

## **Labours of Love in Trinidad and Tobago: Returnee Women's Care-Motivated Migration**

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Why do 'professional' women voluntarily return home to Trinidad and Tobago to perform the proximate care for ageing parents and relatives? This empirical case study centres the ongoing experiences of ten highly skilled women return migrants to Trinidad and Tobago in the southern Caribbean. Interlocutors such as Janet and Flora moved from typical migration destination countries inclusive of the United Kingdom and the USA as well as less common destinations within the Caribbean, such as Jamaica. Guided by social reproduction theory and a patchwork ethnographic methodology, I detail the cumulative costs—financial, social, bodily, affective—that stem from the frictions of cultural norms surrounding these women's "labours of love" to provide proximate care for elderly relatives, as Janet remarks. Women generally, including Caribbean women, have historically done productive and reproductive work that has been undervalued economically and socially for the state, family, and community, and rendered invisible. Migrant women continue to fulfil these responsibilities transnationally as one of our research team members, Maria, and another project participant, Flora note. This gendered labour pattern was not significantly challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Concurrently, labour emigration from the Caribbean to wealthier states across the Global North and South remains a route to improvement for persons and families. In these circumstances who cares for the elderly 'at home?' With ageing populations in many middle- to high-income developing countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, and the contraction of state services accompanying neoliberal reforms, caring for ageing relatives becomes important to the state and how it allocates resources for this population as well as for families. I point to the importance of cultural expectations, also arguing the cultural logics of kinship provide cover for this undervaluing within the capitalist logics of work, thereby reproducing systemic inequalities.