9 Grandma's Tale: Mind-Trips and Memories

The Jamaican women in this study have biographies that often involve several (migratory) moves throughout their own life or in their familial history. This chapter, therefore, addresses retrospective accounts given by the women on the circumstances of leaving Jamaica that led to their current aspirations to return. Besides their negative experiences in Montreal, imaginaries, ideas and wishes prefigure actual physical movements and changes of location. Childhood or vacation memories, reports from others, music videos, and social media together contribute as varying pull factors to a mental journey into 'paradise' Jamaica. These inward, mental travels will then follow the actual movements and experiences of (return) mobility. Here, unexpected boundaries await women on their journeys back to their 'roots' that will ultimately decide their future plans.

With this part of the empirical findings, I aim to unfold that being Jamaican is not only related to an engagement in an ethnic community or social network, but also established through modes of living and socialization with certain cultural values as well as their conservation. Transmitted knowledge through intergenerational narration and own memories play an important role in understanding current movement aspirations. Ms. Brown, for example, influenced by her past childhood memories and longstanding remittance sending practices as well as family connections to her homeland, wishes to return as soon as possible. Furthermore, the current changes in her social environment in Montreal and her future pension are reasons that strengthen her intention to leave. Emotional sentiments to Jamaica as a place of 'heart' are also inspiring Elisha's plans, in which return becomes a process of 'seeking roots'. Thus, cross-border mobility or migration in its various forms is not solely a phenomenon of first-generation immigrants who want to go back "home", but also of later generations. Narratives of family, romantic imaginaries from past travels and a healthy optimism of going back for good inspire all returns. Actual movement between Jamaica and Canada, but also traveling to different destinations in North America or the UK, e.g., for spending leisure time or visiting relatives and friends, is part of their lives and self-understanding.

The following ethnographic depictions highlight how, within this framework and its emphasis on social fields of differential power, the interlocutors explore

their disparities, inequalities, racialized representations and national 'mythscapes' that facilitate and legitimate differential mobility and fixity. Investigations about 'home' or 'homeland' here reveal a notion of mobility as previously shown in studies on transcultural belonging (e.g. Basch et al. 1994, Glick Schiller/Fouron 2001; Glick Schiller 2005; Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt 2004; Faist 2000, 2011; Thomas-Hope 1988, 2002, 2010). The homeland is here understood as a concept of self-representation that the interlocutors use to symbolize their intact social and emotional relationship to a socio-cultural space (cf. Greverus 1979 qtd. in Schönhuth 2005). Home comes to be located in a routine set of practices, in a repetition of habitual social interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head (Berger/Luckmann 1984). As Berger states, people are more at home today in "words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat" (ibid. 64). Some interlocutors of this study perceive 'home' also as a metaphor for romanticized longing as well as a yearning space for connection and nostalgia. To conduct multi-sited anthropological research then means to analyse the 'moving' homes of various kinds, i.e., behavioural and ideational homes that individuals construct and enact. Here a routine set of practices and narrations that do not merely tell of 'home' but represent it, serve as cognitive homes themselves (Wulff 1998 qtd. in Rapport 2014: 209). As Gaston Bachelard claims, "the human imagination always builds 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comforting itself with the illusion of protection, and so carries 'the notion of home' into any 'really inhabited space', whether cognitive or physical" (Bachelard 1994: 5).

As with emigration, return migration has been a constant facet of Jamaican social and economic life (cf. Thomas-Hope 2002). Returnees helped influence the formation of labour unions in the late 1930s and represented Afrocentric consciousness with figures such as Marcus Garvey (Chevannes 1996). Contract farm workers and other seasonal travellers to North America in the 19th and 20th centuries played a significant role in the introduction and subsequent "Jamaicanization" of North American religious practices, such as the Baptist and Pentecostal movements (Austin-Broos 1997; Chevannes/Besson 1996). Besides, many Jamaican immigrants returned to Jamaica from the United Kingdom throughout the 1970s because of unstable economic conditions. Others became "twice migrants" (Bhacchu 1990), moving to the United States and Canada under their British passports. According to De Haas (De Haas/Fokkema 2011: 22), "migration processes tend to become partly self-perpetuating, leading to the formation of migrant networks and migration systems". As networks and systems become strong, it becomes easier for migrants to overcome obstacles to migration, and thus, migration is likely to become self-reinforcing (ibid.). As migration from a community or society becomes common, this behaviour is normalized and expected. Returnees do not use the word "transnational", but they nonetheless understand themselves as people who

have "travelled" (Chamberlain 1998; Goulbourne/Chamberlain 2001; Olwig/Hastrup 1997). While they share the experience of 'travel', they generally desire to 'return' to Jamaica and enjoy a returnee lifestyle in their homeland. To return to one's place of birth or place of 'origin' is a complex decision-making process that reflects migratory life in general, but also cultural values and strategic choices made at a specific point in life. Before the actual return happens, there are complex sets of thoughts, ideas, aspirations, and intentions involved that form the final motives to move.

Family connections in the home country, dissatisfaction with current life in Canada, feelings of loyalty, nostalgia, or the perception that better life opportunities are awaiting them in Jamaica as well as lasting ties with kin and local life are important factors that prompt return intentions. Especially the maintenance of affective ties through holiday trips, the upkeep of traditional cultural practices and values, maintenance of the local language and staying up-to-date with local news via social media, music and the internet are also worth mentioning. Ultimately, all these factors become relevant when a high level of dissatisfaction with the actual place of living prevails due to issues such as economic instability, experiences with racism and limited access to full participation in the host society. Age (especially pre-retirement), climate, socio-economic status, and acquisition of dual citizenship are further combined catalysts of return. Sometimes life-transforming events such as death and the loss of a significant person are also aspects that catalyse into return decisions. Specifically relevant in the case of Jamaican returnees is, however, land ownership. Owning land or housing is often a precondition to returning to the island. It will be seen in the personal stories of the interlocutors that the influences leading to a return are a combination of two or more of the factors mentioned above. All decisions are highly emotional and filled with images of yearning and 'belonging' to Jamaica or a 'paradise home' once lost. The memories and expectations of the idealized homeland –that returnees departed from years ago or that they only know from vacation and family visits– generate both mental as well as practical hurdles in the process of return and resettlement to Jamaica. Hence, return migration is not the final moment of migration for some of the women in this study. However, before we take a closer look into future movements, it is necessary to examine the affective and imaginative desires that fuel return aspirations among the women of this ethnography: The desire of returning to a place where feelings of home, belonging, and acceptance await, regardless of social status and skin colour.

9.1 Nine Nights of Postmemory

For Elisha, her Jamaican identity was always an active component of her life. Her parents made sure she and her sister were firmly rooted in Jamaican culture. "I

am Jamaican. I know where I am from, you understand, I know my roots", she claims. Growing up in a multigenerational house grounded her emotionally to her homeland as narratives from Jamaica and memories were omnipresent; primarily through the Jamaican cuisine of her grandmother and through her parents speaking affectionately about Jamaica, the climate, the food, the music and their childhood memories of growing up in a "stress-free" place. When Elisha was a child, her mother arranged regular holiday trips to Jamaica that caused her to have an excessively positive sense of nostalgia and feelings of belonging to the island. The intermittently practiced "home" return to visit family and friends while being on vacation in Jamaica constructed a complex imaginary of Elisha's local-to-local relation (see Duval 2002; Coles/Timothy 2004). Hannam, Sheller, and Urry describe how memories influence desires to return to an ethnic homeland. They state, "People and places are continually on the move, but images and communications are also intermittently on the move, and both actual and potential movements organize and structure social life" (Hannam et al. 2006: 11). Lived experiences such as her grandmother's 'soul food', her parents' glorified memories and the short-term periods of returning to Jamaica on holiday trips created imaginaries that inspire Elisha's will to return 'back to the roots' even though she never physically migrated or dislocated in the first place. Hirsch and Miller define the act of generational sharing of language, food, and folklore from the homeland as a way of installing "postmemory" (2011: 4), images that exist through actual discussions, but also via memories or historical knowledge from former generations that migrated. This generational memory is recalled in her own childhood experiences and displacement. The cognitive process of remembering here does not form linearly. The past is not given, but continuously reconstructed and represented. Believing and "self-spun webs" (Geertz 2003) of truths seem to be one of the confounding factors in recreating those narratives and positivistic stereotypes over time. The notion of postmemory elaborates this specifically strong bond as "being dominated by narratives and experiences that "precede their own birth" (Hirsch 2008: 103). Hence, the transmitted narratives operate so powerfully that memories are constituted as if they were one's own. Postmemory here is defined as an intergenerational transmitted form of knowledge that functions as an affective force, whereby "post" signals its temporal belatedness (ibid. 106). However, the involvement with the past is less mediated by acts of remembering, but rather by "imaginative investment, projection and creation" (Hirsch 2008: 107). Thomas-Hope sets forth: "The spheres of contact established historically and maintained by Caribbean countries through political and economic linkages determine the overall framework of the national information field" (2002: 7). This statement gives further rise to the assumption of postmemory not only being interconnected with familial remembrance and personal mental journeys into the past, but also to a "national" memory culture of migration and displacement. Taking into account the global connection of Jamaican

people all over the world, travelling and living in other nations and cities, Elisha's lifestyle reflects Appadurai's notion of the significance of imagination through the production of cultural aspects such as "[…], songs, fantasies, myths and stories" (Appadurai 1996: 49). He argues further that globalization, media, and new technologies embrace the interchanging and imaginary process across time and space (ibid. 55). Through contemporary social media and messenger services, Elisha stays in daily contact with her Jamaican friends who greatly support her idea to come to Jamaica. An ongoing process of information gathering and exchange via communication networks between planners, movers and those who stay behind further contribute to the differing perceptions of what goes on "abroad" and "a yard[1]". Thomas-Hope outlines: "[…] migration has become deeply embedded in the psyche of Caribbean peoples over the past century and a half" (Thomas-Hope 2002: 1.2.1). Elisha explains her decision to return to Jamaica equitably as an emotional move, a journey of yearning that exists before her actual physical relocation. Sheller and Urry (2006) describe this act as a "virtual return" while still living in the host country. Additionally, through staying in touch with family abroad via technological services and engaging in touristic mobility, women like Elisha create individual aspirations and opinions about Jamaica that exist only in their very own particular cognitive, imaginative worlds. Through Elisha's connections, the importance of simultaneity across geographical borders is again emphasized. Continuous social interactions through what Appadurai (1996) calls "technoscapes" are one of the processes of transnational mediation and translation that structure interactions in spaces of diversity (Lehmkuhl 2019). The social, cross-cultural relationships and communication networks are the key to the movement of transnational migrants (Levitt et al. 2004).

Moreover, the creation of Jamaica as 'home' is not only constructed through the story-telling of her parents, but also her engagement in female spaces in Montreal, her interest in Jamaican music, food, fashion, and Rastafari. Clifford reminds us, that "practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension" (Clifford 1997: 3). Therefore, spatiality functions as a reflection of the interlocutor's agency in the process of becoming 'othered' or of being intentionally different (see the previous chapter). Black diversity existed in Canada long before immigration waves from the Caribbean emerged in the 1960s. However, up to now, they are not part of a broader Canadian mental landscape or national 'master narrative', especially not in Quebec. Therefore, migratory experiences of being "different" to "other" people from one's "own" peer group or relatives are striving forces of a recreation of or longing for an authentic 'homeland' space. The longing for the homeland is characteristic for all women accompanied in this study. Therefore, feelings of, e.g., "homesickness"

1 Note: "yard" is a Patois synonym used for Jamaica.

seem by far more deeply rooted than a simplistic view of a linear, modern-day migration to a Canadian exile. The feeling of displacement or separation from the homeland is, therefore, less a physical than an emotional condition and grounded in what Patterson describes as "natal alienation" (Patterson 1982: 13). Separated from an 'African' homeland through transatlantic slave trade, the dispersal and with it an emotional mourning continues through the event of economically necessary migration to the northern hemisphere. While living in the diaspora, the exchange of information and images via various networks and "-scapes" (Appadurai 1996: 34f.) reconstruct an idealization of Jamaica and are vital components of distinctly constructed "Jamaicanized" identity formations. Plaza describes that imaginative mobility is embodied in memories, nostalgia, and geographic locations to stay connected with home and in the host society, in which migrants uphold a mental, physical and emotional network with relevant locations (Plaza 2008: 5). Longing for a place consistent with their identity constructions uncovers 'home' less as a category of assignment than as a notion of meaningful place.

When Elisha's grandmother died four years ago, the family transported her mortal remains to the family gravesite in Jamaica according to her last will. "Granny always said, 'mi nah go sleep inna dis soil yah'"[2], recollects Elisha. Hirsch and Miller (2011) explain that specifically second and third generation immigrant children consume homeland narratives repeatedly through language use, culture, music, and stories of their relatives. Here postmemory is again relevant as Elisha's aspiration to leave Montreal for Jamaica strengthened through the experience of her grandmother's death. As Hirsch states, "Familial structures of mediation and representation facilitate the affiliative acts of the postgeneration. The idiom of family can become an accessible lingua franca easing identification and projection across distance and difference" (Hirsch 2008: 115). Such a 'projection' can be found in Elisha's experiences of her grandmother's nine night, a ceremony held before the burial in Jamaica at their family home in Montreal. Elisha reflects on the procedure as follows, "When grandma passed away, my mother wanted to do a traditional nine night. That was the moment I really wanted to know more about my family's past, about our heritage. It was overwhelming. I realized how little I did know", Elisha reflects contemplatively. The traditional Jamaican ceremony is an event where family and friends gather on the ninth[3] day (and night) after the passing of the deceased

2 Translation: Grandma always said, 'I do not want to be buried in Canada!'.

3 Note: The symbol of the 'nine' derives from the belief that a person's soul stays 'on earth' for nine days after their death. On the ninth night, the spirit of the deceased passes through the 'dead yard' to 'saying goodbye' to the family and friends. For many Jamaican families, it is an important ritual so the deceased spirit will not be trapped or turn into a 'duppy' (Jamaican word for ghost). Therefore, some people, for example, cover mirrors, stop clocks from running or move furniture.

to mourn, exchange stories, eat and drink. It is a procedure of standing guard until the departing spirit is ready to leave the house to go to its ancestral 'roots' in Jamaica (or at times Africa) and eternal peace. Like many children of immigrants, Elisha realized even more strongly that she knew little about the proceeding itself, neither what people expected of her nor what was required in general. The number of people who came to mourn for her grandmother was an overwhelming experience, similar to the amount of food, drinks, and the numerous talks that felt like an emotional roller coaster. "There were people from Grandma's church and different jobs, all those 1950s and 1960s immigrants with so much to share. Women who last saw me decades ago were insulted that I didn't know who they were", recollects Elisha. Their stories, some memories from childhood days, others more recent were the highlight of the evenings. "I heard for the first time about her life in Jamaica, the jobs she did there, how she met my grandfather, about going to parties here in Montreal in the 1970s, about walking home because no taxi driver would take them because they were Black", related Elisha.

The differences regarding rituals between a traditional Euro-Canadian and Afro-Jamaican death ceremony was new ground to Elisha, who had been only to one or two traditional Christian funerals in Montreal before. Enduring the ninth night brought her to an emotional "boiling point", especially since the ceremony is not only about the passing person's spirit, but also about the relatives who grieve and stay behind. "When my mum and aunty came and asked my sister and me to rearrange the furniture in granny's bedroom, I was mortified and didn't want to do it […]". Nine night traditionally involves moving pieces of furniture, which belonged to the dead person, e.g., the bed and other personal items to cause the leaving spirit to be disoriented and depart from the house. This inner conflict created by her mother's wish marked a turning point for Elisha. "I was so disconnected from this tradition and did not understand what it meant to my mother. I realized […] I had to wake up out of my Canadian bubble". From that day on, Elisha's wish to return to Jamaica intensified. The loss of her grandmother was a catalysing event that also confronted her with her own mother's traditional belief systems, which she had never noticed as strongly up until this day. Elisha's return is therefore highly influenced by her parents' support who hope that Elisha can have their way to a comfortable retirement by reinstalling networks with local friends and relatives and reactivating their old links.

Elisha's knowledge about Jamaica that her parents tried to install through holiday trips served to prevent a feeling of alienation in the event of possible return. Therefore, a multi-layered process of yearning for reconnection, for the community, for traditions and geographies is perceptible. Places become symbolic of specific life experiences, expectations, and people that make sense of memories, imaginaries, and affective ties. Homeland, like any other place, is, therefore, a fabricated project that changes over the course of life and deals with ever-new formations

(Gupta/Ferguson 1992; Massey 1995). Although places are geographically locatable, home, as in the case of Elisha, can prove to be imagination or projection of personal ideas and expectations (Morley 2000). Her mother and grandmother's romanticized homeland narratives together with family visits in Jamaica nurtured her with the image of Jamaica as an alternative home; a distinct cultural geography imprinted in her psyche like a cognitive plan. The caretaking of her homemade Jamaican shrine that stands near to the window of her little one-room apartment is representative of this plan; filled with souvenir collections, Caribbean-inspired decor, maps and photo collages, Rastafari literature and concert tickets from her favourite Jamaican musicians. Furthermore, her bodily practices and art are a reflection of her inner self-construction, her yearning for home and the glorification of an idealized homeland. Home is then, for example, similar to a metaphorical umbrella that protects Elisha as she states from "the coldness of the heart in this city".

9.2 A Taste of Home

The feeling for Jamaica as home also seems like an unquestioned affiliation in Ms. Brown's life. This affiliation depicts individualized perspectives on a home-space that go beyond the field of the nation-state itself. It is a space connected to the people who continuously create it as such, a space of hybridity. Interpreting her daily practices about home reveals the vexed and changing relationships she has with various locations showcasing that each location subsequently depends on interpersonal networks to friends, kin, neighbours, and links to church or community members. Rapport and Dawson debate 'home' as a concept that "brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively" (1998: 26f.). It becomes clear that 'home' therefore can take on a multitude of interpretational levels, which in combination provide information about, e.g., identity, connections between dwelling and home and, of course, time and space. Ms. Brown's home-making practices in Montreal are a symbol of the experienced loss of her childhood home and the absence of a familiar, meaningful place. Much of her identity construction bases on this experience of loss and the desire to reverse or improve it soon. Home here lies in the smell of her Jamaican food, traditional recipes from her grandmother and in the conserved stories, which she also passed on to her children about their 'authentic' homeland. As Assmann and Czaplicka state,

> "[…] cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday. […] Cultural memory has its fixed point; […]. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained […]" (1995: 129f.).

Informal talks and sharing food at the kitchen table were, not only important key elements of building a trustworthy relationship with a woman like Ms. Brown, but also led to relevant "rich points" (Agar 2008) of understanding the cultural subtext and the connection between cultural memory and food cooking practices. Hence, taste and smell as part of an indispensable "sensory" ethnographic practice (Pink 2006; 2013) became pertinent.

Ms. Brown's kitchen is a rather small, but practically organized space in which she devotes a lot of her time. Even though she has long working shifts, she will always make time to prepare her dinner. Eating outside her house or taking out food is out of the question unless it is from a Jamaican chef in Montreal that she truly trusts. On a Saturday morning, I visit Ms. Brown for another in-house meeting. Approaching the stairs that lead to Ms. Brown's upper apartment complex, I smell the typical flavour of boiled beans (called peas in Jamaica), pimento and garlic. It is nearly 10 a.m., and the meal is already bubbling in the large silver aluminium pot (Dutchie pot) under a small flame on Ms. Brown's stove. The red beans, which are a main component of Jamaican cuisine, had been soaked overnight and serve as the ingredient for her soup today. Tomorrow a share of the pre-boiled legumes will be combined with white rice and coconut milk to make a typical Jamaican Sunday dinner of rice and peas (as a side dish served with meat or fish). "If you don't cook your food in a Dutchie pot it no taste Jamaican", Ms. Brown says while she gently drops a whole Scotch bonnet pepper in the pot. "If the pepper buzz[4] the whole soup will spoil, so you have to know how to stir the soup, […] when I was a young girl my grandmother taught me how to cook real red pea's soup". While she grinds some more spices on a chopping board, Ms. Brown visits her memories. When she was 13 years old, she lived on her grandmother's farm in rural Jamaica. Her mother had left for Canada several years before. Even though she remembers missing her, living in the countryside was the best part of her childhood. Especially during school holidays, Ms. Brown and her sister had endless possibilities. A small stream behind the house was their bathing spot; there were goats and chickens on the farm and numerous fruit trees that the children could climb and eat from as well as vegetables that her grandmother harvested. The slightly yellowed picture that I saw days ago in her living room showed her grandmother's house and the land she inherited together with her sister. The puzzle finally came together. Ms. Brown spent most of her childhood time helping outside in the garden or the kitchen. Cooking with her grandmother is one of Ms. Brown's fondest memories. "Our food is a reflection of

4 Translation: If the pepper bursts, the whole soup will be ruined […]".

our heritage; I am very protective when it comes to my culture. Everything I know comes from my grandmother's tradition", she states. Ms. Brown remembers her grandmother as a resolute, strong, and caring woman who instilled morals, spiritual guidance, and kindness in her. "She used to share out food to poorer people as well; she gave everyone a handout, used to help raise children for others. She was an important part of her local community, and the only thing she feared was God", Ms. Brown explains thoughtfully while stirring up the soup again. "When we were sick, she went outside to the bushes and picked herbs; she had this knowledge about the plants and the land, you know. We didn't have no pharmacy [chuckles]; she knew how to cure anything; she was a powerful woman, my grandmother". Ms. Brown's memory of her grandmother takes on the form of an archetypal figure whose strength and teachings are worshipped. While Ms. Brown's mother was also an essential part of her later life, her grandmother was much more influential in the formation of her belief systems and in the foundation of socio-cultural practices that Ms. Brown passed on to her children. The children were raised "in the tradition of my grandmother", as she puts it. Ms. Brown's grandmother comes across as an idealized figure. The grandmother with her remembered knowledge about healing, food practices, and her generosity and spiritual teachings as well as community-oriented life, is an energetic, spiritual as well as an emotional connection with Ms. Brown. The return to 'grandmother's land' serves as a strong part of her own identity and self-understanding. The search for a place consistent with these memories is reimagined in moments of leisure, of food cooking and of "nurturing the soul" as Ms. Brown says. Her weekly meal plan of authentic Jamaican dishes, which repeat in almost the same running order, on the one hand generate daily routines, which offer security, and on the other hand, produce spaces of yearning and remembrance, sentimental journeys across the ocean of memories. Norbye describes this nostalgia of migrants as "a deep longing for a lost wholeness. […] for another time, for […] completeness" (Norbye 2010: 160). Ms. Brown's furniture, the decoration of her living room, the exclusive cooking of Jamaican cuisine, and the repetitive anecdotes of her childhood memories in Jamaica construct a life unliveable in Montreal. It is significantly unliveable, because experiences outside of the safe spaces are quite harmful and, together with work-related stress and racialization and the cold climate that affect Ms. Brown's health increasing with age, life seems better in Jamaica.

Her social network in Montreal, which mainly consists of English-speaking, Afro-Caribbean women in similar life circumstances (similar age group, similar job, and similar recreational activities), offers little resistance to her plans. Thus, Ms. Brown is aware of the fact that, after all this time abroad, a recovery of her "authentic" homeland is impossible, she still hopes to regain the feeling of being at home, at her place of 'heart', as she puts it. Homeland as a meaningful place marked by multiple temporalities is woven together through feelings of belonging

(Easthope 2004: 135). One is at home when one inhabits a cognitive environment in which one can undertake the routines of daily life and through, which one finds her identity best mediated or in that, sense 'homeless' when such a cognitive environment is missing (Silverstone 1994; Hannerz 2004). However, her high expectations of having a quick and easy return to her homeland and her beloved childhood memories will result in a painful and disappointing process.

9.3 Partner Banks and Homeland Ties

"Living in Montreal also means having a good network of people; it is not like anywhere else. You need help, especially help from other women who go through or experience something similar. My mother was not there; I had no relatives, no aunt, nothing. So you make a network that works like family and makes you feel at home", Carol remembers, talking about her first years in Montreal. For her, being, living and working in the city without her mother, grandmother, or any other maternal or paternal female relative was difficult at the beginning. Even though she left Jamaica by choice and although she had a professional network that was work- and career-related, she remembers how it felt to be on her own. "My mother she taught me how to live with people, she was a rigorous woman, who showed her love in a tough way, you know, she gave me common sense", reflects Carol. The first contact that Carol found locally in Montreal was through church. In church service, she met other Afro-Caribbean women who served as a social anchor in her first years in Montreal. "I realized many of us newcomers had monetary issues and extreme problems to open up official bank accounts, especially without secure employment that was well paid for. Most of the women I met were domestics; some did not have legal documents or overstayed. […] So we started doing a partner. Me and one of my friends who also had a better education and a regular income started it. The idea was not ours, though, my grandmother, my mother, many people that I knew from home used to do it. My grandmother used to be a partner because she was known to be smart and trustworthy. I knew how it works from my family. […]. People trusted us!".

The partner bank is a collective saving scheme popular in Jamaica. The idea behind this traditional socio-economic system is simple. A group of people, so-called 'partners', agrees to pay a regular amount of money to a trusted person, the so-called 'banker', every week. Weekly, one member of the group receives the total sum contributed by all partners. Therefore, if ten partners save 50 dollars a week over ten weeks, each one will receive 500 dollars, either at the beginning of the scheme in the form of a loan or at the end of the scheme in the form of accumulated savings. For the system to work efficiently, the number of partners and the number of weeks have to be even. The banker is a trustworthy person, who

decides which partners are paid their 'hand' or their 'draw' in which order, generally selecting the more trustworthy ones first, while more unreliable partners get paid at the end of a term. This informal economic system of pooling money has its roots in the impoverished communities of Jamaica's urban and rural population (Hossein 2018: 86f.). This community aiding activity is primarily in the hands of women or "banker ladies" (ibid.). In Montreal, the low access or even exclusion that immigrant women from the Caribbean had to face at mainstream banking institutes fostered a socio-economic security system amongst themselves in line with their socio-cultural heritage and networks of care. Using 'partners' offered the possibility to save money and to enable them to survive by infiltrating the local financial system without attracting further attention as many partners were undocumented immigrants. "Most people prefer partner banks because there is no paperwork involved. I remember as if it was yesterday when she [here referring to her grandmother] sat at the kitchen table counting the bills with quick fingers and writing everything in her little booklet. Interesting how such small things you see as a child take on great importance in your later life", Carol says lost in thought. "The knowledge that I had from my grandmother really jumped start my career and my life in Montreal as a young woman without connections. She helped me to reach where I am today". Even though Carol no longer runs a partner bank today, she explains that the system remains popular amongst Afro-Caribbean people in Montreal to this day. The informality that allows more impoverished or undocumented members to draw cash, for example, in emergencies or when their credit status would make them ineligible for loans from conventional banks, keeps the partner banks alive, and the system has long since reached the middle class (Hossein 2018: 86). Similarly, to Jamaicans at home, Jamaicans in Montreal here exclude themselves by choice from regular commercial institutes since they trust and know the people in their collective. Jamaican banker women can bridge precarious situations by offering their financial services, which ordinary people can trust (Hossein 2018: 87).

After Carol met her husband who was born in Montreal to a Barbadian family background, life became a little easier. She could rely on his family networks to help with daily needs or with the child rearing, while she was at work. Marriage and the local inclusion through her partner bank endeavours were strong pillars that aided Carol's integration and access to society. The knowledge from her 'foremothers' and the upkeep of the traditional, informal Jamaican economic system provided for monetary needs and linkages with other Afro-Caribbean women in her local environment in Montreal. The feeling of hominess ("Heimatgefühl") and connection to Jamaica and the friendships and 'trust-networks' shared with other women prevailed through these practices. Therefore, Carol wanted her children to have a vital connection to Jamaica. By narrating her childhood memories to them, and via the anecdotes she shared about her mother and grandmother, she fostered

in them a sense of connection to her country of birth. She made sure that they enjoyed summer holidays on the island and is proud that her adult children have secure connections with their relatives in Jamaica and engage in travels there until today. "I could have never imagined raising my children as solely Canadian", states Carol. "They have to know their roots and background. Their nationality will always be questioned here; it is fragile", declares Carol. Moreover, she says, "Jamaica will always be there; it is our cultural identity, the knowledge, the practicality. When you go there, you can charge up again for a couple of months and get away from the winter [laughs] that is how we always did it. You need this energy. It doesn't mean you need to live there […], no not at all, but without it, you cannot live in Canada either. It nurtures the soul!".

Even though Carol engages in homeland vacations every year, she would never return to Jamaica. The homeland serves to contrast the negative experiences of living in Canada: Racial discrimination, separation from stay-behind family and hectic day-to-day life. Jamaica is a fond memory that serves as a place of great experiences, beautiful vacations, and romantic notions of cultural belonging (cf. Said 1985). A place that charges up her batteries, as she says and an affective connection across time and space. The nostalgic imaginaries that Carol holds to her place of origin also give rise to an 'essentialization' of Jamaica. Examples of such are, i.e., in Jamaica, things are still soulful, people are always friendly, food still tastes like food, and the weather is always good, which are significant imaginative factors in Carol's recurrent homeland travels. As Hirsch and Miller describe, while living in host countries many migrants become "roots-seekers" (2011: 13). Although Carol is highly reflective of herself not being able to live in Jamaica permanently anymore, her well-organized holiday trips and her longstanding absence from living a regular life in the country of her birth constructed a somewhat sanitized version of Jamaica. Even though all of the women in this study have their own or second-hand affective memories that mark important points of their own or familial histories, in the event of returning to Jamaica the character of these memories and the way how they clash with local facts show similarities in all cases.