

REPATRIATION OF NEW YORK GUYANESE BY AGE AND GENDER

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine explanatory variables, age and gender, and whether these can measure the intention to repatriation of those Guyanese living in New York City, United States. The study seeks to isolate the predicative value of age and gender as potential variables that would allow for repatriation policies to target potential expatriates. This is a quantitative study using a survey research designed. Age and gender are found to be significant predictors of intent to return to Guyana after retirement. Gender was found to be a predictor of intent to return with specifically males indicating that they are more likely to return. The study only surveyed individuals in the United States, New York City and thus results can only be generalized to three communities in New York City. Since age was identified as a significant predictor for intent to return, the practical implication is that Guyana could benefit from experienced individuals who may contribute to its economic development given that the majority of their experienced labor force has immigrated. Additionally, those who would return will bring experience and knowledge as they would after retirement. The study found that women were less likely to return but men, who are likely to return, will only do so after retirement. There is currently no empirical work that has been done to identify factors that would influence intention to return of Guyanese living in the United States or for that matter any foreign country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guyana is not only the second poorest country in the Northern Hemisphere but also has the dubious distinction of having the second highest migration rate for skilled professionals, as well as unskilled laborers in the world (Carrington & Detragiache, 1999). Guyanese leaving for the United States have certainly followed this general trend as the most educated leave. Guyana's human capital plight began since the late 1960's and has continued unabated to the current day.

While the flow of workers from Guyana and many Caribbean nations to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, most notably the United States, has proceeded without interruption from the end of World War II, it is possible to distinguish between two broad stages in its modern evolution. Nurse (2004) indicated that between 1945 and the mid-1970s unskilled and semi-skilled workers accounted for most of the labor migration between the Caribbean and North America. The bulk of these migrants were primary school graduates who sought low-status, often menial jobs in the United States. Starting in the second half of the 1970s, however, while this flow continued at stable levels, highly educated professional workers, notably in the health care and academic fields, began to emigrate from the Caribbean to North America in large numbers. This development initiated a second and distinctly different phase in the region's history of labor exportation, one with a salient brain drain component as very little repatriation.

Negative assessment of the effects of brain drain have been proffered of late, *inter alia*, by Miyagiwa (1991); Haque and Kim (1995); Todaro (1996); and Reichlin and Rustichini (1999), all

of whom have argued that the migration of highly educated workers reduces human capital and stymie economic development within the labor-exporting nations. Data gathered and updated as recent as March 2007 shows that there are approximately 381,688 Guyanese living abroad who are classified as migrants as documented by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) and very few have returned to Guyana.

Thomas-Hope's 1999 study, while comprehensive and provides a glimpse of the reasons why Jamaicans returned to their homeland, however, did not provide information on the intention or factors that would encourage return migration. Arthur's study in 2000 which examined the African immigrant Diaspora in the United States also provided a glimpse of the immigrants' perception on immigration, return migration and socio-economic and political factors of immigration but did not specifically addressed return migration.

Repatriation is a complicated phenomenon among brain drain migrants as Thomas-Hope's (1999) survey results indicate. The author concluded that return migration is one that is affected by variables that are difficult to capture through quantitative data-gathering methods, factors that include educational enrollment abroad and family constellations. Massey et al. (1993) suggest that sending countries can do very little to stem the tide of outward migration and empirical studies that have identified factors that explain return migration are also very few as suggested by Thomas-Hope, 1999; Adda, Dustmann & Mestres, 2006; Docquier, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2005.

Cassarino critically examined five theoretical approaches to return migration and concluded that "whether these approaches focus primarily on the economic aspects of return migration, at the individual or household levels (i.e. neoclassical economics, NELM) or the micro and macro dimensions of return migration (e.g. structuralism, trans-nationalism, social network theory), the various ways in which return has been analyzed and returnees depicted differ in terms of levels of analysis and research framework" (2004, p. 268). Cassarino (2004) in his analysis concluded that return migration using the neoclassical economics framework "is an anomaly, if not failure of a migration experience" (2004, p. 269) and that the returnee was unsuccessful abroad and brings no capita back and the skills acquired abroad are not applicable locally. On the other hand, using the new economics of labor migration theory framework, return is the primary objective because the returnee has an attachment to home and household with the goals met abroad (Cassarino, 2004).

The phenomenon of return migration is a quintessentially modern phenomenon. Gmelch noted in 1980, international migration in the twentieth century differs from that of the nineteenth century, in that it is no longer a one-way outflow. Gmelch (1980) argued that scholars must distinguish between groups of migrants according to their initial purpose(s) and migration outcomes. He asserted that researchers investigating cross-border migration should discriminate between (1) individuals who intend to leave their home countries permanently and do so, (2) individuals who intend to return to their countries of origin, and (3) individuals who do not intend to return to their homeland but nonetheless do so.

The primary reason that immigrants return to their homelands encompasses two diametrically opposed outcomes. Some return because they have accomplished the specific purpose for which they emigrated in the first place. Others return because the outcomes that they have experienced in the host society did not meet their expectations and they currently foresee little likelihood of making progress toward previously envisioned goals. With reference to the former, the vast majority of the participants in Thomas-Hope's survey told her that they had come back to Jamaica because they had achieved success abroad. For the interviewees, this assessment of accomplishment was "based on the acquisition of those material assets, or improved educational and occupational status, which would ensure a satisfactory life-style back in Jamaica" (1999, p.

193). Within this sample, at least, return was prompted more often by accomplished success than by disappointing outcomes.

Positive changes in the political, social, economic, and, particularly, employment conditions within the immigrants' home nations appear to have a major causal influence on return migration flows. As Beine and his fellow researchers have observed, "there are many case studies suggesting that reverse migration for the highly skilled is negligible unless it is preceded by sustained economic growth" in the country of origin (2003, p. 35). Within the migration literature, some scholars have argued that enhanced human capital formation through incentives for education eventually might stimulate return among brain drain migrants via its contribution to economic growth and development. Thus, Dos Santos and Postel-Vinay (2003) have speculated that as the labor-sending nation develops its economy through enhanced human capital resource formation, fewer of its members are likely to immigrate abroad and more overseas immigrants are likely to return.

Stark and Taylor (1991) have employed relative deprivation and risk-spreading constructs to explain why migrants return home despite favorable economic conditions within host economies. As a result of wealth or skill acquired in a developed country, migrants may elect to repatriate into a society in which they can enjoy wealth and status relative to the populace at large. In this same broad vein, Dustmann (1997) has argued that as a rule, migrants will decide to return home if they prefer consumption there, if prices are lower there, or if human capital acquired within the receiving nation is more valuable within the sending nation of their origin. Dustmann (2001) added that there is a relationship between return migration and cross currency exchange rates, pointing out that migrants who acquire strong currency stocks while living abroad are drawn back to their homeland with weak currencies since their acquired wealth will have greater purchasing power in their homelands.

Facing especially gloomy prospects, those developing countries that are especially susceptible to losses through brain drain, that is, nations that have lost a substantial percentage of their highly educated populace through migration into OECD economies might nonetheless retain a measure of hope. That hope rests in large part on the phenomenon of return migration or repatriation. As Borjas and Bratsberg have observed, individual "migration decisions are reversible," and many studies have demonstrated that a substantial number of immigrants from developing countries to the United States eventually return to their homelands (1996, p. 165). Better yet, these individuals might bring with them much needed capital and even advanced knowledge/skills acquired within developed societies.

Return migration is particularly prominent among the labor-exporting nations of the Caribbean. Thomas-Hope has remarked, cross-border migration from the region is "part of a wider transnational system of outflow, interaction and feedback" (1999, p. 191). In like manner, Nurse (2004) has commented that with the sole exception of Cuba "complex reciprocal flows rather than permanent one way movements characterize Caribbean migration" (2004, p. 4). From a survey of returned brain drain migrants that she conducted in Kingston, Jamaica, Thomas-Hope found that repatriated Jamaicans had typically spent only short periods of time abroad. A full 60.4% of the educated professionals who had returned to Jamaica had spent fewer than five years outside of their nation. The researcher reported that "professionals were more likely (than other vocational groups) to return within 1 to 5 years. If they remained for longer periods abroad, they were less likely to return" (Thomas-Hope, 1999, p. 190).

Repatriation is a complicated phenomenon among brain drain migrants as Thomas-Hope's (1999) survey results show. It is one that is affected by variables that are difficult to capture through quantitative data-gathering methods, factors that include educational enrollment abroad and

family constellations. Moreover, when set alongside the large body of scholarly works dedicated to labor migration as a whole or even the brain drain in particular, the literature on return migration is exceedingly thin. Empirical studies need to be conducted to assess the impact of return migration schemes (Hope-Thomas, 1999).

As Borjas and Bratsberg have observed, individual “migration decisions are reversible,” (1996, p. 165) and many studies have demonstrated that a substantial number of immigrants from developing countries to the United States eventually return to their homelands but no study has identified the variables that would lead to repatriation. Indeed, Caribbean governments have attempted to stimulate repatriation of skilled workers through a variety of incentive plans. But as Foad has observed, thus far these “repatriation efforts have met with limited success” (2005, p. 5). Additional studies and research is needed to identify policies and programs that will encourage repatriation. This study seeks to identify variables that would measure intention to return to Guyana.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Data for the study was gathered from Guyanese living in the United States, specifically New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island), where it is estimated that there are well above 250,000 Guyanese residing. A 41-item questionnaire on Factors Affecting Repatriation to Guyana, adapted from the Arthur (2000) study of the African Diaspora in the United States conducted on 600 African immigrants living in the United States, was used to gather data on the intention to return to Guyana. The study gathered data by a self-reported survey of 300 participants of Guyanese or people of Guyanese origin living in three communities in New York City. These communities included Richmond Hills, Queens, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn and Flatbush, Brooklyn. A total of 236 usable questionnaires were coded and analyzed using SPSS. The sample was then further reduced to 169 to include only those participants that indicated intent to return.

RESULTS

Age was identified as variable that could lead to return migration. Using ordinal categorical measures age, were firstly tested using Pearson’s Chi-squared cross-tabulation analyses. The results showed that there was not a significant degree of association (Pearson’s Chi-square=16.301; df=12; Sig=.178, see Table 1 in appendix) between the various age groups and when the participant intends to return Guyana. These results show that, although most of the sample participants (58.9%) plan to return to Guyana after retirement, the associations varied across the age groups. Though not significantly greater, the largest proportion (14.3%) planning to return to Guyana after retirement were those aged between 20 and 29 years.

Secondly, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the relationship between age of the respondent and intent to return, see Table 2 in appendix. The one-way ANOVA included “age” as independent variable and “when do you plan to return to Guyana” as the dependent variable. The ANOVA found significant differences among the age groups ($F(6, 161) = 2.356$; Sig. = .033). However, a post-hoc Tukey’s HSD test showed that none of the pairwise differences were significant at the .05 level.

The descriptive statistics show that, on average across the age groups, many of the participants’ responses tend toward a value of 2, which represents the response *after retirement* for “when do you plan to return to Guyana”, see Table 3 in appendix. Lastly, a linear regression analysis was conducted on measures for ‘age’ regressed on ‘when do you plan to return to Guyana’. The results showed that the regression was significant ($F(1, 166)=7.254$, Sig=.008), see Table 4 in appendix. However, the coefficient of determination, $R^2=.042$, shows that only 4.2% of the variation in responses for ‘intent to return’ is explained by the regression’s predictor variable,

age. In addition, the standardized regression coefficient, $Beta=.205$ was significant ($t=2.693$; $Sig.=.008$).

The variable tested the relationship between gender and the intention to return to Guyana. Using ordinal categorical measures were firstly tested using Pearson's Chi-squared cross-tabulation analyses. The test results showed that there was a marginal degree of association (Pearson's Chi-square=4.824; $df=2$; $Sig.=.090$) between gender and when the participant intends to return Guyana. The results show that most of the sample participants (59.6%), see Table 5 in appendix, plan to return to Guyana after retirement, with the association being marginally stronger for males. Secondly, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and the intent to return. The one-way ANOVA included "gender" as independent variable and "when do you plan to return to Guyana" as the dependent variable. The ANOVA found significant differences among the genders ($F(1, 164) = 4.902$; $Sig. = .028$, see Table 6 in appendix). However, the post-hoc Tukey's HSD test was not conducted due to there being only two categories for the independent variable "gender". Lastly, a linear regression analysis was conducted on measures for 'gender' regressed on 'when do you plan to return to Guyana'. The results showed that the regression was significant ($F(1, 164)=4.9044$, $Sig.=.028$), see Table 7 in appendix. However, the coefficient of determination, $R^2=.029$, shows that only 2.9% of the variation in responses for intent to return is explained by the regression's predictor variable, gender. In addition, the standardized regression coefficient, $Beta=.179$ was significant ($t=2.214$; $Sig.=.028$). The data showed that the majority, 59.6%, of those who reported an intention to return stated that it would be after retirement age, 31.9% being the male participants.

CONCLUSION

Age is a significant predictor of intent to return to Guyana. While the literature has shown that young and more mobile individuals are more likely to be attracted to developed countries (Commander, Kangasniemi & Winters 2002; Thomas-Hope, 1999; and Todaro, 1969), this finding is consistent with Thomas-Hope's (1999) study that factors such as age, and other factors, all contribute to the decision to return. The data showed that the majority, 58.9%, of those Guyanese who reported an intention to return stated that it would be after retirement.

The findings from the Pearson's Chi-squared cross-tabulation for gender indicate that males, in particular, were more significantly associated with the responses for intent to return. The findings from Pearson's Chi-square cross-tabulation analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis indicate that males, in particular, were more significantly associated with the responses for intent to return. The findings from the results indicated that while there was a significant difference in the responses for intent to return between the different genders, males were more significantly associated with the responses for intent to return after retirement. Adda, Dustmann, and Mestres (2006, p 15) found from their addiction model that migrant males who had stayed in Germany for 20 or more years, found it increasingly more difficult to decide on whether to return to their home country or not. This study showed that Guyanese were more likely to return after spending long periods of time away from Guyana.

STUDY LIMITATIONS & PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Limitations to this study are that results are based empirically on perceptions of Guyanese living and working in the US, and findings can only be generalized to the three Guyanese communities based in New York. The practical implications drawn from this study will allow for the identification of effective policies to increase repatriation to Guyana of those Guyanese living abroad. Since there currently exists no empirical work that has been done in the examination of these factors for Guyana, the author hopes that this research will contribute to the understanding of return migration by examining the factors influencing repatriation to Guyana.

Appendix

Table 1

Results of Pearson’s Chi-square Cross-tabulation tests for Age

"Age"	<i>"When do you plan to return to Guyana"</i>			Total
	Before Retirement	After Retirement	After children leave home	
18-19	3.0%	4.2%	.0%	7.1%
20-29	8.9%	14.3%	1.8%	25.0%
30-39	6.0%	10.1%	4.8%	20.8%
40-49	4.8%	13.7%	4.2%	22.6%
50-59	1.2%	9.5%	3.0%	13.7%
60-69	.6%	5.4%	1.8%	7.7%
70-79	1.2%	1.8%	.0%	3.0%
Total	25.6%	58.9%	15.5%	100.0%

Table 2

ANOVA Results on Plans to Return to Guyana by Age

Source:	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.431	6	.905	2.356	.033
Within Groups	61.848	161	.384		
Total	67.280	167			

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on Plans to Return to Guyana by Age

Age Groups:	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
18 – 19	12	1.58	.515	.149	1	2
20 – 29	42	1.71	.596	.092	1	3
30 – 39	35	1.94	.725	.123	1	3
40 – 49	38	1.97	.636	.103	1	3

50 – 59	23	2.13	.548	.114	1	3
60 – 69	13	2.15	.555	.154	1	3
70 – 79	5	1.60	.548	.245	1	2
Total	168	1.90	.635	.049	1	3

Table 4

Regression Results on Plans to Return to Guyana by Age

Source:	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.817	1	2.817	7.254	.008
Residual	64.463	166	.388		
Total	67.280	167			

Dependent Variable: Intent to Return; R²=.042; Adjusted R²=.036

Table 5

Results of Pearson’s Chi-square Cross-tabulation tests for Gender

“gender”	“When do you plan to return to Guyana”			Total
	Before Retirement	After Retirement	After children leave home	
Male	16.3%	31.9%	6.6%	54.8%
Female	7.8%	27.7%	9.6%	45.2%
Total	24.1%	59.6%	16.3%	100.0%

Table 6

ANOVA Results on Plans to Return to Guyana by Gender

Source:	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.915	1	1.915	4.902	.028
Within Groups	64.067	164	.391		
Total	65.982	165			

Table 7

Regression Results on Plans to Return to Guyana by Gender

Source:	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.915	1	1.915	4.902	.028
Residual	64.067	164	.391		
Total	65.982	165			

Dependent Variable: Intent to Return; $R^2=.029$; Adjusted $R^2=.023$

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