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3-P-82-0132

IDRC-LIB

18698

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**TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANT NETWORKS - IMPLICATIONS FOR DONOR SOCIETIES
(GRENADA AND ST VINCENT)**

EN# 18698

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Funding Agency: **IDRC**
CANADA

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The Caribbean islands continue to export the brightest ablest and most productive of their tiny population through emigration. While the largest migrant streams have been to the western industrial metropolitan centres with New York predominant, Trinidad and Tobago has been a regional host since the early 19th century. Trinidad's geographic proximity and relative affluence vis a vis its Caribbean neighbours ensure a continuing flow of migrants from the Caribbean micro states of Grenada and St Vincent. This flow is supported and reinforced by the transnational family network created by earlier migrant streams which began in the post emancipation era. There is in fact a continuing intra Caribbean migrant flow with Barbados, Guadeloupe, the Virgin Islands and the Bahamas also being hosts to migrants from the smaller territories of the regions.

Trinidad and Tobago, however, with its petroleum base has been one of the largest recipients of migrants with the majority coming from Grenada and St Vincent. Both St Vincent and Grenada have populations of approximately 100,000. Their migrant populations in Trinidad number 13,594 and 21,127 respectively (Trinidad and Tobago Census 1980). In fact, officials estimate the actual figures of illegals and legals to be more than double the Census count. In contrast, the NY 1980 census indicates that there are 5,000 Grenadians and 2,700 Vincentians in NY (Basch 1986). This heavy emigration of those among the most productive of the populations affects significant aspects of growth and development of the donors.

It influences the life of major institutions in the social, economic and political spheres of the territories. This paper explores the impact of migration on the donor societies and the perspectives of those who remained at home.

THE GRENADIAN AND VINCENTIAN MIGRANT FLOWS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Grenada like St Vincent has a history of emigration going as far back as the 19th century. Following the abolition of slavery in 1834 and the acute shortage of labour which ensued in Guyana and Trinidad as freed slaves moved from the plantation to work on their small plots to squat on Crown lands, labour was recruited from the other Caribbean islands. In both Grenada and St Vincent as in the other donor societies, population growth rates were extremely high in the immediate post emancipation period, and there were also prolonged droughts. Wages were low and economic conditions were further depressed because of the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 which removed protection from British West Indian Sugar entering the British market (Marshall 1982). It is within this context that Grenada and Vincentian workers were recruited to work on the sugar plantations in Trinidad.

A significant movement of people from Grenada and St Vincent to Trinidad and Tobago was stimulated by the development of the Petroleum and Asphalt industries before World War II. During World War II further large scale job opportunities on the American Defense base attracted a new wave of migrants. Migration from the Eastern Caribbean territories was occasioned chiefly because of the lack of diversified economies, high levels of unemployment

and proximity to the booming Trinidad economy. Family ties established through earlier streams further facilitated this continuing movement. Grenada and St Vincent continued to lose population to the now petroleum buoyed economy of Trinidad and Tobago, a migrant flow which saw another peak during the British West Indian Federation. One of the most contentious proposals of the Federal Agreement was that there should be free movement of labour within the member countries. Trinidad and Tobago as the capital site received over 10,000 Grenadians and Vincentians - 5,948 from Grenada and 5,499 from St Vincent (Reubens 1961) - between the period 1958-1960 before the Federation disintegrated in 1961.

The period of the mid seventies which witnessed the oil price hikes saw a further spiral in illegal movements from these two island territories whose economies were hard hit by the oil price rises. Trinidad and Tobago on the other hand with its petroleum base enjoyed an unprecedented economic boom which boosted all sectors of the economy with the newest migrant wave moving primarily into burgeoning construction and service sectors.

THE GRENADIAN AND VINCENTIAN SETTING

The people who have remained behind exist in a setting characterized by monocrop agriculture which has remained the mainstay of the island economies. The economies are heavily dependent on the very vulnerable areas of agriculture and tourism. Agriculture represents over 90% of the export earnings of both donor territories

and in both absorbs about 30% of the labour force. (World Bank Grenada May 1985, St Vincent October 1984.)

In St Vincent the major crops, arrowroot, sugar and banana have all been subject to the vagaries of natural disasters, severe marketing problems and declining world prices. The demand for St Vincent arrowroot was eliminated with competition from Brazil with cheaper arrowroot of comparable quality. Bananas shipped to the U.K. provided the largest single commodity in export trade, but the combined export of other agricultural commodities to CARICOM countries is the most important factor in St Vincent's total export. This latter trade has helped to strengthen the links which exist between St Vincent and Trinidad.

TABLE 1
Percentage Distribution of Vincentian exports
by Country 1985

<u>Country</u>	
United Kingdom	27.8%
Trinidad & Tobago	45.6%
Dominica	2.9%
U.S.A.	9.6%
St Lucia	6.2%
Antigua	2.7%
All other countries	5.2%

Source: Country Statistics 1985

The manufacturing sector which employs approximately 4,000 persons accounts for 11.2% of GDP. This sector is plagued by weak infrastructure and the absence of entrepreneurial skills.

Tourism provides only 2% of the GDP and provides direct employment for an estimated 2% of the labour force.

Within St Vincent there is a large gap between the small elite and the mass of the society. Planter families continue to dominate the land. As late as the 1970's 19 of the 30 estates, over 100 acres were owned by descendants of the planter group, who also own the largest locally owned commercial establishments. Most management and upper level positions in the banks are held by expatriates, local whites or coloureds.

The black educated elite which comprises the middle class gained control of the civil service, lower administrative levels and staff positions in commercial enterprises, law, nursing, insurance and teaching.

The 80% of the Vincentian population which comprises the lower stratum is comprised predominantly of peasant agriculturalists who work small plots which they own or rent. Many work as labourers on estates or on government public works projects. The rest are occupied as fishermen, sailors, stevedores, domestic and hotel workers, semiskilled tradesmen, small shop owners and market traders.

The greatest cultural difference between the lowest socio-economic stratum of Vincentians and other groups probably lies in their marriage patterns. Marriage in the lower stratum tends to occur after childbearing in the late thirties and early forties. Partly as a consequence of this marriage pattern about 1/3 of the households are headed by women. Women in this stratum

work as agricultural labourers on government projects or as domestic workers. Discriminatory laws allow a lower minimum wage for women than men. Many of the young women find migration a viable escape route.

In spite of the differences in opportunities all of the social groups are united in their commitment to migration as a way of life.

For Grenada the mountainous nature of the island and its poor infrastructure make conditions ill-suited for efficient agricultural production. Unlike St Vincent there is a high percentage of peasant holdings with export organized on a cooperative basis. However, the major export crops have not escaped the fate of basic agricultural produce on the world market. Bananas, cocoa, nutmeg and mace represent the four major export commodities. Over the past seven years production of these crops has declined because of depressed world prices, production and marketing difficulties, and a shortage of agricultural labour.

Migration has played an important part in contributing to the labour shortage. Because of the weak infrastructure, efforts to encourage manufacturing and external investment have often met with very limited success.

Primary school enrollment is over 90%. Tertiary education is not available on the island which contributes to a regional university with centres in Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, literacy rates are 85%. Infant mortality rates are 16.7 per 1000 live births. 48.2% of the household heads are women (Country Statistics 1980) and official unemployment levels are over 30% and rising.

TABLE 2
GRENADA
Unemployed by Age

Age Cohort	Nos. Unemployed	% of Total Unemployed
15-19	3,365	32.2
20-24	3,280	31.3
25-29	1,375	13.1
30-34	695	6.6
35-39	305	3.0
30-49	455	4.4
50-54	455	4.4
55-60	150	1.4
60+	380	3.6
TOTAL	10,460	100.0

Source: Revised Grenada Unemployment and Household Survey, 1980. Government Statistical Office, Grenada.

As Table 2 indicates, unemployment is highest among the youth. 76% of the unemployed are between the ages 15-29, the ages which swell the migrant population.

Health care facilities are spread through the country, but lack of resources limit the availability of medical supplies and the upkeep of the facilities.

The left wing coup d'etat in 1979 resulted in the temporary abandonment of the Westminster parliamentary system. Tourism was affected negatively. This dramatic political shift coupled with the 1983 political upheavals and the military invasion, further destabilized the society and increased the already high outmigration levels.

THE PEOPLE REMAINING AT HOME - SAMPLE PROFILE OF
GRENADIANS AND VINCENTIANS

The sample was derived from referrals given by migrants in Trinidad and New York. Migrants in the hosts were asked to name the person at home with whom they had closest contact. Those contacts named were then interviewed in the donor societies. Interviews in both Grenada and St Vincent were carried out by secondary school teachers. Our total sample size was 178. There were 111 respondents from St Vincent and 67 from Grenada. In Grenada the target sample was not achieved because the 1983 political upheavals negatively affected interviewing and 3 of the best interviewers migrated.

The majority of the sample was female - 68% in Grenada and 73% in St Vincent. This numerical dominance of women partly derived from the fact that migrants tend to maintain greater contact with female relatives back home particularly their mothers and sisters. Migrants who have left children behind most often have placed them with female kin. Interviews were conducted at homes many

of which were denuded of males. . . . Fifty-three percent of the women lived in households without a spouse while 28% of the men lived without spouses.

Approximately 20% of the Vincentian sample listed themselves as housewives although many worked home agricultural plots. The women left behind are at the lowest end of the income scale. Relatives remaining behind spanned the age and occupational spectrum.

TABLE 3
Grenada and St Vincent

Age by Decade	Frequency	Percent
20	35	19.7
30	42	23.6
40	23	12.9
50	23	12.9
60	31	17.4
70	13	7.3
80	9	5.1
-	2	1.1
TOTAL	<u>178</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The educational and occupational levels of the sample reflected the educational levels of migrants in the hosts. In Trinidad 64% of the migrant population had achieved primary level education while 26% had secondary education and higher. In New York 62% of the migrants had secondary education before arriving. The donor sample showed a slightly higher educational level in relation to the wider society reflecting the fact that the migrants were coming from relatively privileged homes.

TABLE 4
EDUCATION BY GROUP

Level	No.	Per cent
Primary	77	43.9
Secondary 1 - 4 years	12	6.7
Secondary 5 - 6 years	44	24.7
GCE TO Advanced Level	21	10.1
Post Advanced	21	11.8
Missing	5	2.8
TOTAL	<u>178</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The representation of the upper, middle and lower educational and income groups, however, allowed us a better comparative insight into how the migration affected the different types of socio-economic groups back home.

Eighty per cent of the respondent households earned less than EC\$12,000 per year; 40% of the Grenadians and 17% of the Vincentians earned no income. The highest income earning group were related to migrants in Trinidad. We had in fact found that those migrants coming from the highest socio-economic group found it easier to integrate into the Trinidad society at the same status level than they did in the metropolitan centres. In New York achieving a status commensurate with that which they enjoyed at home was more difficult because they did not belong to the dominant white racial group.

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION

Economic

Remittances were perceived by the respondents as one of the most significant consequences of migration for the donor society. 68% of the sample felt that remittances represented a central benefit. Almost all of the respondents received some form of remittances. Surprisingly there was little difference between the remittances received from Trinidad and New York. Over 37% of the respondents from St Vincent and 43% of the Grenadians receive over \$5,000* per year.

Women received more remittances than men. 33% of the women receive over \$1,000 per year and 10% receive over \$3,000 annually. Only 10% of the men got over \$1,000 per year and 2% more than \$3,000. Women also represented the largest group taking care of children of migrant relatives and this group received larger remittances than those who did not have responsibility for childcare.

There was an inverse relationship between occupational levels, education and size of remittances. The highest educational and occupational group receive the least money. 77% of the Professionals and Management group received no money but received gifts on birthdays and special days such as Christmas. Only 19% of those earning less than \$5,000 got nothing.

The findings implied that remittances reflected more the needs of the people at home than the ability of the migrants to send money. Those at home who needed the most received the most from their migrant relatives.

*All currency quoted in EC.

This was reinforced by the fact that the people who received the highest remittances relied upon them most heavily for subsistence. 38% of those receiving remittances over \$1,000 used the money for subsistence. 29% of the persons receiving between \$250 and \$1,000 spent it on subsistence while 72% of those receiving \$1,000 - \$3,000 and 79% of those receiving over \$3,000 relied upon it for subsistence. The figures clearly demonstrate the role of remittances in the lives of poorer relatives. In view of the high levels of unemployment it could not be reasonably argued that remittances robbed people of the incentive to find work. The data reveal a population which maintains strong ties with their migrant relatives at all social levels. Many of the people remaining behind were dependent on their migrant relative for day to day subsistence, while for the more privileged it allowed the enjoyment of a higher standard of living, trips abroad and luxury items.

The issue has often been raised that remittances are used not for development but for consumption. However our data reveal that remittances are necessary for basic consumption and prevent many families from becoming dependent on the state. The remittances allow their families to function with dignity and feed, clothe and educate their children, functions which would otherwise have had to be undertaken by the state. The distinction made in this context between development and consumption is thus spurious, since the consumption represents the provision of basic needs and it is upon this foundation that effective development can be launched. This is especially so where natural resources are

limited and human resources represent the central resource base.

The question of whether the migrants presence in the donor society would have been a stimulus to development remains a moot point. It cannot be given credence in the context of these societies' inability to respond to increasing levels of unemployment, with creative initiatives for sustaining growth.

At the national level the remittances transmitted by migrants also represent a major foreign exchange earner and thus an important factor in the balance of payments. Remittances nevertheless while remaining significant at the personal level have decreased in importance as a factor of GDP. For St Vincent, whereas in 1943 remittances were 30% of GDP, in 1965 remittances were only 5.6% and by 1979 only 3% of GDP. (Wiltshire 1986).

Agricultural trade

Migrants carry with them a taste for particular foods, music and products associated with home. Migrants in Britain and New York have long been recognised as important consumers and ambassadors of cultural norms in any trade strategy, by both Caribbean policy makers and those involved in marketing Caribbean products.

It is with the Trinidad host, however, that this migrant link has been accompanied by significant agricultural trade from the donor countries. This has been facilitated both by geography and the existence of a free trade area among the former British Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The large pool of Grenadian and Vincentian migrants in Trinidad has stimulated agricultural trade in two respects. They have been recipient consumers of agricultural produce from relatives at home. 48% of these migrants received ground provisions and fruit from home. In addition, the migrants have provided a facilitating base for the traders who arrive each week from St Vincent and Grenada to sell their fruit and ground provisions on the Trinidad market. St Vincent alone supplies 400 tons of agricultural produce weekly to Trinidad (United Nations ECLAC 1985 p. 24). The positive impact of this volume of trade for small farming in the donor societies both from the perspective of production and income cannot be underestimated. The link between migration and the growth of the predominantly female 'petty entrepreneur' traders within the donor societies who are involved in this trade is an important phenomenon in the Caribbean which requires more direct and systematic research.

On the other hand, however, migration depletes the agricultural labour force within the donor societies because of the loss of the young able bodied migrants. There is no motivation for the young to stay in agriculture even when resident in the donor societies because of the lack of vibrancy in the agricultural sector. This stagnation has its primary foundation in the marketing and pricing problems which agricultural products face internationally, and in domestic infrastructural problems.

Migration is a symptom and not a cause of economic problems in the donor societies. It reflects the problems in the agricultural

and other major economic sectors in the donor societies. These in turn reflect the international inequality of wealth and power in the world system. The donor societies have little control over policy, pricing and marketing governing their products in the international sphere and therefore suffer the vicissitudes of the world market. The fortunes of the major plank of their economic activity, on which a significant proportion of export earnings and employment depend, thus remain outside of the control of the local policy makers. Given these conditions, it may be argued that migration allows relatives remaining at home a basis for enhancing their life chances in less than ideal circumstances.

SOCIO CULTURAL IMPACT

Child Minding

Migration has traditionally had a significant impact on demographic trends within the donor societies. Early 20th century movements dramatically shifted sexual balances. In Barbados for which data are available, the sexual balance shifted from 115 women per 100 men in 1861 to 148 women per 100 men in 1921 (Marshall 1982). The men at this period were in great demand because of the labour requirements generated by the construction of the Panama Canal and the expanding Petroleum sectors of Trinidad and the Dutch West Indian Islands. Migrants moving from St Vincent and Grenada in this early period were thus predominantly male.

Modern technological changes in the metropolitan host centres and attendant growth in the service sector of metropolitan economies however brought about shifts in the male female ratios in the labour force with a greater demand for women in the work place.

Women are now as likely to emigrate as men.

U.S. Immigration policies facilitating family reunion of immigrants have as well facilitated this shift in male female composition of the emigration streams in the post nineteen sixties. (Sassen Koob1981). Where previously mothers were left behind to take care of their children, there is an increasing incidence of grandmothers being left in the care of their children while both fathers and mothers migrate. Data for St Vincent give an indication of this new male female balance in emigration patterns.

TABLE 5

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE 1970 to 1980

	Males	Females	Total
Population in 1970	41,150	45,794	86,944
Population in 1980	47,409	50,436	97,845
Intercensal change	6,259	4,642	10,901
Registered Births 1970-1980	17,319	16,947	34,266
Registered Deaths 1970-1980	3,834	4,112	7,946
Natural Increase 1970-1980	13,485	12,835	26,320
Implied Net Migration	-7,226	-8,193	-15,419

(Census, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Vol. 3, p. 12)

Child Minding - Within the sample

Thirty two percent of the families back home had children of migrants living with them. There is more childminding among the least educated group than among the more educated. 61% of those persons without a secondary education mind children of migrants, as opposed to 40% of those with secondary education and above. Only 7% of those with A levels and above took care of migrants' children.

The study found a correlation between educational attainment, income level and child minding. 84% of those minding children have incomes of less than EC \$10,000 per year while 16% have incomes over EC \$10,000.

The majority - 77% of the childminders are female with those in their 60's being the largest single group of childminders, revealing a clear tendency towards grandmother nurturers. 31% of the respondents cared for children of migrants in the US, while 14% minded the children of migrants in Trinidad. 55% care for children with parents in Trinidad and New York.

The increase in female migration has demonstrated within the donor country the phenomenon of grandmother led households where the grandmothers exercise child care functions within the family. This has mixed implications both for the children left behind and for the quality of family life in the donor societies generally.

A negative element was that the grandmother as principal nurturer carries the burden of nurturing the children at a critical stage in their development. The stresses of coping with a difficult environmental context, making the money stretch, and caring for children at an old age make life for both children and nurturer less than ideal. An advantage is that the grandmother is not isolated from the young and her resources fully utilized at an older age. She thus remains important within the family and does not become the unwanted burden on society which the old in highly industrialized societies experience.

Although the families maintain strong linkages in spite of migration, the problems of wide geographical separation are nevertheless present. In this regard legal migration to New York eases the pressures of families because of the official policy of reuniting families. In Trinidad because of the high percentage of illegal immigrants the problems of family dislocation remain an area of concern. For the donor societies, however, where old and the very young coexist the question of the quality of family life and the development potential are brought sharply into focus.

Cultural Dynamics

Migration has had the paradoxical effect of both leading to the stagnation of cultural life at home, and fuelling the development of a vibrant cosmopolitan orientation within the donor societies, unusual in islands so tiny and resource poor. With many of the young ambitious and innovative outside of the country, the quality of social life within Grenada and St Vincent often appears superficially to be very poor. However the social sphere of interaction for those left behind is not bounded by the territorial limits of these micro states.

Within the six months immediately preceding interviews 77% of those left behind had been in contact with their migrant relatives; 47% of them had spoken with their relatives, while 23% of the respondents had seen their migrant family.

Attending the wedding of a son or daughter in the host territories was perceived as normal. The respondents were also very aware at a fairly sensitive level of major issues affecting migrant

relatives in Trinidad and New York. 25% of the sample felt that their relatives got along well with white Americans while 42% felt that they got along badly. 52% felt that they got along well with black Americans while 33% felt that they got along badly. This compared with 68% who expressed the view that their migrant relatives got along well with Trinidadians.

The focus on the host societies can nevertheless be seen as detrimental to the interest and effort that is expended on building a vibrant society at home. Given the realities of power and dominance in the international community the international orientation of the families left behind does facilitate more easy adjustment in an imperfect world. It is significant however to note that 74% of those remaining behind had no wish to migrate. 22% of these were returned migrants who had no wish to leave home again except for short visits.

Politics

Many of the leaders of Grenada and St Vincent were returned migrants. Joshua of St Vincent was groomed in the labour movement in Trinidad before taking up political office back home.

Politicians also actively tap the support of immigrant constituents. Government officials from both Grenada and St Vincent visited New York several times a year to discuss development plans and to raise funds for their political parties and for specific projects. Campaign funds are also marshalled particularly in New York and support committees are formed before elections in the donor societies. Some members of the New York based support

committees return to the Caribbean to campaign for candidates during elections (Basch 1986). Migrant relatives in Trinidad also lobby on behalf of political parties back home and discuss the issues with relatives in the donor society. Some return for the election which lends prestige to the candidate and party.

Sixty percent of the sample felt that migration did not affect politics thus reinforcing the view that there was no sharp break in the level of political activity by migrants because of their physical absence. In fact the political capability of the migrants was enhanced because of the increased confidence gained from the migrant experience.

Migrants often became a pool of potential supporters for politicians back home, and returned migrants often produced many of the political leaders emerging in donor states.

The politics within the donor society thus represents an aspect of the larger transnational field; ideas, attitudes and experiences gained in the migration experience have a direct impact on political styles and issues in donor society politics and the migrants themselves play an active role.

CONCLUSION

Migration affects every major aspect of economic, political and social life within the donor societies.

In the broad economic sphere, it is not possible to extrapolate from the impact at the individual level to draw conclusions about the negative or positive consequences of migration for the donor

a strong national culture, migrants' transmission of host ideas and values and the strong consequent orientation of the donor peoples to the host further inhibits the growth of a strong national and cultural identity - a prerequisite for national development.

Within the regional context where power is more balanced between the donor and the Trinidad host and they are both part of a dependent network, migration creates a stronger base for Caribbean regional integration in both the economic and cultural spheres.

In spreading the family across geographical boundaries migration poses important questions concerning the socialization of the young and the integration of the old women into the active life of society. It puts an undue burden on old women as prime nurturers of children left behind. It however also prevents the marginalization of the old. The absence of a male input in the socialization of the young within the donor society is a factor that requires further research.

Migration expanded the resources available for political activity in the donor society. Migration has woven itself into the fabric of Caribbean life and it has thus become part of the culture of the regions' people. To that extent migration has become self-generating. However, the foundation on which migration rests is the culture of poverty. Its positive effects are thus merely reflections of adjustments to the culture of poverty. This specially relates to extraregional migration. Intraregional migration has deepened and strengthened the historic ties of Caribbean people and provided a foundation at the mass level on which regional integration can be firmly forged.

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society in general. This is further compounded because it is difficult to balance the skill and labour losses against the individual level gains. In this context the effects of migration can be described as mixed and even at times paradoxical. Migration facilitates the effective adaptation of families left behind. It extends the family income for the most needy families who remain behind and improves, sometimes marginally, the lifestyles of those whom the donor society cannot independently sustain. Migration facilitates the provision and improvement of housing for many families where the unequal distribution of resources and the absence of creative initiatives by the state do not allow the meeting of basic population needs.

Remittances provide an additional basis for foreign exchange earnings in the donor societies. Remittances also generate capital for domestic savings and investment. This has to be balanced against the skilled labour pool which is temporarily lost to the society.

In the socio-cultural sphere migration has been a two edged sword for the donor societies. It reinforces the transmission of ideas from the more powerful metropolitan United States and strongly orients those remaining in the donor societies to what is taking place in New York and Trinidad.

In the case of the metropolitan host, this reinforces the cultural domination of the major metropolitan centres. In the context of societies which were artificially created and where slavery and colonialism militated against the development of

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