part of her communication ecology. Both Trevor and Maureen consider their relationship to be very special, and value their deep emotional and intellectual connection.

Their ICT choices are a direct reflection of their commitment to maintaining this kind of connection; both feel that the phone's synchronicity and simultaneity reinforce the sense of intimacy between them. The phone allows for more spontaneous and immediate contact than options like Skype, and its portability and ease of use makes it convenient for their frequent contact. It is spontaneity most of all that strengthens the intimacy between them. While Maureen uses other ICTs with her network overseas, the

phone allows for immediate turn-taking, and best lends itself to the types of intense and cerebral exchanges that she and Trevor share.

They update each other about family members dispersed between the U.S., Canada, U.K., and Jamaica. They also have intense discussions about social and economic trends in Jamaica, and what both see as the country's deteriorating moral fabric. In discussing matters of intense shared personal importance, they continually strengthen the homophily between them (Marsden, 1988).

Trevor and Maureen had grown up together in Jamaica before he migrated in 1956. Since then, they have lived most of their lives apart. As Trevor explained, Maureen is a patriotic Jamaican and had never wanted to migrate. He described her as "One of those who'd stay to turn off the lights, if we had to (gentle laugh). She's committed to Jamaica. She's an educator and has worked there all her life."

As evidence of the strong emotional bond between them, Trevor shared an anecdote with me. I interviewed him while he was visiting Ocho Rios in Jamaica. On the day of our interview, he had just returned to Ocho Rios after staying with Maureen in Kingston for several days. He said, "She [Maureen] just called a few minutes ago: "I just wanted to make sure you're OK," and I said, "I meant to call you and didn't get a chance." And she's into family, caring, she's a caring person." Maureen, in turn, views Trevor as one of the few people she can confide in, and during their phone conversations:

> We can talk about like our marriages and this kind of thing. You know he is in his second marriage; I didn't remarry, I am a divorcee, so that's about the closest thing we talk about, our feelings, you know.

In their retellings about their conversations, Maureen and Trevor's shared sense of integrity, humility, and courage emerged as evidence of their shared intellectual traits

(McPherson et al., 2001). They have a mutual commitment to social values that they

believe are fast disappearing and they bemoan the influence of American materialism and

individualism on Jamaican society. One vexing topic for them is family finances and the

distribution of the proceeds from family estates after older relatives die. Trevor

explained that:

> Money [becomes] a <u>divisive</u>[42] tool where families are concerned.… [Maureen
> and I] have had this discussion many, many times because we've seen it happen,
> the influence of money in relationships and why it's not necessary. Values have
> shifted. American values define me. I wanna have as much as I can. Many of us
> [Jamaicans] have moved to the USA and that's our reason for being there. And
> when we come back to Jamaica, we want a bigger house, a bigger whatever it is.
> And I've found that families in Jamaica will also take [lessons] from families in
> America. It's not about the love of family; it's about the money.

Without prompting, Maureen mentioned this topic in our interview as well, where

she told me she finds the uncaring behavior of family members dispersed by migration

very disturbing:

> You have families there [in America] who don't care two hoots about who they
> leave behind here, you know. Only when the person dies, they come back, and
> you have people dying from want [in Jamaica] and they have children away who
> just completely ignore them.

Maureen and Trevor are grappling with a structural reality of migration: the

seductiveness and pervasiveness of host country materialism. Both respondents strive to

resist these material temptations by holding on to more traditional and communal values.

Their agentic response to these structural circumstances is to offer each other moral

support for retaining their traditional values, integrity, fair-mindedness, and self-

questioning (Elder & Paul, 1998).

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[42] Trevor's emphasis.

Maureen had never wanted to migrate due to marriage and family commitments. She exercised her agency by choosing to stay in Jamaica and has been able to achieve financial stability and career satisfaction. She is one of the lucky ones. Trevor, as a child, had no agency and was compelled to migrate with his family. But he feels a constant pull to visit Jamaica often, hence his intense engagement in both countries.

Emotional and Intellectual Bonds

Gladstone (age 67), a single college professor in New York, and Donovan (age 63), a married entrepreneur in Kingston, email each other almost daily and phone each other several times a month. Gladstone left Jamaica to join his family after finishing college in Jamaica and went on to complete a Ph.D. in New York City. He and Donovan have been friends for over 40 years, and at one point, Donovan lived with Gladstone and his family in New York when he was in graduate school. Donovan discussed how he regarded Gladstone as a brother:

> I am Gladstone's friend and the other members of his family adopt me as their friend too, so a lot of people think I'm a member of that family. You find yourself relating to them at [a] family level. Gladstone and I are like brothers.

Each of these men has an extensive communication ecology, encompassing a wide range of ICT options that they engage from their respective workplaces and homes. In spite of the array of ICT choices at their disposal, they rely primarily on email and to a lesser extent, on their mobile phones to communicate with each other. They email each other when at work or home, and from their phones as well. Gladstone visits Jamaica several times each year, though he has recently traveled there less often due to illness. Desmond visits his children and grandchildren in Atlanta and Virginia at least one each year, but rarely New York.

This pair's communication goals for intense interactions about politics, economics, and social activism are best met by email. Email's verbal quality, combined with this pair's high literacy levels, allow them to articulate their ideas easily in words. Furthermore, email best suits their busy lives as they can begin, interrupt, postpone, and conclude their conversations asynchronously at their convenience.

Donovan runs a small trading company in Kingston, and he and Gladstone have a mutual passion for a non-profit organization that they started together in New York. The organization is a clearinghouse and speakers' bureau for Caribbean professionals working in immigrant communities in the U.S., Jamaica, and across the Caribbean diaspora. Both are committed to maintaining and developing this nonprofit, and have persevered with its operations for several years. Donovan is trying to set up a branch of its operations in Kingston.

Since their relationship has a business dimension, this further explains their heavy email use. They share event and funding proposals, position papers, information about possible speakers, and other useful contacts with each other. They both told me that apart from discussing strategies for how to move their nonprofit forward, Jamaican politics and economics dominate their emails and conversations. Gladstone is very committed to Jamaica's development and serves as a community liaison in New York City for the ruling People's National Party. He told me he had planned to retire in Jamaica, but after a recent bout with prostate cancer, he is reluctant to leave New York and its medical facilities in case his illness recurs. Gladstone described his relationship with Donovan as open and candid:

> At times we have very heated debates about politics (laughs), because he's a little more conservative than I am. And sometimes there are strong views. We have a

genuine friendship in the sense that we respect each other, and in spite of distance, still support each other. And he's someone that I can call up and ask to do certain things, and he can do the same thing [with me]. He has integrity that you value.

Donovan shared similar sentiments:

We have disagreements all the time because we are friends. We are robust, man, we put a whole heap of energy in dis thing (laughs). He's my friend and I am his friend, so of course we do talk personal stuff, as well as politics.

In addition to their shared values, the men share commonalities in age, educational level, income and ethnicity, which further solidify their commitment to their friendship. This pair also shares platonic brotherhood, intellectual intimacy, and fellowship. Gladstone has never been married, lives alone, and has a young daughter living in Jamaica who he rarely sees. He and his child's mother are estranged. He told me he feels closer to Donovan than to many of his female friends, and their email exchanges and phone calls meet his needs to relieve his isolation and loneliness in New York.

Duty and Financial Support

Berris (age 56), a social worker in upstate New York, phones his sister Joan (age 66), a retired secretary, every week in Kingston. Joan lives with her two adult daughters whose young children she cares for while they are at work. Neither daughter is married to her child's father, so Joan has found herself, in retirement, with full-time child care responsibilities. Berris had migrated to New York City in 1992 and still owns property in Jamaica that Joan helps him to manage. This pair is very dissimilar in terms of education level and income, and this dictates the forms of reciprocity they enact with each other. Financial assistance from Berris, who is more affluent and accomplished professionally, is a major part of their bond and a reality that both parties understand, expect, and accept.

Berris engages different ICT options in his communication ecology to connect with family members in Jamaica. He communicates with Joan only by phone, but uses both the phone and email with her daughters. He used to visit Jamaica at least three times each year, but he married recently and now visits less often. Joan's communication ecology is very limited, and is effectively restricted to her mobile phone. She uses prepaid overseas minutes on her phone when communicating with Berris. Apart from providing Joan and her daughters with financial remittances, Berris also exchanges communication resources with Joan, in the form of guidance and advice (Stafford, 2008), even though he is younger than her.

Every month, Berris sends money to Joan to pay his utility bills and mortgage for his Jamaican properties. He talks to Joan about these matters by phone, and emails his nieces with more specific instructions about how these tasks should be completed for him. Berris therefore selects different ICTs for different purposes; he sends emails for his business matters, which he differentiates from his personal exchanges with Joan that occur over the phone. Berris and Joan draw a mediated line between parts of their relationship to avoid possible conflicts and resentments. He understands that Joan is uncomfortable with and will not use email. Therefore, by emailing her daughters for specific tasks, his ICT choices both allow him to separate the exchange of information about material resources (over email) from his exchange of emotional resources with Joan over the phone. Using email for business tasks also facilitates him maintaining documentation for his financial transactions in Jamaica.

Joan calls Berris regularly. She told me that in their conversations, Berris often tells her how to handle certain situations, and how very grateful he is to her for her

honesty and reliability. She believes it is her duty to ensure that his Jamaican properties

are in good hands. However, the subtext of her descriptions reveals his preoccupation

with his financial affairs in Jamaica, and hints at how often immigrants overseas are

exploited even by their relatives at home (Markowitz & Stefansonn, 2004; Potter et al.,

2005):

> He trust me a lot. For instance, if he has bills here to pay, he will send me the
> money to pay it, or put the money into the bank for his mortgage or so. And he
> doesn't have to query, to say: "you didn't do it?" or "what happen here?" He has
> never asked me to let him see a bill.

Berris and Joan have reciprocal obligations to each other, but the burdens of this

arrangement seem to fall more heavily on her, particularly since she provides her brother

extensive help in addition to the carework she does for her daughters' children. Berris

worries about Joan's health and welfare, and feels that his nieces are abusing their

mother's kindness by depending on her for unpaid child care. He attributes Joan's

predicament to a certain passivity on her part; he finds that very frustrating, as he feels

powerless to remedy it. Berris frames his concerns for Joan in part to protect himself

from feeling that he takes more from Joan than he gives, even as he chastises his nieces

for taking advantage of their mother.

The following exchange illustrates how Berris tries to establish his concern for his

sister, with his reluctance to be completely open with her on this issue. He admitted to

me that he feels his gender is a constraining factor; if he had been a woman, he could be

more candid with Joan:

> Berris: Her children overwhelm her a bit with her grandchildren. I tell her she
> needs to give herself some time to enjoy her life. And I find it difficult to talk to
> her about it. I would take a different approach [to this situation]. Sometimes I
> can see the stress, she won't say it but I can see it. I would invite her to New

York and she says she can't leave, because of the kids. And it has been happening for years[43] .
Marian: Maybe if she told her daughters to pay for a babysitter because she's going to visit her brother in New York—
Berris: She's not going to do it. She's too attached to them to do it. And I don't want to (pause) bring up that subject because we are very close and I don't want it to become a source of disagreement with her.

In addition to feeling constrained by his gender in discussing this issue openly with Joan, Berris proffers a gendered assessment of Joan's conundrum, as he "would take a different approach."

The reciprocity that Berris and Joan share is not equally manifest between her and her daughters, as he feels that Joan is contributing a great deal more to that relationship than she is receiving from them (Dainton & Zelley, 2006; Stafford, 2008). Berris told me that Joan frequently admits how difficult it is for her to pay her bills and make ends meet, even though both daughters have jobs. Berris is quick to provide financial assistance, or to bring items from New York when he visits Jamaica. Joan expects Berris to assist her and her daughters financially, as she feels that is his duty to her, as his sister in need. Berris in turn does not hesitate to provide this assistance, as Joan and her daughters enable him to continue to live in New York, without relinquishing his investments in Jamaica.

Nevertheless, there is a sense that self-interest is also preventing Berris from openly discussing this situation with Joan. Berris is motivated to promptly assist her and his nieces financially, because these resources are relatively easy for him to give. He, in turn, needs their cooperation in Jamaica to maintain his transnational lifestyle, and so wants to preserve amicability with Joan:

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[43] Empasis his.

> I try to protect the relationship more than try to protect her. I think I'm protecting her, but I think I need to protect her <u>more</u>[44] by saying "Look, the kids are big, they need to take care of themselves, you need to get yourself some space", but she's not going to.

Each of them secures resources—for Joan, these take the form of remittances and advice from Berris, and for him, in the form of supporting his investments—as a direct result of the others' efforts. Nevertheless, it is evident that Joan still benefits less from these exchanges than Berris does. During our interview, her resignation to the situation and her sadness were palpable; two emotions that are common among individuals who benefit less from reciprocal exchanges between loved ones (Sprecher, 1986).

Variations of commitment and reciprocity are operating at three levels in this vignette: between Berris and Joan, between Berris and his nieces, and between Joan and her daughters. The ICTs that Berris and Joan engage in these exchanges reinforce these reciprocal obligations and reflect their varying comfort with these ICTs. Berris and Joan only use the phone for their conversations, but he emails and occasionally phones his nieces about business issues as a follow up to his conversations with Joan, and to create a paper trail of his financial dealings. Berris and Joan's face-to-face interactions are more limited by her responsibilities to her daughters than by financial realities, given Berris' willingness to pay for her trips to New York. In sum, this respondent pair has enacted a wider web of reciprocal acts between themselves and Joan's daughters that are facilitated by phone calls, emails, and biannual visits.

Trust and Reliability

While the members of this pair are not kin, they interact with each other as if they are, and expect kin-like reciprocity from each other (Stack, 1974). Nordia (age 52) is an

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[44] Berris' emphasis here.

oncology nurse in Manhattan who regularly phones Aunt Myrtle (age 73) in Jamaica, her close family friend. They speak at least twice each month, and do not use email or Skype or Facebook with each other, even though both of them have access to these options.

Aunt Myrtle[45] was a neighbor of Nordia's now-deceased parents in a rural Jamaica community. A caretaker lived in the family home while Nordia's elderly father was alive, and her brother had supervised household matters until he broke her trust by using money she had sent for its upkeep for himself instead. Nordia's brother created an unexpected burden for Nordia and her sister living in Atlanta, who were in a quandary as to what to do with the family home after their father's death. Aunt Myrtle filled this breach, as "we took the running of the house from our brother and gave it to Aunt Myrtle to do. She keeps tabs on the caretaker and is now the point person, and we talk about what's happening with the house."

Nordia and Aunt Myrtle have very different communication ecologies. Nordia uses a landline phone for work and her mobile phone for her personal contacts. She uses email for work, but told me that her job in oncology is so draining that she rarely has any energy left to use email from home. She has Skype on her home computer, but never uses it. Nordia visits Jamaica once or twice each year to visit other family as well. Aunt Myrtle's communication ecology is more extensive, and includes regular use of landline and mobile phones, email, and Skype. She uses Facebook regularly with family members and friends overseas and plays word games online with players in several countries. However, she rarely travels overseas.

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[45] In keeping with Jamaica's informal kinship structure, it is very common to use the designation "Aunt" or "Uncle" for godparents or close family friends, even though they are not blood relations.

Nordia explained that handling her family's affairs in Jamaica from New York is a major undertaking, and her conversations with Aunt Myrtle are dominated by these concerns:

> I haven't lived in Jamaica for a while, and navigating Jamaica is (pause) <u>not</u> an easy thing! <u>Not</u>[46] an easy thing! I am the one who pays the caretaker and the lawyer. The lawyer said the death taxes was something like US$5,900; her fees were 3% of the house's value. And guess who valued the house? Her husband's nephew (rueful laugh). So it was overvalued. When my parents died, Aunt Myrtle was there as a rock. She was really, really there for us.

Nordia relies much more on Aunt Myrtle than the reverse. Shortly before our interview, Aunt Myrtle's situation became more complicated when her husband became seriously ill, and they moved from their rural home to a second residence in Kingston where he can receive regular medical attention. Nevertheless, Aunt Myrtle remains committed to supporting Nordia in resolving her family estate matters in Jamaica:

> Nordia is such a lovely girl that I am never tired of doing anything for her. I don't think I'll be able to do as much as I used to because I am changing my location, but I will still be here for her. She would communicate with myself or my husband, and it became even stronger after the death of her mother. We would assist her father by taking him to the doctor [and] shopping because he was alone, just with a caregiver. And after her father's death, we even became stronger because there were certain responsibilities maintaining the home there.

Although commitment is strong on both sides, the reciprocity between this pair is uneven, although Aunt Myrtle is not as disadvantaged in this exchange as Joan was in the previous discussion (Stafford, 2008). Aunt Myrtle provides management services and oversight, goods, social support, information, and emotional support to Nordia. While Nordia's inputs of interpersonal resources into this relationship are less extensive, she

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[46] Emphasis hers.

does give Aunt Myrtle informal medical advice on treating her husband's illness, and frequently expresses how grateful she is for Aunt Myrtle's assistance.

The ICTs that these two women engage are also uneven. Although Nordia's communication ecology is potentially extensive, she limits her ICT choices to her mobile phone and twice yearly visits to Jamaica. Aunt Myrtle's communication ecology is extensive and she engages many media options. Nevertheless, when communicating with Nordia, Aunt Myrtle confines herself to the few ICTs that Nordia engages, reflecting her deference to Nordia's ICT preferences.

Technical Assistance

Karen (age 48), an elder caregiver in Brooklyn, is in weekly contact with Mr. Robert (age 67), in Jamaica who is supervising the construction of her house in rural Helicon, Jamaica. Karen migrated to New York City in 2000 after finishing grade 9 in Jamaica. She cares for an elderly disabled lawyer in his Manhattan apartment, and uses her mobile phone to call Mr. Robert during periods of downtime in her work day, and on the weekends.

Mr. Robert retired early from his job as a supervisor at the bauxite plant in Discovery Bay, where Norbert the welder (see Chapter Six), also worked. He lives alone, as he and his wife are separated, and his adult children and grandchildren live in several U.S. states. He owns several rental properties and is busy liaising with his tenants and monitoring Karen's building contractor in Helicon.

The nature of this non-kin pair's relationship is primarily instrumental and business-related. They have also been close family friends for many years. Their relationship is driven by generosity and genuine affection and strengthened by these long-

standing ties (Bogan & Darity, 2008). Mr. Robert told me that expects nothing in return from this relationship and has no problem with this arrangement.

Within each of their communication ecologies, Karen and Mr. Robert have access to a wide array of ICTs: landline and mobile telephone, texting, WiFi Internet, Skype, and email in their respective homes. They select from these options to connect based on the purpose of their exchange and their location at times when they need to contact each other. They use mobile telephone calls, texts, and "beeping" most frequently. Karen "beeps" or texts Mr. Robert, asking him to phone her. He does most of the calling via a prepaid overseas mobile phone plan, which makes it cheaper for him to call Karen than the reverse. They both use email for exchanges about her construction project that require written records, such as when Mr. Robert needs Karen's approval for the contractor's building estimates, or when he emails her photos of the construction progress.

Karen started building her house in Helicon in 2007, and only wanted a modest two bedroom bungalow, as she is single with no children. But the contractor went against her wishes by building a larger structure without consulting her.[47] She told me her contractor insisted she deserved a big house or something befitting her station as someone who had lived abroad.[48] Karen deferred to him with little protest, but told me that this project is taking much longer and costing her much more than planned. This

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[47] Paternalism and male entitlement were also operating here. The contractor was much older than Karen, and given Jamaica's double standard which privileges patriarchy, despite matrifocal family patterns (Chevannes, 2001; Leo-Rhynie, 1993), he felt he could change Karen's plans without consulting her.
[48] Immigrants returning to Jamaica often dream of building large concrete houses, even though they may only be a family of two individuals. Returning resident communities across Jamaica are characterized by these large structures. These homes demonstrate to immigrants and their neighbors that they 'made it' overseas. Although impractical and expensive to maintain, these houses are also tangible evidence of their sacrifices while living abroad, and their heightened social status. Locals also expect returnees to build lavish, rather than modest houses. See Horst (2008) for more discussion of these dynamics in her study of the Mandeville returnee community.

creates hardships for her, as she is funding the project with cash from her modest earnings.

Mr. Robert has known Karen since she was a teenager, as they grew up in neighboring communities. Mr. Robert's aunt had adopted one of Karen's sisters, creating a bond between their families. Karen asked him to take over supervising her home construction after one of her siblings in Jamaica failed to manage the contractor properly. Karen and Mr. Robert trust each other a great deal. He interacts with her contractor regularly and he pays the contractor and crew with cash Karen sends by Western Union or with trustworthy people traveling from New York. Even though she remains confident about her contractor's integrity in a general sense, his manipulation of her has left her wary. She therefore relies heavily on Mr. Robert to ensure that her hard-earned money is properly managed:

> I let him [the contractor] work with Mr. Robert, 'cause I would send [instructions] to Mr. Robert, and Mr. Robert would discuss with him, and then call me up, and no problem. He will give me an estimate [for] A,B,C,D, [for] what he's doing, and explain to Mr. Robert what he's doing. Mr. Robert would go and look to see what he's doing. I send the money to Mr. Robert to pay him.

As an example of this pair's commitment, there are times when Mr. Robert extends himself for Karen by advancing money to the contractor for unexpected expenses. This is a leap of faith on his part, but he respects Karen well enough to know that she will repay him. According to him, she is "very businesslike…very brisk, I always was impressed with her." Mr. Robert was willing to do such favors for Karen because he was motivated by another concern: the ever-present specter of crime in Jamaica. This often results from worker's grievances against employers, as he explained:

Sometimes we are in a little tight spot, and I tell her what is needed with the workmen to get paid. As a matter of fact, the contractor is not a problem to get paid, but sometimes he has to get additional persons, and I have to ensure at that time [that] enough funds are there, because these guys are a bit…(chuckles), they get very, sensitive. People will put you to work and when the job is finished, the money not ready, and they [the workmen] send a man to harm you or your family.

Karen and Mr. Robert regard the ICT affordances of voice communication, synchronicity, spontaneity, immediacy, and turn-taking in real time as most important, so their respective ICT choices reflect the need to meet these communication goals. Other more media-rich options like Skype are not "as dynamically responsive to the particular goal at issue" (Wilkin, et al., 2007, p. 2); in this case, the goals at issue are Mr. Robert advising Karen about the contractor's progress, seeking her approval for his requests for funds, and her advising Mr. Robert of upcoming delivery of funds. The ICT options that they engage within their respective communication ecologies support another important communication goal that they share: the need for spontaneous, immediate contact for quick decision-making when necessary.

This pair confines itself to the telephone, texting, beeping and email on occasion, because the partners have clearly defined communication goals that these media can best support. Karen and Mr. Robert are balancing the technological properties and utility of mobile phones, texting, photos, and emails within their respective "contextual contingencies" (DeSanctis & Scott Poole, 1994, p. 14).

Cost is another structural factor or rule that is part of this pair's need for spontaneous, immediate contact. Mr. Robert's actions are less obviously shaped by cost. He has both a landline and mobile phone. He prefers to call Karen using the same prepaid mobile plan that Preston uses to call Marcia (see Chapter Six), and Joan uses to

call Berris, even though Mr. Robert could easily afford to call Karen from his landline. However, his mobile phone is more convenient given his own mobility around his community. Furthermore, Mr. Robert could easily afford a post-paid mobile overseas plan, but he prefers to control his costs by using the prepaid cost option instead.

One Han Wash de Odda[49]: The Nuances of Commitment and Reciprocity

In context of their motivations for maintaining their relationships across geographic distance, the five pairs analyzed in detail in this chapter were committed to providing support for each other in various ways. These included nurturing their close bonds, sharing fellowship and affection, and providing advice and material support. Commitment to each other was enacted through these forms of reciprocity, though pairs differed with regard to what they felt they could expect from their close tie, and what they were motivated to give in return. Levels of commitment and reciprocity also varied by the nature of the paired relationships, and by the life circumstances of the pairs in question.

Respondent's life circumstances were dynamic during this study. During fieldwork, Aunt Myrtle moved house and assumed more responsibility for her ailing husband's care, and would have less time to manage Nordia's affairs. Norbert (see Chapter Five) left Jamaica to join his family in New York, where he would be living in the same Brooklyn neighborhood as his mother, Miss Cordelia.

In the concluding chapter that follows, this research project will be assessed from various perspectives. These include the research objectives, methodological considerations, a summary of the major findings, the extent to which this study was able to achieve its goals, and the directions that still exist for further work in this area.

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[49] One hand washes the other: a popular Jamaican Creole expression for reciprocity.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I begin by reconsidering my research questions and the extent to which emergent patterns in the data addressed each of them. I also address the study's theoretical, methodological, and policy-related implications. Finally, I identify questions raised by the findings that constitute exciting avenues for future research.

Addressing the Research Questions

The goal of this study was to examine the cross-border communicative behaviors between Jamaican transnational migrants and the individuals whom they defined as their close ties overseas. My study examined how their ICT use, and the choices they made about which ICTs to use for different purposes, affected their abilities to meet their own goals for maintaining their close relationships.

Three primary themes emerged in this study. In Chapter Five, I examine how respondents negotiated various forms of distance from their close ties. I found that respondents employed several communicative coping mechanisms, including emotional pragmatism and emotional resilience, in order to rationalize and manage distance. I also found that pairs were agentic in how they managed conflict by initiating and resolving such disputes.

In Chapter Six, I reported on close ties' negotiations of closeness along a presence continuum, with sharing material artifacts on the one end, and overseas travel for offline co-present visits on the other, and ICTs with various affordances facilitating real-time and virtual presence in between. Placing close ties along this continuum, I discussed how relationship type influenced pairs' needs for different kinds of closeness through strategic

ICT choices. Chapter Seven focused on acts of commitment and reciprocity enacted between respondent pairs as mechanisms for achieving their primacy communicative goal of relationship maintenance.

These three sets of themes reinforced each other as a set of agentic responses that respondents developed to manage their long-distance relationships within structural constraints including visa and residency status in their respective countries, work and family obligations, and cost of overseas travel. The three themes often overlapped in respondents' lived experiences, and influencing the communicative expectations and behaviors between pairs.

My first set of research questions sought to uncover the communicative goals that Jamaican transmigrants defined for themselves in relation to their close ties (RQ1), and what communication media in their communication ecologies they engaged to achieve these goals (RQ1a). My findings with regard to RQ1 revealed that respondents' major communication goal was that of relationship maintenance, achieved by sustaining emotional and social support across borders. Respondents also demonstrated another important goal of fulfilling material and instrumental needs.

Maintaining their relationships meant sharing acts of romantic and platonic intimacy, friendship, fellowship, intellectual stimulation, and material aid. This finding mirrored other research on long-distance communication goals between close ties (Baldassar, 2008; Dreby, 2010, Madianou & Miller, 2011, 2012). Respondents' relationship maintenance strategies also involved skillful negotiations of closeness and distance, which depended on the type (i.e., kin, non-kin, romantic) and the intensity of

their relationships. Romantic pairs felt the distance between them most keenly, as did kin pairs whose separations were more recent.

Ancillary to this communication goal was an outlook or mind-set that migrant respondents demonstrated. The migration experience, which all but 10 of the respondents had undertaken at some point in their lives, fostered a cluster of personality traits as typified by strong personal agency (Escobar, 2006; Stuart, 2013; Thomas, 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Migration as a Caribbean cultural rite of passage (Carnegie, 1987; Plaza & Henry, 2006) not only motivated migrants' cross-border movement, but also catalyzed the traits and communicative strategies that allowed them to cope with being distanced from their loved ones.

These agentic traits included emotional pragmatism and emotional resilience. These traits are responsive to the structural rules of long-term separation and dislocation that migration engendered for most pairs (Hiller & Franz, 2004; Kasinitz et al., 2002; Plaza, 2010). As a result, respondents defined distance and separation as benign conditions in their emotional and personal lives. Since they could not alter these structural realities, respondents altered how they responded to them instead.

This primary communication goal of relationship maintenance was further reinforced by mutual acts of commitment. All respondents were firmly committed to each other, and fulfilled reciprocal obligations to their close ties overseas in some form or other (Stack & Burton, 1993). The nature of a close tie relationship signified the provision of some kind of mutual assistance, whether exchanging material goods (Hampton et al., 2011) or providing communication resources such as advice, information, and reassurance (Baldassar, 2007a; Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Respondents also shared communication resources via conflict enactment and resolution, and verbal and/or vocal intimacy (Baym, 2010; Gibbs et al., 2006).

In addressing RQ1a, I found that respondents engaged with ICTs in selective ways, to maintain their overseas relationships (Donner, 2008; Orlikowski, 2000; Rogers, 1995). Overall, respondent pairs elected to use newer, richer ICTs (e.g., Skype) sparingly—even when both individuals could easily afford these technologies and used them frequently in other contexts, such as conducting business from a distance. To connect with their close ties, respondents generally used lean media (e.g., email) for routine or business-oriented matters, but mostly depended on richer, voice-based media for routine contact, emotional exchanges, and for conflict enactment and resolution.

For respondents, a medium's affordances, rather than the medium itself, were paramount (Orlikowski, 2000). The most important media affordances for them were temporal synchronicity and immediacy with vocal cues. A medium's ease of use, and mobility or portability were also very important for respondents, as such mobility enabled them to be spontaneous in contacting their close ties on a whim. As a result, the telephone, whether mobile or landline, was respondents' most preferred ICT. The phone allowed them to maintain privacy of their communications on the road. They achieved such privacy by texting or beeping as support for calls or other phatic communication, with some paying for calls as a signal of commitment. This heavy reliance on the phone for both phatic and intense communication was somewhat counterintuitive, as it is such a visually lean medium.

My second set of research questions explored how demographic attributes influenced respondents' strategies for managing their communication with their close ties

overseas (RQ2), and how these attributes influenced the ICTs they engaged to do so (RQ2a). Prior literature on transnational migration and relationship maintenance suggested that gender, immigration status, age, income, occupation, education level, and parental status would explain considerable variation in migration experiences and strategies for maintaining close ties (Thomas, 2008; Thomas Hope, 2002; Foner, 2005). I not only examined these demographic variations in relation to migration and close tie maintenance, but to ICT use and choice as well.

Significant demographic variables. Given the small sample and diversity of ties within respondent pairs in my study, the demographic differences I observed were suggestive, and I cannot make claims as to the broader significance of certain demographic variables over others. That being said, the variables that appeared to make a difference to how respondents achieved their cross-border communication goals, and how they engaged ICTs in this process were: immigration status, occupation and education, gender, and nature of close tie. These findings differed somewhat from the aforementioned literature.

Immigration status. This variable greatly influenced how respondents negotiated their long-distance relationships with their close ties (RQ2). Most respondents (75%) were U.S. citizens or permanent residents (Acosta & de la Cruz, 2011). Immigration status had the greatest effect on cross-border travel and respondents' mobility more generally (Dreby, 2010). Such freedom of movement meant they could enjoy offline co-present visits with their close ties, and affluent pairs were most able to travel frequently between countries.

For recent immigrants and romantic pairs in New York, immigration status had a major influence on ICT choices they engaged for their long-distance relationships (RQ2a). They relied heavily on their close tie and engaged ICTs that facilitated their needs for feelings of vocal synchronicity and immediacy to manage their homesickness and culture shock (Baldassar, 2007a; Pottinger et al., 2008; Robertson-Hickling & Hickling, 2009; Wilkin et al., 2007), and their need for closeness generally (Baldassar, 2008).

Occupation and education. In diverse ways, these two variables influenced how respondents engaged with ICTs for their long-distance relationships. The data set revealed that occupation and income were highly correlated, as would be expected. In both countries, respondents' occupations ranged from hourly paid employees (24%), to professionals with graduate education (56%). Just under half (43%) of respondents were retired. Respondents with limited education and lower-paying jobs had access to fewer ICT choices, as their communication ecologies were limited to very few media choices and material artifacts (Baldassar, 2007a). They had few options beyond the phone, and were most likely to "beep" their close tie to request a callback, text, and share photographs via the postal service.

For more educated and affluent respondents in both countries, the correlation between occupation and education, and how this determined their communication ecologies was more nuanced. These affluent respondents had more extensive communication ecologies and enjoyed access to many ICT choices. One of the primary findings of this study, however, is that they seldom engaged these many media options to maintain their close tie relationship, irrespective of the occupation and education level of

their close tie. Even when their close tie was equally privileged, they still confined themselves mainly to the phone, supplemented in some cases by email, and for all, by periodic co- present visits. If the ties of these affluent respondents had more constrained communication ecologies by virtue of lower income, or lower technology literacy, both parties used the telephone most frequently to stay connected.

Affluent respondents used their phones as the primary medium to maintain their relationship, as less privileged individuals did. However, their affluence enabled them to make more frequent calls, for longer periods, and with less regard for the costs associated with those calls.

Nature of close tie. Most close ties in the sample were between kin-pairs (71%), even though a few non-kin pairs regarded their close tie as kin as well. The nature of these close ties influenced how respondents negotiated their long-distance relationships, as kin pairs tended to have more intense and emotionally charged interactions than non-kin pairs. However, the nature of the close tie had a minimal influence on the ICTs that respondents engaged to maintain them (i.e., RQ2a). All pairs, whether they were extremely close or less so, used the same vocally rich but visually lean ICT—the telephone—regardless of their income, or the extensiveness/narrowness of their communication ecologies.

Gender. The sample was predominantly female (59%). In mixed-gender pairs, some respondents felt their gender constrained them from talking about sensitive matters, and they thus avoided these topics to maintain their sense of closeness. Furthermore, in these mixed gender pairs, women were more vocally expressive than men, and were more likely to raise sensitive or contentious topics to discuss. However, gender had little

influence on the range of respondents' ICT choices when communicating with their close ties overseas, but female respondents were more intensive communicators in frequency and intensity of the phone conversations all pairs shared.

Minimal demographic influences. The variables that made little difference to how respondents' achieved their communication goals across borders were: age, marital and parental status, and residential patterns. In terms of age, the sample was skewed toward older individuals with a median age of 61; 62% were 55 and older. Respondents under 50 used the telephone most often either out of personal preference, or because their close tie was older with a more constrained communication ecology. Respondents over 50 used the phone due to this constraint, or because they were familiar and comfortable with this technology, or found it convenient, or for all these reasons.

Older respondents were unlikely to use email and the Internet with their close ties or anyone else in their social networks, as they felt uncomfortable with this technology, even though they had Internet access (Pew Research Center, 2014). In contrast, several older respondents readily engaged a wider array of ICTs in their respective communication ecologies when communicating with other people for business purposes or in their social networks, but not with their close ties overseas. This was in deference to the perceived comfort level and routinized behaviors that older respondents knew about their close ties. Based on the sample's skew towards older respondents, it is difficult to make any claims about age as a variable in ICT choices, although the literature indicates that older people are late adopters of ICTs.

Respondents under 50 also preferred the phone because it was portable and convenient to communicate with their close ties. Some had limited or no access to, or

were uncomfortable with newer ICTs, and selected the telephone as the most reliable option. Most respondents of all ages were less likely to use Skype or Facetime, as they had to prearrange a meeting time with their close tie, have access to their computer, and some did not know how to access these options.   Younger and less affluent respondents preferred the phone because it circumvented location-systemic constraints such as inadequate or no WiFi access in their communities.

Marital and parental status. As my sample was primarily older (62%), over half were single (54%), and did not include many parent-child ties, this study was unlike many others that have looked at close ties across distance. This study adds to the existing research by demonstrating how advanced life stage introduces a rarely explored set of communication and material resources that are exchanged between long-distance ties. These resources include intellectual stimulation and tangible financial investments that were less evident in studies of long-distance parenting and less feasible for younger migrants with limited financial means.

Marital status had little influence on how respondents managed their long-distance relationships. As most respondents were never married, divorced, or widowed, none identified a spouse as their close tie overseas, so their marital status was of limited significance. The one exception in the sample was a romantic relationship between unmarried partners. Because of the intimacy they shared, it was very difficult for this pair to be separated. The ICT choices they engaged to maintain their relationship were limited to the mobile phone, which ensured vocal synchronicity, texts, and hard copy letters.

Parental status had minimal, if any, impact on respondents' long distance relationships. One respondent's close tie was her adult son, but their relationship was based largely on the latter's fulfilling practical obligations regarding his mother's real estate investments. This finding contrasted with prior studies that find parental status is a primary factor for the kinds of close ties migrants maintain, and how they engage ICTs to do so (Carling, 2012; Dreby, 2010; Horst & Miller, 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2012). In these studies, however, most or all of respondents were parenting minor children from a distance; given that my sample was older and no longer rearing children, parental status was not a major factor in their behaviors.

Residential patterns. Most respondents (56%) lived primarily in Jamaica, including a few migrants who had retired there. Apart from the ICT choices they selected, respondents' residential patterns had minimal impact on how they negotiated their relationships with their close ties overseas. Despite the enormous differences between Jamaica and New York City in terms of economic prosperity, quality of life, and employment opportunities, most respondents in both countries were financially comfortable enough to not be preoccupied with day-to-day survival issues (Horst, 2006b; Small, 2006). In this regard they were more fortunate than most Jamaicans living in Jamaica.

Residential patterns influenced respondents' material or instrumental rather than communicative goals. Some less affluent Jamaican-based respondents worried about their limited options for economic advancement in Jamaica and desperately wanted to migrate to, or work in the U.S. (Thomas, 2001, 2008). They relied heavily on remittances from their more affluent close ties in New York (Palmer, 2009; Planning

Institute of Jamaica, 2013). Such remittances were important material resources and

signified a tangible communication resource that was part of their long-distance

communication exchanges (Baldassar, 2007a).

My final set of research questions explored how respondents' country of primary

residence explained variations in their strategies to manage their communication goals

with their close ties overseas (RQ3), and how these variations affected their ICT choices

(RQ3a). Location influenced respondents' communicative behaviors because the social

and technological infrastructures of the U.S. and Jamaica were distinctive, and therefore

constrained or enabled certain behaviors with relation to respondents' ICT choices.

My findings revealed that respondents' country of residence did influence their

strategies for managing their communicative goals. The telecommunications

infrastructures in New York and Jamaica were very similar, in that large Jamaican rural

and urban communities offered the same range of ICT options that were available in New

York. However, WiFi connectivity was either absent or irregular in smaller rural

Jamaican communities, meaning that respondents could not engage these wireless-based

ICT options.

For New York-based respondents with investments in Jamaica, their location was

a major constraint in achieving these material goals in another country. They had to rely

heavily on their close tie in Jamaica to manage and safeguard these goals on their behalf,

given the often haphazard nature of Jamaican professional and logistical services.

Country of residence also determined the financial cost for respondents to

maintain their long-distance relationships. Jamaica's pre-paid mobile phone rates for

overseas calls were much cheaper than in New York. Therefore, respondents in Jamaica

initiated more telephone calls, or 'beeped' or texted their close ties more often in New York, even when they were relatively less well-off. Respondents therefore worked within the constraining and enabling features of their countries' ICT infrastructures in order to circumvent the higher costs in the U.S.A. as much as possible (De Sanctis & Scott Poole, 1994).

The findings which emerged from RQ3 and RQ3a related to the major themes of commitment and reciprocity in particular. These location-based ICT choices were a response to RQ3, and were examples of commitment between pairs, as less affluent ties in Jamaica were willing to assume most of the cost for overseas telephone calls. Similarly, in response to RQ3a, the reciprocity that many pairs shared meant that they would engage other ICTs in addition to the phone (i.e., email, money transfers), to support the acts of reciprocity discussed in their telephone conversations.

Contributions to Theory

The theoretical framework employed for this study was communication ecology, which explains how individuals engage a range of media and other communicative channels to achieve their own goals (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2012). Agency and structure are inherent in the communication ecology framework. Any exploration of communication among migrants across borders must consider the contexts within which migrants and their close ties interact, as structural factors enable or constrain their communication goals and the ICT options they can access at an individual level.

Individuals exercise agency as they negotiate their responses to these structural rules such as visa regulations, immigration status, income, ICT infrastructure, work and personal commitments. Respondents' communication goals at the individual level are

being enabled and constrained by interpersonal/micro, community/meso, and national/macro influences, which are transnational or cross border. At the core of communication ecology is personal agency, as the enactment of an individual's goal-directed media use.

In this study, respondents' communicative goals (of relationship maintenance, commitment, and reciprocity) were both enabled and constrained by their communication environments in each country, and by how they engaged their available communication resources accordingly. Similarly, respondents' instrumental and material goals were also enabled and constrained by their communication environments. These goals were more complex than communicative goals, as they required other layers of interpersonal resources to support their ICT choices in meeting these goals.

Communication ecology has been applied to health communication (Katz et al., 2012) and to new immigrant assimilation contexts (Ball-Rokeach et al, 2012; Katz, 2007), but not in the context of transnational Caribbean networks. This study extends communication ecology by applying it to examine a different set of goals, and doing so at the micro level of maintaining close ties. This study further examines how individuals' communication ecologies are tied to each other, across different national contexts.

This study extends communication ecology from the choice of media in meeting specific communicative goals to the quality of the communication exchange itself. This quality also plays a part in deciding which ICTs to engage. And in the context of cross-border communication, such quality is especially important, as individuals assess which ICT will support both their communicative goals and the more nuanced goal of the quality of their distanciated interaction.

Synergies between communication ecology and polymedia. This study strengthens the theoretical contribution to communication ecology by demonstrating its complementarity to the theory of polymedia. Polymedia adds a horizontal dimension to communication ecology by considering the "cultural genres of sociality and emotional registers" (Madianou & Miller, 2012, p. 139), in addition to the affordances of different media, which are integral parts of mediated communication relationships. Like communication ecology, polymedia considers the entire range of media as a communicative environment as a way to understand mediated communication.

According to Madianou and Miller (2012), who proposed this theory, polymedia presumes that: the cost of an individual medium is not a major factor in its use, as each medium exists in synergy with all others. Polymedia also proposes that significant differences in media are exploited to enact and control the expressions of emotions themselves; cultural contexts and the relationships themselves are relevant; larger structures of power are important, and the emotional dimension of mediated relationships is paramount.

The evidence from this study suggests that the primary goal of relationship maintenance between all respondent pairs privileged closeness, intimacy, and emotional exchange, all part of the emotional repertoire that guided the ICT choices they made. These criteria all comprised the emotional dimension of mediated relationships (Madianou and Miller, 2012). As prior research on mediated communication and mobile phones has concluded, when individuals want to maintain closeness and intimacy, they still confine themselves to a few, simple, routine, predictable media choices, as well as to

a limited number of close individuals (Baym, 2010; Brown et al., 2011; Fortunati, 2002; Ling, 2008; Ling & Donner, 2009).

Respondents did switch between media and employ various communication ecologies with different people for different purposes. However, in the case of these dyadic relationships, the telephone, and to a lesser extent, texts and emails, allowed for the fullest expression of emotion, closeness, and intimacy, in times of both mundane and heated exchanges. In the context of polymedia, all pairs in the study valued sociality, and were able to reconfigure their relationship between themselves and ICTs so as to create different emotional registers (Madianou & Miller, 2012) to meet varied communication goals. Respondents demonstrated this reconfiguration in their choice of email for business and instrumental matters, versus voice telephone calls for some instrumental but for more immediate and informal dyadic exchanges. Texting fell somewhere between these two options. Even though it was an asynchronous, lean, verbal medium, it was flexible enough for spontaneous emotional connections which also built closeness.

There is a final factor to consider in this synergy between communication ecology and polymedia, and how this study contributes theoretically to this juncture. This refers to a symbiosis between relationships and the media themselves, where the media are not merely a transmission tool, but assume qualities of expression itself. It has been argued that any relationship is intrinsically a mediated form, particularly for relationships that involve prolonged separation (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Miller & Sinanan, 2014). Because ICTs are used to bridge this separation, these relationships and media are mutually constituted (Madianou & Miller, 2012), whereby the medium can become constitutive of the actual relationship. For the romantic pair in this study, the materiality

of hard copy photos and the imagined presence, or presence by proxy (Baldassar, 2008; Honeycutt, 2008) they signified came to represent tangible evidence of their relationship.

Despite the plethora of ICTs, which keep expanding in quantity, improving in functionality, and converging across media platforms, the phone remained an enduring, preferred choice for respondents in this study. Given their primary goals for relational maintenance, ongoing intimacy and closeness, respondent pairs chose the telephone because they had made a judgment as to its appropriateness in meeting their social and emotional needs. For them, the telephone represented an emotional signifier of their connection to their close ties, and how important their close ties saw them. The medium could become part of the message, as Gershon (2010) indicated that her college student informants were outraged when their significant others broke up with them via a text message.

Theoretical contributions to mediated communication. This study provides a deeper look at communication processes in the context of relationships involving prolonged separations, and the *underlying social mechanisms* that lead to individuals considering an ICT useful, rather than just its affordances and effects. These include available media choices within respondents' respective communication ecologies; movement, or their ability/inability to move across borders for offline, co-present visits, or movement within country, and the ICTs that best fit this pattern of personal mobility; the extent of their individual agency vis-à-vis the ICTs they can afford or choose to engage, and this agency is linked to movement as well. There are the structural rules that respondents must navigate including their country's ICT infrastructure, visa regulations, immigration status, income, work and personal commitments. Finally, my study adds to

existing work on media richness/leanness, and relational maintenance between close ties in mediated spaces.

This study suggests that there are several structural mechanisms at the individual or micro level driving my respondents' ICT options, and their preferences for a particular medium, in their case the telephone, versus others within their pairs. These structural mechanisms refer to respondents' individual habits and preferences which become embedded routines that are slower to change, as compared to rapid advances in technology (Baym, 2010). These structural mechanisms factor into respondents' ICT choices, and comprise a combination of demographics, cultural influences, personal preferences, and power asymmetries between pairs.

Subtle power asymmetries at the individual level influenced by gender, generation, and comfort with technology between pairs also played a role in the primacy of the telephone. Younger respondents deferred to their older partners' preference for the telephone out of respect for their status as an elder. Several respondents, both old and young, who were more competent with newer ICTs deferred to simpler media, such as the phone when their partner, who was younger or older, was not as digitally literate, or conversely suffered from Internet fatigue due to heavy Internet use at their workplace.

Written communication options did not lend themselves are readily to these routinized and embedded individual behaviors. Respondent pairs did text each other on occasion, but texting was not as frequent a choice as the telephone, and most pairs in the sample were not active users of texting. Some respondent pairs used texting for instrumental purposes such as requesting an immediate call back or to locate their close tie, particularly for pairs engaged in cross border transactions.

All pairs used the telephone for instrumental and business exchanges as well, and not every conversation between pairs was extended and intense. Sometimes one respondent would phone the other instructing them to call, or pairs would call each other several times a day to share jokes, ask quick questions, or exchange gossip when a text message could well have sufficed.

From the data set, it was evident that texting and other forms of written communication were less popular as ICT choices, again because of respondents' embedded individual habits and preferences. Texting and emails required more effort and time to type messages, did not guarantee immediacy and synchronicity, and were not always able to express emotions as fully as voice communication. For older respondents with diminished eyesight, texting may have been a challenge on small mobile phone keypads, whereas frequently called numbers could be stored and redialed easily.

This study adds to the mediated communication literature by confirming that close ties served as bonding capital between individuals (Baym, 2010). As in the literature, the close ties in this study were in frequent contact, voluntary—between both kin and non-kin—reciprocal, and enduring (Guerrero, 2008; Haythornthwaite, 2002; 2005). All respondent pairs were homophilous, many in terms of demographic attributes and if not in these areas, certainly in value systems and attitudes (McPherson et al., 2001). Some of the relationships examined were more voluntary than others; family obligations often rendered such connections involuntary.

Finally, this study diverged somewhat from established theoretical positions on media multiplexity (Haythornthwaite, 2005), and media richness and leanness. Respondent pairs did not always use rich media (Klebe Trevino et al., 1990), or prefer

these for their mediated relational maintenance, even when they had extensive communication ecologies with several rich media to choose from. Contrary to the mediated communication literature on media multiplexity, where online or distanced partners add other ICT choices to their respective communication ecologies by drawing on a range of media and communication behaviors to transform their ties into strong ones, there was little evidence of this media multiplexity as a practice between strong ties in this sample. All respondent pairs knew each other before the migrant partners left Jamaica, and began their mediated relationships with close ties already in place, and did not need to engage additional media to strengthen their ties.

It would seem counter-intuitive that respondent pairs' media of choice was lean cue, synchronous voice communication, given their closeness. This study would suggest that cultural nuances (Ito & Okabe, 2005; Ling & Yttri, 2002), and individual preferences (Baym, 2010) were possible explanations. Jamaica's emphasis on orality (Chevannes, 2001), combined with structural factors at the macro level with its 100% mobile phone penetration rate, and at the individual level of ingrained routinized behaviors were driving this reliance on voice communication.

Linkages to migration and transnational research. The interdisciplinary nature of the issues and variables examined in this study extend theory in the migration and Caribbean Studies literatures. Such transnational studies would benefit from more systematic exploration of actual communication practices. Mediated communication practices across borders cannot be fully understood without considering contextual factors such as the geopolitical structures of global migration (Castells, 2010). Nor can communication across borders be removed from the larger macro and meso structural

factors that enable or constrain the maintenance of close tie relationships in these settings (Dreby, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2009; Schiller et al, 1995).

The migration process itself is a type of initiative and goal-directed behavior that is often an act of courage and an intrepid spirit (Dreby, 2010; Escobar, 2006; Madianou & Miller 2012; Stuart, 2013; Thomas-Hope, 2002, 2006). At the micro level, this study has shown that cross-border relationships are negotiated and enriched by creative, individual forms of agency, many of which are efforts to circumvent the larger geopolitical structural constraints (Thomas-Hope, 2002).

Implications for Methodology

This study extends methodological approaches to mediated communication research by working in multiple research sites in two countries, and by examining both sides of the communication exchange in naturalistic settings. While such multi-sited studies are not uncommon in mediated communication research related to organizations and global teams (e.g., Gibson & Gibbs, 2006; Klebe Trevino et al., 1990; Orlikowski, 2000), multi-sited work on mediated communication among close ties is rare.

Existing mediated communication research rarely considers the social processes that enable or constrain cross-border communication in non-organizational settings. A single country study would not consider such dynamics as the importance of U.S. visa status for respondents separated by borders wanting to visit one another. Interviewing in only one country or only half of a close tie pair would prevent the researcher from learning about the significance of social context and country of residence. These are major influences on the way long-distance connections are enacted and maintained, how communication goals are created, and ICTs engaged to achieve them. Interviewing in

two countries shows how communication ecology plays out, and how micro, meso and macro-level influences operate in real world situations.

Likewise, while migration researchers have called for research that engages sites in both sending and receiving countries, such studies that are centrally concerned with ICT use and close tie maintenance rarely take place in more than one country. This study is an attempt to address the "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) which has traditionally presented only one side of the communication exchange between individuals separated from their loved ones at a distance. I have used an ethnology of migration approach (Fitzgerald, 2006), or following migrants from the beginning of the migration cycle to where they relocated. This multi-sited approach to mediated communication research could be adopted by other researchers going forward.

As this was a small scale, qualitative study that relied on snowball samples, the results cannot be generalized to wider populations with similar demographic characteristics (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Nevertheless, this study could not have feasibly been done with a probability sample, as snowball samples are most appropriate for "hidden populations" such as my respondents. There was no way to effectively recruit a sample of transnational Jamaican migrants and their close ties through a probability method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Krathwohl, 2009). Furthermore, given that this was a study of close ties, interviewing both sides of pairs was critical to its implementation.

Implications for Policy

In terms of policy implications, this study reveals that structural constraints that a country's telecommunication policies impose are not all that difficult for individuals to circumvent in real life. Respondents were generally able to work around the

telecommunication policy differences between Jamaica and the U.S. by taking advantage of less expensive mobile phone rates in Jamaica to initiate calls to New York, as the U.S. has one of the most expensive telephone rate structures worldwide (Pew Research Center, 2014). Even though respondents living in Jamaica earned much less than their close ties in New York City, they could still afford to maintain regular contact with their ties in New York, given Jamaica's more affordable telephone rate structure. Some New York-based respondents would bypass the U.S. telecommunication policies by assisting their close ties in Jamaica in paying for these overseas calls by sending phone credit or remittances.

U.S. residency rules as structure. In contrast to telecommunications policy, the structural constraints of visa restrictions between Jamaica and the U.S.A. were more difficult to circumvent. Respondents who did not possess a U.S. visitor's visa were effectively prevented from visiting their close ties in New York. They were among the ones who suffered most keenly from financial hardship in Jamaica, and were the respondents who most wanted to migrate. They were least able to exercise their agency in the physical sense of traveling between both countries, and felt the separation from loved ones most acutely. But some New York-based respondents had circumvented visa restrictions by exercising their agency: they entered into short-term business marriages with U.S. citizens to secure their permanent residence.

Limitations of the Study

I made a determined effort to achieve demographic diversity within my sample—with regard to gender, income, education, occupation, urban and rural residential patterns—through purposive sampling in my interviews with the first half of each close

tie. However, in spite of my best efforts, I had no control over who respondents selected

as their close ties overseas. As a result, I did not achieve full gender parity (sample was

59% female), and it was skewed towards individuals 50 and older (median age: 61 years).

Despite the predominance of older respondents, I did not attempt to recruit younger

respondents as the first 23 of 38 interviews were with relatively even numbers of

respondents under and over 50 (10 under 50, and 13 over 50). My findings from these

initial interviews were not substantively different from those gleaned in the last 15

interviews, of which 11 respondents were over 50.

Another possible limitation of the study was that the definition of close ties varied

within the sample. I could have defined close ties myself, but chose to have respondents

make their own assessments of who they defined as "close." Even though this definition

was generated by respondents, the pairs shared different types of relationships, and so I

ended up defining close ties in a way that created equivalence among difference. Any

research enterprise entails choices; in this case, I exchanged a certain measure of internal

validity for external and ecological validity, by relying on respondents' own assessments

of who was most important to them.

Focusing exclusively on close ties that have endured was another limitation. If I

had asked respondents if they had ever lost contact with one of these ties, and why, this

might have provided insight into whether the behaviors observed were necessary or

sufficient for close tie maintenance.

Furthermore, I had to make certain pragmatic choices and tradeoffs to maintain

internal validity in terms of interview format. Since I wanted to maintain consistency by

interviewing all respondents in both countries face-to-face, all of the close ties that my

initial respondents chose had to be individuals located in places where I could meet them in person. As it turned out, this was not a major constraint; only three respondents initially gave me details for a close tie that lived elsewhere, before providing me information about a close tie that was living in New York.

Therefore, I was able to investigate a rich variety of close relationships across borders, from romantically intimate, to familial ties between kin and non-kin, to platonic bonds of fellowship. Quite unexpectedly, the variations in how close ties were actually manifested, and the differences in the levels of intensity between the pairs, led to an unplanned diversity in how closeness was defined and enacted in these relationships.

Despite these design limitations, the sample was diverse with regard to other demographic variables including occupation, education, presumed income, and residential patterns in both countries. The study can be replicated among similar immigrant and non-immigrant populations, and the subsequent results compared to this study to assess the extent of similar or anomalous trends.

Directions for Future Research

This study gives rise to fruitful prospects for future research. A study that more consistently defines close ties would bear fruit as it would have greater internal validity, comparing both sides of close ties with the type of tie more clearly defined (e.g., parent/child, spouses/romantic partners, child/elderly parent). This type of study would allow for direct and systematic comparisons between types of close ties. My study raises questions about how local social and technological infrastructures affect behaviors related to maintaining close ties. Therefore, other studies using the same methodology could be

done between London and Jamaica, or between different receiving communities in the U.S. and ties in Jamaica in order to address that.

I would also propose a second phase of this research project: a study using archival sources of Caribbean immigrants in New York City communicating with close ties in their home countries at the height of Caribbean immigration, between 1910 and 1929. The focus of the analysis would be material artifacts: letters, greeting cards, and photographs to and from the Caribbean. There is already a rich archive of such correspondence at the Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

This historical analysis could be compared with the present one, to contrast eras where different communication technologies are/were available, and assess how communication patterns have changed (and how they have not) with the advent of a broader set of communication channels available to migrants. Fitzgerald (2006) has recommended such comparative approaches using historical archival and contemporary sources to bolster and deepen analysis of cross-border communication across time periods.

Study Conclusions

This study examined the ways in which Jamaica migrants who had returned home, and others living in New York, managed their long distance relationships with their close ties by engaging ICTs in this process. My research presents a rare and important cross-border perspective on mediated communication and the complexities involved in their efforts to sustain such close connections. Perhaps the most poignant finding from this study was that the migration experience, although mitigated by frequent

and intense connections to home countries or even permanent return, is an experience of loss and irrevocable change. Some of the literature on Caribbean transnational families highlights the effects of such dispersal, but there is little data on the interpersonal behaviors that Caribbean immigrants employ to manage their lives in the face of such change.

Although there are notable exceptions in this literature (e.g., Bauer & Thompson, 2006), communication dynamics and practices are referred to only tangentially, as these studies focus on socio-cultural issues such as social mobility and segmented assimilation in receiving countries (Waters, 1999). What my study has sought to do is to reveal the lived experience of these prolonged separations as a way of life, and agentic responses used to manage this new reality of long-distance relationships in communicative terms.

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Appendix A

An Overview of Jamaica's Social and Historical Context

The Social Context

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean basin and the largest English-speaking island with a land area of 4,411 square miles, and a population of 2,721,000 according to 2014 estimates (Population Reference Bureau, 2014). As of 2012, the most recent year for which data were available, the unemployment rate was 13.7% for both genders, although female unemployment was higher at 17.8%, compared to 10.3% for men (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013). Of the total population, 76.3 % is of African descent, 15.1% African-European, 3.4% East Indian and African-East Indian, 3.2% Caucasian, 1.2% Chinese and 0.8% categorized as "other" (University of the West Indies, 2012). The adult literacy rate is 91.7% (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013). Jamaica's life expectancy is 76 and 71 years for women and men respectively, compared to a global average of 73 and 69 years respectively (Population Reference Bureau, 2014).

According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) human development index or HDI, Jamaica is a high-HDI country, ranked at 85 out of a total of 185 countries worldwide (UNDP, 2013). The UNDP's HDI is a summary measure of a country's human development.[50] The UNDP data were compiled from national censuses

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[50] The UNDP HDI measures the average achievements in a country based in three basic dimensions: a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy at birth), access to knowledge (measured by adult literacy and combined gross enrolment ratio in education), and a decent standard of living (measured by GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) US dollars). These three dimensions are standardized to values between 0 and 1, with the simple average taken to arrive at the overall HDI value in the 1 to 0 range. Countries are then ranked on this value with 1 representing the highest HDI value. Countries are ranked as very high, high, medium, and low HDI. A total of 186 countries were listed for 2013. Each year, some countries rise or fall in this ranking, depending on socioeconomic circumstances.

or surveys, data from other UN agencies, and the World Bank.[51] Jamaica's gross national

income PPP per capita was US$8,480 in 2013, the most recent year for which date were

available, compared to a mean of US$14, 210 worldwide in 2013 (Population Reference

Bureau, 2014).

The Historical Context

After coming to Europe's attention in 1492 as a result of Christopher Columbus'

stymied expedition to Asia, Jamaica was colonized first by the Spanish, until the English

captured the country in 1655. During the 16th century, the indigenous Taino population

was decimated by communicable diseases brought by the Spanish (Curtin, 1990),

combined with forced and excessive hard labor. From the 16th to the 19th centuries, the

British sugar planters who dominated the island's economy imported Africans to work on

the plantations as part of the transatlantic trade in Africans, until this trade was abolished

in the British Caribbean colonies in 1808. This colonial experiment lasted until 1962,

when Jamaica achieved a peaceful independence from Britain.

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[51] According to the UNDP, due to differences in methodology and timeliness of underlying data, cross-country comparisons and over time should be made with caution.

Appendix B

A Brief History of Jamaican Migration

To understand Jamaica's migration culture, a review of Caribbean migration is instructive. Caribbean migration began in the early 1660s—albeit involuntarily—with the transatlantic slave trade in Africans to the Caribbean, Latin America and the United States. Slavery was abolished incrementally in the British West Indian colonies between 1834 and 1838.[52] After Emancipation, Caribbean economies—based primarily on sugar production—went into steep decline. Many sugar estates ceased production, or were abandoned by their absentee British owners. Jamaica was especially hard hit, experiencing a major recession from 1838 to the 1870s, which was alleviated somewhat when banana cultivation for export began in the 1880s (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). Despite the introduction of bananas, this new industry was still not viable enough[53] to ensure widespread employment for former slaves who were the majority of the island's population.

As a solution to these dire economic straits, Caribbeans began to migrate in earnest—from smaller to larger islands, and from the archipelago altogether. Between 1835 and 1885, inter-island seasonal migration began from the smaller Eastern Caribbean islands of Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados, to the larger Trinidad and Tobago in the Southern Caribbean, and to the then British Guiana on the South

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[52] After abolition in 1834 in British West Indian colonies, there was a period of apprenticeship until 1838 where newly-freed slaves were still legally required work on the plantations to ease the transition for plantation owners. After 1838, when full Emancipation took effect, sugar plantations lost most of their labor force, as former slaves left the estates in droves to establish free villages in hilly interior regions, or to squat on marginal plantation land (Curtin, 1955; Hall, 1969; Higman, 2005).

[53] The Jamaican banana industry had great potential to engender economic security for former slaves. But they were constrained by their financial inability to acquire land for cultivation, poor or non-existent roads to transport bananas to ports for export, and frequent hurricanes that destroyed the fragile plants (Senior, 1978a; Sherlock & Bennett, 1998). Furthermore, the British colonial government was never as committed to developing the banana industry as it had been to sugar production (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998).

American mainland (Williams, 1984). Between 1885 and the 1920s, there was a flood of

migrants to Panama—predominantly from Jamaica and to a lesser extent from

Barbados—to build its railway and later the Panama Canal (Conniff, 1985; Richardson,

1985; Senior, 1978a, 1978b, 2014).

While Caribbean people were migrating from the region, new migrants from Asia

arrived. Caribbean plantation owners imported indentured laborers from India and China

to replace the freed Africans who had deserted the estates. A few free Nigerians also

arrived in Jamaica in the 1860s, as an experiment in African indentured labor (Cohen,

2002; Warner-Lewis, 1991). Curtin (1990) estimates that between 1834 and 1918, the

British West Indian colonies imported 536,000 migrants, 430,000 of who were from

India, and the remainder from China, Europe, and Africa.

These new migrants failed to avert the region's downward economic slide. They

quickly became disenchanted with the rigors of plantation life, and left the estates when

their periods of indenture ceased, becoming small entrepreneurs or small farmers. By the

1870s, the sugar industry declined even further due to competition from European beet

sugar, and the unsatisfactory performance of indentured labor (Williams, 1984). The

prognosis for economic recovery was dim, as the colonial government had little interest

in finding alternatives to replace the demise of sugar (Sherlock & Bennett, 1998).

Faced with this dire economic outlook, Caribbean people continued to leave the

region well into the 1930s. These migrants went to Costa Rica, Mexico, and Cuba to

build railway systems and work on banana and sugar estates (Hart, 1998; Lewis, 1987;

Marshall, 1987; Senior, 1978a, 1978b), and to the United States, Bermuda, and the

Dominican Republic for agricultural work (Hart, 1998). Within the island of Hispaniola,

Haitians migrated to their neighbor the Dominican Republic for agricultural work as well (Danticat, 1998; Díaz, 2007).

By the early 20th century, Caribbean migration to North America and Britain was well established. However, these host regions enacted various types of legislation at different times to restrict the entry of Caribbean immigrants, except for temporary domestic and agricultural workers. These polices were largely discriminatory based on race (Kasinitz, 1992). In the early 1920s, Caribbean blacks were allowed to enter the United States as British colonial subjects, despite the climate being generally hostile to people of color (Conniff, 1985). Between 1900 and the late 1950s, Canada imposed severe restrictions against Caribbean migration, except for domestic workers (Avery, 1995; Bashi, 2007; Winks, 1971).

Similarly, between 1924 and 1952, the United States restricted Caribbean migrants by way of annual quotas, with priority given to family reunification (Bashi, 2007). Between 1942 and 1945, the U.S. Government's Bracero Program enabled entry for Mexicans (Fitzgerald, 2009) and black West Indians for agricultural work, which continues today (Calavita, 1994). In 1952, the U.S. Government separated the West Indies from the United Kingdom and reduced the quota for the latter, thereby restricting Caribbean immigration still further (Paul, 1997).

Following these U.S. Government's restrictions on all but low-wage agricultural workers, there was a surge of Caribbean migration to the U.K. from 1947 to 1961 (Paul, 1977). But this influx did not last long. In 1958, race riots erupted in Notting Hill and Nottingham between earlier Caribbean immigrants and their white British neighbors. By 1962, the U.K.—anxious to avoid the civil rights unrest roiling the United States—

imposed restrictions on Caribbean immigrants, many of whom were no longer British subjects but nationals of newly independent countries (Dean, 1993). Consequently, during the 1960s, Caribbean migration reduced sharply to the U.K, and accelerated to the U.S.

As Britain closed its doors to its former colonial subjects, North America opened its own. In 1965, the U.S. immigration laws changed yet again, removing national quotas and providing new special worker categories beyond domestic and agricultural work (Keely, 1979). By 1967, Canada followed suit and relaxed its requirements for immigration, emphasizing immigrants' financial security via proof of assets and fit for specific job categories (Winks, 1971). These requirements continue to make Canada a popular and easier migration destination for West Indians than the U.S. and the U.K.

Africa's descendants in the Caribbean live by a philosophy of "strategic flexibility" (Carnegie, 1987), by taking whatever economic mobility opportunities may become available. By the 20th century, migration to Britain (1940s to 1961) and to North America (1900s to the present) became an entrenched cultural norm in Caribbean society (Bashi, 2007; Bauer & Thompson, 2006; Chamberlain, 1998). The Jamaican creole expression "gaan a farrin" (gone to foreign) is familiar to all social classes as a rite of passage (Fog Olwig, 2005; Thomas-Hope, 2002, 2006, 2009). Jamaicans continue to migrate in large numbers; an estimated 80% of graduates from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica migrate to North America each year (Fitzgerald, 2009).

Class, Gender, and Migration

Caribbean migration is a phenomenon that operates as a microcosm of wider Caribbean society, in that class, race and ethnicity, and gender all influence who

migrates, and all these variables influence how migrants are received in the settlement country. Migrants' social class determines their occupational choices and social status in host countries. Furthermore, when Caribbean migrants move from societies with majority black populations to countries where they are classified as racial and/or ethnic minorities for the first time, these transitions can be unnerving and challenging (Waters, 1999). Gender also plays a major role in the migration process, influencing who initiates migration and who follows, the trajectories of such flows, as well as the occupational choices, residential patterns, and family structures that migrants establish in host countries.

Class and migration. Thomas-Hope (2002), and Pottinger, Gordon Stair and Williams Brown (2008) note that upper-class[54] and middle-class Caribbean migration has tended to take shape as the permanent departure of the family unit and the return of few, if any, remittances. Jamaican upper-class migrants assimilated most easily into the overseas metropoles, armed with the benefits of "colonial capital"; namely, a British-based education, proficiency in Standard English, and middle-class mores (Miller, 2007, 2012). But this was not always the case. Senior (1978b, 2014) notes that during construction of the Panama Canal between the 1880s and 1914, significant numbers of Jamaica's wealthy merchant class, professionals, and self-employed people migrated to Panama. Most Jamaicans in Panama were black and poor, but as they were the largest

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[54] The Jamaican upper class are wealthy descendants of the former British plantocracy, Scottish and Irish plantation overseers and bookkeepers, Sephardic Jews who arrived in the 16th century fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, and other ethnic minorities from China and India who arrived as indentured workers, and from Lebanon, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. University of the West Indies (2012) estimates classify Jamaica's population as: Caucasians (3.2 %), African-Europeans (15.1%), Indians (3.4%), Chinese (1.2%), and "other" (.8%). Upper-class Jamaicans are manufacturers, hoteliers, real estate developers, wholesalers, distributors, and to a lesser degree, professionals in financial services, law, and construction. The upper-classes in the rest of the Caribbean are similar to that of Jamaica in all of these characteristics.

national group on the Isthmus, they nevertheless represented a wide cross-section of

Jamaica's population.

Since the middle of the 20th century, the Jamaican upper-class has had the least

impetus to migrate. Historically, they have controlled the country's wealth and the

economic means of production, as well as economic and political power (Brown, 1979;

Nettleford, 1978). This group maintains a presence in Jamaica, North America and the

U.K. They send their children to secondary schools and colleges outside of Jamaica.

This trend has become so prevalent that several Jamaican companies now offer secondary

school and college placement services and SAT/ACT preparation (L. Alexander, personal

communication, June 20, 2014). Upper-class Jamaicans are very likely to hold

permanent resident status for the U.S. or Canada. However, many prefer to live in

Jamaica and run their businesses from there, traveling intermittently to North America to

maintain their minimum residence requirements.

For middle-class Jamaicans who lack the full breadth of economic and social

advantages of the upper-class, migration has always been a desirable option. However,

the term 'middle-class' in Jamaica is closely correlated with race (Alexander, 1977) and

reflects a historical hierarchy of colonial white privilege (Brown, 1979; Gordon, 1987;

Nettleford, 1978; Stone, 1973; Stone & Brown, 1977).[55] As 91.4 % of the country's

population is descended from former African slaves (University of the West Indies,

2012)[56], the term 'middle-class' spans a wide spectrum of varying occupations, income

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[55] See Gordon (1987) for a definitive overview of class and race in Jamaican society. Alexander (1977) provides a detailed account of the intersection of class and race in Jamaica, and although several decades old, still accurately captures these dynamics.

[56] This 91.4 % includes the 15.1% of African-European descendants already mentioned, and 76.3% who are of pure African descent. However, African-European descendants are found in both the upper and middle-classes, depending on their access to financial or educational opportunities, or family connections.

levels, and shades of skin color. According to Gordon (1987) the 'upper middle-class'

includes individuals of African descent who were born poor and who have achieved high

levels of social and economic mobility through tertiary education. These individuals

entered the professions or gained positions of power in the private, public, and

government sectors. The solidly 'middle-class' are those individuals who may or may

not have tertiary education, and are more likely to be employed in the public or private

sectors, although small entrepreneurs also occupy this group.

Black Jamaicans with limited secondary education or without tertiary training

comprise tradespeople, police officers, civil servants, farmers, construction, and unskilled

workers, and the unemployed. This group is referred to as 'lower middle-class'.

However, the distinction between this group and 'lower-class' or 'working-class' or 'low-

income' is blurred, and many Caribbean scholars define these three categories as

interchangeable (Gordon, 1987; Stone, 1973). Lower middle-class and lower or working-

class Jamaicans would see this shade of difference as merely semantic, as economic

deprivation and frequent long-term unemployment are a permanent way of life for them.

Class lines in Jamaica run deep, and upward social mobility has been difficult to

achieve, even for highly educated Jamaicans. This has been due to the concentration of

power, wealth, and influence in the upper-class, coupled with the racialized colonial

legacy which denigrates the African heritage (Alexander, 1977; Nettleford, 1978; Stone,

1973). Given this legacy which continues to be a rigid, systemic obstacle to upward

social mobility, migration from Jamaica has been a route to circumvent this barrier.

Migration has provided Jamaicans—particularly African-Jamaicans—with an opportunity

to accumulate wealth, or at least attain economic security in host countries, and so escape

their origins of deprivation. Should they return to Jamaica intermittently or permanently,

they often invest in real estate, as a means of securing their children's future, as well as to

redefine themselves and demonstrate their improved status in their home communities

(Horst, 2006b, 2008).

Jamaican migrants going to the United States in the early 1900s, and to Britain

from 1947 to 1950, were limited primarily to domestic and manual work (Foner, 1998,

2005). Consequently, these migrants were mainly from the lower middle and lower

classes. As these host countries developed new provisions for special worker categories

beyond these two categories (Keely, 1979; Winks, 1971), other occupational groups have

migrated from Jamaica. Nevertheless, over the 20th century, primarily less skilled

occupational groups from Jamaica migrated to the U.K, whereas predominantly skilled

Jamaican workers migrated to the U.S. As a result, these migrants to the U.S. have

achieved greater upward social mobility, in contrast to their counterparts in the U.K.

(Foner, 1979b, 2005).

Jamaican nurses have traditionally been drawn from the lower middle class, or

lower-class. Those who migrated to the U.K in the 1950s—and they comprised a

substantial percentage of Jamaican migrants to the U.K. during this time—were well

represented in that country's new National Health Service (Foner, 1979a, 1979b, 2005).

Other unskilled African-Jamaicans found employment with the urban transport systems

of major British cities (Brooks, 1975; Levy, 2004; Phillips & Phillips, 1998; Selvon,

1956) which were rebuilt after World War II. In the U.S., Jamaican migrants also

gravitated towards nursing and related health services, domestic, and agricultural work

(Foner, 2005; Kasinitz, 1992; Waters, 1999).

The migration of skilled Jamaican professionals has continued into the 21st century. Jamaica's Ministry of Education estimated that the country lost 2,000 teachers between 2000 and 2002 (Wyss, 2004), or over 10 % of the country's teachers (Appleton, John Morgan & Sives, 2006). Some of these labor force movements were transitional in response to excess supply of teachers in Jamaica. Many of these teachers returned to Jamaica after their contracts ended, although others remained overseas by negotiating sponsorship by their employers.

Although these numbers are small, the migration of Jamaican teachers represents a new trend of highly-skilled guest workers being courted to work in the U.S. and Britain. These guest workers have legal permission to work in the U.S. and Britain for finite periods, but many try to remain in the host countries by having their employers sponsor them to gain resident alien status. One of my respondents in Jamaica taught in a Washington, D.C. charter school for three years after being recruited by an American employment agency, returned to Jamaica when his contract ended, and now teaches in a high school there.

The gender/class nexus and migration. In a Caribbean context, it is difficult to discuss gender without continuing to refer to class. Among lower-income Caribbean people, men and women are more likely to migrate as individuals, whereas middle and upper-income Caribbeans are more likely to migrate as a family unit (Pottinger et al., 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Lower-income Caribbean women who migrate tend to be less restricted by stereotypical definitions of gender roles than by economic necessities that propel them to move (Thomas-Hope, 2002). While these women may have to leave the nurturing of their own children to family members at home, they often end up

enacting traditional nurturer roles in the work they do after migration, as housekeepers and child caregivers in middle-class households abroad (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Suarez Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002).

Fluidity in how gender roles are enacted by both men and women has a direct bearing on the migration experiences of lower-income migrants. In the case of Jamaica, lower-income women frequently assume a large share or sole financial responsibility for their households (Leo-Rhynie, 1993; Rawlins, 2006; Thomas-Hope, 2002). Women seek out migration opportunities and migrate in their own right, often as initiators of migration for the rest of their families or personal networks (Bashi, 2007; Foner, 2005, Pottinger et al., 2008; Thomas-Hope, 2002; Thomas, 2008).

Lower-income Jamaican women migrate legally as part of family reunification, or as short-term guest workers, or travel overseas on visitors' visas and then go underground as undocumented aliens. They often leave their children behind in the care of other family members or in informal domestic arrangements. This pattern of reciprocal obligations (Bauer & Thompson, 2006; Fog Olwig, 2005; Gouldbourne, 2002) is also observed among female migrants from the Philippines (Madianou & Miller, 2012), Mexico (Dreby, 2010), and Cape Verde (Åkesson, Carling, & Drotbohm, 2012). There is a substantial literature on Caribbean migrants leaving their children behind when moving to North America or the U.K.

For several decades, the Jamaican government has targeted lower-income men and women by way of short-term contract labor migration programs with the United States and Canada in agriculture, manufacturing and hospitality.[57] These programs are

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[57] In 2012, there were 685 Jamaican women and 451 men in the U.S. Hospitality Programme, and 185 women and 126 men in the Canadian Skilled Worker/ Hospitality Programme. In 2012, there were 3,524

seen as pathways to economic mobility for lower-income Jamaicans of both genders

(Thomas, 2008). Remittances from these short-term employment programs are part of

the wider inflow of remittances into the Jamaican economy. In 2013, remittances totaled

US$2 billion, one of three most significant sources of income for the country overall

(Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

Outmigration from Jamaica has always been highly feminized (Foner, 2005). For

every year from 2008 to 2011, more women than men legally migrated from Jamaica to

the U.S.A., averaging 55 % for this period.[58] For this same period, homemakers, students

with children, retirees, and the unemployed were the largest percentage, followed by non-

reported occupations, and migrants in service occupations. Those in management and

professional occupations were noticeably small by comparison.[59]

Jamaican women, as noted previously, also play a dominant role in migration as

both initiators and hubs of migration networks in host countries (Bashi, 2007). Foner

(1979a) also noted this in her study of Jamaican migrants in Britain. Spouses usually

migrate separately, and often mothers migrate first, and later send for husbands and

children to join them in the host country after they gain some economic foothold (Bashi,

2007). This was the experience of many of my respondents.

Return Migration

Caribbean migration in the early 20th century was often cyclical in nature, as

many migrants returned home after seasonal employment in Central America (Plaza &

Jamaican men in the U.S. Farm Work Programme, and 5,993 men, and 378 women in the Canadian Farm and Factory Programme (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

[58] In 2008, 18,477 Jamaicans legally migrated to the U.S.A., in 2009: 21,783, in 2010: 19,825, and in 2011: 19,662 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

[59] In 2008, 43.5% of Jamaican migrants to the U.S.A. had no stated occupation; in 2009: 46.2%; in 2010: 46.6%; in 2011: 46.1%. Service occupations were 16.5%, 16%, 13.9% and 11.9% respectively. Management and professional occupations were 5.3%, 5.2%, 5.1%, and 5.2% respectively (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

Henry, 2006). As Caribbean migrants relocated further afield to North America and Britain, they established more permanent settlement in these regions. As these migrants have grown older, many chose to return to the Caribbean to retire.[60]. Others also opted to return after achieving financial goals, after seasonal employment ended, or as part of a plan to live part-time in the host and home countries (Plaza & Henry, 2006). Some have established small businesses, and some of their adult children, who were born overseas, have also relocated to Jamaica.

In Jamaica, return migration tends to follow two distinct patterns for those returning from the U.K. or from North America. Returnees from Britain tend to form deeper and more permanent connections in Jamaica, becoming more involved in returning residents' associations, and severing all but family ties with the U.K. (Horst, 2008). By comparison, returnees from the U.S. tend to maintain active connections with their American networks, and travel frequently between both countries (Horst, 2008). Presumably, the closer proximity of the U.S. also contributes to these more active cross-border engagements. Returnees from both Britain and North America maintain ongoing personal and social networks and manage financial flows that straddle Jamaica and overseas, and some maintain residences both in Jamaica and overseas.

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[60] In 2012, the largest group of returned residents to Jamaica were 60-69 years old, followed by the 50-59 age group (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

Appendix C

Sample Descriptions

Period 1: Jamaican Sample - June to August 2013

Respon-dent	Close Tie in U.S.A.	Resid-ence in Jamaica	Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.	Year Returned to Jamaica	Reason for Migra-tion to U.S.A.	Respondent's Background
Cheryl, 65, married 1 adult son in U.S.A.	Maxine, cousin in New York.	Bamboo St. Ann parish.	1967	2012	Family reunific-ation, to join her parents and siblings.	Cheryl was a retired nurse. She attended college in the U.S.A. and had a master's degree. Her husband lived and worked in Florida, and her son was a medical doctor. She was farming on family land for subsistence and export, and was a real estate developer. Most of her family lived in the U.S.A.
Pauline, 59, single, no children	Aunt Hya-cinth in New York.	King-ston & St. Andrew parish.	1967	2008	Family reunific-ation, to join her parents and siblings.	Pauline had a long career as a librarian with a non-profit organization before she resigned, and returned to Jamaica. She attended high school, college and graduate school in the U.S.A., and was twice divorced. Pauline traveled to the U.S.A. frequently for work and family reasons, as most of her family lived there.

Respon-dent	Close Tie in U.S.A.	Resid-ence in Jamaica	Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.	Year Returned to Jamaica	Reason for Migra-tion to U.S.A.	Respondent's Background
Colleen 65, married no children	Beryl, sister in New Jersey.	Oraca-bessa, St. Mary parish.	1967	2009	Family reunific-ation, to join her parents and siblings.	Colleen retired early after a successful investment-banking career in New York City. She and her architect husband relocated from New York City to Florida to be near to her elderly parents, and then retired to Jamaica. They designed and built their large home near the sea, and traveled to the USA many times each year. Most of her family lived in the U.S.A.
Beryl, 66, married no children	Close tie of Colleen in Jamaica.	N/A; lives in New Jersey.	1967	N/A	Family reunific-ation, to join her parents and siblings.	Beryl did B.A. and M.A. degrees in the U.S. She was a vice-president in human resources in the entertainment industry before she was laid off a year ago and retired. Beryl visited Colleen in Jamaica frequently each year.
Errol, 56, single, 1 son, living in the USA.	Aunt Iris in Queens, New York.	King-ston & St. Andrew parish.	1980	2008	Family reunific-ation, to join his parents and siblings.	Errol trained as an architect in Jamaica and the U.S.A. He worked in several Northeast cities before returning to Jamaica to care for his elderly mother. He worked for the Jamaican Government.

Respon-dent	*Close Tie in U.S.A.*	*Resid-ence in Jamaica*	*Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.*	*Year Returned to Jamaica*	*Reason for Migra-tion to U.S.A.*	*Respondent's Background*
Donna, 55, single, no children	Alexis, female friend in New York.	King-ston & St. Andrew parish.	1983	1996	Career advance-ment.	Donna gained a B.A. in the U.K. and then worked in the New York City fashion industry for several years. Currently, she was an art dealer and consultant to small business people. She returned to Jamaica to help in her family's business. She was considering returning to the U.S. as business was slow in Jamaica.
Everton 69, married 7 children in the U.S.	Paula, his daughter in the Bronx, New York.	Bamboo St. Ann parish.	1984	2003	Family reunific-ation, to join his wife and children.	Everton was semi-retired, having worked as a trucker in the U.S.A. He had not finished high school. He still did trucking work in Jamaica whenever available. He lived alone in a medium-size house he and his wife took 15 years to build while he was in the U.S. His wife and family lived in the U.S.
Sharon, 64, twice divor-ced, 1 adult son in the U.S.	Marlene, her aunt in Queens, New York.	Morant Bay, St. Thomas parish.	1980	2006	To keep her green card, as she was living in Jamaica more than in the U.S.	Sharon gained a B.A. in Jamaica and taught there before migrating to New York. She worked in publishing before opening her own printing firm. She sold her business and relocated to Jamaica to care for her elderly father.

Respon-dent	*Close Tie in U.S.A.*	*Resid-ence in Jamaica*	*Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.*	*Year Returned to Jamaica*	*Reason for Migra-tion to U.S.A.*	*Respondent's Background*
Trevor, 75, married 4 children	Maureen his cousin in King-ston.	Ocho Rios, St. Ann parish, and Mt. Vernon New York.	1956	N.A. He was a New York-based respon-dent interview-ed in Jamaica.	Family reunific-ation, to join his parents and siblings.	Trevor migrated to Harlem at 18. He went to college in Montreal, and worked in broadcasting and with the NYC government, and in Jamaica as a government consultant in the 1970s. He operated an energy company and non profit between NYC and Jamaica.
Berris, 56, married 1 adult son.	Joan, his sister, in King-ston.	Pough-keepsie, New York.	1992	N/A. He was a New York-based respon-dent interview-ed in Jamaica.	Econ-omic necess-ity. He entered into a business marriage to get legal status.	Berris was a social worker with a youth development agency. He attended teacher's college in Jamaica, and had a teaching career in Jamaica. After migrating, he earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in social work, and worked for several nonprofits.

Period 2: New York City Sample September to November 2013

Respon-dent	Close Tie in Jamaica	Resid-ence in U.S.A.	Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.	Reason for Migration	Intend to return to Jamaica	Respondent's Background
Aunt Iris, married 3 children	Errol, her nephew in King-ston.	Queens, New York	1964	Study and career advance-ment.	No	Aunt Iris completed her nursing training in Jamaica, after which she worked as a nurse in Brooklyn for many years until she retired.
Alexis, 56, single, no children	Donna, her friend in King-ston.	Harlem, New York.	1987	Study and career advance-ment.	No	Alexis worked in marketing and public relations in the financial sector in Jamaica. She then moved to New York to continue working in these industries, before becoming a freelancer.
Paula, 46, single, no children	Everton, her father in St. Ann parish.	The Bronx, New York.	1984	Family reunific-ation, to join her parents and siblings.	No	Paula finished high school in New York. She completed a B.A. and worked as a mortgage underwriter. After the 2008 financial crisis, she began working for her church office as an administrator, in a Jamaican ethnic enclave of the northeast Bronx.
Mar-lene, 72, married no children	Sharon, her niece in St Thomas parish, Jamaica.	Queens, New York.	1971	Career advance-ment.	No	Marlene had retired after a long career as a nurse/midwife with two major private hospitals in Manhattan. She trained in the U.K. before moving to NYC.
Maxine 50, married 3 children	Cheryl, her cousin in St. Ann.	Long Island, New York.	1978	To join parents and siblings.	No	She completed high school in Jamaica, B.A. and M.A. degrees in New York and was a college advisor.

Respon-dent	*Close Tie in Jamaica*	*Resid-ence in U.S.A.*	*Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.*	*Reason for Migration*	*Intends to return to Jamaica*	*Respondent's Background*
Aunt Hya-cinth, 79, wid owed, 1 adult son.	Pauline, her niece in King-ston.	Long Island, New York.	1963	Study and career advance-ement	No	Aunt Hyacinth had recently retired after a long career as a nurse/midwife with two major private hospitals in Manhattan. She trained in the U.K. before moving to NYC.
Glad-stone, 67, single, 1 daugh-ter.	Dono-van, friend in King-ston.	The Bronx, New York.	1978	To attend graduate school, and family reunific-ation to join his mother and siblings.	Less certain than he was before, due to recent illness.	Gladstone was a university administrator and professor with a large public university. He completed a B.A. in Jamaica and earned a PhD in the U.S. He was a community organizer in the Jamaican immigrant community.
Nordia, 52, single, no children	Aunt Myrna, family friend in King-ston.	Harlem, New York	1979	To attend college, and entered into a business marriage to get legal status.	No	Nordia completed her B.A. and M.A. in nursing in New York City and worked at a major cancer treatment center. After her parents' recent deaths in Jamaica, she was working with a lawyer in Jamaica to sell her family home there.
Karen, 48, single, no children	Mr. Robert, family friend in Dis-covery Bay, St. Ann parish.	Brook-lyn, New York	2000	Family reunify-cation, to join her mother and siblings.	Yes, at retire-ment, to live in the house she is building there.	Karen finished high school in Jamaica. She worked as an elder caregiver with several families in Long Island and in Manhattan since she migrated to the U.S. She is building a house in Jamaica.

Respon-dent	Close Tie in Jamaica	Resid-ence in U.S.A.	Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.	Reason for Migration	Intends to return to Jamaica	Respondent's Background
Junior, 18, single, no children	Rafael, his brother in Mand-eville, Man-chester parish.	The Bronx, New York.	2012	To join his parents and siblings.	No	Junior finished high school in Jamaica and is a community college student.
Miss Cord-elia, 79, widow-ed, 13 children	Norbert, her son in Helicon, St. Ann parish.	Brook-lyn, New York.	1991	Family re-unification to join her adult daughter, a nurse who sponsored her.	Miss Cordelia visits Jamaica annually as she has two houses there.	Miss Cordelia never finished high school in Jamaica. She worked as a housekeeper in Connecticut and Long Island before she retired in 2005. She was active in an association in New York, which raised funds for a primary school in her Jamaican community.
Barbara 67, single, no children	Alex, her nephew in King-ston.	Brook-lyn, New York.	1972	To further her studies, and join her mother.	No	Barbara trained as a medical doctor in Jamaica. In the U.S., she specialized in sports medicine became disabled after an accident, and could no longer work. She then gained a PhD and was an Airbnb host.
Des-mond, 48, married 2 children	Lorna, female friend in St. Cather-ine parish.	Mt. Vernon, New York.	1996	To join his wife and children.	No	Desmond has worked with a major cable/Internet/phone company for 14 years as a cable installer. He gained a B.A. in Accounts in Jamaica and taught in a community college there before migrating.

Respon-dent	Close Tie in Jamaica	Resid-ence in U.S.A.	Year Migr-ated to U.S.A.	Reason for Migration	Intends to return to Jamaica	Respondent's Background
Lorna, 39, single, 1child.	Close tie of Des-mond in Mt. Vernon, New York.	N/A. She lives in St. Cath-erine parish, Jamaica. She was visiting NYC at the time. .	N/A	N/A	N/A	Lorna has a B.A. and was a teacher in Jamaica, for 16 years in elementary school. Most of her family lived in the U.S. She regrets not deciding to have one of her siblings sponsor her to migrate to the U.S.
Marcia, 50, div-orced, 3 children	Preston, close friend in Sandy Bay, Hanover parish.	The Bronx, New York.	2003	Sponsored by her mother who was living in the U.S.	No	Marcia migrated to New York as a teenager. She did not finish high school in Jamaica. She worked a in the Bronx six days a week as a home-based elder caregiver.

Period 3: Jamaican sample January 2014

Respondent	*Close Tie in U.S.A.*	*Residence in Jamaica*	*Occupation*	*Want to Migrate to U.S.A.?*	*Respondent's Background*
Norbert 47, married 3 children	Miss Cordelia his mother in Brooklyn, New York.	Helicon, St. Ann parish.	Welder at a bauxite mining plant.	Norbert is a resident alien of the U.S.	Norbert was one of 13 children. He was born and grew up in the Helicon community. Both he and his wife left school at Grade 9. His wife and children migrated to Brooklyn in 2009. His eldest child was in college and the younger children were in public school. His wife worked as an elder care giver.
Mr. Robert, 67, retired, separated, 3 adult children in the U.S.	Karen, a family friend in Brooklyn, N.Y.	Discovery Bay, St. Ann parish.	Landlord, formerly a supervisor, now retired.	No.	Mr. Robert spent most of his life in the Discovery Bay community. He retired early from the bauxite plant where he always worked. He built a six-apartment building in Helicon near to his home, and rented five of the units, keeping one for himself. He was supervising Karen's house construction in Helicon.
Preston, 51, divorced, 4 children living with him.	Marcia, his girlfriend in the Bronx, N.Y.	Sandy Bay, Hanover parish.	Gardener at a five star villa resort,	Yes, to join Marcia.	Preston was born and raised in the Sandy Bay community, a small fishing village on the northwest coast. He went as far as grade 9 in school and has worked ever since then. He supplements his meager income by fishing.
Aunt Myrtle, 73, married 1 adult daughter.	Nordia, her close friend in Harlem, N.Y.	Kingston & St. Andrew parish.	Retired school bursar.	No	Aunt Myrtle was a close family friend of Nordia's parents when Nordia was young. Her husband was a retired pastor and active in his community, but became very ill during my fieldwork, and moved to Kingston from her rural town.

Respon-dent	*Close Tie in U.S.A.*	*Resid-ence in Jamaica.*	*Occup-ation*	*Want to Migrate to U.S.A.?*	*Respondent's Background*
Mau-reen, 75, wid-owed, 1 son.	Trevor, her cousin in Brook-lyn.	Kingston & St. Andrew parish.	Retired teacher.	No	Maureen spent all her life in Jamaica. She was very committed to the educational sector, having worked as an elementary and high school teacher, and a school superintendent before retiring.
Joan, 66, wid-owd, 2 adult daugh-ters.	Berris, her brother in Pough-keepsie, New York.	King-ston & St. Andrew parish.	Retired secret-ary.	No	Joan lived with her two adult daughters and their children, who she cared for while her daughters were at work. She and her daughters managed Berris' properties in Jamaica for him.
Alex, 47, married 3 children	Barbara, his aunt in Brook-lyn, New York.	King-ston & St. Andrew parish.	Chart-ered account-ant.	No	Alex had enjoyed an impressive career trajectory. After completing his B.A. in accounting, he worked in banking and then in accounting where he was a junior partner in his firm. He also owned a chain of retail shops as a private business venture.
Rafael, 32, single, no children	Junior, his brother in the Bronx, New York.	Mande-ville, Man-chester parish.	High school teacher.	Yes	Rafael had been a guest worker at a charter school in Washington, DC between 2010-12. He was recruited in Jamaica by a U.S. employment agency seeking Jamaican teachers. He was then laid off from the charter school, and his work permit expired, so he had to return to Jamaica. He taught music at a high school in Jamaica.

Appendix D

Fieldwork Locations

Period 1: Jamaican Sample June to August 2013

During this period, I conducted 14 face-to-face interviews in Jamaica with Jamaican immigrants, 11 of whom had previously lived in the U.S. and had relocated to Jamaica. Three individuals from this group still lived in the U.S. and were vacationing in Jamaica when I interviewed them. These three respondents were part of my New York City sample. I conducted these interviews in five rural communities on Jamaica's north coast, and in the capital city of Kingston on the southern coast. These locations are described in turn.

Bamboo, St. Ann parish.[61] Bamboo is a small, agricultural community in the hills of St Ann parish, long neglected by the parochial authorities, with limited piped water and sewage services. Bamboo is on the country's main A1 roadway network. Electricity and mobile telephone services are widespread, but landline telephone and Internet services are irregular.[62] Residents have to build concrete tanks or buy large polypropylene structures to store water for domestic and agricultural use.

Despite these infrastructure constraints, in recent years Bamboo has become a magnet for returning residents from North America and the U.K., as it is some 3,000 feet above sea level, is very cool year round by tropical standards, and offers stunning views of the Caribbean Sea. These returnees have built very large, multi-storey concrete[63]

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[61] St Ann parish, where Bamboo, Priory and Ocho Rios are located, has a population of 173,200, or 6.4 % of the country's population, as of December 2012 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).
[62] Bamboo, like other small rural communities, is plagued with the repeated theft of insulated copper cables used by the major telecommunications companies LIME/Cable and Wireless Ltd, and Digicel, which disrupts landline and Internet service (Jamaica Observer, 2014, March 6).
[63] Concrete is the preferred building material for Jamaican houses, as the island lies in the Caribbean hurricane zone, and has experienced very destructive hurricanes in recent years. A concrete house is a sign

houses in the community. I interviewed three respondents in Bamboo. The first was Cheryl, 65, a retired nurse, who I met with on the porch of a wooden hut overlooking her 17 acre hillside farm. Cheryl referred me to her neighbor Evadne, 69, a retired chemist who had worked in upstate New York for 20 years, and we met in the living room of her large, newly-built concrete house.[64] Cheryl also referred me to Everton, 69, the retired trucker, who had transported several loads of dasheens[65] to an exporter, and cucumbers to a local market for her. I interviewed Everton on the verandah of his two-storey concrete house, situated a few miles away from Cheryl's farm, and overlooking his kitchen garden.

Priory, St. Ann parish. Priory is a small, quiet, residential community directly on the sea, on the recently built North Coast Highway which connects the island from west to east. Priory has spacious, well-built concrete houses at both sea level and clustered on the hills overlooking the highway. It serves as a dormitory town for civil servants and professionals who work in the St Ann parish capital of St. Ann's Bay, a few miles west, and for Ocho Rios, a larger tourist town to the east. Many returning residents have settled in Priory as well. Cheryl referred me to Robbie, 45, an entrepreneur, and I interviewed him on the side porch of his two storey, concrete family home.

Ocho Rios, St. Ann parish. Ocho Rios is a major resort town, with many large and small hotels, a cruise ship pier—one of three in Jamaica—and the largest

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of higher status, whereas a wooden house is both less sturdy, and signifies that the occupant is of lower social standing (Horst, 2006b). Wood is also more expensive, as most of it is imported, whereas concrete is produced locally.

[64] Evadne was preoccupied during our interview about the contractor who built her house, where the doors and windows were not plumb. He had since disappeared. Unscrupulous contractors were a common experience among returnees building homes in Jamaica (See Chapter Seven).

[65] Dasheen is a ground provision similar to an Irish potato, but with a firmer texture, which is a very popular staple in the Caribbean. Cheryl exports dasheens to her husband in Florida, who markets them to Caribbean grocery stores there.

concentration of tourist attractions on the north coast. The population is a mixture of permanent and transient groups. The former consist of teachers, police officers, civil servants, bank employees, doctors, nurses, lawyers, clergypersons, small farmers in the neighboring hills, higglers[66] of agricultural produce, taxi and bus operators, hoteliers, innkeepers, restaurateurs, gift shop owners, tour and transport operators. The transients include the visitors from overseas and other Jamaicans, many unskilled and unemployed from other parts of Jamaica, who converge on the town to ply their informal trade in illegal drugs and prostitution. I met with Trevor, 75, the entrepreneur from New York, on the balcony of his high-rise condo overlooking the Ocho Rios harbor, as he was staying in Jamaica at the time. I interviewed Berris, 56, the social worker from New York, in the living room of a holiday apartment where he was vacationing at the time.

Oracabessa, St. Mary parish.[67] Oracabessa, a few miles east of Ocho Rios, is a residential community located at both sea level and on several adjoining hills facing the sea. It is similar in size to Ocho Rios, but not as bustling with commercial activity. It is home to many large seaside and hillside villas, and a popular location for returning migrants from the U.K. in particular. Several expatriates own holiday homes in Oracabessa, including celebrities like Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, and Grace Jones. The town is most well-known as the home of Ian Fleming, the former World War II British intelligence officer and author of the James Bond novels. Fleming's former home Golden Eye is now a five star private villa resort, and in 2011, a previously small-scale

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[66] Another word for hagglers, or informal vendors of goods. In Jamaica, higglers are primarily women, found island wide. An offshoot of the free village system which developed after slavery's abolition in 1838, when ex-slaves fled the plantations to cultivate small hillside plots, higglers emerged as informal marketers of small farmers' produce (Hall, 1969). Higglers buy agricultural produce directly from farmers in their fields, transport and re-sell this produce in small and large town markets across the country. Everton, the trucker in Bamboo, occasionally transported such produce for higgler customers.

[67] St. Mary parish, where Oracabessa and Bonham Heights are located, has a population of 114,000, or 4.2 % of the country's population, as of December 2012 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

aerodrome directly across the street was upgraded to handle larger private aircraft, and renamed in his honor.[68] I interviewed the sisters Colleen, 65, and Beryl, 66, on the back porch of the former's palatial home, which her architect husband had designed and built. Beryl was part of my New York sample, but was visiting Colleen at the time.

Bonham Heights, St. Mary parish. Bonham Heights is a hillside, agricultural community of three to five bedroom concrete homes. Many local small farmers live in the area, as well as many returning residents from the U.K. and North America, who are engaged in farming. Unlike Oracabessa, this is not a resort-type community, situated as it is in the hills some distance away from the coast. I interviewed Mr. Morgan on his front porch overlooking his lawn, replete with laden mango, avocado, and breadfruit[69] trees. Mr. Morgan also owned a large plot of land adjoining his house where he planted other agricultural crops for domestic use and for sale at a local farmers' market.

Kingston.[70] Kingston is Jamaica's capital city, and its political, legal, administrative and cultural center. It is situated on the south coast, surrounding the seventh largest natural harbor in the world.[71] I interviewed four respondents in Kingston. I met with Pauline, 59, a lirarian, at her office in Hagley Park, a commercial section of the city. She was the manager of this entity, which was a recording studio and music equipment rental facility. The building was an old house in a community that had been a

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[68] The Ian Fleming International Airport, which reopened in 2011, generated considerable public debate. Some Jamaicans felt that the facility should have been named after a Jamaican celebrity such as Bob Marley. The Jamaica Labour Party government at the time defended its choice by arguing that Ian Fleming, in writing his James Bond novels at Golden Eye in Jamaica, had put the country on the world map as a tourist destination (Jamaica Observer, 2011, March 6).

[69] The breadfruit is a large, round, starchy vegetable that grows wild all over Jamaica, and is a popular staple among all socioeconomic groups. In the late 17th century, during the height of the transatlantic slave trade, it was brought to Jamaica from Tahiti by British navigator Captain Bligh on one of his trips on the Bounty, as an inexpensive food for slaves on Jamaican plantations (Hall, 1969; Higman, 2005).

[70] Kingston, short for the parish of Kingston and St. Andrew is the most densely populated area of Jamaica, with 666,000 residents, or 24.6 % of the country's population, as of December 2012 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

[71] See Port Authority of Jamaica (2014).

prime residential area in the 1960s. It had since been overrun by commercial activity, and the houses converted into commercial spaces. Pauline's building was being renovated, and our interview was interrupted several times by construction workers and employees needing instructions, guard dogs needing to be fed in a kennel outside, and calls from her mobile phone.

Pauline was my entrée into this U.S. immigrant population living in Kingston. She referred me to Donna, 55, an entrepreneur, who I met at a coffee bar in a shopping mall in Liguanea, a middle class neighborhood. Pauline also referred me to Errol, 56, an architect, who worked in Half-Way-Tree, the city's midtown business district. I interviewed him near his workplace during his lunch break, on the lawn of Devon House. This is a former colonial mansion and museum in Half-Way-Tree, and a central and popular meeting spot for Jamaicans and visitors. Donna referred me to Sharon, 64, the former publisher in New York, and we met at Devon House as well.

Period 2: New York City September to December 2013

During this period, I conducted 15 face-to-face interviews in New York with Jamaican immigrants, seven of whom were the close ties of my sample in Phase 1. The other seven respondents were all immigrants living in New York, and the eighth was a non-immigrant from Jamaica, who was visiting New York, and the close tie of one of these seven respondents. I conducted these interviews in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem/Manhattan, Long Island/Suffolk County, and Queens.

,   **The Bronx.** I conducted six interviews in this borough[72]. I interviewed Paula, 46, the close tie and daughter of Everton from Phase 1, at her workplace. She was a

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[72] The Bronx is one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the U.S., with a population of 1.4 million, with 56.8% of households speaking other than English in the home, a median household income of

secretary for a Jamaican Evangelical church and grade school in the northeast Bronx, a community of Caribbean immigrants. We met at the back of the church, where she was frequently interrupted by parents collecting children, and by her boss, the pastor. I met with Gladstone, 67, the college professor in a Burger King restaurant in my Bronx neighborhood. We had arranged to meet in my apartment, but he could not find street parking, so this was the nearest place with available parking. I interviewed Desmond, 48, the cable installer, and Junior, 18, the college student, at a local community college where I teach, in empty classrooms. I met with Marcia, 50, the elder care giver, in my deceased mother's apartment where she worked. I interviewed Lorna, 39, the teacher from Jamaica, and Desmond's close tie, in the living room of her sister's house in the northeast Bronx while she was on vacation in New York. For all these interviews except with Gladstone, I used public transportation to meet with my respondents.

Long Island.[73] I interviewed one respondent: Aunt Hyacinth, 79, a retired nurse/midwife in her kitchen in her four bedroom home. She had lived in this predominantly white community for over 30 years. She kindly agreed to collect me from the train station in her town and drove me back to catch my return train to New York City.

Queens.[74] I interviewed two respondents: Marlene, 72, a retired nurse/midwife in the dining room of her four-bedroom home, and Aunt Iris, 72, a retired nurse, in the

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$34,300, and 29.3% of households living below the poverty level, compared to the state figure of 14.9%, in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

[73] This section of Long Island is situated in Nassau County, with a population of 1.3 million, where 28.1% of households spoke other than English in the home, with a median household income of $97,049, and 5.8% of households living below the poverty level, compared to the state figure of 14.9%, in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

[74] Queens County, in 2013, had a population of 2.2 million. In 2012, 56.4% of households spoke other than English in the home, had a median household income of $56,780, and 14.4% of households lived below the poverty level, compared to the state figure of 14.9% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2014).

living room of her home. Both neighborhoods were comprised mainly of Caribbean
immigrants.

Brooklyn.[75] I met with Maxine, 50, a college admissions counselor in her office
in downtown Brooklyn. I interviewed Miss Cordelia, 80, in the dining room of her
Flatbush apartment, and Karen, 48, the elder care giver in the dining room in her small
East New York apartment, both predominantly Caribbean immigrant communities. I met
with Barbara, 67, the retired medical doctor in the dining room of her four story
brownstone in Park Slope. This predominantly white community was located on the side
of Flatbush Avenue south of Prospect Park, and opposite to Miss Cordelia's
neighborhood.

Harlem.[76] The section of Harlem where my two respondents lived was near to
125th Street, Harlem's main commercial artery. Since 2005, this neighborhood had
experienced significant urban renewal and gentrification, with the construction of new
high-rise residential buildings with commercial spaces on the ground floors, replacing
formerly vacant and derelict lots. The neighborhood was multi-ethnic, and like many
parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn, property values had soared since these buildings were
erected. Both respondents lived in these new apartment houses. I interviewed Alexis, 56,
a marketing executive, and Nordia, 52, the oncology nurse in their respective apartments.

Period 3: Jamaica January 2014

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[75] Brooklyn, located in Kings County, in 2013, had a population of 2.5 million. In 2012, 46.2% of
households spoke other than English in the home, had a median household income of $45,215, and 22.7%
of households lived below the poverty level, compared to the state figure of 14.9% (U.S. Census Bureau,
2014).

[76] The section of Harlem where I interviewed my respondents falls within Manhattan Community District
10. In 2013, it had a modal income of $35,000-$49,999, with residents 65.3% African American, 21.2%
Latino, 16.1% white, and the remainder of other ethnicities, with 42.7% of households on public assistance.
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Discovery Bay[77], **St Ann parish.** This town, directly on the north coast, is a few miles west of Ocho Rios. It has a small, scenic town center with a popular public beach. The community has many houses near the town center and in the surrounding hills, as well as lavish beachfront villas owned by Jamaicans, returnees, and expatriates. The main commercial activity consists of the only remaining bauxite mining facility in Jamaica, which has its shipping port in Discovery Bay. From this port, bauxite ore, which is mined in the hills north of the town, is exported to the U.S.A. and Europe for processing into aluminum. Discovery Bay is also a popular holiday destination for Jamaicans and tourists from abroad. I met with Mr. Robert, 67, the landlord, on the front porch of his small bungalow near the town center. He had worked with the bauxite plant all of his life and had recently retired.

Helicon, St Ann parish. This is a small community or in Jamaican parlance 'a district' in the hills above Discovery Bay. In Jamaica, a district is a small community without municipal services such as a post office, police or fire station, or a public library, and lies off the main A1 roadway network on secondary or parochial roads. There is one main paved road in this community, although this was riddled with potholes. There is electricity, but limited landline telephone, Internet and garbage collection services. Mobile phone service is widespread. There are no piped water nor sewage services. The residents are a mixture of small farmers, civil servants, professionals, and returning residents. I interviewed Norbert, 47, the welder in the dining room of his mother Miss Cordelia's large house, where he served as the caretaker; as he lived in his own house a short walk away.

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[77] Discovery Bay was so named as it was one of the first locations in Jamaica where Christopher Columbus landed when he arrived in 1492, on his aborted voyage to Asia.

Sandy Bay, Hanover parish.[78] This is a small, quiet seaside town directly on the North Coast Highway, on the western end of the island. The community consists mainly of fishermen and small farmers, who live in small wooden and concrete houses along the main highway or in the surrounding hills. In stark contrast to this modest setting, Sandy Bay is also home to two of the most exclusive resort properties in the Caribbean: the Tryall Golf Club, a five star villa community owned mainly by expatriates, and Round Hill, a villa resort, where U.S. designer Ralph Lauren owns a property. I interviewed Preston, 51, the gardener who worked at one of the Tryall villas, and a part-time fisherman, in my rented car, which I parked at the staff entrance to the Tryall Club. I turned the air conditioner on to block the sound of vehicular traffic passing by. He had just completed his day shift before we met. Preston was born in Sandy Bay and had lived there his entire life.

Kingston. I interviewed five respondents in Kingston: Donovan, 53, the entrepreneur, in his small office in a mall on Maxfield Avenue, a midtown commercial area; Maureen, 75, the retired teacher; and Joan, 66, the retired secretary, on the grilled front porches of their small homes in two lower middle-income residential neighborhoods: Zaidie Gardens and Hughenden respectively. The concrete houses in these two communities were built close together, their tiny yards enclosed with perimeter concrete fences and iron gates. All front porches had iron grills as a deterrent to burglars, who were a constant feature of Kingston life. I met with Aunt Myrtle, 73, the retired school bursar, on the grilled front porch of her small bungalow in Drumblair, a middle-income residential neighborhood near to Half-Way-Tree. I interviewed Alex, 47, the

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[78] Hanover parish is the least populated parish in Jamaica, with 69,900 residents, or 2.6% of the country's population, as of December 2012 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

accountant, on the pool deck of his golf club in an upper-middle income commercial and residential area.

Mandeville, Manchester parish.[79] Mandeville, a major commercial and residential center, is located in the middle of the country, at approximately 3,000 feet above sea level. It is mainly an agricultural community, and starting in the late 1940s, became the country's hub for the bauxite mining and alumina processing industry. As these refineries were being built, local land use laws designated that bauxite bearing lands, even though privately owned, could be appropriated for the industry's use. This is similar to the practice of eminent domain common in many other countries. However, many of these lands were family properties, passed down between generations, and for which no official titles or deeds existed. Therefore, these small farmers often could not establish definitive land ownership, and the refineries did not always pay fair compensation.

As a result, many small farmers were permanently displaced, forming part of the "Windrush generation", the first Jamaicans to migrate to the U.K. in the late 1940s[80]. With the demise of this industry in the late 1990s, these refineries closed, and Mandeville and its environs have experienced some economic decline. Local residents have returned

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[79] Manchester has the fourth largest population in Jamaica, with 190,800 residents, or 7% of the country's total, as of December 2012 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

[80] A large percentage of these displaced persons migrated to the U.K., as part of the Windrush generation. In June 1948, 482 passengers from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex on the British troopship ss Empire Windrush. Many of them had previously served in World War II as part of the Allied Forces in Europe. Jamaica was a crown colony of Britain at that time, and many Jamaicans saw this as returning to the "mother country" where economic opportunities were more plentiful than in Jamaica (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2008). The year 2008 marked 50 years since the start of Caribbean immigration to the U.K. and featured several celebratory events in both regions. The establishment of the bauxite/alumina industry in Manchester in the late 1940s and early 1950s was a major catalyst for unskilled people to migrate to Britain, after their land was acquired for bauxite mining (Thomas-Hope, 2002).

to agriculture, started service industries, and continue to engage in trading and the professions. Mandeville is a major educational hub with several elementary and high schools, and colleges. It is also a preferred destination for returning migrants from the U.K., who have built imposing multi-storey houses in developments on the town's outskirts. Many of these returnees are either members or descendants of the Windrush generation. I met with Rafael, 32, the high school teacher at the institution where he worked, in an empty classroom after he had finished teaching for the day.

Appendix E

Coding Chart

Category: Content of communication

        Sub category Family matters

        Sub category Elder care

        Sub category Family finances

        Sub category Family members in financial need

        Sub category Family inheritance disputes

        Sub category Breakdown in family values

        Sub category Paternity disputes

        Sub category Parental guidance to adult children

        Sub category "Money as divisive in families" In-vivo code/Participant 11, energy company entrepreneur, male.

        Sub category Perniciousness of materialistic/individualistic values vs. communal values

        Sub category Phatic/routine matters

        Sub category Silence/absence of communication. "Nobody wanted to talk about it". In-vivo code/Participant 2, female, company manager's child molestation family crisis.

        Sub category Shame and blame "I felt like the bad person" In-vivo code/Participant 2's child molestation family crisis.

        Sub category Denial "To this day she [her aunt] has never spoken to me about it" In-vivo code/Participant 2 re her late uncle's molestation.

        Sub category Politics

        Sub category Act of keeping in touch more important than content of communication

Category: Presence as a continuum

        Sub category Pragmatism in how separation/absence are viewed

        Sub category Strong emotional attachment across distance

        Sub category Hyperpersonal communication across distance

        Sub category Real time co-presence and sadness

        Sub category Pain of separation "I'd be happy to see him now. I wish I could see him" In-vivo code/Participant 7, architect, male, re being an absent parent from son in USA.

        Sub category Co-present visits vital

        Sub category Guilt. "I was a bad mother" In-vivo code/ Participant 3, retired chemist, who sent her son from New York to Jamaica to be raised by relatives when he was young.

        Sub category Regret "He's not getting the benefit of having a father around" In-vivo code/Participant 7.

Category: Distance is acceptable

Sub category   "we have a healthier relationship with distance between us. She would be too much under my foot" In vivo code/Participant 13, retired editor.
Sub category   Resignation about distance
Sub category   Distance from loved ones as a way of life
Sub category   No ICT can compensate for distance

Category: Emotional stoicism in face of distance
Sub category   Living away from family
Sub category   Strong emotional self-sufficiency

Category: Strong self-efficacy
Sub category   Strong sense of personal empowerment "I was a rainmaker, I never waited for people to help me, I knew my capabilities." In-vivo code/Participant 5, retired investment banker, female.
"My own path. My own crazy path" In-vivo code/Participant 11, NYC sample, energy company entrepreneur and advocate, male.
Sub category   Intrepid spirit (note Madianou & Miller, 2012)

Category: Loneliness
Sub category   Loners
Sub category   "A lot of times I'm by myself, but most of the time, I don't think about it" In-vivo code from Participant 2, female, company manager.
Sub category   Alienation/anomie (Most acute for female deportee, note Miller, 2012).
Sub category   Detachment/disconnectedness
Sub category   Enjoy being alone

Category: Immediacy synchronism/simultaneity of communication essential
Sub category   Primacy of phone to bridge distance
Sub category   "[With email/any computer mediated communication] I'm not feeling it when I do that" In-vivo code, Participant 5/retired HR VP and close tie of retired investment banker, female.

Category: Despite general proficiency in all new ICT, phone most preferred.

Category: New ICTs not necessarily preferred
Sub category   New ICTs less spontaneous (Skype needs hardware preparation and other party needs advance warning)
Sub category   New ICTs can be inconvenient
Sub category   New ICTs used selectively

Category: Facebook reunites families

Category: Cost as impediment to some new ICT use

Category: Physical infrastructure may impede some ICT use

Category: New ICTS enhance long-distance communication
               Sub category   Communication now spontaneous/faster
               Sub category   Communication now richer
               Sub category   Communication more frequent

Category: Older age groups uncomfortable with new ICTs
               Sub category   Phone still familiar
               Sub category   Phone easiest to use

Category: Close tie multifaceted
               Sub category   type of close tie determines degree of pain of
               separation

Category: Minimal impact of gender on close tie relationship
               Sub category   Men consider their gender impedes effective
               communication
               Sub category   Women better at connecting than men

Category: Ethnic ambiguity
               Sub category   Nuanced ethnic self-identity
               Sub category   Ethnicity defined differently whether living in
               Jamaica or USA
               Sub category   Strong ethnic identity
               Sub category   Confused ethnic identity
               Sub category   Denial of ethnic identity

Category: Migration shaped by gender
               Sub category   Women as victims. "I was the sacrificial lamb" In-
               vivo code/Participant 3, retired chemist, female, when
               unmarried/had no children, was sent to the USA to set up new
               home for younger siblings to follow.
               Sub category   Migration more advantageous for women.
               Sub category   "Men have more baggage". In–vivo
               code/Participant 1, farmer/real estate developer and retired nurse,
               female.

Category: Racism as a reality of migration
               Sub category   Workplace racism. "You have to be twice as good
               as they are to survive" In-vivo code/Participant 4, retired customer
               service rep., now farmer and community activist, male.

Sub category   Corporate workplace politics. "I never did the kiss part, but I did the kick part when I had to" In-vivo code/Participant 5, retired investment banker, female.

Sub category   Stress of immigrant life

Sub category   Return migration as coping mechanism. "I think if I didn't come back [to Jamaica], I probably would have lost my mind!" In-vivo code/ Participant 4, retired customer service rep. now farmer and community activist, male.

Sub categry   Denigration of the individual. "My uncle told me here in the U.S, you're just some other nigger, excuse the expression, but in Jamaica you're somebody" In-vivo code/Participant 1, farmer/real estate developer and retired nurse, female.

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Category: Migration, race and gender intersect

Sub category   "I have three strikes: one, unusual accent, two, I was a woman and three I was black" In-vivo code/Participant 5, retired investment banker, female.

Category: Race separate from nationality

Sub category   Segmented assimilation "I don't ever want to lose my [Jamaican] accent". In-vivo code/Participant 6/retired HR VP and close tie of retired investment banker, female. (Note Waters, 1999).
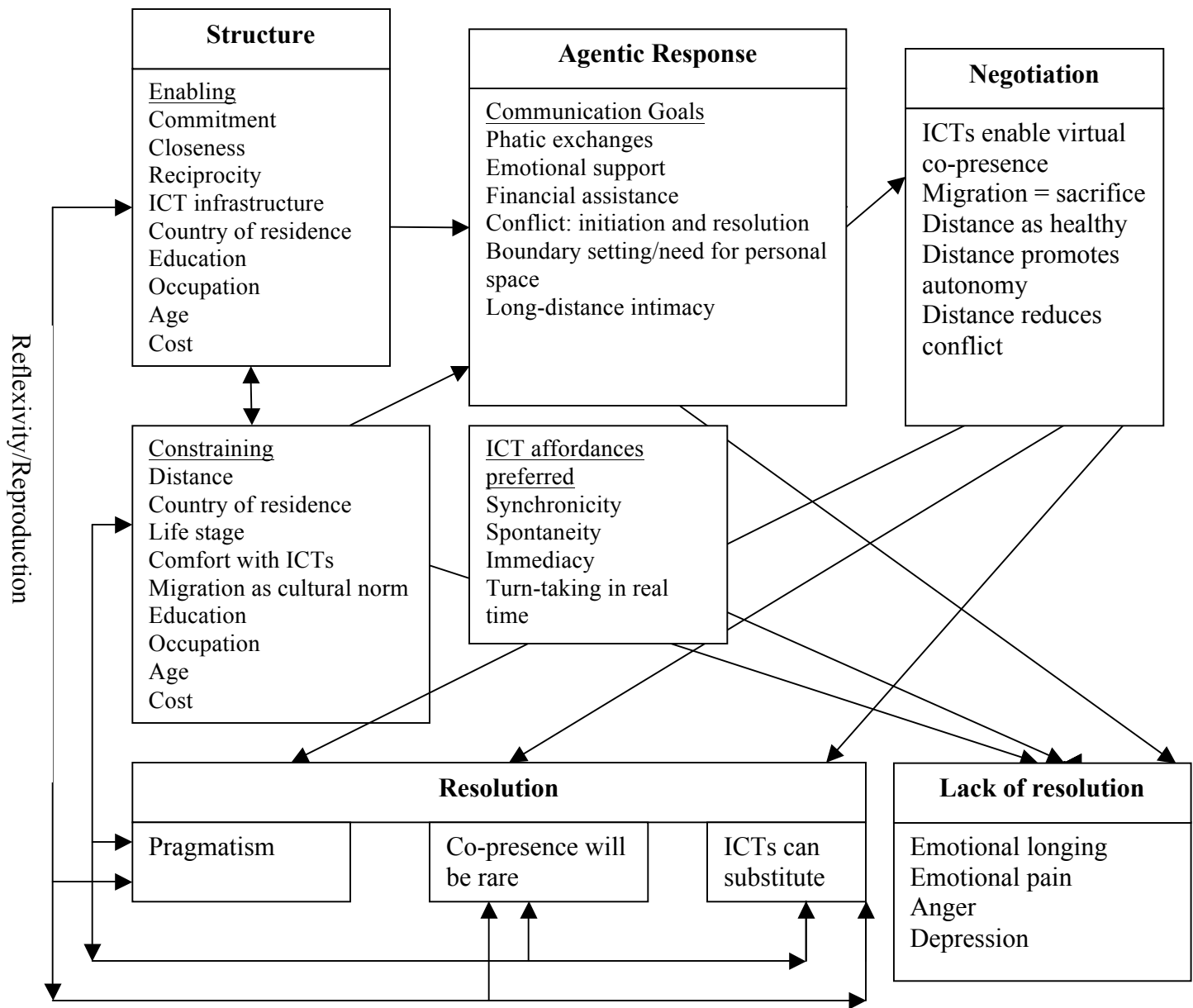
Sub category   "You are not one of them ...in their eyes I was not black" In-vivo code/Participant 10, sales and marketing consultant recalling that her former white boss in NYC didn't see her as black. (Note Waters, 1999, re similar perception of Jamaican immigrants in NYC.)

Category: Altruism

Sub category   Personal altruism

Sub category   Give back to immediate community

Appendix F Conceptual Map of Key Themes

Structure

Enabling
Commitment
Closeness
Reciprocity
ICT infrastructure
Country of residence
Education
Occupation
Age
Cost

Constraining
Distance
Country of residence
Life stage
Comfort with ICTs
Migration as cultural norm
Education
Occupation
Age
Cost

Agentic Response

Communication Goals
Phatic exchanges
Emotional support
Financial assistance
Conflict: initiation and resolution
Boundary setting/need for personal space
Long-distance intimacy

ICT affordances preferred
Synchronicity
Spontaneity
Immediacy
Turn-taking in real time

Negotiation

ICTs enable virtual co-presence
Migration = sacrifice
Distance as healthy
Distance promotes autonomy
Distance reduces conflict

Reflexivity/Reproduction

Resolution

Pragmatism

Co-presence will be rare

ICTs can substitute

Lack of resolution

Emotional longing
Emotional pain
Anger
Depression

Appendix G

Interview Guide for Returned Migrants in Jamaica

When did you first leave Jamaica to live in the USA?

Why did you leave Jamaica?

How long were you living there?

When did you come back to Jamaica?
    -Why?

In any average year, what country do you live in most of the time?
    -How long do you stay there?

Where are most of the people that you're in regular contact with?

Do you have anyone that you are very close to who lives outside of the country where you spend most of the time in any one year?
    -Can you refer me to that person?

In an average month how often do you communicate with this person?
    -Does he/she contact you more often than you contact this person?

Which is the main communication methods you use most often?
    -Why?

Do you use Facebook/Skype/Twitter/Google Chat/Facetime?
    -How often in say a week?

Do you have a landline or mobile phone?
    -How do you use each of them?

What types of things do you talk about with him/her?

Do you ever have any disagreements when you talk to each other?
    -If so, how did you resolve these?

Are there any other subjects that you might find difficult or uncomfortable to talk about with him/her long distance or on the phone that I haven't mentioned?

Do you visit him/her in New York?

What does it feel like to have your close tie so far away?

Are there any times when you would really want to be close to him/her, or you feel that distance sharply?
	-When you really need to reach out to him/her, what do you do?

Moving to a somewhat different subject now. How have advances in technology over the years changed the way that you connect with family or other close ties overseas?
	-From when you first left Jamaica, how is it different compared to now?

When you think about your friendship with your close tie do you think it would have been different if you were a man/woman and not a woman/man?

Tell me a little more about your experience when you first left Jamaica and went to New York?

How do you think being a man/woman affected your migration experience in New York?

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself:

How would you describe your ethnic group?

	-How old are you?

	-Do you have children?

	-What's your highest level of education?

	-What kind of work do you do now?

Do you have any other comments about anything we have spoken about today?

Thank you so much for your time.

Appendix H

Interview Guide for Immigrants in New York City

When did you first leave Jamaica to live in the USA?

Why did you leave Jamaica?

How long have you lived here?

In any average year, what country do you live in most of the time?
  -How long do you stay there?

Where are most of the people that you're in regular contact with?

Do you have anyone that you are very close to who lives outside of the country where you spend most of the time in any one year?
  -Can you refer me to that person?

In an average month how often do you communicate with this person?
  -Does he/she contact you more often than you contact this person?

Which is the main communication methods you use most often?
  -Why?

Do you use Facebook/Skype/Twitter/Google Chat/Facetime?
  -How often in say a week?

Do you have a landline or mobile?
  -How do you use each of them?

What types of things do you talk about with him/her?

Do you ever have any disagreements when you talk to each other?
  -If so, how did you resolve these?

Are there any other subjects that you might find difficult or uncomfortable to talk about with him/her long distance or on the phone that I haven't mentioned?

Do you visit him/her in Jamaica?

What does it feel like to have your close tie so far away?

Are there any times when you would really want to be close to him/her, or you feel that distance sharply?
  -When you really need to reach out to him/her, what do you do?

Moving to a somewhat different subject now. How have advances in technology over the years changed the way that you connect with family or other close ties overseas?
-From when you first left Jamaica, how is it different compared to now?

When you think about your friendship with your close tie do you think it would have been different if you were a man/woman and not a woman/man?

Tell me a little more about your experience when you first left Jamaica and went to New York?

How do you think being a man/woman affected your migration experience in New York?

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself:

-How would you describe your ethnic group?

-How old are you?

-Do you have children?

-What's your highest level of education?

-What kind of work do you do now?

Do you have any other comments about anything we have spoken about today?

Thank you so much for your time.

Appendix I

Interview Guide for Non Immigrant Jamaicans

Respondent_____ said that you were the person that she was most often in touch with in Jamaica. In an average month how often do you talk with him/her?

In any average year, what country do you live in most of the time?
        -How long do you stay there?

Where are most of the people that you're in regular contact with?

Which is the main communication methods you use most to communicate with your close tie in New York often?
        -Why?

Do you use Facebook/Skype/Twitter/Google Chat/Facetime?
        -How often in say a week?

Do you have a landline or mobile?
        -How do you use each of them?

What types of things do you talk about with your close tie?

Do you ever have any disagreements when you talk to each other?
        -If so, how did you resolve these?

Are there any other subjects that you might find difficult or uncomfortable to talk about with him/her long distance or on the phone that I haven't mentioned?

Do you visit him/her in New York?

What does it feel like to have your close tie so far away?

Are there any times when you would really want to be close to him/her, or you feel that distance sharply?
        -When you really need to reach out to him/her, what do you do?

Moving to a somewhat different subject now. How have advances in technology over the years changed the way that you connect with family or other close ties overseas?

When you think about your friendship with your close tie do you think it would have been different if you were a man/woman and not a woman/man?

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself:

-How would you describe your ethnic group?

-How old are you?

-Do you have children?

-What's your highest level of education?
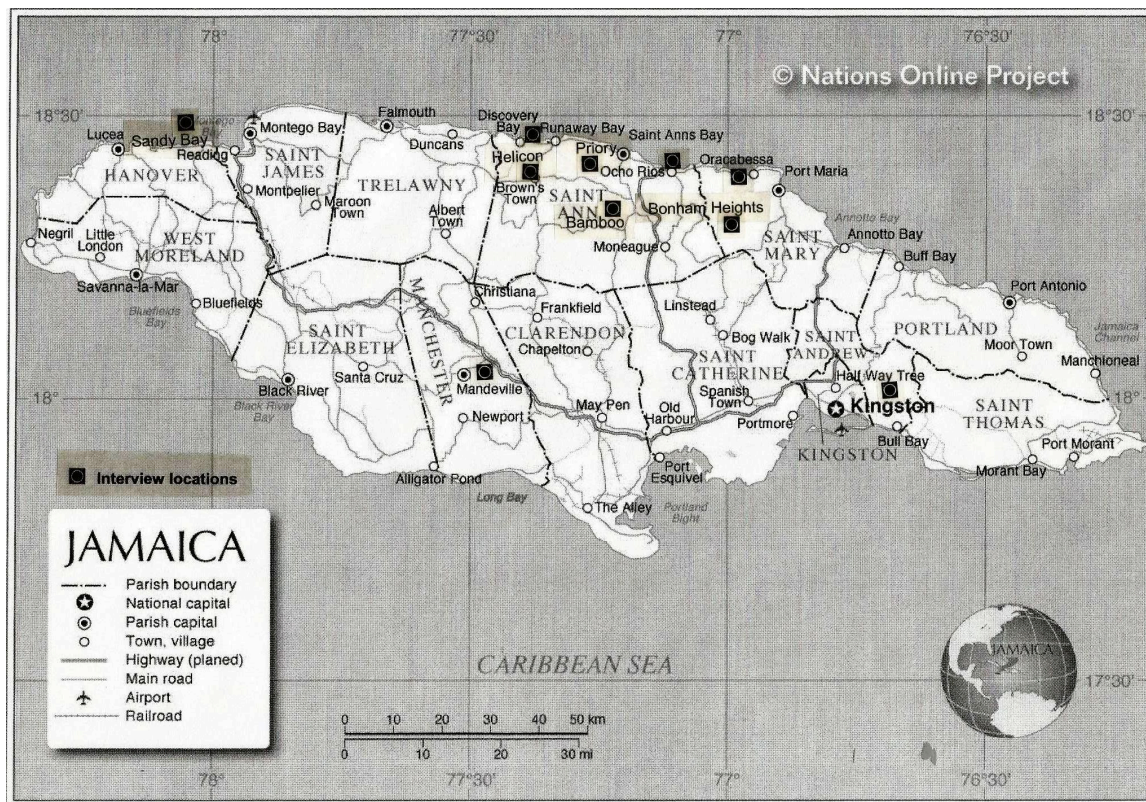
-What kind of work do you do now?

Do you have any other comments about anything we have spoken about today?

Thank you so much for your time.

Illustration 1

Map of Jamaica with Interview Locations
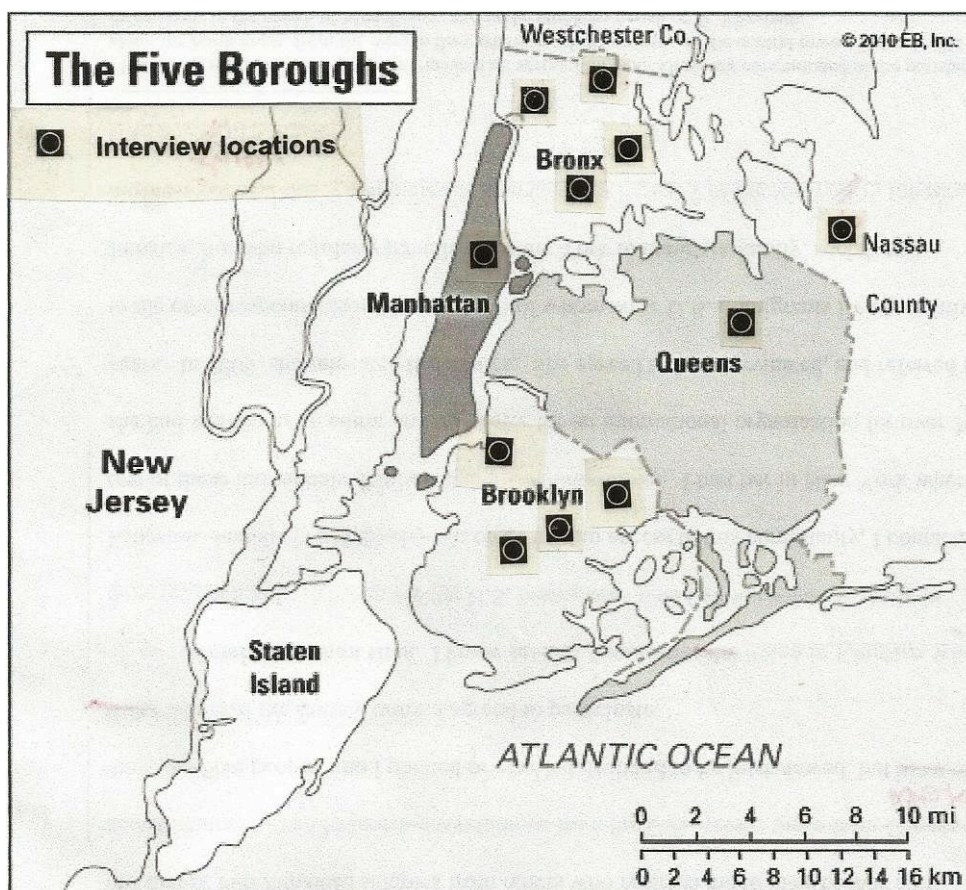
■ Interview locations

Retrieved from:
http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/jamaica-administrative-map.htm

Illustration 2

Map of New York City with Interview Locations

Retrieved from:
http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/art-166363/The-five-boroughs-of-New-York-City