

Successful Transnational Parenting by African Caribbean Mothers
who migrated to the United States:

**A Qualitative Study of English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrant Women's
Transnational Parenting Roles**

By

Christiana Best-Cummings

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City
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Abstract

Successful Transnational Parenting by African Caribbean Mothers who migrated to the United States: A Qualitative Study of English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrant Women's Transnational Parenting Roles

By

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Advisor: Michael Smith

This study explored the issue of transnational parenting to identify components of successful transnational parenting. Using a standardized open-ended interview guide, the researcher examined five main factors that impact the transnational experiences of these women: (1) benefits and consequences of migration; (2) contributions of support systems; (3) transnational parenting; (4) establishment of new family members-second family; and (5) the reunification process.

Twenty women were interviewed in the study. The findings indicated that transnational mothers migrated to the U.S. for several reasons. They migrate for financial reasons, educational opportunities for themselves and their children and because they have family relationships already established in the U.S.

These mothers were devastated by being separated from their children. They revealed that daily activities such as speaking to their children on the telephone is both a happy time for them but it also makes them sad because they relive the emotional pain of not being with their children.

Reunification is an event both the mothers and the children look forward to for years; however some mothers found the reunification process challenging. Issues of child care, balancing the emotional needs of their immigrant children and their husbands, paramour or their children born in the U.S as well as the children's adjustment in school were all new stressors that come with reunification.

Support from family, friends and employers contributed to the mothers' ability to be successful at transnational parenting. The research also revealed, transnational parents are intimately involved in the emotional as well as the financial care of their children. In addition to sending remittances to take care of their children, these mothers spent a great deal of time talking to their children on the telephone.

The greatest challenge for these women that was prevalent throughout the data from the interviews was the difficulty of not being able to have physical contact with their children.

PREFACE

Although transnational families benefit financially and educationally from the experience, the emotional cost of parenting from a distance for both the parents and the children is significant to say the least. The study focused on the mother's experiences, utilizing their recollection of their transnational experience. However, the author does not want to negate or minimize the experiences of the children engaged in transnational parenting. The poem below is a tribute to the children's experience.

This poem was written by a child engaged in transnational parenting. It describes the pain children experience when they have to leave their caretakers of many years, (who are often close relatives) to be reunited with their mothers in a foreign country such as the United States.

loss

She said she had no choice
 We had to leave.....
 I did not understand why I had to leave
 She said "pack your things"
 I looked away, speechless, motionless, I looked away

She said its time to go, say good bye to her
 I looked at her, tears in my eyes
 She grabbed my hand and said "I'm your mother one day you'll understand".
 I looked at her for an explanation
 She took me away to a strange **place**
 I left my heart back in that old space
 She said everything was going to be alright

But I knew nothing was going to be the same
 She could not understand why I hated her
 She took me away
 She broke my heart
 She didn't understand my world fell apart
 She didn't understand I left my heart
 She was a stranger to me, my mother was
 She did not understand that living with my grandmother was what life for me was about

This dissertation manuscript is dedicated to all the mothers, children and families worldwide engaged in transnational parenting. ***You are invisible no more.***

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I could not have completed the study and written the manuscript without the assistance of many people who have supported me in the eight years process.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION:

The goal of this study is to examine transnational parenting issues resulting from the migratory experience of African-Caribbean migrant mothers from English-speaking countries. This study builds on the researcher's (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004), previous study, which focused on the decision-making process of mothers with young children who planned to emigrate to the United States. That study highlighted the women's decision to leave their children and emigrate to the United States.

The current study continues to explore the migratory journey of English-speaking African Caribbean women with the focus on their transnational parenting experience. The transnational period include the time they are living and working in the United States, while their children are living with caretakers back home in their country of origin and includes the reunification period with their children. For the purpose of this study, transnational parenting is defined as where the mother, who in most cases is the head of household, is living in New York and the rest of the family, specifically her children are living in another country (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997; Salazar-Parrenas, R. 2001). Specifically this study will illuminate how African Caribbean Immigrant mothers (ACIM) sustain and preserve themselves and their parenting responsibilities to their children while participating on the transnational stage. In order to examine this phenomenon, the researcher focused on the following areas: (1) incentives for migrating-financial and otherwise; (2) parenting practices-as provider and nurturer; (3) the impact of the separation from their children; (4) the reunification

process; (5) the contribution and utilization of the informal support network; and (6) the ability to sustain two households.

The passing of the 1965 Hart-Celler Act reformed American immigration laws by removing racial quotas of the 1920s that favored northern and western Europeans and replaced it with a visa preference system, which placed all countries on an equal footing. As a result, migration opportunities to the United States became a reality worldwide for people of various ethnic and racial groups. The 1965 law, which was later amended several times, admitted immigrants based on family reunification and occupations needed in the United States, as well as refugees and asylees (Lobo, Salvo & Virgin of the New York City Department of City Planning, 1996).

The 1965 immigration reform law contributed to the globalization phenomenon because it increased the movement of people from countries worldwide to the United States, partly to find better employment opportunities (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001; Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). Although most migration occurs between developing countries, the flow of migrants to advanced economies is also commonplace (The International Monetary Fund, April 2000). International migration is a phenomenon that has far-reaching implications globally. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported 28.4 million foreign-born residents in the United States, representing 10.4 percent of the total U.S. population. Among the foreign born, 51 percent migrated from Latin America, which includes 34.5 percent from Central America, 9.9 percent from the Caribbean, and 6.6 percent from South America. An additional 15.3 percent

came from Europe, while 25.5 percent came from Asia and 8.1 percent migrated from other regions of the world (NYC Department of City Planning Population Division, 2004).

For the state of New York, the immigration population makes up a greater percentage of the total residential population than it does elsewhere in the United States. In 2000, foreign-born New Yorkers were at an all time high of 2.9 million, totaling 35.9 percent of the population (NYC Department of City Planning Population Division, 2004). The exact number of undocumented immigrants in New York City is not known, although the U. S. Department of Homeland Security formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimates that there are 540,000 undocumented immigrants in New York State, with the vast majority living in the city (Foner, 2001).

According to the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS) data, the foreign-born population in 2005 was 35.7 million. About one in eight persons in the United States was born in a foreign country as of 2005. Immigrant adults in the United States comprise of 15.1 percent, or one in six persons. California, New York, Texas and Florida continue to have the largest group of immigrants in the United States, with New York's foreign-born population being 3,997,268 or 21.4 percent of the population and a net growth of 4.7 percent.

Gender and Immigration:

Since the early 1990's there seems to have been a shift in the gender ratio of immigrants coming to New York City down to 92 male per 100 females from 98 male per 100 females in the 1980's (Salvo and Ortiz, 1992). This

change in the male to female gender ratio was in part because of the special provisions that were permitted in recent immigration laws, like “sixth preference”. Sixth preference is given to either skilled or unskilled workers in occupations where labor is in short supply. As a result, immigrants in nursing, and other health-related professions, which attracted a high number of female workers, (Donato, 1992; Houston, Kramer & Barrett, 1984) have increased. The “sixth preference” also allowed women who were unskilled to migrate to the United States to work as “live-in” domestic servants (Kasinitz and Verkerman, 2001).

The issue of migration and immigrants living here has structural and cultural implications for the United States and its citizens as well as for the developing countries and the governments and citizens of sending countries. One implication is transnational parenting; a phenomenon where a parent or head of household is living in one country and the rest of the family is living in another country (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997; Salazar-Parrenas, R. 2001).

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Transnational parenting occurs because citizens of developed countries recruit women from developing countries for low paying jobs without the benefit of a permanent visa (Chin, C. 1998) or their family members accompanying them. Serial migration is an integral part of the migratory journey and transnational experience of African Caribbean women around the world. It involves the parent(s) migrating to the new country first, with children following some time later (Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004; Gopaul-McNicol, 1998;

Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Serial migration persists because of the uncertainties associated with migration and the high economic costs associated with starting a life in a new country (Roth, 1970 as cited in Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, 2004).

The impact of serial migration on families can be devastating. Both parents and children experience the pain of separation and loss from family, friends and country. Separation and loss is experienced twice for immigrant children: first, when their mother leaves them and, later, when they leave to reunite with their mother and are separated from their caretaker, extended family members, friends and country of origin (Smith, Lalonde and Johnson (2004).

The length of separation of parent and child can range from three to ten years (Crawford-Brown, 2001). Some children are left as little as a few months, while others are left at significant stages when separation from a parent, especially the mother, can have devastating consequences (Freud, 1977; Winnicot, 1964). There has not been a great deal written about family separation as a result of migration from the immigrant mothers' perspective.

Most of the written work, from clinical studies originating in Great Britain and Canada, documents the negative impact of separation on family reunification (Burke, 1980; Gordon, 1964; Sewell-Coker, Hamilton-Collins, and Fein, 1985). When reunification occurs, the children may arrive together, or, in some instances, the children are brought over one at a time. Reunification of the entire family can take several years, especially if the process is accompanied by financial problems or immigration complications (Arnold, 1991). In response to serial migration of this kind, transnational families or multinational households

evolved both as a structural and cultural response (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avilla, 1997; Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1992; Chavez, 1992; Curry, 1988).

For many transnational families the ultimate goal is for the child to migrate to the United States and reunite with the mother (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Parent-child reunification is a time of excitement and joy for many of these families. Many of the immigrant children are able to ease into the family and find a comfortable place in the family, and as a result the family system attains a sense of stability. However, in many cases, the reunion is filled with problems (Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004).

Although children often are excited about the reunion, many of them describe it as associated with conflicting emotions and feelings of disorientation. At times, children report an inability to recognize the parent and often feel like they are meeting a stranger. For these reasons, reunification is often an ambivalent experience for children and youth (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2002).

One of the main reasons why reunification is problematic is because transnational mothers expect that upon arrival their children will be happy and excited, appreciative and obedient. However, when this does not occur, mothers feel disappointed, resentful and upset, and they view the child as unappreciative (Baptiste et al., 1997a; Christiansen et al., 1982; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Grahm & Meadow, 1967; Prince, 1968; Thrasher & Anderson, 1988). Frequently, however, parents are naïve about the extent to

which their children may be affected by the separation, loss and reunification process (Christiansen et al., 1982). Both parties can experience hurt and disappointment, leading to additional conflict in the mother-child relationship.

The role of women as caretakers and nurturer of their family is universal and has historically supported the foundation of the family in many cultures. The phenomenon of transnational parenting, where the mother travels to a foreign country leaving her children behind, challenges this cultural intervention because it is counter intuitive and creates a gap in the family structure. Despite this, more and more mothers from developing countries are opting to parent from a distance and establish transnational households. This study will shed light on six key components of transnational parenting, (1) why African Caribbean migrate-what's in it for them and their family; (2) how African Caribbean immigrant mothers parent from a distance; (3) how African Caribbean women cope with the issues of loss and separation from their children; (4) how they manage to support two households financially and emotionally; (5) how they utilize the support networks and (6) how they experience the reunification process.

Caribbean women's migratory journey to the United States is unlike most other traditional immigrant women who migrate together with their spouse and/or children. Instead their migratory journey consists of traveling by themselves, leaving both children and spouse behind in their country of origin, to work, find housing, and provide financial support to family members at home, including their extended family. In addition to traveling on their own and making a home in

the foreign country, they are also expected to continue to be the caretaker and nurturer of their children. Unlike their male counterparts, who are typically the first in their family to travel to the United States to find employment and set up a home and maintain their role as breadwinner and financial supporter of the family, Caribbean women are not just breadwinners and financial supporters of the family, but they are also expected to provide the emotional sustenance their family members need as well.

PURPOSE:

It is the goal of this study to identify the components of successful transnational parenting by African Caribbean immigrant mothers from English-Speaking countries, and in so doing the author will explore on a deeper level four themes that emerged both implicitly and explicitly in the earlier study by Best-Cummings & Gildner, (2004). These four themes are: (1) the rationalizations used by these mothers e.g. (financial rewards) to cope with the separation from their children; (2) the utilization of the support system both in the United States and their country of origin; (3) the ability to parent from a distance while having two family compositions; and (4) reunification process.

Research Questions:

1. How do financial incentives to emigrate to the U. S. offset African Caribbean immigrant mothers' struggle with separation from their children?
2. What contributions do support systems make to the success of the African Caribbean immigrant mother's transnational parenting roles?
3. How does the establishment of new families in the U. S. influence their transnational parenting roles?

4. What factors of the transnational parenting experience impact the success of reunification for African Caribbean mothers?

Hypotheses:

The five research questions above inform numerous hypotheses, like the following:

1. As financial incentives to emigrate rise, immigrant mothers are able to tolerate separation more successfully.
2. Social and economic supports enhance the success of immigrant mothers in maintaining their transnational families.
3. African Caribbean immigrant mothers decrease their success in transnational parenting when they establish new families in the United States.
4. Increased efforts at remaining connected lead to more active planning for reunification.

The contributions from this study will expand practitioners' understanding of immigrant mothers' transnational experience. For example, what keeps them going and not giving up in light of the long period of time they have between when they arrive in the host country and when they are able to send for their children (reunification)? In order to work effectively with these mothers during this phase and also at the time of reunification, practitioners have to understand what it means for these women to engage in transnational parenting and the significance of getting their children to join them in the United States, as well as the importance to the family of reunifying successfully, having sacrificed so much.

As immigrant families continue to migrate to the United States, and in particular to New York City, they will continue to find ways to bring their children

to join them. As they plan for reunification and adjust to their new home, teachers, social workers, residents, neighbors and leaders of the communities in which these families live and work, will benefit from understanding the issues these families bring with them and the nuances in which they experience life in the host country-how they adapt to the changes, how they cope with their growing pains and their overall adjustment process.

RATIONALE:

There are three factors motivating this study: First, is the growing number of immigrants that continue to migrate to New York City. According to the New York City Planning Department, 33 percent of Caribbean immigrants who migrate to the United States select New York City as their place of residence. Many of these immigrants, who migrate from countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados, select New York City because of economic opportunities available here for skilled and unskilled immigrants, documented and undocumented. Additionally, the historical presence of earlier immigrants from the region and established communities that provide and accommodate their ethnic needs also draw immigrants to New York City (Mahoney, 2002).

Salvo & Ortiz, (1992) provide an illustration of the number of non-Hispanic immigrants who migrated to the United States and are living in New York in the 1980's: 45 percent of all Jamaican immigrants live in New York as do 37 percent of all Haitians, 49 percent of all Trinidadians, 61 percent Barbadians and 70 percent of all Guyanese. While the total population of New York declined from

1970 to 1990, the foreign-born population grew immensely to the point where 28.2 percent of the city's population was foreign-born by 1990, with 46 percent of them arriving a decade earlier. The number of foreign-born in the city had grown to 2.4 million or 33 percent of the city total population by 1996. Despite the fact that the number of African Caribbean or West Indians is growing, it continues to remain invisible because its members are frequently lumped with African Americans or with immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean and by association, they are not prominent on the immigration agendas having unique needs.

In addition to being invisible on the political scene, African Caribbean mothers engaged in transnational parenting are invisible to many social scientists as well, even though in New York City they are visible in the parks, playgrounds and wealthy neighborhoods in Manhattan, Long Island, and Westchester. They are also not just working as nannies, cleaning ladies and caretakers but can be found working in various positions in organizations, and as entrepreneurs as well as attending colleges and universities. Although there are many studies of immigrant families from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, most of the studies from Latin America and the Caribbean focus on Mexicans. Very few studies focus on the English-speaking Caribbean, which is another reason why this group of people remains invisible to many social scientists. This study focuses on the English-speaking Caribbean, whose racial and linguistic differences result in their unique experiences when they migrate to the United States.

Second, the study is based on the researcher's knowledge, belief and understanding as a practitioner and a product of transnational parenting that immigrant children's well being is directly related to, and stems from, the well being of the mother or parent. It is the researcher's belief, based on over 10 years as a therapist working with this population and 20 years of experience as a caseworker, supervisor and administrator in the New York City Child Welfare System, that mothers who are successful in transnational parenting demonstrate particular qualities of resiliency. Understanding the mother's transnational experiences from a strengths-based perspective will provide practitioners, such as social workers, nurses, teachers, mental health professionals and psychologists with a wealth of information on how to work more successfully with these families at reunification, which is usually when they come in contact with the various social service systems.

Third, the large number of African Caribbean transnational parents living in New York City is diverse and its diversity needs to be understood to serve them effectively. The African Caribbean immigrant families living in New York City today fall into one of five groups who have all been impacted by or have at some point participated in transnational parenting either as a parent or a child. These categories are: (1) immigrant women parenting from a distance, awaiting reunification with their children; (2) immigrant women who have been reunified with their families after a long period of transnational existence; (3) immigrant women who are the adult children of transnational households and were left behind in their country of origin; (4) the children of immigrant women who were

born in the United States and were active participants of transnational households because they had older siblings living in another country; and (5) the children who are the second generation of transnational parents. The individuals and families of these various immigrant groups are impacted by the transnational parenting and to some degree continue to experience residual affects of the transnational experience. This study, however, focuses on women who have parented from a distance and are reunited with their children currently.

GAPS IN THE RESEARCH:

Contemporary Caribbean immigrants challenge scholarly and popular conceptions of who Blacks are in America. In the past many researchers and writers have made generalizations about an undifferentiated Black population. This belief promoted the ideology that ethnicity only referred to whites. However, today Caribbean immigrants, especially African Caribbean immigrants, are challenging the existing models of ethnic adaptation in race relations and research, (Hirschman, 1983).

In general, English-speaking Caribbean immigrants are not prominent on the immigrant research agenda for several reasons; (1) race; (2) language; and (3) region. Racially, English-speaking Caribbean people are of African descent, and they are often categorized in the United States as African Americans in major research and statistical reports, especially those done by governmental agencies and large businesses, because they are black. As a result of their race and similarities to African Americans they experience racism. As immigrants, they are distinguished from the African Americans. They experience anti-

immigrant prejudice; they are often viewed like other immigrant groups as unwanted foreigners. Additionally, for some immigrants their undocumented status forces them to live a secretive life, which takes them deeper into the subculture of the immigrant culture. Undocumented immigrants seek to avoid being caught by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security and its gatekeepers. At the same time, they are also pressured to find employment, which is especially difficult given their undocumented status, in order to maintain their transnational households. Therefore, for African Caribbeans, race and immigration status is a double threat.

Non-English speaking immigrants are given a great deal of attention because of the language barrier, whereas immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean get less attention. No attention is given to the subtleties of accents within the same language or the slight differences in the utilization of different words to mean the same thing within the same language. Teachers, schools and other social service institutions are sensitive to the issue of language for other immigrant groups, and a great deal of effort and money are spent on providing assistance to non-English speaking immigrants, while there is no mechanism in place to address those language related issues for African Caribbean immigrants.

While English is the official language of the area, there are very distinct differences from American English and even among the countries in the region. The language of the English-speaking Caribbean originated from a compilation of its historical past- English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese, in addition to

social class and culture (Mahoney, 2002). Many children from the English-Speaking Caribbean experience difficulties being understood by their teachers and peers due to their accents and expression of language (Sewell-Coker et al., 1985).

Regionally, when the world looks at immigrants from the Caribbean, Latinos outnumber all other groups in the Caribbean and, therefore, English-speaking Caribbean immigrants as well as the French and the Dutch get lumped in the Latino group, which is culturally and in some cases racially different from the African-Caribbean or West Indian group and, consequently they are again invisible. Invisibility persists due to these racial, linguistic and regional differences.

There is very little literature on African Caribbean immigrants' capacity as a group to migrate, adapt successfully to the host country and contribute as healthy citizens. The literature does not speak to Caribbean immigrants' strengths and resiliency; instead the primary focus is on their inability to acculturate successfully. This study will address this omission by looking at the women's ability to deal with the duality inherent in their roles-on the one hand they are vulnerable (immigration status and work environment) and on the other they are strong and demonstrate a certain level of toughness which contributes to them living and working here and parenting across nation-state boundaries.

The research literature on African Caribbean immigrants from English-speaking countries emphasizes pathology because the data collection was based on hospital records in the United Kingdom (Hemsi, 1967; Burke, 1976;

Rwegellera, 1977; Cochrane, 1977; Carpenter & Brockingtons, 1980; Dean et al, 1981; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1981; McGovern & Cope, 1987; Cochrane & Bal, 1987; Havey et al, 1990). Addressing these omissions in the research will add to the visibility of this group, illuminate their strengths, and provide a voice to the experiences of these women. In addition, practitioners will have an opportunity to understand the dynamics of their accomplishments and their failures as they attempt to juggle the competing demands in their lives: (1) providing financial support to two households, one in the United States and the other in their country of origin; and (2) balancing their obligations to their children, employers, spouse/lovers, and extended family members.

IMPACT ON POLICY AND PRACTICE:

The knowledge derived from these women's experiences can deepen practitioners' awareness and understanding of the growing African Caribbean immigrant population in this country and especially in New York City. Practitioners can use this knowledge to inform policy and practice in the fields of education, child welfare, and nursing/medicine, mental health, criminal justice, and the world of work where many of these women have a high participation rate and where many of their children and offspring eventually become active participants. Understanding the transnational parenting experience of English-speaking, African-Caribbean mothers and the approaches they use to adapt and cope with the experience will also inform practitioners' thinking about treatment strategies for these families.

The problems of immigrants' adjustment to the host country while maintaining two households have implications not only for the individuals themselves, but also for their families and communities in the host country and their countries of origin. For example, immigrants who have successfully adjusted to or assimilated into the host country tend to be more productive, and, as a result, they become less dependent on social services and less likely to engage in activities that are disruptive to the economic, social and political systems (Foner, 2001). Additionally, migrant groups who have successfully adjusted to their new country participate in activities that support the economic and political structure of their new home and their country of origin. This support has implications for community organizers as well as public policy makers (Foner, 2001; Waters, 1999).

SUMMARY:

African Caribbean Immigrants in the United States and particular in New York City are growing like most other immigrant groups, yet still in comparison to other groups of color they are not significant as a group compared to Asians and Latinos. Racially, and physically African Caribbean immigrants are similar to African Americans and as a result are often incorporated with African Americans in studies yet even with these major similarities there are cultural and ethnic differences that distinguish African Caribbean people from Africans and African Americans. As immigrants, African Caribbean immigrants share similar experiences common to other immigrant groups, but again African Caribbean immigrants vary from other immigrant groups due to language, they speak

English, however they do not speak American English and so that makes them different. Additionally, although they are from the same region as many Latinos, they are different racially and certainly there is a language barrier that separates them from Latinos from the Caribbean. Additionally, an even more significant difference for the African Caribbean is the fact that in many cases the woman, wife and or mother is the first one to migrate and as a result, she leaves her children and family behind to find work and support the family left in her country of origin. These differences distinguish the African Caribbean immigrant from other groups yet they remain invisible to policy makers, politicians and social scientists. The invisibility of this group, coupled with the unique phenomenon of transnational parenting that is a natural extension of mothers migrating and leaving their children behind impacts the reunification process between the mother and her children, which motivates this study.

Due to the sparse research on African Caribbean immigrants, it is the author's plan to address this omission and bring attention to the phenomena of transnational parenting, while celebrating their efforts, restoring their dignity and applauding their strengths. As this group increases, it is important for practitioners working with African Caribbean people and or West Indians to be sensitive to the groups' racial and ethnic heritage and the unique issues that accompany this population because of their migratory experience and the transnational parenting. This is a significant part of African Caribbean migrants' psyches that has far reaching implications on the lives of the immigrant and the family members both in the United States and in their country of origin,

especially during the reunification period. For the purpose of this paper the term African Caribbeans and West Indians are used interchangeable. Chapter two is written to provide some insight on the cultural beliefs and practices of African Caribbean people and in particular women and mothers. The purpose of which is to deepen the understanding of this group, which further explains their distinctiveness racially, culturally, ethnically, regionally, spiritually, historically, economically and linguistically from other groups.

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CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

African Caribbean immigrants as stated in the previous chapter are distinct and different from other immigrants because of issues of race, language, region, and their small numbers in comparison to the Latino population from the same region. This chapter provides background information on African Caribbean cultural practices that are specific to the region, its global location, and its cultural beliefs and practices. It provides a context for the research by describing the way African Caribbean people or West Indians are socialized as a people. This information will illuminate the women's experience in the areas of family and marital relationships, parenting style, education, religion and spirituality and child fostering- a cultural practice that was adopted in response to transnational parenting.

Definition and Location:

The Caribbean Islands stretch from the tip of Florida to the coast of South America. Situated on the Caribbean Plate, the area consists of more than 7,000 islands, islets, reefs and cays. The northernmost islands, called the Greater Antilles, are the largest ones and include Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. The smaller, eastern islands are called the Lesser Antilles and include Saint Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Barbados, Saint Vincent, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. Cultural distinctions based on language – English, Spanish, Dutch or French – are used to characterize the different islands. "Caribbean" is named after the Caribs, one of the dominant Amerindian or native groups in the region at the time when

the Europeans first arrived in the 15th century. “West Indies” originates from Christopher Columbus when he first reached the Americas and thought he had landed in India, meaning south and east Asia. For the purpose of this study, the participants examined are from the English-Speaking Caribbean countries are referred to as African-Caribbean or “West Indians.” This includes Jamaica and most of the islands from the Lesser Antilles (Waters, 1999).

English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrants:

There are three distinct waves of immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean (also referred to as Anglophone Caribbean and West Indians) immigrants to the United States (Phillip Kasinitz, 1992). The first wave began about 1900, peaked in the 1920’s and ended in the early 1930’s. While some of the immigrants from the first group were middle class, the large majority was working class. This group’s migration was motivated by the collapse of the Caribbean sugar industry on the international market. The second wave migration occurred between the late 1930’s and 1965. This was the smallest group and comprised primarily of young professionals who came on student visas and a result of being sponsored by family members of the first wave. The last wave consisted of the largest group of immigrants (between 1965 and present) who came as a direct result of the Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965, which eradicated the quota system, which favored European immigrants. An examination of Caribbean migration to the United States indicates that unlike the first and second waves, the third wave of immigrants

included a majority of women (Marshall, 1982) of different socioeconomic groups.

Domestic work has traditionally played a significant role in working class/unskilled immigrant women's entrée into the United States. A historical look at the role of domestic work for immigrants reveals that in the 1900's domestic work was dominated by immigrant women from European countries, such as Germany, Scandinavia, and Ireland (Diner, 1983). At the turn of the century, African American migrants from the South were also very heavily concentrated in domestic work in the North, while in the Southwest Mexican-American women filled the need for domestic workers in that part of the country. Today, a large number of domestic workers in New York City are from the English-speaking Caribbean (Foner, 1987).

The Economies of the Caribbean:

Historically, the Caribbean economy is linked by slavery of Africans and an indentured labor system, which occurred after slavery ended with laborers from India. The plantation economy is modeled after the plantations that were part of the Southern United States economy. However where the American plantation became integrated into a more dynamic economic system and was able to survive such as agriculture, manufacturing and scientific and technological development, the Caribbean plantation economy was non-dynamic and was not very responsive to change in the external world economy (Best & Levitt, 1968 as cited in ed. Knight & Palmer, 1989).

The Caribbean economy historically has relied on the sugar industry, however with the end of slavery this industry collapsed and efforts were made to expand into other agricultural products such as cocoa, coffee, citrus, and later bananas. In the twentieth century, some of the countries saw the growth of mineral such as bauxite (Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname), oil or natural gas (Trinidad and Tobago), and tourism (all Caribbean economies). Economic performance can be put into four categories: independent larger island states which are Cuba with a little over 11 million people; Dominican Republic with 7.5 million, Haiti with 8 million, and Jamaica with approximately 2 and 1/2 million; smaller independent island states such as Antigua and Barbuda has 81,000, the Bahamas has 323,000, Barbados has 270,000, Dominica has 72,000, Grenada has 107,000, St. Lucia has 166,000, St. Kitts and Nevis has 48,000, St. Vincent has 119,000, and Trinidad and Tobago with 1,305,000; mainland states such as Belize which has 292,000, Guyana with 751,000, and Suriname with 449,000; and twelve dependent territories. Seventy-six percent of the Caribbean population inhabits the four largest island states that together occupy nearly 28 percent of the region's landmass. The nine smaller island states account for 6.4 percent of the population and 3 percent of the land. The mainland countries contain 4 percent of the population and occupy 55 percent of the land. The twelve dependent territories have 13.9 percent of the population and 14.4 percent of the land (ed. Knight & Palmer, 1989 and the 2007 World Bank Report).

The Caribbean is filled with economic challenges: the collapse of the long-standing dependence on preferential agreements for traditional exports, adjusting to liberalization and globalization, which means the need to integrate into the world economy, WTO (World Trade Organization) and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA); steep unemployment especially with youths; growing crime; drugs, foreign debt burdens; and vulnerability to natural disasters brought on by climate change (ed. Knight & Palmer, 1989).

Family Relationships:

The West Indian family consists of the nuclear family, but it is also heavily inclusive of the extended family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles (Thrasher & Anderson, 1988; McNicol, 1993). Dechesnay (1986) suggested that, in addition to the patriarchal nuclear family life in Jamaica, a matrifocal or matriarchal family structure prevails as well. According to Dechesnay (1986) there is a relationship between family structure and class. In the upper class, the patriarchal nuclear family is the prevailing structure, while, in the lower class the pattern seems to be matriarchal. These varying family structures are present to some extent to many of the English-Speaking Caribbean counties.

Other data suggest that there is a close similarity between the family structure of Jamaicans in New York and those in Jamaica, West Indies. Grasmuck and Grosfoguel (1997) found that the number of female-headed households for Jamaicans in New York City is 33 percent and 34 percent on the island of Jamaica.

The roles of the West Indian as mother and wife are well defined as caretaker and nurturer. Although there has been an increase in the number of women working out of the home since 1980, the West Indian woman's primary responsibility continues to be child rearing. She is responsible for the care of the home, children and husband or paramour, including preparing meals, mending clothes and taking care of the husband's basic needs, not unlike some of the responsibilities his mother performed (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993).

Consequently, due to the nature of this arrangement, women assume power in a subtle covert way while overtly supporting their man's authority. This arrangement works as long as the woman does not challenge the man and as long as she is not expected to take on his responsibilities. However, due to the issues inherent in serial migration, which is motivated primarily by economic factors for this population, the woman is usually the first to leave and migrate, thereby becoming the breadwinner and replacing the man in his role and, at the same time, leaving her roles as caretaker and nurturer as well as her child rearing responsibilities. In many cases the role of nurturer and caretaker can be transferred to the father or a female caretaker but in many cases it is not possible because the caretaker in the country of origin will meet the physical needs of the child but may not be capable of or refuses to nurture the child in his/her care.

Parenting Style:

The main Caribbean parenting style is authoritarian, punitive, severe and sometimes abusive (Arnold, 1982; Leo-Rhynie, 1997; Sharpe, 1997; Baptiste et.

al, 1997; Smith, 1989). Parents expect that their children will respect and obey them at all times and those who do not comply are beaten with a stick, belt, shoe, a switch or the adult's hand (Leo-Rhynie, 1997). Children are punished harshly for lying, stealing, disobedience, and impoliteness and for refusing to do their chores (Barrow, 1996).

A study conducted by Baptiste, Hardy, & Lewis (1997), found that Caribbean families living in the United States were overrepresented in the child welfare system for abuse and neglect. These parents were confused and angry at the child welfare system's response to the way they discipline their children. As a result, they felt helpless as parents in the United States because they felt stripped of their parental authority. This is one of the main reasons that African Caribbean families seek professional counseling (Baptiste, Hardy, and Lewis, 1997).

A study by Sewell-Coker, Hamilton-Collins, and Fien (1985) in Hartford, Connecticut, with African Caribbean families, found that these parents were stricter by American standards, and placed a high value on obedience, compliance and respect and educational achievements for their children. Also, the researchers found that education was highly regarded and was a priority for their children.

Immigrant parents' interaction with their children during the transnational period as well as the way they continue to parent their children later following reunification is based on their cultural beliefs. Culture guides parents' beliefs and experiences about child discipline, behavior management, and control.

African Caribbean immigrants' parenting style is grounded in the old adage, "spare the rod and spoil the child." Respect, obedience, and interdependence are valued characteristics in children, rather than independence and self-reliance, which are characteristics that are valued in the United States. These factors intersect with and influence African Caribbean immigrants' transnational parenting and their children's adjustment to the U. S.

Education:

Education, like the work ethic, is highly valued by Caribbean people. West Indians view education as a way of achieving upward mobility (Sowell-Coker et al., 1985). In the West Indies many countries are not able to adequately educate all of their citizens for a variety of reasons: economic factors or lack of resources; difficult climatic conditions such as floods; and differences in learning styles (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). As a result when these children migrate they maybe at a disadvantage and many of them face challenges in the educational institutions in the United States. During the rainy season (between June and December), many rural communities in the West Indies experience floods, which block roads and prevent children from attending schools. Even more devastating are the hurricanes, such as Hurricane Ivan that devastated countries such as Grenada, Jamaica and many others in 2004. Additionally, economical hardship may cause a family to keep a child or children home from school to help the family farm the land or help care for siblings (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993).

Due to the scarcity of funds for public education, the average classroom in the West Indies has very basic equipment. It is deficient in the number of visual aids needed to stimulate students' learning experience. Equipments in science laboratories are limited and in many rural areas almost non-existent. Many children have to share textbooks. As a result, the average child's exposure to hands-on practical experience is far less than the average American child (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993).

In the United States the learning style of the students tends to be action-oriented and visual, whereas the learning style of the West Indian student is auditory and teacher-oriented. The West Indian student is trained to be attentive and obedient in the classroom all day. Given the differences in resources, experiences and teaching styles, they often have difficulty adjusting in the U.S. educational system. Often they are seen as less academically motivated because of these differences (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). Also, even though West Indians are English-speaking immigrants, many of them speak Creole (informal English) and this creates a barrier to the child's ability to integrate into the U. S. educational system. As a result of these issues, West Indian children are often misunderstood and are slotted for vocational schools. Given their notable educational disadvantages, and challenges they face integrating into the system, they are at high risk of dropping out of school. Not understanding these challenges and how to navigate the system to advocate for and support their children's education, West Indian parents push their children to succeed, causing undue pressure on them. This conflict between the parents'

high educational expectations and the child's struggles with the educational system contributes to the parent child conflict at the time of reunification (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993).

Religious Practices and Spirituality:

Religious faith and practice have always been important factors in the lives of West Indians. The most dominant religion in the Caribbean is Christianity, primarily Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal (Segal, 1995). However, there are many different sects and cultural adaptations of Christianity found in the islands. The variety in Christianity was influenced by the various groups of people who migrated to the region, each bringing with them, their own religious beliefs. The Spanish and French were devout Roman Catholics, while the British were Protestants. Irish immigrants from Britain brought Catholicism, the Dutch brought both Catholicism and Dutch Reform beliefs (ed. Knight and Palmer, 1989). Much later the indentured servitudes of Asians brought Hindu and Muslims to the region. There is also a small number of Jews as well. Another religious group which is not just based on religious beliefs but instead it is viewed as a religious-political movement is the Rastafarian. Rastafari, was developed in Jamaica in the early part of the twentieth century in response to neocolonialism and social and economic injustice. The Rastafari movement can be found today all over the Caribbean region (ed. Hillman, Thomas & D'Agostino, 2003).

However, one of the strongest religious influences for West Indians is the religions of the African slaves, which originated in West Africa and was merged

with European religious beliefs. The merging of the two evolved into Creole religions, which were hidden behind the cloak of Catholicism. This was not difficult to do because of the similarities between the African religions and Catholicism. Both Catholicism and the African religions combined elements of monotheism and polytheism. They both believed in one Supreme Being but where the Africans believe in deities, the Catholics worship saints, both act as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and humanity. The Creole religions believe in spirits. They believe that the spirits of the ancestors and that of other living entities can influence the lives of the living. They also believe that there can be contact between the human world and the spirit world, and can even be manifested as possessions – or via animal sacrifices. Some of the Creole religions are practiced still today and are interrupted in a variety of ways in different islands. In many of the French-Speaking islands it is known as Vodou (Voodoo), in the Spanish -Speaking countries as Santeria, in Brazil as Candomble and in the English-speaking countries as Obeah. A central theme in Creole religions is that Spirits and power can become centralized into one human being, a leader who can pass on knowledge to others. These leaders also officiate the rituals that are a part of the religion (ed. Hillman, Thomas & D'Agostino, 2003).

Today, even though West Indians of African heritage claim formal membership in a Christian church or sect, belief in the African spirit world is still widespread and is still alive in their minds. The idea of the Obeah man /woman, the “magical specialist” who has have power over the spirits and can use it for

good or bad is still very powerful figures in some communities (ed. Knight and Palmer, 1989).

Religion and spirituality continues to play a significant role in the lives of the African Caribbean culture. It is a crucial part of the family activity and is passed down from one generation to the other. Today, the church or congregation is a place of support, spiritual guidance and socialization for some, while it is a place of refuge for others (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). In addition to being a place of worship, the church is also a beacon for leadership roles such as deacon, trustee or members of a choir (Moore-Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 1982).

Child Fostering:

In the English-speaking Caribbean, child fostering (Soto, 1987) is a practice in which there is an informal transfer of parental rights from the mother or parent who has migrated to an extended family member or guardian, usually female, who is caring for the child in the country of origin during the mother's absence. Child fostering is a common cultural practice in West Indian communities and many African communities. It is not uncommon for children of large sibling groups to be sent to live with other extended family members, such as an aging aunt or grandparent, to assist with the care of that family member. This practice also is common among poor populations; parents who are unable to provide for their children sometimes transfer parental rights to extended family members, who may not have any children of their own but who are in a much better financial position to take care of children (Soto, 1987).

Today, child fostering is an integral part of transnationalism for women who have children and leave them in their country of origin. For women who have family members (mothers, sisters, uncles, fathers, cousins etc.) leaving their children behind with these relatives is usually the optimal choice. However, for the woman who does not have relatives to care for her children, fostering her children with friends and guardians are often her only available choice (Cummings & Gildner, 2004).

Serial Migration:

The migration pattern for Afro-Caribbean women to developed countries such as the United States occurs in a serial (Christiansen, Thormley-Brown, and Robinson, 1982) or “step-wise” manner (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2002). What is significant about serial migration from the Caribbean is the fact that the first parent to migrate is usually the mother, who leaves her children behind. This is especially true in single-parent families. In two-parent families, both parents migrate, leaving the children behind, or one parent migrates, usually the mother, later followed by her husband and then the children (Baptiste, Hardy, and Lewis, 1997b; Christiansen et al., 1982; Nicol, 1971). Prior to the Immigration Act of 1965, the migration pattern for African Caribbean immigrants were similar to the rest of the world with the male immigrant leading followed by spouse and children.

Summary:

Chapter two gives a close up look at the African Caribbean culture and specifically the roles and responsibilities of women, wives and mothers. It

also provides an overall context from which to understand the African Caribbean people, their values which are influenced by their cultural beliefs and practices both in the host country and in their country of origin. This information also provides the backdrop for how they (1) respond to the issue of separation from their children, (2) adapt to their transnational parenting roles, and (3) plan and cope with the stress of reunification.

Understanding a group's history and current cultural practices provide an inside perspective on their cultural and ethnic identity. It is even more significant to this group because like African Americans they identify racially as people of African Ancestry and experience racism similar to African Americans. However due to their migratory journey and previous settlement in the Caribbean they identify culturally and ethnically as African Caribbean. But due to the various languages spoken in this region, there are distinct differences. So consequently, the practices of the African Caribbean are shared practices with other groups, yet there are many differences as well. Areas such as parenting styles, family relationships, religious practices, education, child fostering, and serial migration have been influenced by their African heritage, colonialism, the economics of the developing world as well as the economics of the developed world.

The literature review in the next chapter provides a historical development of transnationalism, the different levels, the distinction and interrelatedness between transnationalism and globalization. Additionally, the literature discusses the significance of remittances, social networks and the role of African Caribbean mothers on the transnational stage both from the perspective of the

developed country which is referred to as being from above and from the developing country's perspective which is referred to as being from below. This is followed by a discussion on transnational parenting both from a structural and emotional perspective. In an effort to ground the issue of transnationalism and its varied components as well as transnational parenting, the author concludes the literature review by grounding it with a description of resiliency which is the theoretical framework used to explain the strength of African Caribbean immigrant women demonstrate irrespective of the challenges inherent in their transnational parenting and overall experience.

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CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review begins at the macro level and proceeds to the micro level. Its progressive style suggests there is movement from one level to the other, albeit non linearly. The literature on transnational parenting or long distance parenting or parenting from a distance begins with a definition and description of transnationalism, which is the social relationships immigrants engage in to stay, connected to their country of origin. It begins by defining transnationalism and delineating its components. African Caribbean women's transnational experience framed within a structural and global perspective is explained under the following headings: (1) Transnationalism and globalization; (2) transnationalism and the role of immigrant mothers; (3) transnational parenting: structural context; (4) transnational parenting: coping with the emotional stress; (5) transnational families; remittances and social networks. These topic headings are interrelated with the lives of African Caribbean immigrants as they parent their children from a distance. Transnationalism sets the context and provides a framework in which both the global and individual social actions of the developed and developing countries interact with each other to support the desires and goals of the mothers, their children, family members, communities and businesses in both the developed and developing countries. It also supports the phenomenon of transnational parenting (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997).

This chapter also traces the women's personal experiences with separation and loss issues associated with leaving their children behind.

Additionally, it details their experiences in their work environments related to their productive and reproductive labor. Issues of loss, particularly ambiguous loss, are discussed in regards to the mothers. The literature review concludes by grounding the women's transnational experience in the theoretical framework of resiliency.

TRANSNATIONALISM:

Transnationalism describes the processes immigrants use to build and maintain multifaceted social relationships that connect their country of origin and those of the host country. Today's migrants are maintaining familial, economic, cultural, and political relationships across international borders and by so doing they are combining their home and the host countries into one arena of social action (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994 as cited in Foner, 2001). Even though migrants live in the United States they are heavily involved in issues in their country of origin, which they continue to call home. The literature on transnationalism is filled with criticisms and debates of what transnationalism actually is or isn't. The following review of the literature illuminates the phenomenon of transnational parenting.

Transnationalism: Historical Perspective

The question of what's new and what's old about transnationalism is one that is frequently asked and has been addressed by Nina Glick-Schiller (1999), Nancy Foner (2000), and Alejandro Portes (2001). As this debate is conceptualized the issue of whether or not the activities of early European migrants' activities can be characterized as transnationalism was central to the

question of new and old. Transnationalism is an active part of previous immigrants' lives such as the Irish, Italian, Jews and Russians. Many of them kept in touch with their families by writing letters and sending money, participating in the political scene of their country of origin as well as traveling periodically to visit the homeland and in some instances by returning home altogether (Alejandro Portes et al., 1999). Many of the early migrants either migrated as a family or continued relations with extended members of the family who were left behind or the husband and father traveled first and continued to keep in touch with the wife and children who later migrated to the United States (Foner, 2001). While these activities of immigrants across national borders reinforced bonds between the host and communities at home, "they did not have the element of regularity, routine involvement and critical mass of contemporary transnationalism" (Alejandro Portes et al., 1999). At the same time there is a great deal about transnationalism that is new. Change in technology such as the telephone, television, video cameras, calling cards, cell phones and the Internet have altered the frequency and intensity in the way families communicate across international borders and therefore the transnational connections. Today the availability of telephones in rural areas in the homeland provides opportunities for family and friends to stay in touch with each other. Additionally the rates of telephone calls have become cheaper, allowing family members to engage more frequently in discussions that impact major decisions in each other's lives (Foner, 2001).

Where most immigrants before migrated with the goal of assimilating, today's immigrant's goal is dual citizenship. Dual nationality provided by political leaders in the country of origin has changed transnationalism from before because it provides immigrants with the opportunity to live and work in the United States and also to participate in the economic and political systems at home. Changes in transportation and communication, such as the use of airplanes for transportation, the frequency with which one is able to travel to and from their country, the ability to get to their destination quicker and the low cost of airfare, all have contributed to bringing about a change in transnationalism as we know it today. Previously many immigrants had to travel by ship, which made the trip long and difficult and when airplanes became available it was a very costly endeavor, so traveling back and forth was not a viable option for immigrants in the past. Today, it is a lot easier and less costly to travel back and forth; hence it is easier to keep the transnational interconnections (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blac, 1995). With the change and the lower cost of transportation, family members can travel home for emergencies and celebrations such as weddings (Foner, 2001).

New forms of transportation and communication in addition to new international forms of economic activity in the new global economy, have translated into increases in immigrants' participation in economic activities that involve crossing borders. It is much easier today for immigrants to manage businesses thousands of miles away, given the availability of "modern telecommunications, information technologies, and instantaneous money

transfers” (Foner, 2001). Many political leaders from the immigrants’ country of origin encourage them to participate repeatedly in economic development back home (Portes, 1996). New immigrants are involved in the politics of their home country in many ways. Due to the technological advances and their dual citizenship, many of them can get on a plane and go home to vote in presidential elections. Political candidates from the Caribbean such as Grenada, Guyana, Barbados, Antigua and St. Vincent frequently attend fund raising activities in New York (Basch, 2001).

Advances in telecommunication and transportation, the new global economy, new laws and political arrangements of national governments all together contribute to a new form of transnational connections that is different in the ways immigrant groups from the past maintained connections to their homeland. Hence these are some of the new ways transnationalism is different from the past.

Levels of Transnationalism:

Transnationalism has undergone some further conceptual enhancement related to its levels, extents and impacts. Theorists have developed conceptual frameworks such as “Transnationalism from Above” and “Transnationalism from Below”. “Transnationalism from Above” is viewed from the perspective of globalization, whereas “Transnationalism from Below” is seen as involving everyday people who are not represented by interests of the state but by grassroots activities (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998,pp3-31). Alejandro Portes et. al. (1999) refined this typology by delineating actions into “low” and “high” degrees

of institutionalization (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999; p. 222). These levels were cross-tabulated against different types of transnational actions such as economic, political and social. Further refinement focused on the intensity of transnational activities, which was an attempt to distinguish transnational activities that occur once in a while from more frequent transnational activities. Guarnizo (2000) discussed the intensity of transnationalism by making a distinction between “core” and “expanded” transnationalism. Core transnationalism on an individual level is defined as those customary and frequent activities that are part of the individual’s life and occur quite often and have become part of their routine. Expanded transnationalism, on the other hand includes migrants’ occasional transnational activities (which tends to occur at particular historical junctures such as political crises or devastating disasters).

Transnationalism and Globalization:

Transnationalism and globalization are two related but different approaches to contemporary immigration. Transnational activities are those activities that tend to focus on social processes involving a particular migrant population and nation-states, while globalization tends to emphasize how economic, institutional, cultural and other changes at a global level reconfigure power, including the places of states in our world (Glick-Schiller, 1999; Sassen, 1998).

The globalization of the market economy has increased the demand for female workers from developing countries to supply low wage jobs in more developed countries such as the United States, like hotel housekeeping, service

and domestic work. African Caribbean women play an integral role in the global market economy and the transnational arena. These women's physical movement from the sending country to the United States along with the continued support of their transnational families and households embodies many of the features of globalization. They are involved in capital movement on a micro level through remittances, which include sending money home to support their families and their households; the serial nature of their migration and that of their children years later suggest that they are engaged in the movement of people; they engage in the social network which supports the migration and location of employment for emigrating friends and family, as well as sending material goods such as cell phones, televisions and computers home, which contributes to the spread of knowledge and cultural exchange. Although many of the women are not directly involved in trade, which is one of the factors of globalization, some women do get involved in entrepreneur activities which involve buying material goods cheaply and sending the merchandise home to family members to sell.

Transnationalism and Capital Expansion:

In addition to domestic work and housekeeping, some immigrants are engaged in entrepreneurial activities including some related to advances in technology that are provided by the economic opportunities of globalization. The demand for news and information, foods and cultural products from their home country is high for many of these immigrants' communities (Alejandro Portes et al., 1999). In New York City the African Caribbean communities that these

businesses operate in are the Flatbush area in Brooklyn, Wakefield in the Bronx, Harlem in Manhattan and Jamaica, Queens. These businesses include ethnic restaurants; small shops that supply foods, cultural products, and newspapers and magazines; beauty parlors; shipping companies that send barrels of goods home to family and children; and long distance telecommunications.

Remittances:

Remittances have become the most visible evidence and measuring stick for the ties connecting migrants with their societies of origin Guarnizo (2003). Remittances are migrant workers' earnings sent back from the country of employment to the country of origin.

Immigrant mothers play a major role in the economy both in the United States and in their country of origin. When they leave their children behind with relatives and other adults, it creates interplay between the caretaker and the mother as well as the economies between the host country and the country of origin. In exchange for caring for the children, the extended family members are paid in the form of remittances, either through cash or goods in addition to the money sent for the children's clothing and schooling and materials (Philpott, 1968 cited in Watkins-Owens, 2001).

Studies of the impact of remittances have shown that they are utilized for investment purposes in the senders' countries of origin in small businesses such as manufacturing and crafts companies, market halls, bakeries and transport agencies (Taylor, 1999; van Doorn, 2001 as cited in Vertovec, 2003). On the other hand, remittances have been shown to have the following negative

impacts: displace local jobs and incomes; induce consumption spending (primarily on foreign imports); inflate local prices of land, housing, and food; create disparity, envy between recipients and non-recipients; and create a culture of economic dependency (Vertovec, 2003).

Social Networks:

Almost all newly arrived immigrants to New York participate in a network made up of family members and/ or friends that help them adapt or acculturate to the new country and connect with jobs (Kasinitz cited in Foner, 2001). Social networking is a significant part of the African-Caribbean immigrant woman's experience (Watkins-Owens cited in Foner, 2001). In their country of origin these women participated in both a colonial and patriarchal society that dominated them on the basis of sex, class and color, while in New York they experienced discriminations based on race, sex, color and location/origin. As survivors, these women have found ways to adapt to the challenges and developed strategies that have framed their historical experiences that is used in their transnational experience. They are strategic, goal oriented, focused and practical. Migration to them is a means to an end, and together they are a great "human resource" in the Caribbean migrant communities (Watkins-Owens as cited in Foner, 2001).

Best-Cummings and Gildner (2004) described social network as the fourth of six steps involved in the pre-migratory stage of emigration found that networking is not just critical in the pre-migratory or decision-making stages, but

it is also an important part of the migration stage and later the acculturation and reunification stage.

Working women are essential to the formation and support of networks for both their male and female relatives, migrating women particularly depend on other women such as sisters, mothers, grandmother, friends and neighbors to help care for their children as well as other female friends to assist them with finding jobs and making social contacts so that the migration can become a reality. For example, Best-Cummings and Gildner (2004) work illustrates the point “My friend wrote and enclosed a letter from my sponsor who said she would give me a place to live, and pay me if I came to work for her.” (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004). The informal network at home often includes the person or family who will be fostering (caring for) the children. Together, the informal network in the U. S. provides support to the immigrant in various ways: advice about the relocation itself and its consequences, financial support, encouragement. At times when the extended family is not a viable option for child fostering, the informal network helps to find child care for the immigrant’s children who will be left behind. “My friends told me, ‘now that you are divorced, you don’t have anything to keep you here. Your kids will be fine.’ ‘They even helped pay for my airline ticket” (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004, p.96).

The informal networks, both in the U.S. and at home, are perhaps central in helping the woman cope with feelings of guilt and regret. “They told me that people left their children and travel all the time. All I had to do was send for my children when I got there” (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004, p.90).

Upon their arrival in the airport at JFK, these women are anxious to meet the relative or friend. The social network is even more critical at this period because its presence at the airport reassures these newly arrived immigrant women that they have in fact arrived successfully and will not be sent back home because the familiar face in the waiting area at the airport is there to take them to their new yet unfamiliar destination (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004).

After they have settled, the social network is also a refuge, a respite from the job and an asset to ongoing socialization of these women in the host country. "I sometimes go to my friends on weekends. I buy food that reminds me of home and we cook together. It makes me feel good." Another woman said, "When you work as a live-in, you have to work 24 hours a day. It is good to visit with my aunt and my friends on the weekends (Best-Cummings & Gildner, 2004, p.96)."

With access to telephones and computers, immigrants today speak frequently to their family and friends who are part of their network both in the host country and in their home of origin via cell phones and emails. One woman stated, "When I call my friends at home, they would tell me, 'your kids are fine. You can take care of your children better if you stay in America than if you come back. Stay and take care of yourself, so you can help your children.'" The use of social networks for the African-Caribbean immigrant woman is a survival tool that is strategic, goal-oriented and practical for dealing with the issues of transnational parenting. It is a valuable resource because it provides them with emotional support, financial support if needed as well as information and the

wherewithal to find employment and housing and knowledge of how to negotiate the challenges of the host country. In turn, when the woman becomes seasoned, after her children arrive, she then becomes the part of the social network that offers assistance to other new immigrants such as her family and friends both at home and in New York.

Transnationalism and the Role of Immigrant Mothers

African-Caribbean Immigrant women have historically made a significant contribution to global economy at great personal cost to themselves and their families (Watkins-Owens as cited in Foner, 2001). These women play a major role in the economy both in the United States and in their home countries. Being active participants in the job market in the United States and sending remittances home to take care of their children, who are being cared for by family, friends and guardians, engages them in activities that alter the fabric of their home of origin economically and culturally.

Migrant women are credited for their participation in social networks, which provide job referrals and support to newcomers, and as a result give them a high rate of participation in the labor market. In large cities such as New York and Los Angeles, the growth in professional employment among middle class native women creates a demand for low-wage, low-skilled jobs, which attract and are more accessible to immigrants than to native minorities (Sassen, 1988; Waldinger, 1996; Zhou, 1992; Portes & Stepick, 1993). The social networks that make it possible for the immigrant women to find employment also by default create ethnic “niches,” which are jobs that are saturated with the same ethnic

members. Consequently, the social networks can lock their members into low-paying jobs associated with racial prejudice and discrimination, leading employers to select immigrant women over native blacks (Waldinger, 1996).

Because these jobs are low-paying and have a large number of immigrants, it is easy to recruit immigrants initially. As a result they develop a reputation of doing these jobs well or having the expertise and are given opportunities by the larger populations thereby locking out other native groups. On the other hand, due to the fact that they have established themselves in that role they are not given opportunities in other fields that are higher paying.

Transnational Parenting:

When these mothers migrate and leave their children behind, they become transnational families because the family is split in two different parts of the world. As a result these mothers engage in a practice of “mothering from a distance”, which is an integral part of the Transnational experience and has emotional consequences for the mothers who leave and for the children who are left behind (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). The pain brought on by the separation creates feelings of helplessness, regret, and guilt for mothers, while the children feel vulnerable, lonely and insecure (Salazar-Parrenas, R. 2001). This phenomenon is quite different from the traditional “split households” of earlier immigrants such as Mexicans and Chinese, where the male parent migrated first leaving their wife and children behind and the women and children join them later. Transnational mothering, or parenting from a distance goes against the

belief system of the nurturing role of the mother and that of the West Indian family structure.

Many of the African Caribbean women engaged in transnational parenting are also ironically working in jobs that require their reproductive labor, caring for other people's children, and are expected to care for their own children as well (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Due to the demands of their jobs, they often are drained of the energy and resources needed to provide for their own families. Migrant women also are expected to provide emotional support and nurturance to their family members at home and also to those at work. An additional challenge facing these women is the geographic distance that separates them from their children, which makes it even more difficult to provide emotional care to their children. In many cases however, regular and frequent contact is maintained between parents and children through telephone calls and letters, as well as through financial and material support sent to the country of origin (Foner, 2001).

In spite of the frequent contact, however, immigrant mothers separated from their children experience a severe sense of loss. In response to the question "how do you feel leaving your children behind," a mother responded by saying "I left him when he was two years old. I bottled and brought the navel string (the umbilical cord) with me. Every time I feel lonely, discouraged, or discriminated against, I take it out and cry over it, knowing that this is the only reason I am here, to give him a better opportunity" (Rattray, 1983 cited in Crawford-Brown, 2002, p.229). Today's female-headed, transnational

households consist of women who bear responsibility for both the reproductive and productive forms of labor (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997 Salazar-Parrenas, 2001), whereas the traditional immigrant, their male processor who migrated to the United States for the purpose of work, otherwise known as productive labor had their wives at home caring for the children, otherwise known as reproductive or emotional labor (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997 Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

Emotional Labor:

Domestic workers are expected to be mother to two families, those they are attached to through employment and those they have an attachment to biologically, meaning their own offspring. They must be available to their employers as confidante and provide consolation, which drains many of these women of the energy and emotional support needed to provide for their own families with emotional care. Emotional labor indicates that women are expected to nurture the emotional well being of people at home and at work. When challenged with geographical distance, transnational mothers face an extra layer of complexity in providing emotional care to their children. Therefore West Indian mothers, especially those in female-headed households, are unable to provide their children with the emotional care they need and consequently their children are vulnerable to suffer from emotional neglect because even though parenting can be transferred to relatives, emotional care is not completely interchangeable from parent to caretaker (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

Transnational Parenting: The Structural Context

Globalization has created an economy that has increased the gap between the haves and the have-nots. For example, developed economies such as the United States and Europe have created a high demand for female workers in the labor market as professionals. Hence, more women in the United States and Europe are seeking higher education and are entering the job market as professionals. Consequently, this has created a demand for female workers in low-wage service labor such as hotel housekeeping and domestic work. The labor of the women from developing countries such as the West Indies is needed because of the growing professional population in developed countries, which includes those of women who are entering fields such as the law, finance, accounting and consulting services. The growth in these professional employments creates demand for low-wage, low-skilled, service jobs, which are more attractive and accessible to immigrants than native minorities, because of their eagerness to work these low wage jobs (Sassen, S. 1994).

The second structural issue is that access to the low-wage labor market is fraught with restrictions and constraints. These women have limited access into the market (Chin, C. 1998). Frequently members or citizens of the developed countries recruit them to work in low-wage jobs without the benefit of a permanent visa. Many of these women are given temporary visas for themselves and not their family, which separates them from their family members (Chin, C. 1987 as cited in Salazar-Parreras, 2001). Additionally, their visas do not allow them to travel back home to visit loved ones, so for years they

go without seeing their family. They have to cross a minefield in order to gain a permanent visa which allows them to work legally and to be reunited with family members--a long, exhausting journey that is filled with legal, financial and emotional costs. As a result, West Indian mothers out of necessity engage in transnational mothering.

Third, developed countries such as the United States, Canada and Europe restrict the integration of migrant West Indian workers because they want to keep some aspect of their economies a secure low-wage job market. Furthermore, developed countries can assure for their economies a supply of low-wage workers, and when the economy becomes sluggish they can easily send them back home (Salazar-Parrenas, R. 2001). This practice sends a message to West Indians that countries like the United States only want their production labor and not their reproduction labor further stimulating the growth of transnational families. Immigration reforms like the (1) Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act signed on April 24, 1996; and the (2) Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of September 30, 1996, which gave all-encompassing powers to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to determine admissions, deportation and detention of immigrants (including legal residents) who had committed crimes (Clark, V. 2004) adds greater impetus to the formation of transnational families.

As developed countries increase their need for immigrant women to ease the reproductive labor of privileged working women in developed countries, an international division of reproductive labor has been created. Under this

system, migrant domestic workers do the reproductive labor of privileged women in developed countries and due to structural restrictions have to leave their children behind. These migrant women in turn hire domestic workers in their country of origin to take care of their own children when family members are unable to do so or when their original childcare arrangements fail. As a result there is a formation of three tiers of mothering between middle class women in the developed countries like the United States, migrant domestic workers working in the United States who are engaged in transnational parenting and domestic workers in developing countries who are too poor to finance the costs of emigration, so they remain in the country of origin and work there caring for the children of the domestics in the United States (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

There are additional structural factors associated with transnationalism, which explain why some migrant mothers who give birth to children in this country choose to send their children back and for those children who were born in the country of origin, these immigrant mothers sometimes choose to leave them in their country of origin. The difference in the cost of living between developed and developing countries induce West Indian mothers to choose transnational households and by default parenting as a viable option. Given the cost of living in developing countries, it is more cost effective to pay for education, housing, childcare and clothing in their country of origin with the low income that transnational parents earned in developed countries, than it is to have their family with them. In many cases, migrant women are able to keep their family in a middle class lifestyle in their country of origin rather than

bringing them to live in cramped spaces and low income neighborhoods, which are often filled with crime. This can have severe ramifications for reunification and the disappointment the children bring when they are reunified at a later time.

Transnational parenting is also seen as a necessity because of anti-immigrant sentiments. Many mothers choose not to expose their children to the racial tensions and anti-immigrant feelings of people in the developed countries especially when their economies are slow. These structural forces contribute to the prolonged separation of migrant mothers and their family.

Transnational Parenting: Coping with the Emotional Stress:

According to Salazar-Parrenas (2001) transnational mothers cope with the emotional stress of transnational mothering including feelings of anxiety, helplessness, loss, guilt and loneliness, in three specific ways: the commodification of love; the repression of emotional strains; and the rationalization of distance. Commodification of love is where the mother overcompensates for her absence with material goods. Repression of emotional strains is where many women deny the emotional difficulties their children experience due to the separation, but they admit to their own emotional strains as a result to the separation. The rationalization of distance is where migrant mothers use regulated communication to ease distance such as letters, telephone calls etc. (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

Transnational Families: Role Reversal

Transnational families are considered “broken” because the foundation of this household is ruptured because it is contrary to traditional expectations of

cohabitation in the family (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001, p. 119). They do not adhere to the traditional division of labor in the family as well as the conventional socialization practices in the family. Traditionally, mothers are expected to take the lead in the family structure to provide nurturing, parental supervision and socialization of children. However, when there is a geographic distance such as in the case of transnational households, mothers are unable to be available to provide that role to their children. On the other hand men and fathers are expected to be the primary financial provider. However, in the case of transnational families the mother is the breadwinner and sometimes the sole financial provider for the family.

In many cases the husband is the one responsible for the reproducing labor of the family because they are the ones in the home caring for the children while the mother has migrated. This arrangement is in direct contrast to the traditional family structure. Hence, transnational families are in fact “broken” because it no longer fits the ideal patriarchal nuclear family model that many West Indian families adhere to. Transnational households enable the family to earn more than they would without it. However it is loaded with emotional difficulties for both the mothers and their children who are left behind in the West Indies (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

The pain of the loss of the immigrant mother who has left her children behind is unlike any other loss because it is unresolved. Unlike a death in the family where the surviving relatives mourn and bring some kind of closure to it, the loss of family as a result of migration, especially when the immigrant is

undocumented and cannot return to visit the family and home, the loss and therefore the grieving process can go on for a very long time without resolution.

AMBIGUOUS LOSS:

Ambiguous loss is characterized as frozen or unresolved grief, which is defined by Boss (1999) as incomplete or uncertain loss inherent in “uprooting” or migration. In her book, *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*, Boss (1999) states, “Of all the losses experienced in personal relationships, ambiguous loss is the most devastating because it remains unclear and indeterminate. If it’s not resolved, it has a physical and psychological impact on the family that may affect its offspring for generations to come. Personal and familial problems that stem from ambiguous loss have less to do with the psyches of those experiencing the loss than with external circumstances beyond their control that prevent them from completing the grieving process” (Boss, 1999, p. 5).

This theory is relevant to the African Caribbean women who are undocumented immigrants and who are unable to return to their country of origin for a visit after years of living in the U.S. because of their immigration status. Consequently, these individuals feel trapped and homesick at the same time. Ambiguous loss can be perceived in two different ways: (1) sensing loved ones as present when they are physically absent, as in the case of a child who is left behind and whose parent migrated to a foreign land; or a mother who is homesick for her children and (2) perceiving loved ones as absent when they are physically present, as in the case of a family member who is mentally ill.

These types of situations often make individuals feel helpless, leaving them vulnerable to depression, anxiety and relational conflicts (Lazarus, 1970 as cited in Boss).

Unclear Goodbyes and Psychological Absence:

An important aspect of ambiguous loss is the ability of the individual to say goodbye without knowing exactly what the period of separation will be. For many undocumented immigrant women in to the United States from the Caribbean, leaving and saying goodbye – without knowing when they will see their families again – is very difficult. For these women, loneliness is a constant. They miss their children, their mothers, sisters and other familiar surroundings. They also miss milestones in their children's lives, such as birthdays and graduations, as well as other significant events in the lives of the extended family members, such as marriages, childbirths, illnesses and deaths/funerals.

The issue of the unclear goodbyes also exists for those left behind, both children and their caretakers. They are affected because they do not know when, if ever, they will see their mothers or sisters or daughters again. These uncertainties can create a great deal of distress for families.

Psychological absence also is prevalent in immigrant families (Boss, 1999). Often the émigré parent is homesick, melancholy and preoccupied with loved ones in their country of origin. This phenomenon is common for immigrants who have not been able to adjust to life in the host country because they are undocumented and have to live on the fringe of the American society.

At the same time, they are unable to travel back home because of their immigration status. These women have left their children behind, but, at the same time, they may have children in the U.S. who are born here. In some cases, the woman is psychologically unavailable to the children who are living with her.

In my therapeutic work with African-Caribbean immigrants and knowledge of the African-Caribbean migration process first-hand, it is important to note some clear distinctions between the African Caribbean experience and Latina women's experience in the model described by Espin (1987). West Indian women are very involved in the decision-making process. Unlike Latino women, they usually are the initiators, suggesting the idea of migrating for a variety of reasons. Also another difference is that many African Caribbean immigrants are unable to return home. This issue is not only present in cases of refugees as suggested by Espin (1987), but also for immigrants who are undocumented, as are many African Caribbean immigrants. Undocumented immigrants cannot go home because they will not be able to return to the United States. Consequently, they are forced to separate permanently or indefinitely (Boss, 1999) from their countries of origin. These individuals live in constant fear of being caught and sent back by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Services, and, due to their status, they are also at risk of being oppressed and exploited by employers.

As part of the Acculturation phase, many immigrants decide, due to circumstances in the host country, not to return home. Reasons for this choice

may include separation from spouse in the country of origin; the death of loved ones at home; or a decision to marry a U.S. citizen and to have children in the host country. As a result, the immigrant may decide that he or she no longer wants to return to the country of origin and decides to adopt the host country as his or her home.

Another significant aspect of the Acculturation phase for West Indian mothers engaged in transnational mothering is the feeling of living in two worlds. On the one hand these women typically have begun the process of acculturation, such as employment, making new friends, going to school and attempting to change their immigration status from undocumented to legal resident. Yet due to their undocumented status, they are not able to totally acculturate in the host country because half of their life is in their country of origin. These discreet yet noteworthy factors are significant in the grieving and mourning process for the West Indian immigrant. The immigrant experiences them in the acculturation process as a loss or death. The literature shows that separation as a result of immigration is a traumatic experience that brings about feelings of loss, grief, guilt and somatic symptoms, which can impact the acculturation process as well as the immigrant's mental health (Espin 1987; Arredondo-Down 1981; and Bowlby 1961). The sense of loss that many of these women experience as a result of migration can negatively impact their ability to acculturate. Hence, many of them are at risk of acculturative stress.

RESILIENCY:

The research has shown that transnationalism has both a positive and negative impact on immigrant women as a group. On the one hand it provides financial incentives to the individual, families, communities and the nation state, while on the other, it creates separation between the immigrant parent and their children, which is an emotional burden for these women. In addition to issues of separation and loss, many of these immigrants experience cultural shock and as African Caribbean women they are frequently exposed to race based stressors in countries such as the United States, Canada and Europe which make them susceptible to stress. Individuals' response to stressors is an indication of survival.

Hence the need to understand resilience as it relates to African Caribbean Immigrant mothers. Resilient individuals have a collection of coping skills that help them to adapt to any situation. These coping skills provide them with the ability to handle stressful situations, and, in so doing they change stressors into manageable events that lead to out of control behaviors for others (Flach, 1988; Wagnild & Young, 1990). Resilient people see change as a part of life that is challenging yet doable (Colerick, 1985). Their perspective on life allows them to see situations as less stressful than their counterparts who are not resilient (Colerick, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Resilience was an implicit theme that emerged from the first study co-authored by the researcher, and it is also implied throughout the literature on transnational parenting. The researcher expects resilience to emerge as a

common personality characteristic among the mothers in the study. In the midst of their incredible experience of separation and loss of children, family and country, these women hold on to their dreams of reunification with their children, not giving up hope and bouncing back from difficult situations including the long, rigorous immigration process which is also financially burdensome. Given the adversity these women experience, they demonstrate amazing strengths.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RESILIENCY:

Resilience as a personality trait that mediates the harmful effects of stress and contributes to adaptation has been a topic of research for a number of years. Often resilience is recognized in individuals who are dealing with difficult and adverse situations, and have the ability to adapt and bounce back to their lives, avoiding potentially harmful effects such as mental illness or stress (Beardslee, 1989; Bebbington, Sturt, Tennant, & Hurry (1984); Byrne, et al., 1986; Caplan, 1990; Masten & O'Connor, 1989; O'Connell & Mayo, 1988; Rutter, 1985). Resilience refers to a dynamic process (Masten, 1994), "it is manifested competences in the context of significant challenges to adaptation or adversity" (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998, p. 206). Inherent in the definition are two very significant conditions: (1) exposure to major threat or severe adversity; and (2) positive adaptation in the face of assaults (Rutter, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992).

Most studies on resilience have historically looked at children rather than adults. These studies were designed to ascertain how children survived childhood adversities such as child abuse and neglect, alcoholic parents, and

devastating natural disasters while growing up free of psychiatric disorders (Byrne et al., 1986; Masten & O'Connor, 1989; Smith, Smoll, & Ptacek, 1990). Gordon defined resilience as: "the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances. These circumstances may include biological abnormalities or environmental obstacles. Further, the adverse circumstances may be chronic and consistent or severe and infrequent. To thrive, mature, and increase competence, a person must draw upon all of his or her resources: biological, psychological, and environmental" (Gordon, 1995. p. 239). There are multiple characteristics found in resilient people. However, there are five that seem to show up consistently across the life span. They are cognitive superiority, autonomy, androgyny, social competence, and internal locus of control (Werner, 1989a; Werner, 1990).

Characteristics of Resilience:

Cognitive superiority is an attribute of resiliency because resilient people display high intellectual enthusiasm and an inquisitive drive to understand (Murphy & Moriarty, 1976). They exhibit the ability to master tasks by taking the initiative to learn them and to complete them by themselves (Nelson-Le Gall and Jones, 1991).

Autonomy is having a sense of one's own identity and the capability to act independently and to exercise some control over one's own environment, including a sense of task mastery. It is also demonstrated in having a sense of purpose and a belief in a hopeful future, including goal direction, educational

aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, optimism and spiritual connectedness. (Werner, 1990)

Androgyny is demonstrating both male and female characteristics at the appropriate time. The ability to surpass one's typical gender role and display behaviors that corresponds to the opposite gender at the appropriate time makes one more resilient (Werner, 1989a).

Social Competence is the ability to be sensitive to other people's emotions. It includes qualities such as responsiveness, especially the ability to elicit positive responses from others; flexibility, including the ability to move between different cultures; empathy; communication skills; and a sense of humor. Problem-solving skills related to the ability to plan; to be resourceful in seeking help from others and to think critically, creatively, and reflectively" (Werner, 1990).

Internal Locus of control is related to resilience because people with internal locus of control believe that they have some control over their destiny and in general they believe they have some power over what happens to them (Garmezy and Rutter, 1983; Werner and Smith, 1982).

Elements of Resilience

In the twenty-five years or more that researchers have studied resiliency, they have found that there are three elements in addition to the person's disposition that increase the capacity of an individual to rise above and grow from a difficult experience: (1) Outside Supports; (2) Internal strengths and (3) Learned skills.

Outside Supports provide trusting relationships, resources that help a person feel safe, loved, and free to develop interests, character and talents. These supports start with the trusting relationship between a parent/caregiver and an infant, and as the child gets older they include other supportive adults and friends, like health professionals, educational leaders, religious groups and social services providers in the community. These adults not only give love and support to the child but they also expose him or her to small or large doses of adversity that develop and build resilience.

Inside strengths are what make up someone's personality. It is critical to know your strengths and use them the best way you can. Adult role models can teach these qualities to their children (Institute for Mental Health Initiative, 2006).

Learned Skills such as problem-solving skills and developing good relationships are also important components of resiliency. Examples of learned skills include being able to communicate well and express feelings; learning how to control the way you react when you are feeling angry or depressed; learning how to solve problems and ask for help. Learned skills are an asset to children, teenagers and adults in difficult times. Acquiring learned skills happens over a person's life span, but the more they are practiced, the more perfected one becomes at them (Institute for Mental Health Initiative, 2006).

A longitudinal study conducted by Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith (1992) with "the children of Kauai" revealed that even though these children experienced early medical distress, poverty, school problems, teen pregnancy or

arrest, they were able to persevere through adversity. A study of New Orleans school integration, by psychologist Robert Coles (1986) investigated the ego strength of African American children who survived the first, hostile years of racial integration.

When looking at the issue of family resiliency, families that participate in a daily routine, communicate well, participate in joint activities, and provide discipline fosters resilience (IMHI, 1991). Family unity (Murphy and Moriarty, 1976) and a quality home environment (Werner, 1989b) relate strongly to competence and resilience. Dunst, Trivette & Deal (1988) found that highlighting families' strengths contributes to a family's capacity for self help.

Many of the African Caribbean immigrant women who leave their children behind and spend years working towards reunification demonstrate the ability to be resilient. Their ability to adapt to a new, stressful and difficult environment demonstrates characteristics of resilient individuals. They display cognitive superiority through their ability to navigate the complex immigration system, many of them migrate here while being undocumented and manage to stay under the radar while working to support themselves and their family and at the same time navigating the immigration minefield to change from being undocumented to legal resident. This change in immigration status allows them to reunite with family members and provides them with the impetus to move out of the economic niche to a job in the mainstream should they choose to. If nothing else it removes the stress of living under the radar and at the same time it provides them with the ability to return home to visit family and friends, attend

familial celebrations such as weddings and less celebratory events such as funerals. They also demonstrate the ability to be autonomous by achieving their goals of supporting themselves and family while mapping out a way to be successful in the immigration maze that exists for them, given the new immigration laws that are even more restrictive.

Androgynous traits are common for these women because they engage in activities that are seen as typical of their male counterparts: many of them are heads of households or the financial provider for the families. They are also the first ones in the family to migrate to the United States, to prepare the way for the rest of the family. They engage in difficult decision-making processes of whether or not to leave their loved ones behind, specifically their young children and migrate to a foreign country, very different from their own (size, climate, culture, race, laws etc), knowing that because of their immigration status, reunification with their children and family is not promised, and most or all of the time when it will occur is uncertain. Yet these mothers continue to remain focused on their goals of maintaining their families and striving for reunification in the midst of adverse situations at work, at home and in their communities, which demonstrates their optimism and internal locus of control.

Furthermore, they exhibit social competence by demonstrating they are able to adapt to an environment where they are able to work with people who are very different from them racially, socioeconomically and culturally. Many of these women successfully live and thrive in their chosen country and frequently accomplish their goal of reunification with their children after years of

separation. These women embody the essence of resiliency. Their hard work and perseverance make it possible for them to accomplish their goal of reunification while modeling resiliency for their children, both in their country of origin and in the United States when reunification occurs.

Table one is a framework which describes some of the major themes found in the literature review on transnationalism and transnational parenting for African Caribbean immigrant mothers. The author adapted Alejandro Portes et., al. (1999) typology of transnationalism from 'above' and transnationalism from 'below', by simplifying it, so that transnationalism from 'above' means actions the migrant parent, immigrants, and the immigrant community engage in while living in the United States. Transnationalism from 'below' describes the activities of those that are left behind. These activities are categorized into four specific yet major themes for the immigrant (social network; remittances; separation and loss; and the economy). The author developed this framework by cross-referencing four themes from the perspective of three main participants in the transnational experience: (1) Transnational parenting viewed from the immigrant mothers' experience (transnationalism from above) and (transnationalism from below) which is the perspective of the children's who were left behind in their country or origin; (2) transnational families also from the perspectives of those family members living in the United States (above) and those living back in their country of origin (below); and (3) transnational communities from (above) meaning the African Caribbean communities in the United States and from (below) which are the communities in the migrant's country of origin. The result

of this schematic outline is a model that summarizes the most prevalent activities of the transnational experience as found in the literature review and the author's previous study on African Caribbean mothers.

TABLE 1: TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Transnational Actors	Social Network	Remittances	Separation & Loss	Global Economy
Transnational Parenting Mother Above United States	<p>Overall support</p> <p>Job Referral</p> <p>Temporary housing</p> <p>Respite from work</p>	<p>Financially support self and family members</p> <p>Send money home regularly</p> <p>Pay school tuition</p> <p>Send material goods to children and caretakers</p>	<p>Feeling sad and depressed</p> <p>Feeling regret for leaving children</p> <p>Feeling guilt, grief, isolated</p> <p>Feeling autonomous</p>	<p>Low wage labor</p> <p>Economic Niche</p> <p>Participation in U.S. economy</p> <p>Reproductive labor</p>
Transnational Parenting Children Below Country of origin	<p>Provide overall support to family</p> <p>Encourage mother to migrate to the United States</p> <p>Child fostering-provide child care</p> <p>Provide information & connections with mother and child</p>	<p>Enjoy middle-class status</p> <p>Receive financial support</p> <p>Receive food & material goods</p> <p>Receive assistance to build/repair homes</p> <p>Receive money for tuition</p>	<p>Feelings of abandonment</p> <p>Emotionally vulnerable to exploitation and abuse</p> <p>Vulnerable to abuse and neglect by caretakers</p> <p>Unclear goodbyes</p> <p>Unresolved grief</p>	<p>Standard of living improves</p> <p>Enjoy having access to material goods and services</p> <p>Sneakers Cell phones Computers Jeans</p>

Continuation of Table #1: Transnational Activities

<p>Transnational Families Above United States</p>	<p>Assist family members to migrate to the U. S. by providing housing, jobs, finances etc.</p> <p>Plan for Reunification of children by sharing resources (legal, & educational information) with each other</p>	<p>Financially support family in host country</p> <p>Continue to support family members in country of origin</p> <p>Balance financial responsibilities of family in U.S. with those at home.</p>	<p>Provide support to migrant by celebrating both U. S. and native holidays</p> <p>Migrant mother visits family and friends in the U S on weekends and holidays</p> <p>Living in two worlds</p>	<p>Low skilled jobs</p> <p>High participation in the Service Industry</p> <p>Job referral and resource</p> <p>High participation in U.S. economy</p>
<p>Transnational Families Below Country of origin</p>	<p>Provide continued support to migrant</p> <p>Caretaker for children awaiting reunification with parent(s)</p> <p>Caretaker for children born in U. S. and was sent to country of origin for various reasons</p>	<p>Continue to receive financial support to care for children, and extended family members in the Country of origin.</p> <p>Receive barrels filled with material goods and technology</p> <p>Receive money sent to pay bills, and purchase services</p>	<p>Continued provision of caretaking to children left behind or children born in the U.S.</p> <p>Dealing with children's acting out behaviors</p> <p>Gender role reversal in child care</p>	<p>High unemployment In country of origin</p> <p>Jobs without security and insurance</p> <p>Migrant mothers hire poor working women in country of origin to work as domestics to care for children at home</p>

Continuation of Table #1: Transnational Activities

<p>Transnational Communities “Above” United States</p>	<p>Cultural/ethnic familiarity Foods, news from home, celebrations</p> <p>High participation in the service industry</p> <p>Assist with socialization</p> <p>Provide support to new migrants from home</p> <p>Informally recruit new migrants</p>	<p>High participation in U.S. economy</p> <p>Purchase goods and services to send home from both African Caribbean communities and main stream American communities</p>	<p>Minimizing isolation</p> <p>Assist with acculturation process</p> <p>Try to get legal permanent resident status</p> <p>Dual nationality</p> <p>Participate in organizations that support the growth and development of ethnic group</p>	<p>Low wage market</p> <p>Temporary visas to work for the migrant mother but not her children.</p> <p>Cheap labor</p> <p>Economic Niche Active</p> <p>Purchasing goods and sending them back home</p>
<p>Transnational Communities “Below” Country of origin</p>	<p>Cultural exchange-usage of new technology to communicate with family in the U. S. Cell phones, telephones computers,</p> <p>Enjoy the utilization of electronic appliances</p>	<p>Remittances stimulates the economy</p> <p>Raises the cost of living of families and communities</p> <p>Community’s reliance on economic support</p>	<p>Provide respite for those migrants who are able to travel back home for family events and national celebrations</p> <p>Communicate with migrant to reassure her she made the right decision to migrate</p>	<p>Utilization of banks, building of homes, employing people to care for home</p> <p>Political leaders support women migrating they are source of income</p>

Summary:

Chapter three outlines a comprehensive review of the literature on transnational parenting, beginning with its foundation in transnationalism. A thorough description of the term transnationalism, begins with the debate of what's old and what's new; as well as the levels of transnationalism which view it from a global perspective (above) and from the perspective of everyday people (below). The literature review also distinguishes and clarifies the differences between transnationalism which are the activities and social processes of migrants and globalization which emphasizes economic, institutional, cultural and other changes at a global or structural level.

Further exploration of the literature revealed the significance of capital expansion, remittances, social networks, transnational parenting from the viewpoint of a structural/global context as well as an emotional point of view, and the issue of role reversal for transnational families. Additionally, the literature incorporates issues of separation and loss especially ambiguous loss which is specific to the loss undocumented immigrants experience because they are leaving family and country but they are uncertain if and when they will ever see their loved ones again. Unlike other immigrants who are able to travel back and forth between the host country and the country of origin, these immigrants are not able to do so. Yet, they are not able to grieve their loss completely because their loss is not like a death where the loved one is gone forever. They continue to communicate with their loved ones but are unable to reunite with them due to the nature of their immigration status. As a result, they experience unresolved

grief because their goodbyes are unclear because it is indefinite and not finite. The literature concludes by grounding the earlier part of the review in the theory of resilience. The literature on resilience is an attempt to explain these women's ability to survive the stress of living in the United States under very difficult circumstances (many as undocumented) or with members of their family being undocumented. Even with the stress of their immigration status, their low wages, their vulnerability to exploitation by employers and others, they manage to thrive and live healthy lives in the U. S., reuniting with their children years later.

Although the women in the study experienced a tremendous amount of pain, which are related to separation and loss of family, they continued to bounce back and thrive and therefore exhibit resiliency. The researcher will test the author's hypotheses of resiliency in the current study, by utilizing the 26-item resiliency scale. One of the hypothesis suggests that there is a correlation between (1) resiliency and successful transnational parenting. The first study explicitly revealed the significance of social networks in the lives of immigrant women; as a result, the researcher will also examine the significance of social support and successful transnational parenting in the current study. Social support as it relates to family, friends and employers will be explored in the current study through the utilization of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the interview guide.

An interview guide was designed to probe deeper into the women's transnational parenting experience to ascertain whether or not the three

additional hypotheses are true or not. These hypotheses suggest that there is a negative correlation between the success of transnational parenting and new family members in the host country because when ACIM has a new family in the host country meeting the needs of the new family distracts her from meeting the needs of the family in the country of origin. It also suggests that there is a positive association between reunification and staying connected as well as a positive association between financial incentives and tolerance for separation.

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CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

This study relied heavily upon grounded theory developed by (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 as cited in McCracken, 1988). Grounded theory is a detailed yet systematic intense review of the data which includes repeated reading of the data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of field notes, interviews, or other documents; by constant comparison, data are extensively collected, analyzed and coded, thus producing a well constructed theory. The focus of analysis is not merely on collecting or ordering a mass of data, but on organizing many ideas, which have emerged from analysis of the data (Strauss, 1987). Grounded Theory enables the researcher to take a comprehensive look at particular phenomena, with the purpose of discovery. It provides ways to define concepts, relationships among concepts and processes (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982), as well as provides a way for the researcher to look for patterns and themes. Grounded Theory also enables the researcher to collect, code, analyze data, and transcribed from taped interviews simultaneously.

The researcher, an African Caribbean, used interviews to secure answers to questions that reveal the transnational experience of African-Caribbean mothers from the English-Speaking Caribbean countries who migrated to New York alone within the last 20 years, left their children behind, and are now reunified with their children in the United States. The researcher used qualitative research methodology. The study consists of 20 respondents who are African Caribbean Immigrant women.

The study has a number of research questions and hypotheses which are listed below. The following are the four research questions and hypotheses:

Research Questions:

1. How do financial incentives to emigrate to the U. S. offset African Caribbean immigrant mothers' (ACIM) struggle with separation from their children?
2. What contributions do support systems make to the success of the African Caribbean immigrant mother's transnational parenting roles?
3. How does the establishment of new families in the U. S. influence their transnational parenting roles?
4. What factors of the transnational parenting experience impact the success of reunification for African Caribbean mothers?

Hypotheses:

The four research questions above inform numerous hypotheses, like the following:

1. As financial incentives to emigrate rise, immigrant mothers are able to tolerate separation more successfully.
2. Social and economic supports enhance the success of immigrant mothers in maintaining their transnational families.
3. African Caribbean immigrant mothers decrease their success in transnational parenting when they establish new families in the United States.
4. Increased efforts at remaining connected lead to more active planning for reunification.

Dependent Variables:

1. **Separation from Children:** African Caribbean Immigrant mothers leave their children behind in their country of origin and migrate to the United States to work. Oftentimes they are separated from their children for many years. Due to the long period of separation from their children, many of them rationalize the separation by believing it permits them to better provide for their children financially.

Specific Questions:

1. How would ACIM describe what it was like for them being separated from their children?
2. How did ACIM handle the separation?

◆ **Transnational Parenting**- When African Caribbean Immigrant mothers migrate and leave their children behind; they become transnational families because the family lives in two different parts of the world. As a result, these mothers engage in a practice of “mothering from a distance, otherwise known as transnational parenting.

III. **Successful Transnational Parenting** will be measured by mothers’ ability to demonstrate they were able to stay connected to their children and relatives, and they were able to provide for their children emotionally and financially. Ways of measuring successful transnational parenting include:

- ◆ ACIM kept in contact with their children monthly or more often.
- ◆ ACIM described parenting techniques that brought about effective change in their children’s undesirable behaviors (culturally sensitive).
- ◆ ACIM provided monthly financial support to their children and the maintenance of the household at home.
- ◆ ACIM had a successful relationship with the caretaker of their children
- ◆ ACIM were knowledgeable of their children’s school performance and attendance.
- ◆ ACIM were able to comfort their children when they were upset.
- ◆ ACIM were able to give their children advice when they needed it.
- ◆ ACIM participated in major decisions in their children’s lives.
- ◆ When the children moved to the United States the family dealt with the challenges of immigration together and the family remained intact.
- ◆ ACIM children graduated from high school.
- ◆ ACIM children who are past school age are productive because they are employed and /or make a valued contribution to the family.
- ◆ ACIM children continued to live with the family and they did not run away from home or move out of the household while under the age of 18.

III. **Reunification**: African Caribbean immigrant mothers will describe the reunification process with their children after being separated from them for a number of years. They will articulate their goals and dreams for themselves, their partners and their children:

Indicators of Successful Reunification includes:

- ◆ ACIM were enthusiastic about bringing their children to live with them in the United States
- ◆ ACIM prepared for their children's arrival:
 - Mothers were gainfully employed or looking for employment.
 - Mothers had housing or were looking for housing for the purpose of reunification.
 - Mothers researched schools that their children will attend.
 - Mothers made child care arrangements for children who needed it during working hours or after school.
- ◆ ACIM prepared loved ones living in their household for the arrival of their children from their country of origin.
 - Family and friends living in the area called or visited when children arrived.
- ◆ ACIM increased the frequency of communications with children and caretaker at home prior to the actual move.
- ◆ Children adjusted to living in New York by going to school or working
- ◆ Children lived with mother for an extended period of time without returning home, running away or moving out prematurely.
- ◆ Children did not become involved in delinquent activities such as:
 - Substance abuse
 - Gang related activities
 - Arrested for crimes other than mistaken identity or racially motivated incidents that led to an arrest such as "driving while Black"
 - Early pregnancy (12 to 16 years old)
- ◆ ACIM child continues to have contact with mother through conversations, visits and family functions.
- ◆ ACIM reports being in fair to good health.
- ◆ ACIM reports that her relationship with her child or children is fair to good. Although there are conflict between the mother and child, the mother continues to feel hopeful that things will get better.
- ◆ The family seeks professional mental health assistance and continues to work together

Indicators of Unsuccessful Reunification (Failed Mother-Child Relationship)

- ◆ There are frequent arguments between mother and child/ren and the relationship continues to deteriorate instead of getting better.

- ◆ The family identifies mother-child conflict as an issue and is not hopeful that it will get better.
- ◆ The family refuses to seek professional help, including pastoral counseling and identifies mother-child conflict as a significant issue that contributes to the deterioration of the relationship.
- ◆ The child or children have been sent back to their home country as a result of the parent- child conflict.
- ◆ The child has a pattern/history of being truant from school, and the school has referred the family for therapy/counseling.
- ◆ A referral has been made from a medical professional to a mental health professional for either the mother or the child, due to stress or an unidentified problem, or a mental health professional has identified mother-child conflict as a significant issue but family refuses to attend.
- ◆ The child is living outside of the primary residence due to mother-child conflict.
- ◆ A professional (including church clergy) identifies mother-child conflict as a significant issue for the family but the family refuses to get help even though it is financially affordable.
- ◆ There is an early pregnancy due to a negative parent-child relationship. The child has run away as a result of parent-child conflict.
- ◆ The child is involved in gang related activities.
- ◆ The child has been arrested for Criminal activities other than wrongful identity of driving while Black.

Reunification:

Specific Questions:

- ◆ What steps did ACIM take to get your children to come to live with them?
- ◆ How difficult was it to get the children of ACIM to finally come to the United States?
- ◆ What were some of the issues ACIM had to consider about living in New York to prepare your children for the move? (Drugs, unsafe neighborhoods)
- ◆ Did ACIM plan include educational preparation for the children?
- ◆ When ACIM's children arrived what were their initial reaction?
- ◆ What did ACIM do to make them feel welcome?
- ◆ What did the rest of the family in NYC do to make them feel welcome?
- ◆ How did the children respond to ACIM?
- ◆ How did ACIM respond to school/work/living in New York?
- ◆ How would ACIM describe the reunification process?
- ◆ Describe ACIM current relationship with your children.

Independent Variables:

I. Financial Incentives - is the monetary compensation African Caribbean

women receive for work they do in the United States. The compensation although relatively low, by U.S. standards, is more than they would have earned in their country of origin. This allows these women to provide their children and extended family members with material goods and services that they would not have had, if the women had remained at home.

Specific questions

1. What was ACIM reason for migrating to the United States even though migration meant being separated from family and friends for an unknown period of time?
 - a) divorce, loss of job, unemployment, death of a loved one?
2. What were the advantages of living in NYC while ACIM's children were living back home?
3. What were the consequences of living in New York while ACIM children were living back home?

II. Support System- Family, friends and employers who make positive contributions to the success of immigrant mothers in maintaining their transnational parenting roles, by providing them with support (emotional, financial, care taking support).

Specific Questions on Employers:

1. Describe ACIM relationship with their employer during the time your children were still living back home.
2. How would ACIM describe their relationship with their employer after their children arrived?

Specific Questions regarding support provided by family and friends will be measured by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

III. New Family Composition- African Caribbean immigrant mothers who have children who were born in the United States and/or a spouse, paramour or significant other living in their U. S. household. These children and/ or partners are different from those living back in her country of origin and participate in or influence directly or indirectly the family's decision-making process.

This new family is a second family constellation that was living in the immigrant mother's household during the period of time she was separated from her first set of children and was a family constellation when the original children arrived in the U.S.

Specific Question:

1. What was it like for ACIM having two households, (one in the U.S. and one back home)?

Transnational Parenting- When African Caribbean Immigrant mothers migrate and leave their children behind, they become transnational families because the family lives in two different parts of the world. As a result, these mothers engage in a practice of “mothering from a distance, otherwise known as transnational parenting.

Specific Questions:

1. How did ACIM stay connected with their children?
2. What form of communication did ACIM use?
3. How did ACIM take care of their children back home while they were living here?
4. How did ACIM let them know you loved them?
5. How did ACIM discipline them?
6. How did ACIM keep up with their development?
7. How did ACIM keep up with their school performance?
8. What kind of advice did ACIM give your children?
9. Did ACIM children ask for their advice?
10. How were their children able to reach ACIM in times of emergencies?
11. What was the frequency of contact initiated by ACIM’s children?
12. What sort of things did ACIM children talk to them about?
13. What was ACIM’s relationship like with the person taking care of their children back home?
14. How did ACIM handle disagreements?
15. What role did the father of ACIM children play in parenting the children when they were home?
16. How would ACIM describe their overall relationship with their children when they were living back home and you were living here?

Data Collection:

Data collection, using interviews took place in locations convenient to the respondents including their homes, coffee shops, and churches- after service, utilizing social networks and community organizations. Twenty participants were solicited through word of mouth, using a snowball technique over a period of a year.

Respondents were interviewed for answers to open-ended questions and prompts that illuminate African Caribbean immigrant mothers' transnational experience. The researcher understands that the data collected from the interviews do not necessarily represent an account of their actual lives but rather their perceptions based on recollection of their experience. It is their worldview of what happened and how they handled difficulties.

The Interview guide is divided into six sections. Each section has a heading that corresponds to some of the variables (independent and dependent). The areas the interview guide focused on were: (1) financial incentives; (2) support systems; (3) new family composition; (4) transnational parenting; (5) separation from children; (6) reunification. The entire interview lasted approximately one hour.

Characteristics & Selection Criteria of Sample Population:

Participants in the study were recruited by word of mouth, and by speaking at a neighborhood church in Queens. The most successful way of recruiting respondents for the study was by utilizing snowball sampling- by asking interviewees to recommend someone (Patton, 1990) they knew who met

the criteria established below. At the beginning, the recruitment of respondents were based on the researcher's connections with members of churches, and the social networks within the African Caribbean English-speaking Caribbean population in the New York City area-particularly in Brooklyn.

The twenty participants that were recruited for the study were African Caribbean women from English-speaking Caribbean countries such as Grenada- 65 percent, Trinidad-10 percent, Jamaica-10 percent, Antigua-10 percent and St. Lucia-5 percent. These women migrated to New York City in the last twenty years and left their children behind in their countries of origin and have been reunited with one or more of their children in the United States.

Recruitment of this population was difficult due the fact that many of the women were undocumented and given the anti-immigration climate of today, many of them were fearful of participating because they did not want their information being given to Homeland Security. Some of them agreed primarily because of the recommendation from a friend, yet when I arrived at their home or their agreed upon location for the interview, they were not present. Efforts to reschedule those interviews were not productive. Some of the women, who, the researcher approached in person (on the street) agreed to be interviewed, but later changed their minds at the point of being contacted to set up the interview. Some of these women were frank enough to share their reasons for not going ahead with the interviews. In addition to fear about their undocumented immigration status, they refused to participate in the study because they did not want to relive such a painful time.

These 20 participants in the study constitute a purposeful, non-probability sample based on the above criteria of selection. Purposeful samples are especially good in generating knowledge of a specific group of interest such as African Caribbean Immigrant Mothers who are involved in transnational parenting. The reason for using purposeful sampling is because it is designed for information-rich, in-depth cases. Information-rich cases are those that allow the researcher to examine issues in-depth that are significant to the purpose of the research similarly to the issue of identifying predictors of successful transnational parenting (Patton, 1990). However, the purposeful sample does not generalize to all African Caribbean Mothers who experience transnational parenting.

Participants in the study were selected based on their race, sex, participation in transnational parenting and country of origin, meaning they are all of African descent and a national from one of the English-Speaking Caribbean countries mentioned above. Additionally, they migrated first, leaving their children behind and were engaged in transnational parenting; however they are reunited with one or more of their children in NYC.

PROCEDURE:

The researcher developed an attractive flyer that was placed in business areas where there is a large population of English-Speaking Caribbean immigrants living and working. These flyers were distributed by hand to potential respondents in person as well. Another source of recruitment for respondents was the visiting of churches and social organizations that have a

large English-speaking Caribbean membership and by asking the leaders and key members for the congregations' to support the study. In addition, acquaintances and relationships made over the years with colleagues and friends who are African Caribbean and those who work with or belong to organizations with a large number of African Caribbean members were contacted.

The Interview:

All the interviews were conducted in person, face-to-face by the researcher. A brief telephone interview was held whenever possible in advance of the face-to-face interview by the researcher to determine if potential respondents fit the study criteria. This telephone interview introduced the study and screened participants in or out.

Whenever recruitment is done in person or via a colleague, friend or organization a letter of introduction (appendix 1) was used to recruit potential participants to the study. For respondents approached in person, especially in public areas such as parks and on the street, the letter was given to the prospective respondents with a telephone number where the researcher can be reached along with the flyer.

The researcher worked alone sending mail to organizations, preparing letters, making follow up telephone calls to set up appointments and transcribing the interviews. The interviews were conducted between the months of April 2007 and March 2008. Respondents who successfully complete the interviews received a \$10 long distance calling card as an incentive.

Tape Recording the Interview:

The interviews were taped recorded for the purpose of increasing the accuracy of the data collection while providing the interviewer with the opportunity to be more attentive to the interviewee and making it possible for the interviewer to be able to respond more appropriately to the needs and cues of the interviewees. Consequently the interviews were more conversational and interactive while capturing the data verbatim (Patton, 1990).

Transcribing the Interview:

The interviews were fully transcribed to capture the raw data of the interviews, which are quotations. The interviews were transcribed manually. Analysis involved repeated readings of the transcribed interviews and listening to the tapes. The transcription of the interviews was done simultaneously with the interviews, from the months of March 2007 to April 2008.

An interview matrix was developed for each of the questions for the twenty respondents. Each interviewee was assigned an id code. Each interviewee's response to a particular question was lifted out of the original transcription to the matrix. The data was then examined to uncover categories and themes underlying the phenomenon being studied. These categories were coded and checked against the data collected.

Protection of Respondents' Anonymity:

Due to the fact that some of the participants were suspected to be undocumented immigrants, the respondents were not asked to sign informed consent forms. Respondents were not asked to sign any document or give their

name in the interview process. Efforts were made to protect the respondents' anonymity. When respondents called as a result of seeing the flyer or getting the letter of introduction, they were asked to give a pseudo first name only and a telephone number where they can be reached. The researcher then called and set up an appointment that was mutually suitable for the interview to take place.

On the other hand, because the researcher is a social worker and a Mandated Reporter, she informed all the study participants at the beginning of the interview that any information indicating suspected child abuse or neglect as well as suicide or homicide will have to be reported to the authorities.

Ethical Considerations:

Given the fact that interviews are interventions (Patton, 1990), the mere process of interviewing people requires that they recall memories, thoughts, feelings and experiences, which can be good or bad. The researcher recognized the sensitive nature of the interviews, and the fact that they at times caused the interviewees to relive periods of time in their lives that may evoke pain and discomfort. Consequently, the researcher, who is also a social worker, conducted the interviews at a pace that is comfortable for the interviewee, stopping when the interviewee wished to do so and allowed the interviewee to decide whether or not to continue with the interview. Additionally, the interviewer prepared a packet of information with resources such as mental health programs in the five boroughs with counseling services where they can go to address their unresolved issues the interview may open up, (see appendix VI). Interviewees were told in the beginning of the interview that if at any time

the information they are sharing caused them pain or great discomfort they are free to inform the interviewer that they would like to stop temporarily or permanently.

Questionnaire/Interview Guide:

Although the use of a questionnaire is often seen as optional in a qualitative research interview (McCracken, 1988), in the case of the long qualitative interview used in this study, it is essential because its utilization allows for objectivity (Brenner, 1985). The interview guide has many functions. It ensures that the investigator covers all the areas she plans to cover with each respondent. It also provides prompts that must be specifically included and strategically placed in the interview. The interview guide outlines the direction and scope of the dialogue in the interview, especially in an open-ended interview that can expand to a point of confusion. At the same time the interview guide does not foreclose the “open-ended” nature of the qualitative interview in which the investigator is able to explore more deeply with additional questions beyond those written on the questionnaire (McCracken, 1988). Lastly, the interview guide allows the investigator to pay full attention to a respondent’s statements with minimum distraction because the investigator does not have to think about which questions to ask.

Analysis of Qualitative Data:

The analysis of the data from the interview utilized cross-case or cross-interview techniques for each question in the interview matrix. The transcribed data for each question in the interview guide was analyzed for each of the

twenty interviews. Answers from different people were categorized by topics based on a descriptive analytical structure for the analysis provided by the interview guide. The data were analyzed continuously as they were collected. Analysis of the data began first by comparing the transcription with the audio taped version of each interview for the purpose of substantiating the accuracy of the transcription to the audiotape.

Coding the Interview:

The interviewer used Strauss (1987) guidelines for coding interview data. Once the data are categorized by topic, the researcher developed a classification scheme comprised of general categories already identified in the interview guide within each category were different subcategories.

Interpretation of the Interview:

The transcribed data from the interviews were analyzed first to include looking for themes to explain the women's experiences: understanding how these women handled difficulties; how individuals approach these experiences; what they thought about them and how they responded; what underlying variables helped them overcome these obstacles? How these women made sense of their own lives? The meaning they gave to their lives? How they reorganized themselves given extraordinary circumstances? The researcher analyzed common experiences to establish typologies of how individual immigrant women approached common experiences and their unique ways they handled common experiences such as conflicts.

Interpretation of the data meant attaching significance to the information found in the study, offering explanations utilizing the literature, drawing conclusions, making inferences, attaching meanings, building linkages and dealing with rival explanations-negative cases (Patton, 1990).

Summary:

This qualitative study consisted of a small but information rich sample. These 20 women responded to 24 questions and several additional prompts, which provided the researcher with an in-depth portrait of their lives and experiences. This depiction sheds light into their world of work, their relationship with the children left behind, their children's caretakers, family members, the difficulties they experience in their work and their lengthy journey towards changing their immigration status in order to facilitate reunification with their children.

Endnotes

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*(1st ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

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CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Information of the Respondents:

Of the twenty respondents in the study, the majority, 65 percent, is from Grenada; 10 percent are from Trinidad; 10 percent are from Antigua; 10 percent are from Jamaica and 5 percent are from St. Lucia. The distribution of the respondents by countries is primarily because the first person interviewed was from Grenada. This first respondent referred three of her friends and they in turn each referred a friend. At the time of migration, one woman was married, five divorced or separated, which means nineteen or 95 percent were single parents, and heads of households. The mothers in the study were separated from their children a minimum of one and a half years to a maximum of thirteen years (see appendix-Demographic chart). The children that were left behind ranged in ages from two to twelve years.

These women migrated to the U.S. and left their children in their native country with relatives. Of the women in the study there were a total of 29 children. Two of the women had two and three children respectively, of which these children were left with multiple caretakers-meaning these five children, had five different caretakers. Some were relatives and some were not. Of the twenty-nine children, seven lived with grandmothers, six lived with the mothers' sisters, five lived with fathers, five lived with friends and one lived with a cousin. The child who lived with her cousin initially was moved to with a guardian. Additionally, in another case a child lived with his father for some time until his father himself migrated to NYC and this child went to live with his father's sister.

The caretakers who were chosen to take care of these women's children provided continuing care throughout the time the women were separated from their children. In 90 percent of these situations, the caretakers who the children were left with remained with the children throughout their mother's entire absence. As mentioned above for unrelated reasons, the children of two of the mothers experience a disruption in child care. A third mother left her three daughters with three different caretakers (a grandmother, a friend and an ex-paramour and his family). These caretakers continued to take care of the children throughout the length of the time the children lived at home.

Economic and employment issues were important triggers of the immigration process. Approximately 60 percent of the women were unemployed in their country of origin prior to migrating and the rest 40 percent reported being underemployed. They were not making enough money to adequately take care of their families nor did they have other means of support.

For two of the women, migration was less of a purely economic issue. One woman described feeling "oppressed" by the political crisis and invasion of her country (Grenada) by the United States in the 1980's. A second woman personally experienced family violence. She was a survivor of both spousal abuse and domestic violence.

For all of the women interviewed, migration was viewed as the most viable way to resolve the economic and other issues they experienced in their country of origin.

Table #2 Demographic information of Transnational Mothers in the Study

Identifying Code of the Women	Country of Origin	Marital Status Prior to Migration	Marital Status after Migration	# Children Left Behind	Current Status Of Children	# of years Separated	New Family Composition	Caretakers
001	Grenada	Married	Married	Two	Masters degree; Construction worker	3 & 4	No	Father & Grandparents
002	Grenada	Married/ Divorced	Single	Five	Two in college; 1 working in NYC; 2 home	5 & 7	Yes-Son	Grandmother
003	Grenada	Single	Single	One	AA degree	6	No	Friend
004	Grenada	Single	Married	One	2 yrs coll; Dental Asst; lives w roommate	6	Yes-husband & daughter	Sister and sister's family
005	Grenada	Single	Married	One	Attending College		No	Sister
006	Grenada	Single	Single	One	In H. S. & Home	9	Yes-son	Gr'mother & sister
007	Grenada	Single	Married	One	In Military	13	Yes-husband and daughter	Sister
008	Grenada	Single	Married/Div	Two	Both married w children	3	No	Grandmother
009	Trinidad	Single	Married/Div	One	Attending College	11/2	Yes-two children	Friend
010	Grenada	Single	Single	One	Attending College	21/2	No	Gr'mother & Sister
011	Antigua	Single	Single	One	Attending College	9	No	Grandparents
012	Antigua	Divorced	Single	One	Masters; married w One child	8	No	Grandmother
013	Jamaica	Single	Single	One	Lives with mother	3	No	Friend and her family
014	Jamaica	Single	Married	One	College! working	5	Yes-Husband	Cousin Friend
015	Trinidad	Married/ Separated	Single	Three	All Married	4	No	Multiple caretakers
016	Grenada	Single	Single	One	Attending College	6	No	Sisters & gr'father
017	St Lucia	Single	Single	One	Attending High School	4	No	Father! Pafl Aunt
018	Grenada	Married/Div	Married/Div	One	Attending College	4	Yes-Two sons	Sister & gr'father
019	Grenada	Married/ Separated	Married	Two	Attending College; Compl H.S and working	3 & 5	Yes-Husband and Son	Split, Ex-Husband & Sister
020	Grenada	Single	Single	One	Masters and Married	8	No	Gr'mother & sister

Analysis of Data:

This study attempts to explore the transnational parenting experiences of African Caribbean women who migrated to New York and left their children behind in their home countries. Twenty-four questions were formulated to explore the issue of transnational parenting. These questions were developed to assist in understanding the inner world of these women. The women were asked to explain their experiences in their own voices. The twenty-four questions elicited responses which are presented in the following format: (1) reasons for migration; (2) rewards and benefits of migration (3) separation and loss issues; (4) support systems; (5) components of transnational parenting; (6) maintaining two households-second family and (7) reunification.

Reasons for Migration:

Not unlike other immigrants who have chosen to live in the United States, English-speaking African Caribbean women who emigrated to New York City (NYC) came here to improve their lives and that of their family members. These women used the phrase “a better life” to describe their reasons for migrating. “A ‘better life’ for these mothers had multifaceted meanings comprised of four specific factors. Clearly, the most important meaning, was connected to the financial security they felt would be possible here and which they felt was not available to them in their country of origin (due to the unemployment, or underemployment they experienced when living there.)

These mothers migrated because they wanted to fulfill their economic responsibility to their children.

I came here for a better life. I wanted a better job and I wanted to take care of my children. Not necessary for better schools because Trinidad had good schools (015)

I wanted a better future for my children and myself. I had five children at the time and two of them were in high school and my income was not enough to take care of them. I was a single parent (002).

I wanted to come here to work and make more money to help my youngest son (013).

I came here for a better life in terms of employment. I did not work back home and I had a friend who lived and work here and I knew that when the American dollar was converted you could buy more with it back in (St. Lucia). Also I knew you can buy stuff up here in America cheaper than back home (017).

Caring for children- by providing a better income is a significant factor in understanding the reason for migration of these women. In addition to working and providing financially for her child, this mother's dream was to return home in three years to be reunited with her child, build a home and start a business to sustain them economically.

I wanted a better life for me and my daughter at the time. I had a two year old; I had no job and very little money. I thought that if I came here I could get a job and work and go back home build a little house, open a shop and go back to take care of my daughter in three years. Three years turn into six years before she came up (004).

For some of the women, a better life meant providing better opportunities for them and their children. Oftentimes opportunities are intertwined with being able to earn more money, attain higher education and travel to a new country to start over after a divorce.

I moved here for a better life. I was a single parent working and I didn't think I was giving my daughter the life she deserved. Back home having an education is important and since I was a teenage mom, I had to stop going to school so I

did not get to finish school. I was working and making a low salary and I wanted to give my daughter more opportunities than I had (009).

I migrated for a better life, better opportunities both economically and educationally (010).

I wanted to make my life better and to make my daughter's life better. Back home we weren't poor but in some ways we were poor. I first went to Aruba but things there wasn't all that good. I lived there for two years, then I moved to Canada because I had two sisters living there. One of my sisters told me its best to go to America rather than stay in Canada because it is easier to get your papers in America and give my daughter an education here. She is an Occupational Therapist. She married a doctor from Grenada. He came here as a child. I came here in 1983 she was about 6. She was 14 years when she came here (020).

I came here for a better life for my kids. It was difficult back home. I worked in my husband's restaurant and it was very hard work. Everyone was talking about moving to the United States, so after we broke up, I moved to NYC. I left by two children home. My son was 12 and my daughter was 3 years old.(017).

The second aspect of a "better life" for some women was the desire to join family who were already living in the United States and the desire to take care of their children economically. For 30 percent of the women, the impetus to visit this country was the result of being urged to take a vacation in the United States by a relative or loved one who lived here. Once they arrived in the United States, the women themselves chose to stay- or were persuaded to stay and work.

I came up here on vacation because my boyfriend, who is now my husband, was living here. While I was visiting him, I just decided to stay. Our daughter was two years old at the time and she was living with my father (005).

I came on vacation and was talked into staying by my aunt. She made it sound easy. I was home with my two year old daughter and no job and my aunt told me that I would be able to work and take care of myself and my daughter if I stayed so I listened to her and stayed (006).

All my family members were living in New York, including my parents. I was a single parent who was unemployed and wanted to find a job to take better care of my daughter. I left my daughter to board with my cousin (014).

Loss of loved ones in their country of origin together with having family members living in the United States appears to have prompted some women to select to emigrate. One woman lost her mother at age 21. Her oldest brother, who lived in NYC sent for her and her siblings.

I was Twenty-one years old and my mother died. I was in nursing school In Barbados when I received the call that we got the visa. My oldest brother was living in NYC and he filed for us- my two brothers and myself. I didn't have the zeal to come up (018).

Another woman lost her mother to cancer and selected to migrate because her father lived here and she had a desire to provide for child.

My father was living here, I had just lost my mother to cancer, two of my children were grown so I left. I also wanted to come here to work and make more money to help my youngest son (013).

For one of the women, the decision to migrate here is not just about helping her nuclear family (parent-child) but more about assisting the extended family. Her decision to migrate was made to make a better life for the whole family. In this case it meant three generations working together towards this purpose-both in the United States and back home.

My Mother was here and she wanted to make a better life for us, so she sent for me and one of my sisters so we can work to help the rest of the family. There were nine of us plus my father who was blind and my son. When my mother sent for me I was 34 years old and my son was six years. I planned to come with my son but the Immigration people in Barbados did not approve it. They felt that my son was too young and if he came with me I would go on welfare so they told me they would only approve for me and my sister to go to

America. They said after a year, I can send my papers showing I paid taxes and they would let my son come up. By after six years of sending papers, they did not approve for him to come up. So I called the Immigration in Barbados and I told them that I did what they told me to do and if they did not send my son to America, they can have their green card back and I would go back to Grenada to be with my son. At that time they approved my son's papers and he came up to live with me (016).

The third component of a "better life" was the availability of educational opportunities for themselves and their children as well as the possibility of personal growth- such as the opportunity to travel to another country.

I first came on vacation and when I saw the education system I thought that would be good for my kids (001).

I came here to go to school (003).

My main reason for coming here was for the educational opportunities for both my daughter and me. I went to Bronx Community College and Lehman College. I majored in Accounting and minored in psychology (011).

Several of the mothers went to school to further their education and did achieve their educational goals. Two received an Associates degree, two went to secretarial school, one took some courses in home health and nursing and one has a bachelor degree in nursing. Acquiring a higher level of education gave these women the ability to move out of the jobs that were initially available to them (such as a babysitting, being a nanny or cleaning lady,) into jobs that were more in the mainstream (in professions such as nursing, the hotel industry, office work). Another woman was able to find work as a daycare provider and self-employed entrepreneur. Two of the women came to head their own businesses: one now owns her own cleaning business and the other runs her

own daycare business. Both women reported that they employ other Caribbean women.

Many of the children of these mothers pursued their own degrees in higher education. Three have masters' degree, one has a bachelor degree, ten are currently attending college, two have associates' degree, of which one works as a dental assistant and the other, is planning on going on to a bachelor degree program. Three are still in high school, one is in the military and two are working-unknown what are their educational levels, and two are still at home in their country of origin. The two remaining children at home are part of a five-sibling group, three migrated and two have chosen to stay home because they have their own families.

Finally, for a small number of interviewees, "a better life" meant the ability to escape some form of oppression, which for one woman meant escaping political oppression. This woman felt harassed because of the political environment she worked in at the time. She lived in Grenada and worked for the government but after the US invasion, and the subsequent change in government, she experienced a great deal of harassment due to her political affiliation. This experience motivated her to migrate.

I worked with the government of Grenada when Maurice Bishop died. After the invasion, life changed and things were not going good. People were being hassled (008).

Another migrated due to spousal abuse/domestic violence as well as financial need. This woman felt that there was "no place to hide" on her small island. She saw coming to the United States, as the only way she could escape

the physical, emotional and financial abuse she experienced in her marriage - even if it meant leaving her young son with her mother.

I was married at age 13 because I was pregnant. My husband abused me and I had no money of my own. I had to leave my abusive relationship. I also had to come for financial reasons. I came to make a better life for my son and myself (012).

Rewards and Benefits of Migration:

In retrospect, many of the women felt that their decision to migrate to the United States and leave their children behind was a good one. They were able to find employment that enabled them to support themselves, their children and extended family. They were able to send for their children and provide them with far more educational opportunities than they would have had in their country of origin. Additionally, a third benefit that resulted from their migration to the United States was remittances-the ability to send money, clothing, and other material goods in barrels. These barrels were usually filled with various items and were sent home to the family an average of twice a year.

Many of the mothers experienced these rewards as part of a continuum of experiences that followed one upon another after migration. They are not always viewed as separate entities. For example, migrating and having the ability to work and make money had financial benefits, which made it possible for them to send remittances home to their children and extended family members.

Working and making money. I didn't have a job back home so I was able to work and take care of myself and help my family although my father was working and he supported the family. I would send barrels to my family home (005).

I worked and bought a beautiful home. I also worked and helped my nieces and nephews. When my brother died, I would send money and clothes to his children. Later, as I got older, I sent for the oldest child so that he can help his brothers and sisters (014).

Having a good job babysitting and earning my own money. Its good to have your own money. That was the best thing. I was also able to help my children and my family. I left my daughter with my sister and my son with his father (019).

Making a little more money and send things for my children and the rest of my family (013).

Migrating to the United States, finding employment, changing her immigration status to one of legal resident-as one woman puts it, provided her with the opportunity to be reunited with her child in the United States.

One of the rewards of moving here was getting a green card and that helped me bring her up here. It was easy for her financially, I was able to pay for her to go to school (007).

Financial benefits, remittances and reunification of children are also linked closely with the mother's ability to provide educational opportunities for their children as a result of their migration here.

The reward was to make more money and send things back home to my children. I was able to give them a better way of life. Education wise, The number of libraries that are available. I saw it as a great opportunity for them. Two of my children are working and two are in college (002).

I was able to make a little more money and send for my children. My daughter did very well in school so that was my reward. She went to college and received a BA and Masters Degree from Emory (001).

The reward of moving here was that I was able to bring my daughter here. I was also able to work and help my family. Another positive thing is, my daughter and her achievements. Giving her that education. I left her home with my mom and my sister and they did a good job. But I felt that bringing her to America would give her more in her life than if she stayed home. She has a masters degree in Occupational therapy (020).

Financial benefits and employment are linked with educational benefits for the mothers as well. Some of the mothers were interested in getting a higher education for themselves as well as for their children.

There wasn't much time between when I was here and when she came. I went to Medgar Evers College and received my Associate Degree. I started school and I found a part time babysitting position so I went to school in the evenings (003).

Getting the opportunity to work and go to school. I went to school and took Data processing and Office Procedures. I also got married a year after I got up here. I was able to work in a hotel as a room attendant and was promoted after 8 years, I became Director of Housekeeping (009).

I had the opportunity to go to college and get an education (011).

In conjunction with the financial rewards, and getting an education for themselves, another mother in the study identified how much she valued the expanded life experiences that resulted from moving to a large metropolis like NYC. She found the wide range of experience available in New York quite different from the opportunities she had available to her in a small country such as her native Grenada. She also felt that she and her child both gained many educational and employment opportunities by virtue of now living in a large metropolitan area.

Good experience living here. You get to see so much more than the life I had in Grenada. Also, there are so many more opportunities for your child such as the Educational system. I also took some courses in Home Health and nursing. I worked as a Home Health Aide for years taking care of the elderly as well as the mentally retarded (016).

The next mother saw the rewards of migrating as a way to escape oppression from her abusive husband and also as an opportunity to provide her son with an education.

My son started Fordham University at age 13. He came here at age 12. He is married, has a son and of his own, a home and works in finance. Another reward is it was a way out of misery (012).

The initial phase of migration where the mothers are separated from their children is painful but it also has some secondary gains as well. Those with very young children recognized the challenges they would have faced of having to care for their young children here-especially when their employment requires them to live-in, which many of them do at the initial stage of their migration.

At first the reward of being able to work and not having to worry about having to take care of a young child. I had a live-in job and I didn't have someone to take care of my child (010).

This parent indicated that her reward was purely to be reunified with her children. The sole purpose of reunification was more critical to this parent because she placed her three children with three different caretakers. During the separation, her contact with her children was limited because of a familial dispute. In addition, although her children lived in the same country, because of this familial dispute, they did not see each other frequently. Reunification had a special meaning for this parent and her children. It meant both wanting to be reunified with her children and wanting her children to be reunified with each other.

Bringing my children up here. I couldn't take care of them when I was back home. I had one with a friend, one with my husband's parents and one with my parents (015).

Living on a small island can sometimes be similar to living in a small town in the United States, where one's opportunities may be predetermined by who you know and your family history. For some immigrants, moving to a large city and distancing oneself from the negative consequences of living in such a "small town" type environment provides a kind of anonymity-which then helps the migrating individual feel that they can be judged on their own merits-and not their affiliation or their family history.

In America there is a level playing field here. I applied to do nursing in Grenada but I wasn't accepted. Back then, Grenada had an elite system based on who you know and who your family is (018).

Disillusionment-No Huge Rewards:

Twenty percent of the women reported being disillusioned. They felt that overall they did not experience the rewards they expected. They were disappointed because it took far too long to be reunited with their children. The average length of separation for the women in the study is 5.15 years, the range of years these women were separated from their children were 1 and ½ years to 13 years. Although they were able to buy their children material goods, they missed their children and felt sad and guilty that they were not able to watch their children growing up. They felt upset about not being able to be present during the various milestones in their children's life. In addition, these women were disillusioned because they came here anticipating many things that did not come to fruition. They found out that it was difficult to get their immigration status changed from being undocumented to being documented. They were

disappointed that they would not have enough money to support two families (their family in the US and their family in their country of origin,) and also acquire one's own home. Some of these women found out early in the migratory process that it was far more difficult than they thought it would be to change their immigration status. This had the additional consequence of relegating them to particular types of jobs where the salary was low, which, in turn, made it very difficult for them to be independent and support themselves and their families back home.

I don't see any rewards. Yes I was able to buy material stuff and send home to my daughter and the rest of my family but I missed my child very much. She didn't want for anything but I missed nine years of her life (006).

There were no rewards. It was hard. I lived with my niece and worked as a babysitter to help my family (008).

I haven't seen the reward yet because I spend my entire time just working and sending money home. My mother is sick back home and I have to send money back to take care of her and my sister who lives in Canada because she is unemployed. She lost her job and I have to help with her rent etc (006).

The accumulated effects of low earnings, the strain of financially supporting two households and the extensive time it took to be reunited with her children due to the mire of immigration roadblocks weighed very much on this mother. In an effort to cope with the pain of the separation and loss of not being with her child, this mother bought clothes and material goods for her daughter. Although she felt good about being able to take care of herself and her daughter, this did not alleviate the emptiness and guilt she still felt.

It did not turn out the way I thought. I could not make the money and go back in three years and I could not get a visa for my daughter to come up here. It was difficult for my daughter because I could not bring her up and I could not go down to visit her, so I bought her stuff like a lot of clothes to make myself feel

better but still you have this emptiness and guilt killing you, but on the other hand I was able to work and take care of myself and daughter hoping I could send for her and take care of her (004).

Some of the women were unsuccessful because they were working in jobs that paid low salaries. This aspect of African Caribbean migration is supported in the literature. The literature shows that the same informal social networks (family, employers and friends) that recruit immigrant women and assists them in finding employment also automatically creates ethnic “niches,” which are jobs that are flooded with the same ethnic members. For African Caribbean women these jobs are as nannies, babysitters, and home health aides. As a result, these social networks can end up locking their members into low-paying jobs associated to a particular group (Waldinger, 1996).

Separation and Loss Issues:

Immigrant families migrate to the United States to improve their lives. Although this does happen in many cases, the down side to this migratory process is the pain of being separated from family, friends and country or origin. Separation and loss issues when referenced in the migration literature, usually places its focus on the immigrant child and his/her experience with separation and loss issues (Mahoney, A., 2002; Crawford-Brown & Rattray, cited in Boyd-Webb, 2001; Salazar-Parrenas, R., 2001; Suárez-Orozco, C. & Suárez-Orozco, M., 2001; Glasgow, G. F. & Gouse-Sheese, J. (1995); Thrasher, S. & Anderson, G. 1988; Prince, G. S. 1968).

Although the parents' issue with separation and loss as it relates to the migratory process is mentioned, it is not usually the focus of the literature. As we can see

by these mothers' statements- the period of time they are separated from their children are indeed very painful for both parents and children.

The analysis of the interviews in the study underscores the intensity of the pain and suffering the respondents experienced as a result of being separated from their children for several years. In an effort to frame the voice of these women's description of the time they were separated from their children, family and friends, the author used Boss' research on ambiguous loss to guide the discussion of the unresolved grief experienced by these women. Ambiguous loss is defined as unresolved loss or loss without closure. In her book, Boss (1999) explained the concept of 'frozen grief' by recalling the pain and homesickness her immigrant family experienced because part of their family was out of physical reach to them. The theme of the loss of physical touch and love was also prevalent for the mothers in the study. Below are some of the ways they described the difficulties they experienced in being separated from their children and not being with them physically.

For one mother seeing other parents with their children reminded her of the children back home and as a result she relived the pain of being separation from her children.

I missed them very much, especially when I would see parents on the street with their children and especially when I would see them not taking care of their children. Sometimes I would see people with their children and I would see what I consider not taking care of I would think I would do things differently. Seeing other parents with their children made me miss them (001).

For another mother, speaking on the telephone, the very same thing that kept her connected to her children also brought her pain because as Boss

(1999) described it also contributed to reliving the loss. In an effort to cope, this mother employed extraordinary measures to provide her daughter with a surrogate parent on her graduation-because she knew that graduation was a very significant milestone for her daughter and her family.

You miss them a lot and that is very difficult. It was difficult to stay long with them on the phone. You miss going to their school and see them perform in school activities. Like graduation, I remembered when my children graduated from High School, I couldn't be there for that because I didn't have my green card to go there and come back. So I paid the airfare of my friend to go down and be there for me. My first daughter was graduating so it was very important (002).

The pain that many of these mothers felt in being separated from their children was exacerbated by the fact that they were unable to physically demonstrate their love to their children and their children were not able to physically experience their mother's love.

It was difficult not to physically show the love you want to the child. Although you say it verbally on the phone, it's not the same. But emotionally your child cannot experience it and neither can you the mother (010).

One could tell by the pain in many of the mother's voices that the separation from their children was very difficult for them. They missed being able to have physical contact with their children-to touch their children and interact with them. They also lamented about not being able to firsthand teach their children about daily life experiences.

Not being able to see her and interact with her or touch her. That is something I don't want to think about. You miss out on teaching her things about life, good from bad. Not that my sister and mother did not do a good job, but I would have done some things different (006).

I left my daughter too young. I was too far away from her. Not being able to see and touch her, only hear her. I didn't worry about my son so much because he was older and lived with his father. His father loved him very much so I knew he would be okay. My daughter lived with my sister (019).

Not spending time with my daughter. I knew she was well taken care of but I missed not being with her. That part was very hard for me to deal with. I would cry at times (005).

In addition to being deprived of physical contact, not being able to teach her children or discipline her children the way they would like to, caused this mother some unease. She was also concerned about how not being a legal resident would impact her and her son.

I miss him so much. You can't discipline him as you want. Sometimes I would call and he would be up awake late. I worried about being stabilized up here. I could go without food but I cannot have my child go without food (017).

In addition to experiencing the separation from children as unresolved or frozen grief, many of these mothers also articulated feelings that are depicted in the stages of grief model that was first conceptualized by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. (Kubler-Ross,1969). The five stages of grief- denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, are quite evident in these mothers' description of their experience of being separated from their children. Using the Kubler-Ross' model, we can see that some of the women experienced depression or despair, while others experienced anger; still others were eventually able to get to acceptance and understanding. The stages of grief reflect a variety of reactions that may surface at different times and in different ways, as the individual makes sense of how this loss affects them.

Many of the mothers in the study also felt guilty, lonely and anxious and full of remorse for leaving their children. As a result of these painful emotions, they reported experiencing sleep deprivation, and having difficulty eating- or instead overeating as a means of coping. Other coping mechanisms were used to diminish feelings of guilt about the separation from their children. Many described frequently they purchased material goods to send back home. Purchases of school supplies, clothing and gifts for their children were sent back home in an effort to cope with their feelings of guilt and longing. Some reported crying a lot to deal with the emotional pain.

The separation was hard. I would cry a lot, I would see children on the train and I would cry. I grieved; I would get angry and cry or eat a lot of ice cream. I would go out and buy her a lot of stuff but the longing and emptiness was still there. When you talk to the child on the phone it kills you. It's a terrible thing, you wish you had money and you did not have to leave your child to go look for it. In order to take care of your child you have to leave. Its like someone cut a piece of your heart out. I would feel that I was being punished for having a child early in life. Sometimes I would get angry at the child's father for not being there to support our child so I could stay with her to take care of her. It makes you angry and bitter and sad. Everyday you get up and you tell yourself things will get better. Sometimes you can't sleep. There was a period in my life where I thought I was going crazy, I couldn't sleep. Then people tell you things also without thinking "I saw your daughter and she looks like this or that" and when you hear that from them it kills you. But there isn't anything you can do. You can't go back and you can't get a visa to send for her. I tried four times to get a visa and they turned me down. Its just real pain. This is the first real pain I ever felt in my life. When I had my other child I still felt pain, the guilt is unexplainable. I left her with my older sister and her family. My daughter was the youngest child in the household but then when my sister got pregnant again I was angry at her because I was thinking my daughter would not get the love and care she needs and deserves. Everything made you angry at everyone and everything, knowing deep down you are angry at yourself for leaving your child (004).

The image of the next mother's experience is very vividly articulated in her recollection of the difficulties she experienced during the period of time she was

separated from her daughter. This mother equated her pain and sadness with death.

Oh god, it was like death. I was so sorrowful. I was a single mother and I felt very guilty about my daughter being home and I was here. I had many sleepless nights. Whenever I ate, I would wonder if she was eating also. I called her on the telephone (014).

Sleep deprivation was a common reaction for the mothers in the study. In some of the women this sleep deprivation was quit long lasting. The next mother reported that she suffered with sleep deprivation for the first three years living apart from her daughter. She also discussed calling home a lot to speak with her child. She experienced much difficulty due to the expensive cost of the calls home-which led to struggles with the telephone company. This mother also alluded to feeling trapped as a result of her undocumented status. She was not able to go back home because that would ruin her Visa status-yet she found herself struggling financially while here.

The separation was very hard. For a mother who really wants her kids it's very hard to be separated from her. For me, it took about three years without thinking about her constantly and getting sad and crying for her and wondering what she is going through. I couldn't sleep well for the first three years. I thought of her day and night. Its hard back home, I used to wonder how my child is sleeping. When I first move here I lived with my aunt then I moved in with my cousin but we didn't have long distance on our phone and if you don't have a social security number you cant get it easy so I had to make a deal with the phone company and pay them \$200. but if you go over that amount they would cut off the long distance on the phone so there were times when I would pick up the phone and not be able to call. It's hard because you can't go back home because it would ruin your visa (006).

While depression is a common theme for some of these mothers, it was certainly an emotion that was also experienced by some of their children as well.

This mother shared some insight into her daughter's experience with the separation. She recalled that speaking to her child on the telephone was both positive and negative for her daughter because although it kept them connected to each other, at the same time, it was painful for her daughter as it increased her feelings of sadness about the separation. She described her daughter as crying for her every night. This mother was also insightful at recognizing that her work, which was taking care of children, caused her to relive the pain of being separated from her own child. This mother said in order for her to cope with the distress of knowing her daughter was suffering she had to "have faith and hope she was okay."

Being separated from my daughter was difficult because I moved to Canada first. In Canada, I wasn't working so I was depressed and sad because I wasn't with my daughter and I didn't have a job or any money. Nine months later I moved to NYC and I found a job and was able to send money home and call my daughter regularly. I would call her a lot, every other day. She would cry every night for me. Sometimes when I'm eating the best of the best I don't know what she is eating. Sometimes when I'm caring for somebody's child, I wondered if she is okay and that if she is all right. Then you have to have faith and hope that she is okay (007).

Interestingly enough the next mother reported that caring for children kept her distracted. She was able to use this distraction as a way of coping with the pain of separation from her children. She also coped by sending her children letters and cards.

It was hard coping with the separation. The people I worked with had children and taking care of them and spending time with them me helped a little by keeping me preoccupied, I called on the telephone and sent letters and cards. I cried a lot at first. I sent money and clothes (015).

Remittances were also another coping mechanism for the mothers in this study. Although they recognized their pain and sadness of being separated from

their children, they also recognized that when they were able to buy things for their children and family, it made them feel better because to them they were a good provider which is part of their responsibility of being a parent.

It was not easy but we dealt with it. I missed them a lot and it was hard not being able to go back home to visit them. We spoke often on the telephone. I also sent a lot of things for my children. I sent them clothes and money. They didn't want for anything. I wouldn't be able to do that if I stayed home (008).

The physical toll of sleep deprivation, overeating or under eating and the emotional toll of depression and sadness was compounded by the feeling of emptiness and the feeling of being trapped-and unable or unwilling to go home. Yet this mother coped with her pain by telling herself she had to deal with it by being tough.

I cried a lot and had sleepless nights. You walk around with an empty feeling. The first month is the hardest because you can't sleep or eat. I cried a lot and wanted to go back home. But you know you can't do that. I was a single parent and going back to what? I had to toughen up myself. This was a matter of sink or swim (009).

Here is the description of yet another mother who described the time she was separated from her child as "miserable". She dealt with her emotional pain by calling on the phone a lot and crying. Whenever she had a meal, she worried if her child was also eating.

I was miserably. I called everyday. I missed him a lot. I spent a lot of time crying and worrying about him. I called him a lot. When I was eating I worried if he was eating too. I would not do this ever again. I missed him too much (013).

In a similar vein, another mother described her period of separation from her child as "torture". In this case she found herself not being able to eat. Even though she left her son with his father and felt reassured that he was alright, she

was still devastated by not being with him. This mother coped by rationalizing her decision to migrate. She told herself that her child understood that she had left him and her country to help him.

The separation was torture. When I first came up I wasn't eating because I was worried and I missed him and I loss a lot of weight. You rather be with him than not. Even though he was with his father it was difficult for me. He was eleven when I left. At the beginning he missed me but he was with his dad. He missed me a lot. He understood that I was here to help him. Sometimes he would say he missed me and me want to come up. No, I wouldn't do it again (017).

This mother reported being sleep deprived, having eating difficulties, experiencing the duality of the emotions created by the conversations on the telephone- on the one hand the telephone provided this mother and daughter with the opportunity to be connected, yet these phone calls also resulted in feelings of sadness and pain. Her daughter cried on the telephone-which obviously affected this mother deeply. The pain felt by this mother was further complicated due to the American invasion of Grenada in the early 1980's. This disturbance in her home country added to her emotional pain since it prevented her from having access to her child and family for some time-leaving her worried and helpless.

It was hard, very very hard. There were times I couldn't sleep at all. Especially when I have to eat a meal, I would think of her, is she all right? I couldn't eat. She also missed me a lot. There were times when she would cry a lot on the phone. It was very difficult during the invasion in Grenada. That was a bad time. I couldn't get through on the phone. I didn't know if they were all right. My daughter was very sad and scared. She cried a lot, my family were very worried about her because all she kept saying was I want my mother. There was no communication with them. It was a terrible time (020).

This mother's pain due to the separation from her children manifested itself in

physical symptoms such as headaches and sleep deprivation. She coped by praying.

It was very difficult so I prayed and prayed. I had a constant headache and didn't sleep much at nights. I prayed God give me strength. She was young only two and a half years. My daughter cried a lot but she was happy when she came (019).

Anxiety is the word one mother used to describe the feeling she felt during the time she was separated from her child. However, she was determined to survive this period of time in her life because of the importance to her of obtaining the long term benefits of education and upward mobility for her child.

Being separated from your child is filled with anxiety. There were lots of anxious nights. I prayed she is well taken care of. It was really hard during that time. But you have to remain focused on the opportunities. I only had a high school education and I wanted my daughter to have a better chance for upward mobility so I did this to help my daughter (010).

Another mother recalls the period of time she was separated from her daughter as having the difficulty of separation somewhat mitigated by having her mother in NYC. Her mother's presence provided a great deal of help to her emotionally.

It was difficult being away from my daughter and the rest of my family. My mother was living in New York so that was helpful because I had her here. I think my daughter did fine. Sometimes she would cry and tell me she missed me (005).

Another parent described her period of separation from her child as creating a void she could not fill. She also felt she did not have a choice in her decision to migrate and leave her child behind.

The negative part of living here and she living at home was missing her and not being able to fill the void you feel when you are separated from your child. I felt I did not have a choice (011).

Even having the appropriate documents for immigration did not create an immediate reunion with one's children. Although one mother's immigration status was documented, immigration did not approve for her son to come with her. In addition, she had a period of time in which she had to wait before she could get her documents, which delayed her getting employment. So in addition to missing her son she felt dependent and helpless.

When I first came to NY, it was terrible. Although I was approved by immigration to come here, I had to wait for my green card and my social security card before I could work. I had to just sit and wait for a few weeks. That was difficult because my mother had to take care of me and I am not used to have my mother take care of me like that. I always worked and had a job but now I was just sitting there doing nothing. I was bored and felt very dependent on my mother. I also could not take care of my son. I had a lot of time to think and I was missing him so much and that was also very difficult for me. It was hard, really hard. I used to try to go back on his birthdays. I would call every week sometimes twice a week. I left him with my father and my sisters and brothers. It was hard because my father was blind and needed help himself. So we paid for someone to help him as well. My son was six years old (016).

One mother engaged in a type of transnational parenting that was different for her than her peers from the region. Although the form of transnational parenting that she described is becoming a growing trend-mothers who are choosing to be separated from their children for reasons other than immigration. When this mother felt overwhelmed by situations here in NYC, she used her relatives' home in the Caribbean to provide relief and support to her. Her first son lived with her sister while she lived up here with her second husband and their two sons-both born in NY. When she went through a divorce from her second husband and found herself not being able to supervise the two

younger sons due to her schedule as a nurse, she sent them to live with her sister. At some point all three sons returned to her in NYC. However, when she learned from a teacher that one of her son was getting close to a school mate who was a gang member, she chose to send the two younger sons back home to live with her sister again. Today her oldest son is living with her and attending college. She coped with the separation like other mothers but she also has the option of visiting them or sending for them to visit her in NYC, because she is a legal resident and has a higher income as a registered nurse.

My children lived with my oldest sister in Grenada who was a teacher. We hired someone to live in the house with my sister and my children. This person took care of the children. It was hard, I missed my boys and their growing pains. As a nurse sometimes you work long and difficult hours I thought it would be best if they lived and got an education back home. It was very difficult but I would send for them twice a year to come and visit and I will go back to visit once a year (018).

The literature on transnational parenting suggests that mothers deal with the emotional strain of being separated from their children in three ways: co-modification of love; repression of emotional strains; and rationalization of distance (Salazar-Parrenas, 2001).

Co-modification of love is defined as occurring when mothers try to make up for their absence by providing their children with material goods. For the mothers in this study, the concept of co-modification of love is definitely supported. Many of the mothers reported sending their children and family members money monthly or biweekly. They also reported sending barrels with material goods to their family as well.

It should be noted that barrels are used by transnational mothers and

other immigrants to send material goods to their families, but not every one uses barrels. Some use boxes because you can fill a box up quite faster than a barrel, so it is easier and less costly to send boxes and care packages home. However the barrel is a traditional way African Caribbean people send items to family members and it continues to be used by some. There are shipping companies in some of the neighborhoods that have a high number of African Caribbean people in NYC-such as Flatbush in Brooklyn and Wakefield in the Bronx, and Jamaica, Queens where shipping barrels internationally to the Caribbean has become the primary business. As a member of that community, the researcher witness this shortly after hurricane Ivan hit Grenada and Jamaica. Many organizations and individuals used these shipping businesses to ship food items and clothing to relatives back home to the West Indies.

Some mothers reported keeping barrels in their homes year round and whenever they had the money to get something they would buy it and put it in the barrel- such as clothes, toys, personal items. For some mothers the barrel signified their love and caring for their children and extended family members. In addition, these barrels mean that they are good providers-a noteworthy role in parenting (Cummings & Gildner, cited in Mahoney, 2004). For some of the women, being a good provider and taking care of their children's need helped them cope with the pain of separation. In addition sending money and barrels to family demonstrated love for one's children and family, not unlike parents in the United States who send their children in college or those away in the military care packages.

I moved to NYC and I found a job and was able to send money home and call my daughter regularly (007).

I sent money down every week (009).

I sent money regularly, I also I sent barrels. If someone was going home I would send gifts for them (002).

I was the parent who took care of all my children's needs. I sent money to take care of her. I sent her school supplies, pocket change, and clothes. I sent her everything (003).

I was always sending things to them. They never missed anything (001).

I sent money on the 15th and at the end of the month. I would send barrels (004).

I would send her things like clothes and toys. As a matter of fact I would send clothes and other things for everyone in the family, including my sister and her children and my father (005).

I sent money and barrels. She had everything. If I went to the store and I saw a skirt and I liked it I would buy five in different colors. One day I ran into a lady from home and she told me "you are raising a real princess home". You send her everything she doesn't want for anything. It made me feel good since I couldn't be there I could send things for her and speak to her on the phone (006).

I sent money home regularly. Every month I would send a money order and I also sent barrels (007).

I sent money frequently as well as barrels with clothes and other things for my children and mother. I wouldn't be able to do so if I had stayed home (008).

I sent money home regularly and I also sent barrels several times during the year (010).

I sent money and clothes home for her and the rest of the family (011).

I sent money once sometimes twice a month. I also sent barrels with clothes and food for them (013).

I sent money and clothes (014).

I sent money down monthly. I also sent clothes and toys and I visited twice (015).

I was mother and father. I sent money to her every month. I sent barrels for her and my family. I still send barrels to my family (020).

Another mother sent remittances to her child and her brothers and sisters. She saw herself as paying her siblings for the care of her son. She viewed the many things sent home as payment to her sibling for their time and work with her son.

I sent money to do everything for him. I paid my sisters and my brothers. I made sure everyone was taken care of to take care of him. I did everything for them back home. I sent money, sent food, clothes, everything. Twice a year I would send barrels. Sometimes I would send it by myself or with my mother and sister (016).

In addition to sending money home frequently and sending barrels at Christmas, another mother in the study sent items home whenever she knew someone was going home. This is not an unusual custom for these parents for this community.

I sent money every two weeks. I also sent barrels for Christmas. Sometimes if I knew someone was going back home, I will send something for him like sneakers, or jeans, whatever I can (017)

In addition to sending money for the care of her children, this mother paid someone in a nearby village to live with her children and to take care of the household chores because the children's caretaker was her sister who worked as a teacher.

I work and send money home monthly. I had to send money down for them and to pay the person who was working for me at home (018).

Another, less typical, living arrangement was engaged in by a mother who left her two children with two different caretakers. Her daughter who was much younger lived with her sister in one home and her son, who was eleven when she left him, lived with his father. Although she sent money and clothes home for both children, money was sent to her sister for the daily care of her daughter. This mother made it a point to send money to her son for the son's bank account-so he will have the money available to him whenever he needed it. In this case she supported them differently but equally.

I sent barrels for both my children and also my family. I wouldn't send something for my children without sending something for my sister or my relatives. I would also send money to my sister to take care of my daughter and I would send money for my son. I sent the check on my son's name so his father would take him to the bank and make sure he gave the money to my son or that my son knew I was sending money for him (019).

One mother revealed the long lasting impact of the persistent pain of separation-which was not healed by sending things home. She was both candid and insightful in stating that although she bought things for her daughter, she still felt the void and emptiness of the loss.

I would go out and buy her a lot of stuff but the longing and emptiness was still there (004).

Repression of emotional strains is another mechanism that these mothers used to cope with the separation and loss. It is defined as occurring among mothers' who deny or minimize the emotional difficulties of their children's experience due to the separation, but admit to their own emotional

strains resulting from the same separation. The findings in the study supported the literature that reports that many mothers minimized the emotional trauma of their children's experience with the separation. Some mothers believed that since the child or children were with the other parent or family members they were fine.

My children handled the separation better than me because they had their father and their grandparents right there with them. I was always sending things to them. They never missed anything (001).

One of the mothers reported that her daughter dealt with the separation well because years later when she was reunited with her child, she shared with her that she was fine. As the researcher analyzed the data, this same very mother reported that her daughter often cried on the telephone during the separation and her child's caretaker would often listen on the other line to their conversation. It seems evident that in this case this mother clearly finds it difficult emotionally to deal with the pain she caused her daughter and prefers to remember the experience in a well-defended, sanitized, way that is free from the emotional pain. We can imagine that she chose these more benign memories because to do anything different would be too much for her.

I think she dealt with it pretty good. When she came up she told me so (003).

In a similar vein another mother took refuge in the adage that 'children learn to adapt', she too reported that her son was fine because during the period of separation, he had children his age in the household where he lived. In using this description of his experience, she did not seem to take into consideration

that those children were with their parents and he was with strangers who were not even family members.

It wasn't that difficult for him. I had a good friend who took him. She had children his age. They made him feel comfortable. Children learn to adapt. He didn't feel lonely (009).

Knowing what we know about the developmental stages of a four-year-old child, this mother again refuses to look at the pain of separation from a child's perspective. Instead she chose to rationalize her child's experience even when her daughter cried and told her she missed her.

I think my daughter did fine. Sometimes she would cry and tell me she missed me. But other than that I think she handled it well because she was only four years old when I left her (005).

Sending children on vacation is another way some of the mothers in the study coped with children's pain and their guilt about the separation.

They did okay, because on two previous occasions they went to Canada on vacation for three months at a time (008).

One mother appeared to take particular pains to avoid seeing her daughter's sadness. This mother found it difficult to say good bye to her daughter and deal with her daughter's pain directly so she sent her on vacation so she wouldn't have to deal with her daughter's sadness.

My daughter was sad, I sent her to Trinidad for a vacation with her uncle just before I left because it made it easier to leave her (010).

Another mother took refuge in the overall outcome. She felt that her children's lives are better today due to her decision to migrate and leave them behind as opposed to staying with them and not being able to provide them with

the material goods. However, she alluded to having some insight into her children's pain when she said 'I wish I never have to make that decision again'.

Even though I wish I never have to make that decision again, I do think she had a better life at home than she would have living up here but it was very hard for me not being with her all the time (011).

This mother eventually began to let her guard down and was able to acknowledge that it was difficult for her children to be separated from her.

It was very difficult for them, but I think it all turned out okay (015).

One of the mothers interviewed was acutely aware of her children's feelings and the verbal and non-verbal reaction to her not being there in person for them. She revealed that each of her five children, dealt with her absence in different ways. Based on the time the researcher spent with this mother, it was clear to her that this mother was emotionally in touch with her children grief.

Kids have different ways of dealing with it. As I said some of them did okay, some of them fell back in their grades. They would say they miss me but I know what they miss, they miss sitting down and talking (002).

The **rationalization of distance** explains how migrant mothers use regulated communication (such as letters, telephone calls etc.) to ease the pain of physical distance. All of the mothers reported using telephone, letters, and cards and most recently email to communicate with their children.

According to the analysis of the data, the telephone is the most frequently used form of communication due to the immediacy of contact and the intimacy it provides. What was very revealing from the study is the ritualized way in which telephone calls are used. This supports the literature concerning the importance of regulated communication. The literature points out that there are so many

things that are out of the mothers control as it relates to parenting from a distance, the regulated communication provides the mothers with some control. There are also some practical aspects to regulating the communication. These practical aspects include cost, making the calls at a time when both the mothers and the children are relaxed and can speak (such as weekends)- when there is no work for the mothers and no school for the children.

I would call every day sometimes. Sometimes he wouldn't be there but he would know I called. He knows that I would call every day (016).

We talked a lot on the telephone. Every weekend- Saturdays and Sundays (003).

I called them all the times especially on weekends. But sometimes I would call during the week whenever I missed her I would call her (005).

I called every weekend and sometimes during the week as well (008).

One mother reported calling her daughter every other day. She also received support from her employers in the form of a calling card, which provided her with the ability to make calls with such frequency.

I would call my daughter every other day. I worked for a family in Long Island and they would give me \$30 a month in long distance calls and I would monitor it to make sure I didn't go over it (007).

In addition to frequent telephone calls, another mother also sent cards for special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas.

I called two sometimes three times a week to talk to him. I also sent him birthday cards, and Christmas cards (013).

The next four mothers used telephone calls and letters to communicate with their children. However the first of the four mothers had five children so her calls

were weekly. She also used letters as a form of communicating to her children both as a way of communicating with her and as a means of developing her children's writing skills. She evidently cherished these letters and reports cards and used them as a source of comfort to her when she was sad.

Every weekend I called. They write letters to me I had all the report cards. They would send me every report card. When I was sad I would go to the folder where I kept their letters and report cards and read them (002).

I stayed connected to my family by letters and telephone calls. I called twice a week. I always called on the weekend and once during the week. I also sent her cards and clothes (010).

I wrote letters and talked to them on the phone. Once a week we will talk and that was after they got a phone (004).

I talked to her every weekend. I wrote letters, I still have some of her letters (006).

This mother also used telephone and letters but as the mother above she used the letters to develop her child's writing skills.

I called regularly on the telephone and wrote letters, which was one way of helping her to develop her writing skills (011).

In addition to communicating daily, another mother sent cards on special occasions and also sent for her daughter to visit with her in the summer when she was out of school. Even though it was a financial burden on her to call so frequently and buy an airline ticket annually, she appeared dedicated to carrying it out.

I called on the telephone every day. I would also send cards for special occasions. I had my daughter come to visit during the summers. I never let her know it was a burden on me (014).

In another situation, one mother's family did not always have access to a telephone so she would first use letters. However when her mother got a telephone, she began calling. However due to the fact that her children were in three different homes, it was easier to use letters and to have her mother send messages to the other children.

I started out writing because we didn't have a phone in my mother's house at first and since my children were split up I had to make three different calls so I wrote letters a lot almost every week. I also called my mother after she got a phone and she would give messages to the other children for me (015).

Support Systems:

The role of the social network both in the United States and country of origin is significant to transnational mothers and their children. Social networks provide financial support, employment opportunities, emotional support to both these women and their children. They are also caretakers for the children left behind at home.

The Role of the Extended Family:

Women engaged in transnational parenting received support from extended family members living in the United States as well as from those who lived in their country of origin. In response to the question, "who was your biggest supporter while you were separated from your children?" African Caribbean transnational mothers reported they received support from several different people. In recounting those who they felt supported by, they included extended family members, friends, neighbors, their children's father, employers and God. Some of these people served as parental surrogates – who attended important

birthdays or graduations- or visited with the children in the home country when visa restrictions prohibited these mothers from being there.

For the twenty women in the study, sisters seem to be the people who they felt they could most rely on for support both in the United States and at home. For this group of mothers, sisters provided housing in NYC; advice and comfort when these mothers became discouraged; support in times of decision-making; in addition to serving as caretakers to children back home.

My sisters were my biggest supporters, I stayed with them when I first came up and they are always there for me (001).

My sister was my biggest supporter. She would give me advice. She would tell me to hang in there because the children will be here soon (008).

My sister is my biggest supporter. We would discuss issues and she would help me make decisions (011).

At first it was my sister back home who was taking care of my daughter. Then after I met and married my husband he became my biggest supporter.

One mother started out relying on her sister-in-law and friend at the beginning of the process, but later she became a member of a church, which then served as a source of strength and a good resource to her.

When I first came up, I stayed with my sister-in-law and she was supportive and also I had a close friend from home. Later, I joined this church and then I started to work for the church and I get a lot of support from the members of the church (002).

The mothers of the transnational mothers were also big supporters to their daughters, only second to sisters. These mothers may have been the first to migrate and send for the transnational mother or they were the caretakers for

their grandchildren back home. In some cases they were also the confidantes to their daughters.

I would speak with my mother. I had some very good neighbors from back home. I would go to their house and spend time with them. My daughter would spend weekends with them. They would buy things for her (003).

My mom and my sister cared for my daughter (010).

One particular mother experienced her employer as a supporter because her employer sponsored her in order to “get my papers”-legal resident. This mother understood the reciprocity of this transaction. Her employer needed her to continue to provide consistent care to her children.

My mother and my employers were my supporters, the people I worked with helped me get my papers because they wanted me to stay with them. They didn't want to lose me (015).

Extended family members such as aunts and grandparents are also big supporters for transnational mothers and their children. In addition to providing advice to the mothers, they were also a source of comfort when the mothers were upset. Also, in one case, a family member visited the children of a transnational mother when she couldn't because she wasn't a legal resident and was restricted in her ability to travel back and forth.

My aunt was my biggest supporter. She was always there for me. She gave me advice, she supported me when I first came up. She went home around the time it was my daughter's birthday to see her even though I could not go home (006).

My grandmother and grandfather were very supportive to me. Whenever I was upset or worried, I would talk to them and they would give me encouragement (014).

Sometimes a woman was fortunate enough to have several siblings supporting her. One woman had two sisters who were supportive to her. One took care of her children for her and the other was there for her in other ways. Her father was also very available to her for emotional support and he too provided help with her sons because he lived in close proximity to the sister that was the caretaker for her sons.

My father and my two sisters. They ensure that everything that a child needs. My older sister supported me emotionally. My family was there for me in every way except financially. My sister was an excellent caretaker to my sons. She got them into music lessons (018).

Another mother's response to the support system questions was two-fold- as was the answers of many of the mothers who answer this question. This mother's aunt sent remittances to the children back home and have also provided encouragement to her niece. In addition however, this mother credits God for her source of strength and her success.

God and my aunt in Canada. She would encourage me to hang in there when things got rough or it became unbearable to handle. She would say to me " you have come to far to give it all up". She also sent clothes home to my daughter and she sometimes sent money as well (007).

For the next two mothers having good friends to support them, by encouraging them when they needed it and being there to listen when the transnational mother wanted to talk was also helpful.

My best friend was my biggest supporter. She gave me the strength to stay and fight (009).

I had a good friend and we would talk about things when it happened (013).

Another mother relied on her boyfriend who was the father of her daughter and later became her husband.

My boyfriend whom I later married (005).

The next mother's case was very unique for transnational mothers because her employers helped her change her immigration status from undocumented to legal resident, they helped her send for her son and later assisted her financially by giving her the down payment for her first home.

My employers were my biggest supporters; they brought my son up every summer to visit. They provided us with food and loan us money to buy my first home (012).

At the other extreme another mother appeared to be more isolated. She wasn't able to easily identify someone as a supporter to her. She was quick to inform the researcher that she kept to her self. Because her mother was sick she did not want to burden her but as she continued to speak she realized that her grandmother was there for her to call and speak to.

I really didn't have anybody. I kept it all to myself. My mother was getting old and sickly. I wasn't too close to my sister. We were independent. I didn't have anyone I could depend on. My grandmother was the only person I could depend on so I would call her. My friends were not very sympathetic even though they were in the same situation. They didn't understand. Some people felt it easier to leave their children. I felt that my son was my responsibility and my duty was to take care of my son, not anyone else (019).

A second mother reported not having anyone to support her. This mother felt she had no one she could depend on or she could receive support from. At the time of the interview she had just sent for her son because he lived with her sister-in-law who was not a good caretaker to her son. This mother received calls and complaints from her sister-in-law frequently about her son. She also

felt that her own sister was more of a burden than a help to her.

Back home I have no one. I really don't have anyone. I sometimes talk to my mother but I don't want to stress her out with my problems because she is sick. My sister back home is always telling me her problems and asking me for things she sees on television. When people here you're in America, they think it's a bag of roses (020).

The Role of the Mother's Employer:

It is this researcher's belief that employment and therefore employers played a significant role in these women's lives. As was stated earlier, a primary reason for migrating was because these women wanted a "better life," which most often referred to better financial opportunities. It is also the belief of the researcher that if their employers supported them, it would contribute positively to the women's ability to be successful in their role as transnational parents. The researcher's hypothesis is based on the fact that many of the women worked in their employers' home and were engaged in reproductive or emotional labor (Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Avila, 1997 Salazar-Parrenas, 2001). The term emotional labor can be used to describe the employment of women engaged in caring for children and doing "live in" work. This type of labor lends itself to a higher level of engagement with their employer and the employer's family that is not necessary for women engaged in productive work (office work) or work in a neutral environment outside the employer's household.

The responses were varied to the question, 'describe what your relationship was like with your employer during the time your children were living in your country of origin?' Fifty-nine percent responded that their relationship with their employer was very good or good. Twenty-six percent responded it

was not good while 15 percent responded that they had several jobs during that period and their relationship with some employers were good and some were bad or not good.

For those mothers who reported having a very good relationship with their employer, they experienced the relationship to be reciprocal in nature. For example, one woman reported that her employer allowed her to take some time to study or do her homework. Another one indicated that her employer would let her call her family back home or give her gifts for her children. Another reason why some of these women reported having a very good relationship with their employer was because for some, their employers sponsored them to get 'their papers' or change their immigration status from undocumented to legal resident. One woman was adopted by her employers because when they went to sponsor her they realized that she was not quite eighteen years old. Another woman was a nurse in a clinic and appreciated the relationship with her employer because her supervisor advocated for her especially when she needed time to go home to visit her children and her family.

It was very good. I would start at 12 noon to pick up their little daughter from school. They were okay with me doing my studying so sometimes I would read and get my homework done" (003).

It was a very good relationship. Most of the time, I worked with a family in Long Island. They would let me call home and use their phone. At times they would buy my children things (008).

My relationship with my employer was very good. It started out as employer/employee and graduated to adopted parents/adopted daughter. They were supportive to me during the time my son was at home and even after he arrived (012).

My relationship with my employer was very good. They helped me get my papers and they helped me send for my children (015).

I worked for the city clinic. I had a very good relationship with my boss. She would advocate for me to get what I needed. Whether or not it extra time off to go home or to be with my children (018)

Those women that reported having a good relationship had similar responses to those who reported having a very good relationship. One woman liked the fact that her employer gave her gifts for her children on their birthdays and at Christmas. Another appreciated her employer for letting her take her vacation at peak time so she could go home to visit with her daughter. One woman worked with the elderly and reported that they loved her and when some of them died, they left her a token of appreciation. Another woman indicated that she worked as a home health aide and she had a good relationship with her employers.

I had a good relationship with the people I worked with at the time. They helped me a lot. They would give me gifts for my daughter at Christmas and on her birthday to send to her (005).

I was upfront with them. I let them know exactly who I am. I told them I had a daughter living in the West Indies and for the most part they were supportive (010).

I had a good relationship with my employers. They would allow me to take my vacation at peak time so I could go home to visit my daughter (011).

I had good relationships with my employers. I took care of the elderly. Everybody I worked with who died left something for me. They loved me to death (014).

It wasn't too bad. I worked as a home health aide through an agency so I didn't have much problems with my employers. I hardly saw them. My relationship with the people I worked with was okay (016).

For those who reported not having a good relationship with their employer, or complained about their employer, one theme prevailed. They worked as live-in caretakers and felt exploited because they were expected to work very long hours. They had no protection because they were undocumented. Here are two examples of what these women experienced:

One of the things we are used to at home is that we are used to being honest. When I first came up here I worked as a live-in babysitter. If the person you are working for isn't honest they can take advantage of you. They can use you also. So my first job, I wanted to work, I wanted to work well so they would keep me and the job will last a long time. I worked there for almost a year. I was working long hours. One day I went to visit some friends and they asked me about my job and I started to tell them what I did and the amount of hours I worked and they said 'my god they are taking advantage for of you'. I was working as a babysitter and a housekeeper. I would take the children to school, come back and clean the house do laundry and everything, then I would go pick up the kids after school and come back and work some more. It never stopped. I did that for a few years because you have to do what you have to do. I learned they used to have two people doing what I was doing but when I got there they had me do everything. I came from home and I am used to working so I did not know they were taking advantage of me because you need the work so you do what you had to (002).

I came here in September of 1992, and started working on the 14th. They were nice to me but it was a lot of work. It was a live-in job and I worked constantly. After my children came I left the job because I wanted to spend time with my children. I used to come home late on Fridays and go back to work on Sunday evening. Sometimes that was hard because on Sundays I would get together with my family and my sister-in-law would cook and we would sit down and have dinner but I couldn't do that because I had to leave at 4pm to get to work on Sundays (019).

This mother felt exploited she was required to work as both a live-in babysitter and housekeeper. However, the experience motivated her to turn her work experience into one that gave her more control. She decided to work as a cleaning consultant, which gave her the ability to be more independent. In this position, she recruited clients and cleaned their homes but had more independence because she was able to set her hours and her wages. In her new position, this mother began to develop more positive relationships with her employers than she had with numerous employers in her live-in positions. I did not tell them I had a child. I changed jobs every two weeks because I could

not work under some of the circumstances. I could not deal with people telling me to clean the kitchen at midnight or to keep working as long as they are up. I worked as a live-in and they expect you to work non-stop so I rebelled. I did not stay on a job for very long for the first six months. After that I started cleaning houses and that worked better for me. I had one woman I cleaned for her every Friday and she was very good. She would talk to me and I told her about my daughter back home and she offered to go and get my daughter for me but then we decided that would not be a good idea because she was white and all (004).

This next mother described working in two different jobs and felt taken advantaged of in both. One was in an office where she worked long hours and was paid very little. The other was as a live-in where she worked all the time and had very little time to herself.

I had different employers. My first job I worked in a garage doing paper work. My boss was okay but the salary was no good. I was paid very little and the money had to pay for rent, send money home and everything. I stayed in the job for six months then I left. I stayed home for a while, and then I got a job babysitting in Manhattan, which paid more.

In my second job I worked in a live-in position for a doctor and his wife babysitting. I would work from Tuesday at 8am to Sunday at 1pm. It was difficult. If the baby woke up five times during the night I had to be up five times during the night. My employers were not bad people. They were okay, but she was crazy. She had a mouse and she would have me get up every day at 5am in the morning to mop the floor everyday before the family woke up and came down stairs. I tell you America will make you or break you (017).

One woman experienced firsthand that some employers and coworkers were anti-immigrant. Some of these employers made derogatory comments to her in the workplace. Some of her coworkers were very competitive. As a result of these experiences, she felt restricted to speak as she wished in the workplace.

I had a lot of little jobs. No one cared to ask about it. I did domestic work, factory work and I also worked in a hotel. It was tough. In some of the jobs people would say, "why don't you go back from where you come from?" (009).

The Role of the Children's Father:

The overall report about the fathers of the children left behind was mixed. Approximately half of the mothers indicated that the fathers of their children did not have a relationship with their children, while the other half reported their children had a good relationship with their fathers. In some cases these fathers were the caretakers or lived close by and visited their children regularly. Here are some positive responses regarding the role of the children's fathers:

He worked and took care of our children (001).

My daughter and my husband were very close. He missed her a lot and was very unhappy to be separated from her (005).

My daughter's father went to see her almost every day. He was always around. Later he went to Canada and got married and sent for her to live with him and his wife but it didn't work out so he sent her to live with me in New York (006).

My daughter saw a lot of her father while she lived back home because they lived near to each other (010).

Her father lives in Antigua and he is very involved in her life. They have a great bond. He often took/drove her to some of the activities she had to get to (011).

My son lived close by to his father and they saw each other often (013).

My son and his father were close when they lived back home because they lived together until his father moved here. As a matter of fact they are still very close that's where he is now. He is visiting his father today (017).

His father played a good role. He saw him regularly; he made sure he went to school. He kept in contact with me. My son would say I have a father and a grandfather and they are very much the same so I don't want to get them upset at the same time. Sometimes his father would take him to football games. His father also kept in touch with me and let me know what was happening with my son (016).

One of my daughters lived with her father and his parents and she was

very close to him. The others didn't (015).

My ex-husband took care of my son because he lived with him and he visited our daughter (019).

My son lived with his father and still is very close. As a matter of fact that's where he is now. He is visiting his father today (017).

Several of the mothers reported that their children's fathers were not supportive to them or their children. Many of interviewee's did not want to talk about their children's father, so they kept their responses as brief as possible. Sometimes, this resulted in just one-word responses. Others elaborated a little more but kept their response very succinct.

He did not play a major role in my children's life (002).

None, he didn't play a role. I don't want to talk about it (003).

Her father was not the parenting kind of person. She heard from him once a year or at Christmas or her birthday. He migrated to NY a year after I left. We were not together (004).

None, he played no role (007).

No role at all. That is why sometimes they didn't have money to get to school (008).

None, he was not involved (009).

His father put us out when my son when he was six months old (012).

He didn't play much of a role. He passed by once in a while and she would hardly see him (020).

None (014).

The Role of the Children's Caretaker:

Transnational parenting depends heavily on five primary factors; (1) a migrating parent; (2) children of the migrant; (3) caretakers for the children; (4) employment in the host country and lastly (5) remittances. Caretakers for the children of the women in this study have been mainly relatives such as aunts, grandparents, fathers, cousins and in some cases close friends of the mothers. Thirty percent of the children lived with their aunts; 25 percent lived with grandparents; 20 percent lived with friends; 20 percent lived with fathers; and 5 percent lived with a cousin. In two instances, children had to move from their original caretakers to a second caretaker. In one situation, the child originally lived with his father but after a few years his father too migrated and the child was placed with his paternal aunt. In the second situation a child lived with her cousin but due to maltreatment in that home, the child went to live with a guardian.

A major part of the transnational parent's role is refereeing arguments or disagreements between the caretaker and the mother's children. However, the mothers were very careful not to take sides. Many of the mothers reported being careful not to take sides when these disagreements occurred because they felt it was important to "keep the peace". So they spent a great deal of their time trying to maintain the relationship that existed between their children and the caretaker. This was stressful for them because they depended on the caretaker to parent their children and did not want to upset him/her.

Most of the caretakers of the children managed to provide a stable home environment for the children until the mothers were ready and able to send for their children. Other caretakers were unable to continually take care of the children who had been left with them, and asked the mothers to send for their children prematurely. The impact of this was unplanned reunification.

The mothers in the study, understandably, viewed the relationship between the transnational parent and the caretaker as critical. Transnational parents depend on their caretakers to provide a stable home for their children so that the parent can have peace of mind when providing for their children and the caretakers. They know that this relationship requires that they work hard and long hours in order to send remittances home in the form of money and material goods for both their children and the caretaker. In most cases, the caretakers rely on the money to financially support themselves and their own family members, along with the children of the transnational parent. The responses to the question "What was your relationship like with your children's caretaker?" were as follows:

This first mother reported not only having a good relationship with her husband and her parents who were the caretakers, but she was also told by her mother that her way of taking care of the children included teaching them so they would be good children.

I had a very good relationship because it was my husband and my parents. My mother would tell me that she is teaching them so they would grow up to be good children and when they come to live with me in the US I can teach them the way I wanted to (001).

This next mother reported having a good relationship with her mother and being appreciative of her for taking the responsibility of caring for her five children. However, she does admit that their ways of disciplining her children were different at times and that included having to confront her mother on how to handle her son's acting out behavior.

We had a good relationship. I always thanked her for taking care of my children for me because she didn't have to do it. I never sent things home for my children without sending something for my mother and my brothers. My brothers did not live in the house but they would stop by and check on them for me. Disagreements were handled by talking about it. Sometimes we did not agree on discipline of my big son. When I called she would say when you send things for the children don't send anything to him. Then I would listen and say, don't say that, its difficult enough for him not to have me there with him, so I cannot send everyone else something and not him. I told her I would speak with him. She could see my point but I respected her but I would not send discipline him the way she wanted me to do by not sending my son gifts (002).

This mother recalled having a good relationship with her child's caretaker and keeping in touch with her even after her daughter left her and moved to NYC.

We were very good friends and we got along. We kept in touch even after my daughter came here. We didn't have any disagreements. (003).

This mother admitted that she did not want to upset her daughter's caretakers who were her sister and her family so she did what she had to for her daughter's sake.

I left her home with my older sister and her family. We did not have any arguments. She was there with my daughter that I did not want to upset her (004).

The next two mothers experienced their relationships with their children's caretakers as a reciprocal relationship. The caretakers took care of the mothers' children and the mothers took care of the caretakers and their families.

My relationship with my sister and father were fine. We did not have disagreements at all. I know they were taking good care of my daughter. We are a very close family. They took good care of my daughter and I took care of them by sending them things for the house or for them (005).

It was very good. We didn't have any disagreements or anything. I needed them to take care of my daughter and they did a good job. I still look out for them even today (020).

Here again is an example of another reciprocal relationship between the transnational mother and the caretakers. However in this case, this mother reported being the oldest of her sibling group and being their caretaker in her mother's absence. When the transnational mother migrated to NYC she depended on them to return the favor of caring for her son. She also provided financial support to her son's caretakers who are family members as well.

Good relationship, very good. My father and my brothers and sisters took care of him while I was here. I used to take care of my younger brothers and sister when my mother was here. I am the oldest girl so they saw me as their mother in some cases. So they saw my son more like a younger brother. He was the first grand child (016).

This mother was much more explicit than most others when she said I had to "keep the peace". She communicated that she depended on her sister to care for her child and she did not want to do anything to upset her or jeopardize the situation that would warrant having to move her child to a second caretaker. This is a very common concern for many of these mothers.

I had a good relationship with my sister because I had to do what I can to keep the peace (006).

Here is another mother who reported having a good relationship with her mother but indicated that she was mindful of the fact that she was dependent on her mother to take care of her child and didn't feel she could disagree with her.

I had a very good relationship with her because it was my mother and I knew she was taking good care of them the same as she did with me. I didn't feel I could disagree with her because I wasn't there to do it myself. I had confidence in her parenting skills after all she was mother and father to me (008).

The two next mothers reported having good relationships with her children's caretakers who were their best friends.

We had a good relationship. She was my best friend. We did not have disagreements (009).

We were friends and I knew they were taking care of him. I trusted them (013).

This mother also reported having a good relationship with her mother and sister who cared for her daughter in her absence but also stated that their discipline practices varied from hers but was not able to share her feeling on it with them because her primary purpose was to "keep the peace".

My mother and sister took care of my daughter. We had a good relationship. We didn't have any disagreements although I didn't believe in spanking and they did. But I had to keep the peace (010).

This parent was very agreeable with the way she was raised and had faith in the way her parents were raising her child to be respectful and obedient.

My relationship with my parents was great. We worked together. We did not have any disagreements. They are my parents and they raised me to be respectful and obedient and I know they would raise her the same, so I had no problem with the way they raised her (011).

His father cared for this child and the mother reported having a good relationship with her son's father.

My son's father was who took care of my son. Our relationship was fine. He did a good job taking care of our son. When my son's father left, then he went to live with his aunt, his father's sister (017).

This child was left with her mother's grandparents. Although this mother

had a good relationship with her grandfather, her relationship with her grandmother was not good but it dated back to her childhood. She reported not having any disagreements but implicitly suggested she kept the peace because she needed their help.

My relationship was good with them, we did not have disagreements. I did not have a good relationship with my grandmother because my mother got pregnant with me when she was 14 and my grandmother never forgave me. But my grandfather always treated me well and he treated my daughter well also. My younger sister was also a good caretaker to my daughter (007).

This mother placed her three children with three different caretakers. One was her mother whom she had a good relationship, the second child was placed with her girl friend who she also had a good relationship with. But her youngest daughter lived with her father and his parents and that relationship was adversarial.

I got along with my mother and the caretaker of my second daughter but I didn't get along with my daughters father's parents where my last daughter lived. I did not communicate with them at all. In fact I had to kidnap my daughter from them to bring her up to NYC (015).

This mother had to change her child's caretaker. In this case her daughter was maltreated by her caretaker who was a cousin.

At first I got along with my cousins but after she started to mistreat my daughter our relationship ended. She would take things away from my daughter. When my daughter moved to a friend's home, it was different because when I had to send things for my daughter I had to send things for her and her children as well and that was a financial burden on me (014).

This mother did not have to change her son's caretaker but she admitted that her relationship with her mother was a very difficult one. She reported agreeing with her mother because she felt she had no choice.

We tolerated each other. I was always a problem to my mother even to this day. There is a lot of pent up anger. I agreed with her on everything because I had no choice (012).

Although, most of the mothers had a good relationship with their respective children's caretakers, it is also implicitly suggested that many of these parents, because of their reliance on these caretakers, did not want to do or say anything that might jeopardize this relationship. Many avoided asserting their own beliefs to these caretakers- even when the caretaker's beliefs stood in contradiction to their own. An example of this, which was cited in the preceding remarks by several of the mothers, was the difference in beliefs related to the issue of discipline. A few of the mothers felt that they needed to tolerate these different discipline practices in order to "keep the peace" and stabilize the environment for their children. They wanted to avoid their children being moved again- and placed with different caretakers- if at all possible.

Components of Transnational Parenting:

An in-depth exploration into the phenomenon of transnational parenting has illuminated several unique features of this practice. First, it requires a great deal of sacrifice, focus and commitment on the immigrant mother's part to improve her life and that of her family who remain in the country of origin.

Many transnational mothers from the English-Speaking Caribbean work in low paying jobs and are expected to financially support themselves in NYC and their families in their country of origin. Support of family frequently means providing for both the children of these mothers as well as extended family

members or caretakers in cases where the caretakers are not the extended family members.

Remittances:

Financial support or remittances are often sent in the form of monthly or biweekly checks for food, in addition to the sending of barrels (see p. 24), which can contain clothes and dry goods. Many of the women prefer to buy goods in NYC because it costs far less than it would cost if their family had to buy these items back home. In many cases these women sent money to purchase food, pay for their children's education and for repair and upgrade of the homes their children lived in. When family members are ill or have an emergency, the migrant is expected to financially contribute to the family's expenses.

These women contribute to the global economy both in the United States and in their country of origin. Their work and purchases here stimulates the economy in the U.S. When money is sent back home and purchases are made for food and other items, there, too, the Caribbean economy is stimulated. Many of these countries depend on these remittances for their own country's economy.

Data from the Bank of Jamaica (BoJ) have shown that more than US\$3.3 billion has been privately transferred to Jamaica through remittance companies, commercial banks and building societies during the past four and a half years (Jamaican Gleaner One Love, 2006). According to the United Nations, in 2000 remittances from Trinidadian nationals working abroad total \$45 million. The United Nations also reported that in 2004, Barbados nationals sent US\$113

million and the estimate for 2006 is \$226 million (Best, 2006). Grenada on the other hand was reported of having \$112.4 millions in transfers, which included remittances (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2335.htm). According to Orozco (2003), Guyana's remittances represent 10 percent of the country's GDP.

On the other hand, for the developed countries, the United States is the main country of origin of workers' remittances to developing and transitional countries, but these outflows is a mere small item in the country's balance of payments. Expressed as a percentage of total imports, the outflow of remittances is particularly large in Saudi Arabia (30% of total import bill) and other resource rich countries in the Middle East. It also exceeds 5 % of total imports in countries as diverse as Israel, Kazakhstan and Switzerland (UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2003, tables 6.3A and 6.3B).

Remittances from the Women in the Study:

As indicated in their statements on pages 115 many of the mothers in the study sent remittances weekly, biweekly and monthly in the form of checks, money orders or cash transfers through companies such as Western Union and its affiliates. All the mothers reported sending care packages to their children and of course they frequently sent barrels, which contained material goods. At times if the mothers are aware of someone going back home to their country for vacation or business they would give that person gifts to take to their children.

There are many examples of remittances (see section on co-modification of love on pages 113-115), below are two examples of mothers who sent money and materials goods to their children.

I would send her things like clothes and toys. As a matter of fact I would send clothes and other things for everyone in the family, including my sister and her children and my father (005).

I sent money home regularly. Every month I would send a money order and I also sent barrels (007).

It is also important to note that not only did these mothers send money to care for their children but they also sent money and materials goods to their extended family and their children's caretakers as well.

I sent barrels for both my children and also my family. I wouldn't send something for my children without sending something for my sister or my relatives. I would also send money to my sister to take care of my daughter and I would send money for my son. I sent the check on my son's name so his father would take him to the bank and make sure he gave the money to my son or that my son knew I was sending money for him (019).

Staying Connected:

Mothers engaged in transnational parenting stay connected to their children and extended family members by telephone, cards, letters, emails and faxes. Many of the mothers used multiple ways of communicating with the telephone being the most frequently utilized means of communication. A few of the mothers brought their children to visit them in NYC-either during the summer when they were out of school or during the Christmas season. However, telephone calls appeared to be used as a primary means of communication. These calls can be viewed as taking on the aspect of a ritualized event- in that they occurred at specified days and times throughout the parent-child separation. Often these calls were made once a week usually on the weekend (see section on rationalization of distance on pages 120-121).

I would call them every Sunday once a week sometimes during the week. Usually Sundays after church I will call them (001).

I called my son once a week, usually on weekends (012).

I would call twice a week. It was like a ritual (009).

The study revealed that although the telephone was a good way of staying connected it also was a way both the mother and child relived the pain of separation. Many of the mothers reported crying with their children on the telephone. Recently with the increased usage of the computers, one mother reported communicating with her teenage son via email. Although this form of communication is relatively new for this part of the region, the researcher anticipates that it would be a popular trend especially for school age children and adolescents. It is also inexpensive and fast. The only thing that it does not have is the intimacy of that the telephone has but with camcorders that too may change.

The Core of the Conversation:

Communication in transnational parenting is critical to both the parents and their children because it increases the ability of both parties to stay connected. Telephone communication, provides immediacy and intimacy. For many of these mothers, it is preferable to letters or cards because hearing and speaking on the phone can provide a profound connection through both the familiar words and expressions used, and in hearing the voice of one's loved one. Two added factors that have contributed to the volume of telephone usage by this population, (as opposed to the sending of letters,) are the availability and

relative inexpensiveness of phone cards and the use of cell phones, which increases accessibility on both sides.

Parenting from a distance via telephone for these mothers presented a multitude of challenges. As revealed in the study, many of the mothers felt guilty that they were not physically present for their children. This may result in a reluctance to discipline their children over the phone-or in having difficulty in saying no to requests made by their children.

Other challenges include difficulty in talking to their children about puberty related issues such as the changes in their bodies, good touch-bad touch, and sexuality. In studying the essence of the communication and weekly telephone conversations between these transnational mothers and their children, this researcher was able to identify several common themes.

The investigation revealed that one of the most common issues discussed in the conversations of the transnational parenting was the children's education. These conversations included topics such as how the child was doing in school, (grades, and homework,) what supplies were needed for school (such as books, markers etc.) and how were the child's relationships in the school setting (including those with their teachers and peers) This is not surprising, since as the literature indicates in chapter 2, the issue of education is a significant factor in the lives of the African Caribbean. In this regard, then, this study continues to support the literature.

Additional topics of conversation included requests by the children for materials goods (toys and clothes, money for school books and school supplies) and discussions concerning the child's friends, extended family and church.

Also, many of the mothers discussed behavioral issues with their children. Being obedient, and respectful to elders especially their children's caretakers was a general theme and a frequent request of the mothers of their children.

However, the telephone was most often used to communicate attachment by conveying to the children how much they were cared for and loved. One parent stated that she would also ask her daughter how her caretaker treated her.

The first two mothers engaged in conversations with their children that were related to family, friends, church, community, politics and school. The conversations about school varied. It included homework, grades, and schoolwork and for the second mother she had the same teachers as her son, so they discussed conversations about the teachers themselves.

We talked about everything. We talked about what was going on in school mostly. We also talked about family stuff. They talked about what was going on in school and what was happening with their friends (001).

We talked about what he did in school. Back home he went to the same school as I did so we had some of the same teachers. So, we would discuss the teachers. Sometimes the teachers would tell him what I was like in school. We talked about the people in the community. We also talked about the politics. We talked about everything (016).

The next three mothers had relatively young children so they kept it relatively simple. They spent time telling their children, they loved them and they

told them that they were trying to bring them up to join them as well as conversations related to school and their children's friends.

He was young but when we spoke on the telephone, I would talk to him and tell him I loved him. He would tell me about his friends and what was happening in school (009).

I would always talk to him and tell him I loved him (013).

I would tell her that I loved her and that I was fixing her papers for her to come up (007).

The next four mothers had teenagers and engaged in conversations that were age-appropriate. In addition to discussions regarding school, family and friends, these mothers discussed issues related to puberty.

We talked about how they were doing in school. About them going to church because I would call them after they come from church on Sundays. We also talked sometimes about her menstrual and about boyfriends (008).

We had a lot of conversations. I spoke to her about menstruation and about having breast. We frequently speak about homework and schoolwork. I sent her books for reading and we would speak about the books (010).

We talked about boyfriends. She asked about any and everything that came up in her daily life in school or in the house she lived in. We talked about the treatment she received at my cousin's (014).

I remembered when I was going through puberty I was ashamed to tell my mom. So I talked to my son about girls, sex and condoms (017).

For the next two mothers, they too reported talking about school related issues but a significant issue for them with their children was communicating to their children about appropriate behaviors befitting them such as respecting their elders and women, and not giving their caretakers problems. The topic of children respecting and obeying adults is also supported in the literature in chapter two related to child rearing practices.

Sometimes when I spoke to my son I would speak to him about how to be a young man. How to grow up and be a good young man. Not to get into trouble. Be respectful of elders and women. We talked about school and homework (019).

I will call her and asked about school. How is she behaving and I told her don't give them any problems (020).

This mother was consciously seeking to find out how her children were feeling when she spoke to them. She also took the time to write them because with five children it wasn't always possible to speak with each one every week for very long, so she made sure they received letters regularly and she expected them to respond by letter. Her goal was to communicate with them individually but also to teach and encourage their reading and writing skills.

I asked them how they were feeling and how they were doing in school. I would write each one of them a letter and I would asked them to read it and I would ask them questions in the letter and asked them to answer their question so they would answer their letter (002).

This mother continued her dialogue about the difficulties of not being able to hold or touch her child. She also recalled her daughter asking her 'when are you coming for me?' which was followed by an emotional outburst.

I would talk to her on the phone, promise her stuff, tell her how much I loved her and she will say "yes" but you can't hold her, make eye contact, kiss her to let her know. She always asked "when are you coming for me?" and we would both cry on the phone (003).

The conversations between this mother and her teenage daughter were very frequent. One of the uniqueness of this mother's relationship with her daughter was the fact that her daughter was involved in beauty pageants similar to the mother. This common experience bond them and they would spend most of their conversations preparing and planning for one event after the other.

Most days I would call in the mornings and at nights. We would discuss what she is going to wear. If there were a special event we would discuss what she would wear and how she would prepare. For example, she represented Antigua in a pageant and I prepared her on the telephone and she won. I went down for the event. We are very close (011).

This parent reported that it was uneasy for her to speak to her child on the telephone.

It's very uncomfortable to parent your child from a distance. You call and talk about school (012).

This parent not only discussed issues related to school with her boys but they frequently had request for items they wanted her to send them.

We talked about how are the family doing and how school is going. They would ask me for different things they want such as computer games (018).

Providing Emotional Support:

Transnational mothers frequently provide emotional support to their children through their weekly telephone calls. As noted earlier, they often expressed their love for their children during these calls. They also comforted their children when they found out that their children were upset, provided advice to them when needed and, at times, disciplined them. Frequently, they communicated to their children about school matters, and attempted to teach them the changes in their bodies. Here are some responses to the question, "how do you let your children know you love them?"

The first two mothers reported they did not grow up in their household hearing the words 'I love you'. So they did not use it as much with her children back home, however when they migrated to the U.S. and saw mothers telling

their children 'I love you' as often as they did, they then began to use it with their children. This is clearly a positive part of the acculturation experience.

By telling them. When you come to this country and you see people say to their children, "I love you." You want to do the same. At home I did not say I love you as much but they knew I loved them (001).

I tell them I love them. As a child I didn't here it, but it's a generational issue. I tell them I love them and they say it to me too (018).

The next seven mothers reported that they would tell their children on the telephone frequently that they loved them. It was part of their regular conversation with their children.

I would tell her I loved her and let her know that. Everything was done on the telephone (003).

I told my daughter as much as I can how much I loved her. I would tell her that over and over again (005).

You talk to your child a lot on the phone. You tell her you love her (006).

He was young but when we spoke on the telephone, I would talk to him and tell him I loved him (009).

I would always talk to him and tell him I loved him (013).

I always told my daughter "don't worry darling, mommy loves you and I will always be there for you (014).

I would tell him I love you. I never forget to say that. Every conversation. Even today (016).

The next two mothers told their children that they loved them but connected it to the issue of reunification.

I would tell her that I loved her and that I was fixing her papers for her to come up (007).

I would tell them on the phone or in my letters that I loved them and they would be with me soon (008).

This mother reported that when she told her son she loved him, he complained to her that he was no longer a baby. Given his age, this young man's response is age appropriate.

I would tell him I loved him on the phone. My son will complain that I treat him as a baby (017).

This mother told her children she loved them on the telephone in addition to sending them cards on special occasions.

Whenever I spoke to them I would tell them that I loved them. I also sent them cards on their birthdays, Valentine's Day, Christmas and Easter (019).

This mother expressed her love by telling her daughter on the telephone but indicated that she also sent her things, which were also an expression of her love to her daughter.

Calling her and telling her I loved her and send money and books home for her. She knew I loved her because of the things that I did for her (020).

Comforting Children:

Overall, many of the mothers agreed that it was difficult to comfort their children on the telephone. Some mothers reported that they were able to provide comfort to their children when they were upset- but that there were some limitations. Many mothers relied on the children's caretakers to comfort their

children. Others reported that the children did not share with them that they were upset because they did not want to upset their mothers.

This mother reported that when she called on the expected days such as the weekends her children focused on discussing only the good things but if she called outside of the norm, they were more likely to share with her what was brothing them. She was also relieved to have her husband there for children whenever they were upset.

They didn't let me know if they were upset but if I called on a Wednesday or Friday outside of the ordinary. They would tell me more about the things that were upsetting them. Other than that when I called on weekends they only focused on the good things. I think they would tell their father or my parents about the things that upset them (001).

The next three mothers found talking to be a good way of comforting their children when they were upset.

I would stay hours on the phone talking to her. I would ask her about everything and she would tell me what made her sad. But I always had to remember that I wasn't there to be with her and I did not like to make it worse for her when I hung up the phone. So I always had to bear that on my mind (003).

Whenever my daughter spoke to me she would get sad and cry and I would talk (006).

Whenever she was upset we would talk about it (011).

This next mother found herself crying on the telephone with her daughter whenever her daughter was upset about something.

We cried together on the phone (004).

These four mothers reported finding it difficult comforting their children on the telephone and relied on the caretakers as intermediaries.

That was difficult for me. It's hard to comfort your child by phone. I relied on my sister and my father to do it (005).

I would just leave him alone. If he explained he was upset I know he only gets more upset if I talked about it, so I would wait for him to let me know if he wanted to talk about it. I also knew he had my father to talk to (016).

My sister may call and say that something happened and one of them is acting out and I will try to get them to talk to me. It's difficult because they don't talk much. They talk to my father a little more. He is strict but he talks to them (018).

This is also very hard to do as well. Sometimes they wouldn't let me know that they were upset. I had a good friend in the neighborhood and they would sometimes confide in her and she would let me know what was really going on (008).

This parent knew her daughter well enough to know that when she was upset she became quiet and she would have to pry it out of her. At times she was successful and there were times when she wasn't. But she kept talking to her daughter to find out what was bothering her.

When my daughter was upset she would be quiet and not speak to anyone or me. I would talk to her and tell her not to be upset. Sometimes she would tell me what was bothering her but at times she wouldn't, but I would keep talking to her. It is not easy to comfort your child from a distance because you don't know what she is thinking. I would talk until my chest would hurt (007).

The next two mothers were not able to determine when their respective children were upset. One reported her child did not let her know when he was upset and the other reported that her son was happy to please her so he chose not to let her know he was upset.

He didn't let me know if he was upset (009).

He was happy to please me, as I was happy to please him. We made each other happy even though I was in pain (012).

This mother was able to determine when her child was upset because he would cry, but she would respond by telling her not to cry because it wouldn't bring her mother home. Again this mother comfort to her child was connected to reunification.

If she was upset she would cry but I would tell her not to cry it would not bring mommy home (010).

This mother relied on praying with her son while she was comforting him. She also used tears when nothing else worked and because her son did not want to upset her he would forgo his pain in fear of upsetting his mother.

When he was upset, I would talk to him and I will tell him lets pray. I would cry it off. He would calm down when he heard me crying because he wouldn't want me to be stressed out (017).

This mother quickly identified that her son was upset because his stepmother mistreated him. However because she depended on her son's stepmother to take care of him because his father was gone a lot, she did not deal with the stepmother but instead focused on her son's behavior and how it contributed to the stepmother's actions against him.

Whenever my son was upset because his father's wife didn't treat him right, I would tell him 'don't give her any rudeness'. I would encourage him to speak to his father because she pretended to like him when his father was around and treated him badly when his father wasn't around (019).

This parent chose to focus on the positives. So she comforted her daughter by telling her everything is going to be alright.

Telling her everything is going to be all right. Tell her nice things. Tell her we will be together soon (020).

Advising Children:

Many of the mothers also admitted that it was difficult to provide advice to their children from a distance. Some of the mothers stated that it was difficult to give advice to their children because they were too young. However, many of the mothers reported that in spite of these obstacles they still tried to give advice. Others relied on caretakers and extended family members and friends to provide advice to their children.

The next six mothers reported that their children were too young to be given advice and far too young to ask for advice.

Because of her age there wasn't much need for advice (003).

She wasn't old enough to ask for advice (005).

My daughter was too young to ask for my advice (006).

He was too young for me to give him advice. He also did not stay there too long (008).

She was too young to give her advice (009).

I didn't give any advice (015).

The next two mothers' daughters were teenagers and asked them for advice and therefore the mothers were happy to respond to their children. One daughter was faced with making a decision between joining a steel band or the choir. The other daughter was interested in participating in a national pageant.

Once my daughter wanted to join the choir or the steel band so asked me what I thought she should do and I told her to join the steel band (001).

She would ask for my advice and I would give it to her. She would asked my advise on participating in a national pageant in Antigua and I helped her prepare for it (010).

Two of the mothers in the study found themselves giving their children advice on issues related to their behavior. The first mother was concerned that her daughter was not listening to her caretaker and the second mother was more concerned with her son's behavior in general.

I would ask her to listen to my sister and behave herself but she was too young to give her advice (004).

I told him to behave and don't get in trouble (012).

Both of these mothers reported that their children did not ask for advice so they did not give them any. However what is also important to note is the fact that the mothers relied on intermediaries in their children's caretakers to advice their children when needed.

I didn't give them any advice because they didn't ask me for advice. My son had his father and my daughter had my sister (019).

I didn't give advice. No, not really. Her aunt would do it (020).

This mother realized that sometimes her children would create a split between her and her mother who was their caretaker. She would make every effort to include her mother or ask her mother for her opinion first. She did not fall into the trap of making decisions or advising her children without bringing her mother into the fold.

Well you know what, sometimes they would speak to my mother and ask her for advise. And if I call they would ask my opinion. But when they would ask me for my opinion I would ask them what did my mother say because I didn't want to overstep my position because I wasn't there with them, my mother was the one with them so I would always asks them what she said first. If they tell me my

mother told them to ask your mother then, I would speak with her and together we would make a decision because I would listen to her opinion (002).

This mother would always give her daughter advice but she felt it was fruitless because her daughter would have already made her decision.

I would always give advice but she already make up her mind (007).

This mother felt that the best advice she could give her child was to get a good education because it was the most essential thing in life.

My advise to him was with a good education you can get anything you want (011).

This next mother's advice focused on telling her daughter three words only. I would tell her to "hang in there" (013).

This mother did not wait to be asked for advice from her son, she forced her ideas onto him whether he wanted it or not.

If he didn't ask for my advice I would still give it to him. I wouldn't ask him if he needed it, I would throw it in his face (017).

Although this mother did not formally give advice to her sons. They would often ask her to be intermediary with her sister their caretaker.

No they didn't ask for advice but they would tell me things that are going on that they need me to intervene with my sister on their behalf on. They would say Mommy I don't think I need tutoring. Tell auntie Maud to stop the tutoring. They complain that their aunt doesn't ask them what they want; she just goes ahead and does it without asking them if they want it (018).

Disciplining Children:

Discipline is an integral part of parenting in general and significant to transnational parenting given the culture of African Caribbeans from the English-Speaking countries. As discussed in Chapter Two, parenting style is determined

by culture. The culture of the English-Speaking Caribbean is to use physical forms of discipline.

Children are frequently punished for lying, stealing, disobedience, impoliteness and for refusing to do their chores (Barrow, 1996). The infusion of the American culture of discipline in addition to the fact that transnational mothers are parenting from a distance makes it difficult for parents to discipline their children the traditional way. As a result, many of the mothers disciplined their children by resorting to verbally threatening their children on the telephone when they heard from the caretakers that their children misbehaved or did not do well in school.

Some of the mother's responded to their caretaker's complaints by making several telephone calls- in order to speak directly to their children or the caretaker, (which can be a very expensive endeavor). Additionally, many of them reported using negative reinforcement by letting their children know that they would not get any of the items they asked for, if these negative behaviors continued to persist. Several of the parents did not have much to say because they indicated that their child was too young to be disciplined.

These two mothers talked to their children and found it an effective form of discipline. One mother reported that sometimes her children would cry when she spoke to them. The other mother said she used the opportunity to teach her child right from wrong.

When I call them my mother would let me know if they did something wrong and I would talk to them. Sometimes they would cry when I spoke to them (001).

If she did something wrong I would talk to her about it. Tell her right from wrong. Tell her to behave and that we will see each other eye to eye soon (020).

The next two mothers used threats to discipline their children. At times she would also write them letters and make several phone calls.

Threats and more threats. I talked to them and explained the consequence of their behavior. I did a lot of talking, a lot of phone calls and a lot of letter writing (002).

I threaten them from a distance. God has been good (018).

The following three mothers used negative reinforcement as a method of disciplining their children. Often times they would withhold gifts from their children. This they found to be effective.

I would say you ask me for something to go to a function, I would tell her I am not sending it to you. Or I would tell her you cannot go to where ever she wants to go. I would then tell the woman she lived with not to give her something or not let her go (003).

I would withhold gifts and I would set limits. But most of all we talked a lot and explain things to her (007).

Instead of sending him what he asked for, I would tell him no. Sometimes I would tell him no you wouldn't get it. I would explain to him where he went wrong. My father was also a good mentor to him (016).

The next three mothers talked to their children but focused on their behaviors. One reported that she would always ask for an explanation and tell him to behave himself. Another said she would tell him don't give any trouble and the third shared that she would tell him to listen to his elders.

If he did something wrong, I asked for an explanation. I never took sides. I would tell him you got to deal with it and behave yourself (012).

I would always say to him behave yourself and don't give any trouble. We talked about school (013).

Whenever they did something wrong, I told them listen to their elders. But they were good kids and they did not get into a lot of trouble. They grew up in the church (019).

The next mother reported talking to her children was not effective and therefore found it difficult to discipline her children.

That's the hard part. I would talk to them but since I wasn't there, it wasn't very effective (008).

This mother reported not having to discipline her daughter because she would speak to her daughter and her daughter would obey her.

I didn't have to discipline her. I spoke to her and she listened to me. She was always a good child. I just spoke to her. We had a lot of conversations (010).

Children and Caretakers having Access to Mothers:

Transnational parenting or parenting from a distance requires the mothers to have frequent contact with their children but it is just as important for the children and caretakers to have access to their mothers- especially in the case of an emergency. The statements below are responses addressing the issue of children and caretakers having access to their mothers in case of an emergency. This study revealed that all caretakers and children did have a telephone number for their respective mother's and they were able to reach their mothers when needed. However, the communication between the parties was overwhelmingly one-sided with the mothers in the United States initiating most of the calls. Most of the mothers indicated that cost of the calls was the predominant reason why they initiated the calls home. It cost more when calls are initiated from the Caribbean than when it is initiated from NYC.

The mothers often felt trepidation when this pattern was reversed- and they received calls from the caretakers. This was because the reason behind these calls was to complain about the children or at other times- to inform the mothers that their child or children were hurt or sick. Consequently, many of the mothers were terrified to get calls from their children's caretakers, especially when they had very young children. As a means around this, many of the mothers found it easier to call their children regularly and frequently. When teenage children called it was more acceptable for the mothers to receive calls directly from their older children.

For the eight mothers below they received telephone calls from their children, relatives and caretakers. Some called more frequent than others but both parties initiated the calls.

Yes, they called me all the time (001).

They called me (002).

They had my number and called me whenever they needed to do so (003).

Yes. My son had my number and knew it very well (016).

My son had my cell number (017).

Yes, they all called me whenever they needed to talk to me (018).

My son would call me whenever he felt like it (019).

Yes, my family called sometimes. My daughter would call sometimes also. But I did most of the calling because its less expensive for me to call than it is for them to call (020).

The nine statements below were reported by mothers who said that their children, family and caretakers had their telephone numbers which included their home number, their work number and at times their cell phone number. However, these mothers reported that there were no reasons for their family to call because the mothers called frequently and the understanding they had with their loved ones at home was that they would only call in times of an emergency.

My sister and my father were able to reach me in case of an emergency. Thank god there were no need for that (005).

My grandmother and sister knew how to reach me but they never had to because I called every week (006).

Yes, my girlfriend had my telephone number (008).

My sister was able to reach me in case of an emergency (009).

She had my home telephone and my cell number (010).

They had my telephone number, but there was no reason for them to call. I called every week (011).

They had the phone numbers for my job and my father's number (012).

She had my telephone number at work and my father's telephone number because during that time I lived with my father (013).

My mother had my work telephone number to use in case of an emergency but she never used it (014).

This mother received a call from her sister who was the caretaker for her young daughter. The call was to inform her that her daughter had an accident. The message was processed by the mother as if it was a critical situation and she lost control and was unable to hear the information. This may be why so

many mothers above indicated that they were happy not to hear from their children's caretakers because they imagined the worst scenario. For this mother this incident created the emotional pain which caused her to relive the pain of separation all over again.

My sister had my number and called. One time she called to say my daughter fell and hurt herself. I think I heard it worse on the phone than the incident really was, my husband and my cousin had to call my sister and speak to her because I was not able to do so. Then you start to feel helpless because you can't go home. You relive the whole emotions. After each conversation with my daughter I relived the pain of being away from her all over again and you start to ask your questions such as why did I leave her? WHY DID I DO IT THIS WAY? But its worse if you don't call because you need to hear her voice and you know that she needs to hear your voice (004).

In the next situation, this mother was calling to speak to her daughter but could not reach her because she was hospitalized due to the fact that she was having surgery. The child's caretakers did not want to worry the mother so they were not honest with her. Nonetheless, this mother became anxious and very upset when she could not reach her daughter because she also feared the worst.

They had my phone number to call in case of an emergency but they never did. One time I called and my daughter wasn't there so I called the next day and again she wasn't there. Two days later I called and they gave me some story about her being in the city. Finally I told them I was calling the next day so they better make sure she was home. When I finally spoke to her she told me she had surgery and was hospitalized for a week. I was so upset with my family for not letting me know (007).

Challenges Inherent in Parenting from a Distance:

While all the mothers engaged in transnational parenting reported it was difficult and challenging to parent from a distance, some reported finding

transnational parenting relatively simple and uncomplicated. Some of the mothers, who did not feel overly burdened by transnational parenting gave the following reasons for the ease of their particular situations: the separation from their children was brief; the children were too young to understand what was happening; the mothers had reliable childcare arrangements in relatives they trusted.

One parent went so far to say that parenting from a distance is not parenting at all. She felt that parenting can only be done in person. Another parent thought parenting from a distance is “non-existent”. However all the other parents differed in opinion, they felt that parenting from a distance is possible. They also recognized and identified that it was difficult to parent from a distance, however the overall responses from the mothers indicated that they believed that it is possible to effectively parent from a distance, especially when the caretaker is someone who lives in the same household with the children and that person is trustworthy and supportive to the parent, while being a nurturing, yet stern co-parent to the children. In all actuality what the mothers described they did was co-parent their children with their caretakers. Here are some of the views of the women in the study regarding their take on transnational parenting.

Four mothers in the study reported that parenting from a distance was either not difficult or okay. The first parent reported parenting was not difficult because her children lived with their father, which is her husband and her parents. Her husband worked and they had a small business that generated revenue to help support the family.

Parenting from a distance was not too difficult because my children lived with their father and my parents lived close by. We also had a family business, which helped to support them financially (001).

The next mother reported that parenting from a distance was 'okay' because her daughter was too young to understand what was really going on.

Parenting from a distance was okay because she was too young to understand. I would tell her I loved her and let her know that. Everything was done on the telephone (003).

Another parent reported finding parenting from a distance 'effective' because she had her sister and her mother to discipline her daughter for her.

I found it effective because I had my sister and mother to discipline her and to help me (010).

This parent was brief and concise in her response on parenting from a distance.

Parenting from a distance was okay (011).

The second descriptive category that the mothers in the study reported on regarding parenting from a distance was that they found it 'uncomfortable'.

It's very uncomfortable to parent your child from a distance because all you do is talk and they can't really see you (012).

The third descriptive category for the question of what it was like parenting from a distance communicated the same message but different parents used different phrases to describe what they experienced, such as 'very hard'; 'difficult'; 'not easy'; 'non-existent'.

This parent found it hard because she was not there in person and she had five children to parent from a distance, while her elderly mother took care of

them back home. She shared that sometimes she would go without things for herself in order to make sure that her children had the essentials they needed.

Parenting from a distance was hard because you're not there. I spoke to each one of them when I called so everyone had a chance to speak with me and I would tell them I love them. It was difficult at times you have to go without to send money home or whatever they need before you can take care of yourself. You learn to do without or with very little. You sacrifice for your children. You put them first (002).

This parent summarized the experience as "non-existent". She found it difficult demonstrating her love for her child physically. The inability to have physical contact with her young daughter was excruciatingly difficult for this mother.

It was tough and non-existent at the same time. It was hard to show her I loved her. You talk to your child on the phone until she was four or five years old. My family would tell me she did not behave herself and you talk to her on the phone and you tell her to listen to them or I love you or don't do that or don't do this, but it doesn't do anything. I would talk to her on the phone, promise her stuff, tell her how much I love her and she will say "yes" but you can't hold her, make eye contact, kiss her to let her know. She always asked 'when are you coming for me?' and we would both cry on the phone. I don't know if you would call that parenting? I don't call it parenting. I would say I was absent from my child's life. If my child was older, I think you could have a better conversation with your child because they would have the ability to understand. It's hard when they are 3, 4, or 5 years old. I remember when I was speaking to my daughter, I was asking her to listen to her aunt and she responded by saying "Ma if you don't come for me soon I will die". I don't have to tell you how that made me feel. Parenting on the phone for a little child is not possible, you just can't do it. You are just a voice on the phone telling them what to do. With an older child you can have conversations (004).

Even though the separation was short lived, this mother reported finding it difficult and remembered crying a lot and calling her daughter and her family a lot.

It was for a short period of time but it was very difficult. I just remember crying a lot. Calling my family and especially my daughter a lot because I missed them (005).

The next two mothers found parenting from a distance difficult because they were not there in person. They summarized their parenting efforts the following way: “talk on the phone to their child; you tell them you love them; and you send money and material goods to them”.

When you parent from a distance its sometimes difficult because you are not able to be a parent the way you want to be if you are there in person so you do the next best thing. You talk to your child a lot on the phone. You tell her you love her. You send money home to take care of her and your send lots of things to her and your family in barrels (006).

Parenting from a distance was very difficult because you are not there and that’s difficult to do by phone (007).

Parenting from a distance according to the next mother wasn’t easy especially when her children did not behave or listen to the caretaker. She found herself talking to her children on the phone but it wasn’t very effective.

Parenting from a distance is not easy. Because when they didn’t want to listen to their grandmother there was very little I can do. I would speak to them and they would listen but I wasn’t there so they would do whatever they wanted anyway (008).

In the subsequent case this mother reported that talking to her child was in fact effective although she found it difficult to parent from a distance.

For the year and a half I was separated from my son it was difficult. I had a good son and we talked often on the telephone, I would talk to him and tell him I loved him. We kept it simple (009).

This mother put it succinctly, when she said parenting from a distance is not easy because “you are a voice on the telephone with no power”.

Parenting from a distance was not easy because you have no power. All you are is a voice on the telephone (013).

Another parent found parenting from a distance difficult but she reported telling her daughter that she loved her and she was there for her.

Parenting from a distance was difficult. I always told my daughter “don’t worry darling, mommy loves you and I will always be there for you (014).

This next parent found parenting from a distance difficult because she had her three daughters with three different caretakers and she wasn’t always able to communicate with all three of them.

Parenting from a distance was difficult because I had all three girls with different people (015).

This mother was frustrated because her son’s caretaker called frequently to complain about him.

It’s not easy because they are always calling you to complain about him (017).

This mother had some discomfort describing her experience of parenting from a distance. However, her response is very telling.

It was so hard, hard, and very hard. That’s all I can say. It is so very hard to do. When you first come up you are not really able to focus because you are always thinking about your child. I don’t really want to think much about it (020).

New Household Composition-Second Family:

Parenting from a distance also requires mothers having to support two households, one in the United States and the other back home. This dual responsibility in and of itself- is both financially and emotionally taxing. Some of the women talked about having to pay rent and buy food even paying babysitters for children that are born in New York, in addition to sending money home for

their children. In spite of these challenges and burdens, many of these women reported staying focused on their goals of both taking care of their children and family back home and eventually reuniting with their children in the United States.

Nine of the women in the study found relationships that blossomed into permanent relationships such as husbands, and paramours, which, of course, were both a support and added to the complexity of their situation. Some of the women even had children with their partners in the host country- a second family. Of the nine women who had a second family in the United States, seven of them had children with their partners. Of the seven who had children, five were married and two were not. Additionally, of the nine women with a second family, seven were married but only five had children with their husbands, two of the married women did not have any children with their husbands.

Although these women had a second family here, many of them did not think that their relationship with their partners and children in this country distracted them from focusing on their obligations or love for their children back home. However, the women who had a husband or mate here- while their children lived back home, often encountered difficulties when their children reunited with them in this country. Two women's marriage ended in divorce due to the difficulties they experienced after the arrival of their children. A third woman who was not married but had a child with her paramour, reported that her relationship with her paramour ended after her children arrived in the United States.

This mother reported that her paramour was a friend from back home who migrated to the United States and helped her financially to move to NYC. This relationship blossomed and eventually he became her partner and they had a child together. This happened while her children lived at home. Although her children were familiar with her partner, it was difficult for her to tell her children back home that she was having a child, so she did it by writing them letters and following up with a telephone call. She also reported that her partner was supportive of her children and helped them financially as well.

I had a friend. I knew him back home. He helped me move to the United States by assisting me financially. We had a child together who is 12 years old. Today he lives in Florida and our son spends summers with him. When I learned I was pregnant, I wrote my mom a letter and I sent my children a letter. Before they received the letter I called them and explained that I was pregnant and I would give him a chance to live just like I did them. My friend and I were friends home. He knew my children and they knew him. He visited them at home for me periodically. When he came up here we were partners and had a relationship. The relationship ended when our son was three years old. He used to send money for my children without my knowledge (002).

For this mother, she had a paramour and a nine year old son from the relationship. Although her paramour- father of her son is a part of her life, they speak daily, he doesn't live with them permanently. He was frequently away from home because of his work in the Coast Guard, which required him to travel and live away from home for periods at a time. She reported her paramour is very supportive of her, their son and her daughter who migrated to New York.

My son's father and I have been together for many years. He works in the Coast Guard and travels to different cities. He now works in Florida. He did not live with me permanently. He would stay with us for a while then go to his work. When he was in Boston, he came on weekends. Now he is in Florida, we don't see him as often but we speak every day and he comes when he can. So it wasn't quite like having two sets of family. When my daughter arrived he helped her with Math because that was a subject she needed help with. They

get along well, everyone thinks that he is her father. He would go to her parent/teacher conference when he was here and he never missed her graduations (006).

The next mother reported she was very focused and worked diligently to reunite with her daughter. She married her husband two years after she arrived. Her marriage was followed by the birth of their child but she did not let her new family distract her from her goal of reuniting with her first daughter.

Well it wasn't a long period. I came here in 1989, I got married in 1991. I came here with a goal. I found a good man; I prayed to god and asked him to send me a good man. We knew each other for a year before we got married. We had bills here, with babysitters, and we had to pay rent and we had to send money home for my daughter. Although he had children home with someone else, he wanted them to grow up there and come as adults because they lived with their mother back home. He also sent money home to his children. We saved everything because we wanted to buy a house. He was a true partner and a good husband. He was supportive every step of the way. I had one child while my daughter was home (004).

This next parent also met and married her husband and had a child, while her daughter lived back home. This mother also reported not allowing her new family to distract her from reunifying with her daughter back home.

I was married and we had a daughter. He was very supportive and he helped me bring her up. He would also speak to her on the telephone when she was home. He gave me advice as my husband, but I was very focused on getting her up and he knew that. My second daughter was born here in the United States. She was two years old when my daughter arrived. There was no problem. My husband was supportive and helped me. I was very single-minded in my plan to get my daughter up here (007).

This mother's union resulted in her husband "filling for her papers", which changed her immigration status and assisted with reunification of her children.

My partner was my husband. He was very supportive when my daughter was home. He filed for her papers so she can come up to live with us (014).

Although the next mother had two households, she thought of her family in the United States and those back home where her oldest son lived as one. She refused to admit there were two different households. This also spoke to her determination to keep the two households together psychologically and financially even though they were physically separated.

There were no two households because I didn't allow it. My child was my child. I wouldn't let it but I didn't allow it to get in his way (018).

Another mother found love and marriage to a man who changed her immigration status and facilitated the reunification of her children. They also had a child however what was significant about the birth of her child was that he was born years after her children arrived.

It wasn't easy financially or emotionally. I used to cry for my children at nights. My husband was very supportive. He helped me get my green card and he helped me bring my children up here to live with us. Now we have a four year old. But my youngest son wasn't born until long after my first two children were in NYC (020).

Here is a mother who married, but had no children with her husband. They both had children before meeting. This husband was also very supportive and assisted her with changing her immigration status and reunifying with her children. However, after her children arrived the relationship disintegrated.

I got married to a man from Grenada. It was good for a long time. He helped us out financially and in other ways. He never told me he had a child but after we went to get my girls he told me he had a son. After the girls arrived things started to fall apart (008).

Another mother reported marrying and having a very supportive husband initially. He also assisted her in reunifying with her son. They too had no

children together. However, later her husband became jealous of her relationship with her son and he started to mistreat him. When the relationship with her husband ended, her son went to work to help support his mother and younger siblings financially.

My husband and son had a good relationship. At first we slept on the bed like we did at home. Later it got difficult for my husband to deal with the fact that I was so close to my son. My husband wouldn't allow him to eat or speak to his friends on the telephone. My son went through a difficult time with my husband. When my husband left, Jimmy left school and found a job to take care of my two younger children and me (009).

Reunification:

Reunification of transnational families from the English-Speaking Caribbean generally means that the children migrate to the United States to live with their parents. The reasons why these families separated from one another are described in the initial part of this analysis- as are the rewards experienced as a result of the parental migration.

Serial migration or stepwise migration, which occurs when the mother comes first and is followed by her children, can often create a difficult adjustment for some children (Smith, Lalonde and Johnson (2004). These children experienced separation and loss twice: first, when their mother left them, and later when they left their caretakers to reunite with their mothers (Smith, Lalonde and Johnson (2004).

The findings in this study revealed several factors that influenced reunification-and whether or not reunification was planned-or unplanned. These factors included the length of time separated, the mother's ability to meet the

stringent requirements of immigration, the living arrangements of the mother in the US, and the ability of the caretaker to co-parent the children of these transnational mothers.

The findings detailed the complex processes and challenges faced by transnational parents in planning for reunification with their children. These mothers followed an in-depth protocol which provided a snapshot into the determination and fortitude required by undocumented immigrants who are trying to gain legal status in this country for themselves and their children. The study revealed six separate and difficult steps that had to be completed before a mother could successfully bring her children to live with her in the United States. The first three steps were identified by the women as expectations of Homeland Security, previously known as INS-Immigration and Naturalization Services. These steps are: (1) having a documented job or some means of income; (2) having a home even if it meant sharing the living space with relatives and friends; (3) a savings account and proof of savings from a bank. These steps are not easy to accomplish given their undocumented status. The mothers in the study believe these requirements are to prove that they were capable of caring for their children and the children did not have to depend on public assistance. Additional issues that transnational mothers have to be concerned about in preparation for reunification are: (4) preparation for children to attend school when they arrive-including proof of school attendance and grade completed, immunization etc.; (5) gifts for the children to make them feel

welcome (6) child care arrangements for younger children who are not school age and supervision for school age and older children.

Planned Reunification:

The first mother provided a detail description of some the rigorous requirements immigration asked of them in order for reunification to occur.

It was difficult to get them to come up. You have to get a Visa, invitation letter, which shows you are employed and a bank statement. I lived with my sister, I didn't have an apartment of my own and I had to make plans for them to go to school. Luckily they were old enough and didn't need a babysitter after school (001).

The next mother described the process of serial migration she took with her children. For this mother since she could not bring all her children up at the same time, she chose to send for the oldest girl to assist her by working and financially supporting her younger siblings.

My first daughter and second child came up first 12 years ago; I was here five years before she came. Seven years ago the fourth one came. Five to four years I brought up the last two. The first one graduated from high school back home but there was no way we planned for her to go to school when she got here. She came here to work and help take care of her brothers and sisters. So she went right into work. When the last two came up they went to school. My son is at Medgar Evers College and my daughter who is very smart so she is now in a private college with a partial scholarship (002).

This mother's initial goal for migrating was to further her education and provide her daughter with a "better life". Her reported testimony regarding reunification with her daughter clearly indicated she was accomplishing her goals by attending school and working.

I had a job and was attending school. I also had an apartment and I made all the travel arrangements and called my friend and told her. Yes, I did save money up because you have to show immigration that you can take care of your children financially and they wouldn't be going on welfare. My daughter was school age so I enrolled her in school when she came. Before she got here I

had her get all her documents (report card, letter from the principal, immunization card, birth certificate etc (003).

Staggered reunification seemed to be a much utilized option for some transnational mothers today. Instead of planning for the big event which sometimes takes years to happen due to the immigration requirements, some mothers sent for their children to visit them for a vacation during the time they were out of school. The visits helped reduce the lengthy separation period that took years to happen. It also gave both the mother and child an opportunity to reconnect and get to know each other over a period of a month or two; and it helped with the child's transition later when they reunite permanently.

Every year during the summer we would bring her up for vacation and when we decided to get married we brought her up and kept her with us. We were both working and we bought her new things. She went to the same school her cousin went to and the school was close to where my mother lived. So I would drop her off at my mother's in the morning and my mother would take her to school and pick her up after school (005).

This child first migrated to Canada to live with her father and his wife, but when it didn't work out she moved to NYC to be with her mother. When the eleven year old arrived her mother was pregnant with her second child. This mother also shed some light on the fact that at reunification, transnational mothers have to deal with child care issues, not an issue they had to deal with during the time their children were at home-in this case it's after school.

My daughter came to live with me from Canada where she was living with her father for a couple of years. She was eleven years and I was pregnant with my son who is nine years now. I had my own apartment and had saved up some money. She was old enough to walk to school and back until she made friends. Her best friend from home lived two blocks from us and they traveled to school together. Everyday when she came home from school she would call me, eat something, do homework until I got home from work (006).

In addition to the normal preparation that was required by Homeland Security, this mother found it helpful to prepare for the reunification of her daughter by taking an introspective perspective- by fasting and praying.

I fasted and prayed for a week. I had a job, a house and money in the bank (007).

In some cases, when mothers became legal residents and planned for reunification, they would travel back home to get their children. For many of them, it was their first trip back since they left home years ago.

I went home and brought them up. I shared an apartment with my brother and he helped me. I had a job and I had saved up some money (008).

I fixed my children's papers and I had to go home to get them. I had a job and an apartment. I had been saving up money for years in preparation of this time (015).

Some women were able to change their immigration status by meeting and marrying someone who is a legal resident or a citizen. This next mother was able to reunite with her son in one and a half years, which is unprecedented for this group.

After I was here a year, I got married and six months later I sent for him. I was employed and so was my husband. My husband and I had an apartment (009).

Here is another example of a mother marrying a legal resident and becoming a legal resident herself, which provided her with the opportunity to reunite with her daughter. Unfortunately, her daughter did not get along with her husband.

I got married and my husband filed for my daughter and me. We bought a beautiful house and my daughter had her own section of the house because she

was much older by now, she was eighteen years old and she did not get along with my husband. When she arrived she went to college (014).

Some mothers planned their children's reunification around their school. This particular mother timed the reunification so she would get to spend some time with her daughter before she started school.

I waited for her to end the school year at home and then I sent for her. I had a job and an apartment. We had a couple of months together before school started again (010).

The next two mothers planned their children's reunification based on their educational milestones. Both mothers wanted their children to go to college so they planned their children's reunification in order for them to be prepared for college.

She just recently came up. She is studying for the SAT and she will be starting college in January. I have a house and she will be living with me while she attends college. She is no longer going to be separated from me (011).

When my son Tony came up it was planned. He was in his last year of high school and I wanted him to come up so he can go to college. So I sent for him to spend the last year of high school here. He is 21 years old now and he is getting ready to graduate from college soon (018).

Another mother's report of the reunification process demonstrated her strength and fortitude- she made a drastic move to take some control of her life by moving out of a very wealthy home and neighborhood- where she lived with her employers/adopted parents, into a room because she wanted to reconnect with her son on her own terms. She also demonstrated her independent spirit by the selection of the school she chose to have him attend as opposed to what was offered to him by her employers.

When my son came up I was still living with my employers. We stayed with them one year. Then I rented a room. They wanted to put him in an Ivy League school but I didn't want him to go so I sent him to Fordham University (012).

As this mother reported, once her immigration status changed, it was easy for reunification with her children to occur.

I filed for him and he came up. It wasn't too difficult because I had my papers. I had a job, an apartment and money saved (013).

In order for reunification to occur, this mother reported, "working non-stop". However, when it was time for it to happen, she became sick and spent part of the process in the hospital.

I was working nonstop, trying to make everything right. But I got sick and had to have emergency surgery. So most of the time he was in Barbados getting the visa, I was in surgery. I was worried. I must have said something about my son when I was recovering because after I recovered, the doctor asked me what was going on with my son. So I told him he was in Barbados trying to get his papers from immigration. At the time my son came, I had my own apartment. I was living by myself. It was difficult because of immigration. First they told me that I had to work one year and send my tax papers back and he would come but it took six years. I did extra work so I could send my tax papers to immigration every year but they kept him from me (016).

Unplanned Reunification:

For some of the mothers reunification with their children was unplanned. The decision to send for their children was unanticipated and occurred very quickly. In some cases, the motivation for reunification stemmed from their children's plea to be with their mothers; in other cases unplanned reunification was necessitated by the caretakers' desire to end their obligation of caring for the children. In these circumstances, the mothers felt compelled to hastily reunite with their children without the time needed to plan.

One mother felt she had to take matters in her own hands after years of waiting for Homeland Security to approve her papers and make her a legal resident, in order for reunification with her daughter to happen. This mother's decision not to wait any longer for the legal channel was based on her daughter remark to her that she would 'die if her mother did not send for her'. After this heart wrenching conversation, this mother felt she had no other choice but to bring her daughter up by any means possible because the consequence of losing her daughter to suicide was not an option she was willing to chance.

She came in such a hurry; it was not a planned thing. After the last conversation where she said she would die if I did not send for her. I decided I had to get her up quick, and fast. When she arrived I did not have the fabulous life set up for her as was expected. Me and my husband and our one-year-old baby lived in a one-bedroom apartment. I bought her a doll she had asked me for, some clothes, and toys. I didn't go to the airport. My husband whom she knew from pictures and phone calls went to the airport to get her. I couldn't go to the airport. I couldn't handle it. When she came, the next week was her birthday so I gave her a big party and invited some children so she could start making friends. She came in July and didn't start school until September. When she came the people I was working with was very understanding so I was able to take her to work with me and when my husband wasn't working she stayed home with him. I used the time we were together going to and from work to bond, but I don't think it worked. She resented me and I resented her for resenting me. Then you know it gets out of control. I guess she felt I didn't do enough to get her up here (004).

The next mother did not plan for her last two children to join her permanently when they did. At first, she sent for them for the summer but when they were scheduled to return, her mother-the children's caretaker called and ask not to send them back. Feeling she had no other choice, she kept them.

I didn't plan for school in advance because I did not decide to keep them until the last minute. They were here visiting on vacation and the night before they were supposed to go back my mother called and asked me to keep them and not send them back as they were preparing to go back home (002).

Another mother made her decision to hasten the reunification with her son because she received one complaint too many from her son's caretaker about how difficult it was for them to continue to care for him. She had planned to have him finish high school back home before coming up to live with her. But after a difficult conversation with her son's caretakers she sent for him immediately.

I didn't plan to bring my son up here. He is fifteen going on sixteen and I wanted him to stay and study and finish high school before he came up. But one day, his aunt called to say he was in trouble. They called about petty things. He had just pierced his ears. I used to send money for him for school but they would call constantly and ask money for him. I got tired and asked my employer to lend me the money to buy him a ticket (017).

Children's Experience with the Reunification Process:

Reunification is often viewed by many as an event -and not a process. Many parents who are separated from their children fantasize about the time when they will be reunited with their children. The longing they feel prior to reunification contributes to the fantasy that everything is going to be perfect when they are together with their children. In this study, many of the women talked about this personal aspect of the reunification process and were also candid about their children's adjustment in the United States (particularly in New York City.) Almost uniformly, the children's initial reactions at the initial stage of reunification were one of happiness and excitement. Some of the children were aided in making a successful transition to living here by having had some familiarity with their mothers and the host country and community because they had visited on vacations. Other children had their transition here made easier by

their connections to family members and friends from their country of origin who provided a sense of familiarity, and who, when needed, oriented these children to their new schools and neighborhoods. These positive emotions did not last for some children. After the initial reunification period, some children began to feel resentment towards their mothers and missed the caretakers, relatives, friends and neighborhoods back home.

For this mother one of her children was excited and happy to be reunited with her in the United States, while the other wasn't and after living here for some time-finished graduate school, her daughter returned home.

My son was excited. It was around Christmas and it snowed and he was happy to be here. My daughter was happy not to come first because she never wanted to come to the U.S. My daughter went back home after getting her masters but my son still wants to be here and live here. He wants to be here forever (001).

This mother reported that her children were excited and they tried to reacquaint themselves with her. Additionally, when her son arrived he was diagnosed with a learning disability and he was able to get the necessary help he needed. This was not possible in her country of origin.

They were excited and we played catch up. The last son was has a learning disability that wasn't diagnosed earlier and he became the class clown. The youngest girl is an excellent student and did and continues to do very well (002).

Another mother reported her daughter was excited to be with her but hinted at the fact that it was important for her daughter to stay in contact with family and friends back home.

She was excited to be here and to be with me. She wrote her friends back home (003).

The next mother reported that the initial stage of reunification was very emotional for her and her daughter and they reconnected physically by spending the first night together in the same bed. However as time passed her daughter began to exhibit signs of anger possibly as a result of feeling abandoned and rejected by her mother-this mother remarried and had a child with her husband.

She was excited to see me. We talked and we cried and she slept on the bed with me the first night. My husband slept on the couch. When she was going to work with me we had a good time and it was fun at first but then I noticed there was resentment (004).

Here is another example of a mother reporting her daughter was excited at the initial stage of reunification, but also utilized the informal support network within the extended family to make her daughter feel welcomed which gave her a sense of belonging.

When she first arrived she was excited to see me and her father and her grandmother. She also had cousins here to be with. She went to school and was a good student. She was a good child and up until today is a good daughter. She was familiar with life here because she visited before she moved here for good and she had family here to take care of her and to be with (005).

This mother utilized gifts to make her daughter feel welcomed. She also spent quality time with her daughter. Extended family and friends were also available to welcome her.

My daughter was very happy to be with me and she was excited that she was having a new brother or sister. She like school and made friends easy. I bought her things to make her feel happy and in the summer time I would take her to work with me so we would have some quality time together. Everyone was glad to see her because they had heard about her for such a long time (006).

This child was initially happy to see her mother who had become a stranger to her, in addition to having a new family-husband and a newborn. As a

result, this child this child felt the loss of leaving her aunt who was her caretaker, as if her security was threatened (Bowlby, 1969). For this child being separated from her aunt and adjusting to a new family was too difficult for her to deal with so she persuaded her mother to send for her aunt. The presence of her aunt provided her with the comfort and security she needed. This mother recognized she felt jealous of their relationship even though she understood it.

At first she was happy to come but she continued to pressure me to send for her aunt, my sister who took care of her back home. Within six months of her coming up my sister came up and she was happy again. They spent all their time together. I was jealous of their relationship but I understood it. Even today they are still close. My daughter still helps her aunt (007).

Utilizing friends as a resource to orient and help her daughter make the adjustment of navigating her way in a new school system was what this mother had to do in order to assist her daughter's reunification process.

When they got here we had a good relationship. School was hard at first. It was a completely different system. But I had a friend that worked in the same school as my youngest daughter and she helped orient her so she understood she had to move from one class to the other as opposed to the opposite as it was home (008).

For school age children and teenagers who are recent immigrants, peer pressure and "fitting in" is a stressful part of transitions (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Similar to the literature this child experienced some difficulties in school at first not because of academics, he was teased by his peers. In addition to the stress of adjusting in school with his peers, this young man was mistreated or abused by his mother's husband.

He was elated and happy. It was difficult for him at school. The children gave him a hard time. It was hard for him to fit in but he eventually adjusted. My husband and son had a good relationship. At first we slept on the bed like we did at home. Later it got difficult for my husband to deal with the fact that I was

so close to my son. My husband wouldn't allow him to eat or speak to his friends on the telephone. My son went through a difficult time with my husband. When my husband left, Jimmy left school and found a job to help support my two younger children and me (009).

The reunification for the next child revealed how family and friends provided support which aided with the child's adjustment.

She was happy and excited. She ran to me in the airport. She was shy at school. She had some family up here such as cousins that went to the same school. Her cousins lived across the street from the school. I also had friends in the building who also sent their children to the same school so that was helpful to her adjustment (010).

Another example of a child reunifying and initially feeling happy but later is sad because she had to leave family and friends behind.

She was happy yet sad. Happy because she was glad to be here with me, but sad because she had to leave my parents and her friends (011).

This mother's focus was on her son's educational accomplishments.

He was very happy when he first arrived. He was very smart and he got lots of scholarships for college (012).

For this family, the reunification was successful because of the support of family and friends from their home country.

He was very happy and excited. We have family here and we visited them and they visited us. He also had a lot of friends from Jamaica living in the neighborhood (013).

This parent was candid about her daughter's reunification process-the difficulties the family experienced because of the fact that her daughter had a hard time sharing her with her second family.

She was not happy to know I was married and had a husband. That was very difficult for me. Things got progressively worse with time. I didn't know which way to turn. I was in the middle between my husband and daughter (014).

Another reunification where the child had a difficult time leaving her caretaker because she had formed a deep attachment with her grandmother when her mother left her behind and migrated to the United States.

The oldest one had a hard time separating from my mother. My children were teased in school and came home crying, but after a while they made friends and settled down (015).

This reunification was initiated by the transnational parent without her teenage son's input and as a result he was not thrilled to migrate as she expected him to be.

It was such a happy time for me. He didn't want to come because he wanted to stay and finish school. I told him to come for three months then I would send him back. But I couldn't send him back. He was a little upset. He still reminds that he wanted to come for three months and he is here five years. He finished high school and is going to Virginia State in the fall to major in biochemistry (016).

This is a recent reunification. This mother is still waiting to enroll their teenage son in school.

He is happy and I am waiting for him to get into school. They wouldn't let him register for school because they want me to get his grades first. It is taking a long time for his school to send me his grades. But he is fine (017).

The children in this family were obviously ambivalent about reunification.

They did not really want to come for good. After three four weeks of living here they adjusted and were okay. They forgot everything from home (018).

Efforts Utilized by Mothers to Assist with Children's Adjustment:

Many of the mothers tried a variety of measures to help their children adjust to living in their new country- New York City. They made many efforts to help their children feel comfortable in their new and unfamiliar surroundings. These efforts included supporting their children's adjustment by taking them to

work with them with the goal of spending quality time with their children; engaging them in recreational activities-celebrations; and facilitating activities that included their children and extended family and friends.

The next mother relied on an older niece to take her son on planned activities which familiarized him with his new community and kept him busy and occupied while she was working.

A lot of family gets together. My niece was older than my son so she would take him places when I was at work. Sometimes it was real hard but when my son came I could not just pick up and go. I had to take care of his meals and I just couldn't just pick up and go with my friends. So I did not have the freedom I once had (001).

This family engaged in activities and celebration together as a unit, as well as the church which this mother was a member of for several years and where the members of the church were from the English-Speaking Caribbean.

We had birthday parties. One Sunday a month we went up to dinner. We would get together and talk. My family was the extended family in the church. Every one in the church made them feel welcome because they knew how excited I was to see them (002).

This child migrated just before her twelfth birthday and was given a big celebration where many of her friends from home who were living in the neighborhood attended.

For her 12 birthday we had a special birthday party. We invited some of her friends from home who was going to the same school here in NYC. She met people from home. The school work was not very hard (003).

Again another parent celebrated birthdays and capitalized on family outings which facilitated conversations and opportunities to bond and reconnect.

We had birthday parties. One Sunday a month we went up to dinner. We would get together and talk (004).

Going out to eat and taking long drives were effective ways for this family to reconnect and build new relationships.

We would take long drives and go to a restaurant once a week. We also went to the movies. My daughter also got close to my husband. They had a good relationship (007).

This mother relied on her relationship with her landlord and his wife to assist her in supervising her children after school as well as with the adjustment period. Regional and cultural similarities were helpful in this situation.

In my building I had a good landlord and his wife and they took a strong role with my children. They were from Haiti, I trusted them. They supervised the children after school (009).

The reunification process defined for the purpose of the study included the initial period of time-the first couple of years after the children migrated to join their mothers in NYC. There were lots of variability in the reunification process as described by these mothers. While some children had difficulty adjusting at first because they found the educational system different from their former school experience; or they had a difficult time making friends; or they were teased by children; others did not exhibit any outstanding or noticeable problems. Also, some children experienced reunification in ways that were different from their mother's expectations-acting out behaviors.

Challenging Reunifications:

The findings in this study revealed some common reactions of reunited children, who had difficulty adjusting, they refused to eat and threatened to run away; demonstrated signs of anger; having an aversion to getting close to the mother; and being overly obedient and compliant. Two parents reported that

their children had a difficult time making friends and as a result were isolated. Most of the mothers, however, reported that, in retrospect, the reunification process for their children was good. Again some mothers reported relying on family members, friends, teachers and siblings to assist in mitigating negative reactions to the recent move.

This mother was asked by her children's caretakers not to send them back the night before they were scheduled to return home.

The last two children had a difficult time when they first arrived because at first they thought they were returning home but they weren't told they would be staying until the last minute. I got a call from my mother the night before telling me she didn't think it was a good idea to send them back. My youngest daughter was speaking back to her and stressing her out. They were angry and upset for a long time. My daughter has a big mouth, one day she went to church and started to speak to the congregation about feeling forced to stay where she doesn't want to be. It was a mess. It's a good thing my older daughter was there to fix things and it's a good thing I am known in the congregation (002).

This mother felt rejected by her daughter because she wouldn't hug her, yet she had no trouble hugging other people.

The first thing I noticed about my daughter first arrived was that when I hugged her she stiffened. At first I thought she was sexually abused but I noticed she only stiffened when I hugged her not when anyone else did and that made me sad (004).

This mother used compliance driven methods to relate to her daughter when she arrived. From the mother's perspective it was successful.

When my daughter arrived I laid the rule down about how things were going to be and what I expected of her and she obeyed my rules and respected my wishes. She went to school and did well. She just graduated with her Associates in optician and plans to go to Brooklyn College to get her Bachelor degree starting in January (005).

Another situation where the mother used compliance-driven methods of discipline to reconnect with her daughter.

The reunification process was fine. There were family and friends in the building, the school and the neighborhood. As far as my relationship with her, I made it clear that I was the mother and not the friend. I did not tolerate any disrespect (010).

In this family one child acted out her depression and feelings of helplessness as a result of being traumatically removed from her caretakers at home. This young woman was left as an infant and had very little memory of her mother, because she lived with paternal family and they cut all ties with the mother after she migrated. In order for her mother to bring her to the United States she had to kidnap her from her paternal family -a very traumatic experience for this young lady.

Reunification was difficult. One of my daughters refused to eat at first. Later she tried to run away. Then she settled down. Having her sisters helped. They helped her accept living with me and life in NYC (015).

This next young man had difficulty adjusting to the school system at first, as it relates to making friends. However connecting with children from his country helped him.

My oldest son, Tony had a difficult time adjusting to the school. He took the test and passed it with flying colors, but he had some problems adjusting up here. It was difficult for him to make friends. Eventually, he made friends with other children from Grenada and other West Indian countries (018).

Mother's Relationship With Children Today:

As these transnational mothers discussed this painful- yet ultimately rewarding experience, many of them smiled when discussing their current relationships with their children today. Rightly so-since the majority of the mothers in the study reported having a good or very good relationship with their children today. Some of them were proud to share their children's educational

achievements, their marital status as well as information regarding their grandchildren.

My relationship with my children is very good. My son is going to be 24 in May. He works in construction. My daughter returned home to work after getting her masters. She is thinking of returning to work on her Ph. D. We talk to each other all the time (001).

My relationship with my daughter is just fine. She has a masters degree and is an Occupational Therapist and married a doctor from Grenada. He came up here when he was eleven years old. She is very happy (020).

My daughter is 23 years and living with me. She went to Kingsborough College and got her Associates and plans to go to Brooklyn College to get her Bachelor degree (003).

My relationship with my daughter today is very good. She is going to the University of Buffalo. We are very close and she is our only child still today (005).

This mother had five children in her country of origin, three of whom are here. Two are in college, one is working to help the family and two chose to remain home.

My relationship with my children is very good. We have family dinners, I love to cook and have friends come over and we talk and enjoy ourselves. Four of my children live in NY and two lives in Grenada. Two of them are in college, one works and the youngest is 12. Also, my two children living in Grenada have their own families there (002).

In addition to educational achievements two of the mothers focused on the issue of respect and moral values.

We have a good relationship. Even today she respects me and continues to live with me and helps with her brother. Although we were separated for nine years, our relationship is good. Even though you miss out on a lot, nine years is a long time, I don't believe we can make up for the time we missed but we can move forward and be mother and daughter again (006).

We are very close. She is respectful and has high moral values. We are very affectionate with each other. My mother and father did a great job and she is a great daughter and person (011).

The next two mothers indicated that they continue to have a good relationship with their children and that they were proud of the fact that their children were still living at home.

We have a very good relationship. We live in the same apartment (013).

We live together and he sometimes tells me I still treat him like a baby because sometimes I would hug him and kiss him and tell him I love him. When we would be on the train he wouldn't give eye contact because I would tell him I love him. He says I embarrass him (017).

Some of the mothers shared that their children were married, have children of their own and live with their own families. However, even though these children lived apart from their mothers, they were still in constant contact with them.

My relationship with my children are fine. My son is married and has two children but he is always over here. They live close by. My daughter is 18, she is in college and lives with me, my husband and my four year old son (019).

We have a good relationship. We talk all the time. My grandson is coming to spend some time with me. They all live in California now. I moved us all to California but I returned after seven years. We were trying to get away from my husband (008).

My relationship with my son is very good. I spend time with my son, his wife and my grandson. We visit with each other all the time (012).

This mother was proud that she had daily contact with her son. She also reported he takes her to church every Sundays.

My relationship with my son is great. He calls me everyday. He picks me up and takes me to church and drops me off on Sundays (009).

In reporting about her relationship with her daughter this mother was candid and provided details related to the topics they discussed.

We have a wonderful relationship. She is 23 years old and she involves me in everything. She calls me about cooking ideas. Whenever she is dating someone she would call me about boyfriend stuff (010).

Two mothers reported that their children were argumentative and still somewhat distant. This is not very difficult to believe because of the emotional trauma the children experienced during the years they were separated from their mothers and again when they left their caretakers and reunited with their mothers.

My relationship with Tony is good but it could be better. He says I can't hold on to him forever. We argue a lot, but I think its because of where he is in his development, I also think its because he spent so many years back home while I lived here (018).

Today, my daughter works and has two daughters and a boyfriend. Her boyfriend is more important to her than anyone else. She has a big time job but she always calls to borrow money. We get along okay but sometimes we don't. She tries to boss me around by trying to always tell me what to do (014).

This mother reported she lives apart from her three children who are all married. However at the time of the study, two of her daughters lived in NY with their husbands and children and the youngest daughter who went through the traumatic kidnap as a child in order to be reunified with her mother is also married and has no children. She lives the furthest away in Atlanta, Georgia.

My relationship with my children is very good. My second daughter got married first. She has two children and lives in NY. We go to the same church. The oldest is married with one child and the youngest lives in Atlanta with her husband, who is in the military (015).

Although this mother has a good relationship with her daughter, she admitted that as an adult her daughter is still unable to hug her. This mother continues to feel guilty for leaving her daughter and her daughter continues to harbor feelings of abandonment and rejection.

My daughter doesn't live with us. She comes to visit and we talk but I don't hug her. We talk, she asks for my opinion and advice sometimes she takes my advice sometimes, sometimes she doesn't. We talk about things now, she told me when she came she did not expect to meet me with a husband and children. She was looking forward for us to spend time alone. She was very angry as a child when she first came up. I think If we had seek therapy when she first came up things may have been different but I don't know if we would have been able to afford it. I still feel bad about leaving her and I know she has not forgiven me for leaving her (004).

The findings clearly revealed the difficulties inherent in the daily lives of transnational mothers. Even though the mothers discussed the difficulties, many of the mothers emphasized the separation and the time spent apart from their children as being the most difficult. The data also revealed that reunification was also challenging for the child, the mother, and the second family especially the husbands.

SUMMARY OF THE DATA:

The goal of this study was to identify predictors of successful transnational parenting of African Caribbean immigrant mothers from English-Speaking countries by highlighting five key components of their transnational parenting experience which are: (1) how African Caribbean mothers parent from a distance; (2) how African Caribbean women cope with the issues of loss and separation from their children; (3) how they manage to support two households-

financially and emotionally; (4) how they utilization of support networks and (5) the reunification process.

How They Parent from a Distance:

African Caribbean Mothers from English-speaking countries parent from a distance successfully with a great deal of challenges. Many of these mothers migrated for a variety of reasons, economic being the primary reason. They also migrated to make a “better life” for themselves and their children which translate to employment-even if it means working in low paying jobs. They also migrated because of the educational opportunities available in New York City for themselves and their children. For some mothers, it meant getting a college degree, or a certificate in a field that would take them out of the job niche of working as a babysitter, a nanny or a live-in maid and into jobs that are considered more mainstream such as nursing, working in an office, or being an entrepreneur. For their children, it meant providing them with opportunities to go to college and to be able to work in fields that their mothers did not have an opportunity to work in, such as occupational therapy, fiancé, some of the higher end positions in the health care field, teaching, social work, and the medical field-research. Many of the mothers chose to come to NYC primarily because of a relative or friend who was already living here together with the fact that NYC is known for its large immigrant population.

When asked “if they would do it again”, 45 percent of the women in the study reported they wouldn’t do it again, while 40 percent reported they would and 15 percent were undecided. For the women who reported the rewards

outweighed the consequences of migration, they referred to the educational achievements of their children as the rewards. Those women who reported they would not do it again emphasized that being away from their children was one of the most difficult and traumatic things they had to do. One woman described the time she was separated from her children as one that is similar to “a death” of a loved one.

The study revealed that transnational parenting includes a number of factors (1) staying connected; (2) sending remittances; (3) providing emotional support to children and caretakers; (4) comforting children when they are upset; (5) advising children on decision-making issues; (6) disciplining children; and (7) managing conflict between their child and their caretaker. Additionally, in order for the transnational parent to be successful there are some implicit components that must be in place to establish a solid foundation, and they are: first, the parent and the caretaker have to understand and agree that they are co-parenting the child, not unlike a divorced parent who lives outside of the home. Second, both the parent and the caretaker must understand and agree on the goal of transnational parenting and that is the child is to plan for the child to be reunified with the parent; and lastly, they should have an understanding of how the process-normal developmental behaviors coupled with issues of separation and loss and typical responses from the child.

Staying Connected:

The women in the study made frequent calls to their children and family with an average of weekly calls. Although the caretakers and the children have

telephone numbers and access to the mothers, overall the mothers prefer to initiate the calls because of cost and because it provided them with some control over an otherwise helpless situation. Additionally, receiving calls from home for these mothers often meant that the caretaker was calling to complain about the child's behavior, or there is a health related issue with the child or in the case of older children they were often requesting some type of gift or money from their already financially strapped parent. On the other end of the spectrum, when they are speaking to their children, these mothers often experienced a type of intimacy and immediacy that no other form of communication provides them with their loved ones. They felt connected to their children and loved ones. This sense of connectedness is both a joyous occasion for them because it is the only form of communication which allows them the opportunity to hear the voices of their children, and at the same time it was laden with a theme of sadness because at times the children would cry on the telephone and both parties would relive the pain of separation and loss.

Although these phone calls were ritualized in frequency and conversations, the study revealed that these mothers also utilized the telephone to exchange touching moments of tenderness as well as to share feelings of affiliation. They also disciplined their children, advised them and comforted them when they were upset. Depending on the age of the child many of the mothers also helped their children with homework and discussed issues related to school-the content of books the mother sent her child or in one case prepared for a beauty pageant.

Although the telephone was widely used and mothers utilized it to stay connected to their children and family members, they also suggested that their conversations with their children were sometimes difficult, especially when the child was upset about something, or when there was a need for the mother to discipline the child. Many of them felt invisible and helpless at times. One mother described it as being “tough and non-existent at the same time”.

Some of the mothers revealed that at times they had to mediate between their child and the caretaker and when they didn't have to do that explicitly, they were ever mindful that whatever they did or say impacted the relationship between the child and the caretaker so they spent a great deal of effort consciously trying to “keep the peace”. Many of them feared that the child's stable home environment would be disrupted and they would have to find another caretaker or that their child might be maltreated in their absence.

A very significant part of transnational parenting is the role of remittances to the child, the caretaker and the mother. These mothers sent money to their children monthly or biweekly. They also sent material goods or a barrel twice a year. The money provided financially for the children-allowing them to live a middle class life style back home. The children looked forward to their mothers' gifts that were at times delivered by a visiting neighbor or friend in addition to the barrels. At times, the children initiated contact with their mothers to ask for those items. For the caretaker, they were expecting the money and the material goods as much as the children. Remittances for the caretakers translate in improving their lifestyle as well. This is the unspoken part of the

agreement between the mother and the caretaker. This mother put it succinctly.

I sent money to do everything for him. I paid my sisters and my brothers. I made sure everyone was taken care of to take care of him. I did everything for them back home. I sent money, sent food, clothes, everything. Twice a year I would send barrels. Sometimes I would send it by myself or with my mother and sister (016).

For this group of mothers, the children's caretakers were primarily extended family members such as the mother's sisters, husbands or ex-husbands, aunts, grandparents, cousins and friends. Given that the caretakers were primarily relatives, this group of mothers felt relatively secure that their children were well care for and utilized remittances as a reward to the caretakers for doing a good job caring for their children.

Coping with Separation and Loss:

The issue of separation and loss was a very painful thing for the mothers in the study. Many of them coped by buying things for their children and sending it to them. However, they recalled that purchasing things for their children was just a temporary fix and it did not get rid of the "void and emptiness" inside. Many of them experienced sleep deprivation and had difficulties eating. Some spent a great deal of time crying and reaching out to their primary supporter-relatives, friends and employers.

A few of the mothers used work to keep them distracted from their emotional pain. Work was also a distracter because according to one mother who worked taking care of children, caring for the children was a way of displacing her love for her own children on the children she took care of. Another mother found taking care of children painful because it was a constant

reminder of the loss of her own children. Many of these mothers reported reliving the pain of separation from their children in daily activities, such as seeing a child with his or her parent; or speaking on the telephone with their child-although it was good to speak with their child, it was also painful as well.

Reunification:

Reunification was almost always a long drawn out process for the mothers in the study, due the rigorous immigration requirements. As a result, some of them would send for their children to visit in the summers, which provided them with an opportunity to reconnect with their children, provide the caretaker with respite and bridge the eventual transition of the final reunification process.

For those who were not able to find an intermediary form of reunification, they provided their children with other opportunities, such as vacations with relatives in other countries or in one case, a mother sent a friend home in her place to be there for her first daughter's graduation from high school.

In all but one family the children migrated together. In one case the mother consciously sent for the oldest to assist her financially first, followed by the younger children. The reunification of the mothers with their children occurred after been separated for a period of time which ranged from as little as one and a half years to as much as thirteen years.

The reunification process was a complex one for these mothers. In addition to the immigration requirements for approved migration for their children, these mothers consciously made an effort to make their children's

adjustment as comfortable as possible. In doing so they engaged extended family members and friends from their country to assist and support them in this effort.

For many of the mothers reunification was planned but for a small number it was unplanned. Usually the unplanned reunifications were exasperated by the child's inability to withstand the lengthy wait or the child's acting out behavior, which caused the caretaker to request the parent to speed up the process.

New Household Composition:

Some women were lucky to meet a legal resident or citizen from their country or region and married them and later were able to change their immigration status and file for their children so that reunification can occur. However, in most of the cases where a marriage occurred, there was also a child conceived and a new household or second family resulted. This new family created an expedited means of reunification for the child left behind but at the same time in almost every case it also caused tension between the child migrating and the family already established in the U.S.

Of the twenty mothers interviewed, nine had new household compositions or a second family in the United States. Seven of the women were married; and five of the seven women who were married had children-only one parent conceived her child after her first set of children reunified. The other four had their children or conceived their children prior to the reunification. Two of the seven marriages ended in divorce, of the two marriages that ended, there were no children conceived in those relationships. Of the nine families with a second

family in the United States, two women had paramours and children as a result of the relationship but were not married. One of these unions where there wasn't a marriage also ended. Interestingly, all nine mothers admitted that having a family in NYC while their children were still at home was financially taxing, but they denied that it distracted them from their emotional and financial responsibilities to their children at home.

Utilization of Support Network:

The support network for many of these women was informal by nature. Many of them included family members who migrated here prior to the transnational parent, as well as friends and in some cases employers. The network provided employment opportunities, financial assistance when needed; and emotional support. Some women accessed the network at different times and to different degrees. However, for the mothers in this study their biggest support at times were the caretaker of their children back home. Those who were married in the United States and started a new family revealed that their husbands were their biggest supporters. While most of the women reported having a good relationship with their employers, two specifically indicated that their employers were a significant supporter to them and their children. In addition to naming these supporters, many of the women referred to their church or God as a form of support.

The study illuminated the phenomenon of transnational parenting by identifying behavioral indicators of successful transnational parenting. According to the typology defined on page 74, the researcher can conclude that

these twenty African Caribbean mothers did successfully co-parent their children from a distance. They had (1) weekly contact with their children, sometimes more; (2) provided monthly financial support and sent remittances; (3) maintained a good relationship with their children's caretakers; (4) were knowledgeable of their children's school performance and attendance; (5) many of them were able to comfort their children or knew that their children's caretaker were able to comfort their children when they weren't able to do so, or were unaware that their children were upset.

Many of them were able to (6) give their children advice that were age-appropriate; (7) reunification was planned or in cases when it was unplanned the mothers were very conscious in helping their children with the adjustment emotionally, socially and educationally. The mothers were (8) involved in major decision-making events; (9) all of the children who reached adolescents are in high school or graduated and are either working or in college or both. Some of the children (10) continue to live with their mothers or are married and have families of their own. One child who is an adult and isn't married lives in an apartment with a roommate and another child returned home to her country of origin after getting her masters degree in Public Health, because she wanted to make a contribution to her country and also because her caretaker-her grandmother is old and she wanted to be there for her grandmother.

It is just as important to say that the mother's success at parenting from a distance is also based on the careful selection of the caretakers for the children left behind and the trust, and support they received from the caretakers who for

the most part were also extended family and friends. But most of all, the success of the mothers' parenting was related to the work the caretakers did in co-parenting these 29 children along with the 20 transnational mothers.

Duality Inherent in Transnational Parenting:

As the researcher analyzed the data from the study, the resounding theme of duality was evident for both the mothers and the children engaged in transnational parenting. At times, this dual role created paradoxes that in some cases were in conflict with one another. Below are five different situations where transnational parenting and its inclusive factors have been found to create dichotomies.

In the case of the mothers, 60 percent reported migrating because they were unemployed, while 40 percent reported they were underemployed in their country of origin. On a macro level this speaks to the issue of poverty in the English-Speaking Caribbean and the number of unskilled laborers in developing countries and specifically the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The level of poverty in the SIDS countries suggests the seriousness or the inability of these countries to integrate into the global economy as well as, for example, the Asian countries of India, China and South Korea. The lack of integration of the SIDS economies into the world economy is primarily because of the income gap between the advanced economies and the low-income economies as well as their policies, and also because of the continuous environmental and natural disasters (hurricanes and tidal waves), SIDS are challenged with (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2004).

Due to the poverty, the location, climate and topographic vulnerability, one natural disaster can wipe out a SIDS entire economy in a day, such as what hurricane Ivan did to Grenada in 2004.

The twenty women in the study left their developing countries because of poverty-unemployment and underemployment and because they felt they did not have a choice. Then they moved to a richer, larger, developed country such as the United States, to work in an unskilled, low paying job market that most American citizens refuse to work in because of the low salary. They took those jobs because of their limited choices and they used their salaries to support themselves, their children and families back home which was a financial burden for them and required a great deal of sacrifice on their part.

On a macro level these women are caught between two worlds and they actively made decisions to resolve the issue to financially take care of themselves and their children. However in doing so, they were caught in a dichotomous situation, which left them vulnerable to being exploited by unsavory employers and others in their community who were aware of their undocumented status. Many of them did not have the safety nets the average working American has such as sick leave, annual leave, and a benefit package (medical, dental, eye etc.).

For these women, making the decision to migrate suggest they are adventurous. Surviving and thriving in an unfamiliar environment also suggests they are resilient, yet believing as one mother put it, "I planned to go back home

in 3 years, build a house and open a shop to work and make money” is somewhat naïve, which is rooted in “wishful thinking”.

A third example of the duality of these women’s lives was evident by their selection of caretakers; they were very good at selecting substitute parents for their children. As a result of their selection, their children were able to form positive attachments to their caretakers. Because of the positive attachments when the children reunited with the parents they had some difficulties adjusting- some of them saw their mothers as strangers. One mother reported that after her child arrived, “she pressured me to send for her aunt”. This child’s aunt was her caretaker back home. The duality here from the mother’s perspective was that she encouraged and supported the attachment of her child and her sister while her daughter lived back home, but she did not understand that at reunification, the extent of her daughter’s loss when she was separated from her aunt- who was her caretaker for several years. This second separation for this child created a great deal of emotional pain for her daughter, which prevented her daughter from bonding with her birth mother. This mother expected her daughter would bond with her immediately at reunification.

Fourth, many of these mothers reported being good providers to their children. They pride themselves in being able to “take care of all their children’s needs”. As a result of their absence from their children however, their children were vulnerable to abuse and neglect. One woman reported moving her daughter from one caretaker to the other because her daughter was maltreated.

Fifth, all the mothers reported sending their children, family members and or caretakers remittances in the form of money and material goods. This too has a duality associated with it. Remittances for many of the developing countries-SIDS are second to tourism in terms of these countries national income. According to recent information, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean living abroad are estimated to have sent approximately \$55 billion in remittances (money transfer) to their home countries in 2005 (Green, 2006).

Studies of the impact of remittances have shown that they are utilized for investment purposes in the senders' countries of origin in small businesses such as manufacturing and crafts companies, market halls, bakeries and transport agencies (Taylor, 1999; van Doorn, 2001 as cited in Vertovec, 2003). On the other hand, remittances have been shown to have the following negative impacts: displace local jobs and incomes; induce consumption spending (primarily on foreign imports); inflate local prices of land, housing, and food; create disparity, envy between recipients and non-recipients; and create a culture of economic dependency (Vertovec, 2000).

Immigrant mothers play a major role in the economy both in the United States and in their country of origin. When they leave their children behind with relatives and other adults, it creates interplay between the children caretakers and the mothers as well as the economies between the host country and the country of origin. In exchange for caring for the children, the extended family members are paid in the form of remittances, either through cash or goods in addition to the money sent for the children's clothing and schooling and food

(Philpott, 1968 cited in Watkins-Owens, 2001).

Negative Cases

According to Patton (1990), the search for negative cases is similar to testing for alternative or rival schematics. Searching for cases that do not fit into the pattern helps to support alternative explanations. As with most qualitative analysis in validating the data, this researcher purposely looked for negative cases but didn't find any. At the time of reunification the researcher looked for the outcomes of the 29 children of the mothers in the study. Every child had a successful outcome. The indicators listed in chapter four on p. 75 measured unsuccessful reunifications. For the 27 children who migrated to NYC, all of them are either working or in college or they are still in high school and living at home. Two of the children did not go to college but are working and still live at home with their mothers. Two children did not migrate to the United States; instead they chose to remain back home because they have their own families at home. None of the children living in the United States or back home are in prison or on public assistance. However, one of the two children who is living back home had a child as a teenager, while waiting for reunification. Eventually, she migrated but decided she wanted to be with her daughter and could not leave her behind like her mother did with her and her siblings. This researcher sees her actions of returning home to be with her daughter as strength-based rather than a failure.

Limitations of the Study:

There were some limitations to the study including the small sample size, the self-selection of the respondents and low returns of the two surveys from the respondents. This study is based on a small but unique sample of only 20 respondents. Due to the small size of the sample, the knowledge generated from the study cannot be generalized to the larger African Caribbean transnational parenting community. Although, the researcher recruited approximately forty respondents for the study, many of the potential respondents who initially agreed to be interviewed changed their minds later. However, as on most qualitative research, the lack of breadth in the sample is compensated for by the depth of response on experiences of transnational parenting for a unique sample who have been transnational parents.

Some of the mothers were not present when the researcher arrived at their homes for the interview even though the appointment were confirmed a day or two earlier. Efforts to reschedule those interviews were not productive. Some of the women, who, when in person meetings with the researcher agreed to be interviewed changed their minds at the point of being contacted by the researcher to set up the interview. The reasons they gave were two-fold. The most common reason given was concern about their undocumented immigration status. Even after being told that they did not have to sign a consent form and that they would not have to give their names or identifying information to the researcher, these women were not reassured that it would be safe to be interviewed. The second reason for refusing to participate in the study was that it

would be too painful to relive such difficult times in their lives. In both situations the researcher expressed her understanding and praised these mothers for being honest and forthright.

Self-selection is another limitation of the study. The women who agreed to be interviewed and followed through with the interview wanted to tell their story. Utilizing a snowball technique-where one person referred another for the study, assumes that the respondents in the study were eager to share their experience. One view of this sampling technique suggests that those who decided to participate in the study were highly motivated. Another perspective in viewing this sampling technique suggests that the less motivated women selected out of the study and as a result the study isn't as robust as it would have been with a more diverse group of African Caribbean immigrant mothers engaged in transnational parenting.

Third, the study was originally designed with the plan of triangulating the study methodology-qualitative and quantitative. To support the quantitative part of the study, the researcher used two scales: (1) The Resiliency Scale, which is a 26-item instrument that measures the level of individual resilience. Resilience is seen as a positive personality characteristic that enhances individual adaptation and (2) The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), which is a 12-item instrument, that measures perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. Both scales were given to the respondents to complete at the beginning of the study, just before the interview began. Some of the respondents completed it and gave it to the researcher,

while most of them did the interview and promised to mail it back to the researcher. Altogether the researcher received ten surveys back to date. With such a small number of surveys available for analysis, the researcher made the decision to focus just on the qualitative part of the study, which is based on 24 questions and is designed to elicit information-rich data.

Consequently, the researcher concentrated on collecting detailed data from a small sample size, with the understanding that the small number of respondents in the study reduces the ability to generalize to the larger population.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY FINDINGS:

Daily life for the women in the study was comprised of a complex and interwoven series of many grueling and demanding activities that required great persistence, patience and planning. They included living in a foreign country while being away from family and friends, working in low paying jobs as nannies and babysitters and sometimes living in the homes they work in and being expected to work all day and night, at times dealing with an unsupportive employer, navigating the long, rigorous immigration minefield, financially and emotionally supporting two households, working to sustain the relationship with their children's caretakers with the hope of avoiding moving children from one home to another, dealing with issues of separation and loss for self and children, planning for reunification and finally, coping with the reunification process itself.

Surviving each of these difficult life experiences and thriving like the twenty women in the study have, is self evident that they are resilient, which is

defined in the literature as the ability to bounce back and adapt in the context of significant adversity (Masten, 1994).

Practitioners should use caution when generalizing these results to larger African Caribbean immigrant women engaged in transnational parenting. However, based on the findings from the study and the researcher's own intimate knowledge of this population and her work with this group in private practice, it is possible to make some recommendations and strategies that could be used by social service agencies, school settings, mental health providers, medical personnel, community organizations, and in churches/places of worship where this population frequents.

Recommendations and Strategies:

The recommendations and strategies are derived directly from the findings in the study. Some of these recommendations have implications for policy, program development, clinical intervention and staff development across several institutions that have contact with these transnational families.

In terms of program development, as well as organizational and clinical interventions, it is important for agencies to establish venues that would allow immigrants, (and transnational families in particular,) to talk about the many difficulties they face, without retribution. Support groups for transnational women engaged in transnational parenting are one specific type of program that needs to be developed by service providers, who are working with the transnational population. Additionally, special efforts should be made to include the partners of the women (husbands and paramours) to participate in any treatment

intervention. The findings show that these men play a significant role in the lives of the women and their children both in the U. S. and in the country of origin. They perform an important role by supporting the women both emotionally and financially, which helps the women to be able to balance both households prior to reunification. These men are also significant to the success of the reunification process as well.

Some additional support groups that are needed for this population are groups designed for children recently reunified with families. Often-overlooked population that may also require group support are the children who were born in the United States and are now literally sharing their homes and their parents with older siblings that are strangers to them.

Interventions designed to develop and enhance the parent-child relationship between the transnational mother and the reunified child is essential. However, these newly migrated children would also benefit from orientations or groups designed to provide newly migrated children with a formal orientation to the American educational system as well as after school programs designed to provide homework assistance, mentoring and recreational activities. An after school program could provide these children with much needed support while also supporting and reinforcing their learning in the classroom. Such a program also could help these children cope with the often long working hours of their mothers.

A peer mentoring program with a model of having children who are more advanced in their acculturation process mentor the newly arrived student would

also serve to sustain the new arrival and present a model of successful acculturation. Planned recreational activities should be available so new immigrant children are introduced to the host country and communities in a positive, fun way.

Other recommendations are directed at institutions and professionals working with immigrants, and in particular, the transnational immigrant population. Board of Directors, administrators, and staff should be cognizant of the importance of providing emotional and social support during both the transnational parenting period and the reunification period for these families. Making support services available to the transnational family should be a priority of schools, community organizations, and churches, etc.

Staff preparation, development and training are critical in working with the transnational population. For example, social workers, guidance counselors and clinicians should be trained to understand the psychological effects of these lengthy separations and the loss issues that occur for transnational parents prior to reunification. They should be familiar with the dynamics of transnational parenting and the various psychological, economic and housing issues that impact this type of parenting. These professionals also need to be knowledgeable about the adjustments that have to occur for both parent and child during the reunification phase. Often, due to the challenges of reunification, professionals will be called upon to provide emotional support to various family members. They should also be trained to understand how the dual roles and relationships of these parents, which we referred to in the

summary section of this document, can create parent-child conflicts between transnational parents and their children.

Staff should also be made aware of the painstaking efforts that these parents must take in order to fulfill the strict requirements needed to change their immigration status. This process is extremely stressful to the transnational mother because of its high stakes. It is important that those working with these transnational families are aware of and kept abreast of the changing immigration laws so that they can inform their clients of the reforms as they occur. However, it is absolutely imperative that these workers understand that they are never supposed to report, or compromise the confidentiality of families they suspect to be undocumented. Sharing the confidentiality laws and the most recent immigration information with these families could help allay their fear regarding being reported to Homeland Security. Having knowledge of the most recent changes in immigration policy and rulings would certainly be an asset to staff working with transnational families. Sharing this information would certainly build confidence in the expertise of the worker. More importantly it could also promote good will and trust as the family experiences the worker as contributing to the family's receipt of important immigration knowledge. Staff should also be knowledgeable about the necessary documentations (including immunization records) needed by immigrant families. This information should be shared with parents in a timely manner so that they can retrieve this important information as early as possible in the reunification process.

The following are some specific areas of training that would be necessary for staff working with immigrant families. First, it is highly recommended that all staff working with immigrants attend training on how to develop cultural competence and sensitivity across cultures. This training is critical for people working with groups that are different from theirs or the American culture. It will also be beneficial for people who belong to the same cultural group because frequently they are of a different social class than the parents they are working with. Also, workers from the same cultural group may be legal residents who do not understand the immigration status nuances faced by these new immigrants.

Subsequent in-service trainings and staff development should include some of the information derived in the literature on this population as well as the knowledge gained from this study. Knowledge of some of the cultural factors related to the extended family, such as the strong informal social network that exists in this population, as discussed earlier, essential to working with this population.

. Training should also be provided to staff on the concept of child fostering and its role in this African-Caribbean culture. This concept needs to be trained without over simplifying or generalizing it-meaning it is very much a part of the African Caribbean culture but when used in the case of Transnational families, the impact on the family is very different. The separation that occurs due to migration as opposed to leaving one part of your country to live with a relative in another part of the country is not as finite.

Education can often be the best tool to both help families recognize potential developmental lags in children and prevent child abuse and maltreatment. It can also be used to help families learn new methods of discipline that will minimize their interaction with the child welfare system. Training staff to identify and recognize signs of maltreatment needs to be used primarily as a preventive measure when working with this population. It would also be important to train staff to educate immigrant families on developmental milestones and corresponding age-appropriate behaviors for children. Also, training about developmental disabilities should include knowledge about teaching parents how to be aware of potential learning disabilities in children. Staff should also understand the significance education plays in the lives of the African Caribbean immigrant population. This area can be an excellent way of engaging, what might otherwise be a resistant group, in counseling or therapy. Organizations should also create public awareness among the African Caribbean population about the helpfulness of such services in order to counteract the negative stigma and stereotyping of mental health services by this ethnic group

Strategies focused on engaging and recruiting family members should include actively advertising services in neighborhoods where these families live and work. Another suggestion to ensure higher use of services is for community organizations (such as schools, social service agencies and mental health organizations,) to partner with neighborhood churches and places of worship. Community organizations that provide services to this populations should also

invest in offering good childcare by providing babysitting/playroom facilities and quality supervision and snacks for families who have young children. These types of services should be made available in the late afternoons and evenings after work.

Two additional strategies are suggested here to address the social work interventions that this researcher feels would work best for this group based on the knowledge learned from the study. Social workers working with African Caribbean families should utilize a strengths-based approach, which is based on the belief that when people focus on their strengths they are more likely to solve problems and make changes in their lives. These families have demonstrated a great deal of strengths while living under very stressful situations. Social workers working with African Caribbean families should use Brief Solution-Focused Therapy given the fact that this population is not accepting of the therapeutic community and would most likely be resistant to long-term, traditional psychotherapy. It makes sense that a model that is time limited and promotes clients abilities to find solutions to problematic issues would be better received than open-ended long-term therapy. This model would engage the family as a partner in the helping process and utilize the strengths found in this population.

In terms of policy and legislation, the findings identified restrictions resulting from the current immigration policy's response to undocumented immigrants. The most recent immigration reform bill now being debated in congress is the new Temporary Worker program that is a very restrictive

legislation that has bipartisan support. It was developed to control the flow of immigrants in and out of the United States. It sets a cap of 200,000 temporary workers annually. It denies temporary workers an opportunity to live with their families, establish homes, integrate into local communities and eventually apply for permanent residency and citizenship. Many immigration rights groups are concerned about the fairness and equity of this bill. This new law continues to force the women in my study (and countless others like them,) to become active participants in the underground world of the undocumented immigrant (Immigration Policy Center, 2007).

When the immigration debate is examined, it is clear that many of today's immigrants come from Latin America, Mexico and Central America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, while prior to the 1960's, most immigrants came from Europe. While the immigration issue is a complex one that has to be addressed on various levels; it is indeed difficult to understand why there are increasing negative immigration sentiments, and more restrictions in immigration, given the declining number of less-skilled native-born workers, and the growing need for less-skilled labor? - This country's own Bureau of Labor Statistic projects that nearly 6 million new jobs will be created between 2004 and 2014 that require only short term, on-the-job training, yet the negative outcry against immigration persists. Deeper inquiry is certainly needed to explore the impact of race and by default the issue of racism in the immigration debate. One troubling observation is that as the color of the immigrant populations' skin gets darker, the

immigration sentiments become more negative and the laws become more restrictive.

As the study discovered, both the United States and the countries of origin are beneficiaries of the labor of these women as seen in their increased spending capacity and economic contributions such as the sending remittances. Yet, for these women, life in both countries continues to be restrictive and non-supportive. In the United States, these women are recruited to provide a service to middle class citizens who are active participants in the workplace. The transnational women work for low wages and do not have the possibility of unemployment or paid vacations or sick leave that others in this country have as part of their fundamental rights in the workplace. Transnational women contribute to the U.S. economy because they live, work and make purchases for themselves and their children in order to send material goods home.

At the same time, the money sent home to the countries of origin, are used to stimulate the economies at home. For many countries, remittances are one of the largest sources of income for that country's economy (Orozco, 2003).

Understanding the contributions these women make in both economies, it is only befitting that they are valued and able to receive some form of reciprocity for their contributions to both countries. Instead, the situation of these women is punitive in one country (the United States,) and disregarded and unnoticed by the countries to which consume the fruits of the women's labor.

Certainly, the United States needs an immigration bill that is beneficial to all (both American citizens and immigrants). Such a bill would, if equitable,

would be based on the realities faced by immigrants today, their purposes for coming here, as well as the history of immigrants emigrating to this country. It should not be based on fear, paranoia, and racism.

The sending countries need to be more responsive to these migrating women and especially to their children. Instead of being merely recipients of these women's work and money, the governments of these countries should provide services to the children of their nationals. They could invest in these children's mental health as it relates to issues of separation and loss as well as protecting children who may be vulnerable to abuse or maltreatment by their caretakers. These home countries can also develop programs to assist children with reunification by having the children participate in groups that will prepare them for the migration process. Such groups could allow expressions of grief and loss concerning the separation from their current caretaker and prepare the children for living in a foreign country with their mother and at times, other members of the family that may be unfamiliar to them. Additional issues to be addressed are past and current feelings of abandonment and rejection by their mothers as well as expectations that their mothers may have of them-and that they may have of their mothers. These services can be provided in the schools that these children are attending.

Future Research Projects:

The phenomenon of transnational parenting is growing and exists in many countries throughout the world. As globalization increases and the gap between developed countries and underdeveloped countries increases, more

and more parents will make the decision to leave their families behind and pursue work in foreign countries to improve the lives of their family.

Much more research will be needed to understand and support these families engaged in this growing trend. Further exploration is needed to unpack the fantasies of both the mothers and children regarding reunification and how these dreams and wishes of reunification impact the actual reality. Fantasies and its impact on reality can be explored to include other arrears of mother-child reunification. Such as reunification in the child welfare field as it relates to mothers reunifying with their children who are returning home from foster care. Also, in the criminal justice field issues of fantasies as it relates to reunification of imprisoned mothers and their children.

Further investigation of the role of fathers in the transnational process-how active or passive are they? Research that further looks at the caretakers (both extended family and non-relative caretakers) in terms of the quality of care they provide for the children and their understanding of their role. In-depth exploration of the cultural practice of child fostering including getting the children's and caretakers' perspective.

Additionally, research is needed to understanding how the newly reunified children are adjusting emotionally, socially and educationally and what supports are needed to address some of the issues they encounter. This has implications for communities and the educational system.

The issue of gender as it relates to the children left behind, how does it impact the reunification process? Research is needed to further investigate the

role of the church or the role of religion or the belief of a spiritual or higher being and the women's ability to cope with the many difficulties they encounter as a result of parenting from a distance. Last but certainly not least research is needed to investigate the phenomenon as it relates to those cases where reunification failed or was not a goal of the parent. How do the children left behind cope with the abandonment and what makes these mothers walk away.

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RESEARCH PLAN

This plan provides an overview of the timeframes utilized for completing the dissertation:

TASKS

TIMEFRAMES

Submission of literature Review	April 7, 2006
Approval of 2nd Exam	May 18, 2006
Submission Proposal to Committee	January 26, 2007
Took IRB test online	January 29, 2007
Submission of IRB application	January 31, 2007
Committee meeting and approval of Dissertation Proposal	March 1, 2007
IRB Approval	April 10, 2007
Distributed letters to contacts in organizations for referrals of respondents for the study	April 15, 2007
Distributed flyers to potential respondents in areas where English-Speaking Caribbean immigrants live and work.	April 15 2007
Made visits to organizations and contacts to encourage them to identify respondents	April 20-December, 2007
Made follow up telephone calls to contacts & Organizations	April to December, 2007
Conducted Interviews of respondents & administering the scales	April 19, 2007-March 2008
Transcribed interviews	April, 2007-March 2008
Analyzed data from the interviews and surveys	June, 2007-March 2008
Prepared report of findings	March 2008
Submission of study analysis, findings and conclusion	March 17, 2008

This is a linear plan for the completion of the research, analysis and writing of the dissertation project. Recruitment of respondents occurred throughout the process, simultaneously with the interviews.

The Graduate Center OF The City University
of New York

RECRUITMENT FLYER

**IMPORTANT STUDY FOR AFRICAN CARIBBEAN
IMMIGRANT WOMEN FROM THE ENGLISH-
SPEAKING CARIBBEAN/WEST INDIES**

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING?

**WE ARE LOOKING TO TALK TO MOTHERS
WHO ONCE ENGAGED IN
LONG DISTANCE PARENTING**

Participants in the study have to be women who lived
in NYC while their children lived in another country
but are reunited with their children in NY at this time.

**INTERVIEWS WILL BE HELD FROM
April 2007 to March 2008 (Approximately 1
HOUR)**

**YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO GIVE YOUR
CORRECT NAME/ANONYMITY IS GUARANTEED**

\$10 LONG DISTANCE CARD FOR YOUR TIME

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED,
CALL CHRISTIANA CUMMINGS (347) 275-7790.**

The Graduate Center OF The City University of New York Informational Page

My name is Christiana Best Cummings and I am a student in the Social Welfare Ph.D. Program at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled “Predictors of Successful Transnational Parenting for African Caribbean Mothers.” This is a research study of how immigrant women from English-speaking Caribbean countries parent their children from a distance. The study is expected to reveal information on African Caribbean immigrant’s adjustment in the United States at the initial stage of migration when mothers are engaged in long distance parenting, and later when they are reunified with their children, which is when parent-child conflict is most prevalent.

I would like permission to interview you about your experiences. The interview will take approximately one hour. You will receive a \$10 long distance card for your participation. With your permission, I would like to audio-tape this interview so I can record the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The risks from participating in this study are minimal. You will likely recall some earlier recollections that will probably have both pleasant and unpleasant memories. If you find that you are unable to continue you are free to stop the interview at anytime by refusing to answer, postponing it to a later date, talking to the researcher about how the recollection of memories is making you feel or ending the interview altogether. The benefits of your participation are that practitioners’ knowledge will increase because they would have a deeper understanding of what you do to as parents to successfully parent your children at a distance. This knowledge will hopefully inform policy and practice in the fields of education, child welfare, nursing/medicine, mental health, criminal justice and the world of work.

You will be one of 20 women who will participate in the study because this is the minimum number of participants for this type of study. You are eligible to participate in the study because you have met the following criteria: (1) African Caribbean immigrant mother; (2) migrated to NYC within the last twenty years; (3) left children behind and later reunited with them in NYC; (4) migrated from the English-Speaking Caribbean; (5) may also have children born in NYC.

Please be aware that if you wish to stop the interview, you can do so with no negative consequence. Anything you say or do has no bearing on any professional, social, or community resources on which you depend or are connected to.

Although I will not ask you to sign a consent form, I will ask you to give you consent on the tape recorder at the beginning of the interview by verbally giving your consent to participate in the study. I will read this very informational form to you and ask you to indicate verbally.

I may publish results of the study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please let me know by calling me and I will agree to meet you and hand deliver it to you.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me, Christiana Best-Cummings at (347) 275-7790 email: bstwshs153@aol.com, or my advisor Michael J. Smith at (212) 452-7029, email address_profmsmith@aol.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, email: kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

Sincerely,

Christiana Best-Cummings

Appendix I

Dear Participant:

I am conducting a study of how African Caribbean immigrant women from English-speaking Caribbean countries parent their children from a distance. This study is part of my dissertation project at The Graduate School and University Center at the City University of New York. The results of the study will be strictly confidential and used for academic purposes. I am interested in interviewing 30 women who meet the following criteria:

- ◆ born in one of the English –speaking Caribbean Islands or Guyana
- ◆ identifies as African Caribbean or black
- ◆ lived in the United States from one to fifteen years
- ◆ migrated to the U. S. first and was later joined by their children
- ◆ is documented or undocumented and currently lives in the United States and
- ◆ also may have children who were born in both the U.S. and in their country of origin
- ◆ reunited with one or more children in NYC

In doing this study, I hope to expand the knowledge of practitioners, such as social workers, nurses, teachers, and counselors who work directly with immigrant families so they will have a better understanding all the things that you believe lead to successfully parenting your children from a distance.

Participation in the study is voluntary. It involves being interviewed and completing three surveys. You will receive a \$10 long distance calling card for your time (interview and the completion of the surveys).

The interview will last approximately one hour. You do not have to put your name on any of the documents. All efforts will be made to keep your identity confidential.

Thank you for your time and participation. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christiana Best-Cummings,
Doctoral Researcher

Cell (646) 784-4484;
Home (347) 275-7790

Appendix II

Dear Referral Source:

I am requesting your help in identifying individuals to participate in a very important research project, which is part of my dissertation project at The Graduate School and University Center at the City University of New York. The study explores the transnational parenting experience of African Caribbean immigrant mothers who migrated to the United States and whose children once lived in their country of origin but is now reunified with their mothers in the United States. Specifically I am investigating what these women do that lead to them parenting their children successfully from a distance, while living in the United States and their children are living in the country of origin.

Your assistance is greatly needed in identifying and referring participants for this study. Your help will contribute to the overall knowledge in the field of immigration, while bringing visibility to the challenges found at the reunification period.

The study consists of an interview, which will take approximately one hour.

The information will be used for academic purposes such as publications, and presentations at conferences. Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants will not be asked to sign a consent form or to identify themselves by name. All efforts will be made to protect the anonymity of participants in the study.

Please ask participants who fit the criteria for the study to call me at (646) 784-4484 or (347) 275-7790. Please ask participants to call and leave a pseudo name and a number where they can be reached.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter for the participants, so you will be able to give to potential participants for the study. Thank you for your assistance. It is most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christiana Best-Cummings,
Doctoral Student & Researcher

Continuation of Appendix III

Criteria for participation in the study is as follows:

Respondents should possess all of the eight (8) criteria listed below:

1. born and live in one of the English –speaking Caribbean Islands or Guyana
2. identifies as black or African Caribbean
3. migrated to the United States while children lived in country of origin
4. lived in the United States from one to fifteen years
5. Currently reunited with one or more children
6. migrated to the U. S. first and was later joined by one or more children
7. documented or undocumented and is currently living in the United States, also
8. may have children who were born in the U.S. and some may have been born in their country of origin

Appendix IV

Telephone Eligibility Screening Form

Potential Participants in the study must meet the first five criteria to participate in the study.

1. Were you born and live in one of the English –speaking Caribbean Islands or Guyana?
2. Do you identify yourself as black or African Caribbean?
3. Did you migrate to the United States while your children lived back in your country of origin?
4. Have you lived in the United States between one and fifteen years?
5. Did you reunite with one or more children in NYC?

Although, the researcher is looking for participants who meet the next criteria, it is not compulsory for every participant to do so.

6. Do you have children who were born in the U.S. in addition to those who were born in your country of origin?

Appendix V INTERVIEW GUIDE

Predictors of Successful Transnational Parenting by African Caribbean Mothers from English-speaking countries who migrate to the United States

OPENING STATEMENT: This interview guide is part of a research project that is looking at what women like yourself (African Caribbean immigrant mothers) do to successfully parent your children from a distance. The guide is divided into five sections: (1) benefits and consequences of transnational parenting; (2) support systems; (3) transnational parenting (4) reunification and (5) new family composition. **(You are not required to write your name on this document).**

Financial Incentives:

1. What were your reasons for migrating to the United States, even though it meant being separated from your children for an unknown period of time?

Prompt: divorce; loss of job; unemployment; death of a loved one

2. What were the rewards/benefits of living here while your children are living back home?

Prompt: financial and other types of incentives

3. What were the negative consequences of living in the U. S. while your children are living back home?

Prompt: separation and loss issues
Was it worth it?

II. Separation from Children

4. Describe what it was like being separated from your children

Prompts:

- a. how did you handle the separation?
- b. How did your children deal with the separation?
- c. If you had to do it over again, knowing the period of time you were away from your children, would you do it again?

III. Support System (Employer)

5. Describe your relationship with your employer during the time your children were still living back home?

6. How would you describe your relationship with your employer after your children arrived?

7. Who was your biggest supporter during the time your children were living at home?

Prompt: Did you get support from different people over the period of time?

IV. Transnational Parenting:

8. How did you stay connected to your family back home?

Prompt: means, frequency

9. What was it like for you living here while your children lived back home?

Prompt: who cared for your children?

10. How did you take care of your children back home while you were living here?

11. Tell me what it's like parenting from a distance?

Prompts: care of children; ability to parent effectively; family provider

a. How did you let them know you loved them?

b. How did you discipline them long distance/set limits?

c. How did you communicate you cared long distance?

d. When your children were upset how did you comfort them?

e. What kind of advice did you give them?

f. What did you talk to your children about? How did it feel?

g. What did they talk to you about?

h. Did they ask for advice?

12. When your children were upset how did you comfort them from a distance?

13. What kind of advice did you give your children?
14. Did your children initiate contact with you? What was the frequency?
15. In case of an emergency, how were your children or their caretaker able to reach you?

16. What was your relationship like with the caretaker of your children?

Prompts: How did you handle disagreements with the caretaker?

17. What role did the father of the children play while you were living in the U. S.?

18. What was his relationship with his children during the time you were living in the U. S.?

V. Reunification:

19. What steps did you take to get your children to come live with you in the U.S.?

Prompts:

- a. Were you employed?
 - b. Did you have an apartment or place of residence?
 - c. Did you save up money for their arrival?
 - d. Did you plan for them to attend school?
20. How difficult was it to get them to finally come to the United States?
21. When your children arrived what were their initial reaction?

Prompts:

- a. How did they respond to you?
- b. How did they respond to school/work/living in NYC?
- c. Did their reaction change?
- d. What did you do to make them feel welcome?

- e. What did the rest of the family in NY do to make them feel welcome?
22. How would you describe the reunification process?
- a. who provided supervision for your children when you were at work?
- b. what was it like for you having the responsibility of taking care of your children directly after such a long time?
- c. What were some of the things you argued with your children about?
- d. When you children lived at home you had help from family, who provided you with help when you had problems related to your children in NYC?
- e. how did the church/school/family/friends help when your children arrived?
- f. Did you have concerns of safety for your children that you did not have for them before when they lived back home?
- g. who did they play with in NYC?
- h. what did they do for fun?
- i. did you learn anything in the US about parenting that influence how you parent your children?
- j. are there any parenting issues that you see happen in the U.S. that you will not do or did not allow your parenting with your children?
23. How is your relationship with your children today?

VI. New Family Composition:

24. What was it like having two households?

Prompts:

- a. Did you have a partner here in the United States living with you during the time your children were living at home?
- b. What role did your partner play in your life at the time?
- c. Did he advise you on issues related to your family?

- d. Did you have children that were born in the United States, while your other children were living back home?
- e. What was it like for you having two sets of children, one back home and the other in the United States?
- f. How did your responsibility to your children in the United States affect you meeting your responsibilities to your children back home?
- g. When your children arrived what was it like with the two sets of children living together?
- h. How it all turned out for the entire family?

Appendix VI
Treatment Providers-QUEENS

- Elmhurst Hospital 79-01 Broadway (718) 830-1515
- Catholic Charities 13-29 Beach Channel Drive
Far Rockaway (718) 337-6800
- Corona Elmhurst 37-22 82nd Street (718) 779-1600
Guidance Center
- Creedmore 80-45 Winchester Blvd. (718) 464-7500
Psychiatric Center Queens Village
- Safe Space 163-18 Jamaica Avenue (718) 471-6818
- Hillside Eastern 96-09 Springfield Blvd. (718) 740-3310
Queens
- Holliswood Hospital 87-37 Palermo Street (718) 776-8181
- Long Island 97-29 64th Road (718) 896-3400
Consultation Center
- Long Island Jewish 75-59 263rd Street (718) 470-7000
Glen Oaks
- Mobile Crisis Unit 61-41 Kissena Blvd. (718) 463-9660
- New Horizon 108-19 Rockaway Blvd. (718) 845-2620
Counseling
- Queens Child Jamaica (718) 657-7100
Guidance Center
- F.E.G.S. 1600 Central Avenue (718) 327-1600
Far Rockaway

Treatment Providers-BROOKLYN

Neighborhood Counseling Center
 7701 13th Avenue, Brooklyn, N Y
 Y
 (718) 232-1351

Community Healthcare Network
 94 Manhattan Ave, Brooklyn, N
 Y
 (718) 388-0390

Interborough Developmental Center
1670 E 17th Street, #2, Brooklyn, NY
(718) 375-1200

New York Psychotherapy and
Counseling Center
796 Drew St #H, Brooklyn NY
(718) 235-3100

New York Psychotherapy &
Counseling Center
394 Hendrix St. Brooklyn, NY
(718) 485-2100

A Counseling Service
116 Prospect Park W.
Brooklyn, NY
(718) 768-6664

CIS Counseling
111 John Street #930
York, NY
(212) 385-0086

A New Horizon Counseling Cent.
10819 Rockaway Blvd. New
Jamaica, NY
(718) 845-2620

Caribbean Women's Health Association

Treatment Providers-BRONX

MHA
Bronx, NY
(914) 666-4646

New Beginnings Counseling
3183 E. Tremont Ave, Bronx, NY
(718) 792 4814

Fordham Tremont Mental Health
817 E. 180th Street
(718) 933-3222

Whitehill Counseling Service
22 W. 1st Street. Mt. Vernon
(914) 668-9124

Treatment Providers-MANHATTAN

CIS Counseling
111 John Street #930
(212) 385-0086

FEGS Behavioral Health Serv.
315 Hudson St. #6, New York
(212) 366-8095

Treatment Providers-Staten Island

Cardio Behavioral Health
2291 Victory Blvd. Staten Island, NY
(718) 477-0228

Appendix VII

Immigration Status Adjustment

Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of New York
1011 First Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10022
800/566-7636

Immigrants and Child Welfare Project
Hunter School of Social Work
129 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
212/452-7094

General Legal Assistance/Information and Referral

Legal Aid Society
199 Water Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10038
212/577-3300

General Information and Referrals for Questions Regarding Immigration

New York Immigration Coalition
212/4193737

Immigration and Referrals Regarding Domestic Violence and VAWA:

Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project
74-09 37th Avenue
Jackson Heights, Queens
718/899-1233 ext. 129
Hotline: 800/621-4673

Immigration/Domestic Violence Law, Assistance, and Information:

Sanctuary For Families/Immigration Intervention Project
67 Wall Street, Suite 2211
New York, NY 10266
212/349-6009, ext. 246
Fax: 212/566-0344

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