

Jun-2016

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Recommended Citation

Baldwin, Andrea Natasha and Mortley, Natasha K. (2016). Reassessing Caribbean Migration: Love, Power and (Re) Building in the Diaspora. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(3), 164-176.
Available at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol17/iss3/14>

Reassessing Caribbean Migration: Love, Power and (Re) Building in the Diaspora

By Andrea Natasha Baldwin¹ and Natasha K. Mortley²

Abstract

Traditional research has framed Caribbean migration as a socio-economic issue including discourses on limited resources, brain drain, remittances, and diaspora/transnational connection to, or longing for home. This narrative usually presents migration as having a destabilizing effect on Caribbean families, households and communities, more specifically the impacts on the relationships of working class women who migrate leaving behind children, spouses and other dependents because of a lack of opportunities in Caribbean. This paper proposes an alternative view of migration as a source/manifestation of women's power, where women, as active agents within the migration process, in fact contribute to re building relationships, families and kinship and social networks. This paper is largely theoretical and puts forward a model which the authors plan to use to carry out future research on the lived experiences of Caribbean women, as well as a framework of analysis for other researchers. The authors thus carry out an examination of the migration literature which speaks to the lives of Caribbean female migrants, both in the region as well as those who now make up the Caribbean diaspora. We offer a critique of the existing literature on Caribbean migration and propose a reassessment of migration using a methodological framework entitled *Intimate Cultural Love Power*, developed by one of the authors, to examine love, power and migration.

Keywords: Caribbean, Diaspora, Migration, Women and Migration, Transnationalism, Migrant networks.

Introduction

The magnitude of Caribbean migration has had a tremendous impact on many Caribbean island states (Segal, 1987). Large-scale migration from the region has traditionally been theorized from an economic or socio-political perspective (McElory & Klaus de Albuquerque, 1990; Nurse, 2004; Thomas-Hope et al. 2009), which cites limited employment opportunities, economic hardships and political struggles as the main motivating factors for migration. Research has largely

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focused on understanding the effect that this out migration has had on Caribbean economies through issues such as brain drain and remittances.

In terms of migration's social impact on Caribbean families and communities, traditionally it has been theorized as having a destabilizing effect. The first major wave of out migration from the region in the immediate post slavery period included men who went to work on banana/sugar estates or the Panama Canal and Railways and left behind their families. Women then began migrating and soon outnumbered men in some Caribbean countries. These women migrated in search of employment and educational opportunities to advance themselves and better support their families. While some went to make a benchmark and eventually sent for their families, there were others who left behind spouses, children and other kin. The Caribbean family in response to various migration waves has had to adopt several survival strategies, but the migration discourse has generally tended to focus on negative impacts including broken homes, relationships and impacts on children, especially 'barrel children' (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009).

Some attention has been given to the migration of Jamaican women to the US. For example, Fox, in her 2010 ethnography of gender roles in rural Jamaica argues that the migration of women to fill domestic roles in the hotel industry in the US impacts the division of labour by requiring men to take on women's domestic responsibilities and places women migrants in the powerful position of productive earners sustaining the family at home via remittances. Her arguments therefore usher in new gender dynamics that to some extent positively feminize men in the migration discourse.

A glaring flaw in the classical structural argument is the treatment of migration as a sex-undifferentiated phenomenon. Yet, there are reasons -empirical and theoretical- to believe that structural factors impact differentially on men and women's decisions to migrate (Ellis et al., 1996). Important among these are structural differences in labour markets, national immigration policies, differing ideologies about male and female roles in society and changes in the nature of housework (Chaney, 1985; Kofman et al., 2000). Further, men and women experience migration differently. Caribbean migration has shown that women do migration in their own right and not only as appendages of men (Mortley, 2009). Previous reductionist approaches failed to recognize the complex and central role that gender plays in the migration decision-making process (Chant & Radcliffe, 1992; Morokvastic, 1983). Migration decisions of women cannot be explained without consideration of the history and current state of gender norms and gender relations (Mortley, 2009).

In addition, Caribbean migrants are moving for a wide range of complex reasons and the traditional, unilateral push/pull theory has become archaic. With the increase in world travel, use of technology and greater individual choices, migration is no longer characterized as a one-time movement but rather as a circular movement of people, goods, services, knowledge and information. Migrants constantly return home for short visits and maintain transnational ties with home countries.

Our theoretical shift away from traditional conceptualizations includes a perspective that incorporates and responds to the above developments. This reassessment needs to be informed by and highlight the migrants' agency, power, deliberateness and decision-making in the migration process, and explore more thoroughly the multiple roles that migrants play within the context of evolving global economies, labour markets and transnationalism.

This paper presents an initial theoretical exploration of such a reassessment of migration to include issues of agency, the creativity and the alienation of migrants in this circular and transnational movement of people and knowledge. We specifically examine the decision of

Caribbean women to migrate and offer a more robust explanation of this process by framing the discourse in a way that is no longer solely focused on the economics of migration as the motive and the reward. We do so by positing that love and the power that love has are drivers that influence women's migration decisions, and by framing migration as a method women use to care for those they love, as well as a method of self-care. Identifying love and how it creates agency in the migration process, we believe, will contribute to a better understanding of past, current and future migration among Caribbean women.

The purpose of this paper therefore, is to focus specifically on conceptualizing migration as a movement which is (not only symptomatic of a deep manifestation of the internalization of cultural gender relations by Caribbean women but) motivated by love and undertaken as a method of caring by Caribbean women who learn to love in a very gender specific way (Baldwin, 2014). To aid this conceptualization we have coined the term *love power migration*. This term is used to define migration as an act or manifestation of women's caring. The paper thus seeks to present a different view of migration, one that contributes to and builds upon the aforementioned migration scholarship on the region. While this paper is theoretical in nature, we will demonstrate how the love incubated in the social and cultural context of Caribbean gender relations can be the underlying motivation for migration of Caribbean women, and how this can be simultaneously empowering and oppressive/alienating not only for them but for their families. We also find it essential to show how the concept of *love power migration* is bound up in the concept of Caribbeanness. The Caribbean according to Stuart Hall is "the first, the original and the purest diaspora" (Hall, 2001, p.28). It is the culture, ideologies and pressures of this region that prepare women to utilize methods to survive and transcend this creolized space and hence the process of migration must be understood as a wholly Caribbean act. According to Bénéitez-Rojo (1996) "the Caribbean flows outward past the limits of its own sea with a vengeance" (3). This statement signifies that the very decision and act of migrating is an act of Caribbeanness because to be Caribbean is to be globally resourceful and unbound. In that way migrating women's sense of themselves could be theorized as fundamentally tied to the Caribbean region in a way that also transcends the region and connects it to the diaspora.

We believe that a scholarly discourse about this type of female agency as significant to the migration process and linked to the concept of Caribbeanness is necessary for the creation of a set of migratory feminist discourses explicitly linking Caribbean feminisms in the region to the diaspora. Making visible the role of women's agency in movements "out" of the region allows these women's narratives to make their way back to the region through Caribbean feminist theorizing, thus contributing to a more nuanced thinking about Caribbean gender role transformation.

To accomplish the above, we utilize Anna Jónasdóttir's (1994) theory of political sexuality and Eudine Barriteau's (2004) theorizing of Caribbean gender systems. We examine how within their relationships, Caribbean women who are socialized to care for their families and loved ones, migrate to take advantage of several opportunities, including work and career opportunities, professional advancement, education or reunification, as a means of providing such care. The paper also contends that *love power migration* can be embarked upon as a method of self-care and can therefore be manifested in the forging of new relationships and networks, the foundation for building and rebuilding in the diaspora which both impacts and is impacted by the reconstruction of relationships and creation of new networks within a vibrant transnational space.

Women in Caribbean Migration

In the migration literature, the study of women in international migration has traditionally been a neglected issue. When women were included in writings, there was a tendency on the part of scholars to portray women as mere functionaries whose role basically was determined by male needs. The term 'migrant' in the early writings and empirical research of the 1950s to the early 1970s carried a masculine connotation (Pessar, 1986). Male bias in the literature derived from the view that it was the male migrant who went out to seek economic opportunities abroad and left a dependent wife to her domestic duties in the home or was later joined by that dependent or trailing wife and or children (Stahl, 1988).

To understand this view, it is useful to consider the theoretical assumptions that guided much of migration scholarship of that period. Most scholars were then influenced by neo-classical theory where those individuals with the ability to project themselves into the role of 'Western man' headed off to the cities where the benefits of modern life could be attained (Lewis, cited in Mahler, 1999).

Again, this view of the male migrant has been buttressed by the dominant and influential Western ideology of the male breadwinner and the dependent female. This has been a powerful norm in Western industrial society and is rooted in women's dual productive and reproductive roles (Safa, 1995). Even when women are employed, it is assumed that they are to be responsible for domestic chores and childcare while male responsibilities in the household are minimized in favour of their primary role as breadwinner or provider. This view/myth has been transmitted and has proliferated throughout the developing world and more specifically throughout the migration literature. It has sustained the view that the woman migrant is a dependent person, an associational mover, rather than an independent migrant herself (Belan, 1988). Female migrants were therefore assigned to the status of 'dependent' whether this dependency was real or perceived.

While it might have been the case that men dominated migration flows in the initial stages of migration from the region, this no longer obtains today. While the largest wave of emigrants, mostly male, went to help build the Panama Canal from 1880-1914, by the 1960s women began migrating independently, at a similar rate as men and even surpassed them in some Caribbean countries.

Emigrating women in the 1960s included both professional and working class women with their movement being affected by the global job market, that is, their movement fluctuated according to changing labour markets overseas and the availability of jobs both at home and abroad (Momsen, 1992). For example, Shepherd (1998), contends that after the completion of the Panama Canal, male migration dropped and female migration rose as the growth of the tourist industry in the Caribbean, especially in the US Virgin Islands, created a demand for female workers. Female dominance of migration flows to the United States, for example, reflected the economic restructuring in the United States and the growth of female intensive industries, particularly in service, health care, microelectronics and the apparel industries (Sassen, 1984, 1998).

Today, women outnumber men in migration flows from the region. Once a male dominated phenomenon, women have now taken over, constituting for example, 55 percent of the migrants from Nevis between 1970 and 1980 (Olwig, 1993). Today's immigrants to New York City are more likely to arrive in family units especially if they are refugees (Bogen, 1987), but if they do arrive alone, it is often the woman who comes first and who then sends for the rest of her family (Chaney, 1982; Barrett, 1989). For Jamaica, the largest English speaking Caribbean country, Bolles (1981) points out that women represented 58 percent of immigrants to the United States between 1962 and 1976. In a study of migration's impacts in Jamaica (2010), Thomas-Hope et al. using

household survey data, found that in the two years prior to the study women were dominating migration outflows due to labour demands in destination countries.

Not only do women play a significant role in the present migration flow in terms of numbers, but they also play a significant role in the resettlement of their spouses, children and other relatives. This role has been enhanced by the fact that women also play a major part in the formation and maintenance of social networks, which bind communities together and facilitate the entry, adjustment and adaptation of later migrants. Barrow (1996) notes that several recent investigations of family in the Caribbean have identified female dominated kinship networks, often extending abroad to incorporate migrant ties. These networks are created and maintained by women as adaptive strategies for survival in circumstances of poverty and deprivation. Further, these networks come to function as causes of migration in themselves because they lower the costs and risks of migration and increase its expected returns (Massey et al., 1993).

Today women migrate in significant numbers, their experiences of migration and work, their creation of immigrant communities and transnational links and networks, provide information and links for future migration of other women in home societies, thus intensifying the flow of female migration. Women continue to be significant players in international migration, both in terms of statistics and as major actors in the process of migration.

In light of empirical studies showing women's agency and decision making in the migration process, by the 1980s the male bias in migration studies began to change (Mortley, 2009). This change was also brought about as developments in Caribbean feminist scholarship and women's studies programmes prompted scholars and policy makers to focus attention on female migrants. The significant role played by women in the migration process brings to bear the fact that in order for international migration to be fully understood, female visibility has to be adequately appreciated and factored into the literature. Otherwise, studies of international migration will remain severely incapacitated and only tell half the story.

Reassessing, refocusing, reframing the Migration Discourse

After decades of neglect and invisibility, women are now in the migration literature. In attempting to remedy the androcentrism that has prevailed in the literature, we must not however reverse the bias by focusing exclusively on women. A more nuanced understanding of Caribbean migration requires a reframing of the migration discourse in such a way that it focuses on gender rather than a men or women only approach. Reconceptualization also calls for an approach that appreciates the complexity of gender socialization and the often subconscious programming and resulting impact of gender ideologies on Caribbean men and women. In this respect, when examining migration, there is need to emphasize the combined importance of issues such as gender and power relations, economic inequalities, policy, social change, and agency.

We posit that migrants are not unwitting pawns in the process of migration but do exercise power and autonomy in the migration process. Therefore, while we understand that there exists economic and social push/pull factors that influence migration decisions, we also recognize the decision making process and the agency required in order to migrate. This is not to say that the concept of agency has not been included in the scholarship. Paule Marshall (1960) pays homage to the Barbadian immigrant women of her mother's generation and her representation of the Barbadian immigrant community reflects the central role that women played in the production of Caribbean identity in the US. For these immigrants from Barbados, language was therapy for the tribulations they endured as invisible citizens of a new land—invisible because black, female, and

foreign. However this conceptualization of women was not common in the early literature and further we argue that Caribbean women's agency is linked to love, power and broader gender dynamics, which are a constitutive aspect of the social, economic and cultural features that structure migration and specifically the migration decisions of women.

As a part of our reassessment thesis, we also put forth that although some Caribbean women may leave behind broken homes and relationships when they migrate, they are simultaneously operating within a constant process of rebuilding and establishing new relationships. This rebuilding of relationships and networks is important to constructing a sense of empowerment and self-care, even in the face of otherwise alienating circumstances.

Love and Power as Impetus for Migration Decisions

Love, herein defined as “a sensuous capacity and a specific creative force expressed in relational practice ... [and] organized in a specific process called sexuality” (Jónasdóttir, 1994), is a powerful socially and culturally constructed resource which can be used as a force of domination and subordination in intimate relations. This definition of love provides a context in which we can possibly understand the motivations of Caribbean women and their insistence on embracing traditional roles as caregiver. It also offers a possible explanation as to why Caribbean women have in the past, currently, and will in the future leave all that is familiar and migrate to foreign lands as a means of providing care for their love ones.

As mentioned previously in this paper, migration has generally been viewed as a public action ignoring the importance of understanding the private motives and intimate decisions involved. Love provides a way of thinking through, framing and answering questions of power and decision making, specific to the migration of women in intimate love relationships. Such a frame also shows that the very public act of migrating is connected and interconnected with the very private decision to do so. While understanding the politics and economics of migration is important, the personal decision and motivation to do so must also be examined for its own potentially unique contribution to the migration discourse.

The Theory of Political Sexuality

In many contemporary societies much like the Caribbean, generally “women and men are seen as formally/legally equal individuals ... almost all adult women are fully or partly employed ... there is a high proportion of well-educated women, and ... welfare state arrangements, which obviously benefit women, are relatively well developed” (Jónasdóttir, 1994, p. 1). To explain how love operates in these societies, Icelandic feminist Anna Jónasdóttir developed a sex/gender theory called political sexuality where she places the concept of love as power into a theoretical frame. Using this frame she explains that love has two main elements, care and erotic ecstasy. She theorises that in heterosexual love relations which are institutionalised in contemporary society, care and ecstasy find themselves in continuous opposition. What this means, is that women “are ‘forced’ to commit themselves to loving care” and “[i]n the normal case ... a woman is ‘forced’ in her relationship with a man to contribute more caring than he is, and on the whole to love in a way that he is not” (Jónasdóttir, 1994, p.107).

To further explain how the above works, Jónasdóttir contends that the historical materialist process as theorized by Marx is not limited to the economy but also encompasses how the mind and body are formed. She focuses specifically on “society’s socioeconomic processes: production

and reproduction, and the position of women in these processes and how adult masculinity and femininity as different role sets are constructed by ideological powers” (Jónasdóttir, 1994, p. 20). By doing so she acknowledges sexual love as an exploitable capacity essential to the production and reproduction of society. This means that labour would lose its position as the sole materialist conception of history and the “concepts of ‘love’ and ‘love power’ would be of immediate interest for the development of historical materialism more generally” (Jónasdóttir, 2008, p. 65). Jónasdóttir argues that all that is material is not economic in that the things obtained through labour are not life’s only and total “prime want” (p. 97). Since there are other prime wants, “love, and not only labour, creates people/human social existence under conditions that can be called materialist” (Jónasdóttir, 2008, p. 64). If therefore, “people produce society and make history by means of love that is, by practicing and using/consuming love power, then labour loses its absolute position” (Jónasdóttir, 2008, p. 64). It is the use and expression of this love power in certain social relations, for example heterosexual love relations, that results in the development of ideologies that govern how they are to be expressed between men and women.

By theorizing that love can produce materialist condition for human social existence, Jónasdóttir holds up love to be a crucial component to how people produce society and make history. Similar then to Marx’s theory of labour power, materialist human social existence can be produced by practicing and using/consuming love power (Jónasdóttir, 2008). If this is so, then our focus on migration (and other ways in which societies are produced and history made) as mainly an economic/labour issue needs to be reassessed, and we need to consider love and love power as a crucial component of examining this social phenomenon. We need to consider the use and expression of love power in heterosexual love relations and whether this use and expression, which according to Jónasdóttir, forces women in their relationships with men to contribute more caring and to love in a way that men do not, might be an impetus to women’s decision to migrate.

This theorizing is necessary not only because it can assist us in better understanding Caribbean women’s decisions to migrate, but also because it deals directly with people not as a class of people or simply just as groups of men and women. Rather, the theory considers individuals as they relate to each other directly, in culturally specific ways. Our investigation of migration is therefore no longer limited to a class of labour producing women and other factors that cannot escape the economic/labour dichotomy. Jónasdóttir states that when men and women conduct relationships, they do so not only as labour producing individuals but as people with feelings and emotions that can produce actions, as sexual beings. Therefore in human relations, actions and feelings work together, which implies “not only that the practice of sexuality and love is about emotional experience but also that it generates cognitive reason and a readiness to act” (Jónasdóttir 1994, p. 57). Therefore, love power becomes that “creative and alienable, practical human capacity, used by people to act on one another’s and one’s own human material” (Jónasdóttir 1994, p. 80) which is essential to the production and reproduction of society. Just as the economic system that produces the things we need for existence has an independent feature, so too does the sex/gender system. Both of these processes are sustained by unequal power relationships and both are political (Jónasdóttir 2008).

Love power, Caribbean Gender Systems

Jónasdóttir’s work offers a new direction and perspective for conceptualizing and understanding the migration decisions of Caribbean women. The manifestation of love power as theorized by Jónasdóttir has already been applied by Caribbean feminists who have for example

explained how a culturally specific love power can result in women in the Caribbean taking on more of the care work in the relationship than men (Baldwin, 2012). This is despite the fact that over the decades, according to Caribbean feminist theorist Eudine Barriteau, women in the Caribbean have been able to achieve substantial material gains.

In her work on Caribbean gender systems, Barriteau distinguishes between what she calls the material dimensions of gender and the ideological dimensions (Barriteau, 2006). These dimensions expose how individuals create gender identities and that it is the social expectations and personal constructs of gender identities that form the core of the gender ideologies within a particular society. In Anglophone Caribbean society specifically, although material relations of gender have improved significantly for Caribbean women, the ideological relations of gender have not (Barriteau, 2004). Therefore women still believe that they must perform the care in the home, are expected to assume the responsibility for the care of children, the elderly and less fortunate relatives, and to explore economic survival strategies in times of economic crisis when existing state welfare allocations are cut. Furthermore, to do so, they are more likely than men to use money designated for their personal spending to boost collective expenditure on food and family needs. According to Douglass (1992) this is all done while the woman carefully ensures that her spouse/partner feels in charge of the household and family. As the primary caretaker of their relationship she endeavours to make it thrive. Douglass states of Jamaican women for example, that one of their duties is to pay attention to their husbands so that he will not take an outside woman (Douglass, 1992). From this perspective the ideological relations of gender are presently at their worst for Caribbean women. While Caribbean states deserve credit for guaranteeing equality of access to basic resources, gender justice is still a distant goal (Barriteau, 2001).

The current state of Caribbean gender systems therefore creates a climate where love power in heterosexual relationships and as defined by Jónasdóttir produce inequalities within these relationships. It is not the habit of ideologies, especially those steeped in patriarchy, to be overt and blatant. They are very subtle because they are built on a sense of consensus or the idea that the actions which they generate are for the common good of all in society. Therefore, love power operates to alienate women when women enjoy caring for their loved ones even though they may dislike the tasks that caring involves, but see them as the way that they show love and which is different from the way men show love (Baldwin, 2014).

According to the above argument, this way of negotiating in the family is not only a product of Caribbean gender ideology but is expected from women who love men. This negotiation is especially evident for professional middle class women in the Anglophone Caribbean who are defined by Baldwin as “women who, first, have been able to successfully translate their special knowledge and skills into social and economic rewards and, second, have come to occupy the intermediate position between the elite and the working poor” (Baldwin, 2012). For these women, the culturally specific type of love power existing in the region, results in a very gender unjust situation as it “dictates the way love is given, shown and received differently by men and by women and how gendered love results in the subordination of women in the home” (Baldwin, 2012). In her work Baldwin draws on the theorizing of several Caribbean feminist who demonstrate that throughout the history of the Caribbean, women have consistently defined themselves in terms of their family and, regardless of class or race, continue to place the welfare of the ones whom they love before their own (Baldwin, 2012). This is not to suggest that women do not receive satisfaction from doing so, but to show up the inequality in love relationships. Exposing this inequality, demonstrates the paradoxical nature of emotions in the roles women assume in the home and the work they voluntarily perform for family members. Gender is, like

race and class, a “hierarchical structure of opportunity and oppression as well as an affective structure of identity and cohesion, and families are one of many institutional settings in which these structures become [a] lived experience”, that is struggled through every day (Marx Ferree, 1990). Baldwin therefore suggests that women, although they maintain a level of agency in their relationships of love, deciding what they will do and under what circumstances, generally voluntarily give up their love power. She therefore agrees with Jónasdóttir that love power can be both alienating and creative.

In intimate relationships between men and women therefore, detecting that “moral content, the emotional effects, and the appraisal of values involved in social life, is crucial to understanding the inner workings of decision making therein (Douglas, 1992). Women learn how to show love culturally and “[i]n social processes, including ideological processes, thought, practice, and sentiments come into play” (Douglas, 1992). This cultural love is taught through socialisation at home and at school, and education and religion have become major factors in defining women’s status and the roles that they play in Caribbean society (Ellis, 2003). The ideal of spiritual love was extended to family relations, and as the demarcation between men's and women's work reduces the bonds of shared business, the connection of family members increased through intangible love (Young, 2003).

Love power and the migration of Caribbean women

Within heterosexual relationships in the Caribbean, love is expressed differently by the two genders. The different roles of men and women in relationships reflect their broader roles within the family. Girls are taught from an early age strategies to ensure their survival and that of their families, whether a male is present or not. At the same time they are also taught that it is not only desirable but important to have a male partner and that in the male-female relationship, the man is dominant and the woman is not free to do as she wishes but must defer to her mate (Douglass, 1992). This is not merely a cognitive process, meaning that it is not the mere mental processing of information and application of knowledge, but also includes what Douglass (1992) refers to as sentiments. In the Caribbean context, Baldwin refers to this process as *intimate cultural love*. *Intimate cultural love* is the selfless way individuals, especially women, think about and interact with those they love – specifically, the way in which they put others’ needs before their own, the love power exchanged/surrendered to do so, and the meaning and value of such action (Baldwin, 2012). Just like ideologies, this way of loving can be alienating but can also be contested so that a dominant, new way of cultural loving can occur over time. Hence, this love also possesses a creative element.

Understanding love and love power as crucial to the way women interact in their relationships with men and how love power is surrendered by women taking on more of the care work in these relationships, has several implications for understanding the migration of Caribbean women. A woman’s migration decision should not be reduced solely to economic necessity. A woman who is in a relationship and/or has a family and who decides to migrate may do so not only because of the politics of labor and the push/ pull of gaining a measure of economic power/reward, but also due to the politics of love and the push/ pull of creating or sustaining love through care, and the power this has to drive a person to act in creative even though alienating ways.

For example, in the past women have migrated to explore economic survival strategies in times of job cuts or when existing state welfare allocations disappear. When we move beyond the strict labor/economic assessment of migration, we get a deeper understanding of why women (as

oppose to men) may feel more compelled to use migration as a mechanism through which they can provide and care for their families, even when they might not particularly enjoy being away from their loved ones or enjoy the work which that type of caring involves. Just as we understand household and care work as a way in and through which women show their love even while disliking the actual work involved, we need to see migration as the mechanism through which women can also show their love even when they do not enjoy the work it entails, or the loneliness of being away from home. This *love power migration* must be understood as simultaneous creative and alienating where women have for years come up with creative ways through migration to care for and support their families even while alienating their own wants and needs.

While this concept of *love power migration* has yet to be empirically tested, we believe that it can also help us to better explain what some have theorized as a longing for or reimagining of home by migrants or by those in the diaspora. When women migrate on the basis of love power, being away from home or caring from a distance may be so alienating that they romanticize home as part of their coping strategies.

For Caribbean migrant women who have greater options in the migration decision, their migration may be less alienating and may even be understood as a method of self-care through migration. Middle class women for instance, may be able to choose where they want to migrate and have more options regarding what they will do once they migrate. These women who earn more money, and have access to a wider range of resources and networks may experience migration in a less alienating way. Feelings of alienation might also be lessened as women utilize their greater access to resources and networks as a means of bridging cultures as well as recreating culture in the diaspora rather than, as with earlier waves of migration, simply engaging in the one-way transactions of caring from afar.

In the current context of globalization, and transnationalism, women create and foster transnational ties through a deeper cross border, multidimensional sharing of cultures and the use of technology as a connection to various homes and sites of women's caring and giving of love. As a result, Caribbean female migration is no longer a one-time movement but rather a complex and circular movement that builds on and recreates itself with each new movement both within and across borders. Women can build on and recreate *love power migration* through either new relationships, movement toward an existing relationship, or migrating and then fixing broken relationships. This also demonstrates that the building of relationships and networks is important to constructing a sense of empowerment even in the face of otherwise alienating circumstances, which is crucial to the migrant woman's success in caring for those she cares about.

As technology and cultures continue to transform so too is the current transnational way of caring expected to evolve. It is important for us as Caribbean feminist scholars to theorize these movements not only to connect the caring practises utilized by women within the region and in the diaspora but also to build a feminist scholarship that specifically demonstrate how experiences of the diaspora have a dynamic impact on gender transformation within the region. As women continue to access more resources and have access to more choices, it is anticipated that the way in which love is expressed will also undergo a transformation, revealing the creative power of love and resulting in gender equity in intimate relationships. *Love power migration* therefore, it is anticipated, may no longer be based on women's caring, and hence the alienating aspect may be replaced entirely by the creativity of loving within and across borders.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that given the current transnational nature of Caribbean migration flows, and the enhanced position and status of migrant women, the simple economic push/pull framework has become outdated. Caribbean women migrate for a range of reasons beyond just economic betterment. By utilizing the political sexuality frame, we show how love and the power which love holds to drive people to act is especially important when one considers why women who are socialized to care for those who they love, are motivated to undertake certain tasks, and to make certain decisions, including the decision to migrate. We have also demonstrated how the decision and agency in migratory practices of Caribbean women is bound up in notions of Caribbeanness, that is, what it means for women who grow up in the region to care both for those who they love and for themselves. This notion of Caribbeanness is connected to what Nettleford describes as the “awesome process of ‘creolisation’ with differing elements now coalescing, now separating, now being assimilated, now resisting, now counter-resisting in a dynamic contradictory relationship that produced agony but also new life” (2003) else/everywhere.

Although women have been making the decision to migrate for decades, we believe that the impetus of this decision for Caribbean women who love and show their love through caring has not been explored. In reassessing migration using this lens, we therefore can recognize migration as a tool of caring or a means through which women care. Such a reassessment offers new scholarship that can help to further develop Caribbean migration research and discourse.

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