

## MASTER THESIS MPA

# Between islands and identities: The mental journey of remigration

A study on relevant socio-emotional factors involved in remigration, for Dutch Caribbean students and young professionals.



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## Summary

Dutch Caribbean students are often encouraged to study in the Netherlands with the hope that they will return to support their islands. While shared citizenship and the Dutch educational system make studying there practical, leaving the islands also means giving up familiarity, community, and culture. Although many students intend to return, not all do, for complex reasons. Social networks and emotional ties increasingly appear to influence return decisions. Theories on belonging suggest individuals want to live where they feel at home, but DC students often develop dual attachments, complicating these decisions. Return is not always permanent, and people often move back and forth. Research on how socio-emotional factors affect the remigration of this population is limited. Stichting WeConnect seeks to explore this area and provide insights to better guide students and professionals. This study investigates how socio-emotional factors shape return decisions among DC young professionals after studying in the Netherlands.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Dutch, English, and Papiamentu, based on participant preference. Audience questions from earlier WeConnect webinars helped guide content, and a follow-up webinar in April 2025 was used to share findings and gather further input. Thirteen people from five of the six islands were interviewed; five lived in the DC and eight in the Netherlands. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, anonymised, and analysed thematically using theory- and data-driven coding.

Decisions around return migration are shaped by a complex interaction of intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural/contextual, political/historical, and situational factors. An emotional bond with the home island was shared by all participants. While some felt at home in the Netherlands, it rarely matched the sense of peace and identity experienced on the islands. Cultural identity, especially language, played a key role. Papiamentu was crucial for emotional expression among ABC islanders. Life satisfaction, often influenced by loneliness, stress, or health, was a reason to consider remigration. These choices were also shaped by life stage, relationships, and aspirations for stability or homeownership. Family ties were central; many wanted to be close to relatives or raise children near extended family. Despite digital efforts, distance strained these relationships. Romantic partners also influenced decisions; shared Caribbean heritage could ease the transition, while differing views on location could create tension. Racism in the Netherlands contributed to alienation but was never the sole reason for return. Still, it shaped belonging and prompted some to seek comfort in familiar environments, even if racism was also present there. These responses reflect resilience, aligning with Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth, where marginalised individuals draw on social, linguistic, and aspirational capital to navigate adversity. Cultural and contextual factors also influenced belonging. Many valued the islands' slower pace and communal spirit, while others found them intrusive or hard to adjust to after adopting Dutch norms. Participants appreciated island friendliness but also valued the inclusivity and anonymity in the Netherlands, particularly for those with marginalised gender or sexual identities. Material factors like climate and housing also played a role. Political and historical frustrations added complexity. Many felt the Netherlands ignored its colonial past and Caribbean identities. Experiences with institutional racism and microaggressions reinforced exclusion. While Dutch education offered advantages, it came with emotional and bureaucratic burdens. Situational factors like location affected community access. Cities like Rotterdam offered stronger cultural networks. Job opportunities and local hiring practices on the islands also shaped return decisions. Some participants tested island life before committing, reflecting the fluid nature of return.

While themes like family, career, and culture were common, their meaning varied across participants. Family ties might motivate return for one or support staying in the Netherlands for another. Emotional ties to the islands often coexisted with appreciation for Dutch opportunities. A strong sense of belonging to the islands was often rooted in shared language, culture, and climate. Belonging in the Netherlands was more situational, often tied to individual relationships or careers. Many expressed a wish to contribute to their

home islands but faced barriers like limited jobs, red tape, and reacculturation challenges. These could lead to emotional strain or even returning to the Netherlands. Although racism and discrimination were often mentioned as sources of alienation, they didn't directly drive remigration. This contrasts with other migrant groups and suggests return motivations are not easily generalisable. The link between academic success and return was complex. For some, achievements made return difficult due to job mismatches. For others, return goals shaped study choices. Success in education alone did not determine return.

Stichting WeConnect is advised to expand workshops on the emotional and mental aspects of remigration. Collaborating with culturally competent professionals would enhance this effort. To meet practical needs, a remigration handbook or online peer forum could support housing, bureaucracy, and employment transitions. DC students and young professionals should reflect on emotional needs, with social relations or councillors, when considering return. A temporary stay while keeping Dutch options open, such as subletting or sabbaticals, can provide clarity. Re/Presenting Europe is encouraged to explore migration through identity, cultural capital, and inequality. This includes addressing how mobility is shaped by racialisation and colonial legacies. Ongoing research and community work can help shift dominant narratives. Higher education institutions should promote Caribbean internships and validate remigration as a career path. Language policies should be reassessed for their impact on student inclusion. Dutch institutions should better reflect Caribbean history in education. On the islands, simplifying bureaucracy and supporting diaspora ties can encourage return. Employers are advised to provide cultural onboarding. Future research should quantify these findings and assess variation across groups.

## Conclusion

This study found that return mobility among DC students and young professionals is closely tied to the ability to be oneself in an environment that meets personal needs and supports quality of life. It also involves balancing practical realities with emotional well-being and social connections.

# Table of contents

<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
CONCLUSION .....	4
<b>Table of contents.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Contextual Background .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 STAKEHOLDERS .....	8
2.1.3 RE/PRESENTING EUROPE.....	8
2.2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS .....	9
2.3. THE DUTCH CARIBBEAN ISLANDS.....	9
2.2. A HISTORY OF COLONIZATION AND SLAVERY .....	10
<b>3. Theoretical Background .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 THEORISING REMIGRATION .....	11
CONCEPTUALISATIONS .....	12
INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK.....	14
SUB-QUESTIONS .....	14
<b>4. Methodology .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS .....	16
4.3 PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT .....	16
4.4 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS.....	17
4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	17
<b>5. Results.....</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1 INTRAPERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS .....	18
5.2 INTERPERSONAL FACTORS .....	20
5.3 CONTEXTUAL/CULTURAL FACTORS .....	21
5.4 POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL FACTORS .....	22
5.5 SITUATIONAL FACTORS .....	24
5.6 REFLECTION OF THE WEBINAR .....	25
<b>6. Discussion .....</b>	<b>26</b>
6.1 KEY FINDINGS .....	26
6.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH .....	27
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	28
6.4 CONCLUSION .....	30
<b>7. References list.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>8. Annexes .....</b>	<b>34</b>
8.1 SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF COLONIALISATION AND SLAVERY .....	34
B 8.1 CODEBOOK.....	34
8.3: INFORMATION LETTER .....	1
8.4: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	5
8.5: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	7
8.6: DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	12



## 1. Introduction

“Go study, and come back to help your island” is a mantra that is heard by many Dutch Caribbean (DC) students when they leave their island to pursue higher education. For them, studying in the European Netherlands<sup>1</sup> is a logical choice due to the Kingdom’s shared citizenship, a Dutch-based educational system, and limited options on the islands (Ombudsman, 2020; van Casteren et al., 2021). Pursuing higher education, however, is not purely a decision based on academic ambition. It also involves leaving behind family, friends, the natural environment, and generally everything they had been used to. Many students leave their island with the idea of returning in mind; however, in practice, many eventually do not.

Traditionally, people looked at economic theories to explain migration patterns. These theories postulate that people emigrate in favour of financial goals, and remigrate after achieving said objectives or after failing to reach them (Kunuroglu et al., 2018). In line with this, the relatively limited remigration to the islands is often explained by a lack of career opportunities and lower salaries (Tong, 2019). However, economic theories are of little relevance when not discussing labour migration (Carling & Pettersen, 2014). Trąbka et al. (2022) nuance this slightly in their study. Although they found that labour market status did not correlate strongly to attachment to a place, other economic factors like owning property or access to welfare were related to attachment to a place. Still, their main conclusion is that migrants who consider returning should take into account their social networks back in their country of origin (Trąbka et al., 2022).

Network theory has shown that people’s migration patterns are strongly influenced by what others in their environment choose to do. (Kunuroglu et al., 2018; Vathi & King, 2017) . Social ties with family, friends, and community members across borders can impact the decision to (re)migrate. After returning, they can impact how returnees experience their return, e.g., by providing support in adapting to the new life (Trąbka et al., 2022)

Recent theories also emphasize the role of ‘belonging’ as a crucial factor in migration decisions, meaning that people seek to live where they feel at home (Antonsich, 2010). When this sense of belonging (SoB) spans multiple locations, it is called transnational belonging (Antonsich, 2010). The dilemma that this brings is perfectly described by Falicov (2005): *‘If home is where the heart is, and one’s heart is with one’s family, language, and country, what happens when your family, language, and culture occupy two different worlds?’* As for the DC young professionals, they moved to the Netherlands together with their peers, and lived there during a formative period of their lives, whilst building relationships and other ties to the country and its people (Tong, 2019), thus creating a second home in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, remigration is not always a unidirectional and final affair. Rather, people can choose to stay at their destination (e.g. Caribbean) for only a couple of years, or otherwise decide to return (e.g. to the Netherlands) again. Some may visit for a short stay but end up never leaving. To address this principle, (Vathi & King, 2017) introduced the term ‘return mobilities’. Return mobilities describe all instances where individuals visit or return to their motherland, for any duration. This suggests that the answer to why DC young professionals do or do not remigrate lies in the study of social and emotional factors that influence the transnational SoB, whilst accounting for the possibility of various types of return mobilities. Also, socio-emotional factors not only drive remigration mobilities, they are also impacted by it (Vathi & King, 2017). The factors impacting remigration are highly dependent on conditions in both the sending and destination

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<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of the Netherlands also includes the BES islands as discussed in 2.3. For simplicity, when referring to the Netherlands, the European Netherlands are meant

countries, which stresses the importance of population-specific research on this topic (Dziekońska, 2024a). However, at this moment, studies on the socio-emotional factors in relation to migration mobilities have not yet been performed in this population.

Stichting WeConnect, the commissioning party of this research, plays a crucial role in supporting **DC students**. There have been calls from within the community of DC students to receive better support on the prospect of remigration. The foundation has been facilitating discussions on returning home, where **young professionals** expressed uncertainties about timing, identity, and reintegration challenges. Issues such as feeling detached from their home island, struggling with societal reintegration, and concerns about political and social conditions in the Netherlands all shape their decision-making process. WeConnect seeks to address these concerns by generating new insights into the socio-emotional dimensions of remigration, ensuring that students and professionals receive the support they need during this transition.

Although these topics are extremely relevant to the target group, the focus in research and literature has been mainly on practical and financial issues, such as student debt. WeConnect wants to bridge this gap by further investigating the social-emotional side of remigration. By giving lesser-exposed, but essential themes a voice, WeConnect hopes to be able to guide students and young professionals even better. By providing a better, broader insight into the return issue, WeConnect also tries to stimulate return.

In summary, little information is available that acknowledges the complex socio-emotional nature of remigration for this community. Therefore, the aim of this research is to contribute to the body of knowledge on why DC young professionals do or do not decide to remigrate after studying in the Netherlands, by exploring the relation between socio-emotional factors and their return mobilities. This objective will be pursued via the following research question:

*How do socio-emotional factors relate to the return mobilities of Dutch Caribbean young professionals who followed higher education in the Netherlands?*

## 2. Contextual Background

### 2.1 Stakeholders

#### 2.1.2 WeConnect

Since its founding in 2014, WeConnect has been dedicated to supporting the DC diaspora. The foundation primarily focuses on students and young professionals, offering guidance throughout their studies in the Netherlands and in preparing for a possible return to the islands. To support this group, WeConnect organizes a range of activities, including workshops, coaching sessions, and other educational events. It also promotes internships and job opportunities available on the islands to the diaspora community in the Netherlands. In the past year, WeConnect has hosted monthly webinars where employees from local companies share their experiences of moving back to the Caribbean. Additionally, the foundation regularly participates in the national job fair in the Netherlands, helping to connect diaspora members with employers and opportunities on the islands.

#### 2.1.3 Re/Presenting Europe

This research is part of Re/Presenting Europe, a research consortium that critically explores the ongoing impact of colonialism. The consortium focuses on how colonial histories continue to shape present-day realities, especially for diasporic and marginalised communities. The project has a key interest in the mobility of individuals within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with a particular focus on identity-driven migration, solidarity networks, and the SoB.

This is the third research project to emerge from the collaboration between WeConnect and Re/Presenting Europe. The first study examined how mental health resilience among DC students could be supported effectively (Noordzij, 2022). The second project explored the factors that promote or hinder the SoB among these students (Hendriksma, 2024). This current project builds on that work by exploring the link between well-being, SoB, and remigration.

#### 2.1.1 Dutch Caribbean Students & Young Professionals

The main beneficiaries of this research are people from the DC, who are either studying in the Netherlands or in the early stage of their career. Every year about 1600 of students come to the Netherlands to study (Ombudsman, 2020). No numbers were found on the total amount of DC students and young professionals currently living in the Netherlands. However, they are part of the roughly 100 thousand people from the DC Isles who are first generation migrants to the Netherlands (CBS, 2022). No data was found on the distribution of where, when and if they have studied, nor what the most popular educational disciplines are.

During their studies, many DC students face unique challenges, including homesickness, culture shock, and discrimination. Their Dutch proficiency is often questioned; this often prevents them from fully expressing themselves and can contribute to feelings of isolation (van Casteren et al., 2021). These factors negatively affect well-being and academic performance, which is unfortunate for remigration as the longer one stays abroad, the stronger ties to the host country and the less likely they are to eventually return (Giannocolo, 2011; Tong, 2019; van Casteren et al., 2021).



### 2.1.4 Employers and Ministries

WeConnect collaborates with employers across the DC, playing a crucial role in helping students and young professionals find internships and jobs that support their return. In addition, WeConnect works with three<sup>2</sup> ministries in the Netherlands: the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations; which plays a central role in the governance of the Kingdom and supports initiatives that promote development within the Kingdom and between its parts; the Ministry of Education, Which supports educational and cultural development in all parts of the Kingdom. For the DC diaspora, this ministry is particularly relevant in improving access to quality education and promoting equal opportunities; Ministry of Health welfare and sport, which contributes to the health and well-being of people in the Netherlands including Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (Breeman, 2020).

## 2.2. The Education System and Its Implications

### Netherlands-Centric Education

The limited availability of higher education on the islands means that for many disciplines, studying abroad is a necessity. A major reason why DC students end up in the Netherlands is the alignment of the education systems with the Dutch. This is both in terms of structure as well as the primary language of instruction, which is Dutch. This adds a level of social complexity, as for fewer than 10% of households, it is the primary language spoken at home. Most children grow up speaking Papiamentu (Spoken on Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire but written as Papiamentu in Aruba) or English (St Eustatius, Saba, St Maarten) at home, making the Dutch language a barrier to academic success (Moerman, 2012).

The islands have a Dutch education system in which the main instruction language is also Dutch. Because of this, the opportunities to study in culturally and geographically closer regions, such as Spanish-speaking countries are indirectly restricted. (Van Casteren et al., 2021). This means that DC students typically end up studying in the Netherlands.

## 2.3. The Dutch Caribbean islands

The DC comprises six islands that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Following the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010, Curaçao and St. Maarten became autonomous countries, joining Aruba, which had held this status since 1986 (also referred to as the CAS islands). The other three islands: Bonaire, St. Eustatius (Statia), and Saba (BES) officially became part of the country of the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2017) Bonaire is now named Speciale Gemeente (Special Municipality) whereas Statia and Saba are called Public Entities.

All residents of these islands and the European Netherlands share a head of state and the same passport. There is also a system of shared governance, meaning foreign policy and certain laws apply to all four countries, but each retains autonomy in most domestic matters. As the BES islands are technically part of the Netherlands, they are subject to Dutch laws and regulations, and their inhabitants can vote in Dutch elections, whereas citizens of the CAS islands cannot. Decisions concerning the Kingdom are made by a committee comprising the King, all Dutch ministers, and three deputies from the CAS islands (Breeman, 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> WeConnect receives funding from these three ministries, as well as from the ministries of: Infrastructure and Watermanagement; Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature

## 2.2. A History of Colonization and Slavery

The history of Colonisation and Slavery is essential for understanding the lived experiences and migration decisions of the DC population today. The legacy of slavery, racial oppression, and cultural suppression has shaped social structures and institutional dynamics, and affects how DC individuals are perceived and treated in the Netherlands and how DC individuals perceive the Netherlands . These historical injustices contribute to contemporary issues such as discrimination, identity struggles (van Stipriaan, 2023) and a weakened SoB (Hendriksma, 2024), factors that play a crucial role in remigration decisions. Acknowledgement of this history allows for a better understanding of how structural and socio-emotional factors intersect in shaping motivations to return to the islands, particularly among students and young professionals who navigate both their personal development and a postcolonial reality<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Supplemental information can be found in the Annex (8.1)

### 3. Theoretical Background

#### 3.1 Theorising Remigration

The main concepts are theorised in this section. **Remigration**, refers to the process by which individuals who have previously emigrated return to their place of origin after a significant period abroad. The temporal aspect distinguishes remigration from short-term mobility, such as vacations or business trips, but no strict bottom limit is defined (Dziekońska, 2024a). This study focuses specifically on voluntary remigration, which Kunuroglu (2018) species to entail: it is driven by an individual's own intentions and desires and therefore excludes involuntary forms such as deportation.

Central to voluntary remigration is **willingness**, defined as the personal decision to return (Battistella & Cassarino, 2014). This willingness is often rooted in a strong **sense of belonging** to the place of origin. Belonging refers to emotional attachment, identification, and a feeling of safety and comfort in a particular place (Kunuroglu et al., 2018; Antonsich, 2010). However, belonging is not exclusive or fixed. It is increasingly recognized as plural and fluid, meaning that individuals can feel a SoB to more than one place at the same time (Antonsich, 2010). This idea is central to **transnationalism**, which highlights the ongoing ties migrants maintain across borders, forming what is known as a transnational social field (King and Christou, 2011). For DC individuals, this often means sustaining meaningful relationships and emotional connections in both the Caribbean and the European Netherlands. As a result, remigration is influenced by experiences and attachment to both locations, and individuals may feel equally rooted in both regions.

A particularly relevant type of social experience is discrimination in the host country. In a study on Turkish immigrants in Western Europe, discrimination emerged as one of the three strongest factors influencing return decisions, alongside the initial intention to return and a SoB to Turkey (Kunuroglu, 2018). This finding raises the question whether discrimination may also significantly influence the remigration decisions of DC individuals. Although there are clear differences between the Turkish and DC populations, both groups have been subject to discriminatory experiences in their host countries (Groenewoud, 2022; Samson, 2022). In the case of the DC diaspora, recent research has shown that microaggressions negatively affect their SoB in the Netherlands (Hendriksma, 2024). Barriers to SoB may, in turn, impact this population its willingness to return.

Still, willingness alone does not directly result in actual return. Battistella and Cassarino (2024) argue that in addition to willingness, a person must also reach a **state of readiness**. This means being prepared to mobilize the necessary resources—both tangible, such as money or housing, and intangible, such as emotional resilience or supportive social networks. Many people who wish to return never do, not due to lack of motivation, but because the enabling conditions are not in place.

A key moment in the development of readiness often involves a **trigger event**. A study on Polish immigrants in Western Europe showed that significant life events, such as becoming a parent, can prompt deep reflection on life in the host country and future aspirations (Dziekońska, 2024b). These events bring latent concerns to the surface and often lead individuals to reevaluate their long-term goals. For instance, becoming a parent compels people to consider where they want to raise their children and where they want their children to develop a SoB. Other common triggers include key stages in a child's education, such as starting school or transitioning to secondary education. These moments bring clarity to previously unspoken feelings and may lead to a decision to return.

Even after the decision to return has been made and acted upon, the process is not necessarily complete. Upon return, individuals must go through a period of **reacculturation**, adjusting to a place that may have changed during their absence. Vathi & King (2017) points out that there is often a mistaken assumption that

returning to one's country of origin will be seamless. In reality, returnees may face difficulties reintegrating, especially if they encounter unexpected changes or no longer fit in as they once did. This can lead to confusion, identity loss, or even a second emigration.

Moreover, remigration must not be viewed as a one-time, permanent move. Instead, migration is an ongoing, flexible process where people may return home temporarily or relocate again after some time (Vathi & King, 2017). The concept of "**return mobilities**" (King & Christou, 2011) highlights that returns can take many forms, including short visits that may or may not later influence a permanent move (Dziekońska, 2024b; Kunuroglu et al., 2018). Return mobilities show how a DC young professional may choose to return permanently, for a couple months or years, visit for vacation or may never return.

In practice, willingness, readiness and reacculturation are often entangled. Intentions do not always lead to action, yet they are closely related (Tran et al., 2022). A single trigger event can simultaneously awaken a desire to return and create the conditions to act on it (Dziekońska, 2024a). Similarly, the degree to which someone experiences challenges during reacculturation may be shaped by conditions present before the return. For example, family can influence all stages of the process—it can foster willingness, act as a trigger for the return itself, and support or complicate reacculturation (De Visser et al., 2023; Dziekońska, 2024a).

In summary, a comprehensive understanding of remigration must combine three interrelated dimensions: the initial desire or willingness to return as a result of transnational belonging, the readiness or capacity to act on that desire, and the post-return process of reacculturation. It must also recognize that remigration is rarely fixed or final, but often part of an ongoing, dynamic pattern of movement shaped by personal, relational, and structural factors.

## Conceptualisations

### 3.1.1 A sense of Belonging

Antonisch (2010) created a model which distinguishes between Place belongingness and the politics of belonging. **Place belongingness** describes an emotional feeling of attachment by an individual to a particular place. It is a place of familiarity, comfort, security and emotional attachment. Another way to describe it is the place of identity. The geographic scale of said location has a large range. In certain instances, one may speak of the house in which they live, but it can also be their neighbourhood, or country. The absence of these factors can lead to feelings of loneliness, alienation, and displacement, which may result in motivational and mental health challenges (Antonsich, 2010). The two spaces which are generally referred to in this study are the European Netherlands (and one or more of) the islands in the DC.

Antonsich (2010) identifies five key dimensions of place-belongingness:

- **Autobiographical Belonging:** A person's connection to a place, shaped by one's life story, which creates attachment.
- **Relational Belonging:** Feeling at home is often supported by social connections. These range from close bonds with family and friends to more casual interactions with others in the community.
- **Cultural Factors:** Shared customs, language and everyday practices. It is involved in communal experiences and a feeling of being part of something greater.
- **Economic Factors:** Material and financial facets of life which allow for an individual to live a stable and secure existence.
- **Legal Factors:** Relating to whether a person is allowed to be somewhere from a point of legality (e.g. citizenship, residency)

**Politics of belonging** highlights that even if a person is technically allowed to belong (legal factors), one must also feel accepted. For individuals who do not fit the dominant societal group, exclusion can be a major barrier to belonging. The politics of belonging involves power dynamics, institutional policies, and discourses that define who is considered "us" or "them" (Antonsich, 2010).

Studies show that the politics of belonging, particularly in the form of racism, can drive remigration by undermining individuals' ability to feel at home (Kunuroglu et al., 2018b). Hendriksma (2024) found that the SoB of DC students in the Netherlands is threatened by a specific form of discrimination known as microaggressions. The concept is defined as *"subtle or unintended putdowns that may seem harmless individually but, when accumulated, can cause significant psychological damage"* (Hendriksma, 2024). There are three types of microaggressions: Microinsults are common remarks that, while not necessarily intended to harm, come across as rude or offensive. Microinvalidations involve actions that dismiss or undermine the feelings or experiences of the individual. Microassaults, however, are explicitly intended to cause harm (Hendriksma, 2024).

Microaggressions have been shown to hinder the SoB in the environment where they occur, creating an exclusionary atmosphere (Hendriksma, 2024; Kunuroglu et al., 2018b). This exclusionary environment may reinforce attachment to one's heritage country and in-group solidarity. As a result, microaggressions can strengthen the SoB to the country of origin (Kunuroglu et al., 2018b).

The SoB is further influenced by the political situation in both the host country and the country of origin. This underscores the importance of addressing political contexts when researching drivers of migration (Kunuroglu et al., 2018b). For instance, it is crucial to consider the changes in the political landscape in the Netherlands following the 2023 elections.

## Reacculturation

Vathi & King (2017) argue that remigration does not end at the airport. When people migrate back (remigration) there is a phase of getting readjusted to local life, which is called reacculturation. It is often falsely assumed that reintegration is effortless because a person returns to a place of familiarity. However, this neglects that people change during their time abroad and that neither the developments in their country remain dormant. This can lead to strong feelings of being lost, and a lost identity, not identifying with a place that had always been home. Therefore, reacculturation can be just as complex as initial integration (Vathi & King, 2017).

Cernigoj et al., (2024) formulated 5 categories that describe risk and protective factors that shape individuals' experiences when returning to their home country:

- **Demographic factors:** Age, gender and other potentially relevant characteristics.
- **Intrapersonal factors:** Personal attributes, which they called cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics.
- **Situational factors:** Conditions or circumstances that are in place at a particular time and place, such as a job opportunity or a crisis, which can influence decisions or feelings of connection.
- **Interpersonal factors:** relationships and interactions with other people, and including both personal and group dynamics.
- **Cultural and environmental factors:** Conditions of the environment, including factors as culture, historical background, social norms, and economics.

## Integrated Framework

This framework defines remigration as a derivative of the transnational SoB. The willingness to remigrate increases when the SoB becomes skewed towards the place of origin. People remigrate when their transnational SoB becomes weighted so strongly to the country of origin, that they are prepared to mobilise the resources required to remigrate. This point is often reached after a trigger event. The challenge of reacculturation as the transnational SoB can be subjected to challenges due in the process of reacculturation, which, if unsuccessful can shift the transnational SoB back to the Netherlands to the extent that one decides to move back again.

To study this, a model was made to study all phases of **return mobilities** under one model of SoB. This was based on two models. 1) Antonish (2010) who divides between Place Belonging (Autobiographical, Relational, Cultural, Economic, and Legal factors) and Politics of belonging. 2) Cernigoj et al., (2024), who identified that reacculturation depends on Demographic, intrapersonal, situational, interpersonal, cultural and environmental factors.

This lead to the following five categories of:

- **Intrapersonal factors:** Personal attributes, cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics, which can be based on personal history, memories and relationships. They also include demographic factors and explicitly include the component of Identity and emotional attachment to a location.
- **Interpersonal factors:** Those factors that are involved relationships and interactions with other people, and including both personal and group dynamics. These involve strong social ties like families and friends, but also weaker interactions with acquaintances, colleagues and strangers.
- **Cultural/contextual factors:** Conditions of the environment, including factors as culture, historical background, social norms and language, which foster a sense of community and intimacy. Context addresses the broader social, economic and climatic characteristics of the environment.
- **Political/historical factors:** Factors related to political safety of the diaspora. This involves factors that relate to the sense of acceptance of individuals who diverge from the dominant social group, or their emancipatory status. This also involves bureaucratic challenges. Factors that are related to the shared history of the Kingdom are also included. For example, the point 'ignorance of Dutch people about the shared history' is a political/historical factor that is associated with racism.
- **Situational factors:** Conditions or circumstances that are in place at a particular time and place. These involve, among other things, economic factors like the ability to reach financial and material stability at a certain location at a certain time in this person's life.

## Sub-questions

In light of the theoretical or conceptual framework and the main research objective to contribute to the body of knowledge on why DC Students and young professionals do or do not decide to remigrate after studying in the Netherlands, by exploring the relation between socio-emotional factors and their return mobilities, the central question —How do **socio-emotional factors** relate to the **return mobilities** of Dutch Caribbean young professionals who followed higher education in the Netherlands? — will be answered through researching the following sub-questions:

- How do **Intrapersonal** factors relate to the return mobilities of DC young professionals?
- How do **interpersonal** factors relate to the return mobilities of DC young professionals?
- How do **Cultural & contextual** factors relate to the return mobilities of DC young professionals?
- How do **Political & historical** factors relate to the return mobilities of DC young professionals?
- How do **Situational** factors relate to the return mobilities of DC young professionals?





## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The research on socio-emotional factors influencing return mobility among DC students and young professionals was guided by our theoretical model on SoB as described in the previous section. Given the complexity of belonging and the study's focus on individual perceptions, a qualitative approach was most appropriate.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the primary method, as they allow for a deep exploration of personal experiences while providing the researcher with enough structure to cover key themes. Interviews were conducted both online and in person, depending on logistical considerations and the preferences of the participants. Respondents were also given the option to speak in their preferred language, resulting in three interviews in Papiamentu, two in English, and eight in Dutch.

Initially, the study planned to incorporate a modified version of the timeline method from the Reflexive Monitoring in Action (RMA) handbook (Van Mierlo et al., 2010), which encourages participants to reflect on how past experiences shape current decisions. However, the pilot interview revealed that the structured nature of the method did not suit the topic or interview style, which led to the method being abandoned for a more conventional semi-structured format.

### 4.2 Webinars

WeConnect has been organizing monthly webinars from October 2024 where employers from different islands are invited to discuss working on their respective islands. The audience questions during the webinars from November and December provided insight into the factors that potential returnees may find pressing in their considerations. These questions were therefore used to help inform the data collection strategy, particularly the interview guide. An additional webinar was organised in April 2025 to present the preliminary outcomes of this study and gather feedback from an audience of members of the diaspora.

### 4.3 Participants and recruitment

This study aimed to include a diverse group of individuals from all six DC islands, with variation in academic backgrounds and gender identities. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a balanced representation of individuals currently living in the Caribbean and the Netherlands. The selection was based on four criteria:

1. Participant grew up in Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, or Saba.
2. Participant has completed secondary education on the DC islands.
3. Participant has finished or is in the final phase of finishing their MBO, HBO, or WO education in the Netherlands
4. Participant is contemplating, or has contemplated the idea of returning

In total, thirteen individuals were interviewed, representing five out of the six islands (Table 1). No suitable respondent from Saba could be found. Of the participants, seven identified as female and six as male; five lived on their island and eight lived in the Netherlands. Of these eight, two had past remigration experience, and two have concrete plans to remigrate in the near future. Eleven participants had completed a higher education program, one is currently studying and one started their career before finishing their degree. While the latter technically deviates from the third selection criterion, this individual

still met the broader intention of the study: to focus on those with potential for remigration in the near future. The participants represented a wide range of sectors, including IT, arts and culture, education, sociology, medicine, finance, biology, environmental activism, and political activism. The sectors are not attributed to individuals in the table in favour of maintaining anonymity.

**Table 1.** Overview of participants and remigration status

Respondent	Gender	Isle of origin	Place of residence	Remigrated	Details
R1	Female	Aruba	Netherlands	No	
R2	Female	Curaçao	Curaçao	Yes	
R3	Female	Aruba	Aruba	Yes	
R4	Male	Curaçao	Nederland	No	
R5	Female	Bonaire	Netherlands	No	Concrete plans for future, no clear time indication
R6	Female	Sint Eustatius	Sint Eustatius	Yes	
R7	Male	Bonaire	Netherlands	No	
R8	Female	Sint Maarten	Netherlands	Yes	Sint Maarten - Test remigration for 1 year Concrete plans for remigration in near future
R9	Male	Curaçao	Netherlands	Yes	Curaçao – Remigration discontinued after half a year
R10	Male	Bonaire	Netherlands	No	Concrete plans for remigration in near future
R11	Male	Curaçao	Curaçao	Yes	
R12	Male	Bonaire	Netherlands	No	
R13	Female	Sint Maarten	Sint Maarten	Yes	

#### 4.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and stored anonymously. Analysis started immediately after the first interview. A pilot interview (R1) was performed in order to test and adjust the interview guide. This codebook (8.2), consisting of important main and sub-themes, formed the initial base for coding of following interviews. During analysis, the quotes related to these sub codes were inductively re-clustered to improve appropriate data presentation.

#### 4.5 Ethical considerations

Because this is a study on human experiences, it was important to take into account ethical considerations, especially since topics related to mental health were covered. All participants gave informed consent before participating in the study (Documents in relation to informed consent and data management are found in annex 8.2-8.5). Participants were free to converse in their preferred language, and to refuse to answer any question without providing a reasons. All participants had access to counselling in their desired language via WeConnect if they felt a need. The data management plan shows how data was handled safely and securely (8.6).

## 5. Results

The socio-emotional factors that emerged from the interviews are discussed in this chapter. They are clustered in the socio-emotional categories as described in the theoretical model. The factors (Table 2) are presented based on the frequency they were discussed during the interviews. Many are accompanied by quotations. If the quote was translated into English, the untranslated quote is added as a footnote.

**Table 2.** Taxonomy of socio-emotional categories involved in remigration mobilities

Intrapersonal/ Demographic	Interpersonal	Contextual/Cultural	Political and Historical	Situational
Identity as an Islander	Family	Differences in Norms/Values/Social interactions	Awareness of the shared colonial history	Residency & Bureaucracy
Personal Identity	Social relationships	Cost of Living/ Quality of life	Studying to help ones Island	Employment and purpose
Cultural Identity	Perceived racism/discrimination		Language	Work Culture Conditions
State of Wellbeing				Return Mobilities
Age and Life Phase				

### 5.1 Intrapersonal and Demographic Factors

This category covers factors that relate to personal attributes, cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics, which can be based on personal history, memories and relationships.

#### 5.1.1 Identity as an Islander

All interviewees expressed a deep affection for their home island, regardless of current or future residence. Bonairians, in particular, voiced concern about the rapid transformation of their island following its 2010 transition to Dutch municipality status, citing cultural erosion and environmental strain. While many felt "at home" in the Netherlands, the emotional attachment never matched that of their island. A strong desire to contribute to local development often drove remigration, although some preferred to remain in the Netherlands, where they felt greater agency. Several rejected the label 'Netherlands Antillean,' as the entity does not exist anymore. But one also did so to distance themselves from stereotypes such as *"Antillean families with five children and a golden tooth living off welfare"* - R08 – Sint Maartener. However, this perspective was not shared by the other Sint Maartener.

Identity as an islander proved complex, shaped by personal and island-wide changes during time abroad. Some feared that returning would reveal an unfamiliar island or that they had assimilated too deeply into Dutch culture, creating barriers to reintegration. For others, this created urgency to return before reacculturation became impossible. As one person noted: *"I have an uncle who has been living here for 20 years and when he visits Bonaire he acts too Dutch ... If you live here too long, going back is not fun anymore or wont appeal anymore"*<sup>4</sup> - R09 – Curaçaoan.

<sup>4</sup> "Mi tin un tio ku tin 20 ana akinan anto e si ta bai boneiru anto acto demasiado hulandes ... Si bo biba akinan muchu largu, baiendo bek no ta leuk mas of no ta spreek bo aan"

### 5.1.2 Personal Identity

Interviews revealed a recurring tension between the desire for learning and exploring and the need for peace and stability. Many viewed the Netherlands as a place for discovery and development, while their home islands represented peace and stability. This contrast shaped migration decisions: the Netherlands attracted those seeking novelty and challenge, especially early in life. Notably, sexual identity was named as a reason not to remigrate as the acceptance is lower on the islands (see cultural norms/values). In the Netherlands, some felt that they had to repress some aspects of their identities to fit in, for example, having long curly hair: *"Before, I used to cut it but now I let my hair grow a little, I'm not supposed to hide that"*<sup>5</sup> – R13 - Bonairian

### 5.1.3 Cultural Identity

The ability to speak one's mother tongue was important for belonging. Dutch was often seen as a transactional language, whereas Papiamentu speakers especially described their mother tongue as the language of their emotions. Language included speaking and being exposed to small cultural phrases and ways of communicating. The link between language and wellbeing is well exemplified by the following quote: *"But I don't express myself, I don't tell jokes because they are lost in translation. So if I just have one person with who can speak Papiamentu with me, everything comes alive and I am happy again because I can express myself"*<sup>6</sup> – R05 – Curaçaoan

Cultural events in the Netherlands had different impacts depending on the person. For example, 'Fiesta Macumba' (a Latin party) was seen by one as a chance to connect to their culture, whilst another felt it was too marketed to white women, which left them feeling unwelcome at a celebration of their own culture.

### 5.1.4 State of Wellbeing

Satisfaction with life was a strong indicator of remigration desire, as well as actual mobility. Low satisfaction with life in the Netherlands drove remigration, and was related to factors like stress, loneliness. It was further impacted by the strain caused by dealing with the weather, societal norms, and hasty pace of life: *"The last 3 years I became sick maybe every two months and that became a sort of wake-up call, like, 'I think something is not going entirely well'"*<sup>7</sup> R02 – Curaçaoan.

### 5.1.4 Age and life phase

Deciding where to build a future is a significant consideration, encompassing settling with a partner, potential homeownership, and raising children. One participant stated, *"I am now at an age where I am actually young, I don't have a house, I don't have kids, I don't have a partner yet, so before I have something of permanence, I must decide where I want to settle"*<sup>8</sup> - R03 – Aruban. Some felt they had missed the opportunity to return home. Despite the desire, established lives in the Netherlands, including family and housing, made transatlantic relocation difficult.

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<sup>5</sup> "Prome mi tabata pela semper pero aworaki mi ta laga mi kabei cresa un tiki. I'm not supposed to hide that".

<sup>6</sup> "Pero mi no ta expressia mi mes, mi no ta hasi jokes pasobra nan ta lost in translation. Dus si mi tin gewon un hende ku por gewon papia papiamentu ku mi, than tur kos ta come alive anto mi ta happy again, pasobra mi por expressia mi mes."

<sup>7</sup> "Ik was gewoon echt niet happy in Nederland. Ik werd de laatste drie jaar misschien wel elke twee maanden ziek en dat werd ook wel een wake-up call, van volgens mij gaat er iets niet helemaal goed"

<sup>8</sup> "Ik ben nu op de leeftijd waar ik eigenlijk jong ben, Ik heb nog geen huis, Ik heb nog geen Kinderen, Ik heb nog geen partner, dus voordat ik iets vast heb, moet ik echt een besluit nemen waar Ik wil vestigen"

## 5.2 Interpersonal factors

This category covers those factors that are involved relationships and interactions with other people, and including both personal and group dynamics.

### 5.2.1 Family

Family was a major motivator for returning. Many expressed a strong desire to live closer to relatives, emphasising emotional closeness, and shared time zones. Older participants often wanted to care for ageing parents out of a sense of reciprocity: *“My mother was the only person I’d give up everything for.”*<sup>9</sup> – R08 – Sint Maartener. Younger participants spoke of missing out on time with ageing grandparents, or milestones like siblings having children, and how distance strained emotional bonds. For those with family in both locations, it felt like a lose-lose situation. Technology and visits helped maintain connections. Family ties also encouraged longer stays in the Netherlands. One delayed their return to support siblings’ education, while others were urged by parents to finish their studies first. Return was discouraged too by strained parental relationships or past trauma on the island.

Having a partner who was unwilling to move could force a difficult decision between relationship and remigration. One respondent pre-emptively avoided romantic relationships in the Netherlands to escape this dilemma. For others, love motivated migration, with two respondents expressing willingness to leave their island again in support their partner’s dreams.

Children introduced complexity as moving becomes harder when schooling and the child’s own sense of home are involved. Furthermore, someone during the webinar named their child’s disability as a reason not to remigrate. Many stressed the importance of giving their (future) children a similar upbringing to their own and would neither like to raise them away from family: *“When you start a family you don’t want to have be sending pictures of your kid because you’re in Switzerland”*<sup>10</sup> — R10 — Bonairian.

### 5.2.2 Social Relationships

Some found belonging mainly through social networks: *“In both places we feel at home amongst our friends”* – R06 – Statian. Social ties with people of the same culture allowed language use, cultural expression, and mutual support against racism, smoothing (re)integration. Caribbean colleagues cultural identity expression easier at work. Building local networks helped with everyday adaptation, both in the Netherlands and on the islands.

To the prospect of remigration, diaspora peers could offer guidance, share lived experience, and help set realistic expectations. Some respondents had relied on friends to gauge whether remigration would suit them. Multiple perspectives were key to building one’s own opinion.

Frequent moves strained long-term friendships potentially leading to loneliness. Some had many friends but missed a core group. Strong Dutch social ties sometimes motivated staying. As one person noted, *“Leaving strong social relations in the Netherlands would feel like a shock. Why try to build elsewhere what you already have here?”* – R04 – Curaçaoan. But these ties could also fade when friends remigrate, generating the desire to follow.

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<sup>9</sup> *“Mijn moeder was de enigste persoon die ik geef alles op voor.”*

<sup>10</sup> *“Si bo kumisa un famia bo no ke ta na Switzerland mandando portretnan di bo yu.”*



### 5.2.3 Perceived Racism/Discrimination

Racism and discrimination shaped participants' feelings toward the Netherlands. One described arriving with belief in a Dutch version of the "American dream." A participant from a smaller island said the only Dutch people they had known were intellectuals "because you're not gonna be sent to the Caribbean if you're not likely doing research or Leadership or something" – R06 – Statian.

Exposure to Dutch society led to difficult experiences that changed perceptions of Dutch people: "But Tilburg did shape me 'is this the Netherlands?' Because I had never viewed the Netherlands from that side before" – R10 – Bonairian. One participant dropped out of education under the emotional toll of racism. Others felt like second-class citizens despite Dutch passports, facing microaggressions and violence. One remembered a fellow student saying: "Ah sorry, I don't listen to nigger music" – R09 – Curaçaoan.

Participants also described being stared at outside the Randstad and burdened with the sense of representing all Black people: "I remember questions being asked and everybody looks at you and I'm thinking 'buy you too have a race', don't exclude yourself from this conversation" – R02 – Curaçaoan. They cited skin tone, accent, and name as barriers, often needing to work harder to prove themselves: "You always work so hard... I say yes, because I always need to prove, through working twice as hard... And I'm sad it is like this but on my island it is not necessary" – R08 – Sint Maartener. Many felt the system was not designed for them, and difficulties finding work experience as a Black person left some disillusioned.

Although no one returned solely due to racism, less racism was seen as an advantage of remigration: "Eventually, I only speak for myself, I want to go back, [upon returning] I won't have to look over my shoulder, I'm not judged for my colour" – R08 – Sint Maartener. Some found growth in the struggle: "It is not easy to live in the Netherlands as a coloured person ... but on the long run it will help you grow as a person" – R03 – Aruban.

Racism also occurred in the Caribbean. One was told by a Dutch person they spoke "good Dutch for a local." As one said: "They dare come to Bonaire and say racist things about the local Bonairians" – R12 – Bonairian. Returnees were sometimes called "too Dutch" by peers or family, often due to misunderstanding. One faced sabotage at work and was told to go back to his country, to which he replied: "Yes, this is my country and I'm here to care for our nature" – R11 – Curaçaoan.

## 5.3 Contextual/Cultural factors

This category covers conditions of the environment, including factors as culture, historical background, social norms and language, which foster a sense of community and intimacy.

### 5.3.1 Differences in Norms/Values/Social Interactions

Differences in cultural norms, values, and social interactions shaped participants' sense of belonging and desire to live in a certain place. All noted the slower pace of life on the islands compared to the Netherlands, influencing time perception, bureaucracy, and organisation (see 5.5). Many appreciated this as a counterbalance to stress: "*Here it all is like 'be calm, it will be all right ... and I think that for me, as someone who always wants everything really quickly, it is actually really good for my mental health'*"<sup>11</sup> – R13 – Sint Maartener. However, those used to Dutch punctuality sometimes found readjusting difficult. Some adapted by changing their own approach: "*I make sure that I'm on time and in the meantime I'll do something else with my time, so that actually is the Dutch mentality, efficiency thinking, I like that*"<sup>12</sup> – R03 – Aruban

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<sup>11</sup> "Het is hier allemaal, doe maar rustig, weet je, het komt echt wel goed. (...) En, ik denk dat dat voor mij als iemand die altijd alles heel snel wil dat het juist heel goed is voor mijn mentale gezondheid."

<sup>12</sup> "Ik zorg gewoon dat ik op tijd ben en in die tussentijd doe ik iets anders met mijn tijd, dus dat is wel de Nederlandse mentaliteit. Efficiënt denken, efficiënt werken, dat behoud ik wel."

Participants contrasted the Caribbean's communal atmosphere with the Netherlands' more individualised lifestyle. On the islands, spontaneous interactions like greeting strangers or visiting family unannounced were normal. In the Netherlands, relationships felt more distant due to longer travel times and impersonal work culture. The lack of daily friendliness could be jarring: *"In Deventer, if I entered the bus and said 'good morning' everyone looked at me angrily and that was such a contrast ... where are the kind people? What is wrong with good morning"*<sup>13</sup> – R13 – Sint Maartener. Still, communal life also brought downsides, like limited privacy and social pressure for those who deviated from norms. Some participants had negative experiences with island attitudes toward sexual and gender identity. Limited acceptance made returning difficult. Divergence was often tolerated, but not accepted, and tight-knit communities amplified gossip. Dutch society was seen as more accepting and anonymous, providing safer space for self-expression.

Some participants had negative experiences regarding their islands' cultural attitudes toward sexual and gender identity, which was a major barrier to returning. Divergence from these norms felt as if it were tolerated, but not truly accepted. The island's tight-knit social fabric amplified this, as rumours spread quickly. *"I think there is also a sort of antipathy towards Dutch people, which is just given how the Dutch have treated the island. ... and imagine I return with a Dutch, than I would be queer, and married to a Dutchman"*<sup>14</sup> – R04 – Curaçaoan. Dutch society, was seen as more accepting and diverse, which allowed for more anonymity and space for self expression.

### 5.3.2. Cost of Living/Quality of life

Housing was often a motivation to remigrate. Although expensive in many islands, especially where a lot of capacity is used for tourism, most preferred the price-quality ratio on their island. Weather also strongly impacted quality of life, with cold and dark winters in the Netherlands perceived as detrimental to health: *"When I'm in holland, the only months when I'm happy is between June and September"*<sup>15</sup> – R08 – Sint Maartener. Several mentioned consciously trading off higher earning potential in the Netherlands for the improved quality of life on their island. However, leisure opportunities differed: the islands' small size sometimes limited activities for adults. In both settings, short travel distances were an asset. On the islands, things are much closer together, but the Netherlands was preferred due to public transport options and bicycle infrastructure. Traffic congestion on Curaçao, without alternatives, was a particular frustration for some

## 5.4 Political and Historical factors

This category covers factors tied to political safety, emancipatory status, bureaucratic challenges, and the broader impact of the Kingdom's colonial history.

### 5.4.1 Awareness of the Shared Colonial history

Participants expressed being frustrated when encountering Dutch people who were unaware about the shared colonial past. This concerned colleagues, fellow students, and other relations. Sometimes this resulted in painful microaggressions and stereotypes. One person preferred not to share their background: *"I was subject to many questions and comments 'you are Bonairian right, is there internet there?', 'is the water*

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<sup>13</sup> *"In Deventer, als ik daar in de bus liep en dan zeg ik, goedemorgen, dan keek iedereen heel boos van. En ik vond dat zo'n contrast, (...) Van waar zijn de mensen die het gewoon vriendelijk doen. Wat is mis met goedemorgen?"*

<sup>14</sup> *"Ik denk ook er is ook een soort van afschuw tegenover Nederlanders, wat terecht is gegeven hoe de Nederlanders hebben het eiland behandeld. (...) En stel je voor ik kom met een Nederlander daarheen, dan ben ik én queer en ik heb een Nederlandse man getrouwd"*

<sup>15</sup> *"When I'm in holland, the only months when I'm happy is between June and September"*

*drinkable?’ Yes we are a civilisation over there, we have everything”<sup>16</sup> – R05 Bonairian. Participants explained that Dutch education barely covers Caribbean colonial history, leading to disgruntled feelings: “They know everything about their own history and that of their neighbouring countries, but that which is part of their own kingdom they don’t know about, or don’t want to know about”<sup>17</sup> – R10 — Bonairian. Such situations lead to feelings of being an afterthought which hindered belonging.*

Such feelings were strengthened by a feeling that the Dutch government seems absent in its support for the islands. Instead of proactively helping when problems arise, there is a perception that they wait until things escalate so they can step in and take over. This was said to give the impression that the islands are not treated equally.

#### 5.4.2 Studying to help one's Island

There were varying perspectives on the idea that people were stimulated to study in the Netherlands, in order to return and contribute to their island. Participants appreciated access to education opportunities not available at home, but also faced emotional dilemmas tied to the postcolonial relationship. One participant explained feeling a duty to gain knowledge because the Dutch had taken so much, conveying a strong sense of wanting to contribute to their island, not just themselves. Another shared that they would not return because they could have a larger impact from within the Netherlands (5.5.2). A contributor to the April recalled always taking their goal to return into account when making decisions during their studies.

There were accounts of where students wanted to contribute during their studies, but were unable to due to unforeseen obstacles. University agreements often failed to facilitate connections to Caribbean placements. For instance, someone had their internship on Bonaire rejected because their internship had to be international and Bonaire is technically part of the Netherlands. Also, many hadn’t fully understood the long-term implications of studying abroad, such as student debt and bureaucratic barriers impacting eventual return.

One participant was highly critical on the concept itself. They felt that this way of thinking puts too much pressure on those that go study abroad, whilst it forgets that those who remain on the island can also help the island grow. The latter group, they said, was being neglected. Therefore they distanced themselves from the concept of ‘Brain Drain’ and introduced ‘Brain Waste’ instead.

#### 5.3 Language

Language inequalities were a major source of frustration. Both Papiamentu and English-speaking participants said their intelligence was questioned due to their accent or lower proficiency in Dutch. Several reported false accusations of plagiarism, suggesting disbelief in their capabilities. There was a feeling of injustice among English natives for having to take mandatory English classes taught by non-native speakers: *“Even though they’re a native English speaker who speaks English at C2 level, who reads C2 level books they’re forced to take an English class with someone [the teacher] who has a barely bachelor in English.”* – R06 – Statia. They also described inequalities where Dutch fluency determined opportunities on the islands, while poor English among Dutch students in education felt overlooked: *“Having students who I believe to be truly brilliant and have them be treated like less than, because they don’t dominate the language. But then I ended up being in spaces ... with Dutch dominant people who could not articulate a single sentence in English.”* – R06 – Statia

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<sup>16</sup> *“ta tin yen pregunta anto yen commentsnan. ‘si bo ta di Boneiru tog, tin internet?’ ‘Tin awa limpi, yes, nos ta un civilisation eibanda haha, nos tin tur kos.*

<sup>17</sup> *“Nan sa tur nan mes historia anto historia di nan neighbouring countries pero loke ta parti di nan mes kingdom nan no sa, of no ke sa.”*

Some other cases concerned: Dutch classmates refusing to speak English, even though it was the programme's official language, which hindered their participation, especially when Dutch was already a difficult language or they feared making mistakes. Others who spoke Dutch fluently still felt marginalized because of their accent or choice of vocabulary. One person recalled being sent to Dutch classes, only for the teacher to question why they were even there.

## 5.5 Situational factors

This category covers conditions or circumstances that are in place at a particular time and place.

### 5.5.1 Residency and Bureaucracy

Living location in the Netherlands greatly affects access to cultural familiarity and belonging. Urban centres in the Randstad were most often cited as places where respondents felt more at home, due to Caribbean communities, cultural events, and fewer experiences of racism. Still, some chose to live outside these regions to avoid insularity or explore other parts of Dutch society. One person moved from Nijmegen to Rotterdam for a stronger cultural connection but still felt unfulfilled, which led to thoughts of remigration. (Re)settling on the islands often involved administrative challenges. Participants spoke of delays with registration and banking. This could feel alienating, even in familiar places. One respondent raised on the island but born elsewhere faced difficulties obtaining permits: *"If I had come here with a job and had a salary ... because I had nothing besides a diploma it became very difficult"*<sup>18</sup> – R13 – Sint Maartener

### 5.5.2 Employment and Purpose

All participants emphasised the desire to contribute to their island or diaspora. This ranged from health care to educating youth about life in the Netherlands. Some also tailored their education towards future activity on their islands. Jobs on the islands often require multitasking due to limited specialisation. While this can lead to overload, it also allows for creative impact. However, the job market was also described as intellectually isolating, especially in specialised fields. Conversely, participants in Caribbean health care were seen as more appreciative than in the Netherlands. Some felt they could contribute more systemically from the Netherlands, through lobbying or gaining leadership experience for future use on the islands. *"We do lobbying work in the Hague to at least let the voices of the islands be heard. Work in the Netherlands offered systemic impact, but on the islands, individuals could have a more visible effect due to limited resources."*

### 5.5.3 Work Culture Conditions

Even when welcomed on their island initially, the hiring culture posed difficulties. Some participants recounted high enthusiasm during recruitment processes only to receive no follow-up. One worked without pay, later learning no position was available. Another only got an interview after stating they'd return to the Netherlands after over half a year of searching. Sometimes they were deemed overqualified for a function, which led to them not being hired. Such encounters left them with a dissonant feeling of wanting to return and contribute but feeling unwanted. This was seen as a cultural aspect for which they had not been prepared. *"Everyone received me with a lot of enthusiasm like 'oh we're hiring local talent' ... I really would have preferred if they had said clearly from the beginning: 'no, we are not going to do that', because then I wouldn't have had that hope"*<sup>19</sup> – R13 – Sint Maartener.

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<sup>18</sup> "Als ik hier was gekomen met een baan en ik had gewoon een salaris, ... Omdat ik niks had behalve een diploma was het echt wel moeilijk."

<sup>19</sup> "Iedereen ontving mij met heel veel enthousiasme en van oh, hiring local talent (...) Ik had dat wel echt veel liever gehad als ze vanaf het begin heel duidelijk hadden gezegd. Van nee, dat gaan we niet doen, want dan is die hoop bij mij daar niet."

Work-life balance on the islands was seen as qualitatively better. Days were less draining, and evenings could be used for leisure rather than recovery. Still, respondents cautioned against idealization as daily realities like traffic congestion remain. Cultural fit also mattered. Some avoided working on the islands due to workplace norms: hierarchy was more pronounced, and professional discussions became emotionally charged more easily. Still, others appreciated the social warmth and respect shown by clients or patients.

#### 5.5.4 Return Mobilities

Mobilities ranged from short-term visits to longer stays and multiple migrations between islands and the Netherlands.

##### 1. Short-Term Mobilities: Vacations

Vacations were essential for maintaining a connection with one's island.

Visits sometimes cause mild to severe homesickness, particularly around the December holidays. Some were even discouraged by friends and family from returning during the holidays to avoid reinforcing this. For some, a vacation triggered such emotions and realisations that they directly lead to remigration, often accompanied by a renewed SoB. However, one mentioned a conscious decision to visit less often to notice more change between trips, aligning with their adventurous personality. Vacations also came with obstacles. Travel around December is significantly more expensive, and one respondent recounted a 32-hour journey home due to budget constraints.

##### 2. Medium-Term Mobilities: Short Stays and Test Runs

Several participants spent up to a year back on their island. Motivations included internships, remote studying during COVID and a test year before considering permanently remigrating. Internships resulted in the individual staying upon completion, or deciding not to return for a while yet e.g. to gain more experience in the Netherlands. There were also unsuccessful returns where the individual moved back but faced challenges like unemployment or difficulty adjusting, eventually returning to the Netherlands.

##### 3. Long-Term or Open-Ended Mobilities

Some participants returned without specific plans. In one case, a person returned at their partner's urging, unsure about career prospects in the Netherlands. The idea that migration doesn't have to be permanent helped lower the psychological barrier to returning. Others experienced circular or multi-directional mobility, moving back and forth between the island and the Netherlands, or between different Caribbean islands. As one respondent described it: *"They asked, oh, you're here, you're back. And I said, oh no, I'm back and forth."*  
– R06 – Statian

#### 5.6 Reflection of the Webinar

Attendees to the webinar in April where these results were presented, were asked to reflect on the findings of this study. The comments expressed feelings of recognition as well as appreciation. WeConnect was given gratitude for organising such webinars. There were no signs that people disagreed with the findings, although not everyone gave an opinion and only a selection of the themes could be presented due to time constraints. There were also many questions about practicalities surrounding remigration, concerning finding a job, adjusting to life on the island, challenges in communicating with colleagues.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Key findings

The aim of this research was to contribute to the body of knowledge on why DC young professionals do or do not decide to remigrate after studying in the Netherlands, by exploring the relation between socio-emotional factors and their return mobilities. This yielded the following overarching key findings, based on the study of Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Cultural & Contextual, Political & Historical, and Situational factors.

#### 6.1.1 Universal themes with unique interpretations

Although participants often discussed similar themes, the value attached to each varied significantly from person to person. For example, family emerged both as a reason to return and as a reason to remain in the Netherlands. Some participants wished to return to care for ageing parents or raise their children in an environment similar to their own upbringing. Others remained in the Netherlands to support younger siblings or because they had family in both locations, resulting in a complex situation where any decision involved some form of loss.

This pattern of dual meanings was also present in other themes. The same topic could be mentioned as both a driver and a barrier to remigration. A similar dynamic was found in a systematic review on remigration drivers and barriers in sub-Saharan Africa, where economic factors, family, education, and legal rights appeared on both sides of the equation (Weldemariam et al., 2023). Here economic factors are both drivers and barriers. Similarly, Family, education and legal rights can be seen in both sections. The first conclusion is therefore: many themes are widely regarded as important, but they are experienced in highly personal ways, influencing remigration in distinct and sometimes contradictory directions.

#### 6.1.2 Sense of Belonging vs Sense of Alienation

Participants often reported a strong emotional bond with their home island, shaped by ties to family, climate, culture, food, and language. In contrast, their SoB in the Netherlands was more situational and interpersonal, typically based on personal relationships or professional opportunities and often less emotionally grounded. Many described the Netherlands as a place for growth and exploration, while the islands represented peace, familiarity, and stability. These settings served different emotional and practical functions, making comparisons between them difficult. A similar phenomenon was observed in research on New Zealanders living in London. Even when living and working abroad, their emotional identification with their home country remained strong (Wiles, 2008).

Although many participants expressed a wish to contribute to their island's development, various obstacles made this difficult. Examples include being denied internships or struggling to find employment. These barriers negatively affected participants' sense of purpose and led to emotional consequences, including a sense of mourning. Some returned to the Netherlands after unsuccessful attempts to remigrate. These findings suggest that situational challenges can significantly affect emotional wellbeing. Reacculturation difficulties produced similar effects. This aligns with previous research showing that reacculturation challenges can cause feelings of alienation, depression, and anxiety (Kartoshkina, 2015).

The study also highlighted factors contributing to alienation. Many participants experienced racism and discrimination in the Netherlands, which led to emotional distancing. However, although reduced exposure to racism was cited as an advantage of returning, there was no strong link between perceived racism and an actual decision to remigrate. This contrasts with findings from a study on Turkish return migrants from



the Netherlands, Germany, and France, where discrimination was one of the three main drivers of remigration (Kunuroglu et al., 2018). Carling & Pettersen (2014) provide a possible explanations: They argue that remigration drivers are not easily generalisable across populations, since both the individuals and the countries involved differ.

The second conclusion is as follows: the desire to remigrate is influenced by both the SoB and the sense of alienation felt towards the Netherlands and the DC. Often, the factors that promote belonging in one place are not the same as those that promote belonging in the other

### 6.1.3 Study success and remigration

The relationship between study success and remigration was not straightforward. In some cases, academic success made remigration more difficult when participants were overqualified for local job markets. Negative experiences such as racism occasionally hindered academic progress or a SoB in the Netherlands, but did not necessarily lead to a decision to return.

However, some did shape their studies with the goal of returning in mind. One participant of the April webinar shared that they factored in a future return into key academic decisions, which made the eventual remigration process smoother. This suggests that the idea of remigration is related to study success through a strong SoB towards ones island. However, no it cannot be concluded that study success on its own influences remigration.

No prior studies were found that examined the relationship between academic success and remigration in a context similar to this one. One exception is Oklikah et al. (2024), who found that individuals who return without completing their studies may face stigma and social exclusion due to perceived failure. This can hinder reintegration and affect their SoB upon return. However, none of the participants in this study reported such experiences, and the topic was not raised by the researcher, so its relevance for DC populations remains uncertain.

This leads to the third conclusion: A desire to remigrate may sometimes motivate academic persistence, rather than academic success leading to remigration.

## 6.2 Strengths and limitations of this Research

One strength of this research was its focus on socio-emotional factors, which are often overlooked in migration studies. A recent systematic review noted that factors such as discrimination and cultural values are frequently neglected (Černigo 2024). By centring participants' lived experiences, this study provides a rich, nuanced understanding of migration dynamics.

Another strength was the interviewer's background as a member of the diaspora who spoke Papiamentu. Participants could choose their preferred language, and three chose to speak in Papiamentu. This enabled more authentic and nuanced communication. One participant noted: *"More at ease haha, all other times they [interviews] were in Dutch and by a Dutch person. Which means you can't express yourself. So I am a bit more hesitant because I know that those people will not understand"* <sup>20</sup>R05 – Curaçaoan.

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<sup>20</sup> *"Meer op m'n gemak haha, tur e otro biaha nan semper ta den hulandes anto vaak door een Nederlander gedaan. Ke men bo no por ekspresa bo mes. Anto toch mi ta un tiki mas terughoudend pasobra mi sa ku e hendenan no ta bai kompronde."*

The inclusion of diverse migration experiences also added value by revealing how feelings and perceptions shift over time. However, one of the five islands was not represented in the sample, and it was difficult to reach participants who moved to the Netherlands for secondary vocational education. These factors made it harder to present the findings in a neatly structured way.

All participants expressed a strong connection to their island and a desire to contribute to its development. This may indicate a self-selection bias, where individuals with a deeper emotional investment in the topic were more likely to participate. As a result, perspectives from those with weaker attachments may not have been captured, indicating that the list could be supplemented by future research.

The small sample size (13 participants) and the diversity across six islands also mean the results cannot be generalised to the broader population. Experiences varied considerably based on cultural background and language, particularly between Papiamentu- and English-speaking participants. Although data saturation was not achieved due to time limitations, the study still offers valuable insights into recurring themes and lived experiences. The aim was not statistical generalisation but to identify meaningful patterns within a diverse group.

The theoretical model used in this study focused on transnational belonging and its relationship to remigration and socio-emotional factors. Data were grouped into five thematic categories. This flexible model, based on existing frameworks, allowed for the inclusion of a wide range of themes. One critique of remigration theory is that models often become overly specialised, making them susceptible to missing important information (Carling et al., 2018). While the five-pillar approach helped structure the analysis, it also risked oversimplifying or overlooking certain nuances. Since the model was newly constructed, translating its findings into more established frameworks in future research may result in the loss of important context.

## 6.3 Recommendations

### 6.3.2 Stichting WeConnect

Given the emotional and social complexity of remigration, Stichting WeConnect is advised to organise more workshops that encourage personal reflection, emotional awareness and mental health in relation to remigration. Collaborating with culturally competent professionals would enhance the impact of such initiatives. To address the practical questions that arose during the webinar, WeConnect is advised to develop a accessible resource, such as a remigration handbook. This could include guidance on both emotional aspects and practical matters, from housing and work to navigating bureaucracy. Alternatively, a dedicated forum on the foundation's website could facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and ongoing dialogue among remigrants.

#### 6.3.1 Dutch Caribbean Students and Young Professionals

Young professionals considering a return are encouraged to reflect on what genuinely contributes to their happiness and well-being. Engaging with a psychologist or counsellor may support this process. As remigration emerged as a deeply social experience involving family, partners, and friends, it is also advisable to open conversations within one's community. For those uncertain about returning, a temporary stay could provide clarity. Subletting a Dutch rental apartment and/or negotiating a sabbatical from work in the Netherlands may offer the flexibility to explore the possibility of return before committing fully.

### 6.3.3 Re/Presenting Europe

Re/Presenting Europe is advised to continue their exploration of the affective and identity-driven dimensions of mobility. This includes further examination of concepts such as cultural and community capital, as described by Yosso (2005), and their relationship to systemic exclusion in the Netherlands. Re/Presenting Europe is well-placed to critically examine the institutional responsibilities of the Dutch state in ensuring fair access to opportunity, mobility, and recognition for all citizens of the Kingdom.

### 6.3.4 Institutions of Higher Education

Career services are urged to recognise remigration as a valid and aspirational career path. Highlighting the success stories of alumni who have returned to the islands and thrived professionally can help current students envision diverse futures beyond the Dutch context. Strengthening partnerships with institutions in the Caribbean through internships, exchanges, and collaborative projects would further reinforce this objective. Additionally, the bureaucratic red tape that often complicates approval of internships on the islands should be addressed to create smoother pathways for engagement.

Institutions are advised to critically examine how language use may contribute to inequity within their study programmes, and discrimination or to social exclusion among students.

### 6.3.5 Governmental Entities

Dutch governmental entities should ensure that the shared colonial history as well as Caribbean perspectives are adequately represented in Dutch educational content. This would contribute to a sense of visibility and inclusion for Caribbean students and promote understanding and empathy among their peers.

Governmental entities on the islands are advised to assess their processes related to registration, and administrative procedures that discourage remigration. Streamlining these processes and providing clear, accessible guidance would significantly ease the return journey. Furthermore, options for the improvement of structured opportunities for collaboration between diaspora professionals in the Netherlands and island institutions should be researched, as many shared a wish to contribute to their islands development even when residing in the Netherlands.

### 6.3.6 Employers on the Islands

Employers should ease the transition by preparing both remigrants and incumbent employees for intercultural dynamics. Offering onboarding that includes information about local work culture, while also acknowledging the Dutch professional experiences that remigrants bring, can help reduce misunderstandings and promote smoother integration.

### 6.3.7 Future Research

This study offers a nuanced overview of the socio-emotional factors shaping return mobilities among DC youth. However, care should be taken not to generalise these findings across all islands or populations. Future research could aim to quantify how frequently these themes occur and assess variation across islands or demographic groups. This would help to develop targeted and evidence-based strategies for supporting the diaspora. Additionally, research is needed in the impact of teaching language on educational equity on the isles and in the Netherlands.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the question: “How do socio-emotional factors relate to the return mobilities of DC students and young professionals?” In pursuit of this question the transnational SoB of this population was studied, which lead to the identification of an array of socio-emotional factors. This lead to the following conclusion:

The relation between socio-emotional factors and return mobilities is one that is defined by where an individual feels free to be themselves, within an environment that fits their needs and where one can maintain a desirable quality of life. It is also a social issue in which a balance is sought between practical considerations and emotional well-being.

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## 8. Annexes

### 8.1 Supplemental Information on the History of Colonialisation and Slavery

The Netherlands' relationship with the Caribbean islands began in the 17th century when the Dutch West India Company colonized them for strategic and economic purposes. This occurred during the height of the transatlantic slave trade, in which the Dutch forcibly transported over half a million Africans to the Americas. Many perished en route; survivors were subjected to brutal forced labour and traded like livestock. Their 'owners' controlled all aspects of their lives, including names and relationships, and were allowed to inflict brutal punishments (van Stipriaan, 2023).

Abolition of slavery in 1863–1873 did not bring real freedom. Former enslavers were compensated, while the formerly enslaved remained economically dependent. Many continued labouring under exploitative conditions. In Suriname, a transition period delayed freedom by a decade (van Stipriaan, 2023).

Slavery was racially driven, fostering ideologies of Black inferiority. These views intensified after abolition and became embedded in science and society (van Stipriaan, 2023). Only post–World War II, change slowly began. Yet racism's legacy remains, shaping societal attitudes and internalized perceptions, such as Eurocentric beauty ideals, to the extent that many still dislike the natural curls in their hair (van Stipriaan, 2023).

Cultural practices in the DC, like Tambu music and dance were suppressed or banned, and freedom fighters were portrayed as criminals (Jones, 2024). Schools misrepresented heroes like Tula (Curaçao) and Anton de Kom (Suriname). Language was a tool of oppression: Papiamentu was demeaned as "nigger gibberish" or "barbaric" and often banned. Although now an official language, it wasn't formally recognized until the 21st century (Moerman, 2012).

Recognition of historical injustice is growing. Tula and Anton de Kom have been restored in honour by the Dutch government (NOS, 2022, 2023), and lesser-known figures are receiving more attention, such as in the 'forgotten heroes of Curaçao' series (Hendriksen, 2024). In 2022, the Dutch government issued an apology for slavery, followed by the King in 2023 during abolition commemorations, marking the start of the slavery memorial year (Rijksoverheid, 2022, 2023). However, challenges remain. The 2023 electoral rise of the PVV, a party opposing apologies and advocating to cut ties with the islands, casts doubt on future Dutch-Caribbean relations (Zuidervaart, 2024).

#### B 8.1 Codebook

Main category code	Description	Sub codes	Quote
Intrapersonal	Those factors that relate to cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics and functioning of the individual, these can be based personal history, memories and relationships. They also include demographic factors and explicitly includes the component of Identity and emotional attachment to a location.	Demographic	<i>Op een latere leeftijd is het anders dan wanneer je jonger was, hè, Als je 3 jaar bent toen je hier naartoe kwam, is het voor jou thuis, Maar ik ben 25 Toen ik hier kwam. Dit is nooit thuis voor mij.</i>
		Affective characteristics	<i>Ik ben wel ook heel typisch antilliaans opgevoed als in qua eten, cultuur. Muziek was heel prominent in ons huishouden. Dus wat dat betreft ben ik cultureel heel verbonden met het eiland, ben ik nog heel trots op. R4</i>
		Cognitive characteristics	<i>, en ik moet niet te lang wachten, want tijd gaat voorbij en Ik ben nog jong en als ik een toekomst wil, moet ik echt bepalen: Waar wil ik mijn toekomst? Wil ik in Nederland blijven om een huis te kopen of wil ik op Aruba opbouwen? Dus Ik ben nu in een leeftijd waar Ik wil opbouwen, dus Daarom Dat was eigenlijk de pressure die ik voelde om terug te gaan. En, dat heeft mij eigenlijk gemotiveerd om terug te keren. Van oké, Ik ben nu op de leeftijd waar ik eigenlijk jong ben, Ik heb nog geen huis, Ik heb nog geen Kinderen, Ik heb nog geen partner, dus voordat ik iets vast heb, moet ik echt een besluit nemen waar Ik wil vestigen. R3</i>
		Behavioural characteristics	<i>Ja, kijk, in Nederland zijn we gewend met op tijd komen en hier moet je dat niet echt verwachten, dus Dat Je moet je aanpassen, Maar ik behoud dat wel, dus ik kom wel op tijd of ik zorg dat ik op tijd ben. Maar Ik raak niet geïrriteerd als mens laat Mensen laat komen, want dat kan Ik niet veranderen. Dus ik zorg gewoon dat ik op tijd ben en in die tussentijd doe ik iets anders met mijn tijd, dus dat is wel de Nederlandse mentaliteit. Efficiënt denken, efficiënt werken, dat behoud ik wel. R3</i>
Interpersonal	Those factors that are involved in contact and relations with others individuals and groups. These involve strong social ties like families and friends, but also weaker interactions with	Family situation	<i>en dan is het ook wel fijn om te weten dat mijn ouders dichtbij zijn. Maar dat is voor mij niet echt een heel goed verkooppunt om terug te verhuizen naar Curaçao. Nú at least, gewoon waar ik nu in het leven sta van dat als starter - R4</i>
		Social support /social network	<i>En Daarom had ik die push juist nodig van iemand die in dezelfde situatie zat dan ik, dus die zij woonde Ook in Nederland en zij heeft ook de keuze gemaakt om terug te keren. Voor haar was het ook niet makkelijk, maar uiteindelijk kwam het wel goed en zij kent mij. Dus zij zei [naam] op Aruba gaat het echt goed komen, dus je moet, je hoeft je geen zorgen te maken. -R3</i>

	acquaintances, colleagues and strangers.	<b>Perceived discrimination upon return</b>	<i>Ik denk ook er is ook een soort van afschuw tegenover Nederlanders, wat terecht is gegeven hoe de Nederlanders hebben het eiland behandeld. ook met ons koloniaal verleden. En stel je voor ik kom met een Nederlander daarheen, dan ben ik én queer en Ik heb een Nederlandse man getrouwd en dan kom ik terug op het eiland en dan een Kind. - R4</i>
		<b>Perceived discrimination whilst abroad</b>	<i>Ja wel uit ervaring moet ik wel zeggen dat als gekleurde moet je altijd harder werken dan iemand uit Nederland. Want er is een bepaalde oordeel op jou en dat is gewoon een feit. En ja, Ik heb discriminatie meegemaakt in Nederland, in Nijmegen. Toen ik studeerde, moest ik mijn scriptie voor ja tweede voor de tweede keer doen. Ik werk in mondeling gevraagd Als ik mijn scriptie zelf heb geschreven. Er waren twijfels over mijn eigen Intelligentie. En mijn eigen leermogelijkheden, dus dat heb ik echt ervaren. - R3</i>
<b>Cultural/ contextual</b>	The broader social, economic, political, historical and cultural characteristics of the environment". Černigoj et al., 2024)	<b>Cultural differences in Norms/values/social interactions</b>	<i>Oké, heel simpel. Aruba heeft een andere soort cultuur. We zijn meer met elkaar, dus Samen en Nederland heeft meer een individualistische cultuur, dus Iedereen is bezig met een eigen gezin en op Aruba zie je dat je je tante je ooms, zijn allemaal onderdeel van je familie en Het is heel makkelijk om elkaar te zien, want het eiland is heel klein en Nederland is Natuurlijk groot en je ziet je dierbare of je Mensen waarvan je houdt heel erg weinig. En dat maakt het echt heel moeilijk voor mij om in Nederland te blijven, want dat vind ik heel belangrijk. Dus de sociaalheid en mijn omgeving. - R3</i>
		<b>Cultural differences in Communication/language</b>	<i>Dit dit vergeet ik, maar het is heel belangrijk, het heeft ook te maken met talen. Wij spreken 4 talen op het eiland, op de ABC eilanden, en Nederland is niet mijn moedertaal. Dus papiamentu is meer mijn moeder, dus dat geeft mij al het gevoel van thuis voelen dat ik dat ik gewoon bon dia hoor dus dat ik ergens In de supermarkt komen "bon dia, bonochi", dus dat zijn allemaal de kleine dingen die echt een groot verschil maken. - R3</i>
		<b>Socio-economic conditions &amp; General quality of life</b>	<i>Heel erg peaceful. Ik voel me heel erg goed. Minder stress. Gelukkig met familie en vrienden, enjoying the Little things in Life. Het is gewoon de beste keuze die ik ooit heb gemaakt. Ik, ik hou van reizen. Ik dacht, Als ik terug naar Aruba ga, kan ik niet Reizen. Ik ben al naar Colombia geweest. Ik ben net naar Bonaire geweest voor werk. In april, waarschijnlijk ga ik naar Sint Marten, dus Ik ben dezelfde lifestyle die ik in Nederland had. Dat heb ik ook op Aruba. Dus. Het is mooi dus I'm happy.- R3</i>

<b>Political/ historical</b>	<p>Factors related to political safety of the diaspora. This involves factors that relate to the sense of acceptance of individuals who diverge from the dominant social group, or their emancipatory status. This also involves bureaucratic challenges. Factors that are related to the shared history of the kingdom are also included. For example, the point 'ignorance of dutch people about the shared history' is a political/historical factor that is associated with racism. But, as it is not this encompasses statehood.</p>		<p><i>Ik werkte op verschillende, bij verschillende organisaties In de culturele sector en Het was gewoon zo... It was just a mess, Ik kan doen alsof het heel.... It was just a mess. Er werd Ook wel op gebied van, zeg maar. Ja being a Black person heel veel van je gevraagd. Nu ook met de Trend van diversiteit dat heel veel verantwoordelijkheden op dat gebied bij jou werden gelegd. Dat was gewoon heel Emotional.</i></p> <p><i>Aha je lacht, je weet precies wat ik bedoel. - R2</i></p>
<b>Situational</b>	<p>This category refers to external factors that are related to a specific situation and set of circumstances that exist at a particular time. These involve among other things, economic factors like the ability to reach financial and material stability at a certain location at a certain time of this person's life.</p>	<p><b>Initiative for the migration</b></p>	<p><i>"Ik ben uiteindelijk naar Nederland gekomen om natuurkunde studeren, Maar dat heb ik maar een jaar volgehouden. Dat ging op zich maar goed maar Ik realiseerde me dat ik eigenlijk een hele domme keuze had gemaakt. Ik heb eigenlijk je studie gewoon gekozen Omdat, ik wist niet zeker wat ik wou gaan doen"</i></p> <p><i>R12</i></p>
		<p><b>Career situation</b></p>	<p><i>Siiii, nou luister, bida por ta karu, akinan tambe tur kos ta karu. Het maakt niet uit, voor mij maakt het niet uit si bida ta karu. Ik denk puur si mi lo disidi ku mi no ta bai bek ta puur op basis van baan. - R5</i></p>
		<p><b>Mobilities &amp; Contact with the island</b></p>	<p><i>Ik moet zeggen dat in het begin dus voordat ik de erasmus deed, wou ik helemaal niet terug. Toen dacht ik echt. Nee, ik blijf hier. Ik kan me ook herinneren dat ik na een jaar. Ook naar curacao ging op vakantie en ik voelde me eigenlijk niet meer thuis. Het was heel raar eigenlijk. - R2</i></p>

## Information for participants

**Voor Nederlands: zie onderaan**

### **Study: Exploring the personal (socio-emotional) factors related to remigration**

Thank you for being interested in participating in this study. Through this letter, we would like to inform you on the goal of this study and provide information on what participation entails. If you have any questions that are not answered by this letter, feel free to contact one of the researchers. This research is commissioned by the Stichting We Connect and the Athena Institute, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

#### **1. Aim of this study**

"Should I return or not?"—every island student in the Netherlands faces this question. Beyond salary and career, the dilemmas often involve family, culture, identity, and timing. Returning is a deeply personal choice. Research shows that feeling at home shapes where we live. But what if you feel at home in two places? Many island students are torn between their home island and the Netherlands, making the decision complex. WeConnect hears that returning isn't always seamless. You change while abroad, and your island changes too. Adjusting takes time, yet this challenge gets little attention. This study explores how social and emotional factors shape decisions and post-return adjustment. Our goal is to support returnees, ease transitions, and present important themes to employers and governments so they can make work of it.

#### **2. Who is eligible for participation?**

We are looking for current students who have completed their secondary education on Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Aruba or Curaçao, have moved to the Netherlands to pursue postsecondary education (MBO, HBO or WO level). This includes people who have made the return, and people who live in the Netherlands who have considered or consider returning. We seek students at the near end of their education and young professionals who work in the Dutch Caribbean or in the Netherlands, and students at the end of their education that study or have studied across the Netherlands.

#### **3. What does participation entail?**

In this study, participants will be interviewed on social and emotional themes that impact remigration and are impacted by remigration. The interview will take about 1 hour and will be conducted by a master's student of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Interviews will be conducted in English or Dutch or Papiamentu, depending on the preferred language by the participant.

#### **4. Potential risks and benefits**

**Risk:** The interview will cover topics that might be difficult to talk about such as personal experiences with discrimination and exclusions. These topics can be triggering for some participants. To minimize potential harm, Stichting WeConnect has a list of (culturally sensitive) counsellors that speak the local languages of the Islands. This information will be shared with the participant if the participant has a need for aftercare. **Benefit:** The participant's insights will contribute to providing better guidance and support to those considering return to the Dutch Caribbean. The participant may gain new insights into their own perspective on returning.

## **5. What are my rights?**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. This means that the participant can choose not to respond to a question if this is preferred. Moreover, the participant is free to stop participation at any point, without having to provide a reason. Once a participant decides to terminate participation, all data collected to that point will be deleted. If a participant wishes to receive updates regarding the study, they can mention this to one of the researchers.

## **6. How is my data used and stored?**

Some personal details such as name and email address are known to the researchers. This information will only be used to schedule an interview appointment and not for anything else. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcripts will be stored on a secured SurfDrive property of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Recordings of the interviews will be deleted after being transcribed. Transcripts will be anonymised and only the researchers will know which transcript belongs to which participant. Moreover, only the researchers will have access to these anonymised transcripts. Once the study is completed, the results will be untraceable to individual participants. The transcripts will be stored for 5 years and the researcher may use the anonymised transcripts as data for future research projects.

By signing the "Informed Consent" form, you agree that your data is collected, processed, and stored in the abovementioned ways.

## **7. Any questions?**

If you have any questions before, during, or after participation, feel free to send an email to:

Research intern: Roman Monte ([r.r.monte@student.vu.nl](mailto:r.r.monte@student.vu.nl))

Main researcher: Durwin Lynch: [d.lynch@vu.nl](mailto:d.lynch@vu.nl)



# Informatie voor deelnemers

## Onderzoek: Exploring the personal (socio-emotional) factors related to remigration

Bedankt voor uw interesse om mee te doen aan dit onderzoek. Via deze brief willen we u informeren over het doel van dit onderzoek en over wat deelname inhoudt. Mocht u na het lezen van deze brief nog vragen hebben, neem dan gerust contact op met een van de onderzoekers. Dit onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door het Athena Instituut en Stichting WeConnect.

### 1. Doel van het onderzoek

"Moet ik terugkeren of niet?" - elke eilandstudent in Nederland wordt met deze vraag geconfronteerd. Naast salaris en carrière, zijn de dilemma's vaak familie, cultuur, identiteit en timing. Terugkeren is een zeer persoonlijke keuze. Onderzoek toont aan dat waar je je thuisvoelt bepaalt waar je wil wonen. Maar wat als je je op twee plekken thuis voelt? Veel eilandstudenten hebben een dilemma tussen wonen op het thuseiland en in Nederland, wat de beslissing complex maakt. WeConnect hoort ook dat terugkeren niet altijd soepel verloopt. Je verandert terwijl je in het buitenland bent, en je eiland verandert ook. Aanpassen kost tijd, maar deze uitdaging krijgt weinig aandacht. In dit onderzoek kijken we hoe sociale en emotionele factoren beslissingen en aanpassingen na terugkeer beïnvloeden. Ons doel is om terugkeerders te ondersteunen, overgangen te vergemakkelijken en om thema's aan te rijken aan werkgevers en overheden zodat ook zij er werk van kunnen maken.

### 2. Wie kan meedoen?

We zijn op zoek naar huidige studenten die secundair onderwijs hebben afgerond op Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Aruba of Curaçao, die naar Nederland zijn verhuisd om tertiair onderwijs te volgen (MBO, HBO of WO niveau). Het gaat specifiek over mensen die al terug zijn gekeerd, of in Nederland wonen en het overwegen of hebben overweegt. We zoeken studenten rond het einde van hun opleiding in Nederland, en *young professionals* die werkzaam zijn in Nederland of de eilanden.

### 3. Wat houdt deelname in?

In dit onderzoek zullen deelnemers worden geïnterviewd over sociale en emotionele thema's die een impact hebben op remigratie, of door remigratie worden beïnvloed. Het interview zal ongeveer 1 uur duren en zal worden afgenomen door een masters student van de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. De interviews zullen worden gedaan in het Engels, Nederlands of Papiamentu, afhankelijk van de voorkeur van de participant.

### 4. Potentiële risico's en voordelen

Risico: In het interview worden onderwerpen behandeld die voor de deelnemers gevoelig kunnen liggen zoals ervaringen met discriminatie en buitengesloten worden. Deze onderwerpen kunnen een schokkend effect hebben op de deelnemer. Om potentiële schade te minimaliseren, heeft Stichting WeConnect een lijst van (cultuursensitieve) hulpverleners die ook de lokale talen spreken. Indien de deelnemer er behoefte aan heeft delen wij deze informatie als vorm van nazorg. Voordeel: De inzichten van de deelnemer zullen bijdragen aan het voorzien van betere ondersteuning voor zij die overwegen

om te remigreren. De participant krijgt mogelijk ook zelf nieuwe inzichten in hun eigen perspectief over terugkeer.

## **5. Wat zijn mijn rechten?**

Deelname aan dit onderzoek is volledig vrijwillig. Dit houdt in dat de deelnemer kan besluiten om een vraag niet te beantwoorden als dit gewenst is. Verder kan de deelnemer op ieder moment besluiten om te stoppen met deelnemen, zonder hier een reden voor te hoeven geven. In dat geval zal alle tot dusver verkregen data verwijderd worden. Als een deelnemer behoefte heeft om updates te krijgen over het onderzoek na deelname, kunnen zij dit laten weten aan een van de onderzoekers.

## **6. hoe wordt mijn data gebruikt en opgeslagen?**

Sommige persoonlijke gegevens zoals naam en e-mailadres zijn bekend bij de onderzoekers. Deze gegevens worden uitsluitend gebruikt om een interview afspraak in te plannen en voor niets anders. Alle interviews worden opgenomen en getranscribeerd. De transcripten worden opgeslagen in een beveiligde SurfDrive van de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Opnames worden direct verwijderd nadat deze getranscribeerd zijn. De transcripten worden geanonimiseerd en alleen de onderzoekers zullen weten welk transcript bij welke deelnemer hoort. Alleen de onderzoekers zullen toegang hebben tot de transcripten. Zodra het onderzoek afgerond is zullen de resultaten onherleidbaar zijn aan individuele deelnemers. De transcripten zullen voor 5 jaar bewaard worden en onderzoekers kunnen de geanonimiseerde transcripten gebruiken als data voor toekomstige onderzoeksprojecten.

Door het "geïnformeerde toestemming"-blad te tekenen geef je toestemming dat data op de eerder genoemde manieren wordt verzameld, verwerkt en bewaard.

## **7. Verdere vragen?**

Mocht u vragen hebben voor, tijdens of na uw deelname, neem gerust contact op met een van de onderzoekers:

Onderzoek stagiair: Roman Monte [r.r.monte@student.vu.nl](mailto:r.r.monte@student.vu.nl)

Hoofdonderzoeker: Durwin Lynch: [d.lynch@vu.nl](mailto:d.lynch@vu.nl)

## Geïnformeerde toestemming

**Study title:** Exploring the personal (socio-emotional) factors related to remigration

**Study Goal:** Het ontwikkelen van aanbevelingen voor het verbeteren van de begeleiding in de context van remigratie naar de Caribische eilanden in het koninkrijk.

Hoofdonderzoeker: Durwin Lynch ([d.lynch@vu.nl](mailto:d.lynch@vu.nl))

Onderzoek stagiair: Roman Monte ([r.r.monte@student.vu.nl](mailto:r.r.monte@student.vu.nl))

Door dit formulier te ondertekenen bevestig ik dat:

Ik de informatiebrief heb gelezen en volledig begrijp;

Ik genoeg tijd heb gehad om te bepalen of ik deelneem aan dit onderzoek of niet;

Ik ervan bewust ben dat tijdens het interview onderwerpen worden besproken die potentieel gevoelig kunnen zijn zoals persoonlijke ervaringen met discriminatie en buitengesloten worden;

Ik me ervan bewust ben dat persoonlijke gegevens zoals naam en e-mailadres niet met derden worden gedeeld;

Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname vrijwillig is;

Ik begrijp dat ik ervoor kan kiezen om een vraag niet te beantwoorden als ik dit niet wil;

Ik begrijp dat ik op ieder moment mijn deelname stop kan zetten, zonder dat ik hier een reden voor hoef te geven;

Ik mijn toestemming geef om de audio van het interview op te laten nemen;

Ik toestemming geef om de data uit het interview te laten verzamelen, verwerken en bewaren zoals omschreven staat in de informatiebrief die ik heb ontvangen;

Ik heb de mogelijkheid gehad om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek en mijn deelname en al mijn eventuele vragen zijn beantwoord;

**Respondent.**

Naam:

Handtekening:

Datum + locatie:

# Informed consent

**Study title:** Exploring the personal (socio-emotional) factors related to remigration

**Study Goal:** To develop a series of recommendations on how to improve the guidance and support in the context of remigration to the Dutch Caribbean Isles.

**Main researcher:** Durwin Lynch ([d.lynch@vu.nl](mailto:d.lynch@vu.nl))

**Research intern:** Roman Monte ([r.r.monte@student.vu.nl](mailto:r.r.monte@student.vu.nl))

By signing this form, I confirm that:

- I have read and fully understand the information sheet of this study;
- I have received sufficient time to decide to participate in this study;
- I am aware that the interviews will cover topics that might be difficult to talk about such as personal experiences with discrimination and exclusion;
- I am aware that personal details such as name and email address will not be shared with third parties;
- I understand that my participation is voluntary;
- I understand that I am free to not respond to a question if I do not want to respond;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any point, without having to provide a reason to do so;
- I give permission to (audio) record the interview;
- I agree that the data from the interview will be collected, processed, and stored as described in the information sheet I have received;
- I have had the opportunity to ask extra question, and all my questions have been answered;

## Respondent

Name:

Signature:

Date + location:

## 8.5: Interview guide

### Annex: Interview guide – Dutch version

- Introductie over mijzelf & het onderzoek.
- Aangeven dat we kunnen spreken in de taal naar voorkeur van de respondent en dat deze vrijuit mag wisselen tussen talen gedurende het gesprek

#### *Deel 0: intro + building rapport*

1. Kan je misschien een korte introductie geven door te zeggen wie je bent, waar je vandaan komt, wanneer je naar Nederland bent gekomen?
  - a. Welke studie ben je gaat doen?
2. Waarom heb je besloten om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek?

#### *Deel 1: De Tijdlijn*

In mijn onderzoek kijk ik naar de wens om terug te keren. Kunt u mij helpen om deze op een tijdlijn te plaatsen. Laten we beginnen bij uw aankomst in Nederland

3. Hoe keek u destijds aan tegen terugkeer?
  - a. Wat waren destijds uw drijfveren om wel/niet terug te keren na de studie?
4. Gedurende de fase daarna: hoe heeft uw houding/wens om terug te keren zich over tijd ontwikkeld?
  - a. En daarna etc?

Om terug te keren moet je dat natuurlijk willen, maar je moet er ook klaar voor zijn voordat je actie gaat ondernemen.

5. Kun je je een moment herinneren dat je voelde dat je er wel/niet klaar voor was om terug te keren? Zo ja, kun je dit moment beschrijven?
  - a. Wat maakte dat de tijd (nog) niet rijp was?
6. Uiteindelijk kwam u voor een keuze te staan, terugkeren of niet. Kunt u zich een moment herinneren dat u een knoop doorhakte?
  - a. Wat maakte juist dit moment zo belangrijk/ wat gaf hierin de doorslag?  
Familie, financiën, loyaliteit naar het eiland, weer/klimaat/depressie/niet meer thuis voelen in NL?
7. Je leest vaak over 'bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van het eiland', wat betekent dat thema voor jou?
  - a. Hoe ga je om met deze verwachtingen? (Ervaar je dit ook wel eens als druk?)

Uiteindelijk koos u er voor om (nog niet) terug te keren

8. Hoe zag deze keuze er uit?
9. Toen u terugkeerde was het voor het eerst in **X** jaren dat u weer voor langere tijd op uw eiland woonde, hoe was dit voor u?
10. Hoe was het om weer op uw eiland te werken?
  - a. Zaten hier ook uitdagingen/mooie aspecten aan?
11. U was veranderd, maar het eiland stond natuurlijk ook niet stil, waaraan merkte u dit?

#### *Deel 2: Terugblik op de tijdlijn*

Dan komen we bij het punt van nu, **X** jaar nadat je bent gaan studeren, **Y** Jaar na het afronden van (je studie). Je woont nu in \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Hoe verhoudt jouw keuze zich tot uw welzijn?

- a. Psychosocial well-being
- b. Hoe is je welzijn nu?
- 13. Zijn er dingen die je achteraf gezien anders had willen doen?
- 14. Kun je specifieke momenten of thema's beschrijven waarbij je graag hulp had gehad?
- 15. Kies 1
  - Bent u van plan om ooit nog te emigreren vanuit waar je nu bent?
  - Wat is er nodig voor jou om terugkeer serieus te overwegen?
- 16. Wat denk je dat er moet gebeuren om meer eilandskinderen naar de eilanden te krijgen?

### Deel 3: Wat is beloning?

In dit onderzoek hebben we het over migreren en remigreren. Veel van de thema's waar we het over hebben gehad lijken te maken te hebben met waar je je thuis voelt. In literatuur lees je ook dat de wens om terug te keren sterk wordt beïnvloed door waar je je thuis voelt (*sense of belonging*)

- 17. Vindt u het oké om iets dieper in te gaan op wat thuis voelen voor u betekent?
  - a. Wat betekenen thema's als 'thuis voelen' & 'Thuis horen' voor jou u?
  - b. Indien relevant: Wat maakt dat dit een lastig onderwerp is voor u?
- 18. Hoe belangrijk is taal en cultuur voor uw identiteit? [en ook thuisvoelen]
  - a. En religie/spiritualiteit?
- 19. Als Island Child/Yui di tera die in Nederland heeft gestudeerd kun je je misschien wel thuis voelen op meerdere plekken.
  - c. Hoe kijkt u aan tegen dit idee?
- 20. Hoe denk je dat jouw gevoel van *belonging* naar deze plekken zich verhoudt tot je wens om terug te keren?
  - a. → Kun je momenten aanwijzen waarop je gevoel van *belonging* op één van deze plekken veranderde?

### 4: Re/presenting Europe

Dan wou ik je nog wat vragen stellen die misschien iets persoonlijker zijn. Er is de laatste jaren steeds meer aandacht voor het de koloniale tijd. De 6 eilanden en Nederland vormen samen een koninkrijk.

De laatste jaren is er meer aandacht voor de geschiedenis van hoe dit tot stand is gekomen, en hoe de gedeelde geschiedenis vandaag de dag nog een impact heeft op individuen, groepen en de verschillende samenlevingen. Vanuit Re/presenting Europe houden wij ons bezig met deze impact

- 21. Kun je wat vertellen over of en hoe jij impact ervaart?
- 22. Hoe is het voor jou dat er de laatste jaren meer aandacht is gekomen?
  - a. En als je dan kijkt naar dat je als Island Child of Yiu di Teran in Nederland studeert?
  - b. Heb je te maken met uitsluiting of discriminatie, zo ja, op wat voor manier?
  - c. Wordt je keuze om in Nederland te blijven/te remigreren hierdoor beïnvloed?
    - i. Wat zie je bij jezelf?
    - ii. En bij anderen?

### 5 Afsluiting:

Dankjewel, we naderen nu ongeveer de afsluiting van het interview

- 23. Zijn er dingen die we nog niet besproken hebben?

Dan wil ik je heel erg bedanken voor je deelname. Je kunt altijd nog mailen als je iets te binnen schiet of als je iets wil weten.

Is er nog iets dat je van mij wil weten?

Eventueel:

Dan nog een klein dingetje:

24. We zijn voor dit onderzoek nog op zoek naar meer Nederlands Caribische studenten in Nederland, ken jij misschien nog meer mensen die mee willen doen aan dit onderzoek
- Aangeven wie ik specifiek nog zoek



## Introduction

- Brief introduction about myself & the research.
- Let the respondent know they can speak in their preferred language and freely switch between languages during the conversation.

### *Part 0: Introduction & Building Rapport*

1. Can you give a short introduction about yourself—who you are, where you're from, and when you moved to the Netherlands?
  - a. What did you study?
2. Why did you decide to participate in this research?

### *Part 1: The Timeline*

In my research, I examine the desire to return. Can you help me place this on a timeline? Let's start with your arrival in the Netherlands.

3. How did you view returning at that time?
  - a. What were your initial reasons for wanting or not wanting to return after your studies?
4. Over time, how did your perspective on returning change?
  - a. And after that?  
Returning isn't just about wanting to—it's also about being ready before taking action.
5. Can you recall a moment when you felt ready (or not ready) to return? If so, can you describe that moment?
  - a. What made the timing (not) right?
6. Eventually, you had to make a decision—to return or not. Can you remember when you made that choice?
7.
  - a. What made this moment decisive?
  - b. e.g. factors like family, finances, loyalty to the island, climate, homesickness, or not feeling at home in the Netherlands?
8. You often hear about "contributing to the island's development." What does this idea mean to you?
  - a. How do you handle these expectations? (Do you ever feel pressured by them?)

Ultimately, you decided (not) to return.

8. What did that decision look like for you?
9. If you returned, it was your first time living on your island for an extended period in X years. How was that experience?
10. What was it like to work on your island again?
  - a. Were there any challenges or positive aspects?
11. You had changed, but your island also evolved. In what ways did you notice this?

### *Part 2: Reflecting on the Timeline*

Now, we've reached the present—X years since you started studying, Y years since you graduated. You currently live in \_\_\_\_.

12. How does your choice relate to your well-being?
  - a. Psychosocial well-being
  - b. How do you feel now?
13. Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?
14. Can you describe specific moments or themes where you would have liked more support?

15. Choose one:
  - a. Do you plan to emigrate again in the future?
  - b. What would make you seriously consider returning?
16. What do you think needs to happen to encourage more island students to return?

### *Part 3: What Does "Belonging" Mean?*

This research explores migration and remigration. Many themes we've discussed relate to feeling at home. Research also suggests that the desire to return is strongly influenced by one's sense of belonging.

17. Would you be comfortable discussing what "feeling at home" means to you?
  - a. What do concepts like "feeling at home" and "belonging" mean to you?
  - b. If relevant: Why is this a difficult topic for you?
18. How important are language and culture to your identity? [And to your sense of belonging?]
  - a. And religion/spirituality?
19. As an Island Child/Yui di Tera who studied in the Netherlands, you may feel at home in multiple places.
  - a. How do you view this idea?
20. How does your sense of belonging relate to your desire to return?
  - a. Can you identify moments when your sense of belonging in a certain place changed?

### *Part 4: Re/presenting Europe*

Now, I'd like to ask a few more personal questions. In recent years, there has been more focus on colonial history. The six islands and the Netherlands form a kingdom, and more attention is being paid to how this shared history still impacts individuals, groups, and societies today. As part of the **Re/presenting Europe** project, we examine this impact.

21. Can you share whether and how you experience this impact?
22. How do you feel about the increased attention to this topic in recent years?
  - a. And as an Island Child/Yui di Tera studying in the Netherlands?
  - b. Have you experienced exclusion or discrimination? If so, in what ways?
  - c. Has this influenced your decision to stay in the Netherlands or to return?
    - i. What do you notice in yourself?
    - ii. And in others?

### *Part 5: Conclusion*

Thank you! We're nearing the end of the interview.

23. Are there any topics we haven't covered that you'd like to discuss?

I really appreciate your participation. If anything else comes to mind later, feel free to email me.

### **Optional:**

One \_\_\_\_\_ last \_\_\_\_\_ thing:  
 24. We're still looking for more Dutch Caribbean students in the Netherlands for this research. Do you know anyone who might be interested?

- Specify the type of participants we are looking for.

## 8.6: Data management plan

### General information

#### 0.1 Document version & date

Version 1.0

Date: 05/02/2025

#### 0.2 Project title

Exploring the personal (socio-emotional) factors related to remigration

#### 0.3 Project summary

This research aims to explore the socio-emotional factors related to remigration, by researching the socio-emotional barriers and facilitators of remigration through the remigration process.

#### 0.4 At which VU Faculty is this project situated?

Faculty of Science (BETA)

#### 0.5 Your contact details

Name: Roman Monte

Email: r.r.monte@student.vu.nl

University: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Faculty/Institute: Faculty of Science

Department/research group: Athena Institute

#### 0.6 List other people involved, including those at partner organisations in the project (if applicable)

Athena Institute (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Stichting WeConnect (commissioner)

#### 0.7 Funding organisation & grant number (if applicable)

-

#### 0.8 Project code (if applicable)

-

#### 0.9 Consulted data management expert(s)

-

### 1. Data description

#### 1.1 Will you collect and/or process personal data in this project?

Yes

#### 1.2 Will you use existing data? If yes, what is their source?

#### 1.3 Will you collect or produce new data? If yes, please describe how.

Yes, we will record 12 semi-structures interviews via laptop and phone

#### 1.4 Describe the population/participants/subjects that will be studied

Students who grew up in the Dutch Caribbean Isles, have moved to the Netherlands to pursue postsecondary education (MBO, HBO or WO level). This includes people who have made the return, and people who live in the Netherlands who have considered or consider returning. We seek students at the near end of their education and young professionals who work in the Dutch Caribbean or in the Netherlands, and students at the end of their education that study or have studied across the Netherlands.

#### 1.5 Do you process any of the following (personal) data?

- Contact details
- Name

#### 1.6 Do you process the personal data based on informed consent?

Yes, using digital consent

Yes, through a physical form

1.7 On what legal ground will the data processing take place if it is not based on informed consent?

Not applicable, informed consent is used

1.8 Does the data collection include any of the following types of personal data?

Race or ethnic origin

1.9 If your research involves special categories of personal data (previous question) and you will not use explicit informed consent, what is the legal ground for the exemption?

NA

1.10 What kinds of outputs will you produce in this project? Please describe these data assets.

Raw data

Data asset: interview recording

Format: .mp3

Estimated size: 3-5 GB

Processed data

Data asset: interview transcripts

Format: PDF

Estimated Size: 1 MB per transcript

Analysed data

Data asset: coded transcripts

Format: Atlas.ti

Estimated size: 1.2 MB per transcript

Research documentation

Data description: final report

Format: PDF

Estimated size: 1.5 MB

1.11 How much digital data storage will your project require?

0 - 50 GB

1.12 Will you collect physical data? If yes, please describe these.

NA

1.13 Will you take measures to ensure data quality? Please describe these, if applicable.

NA

2. Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct

2.1 What legislation applies to your research project? Please tick the relevant boxes for your project.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/ Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming (AVG)

2.3 Do you require approval of an ethical committee for this project? If yes, please indicate which ethical committee and whether you have obtained approval for this project.

No

2.4 Will you work with data for which intellectual property and/ or confidentiality are an issue? If yes, please describe.

No

2.5 Do you plan on generating a marketable product from your research project? if yes, please describe

No

3. Storage and back-up during the research process

3.1 What measures will you take to secure and protect data during the research process? Please describe, for each separate data asset you described for question 1.10, how you will ensure data security, where the data assets are stored & backed up, and who has authorization to access the asset.

Raw data:

Data asset: interview recordings

Storage: SurfDrive (owned by Athena Institute)

Back up: Microsoft OneDrive (VU student account)

Security measures: Password protected. Recordings will also be deleted after transcription

Access: research team

#### Processed data

Data asset: interview transcripts

Storage: VU Surfdrive

Back up: Microsoft OneDrive ( VU student account)

Security: anonymisation of personal data + password protected

Access: research team

#### Analysed data

Data asset: coded transcripts

Storage: Atlas.ti

Back up: Surfdrive

Security: password protected

Access: research team

#### Research documentation

Data asset: final report

Storage: Formdesk + Urkund/Ouriginal

Back up: Microsoft OneDrive (VU student account)

Security: restricted access or password protected

Access: research team + assessors

#### 3.3 Which tools are used in the collection, processing or storage of data during research?

Microsoft Teams

Zoom

OneDrive

Other (please specify below)

SURFDrive

Atlas.Ti

#### 3.5 Is it necessary to transfer the (physical or digital) data assets to other locations or research partners? If yes, please describe how you secure the file transfer.

No

#### 3.7 Do you transfer personal data outside of the European Economic Area (EEA)? If Yes, please provide additional information

No

#### 4. Data archiving and publishing

##### 4.1 Which data assets will be archived and which will be published?

interview transcripts and informed consent forms will be archived in SURFdrive.

##### 4.2 Where will you archive your data assets?

VU SURFdrive

##### 4.4 For how long will the data be available in the archive?

5 Years

##### 4.6 Where will you publish your data assets?

-

##### 4.8 How will you ensure your dataset gets a persistent identifier (e.g. a DOI-code)?

-

4.9 Will you register your datasets in an online registry other than PURE? If yes, where?

4.10 Are there restrictions to data publishing? If yes, please specify the reasons and list the data assets you do not wish to share publicly.

-

4.12 When will you share the data? If not immediately after completion of the project, please specify the reasons.

Directly after completion

4.13 Please indicate the license and/ or terms of use under which you share your data.

-

## 5. Documentation

5.1 What documentation will accompany the data?

Codebook

Interview guide

Interview transcripts

5.2 What metadata will accompany the data?

Codebook

Interview guide

Interview transcripts

5.3 What methods, software or hardware are needed to access and use your data?

The data is stored in SURFdrive. A password is needed to gain access.

## 6. Data management responsibilities and resources

6.1 Who will be responsible for management of the data assets during the project? Please specify their name, position, role in the project, and faculty/ institution/ group.

Name: Roman Monte

Role in project: intern

Function: Master student MPA

Email: r.r.monte@student.vu.nl

University: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Faculty/Institute: Faculty of Science

Department/Group: Athena Institute

6.2 Who will be responsible for management of the data assets after completion of the project (e.g. the project lead/ dedicated data manager/ department head)? Please specify their name, position, role in the project, and faculty/ institution/ group.

Name: Durwin Lynch

Role in project: VU supervisor/On-site supervisor

Function: Program Coordinator Master MPA at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; University lecturer; PhD candidate

Email: d.lynch@vu.nl

University: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Faculty/Institute: Faculty of Science

Department/Research Group: Athena Institute

6.3 For data that are only available upon request, what methods will be used to handle requests for access and how will data be made available to those requesting access?

For future research projects, data will only be made available after being fully anonymised

6.4 What resources (for example financial and time) will be dedicated to research data management? Please estimate their cost.