

## 4

# REMOTE ACCULTURATION AND THE BIRTH OF AN AMERICANIZED CARIBBEAN YOUTH IDENTITY ON THE ISLANDS

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Today, few societies are beyond the reach of globalization. Although external cultural influence is not a new phenomenon (given the inglorious human history of conquest and colonization) and third culture children are on the rise, there is an unprecedented level of voluntary culture sharing in the 21st century due to modern forms of globalization. Technological advances beginning at the end of the 20th century have facilitated instantaneous access to and interaction among people from once-distant lands. In the case of the Caribbean, there is a well-established bidirectional exchange with the United States, the country that sends the most tourists to the Caribbean and receives the most migrants from the Caribbean (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2013a; Thomas-Hope, 2002).

As the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) acknowledges in its 2010 Commission on Youth Development report, the United States has an unmistakable presence in modern life on the Caribbean islands, especially

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for youth. The amicable coexistence of Caribbean and American societal elements in Caribbean cities today evidences the hybridization of the two cultures in public spaces. For example, in Half Way Tree, the capital of St. Andrew, Jamaica, teenagers can shop for rasta-handmade Jamaican leather sandals and imported Ralph Lauren jeans from local vendors, eat a “Spicy Chick’n Crisp Sandwich” at Burger King consisting of a Jamaican chicken patty dressed with typical burger toppings in a sesame seed bun, and watch the latest Hollywood blockbuster preceded by the Jamaican national anthem in a nearby cinema, all the while exchanging texts with cousins living in Miami. This hybridized Caribbean culture on the islands raises an important question: How has modern societal “Americanization” affected the psychosocial development of youth in the Caribbean, specifically their identity, values, and behavior?<sup>1</sup> Recent scholarship on *remote acculturation* has begun to answer that question. Remote acculturation, which was first documented in Jamaica, is a 21st-century form of acculturation in which geographically remote cultures are brought by globalization into the local environment, allowing nonmigrants indirect and/or intermittent exposure, and for some, resulting in a new type of bicultural profile (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and describe remote acculturation in the larger context of Caribbean migration, transnationalism, and industry; discuss pertinent theoretical/conceptual frameworks underpinning remote acculturation; review research findings on remote acculturation in the Caribbean; and outline policy implications and future research directions. Although a few Caribbean countries are U.S. territories in which residents are official U.S. citizens (i.e., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands), this chapter excludes those countries because U.S. citizenship and free movement between those islands and the United States means that American culture is not remote for those islanders.

## REMOTE ACCULTURATION

*Acculturation* refers broadly to changes that come about when culturally different groups or individuals interact (Sam & Berry, 2006). *Psychological acculturation* pertains to the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of these changes (e.g., in behavior, values, and identity: Graves, 1967; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010) and is the focus of this chapter unless otherwise noted. The very definition of *globalization* as the “multidirectional flows

<sup>1</sup>The term *American(ization)* in this chapter pertains to the United States to be consistent with common usage in the Caribbean. Because most Caribbean countries are islands, the term *island* is used interchangeably with *countries*.

of goods, people, and ideas” (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011, p. 258) indicates why it is considered “the starting point for acculturation” (Berry, 2008, p. 332). The traditional conceptualization of acculturation applies most readily in the context of migration in which the movement of people from one place to another prompts intercultural interaction (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). However, the traditional conceptualization does not account for cultural and psychological change following the flow of goods and ideas across borders in the absence of migration, nor does it account for short-term travel, all of which are contemporary realities. For this reason, remote acculturation was recently introduced as a modern form of nonmigrant acculturation prompted by indirect and/or intermittent intercultural contact via newer forms of globalization such as information and communication technologies (ICTs; e.g., cell phones, cable television, Internet) and multinational fast food companies (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Taken together, acculturation can now be considered as “what happens when groups or individuals of different cultures come into contact—whether continuous or intermittent, first-hand or indirect—with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of one or more parties” (Ferguson, 2013, p. 249).

Over time, various ideas have been advanced about how acculturating individuals deal with their experience of more than one culture. Although it was originally thought that the acquisition of a second culture competed with maintaining a connection to the first (unidimensional model), there is now a realization that the second culture is its own dimension of experience (bidimensional model; see Berry, 1980, 1997). According to this bidimensional view, an individual can have a strong orientation to both cultures (integration), to one’s first culture only (separation), to one’s second culture only (assimilation), or to neither (marginalization). Integration or biculturalism is the most common acculturation strategy among immigrant youth based on a large study of immigrant youth across 13 societies, the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Like traditional immigrant acculturation, globalization-based remote acculturation can take multiple forms depending on the strength of one’s orientation to the culture of origin and the remote culture (Berry, 2008; Ferguson, 2013). Moreover, Arnett (2002) predicted that biculturalism would become predominant among 21st-century nonmigrant youth because they are immersed in global culture in addition to their local culture. According to Jensen et al. (2011), globalization-based assimilation is evident when young rural Chinese women who migrate to the city for work swap global values for traditional rural ones (Chang, 2008, as cited in Jensen et al., 2011). Separation is demonstrated in the revival of traditional Samoan tattooing among adolescent boys after being eclipsed by global cultural norms. Integration can be seen among youth in India who remain committed to arranged marriage

despite being immersed in high-tech global culture (Côté, 1994, and Verma & Saraswathi, 2002, respectively, as cited in Jensen et al., 2011). And marginalization is embodied by the rejection of traditional local culture and unattainable global culture by some Nepali youth (Leichty, 1995, as cited in Jensen et al., 2011).

Transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are also useful lenses through which to view the impact of globalization on local youth identities. Glick Schiller and colleagues' work on these two concepts pertains primarily to the experiences and identities of migrants who straddle the home and host nations or who are both rooted in their own nations and open to the world (see Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Glick Schiller, Darieva, & Gruner-Domic, 2011). However, these theoretical conceptualizations are ripe for application to nonmigrant youth undergoing remote acculturation. Caribbean youth may develop a type of transnational or cosmopolitan identity due to close social, monetary, and practical connections to family and friends in the United States and elsewhere. Viewing remote acculturation through the lenses of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism also reveals a certain dynamism to the experience and resulting youth identities that can be overlooked by the acculturation lens.

## GLOCALIZED CARIBBEAN CONTEXT

Acculturation processes in the Caribbean date back at least to Christopher Columbus's arrival in the 15th century and perhaps earlier if distinct indigenous groups interacted as they co-occupied the islands. The arrival of new cultural groups over the centuries via the slave trade (Western Europeans and West Africans mainly), indentured labor agreements (e.g., from India), voluntary immigration (e.g., China, Nigeria, other Caribbean islands), and within-Caribbean migration (e.g., Indo Caribbeans from Guyana to Barbados) has since fueled acculturation processes in the Caribbean (see Senior, 2003). Today, permanent migration of nonnatives into the Caribbean has by-and-large been supplanted by short-term tourism. Cultural influences, especially from the United States, also arrive on the islands' shores through merchandise, food, and ICT. However, these remote cultural elements are not always practiced in their original forms; islanders often put their own stamp on them. For example, reggae and soca versions of hit U.S. pop songs are popular on the islands, and Burger King and KFC in Jamaica serve meat seasoned to the Jamaican palate (in fact, the KFC "barbecue" chicken recipe is a favorite in Jamaica but does not exist in the United States, where the company originates). Thus, *glocalization*—"the co-presence . . . of both universalizing [global] and particularizing [local] tendencies" (Robertson, 1997)—rather than

mere globalization, best describes the impact of U.S. culture on local Caribbean communities. There are at least three major mechanisms by which the globalized Caribbean context sets the stage for remote acculturation of youth: (a) migration and transnationalism; (b) tourism and imported goods; and (c) monetary, practical, and social remittances.

Migration and Transnationalism

Caribbean people are highly migratory. In fact, the Caribbean has the highest out-migration propensity in the world, driven largely by the incapacity of the labor market to provide sustainable employment, particularly for skilled and highly skilled workers. Annual out-migration rates range from 12.1% of the population in the Bahamas to 43.3% in Suriname (Pienkos, 2006). Beginning in the 1960s, the United States (#1) and Canada (#2) eclipsed the United Kingdom as the top destinations for Caribbean emigrants (Thomas-Hope, 2002), and Caribbean Blacks now represent over half of the U.S. foreign-born Black population (Greico, 2010). See Table 4.1 for outmigration rates of Caribbean-born individuals to the United States in the most recent 2010 census (note that Jamaica has the highest rate). Consequently, there is now a widespread diaspora of Caribbean emigrants who have settled and built communities in other world regions. However, back-and-forth migration may be even more characteristic of the Caribbean

TABLE 4.1  
Rates of Out-Migration From Select Caribbean Countries to the United States

Country	Number of Caribbean-born individuals recorded in the U.S. 2010 Census <sup>a</sup>	Caribbean region and island populations based on most recent national estimates	Percentage of Caribbean population in U.S. 2010 Census <sup>i</sup>
Caribbean	3,731,000	41,624,000 (2010) <sup>c</sup>	9%
Cuba	1,105,000	11,162,934 (2012) <sup>d</sup>	10%
Dominican Republic	879,000	9,445,281 (2010) <sup>e</sup>	9%
Jamaica	660,000	2,717,991 (2013) <sup>f</sup>	24%
Haiti	587,000	10,413,211 (2012) <sup>g</sup>	6%
Other Caribbean <sup>b</sup>	500,000	7,884,583 <sup>h</sup>	6%

<sup>a</sup>Adapted from "The foreign born from Latin America and the Caribbean: 2010," by Y. D. Acosta and G. P. de la Cruz, 2011, *U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Briefs, ACSBR/10-15*, p. 3. In the public domain. <sup>b</sup>"Other Caribbean" countries = Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, the former country of Guadeloupe (including St. Barthélemy and Saint-Martin), Martinique, Montserrat, the former country of the Netherlands Antilles (including Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten), St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands. <sup>c</sup>Data from "Caribbean 2010" (n.d.). <sup>d</sup>Data from National Office of Statistics and Information (n.d.). <sup>e</sup>Data from National Office of Statistics (n.d.). <sup>f</sup>Data from Statistical Institute of Jamaica (2015). <sup>g</sup>Data from Haitian Institute of Statistics and Information (2007). <sup>h</sup>"Other Caribbean" population derived by subtracting the four listed country populations from the "Caribbean" population. <sup>i</sup>Percentage of Island Population in U.S. 2010 Census computed for each row.

than is permanent emigration from the islands (Thomas-Hope, 2002). This has given rise to a certain transnationalism wherein Caribbean “transmigrants” actively maintain social networks in both their heritage and destination countries (Glick Schiller et al., 1992). Seasonal farm workers and temporary domestic workers often spend months at a time in each location, as do informal commercial importers whose livelihood is to accumulate goods to bring back to the islands to sell (Durant-Gonzalez, 1983). Serial family migration is also common wherein a parent, usually the mother, emigrates months to years ahead of the children to establish herself before “sending for” them to join her (Pottinger, Stair, & Brown, 2008). As a result, Caribbean islanders, perhaps especially youth, have developed a collective mental image of migration destinations, according to Thomas-Hope’s (2002) cross-national study. This mental image is corroborated by the selective positive information transmitted back to the homeland by migrants and facilitates remote acculturation on the islands as some youth begin to imagine the eventuality of emigration, even if it is never realized.

Due to the transnationalism of the Caribbean diaspora, those living outside of the region keep close ties with those within the region in tangible ways that allow islanders appreciable exposure to remote cultures. For example, Caribbean associations in the United States often engage in community development initiatives back home, such as sponsoring students’ education, building community centers, offering medical, social, and religious services, and donating emergency vehicles (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; <http://chicagoconcernedjamaicans.com>). These collaborative transnational projects not only strengthen the mental image of migration among nonmigrant island youth but also bring these youth into contact with migrants living in the desired locations. Islanders also play an active role in connecting to those in the diaspora to the island pulse through radio and television programs (e.g., “Jamaican Diaspora Live” call-in radio program on Power 106 in Jamaica; 102.7 FM in Trinidad and Tobago) and bargain international calling plans to North America and Europe (e.g., Digicel Jamaica’s \$1,500—approximately US\$13—for 1,000 minutes). Recently, the banding together of Jamaicans in the Caribbean and in the diaspora in support of Jamaican national Tessanne Chin, who was the fall 2013 winner of the televised American vocal competition “The Voice,” perfectly illustrates how Caribbean transnationalism may facilitate remote acculturation by allowing the average nonmigrant island youngster to observe and participate in U.S. culture.

### **Tourism and Imported Goods**

In relation to the United States, the Caribbean is both consumed (via tourism) and consumer (via imported goods). Tourism is clearly one of the Caribbean’s best assets and represents a prime industry for many islands.

Tropical beaches that promise fun in the sun in easygoing island style lure large numbers of tourists to the Caribbean each year, growing from approximately four million in 1970 to nearly 25 million in 2012 (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2013b; Nicholson-Doty, 2013). The economic benefit of tourism to the Caribbean is clear—Caribbean visitors spent US\$27.5 billion in 2012. U.S. residents comprise the largest proportion of visitors to the Caribbean both historically and currently (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2013b, 2013a) ahead of Canada, Europe, and other world regions. Many, if not most, Caribbean youth have brief and sporadic contact with U.S. tourists, which may over time predispose them to remote acculturation.

The Caribbean also consumes a great number of American products, including entertainment (e.g., cable television, movies, music), apparel (e.g., name-brand clothing), electronics (e.g., game consoles), and food (e.g., U.S. fast food/restaurant chains). According to the 13-country CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (2010) study, ICT is considered the primary means by which Caribbean youth on the islands consume American cultural products. For example, Forbes's (2012) ethnography demonstrated that Facebook is a dominant interface used by youth in Jamaica for social connections with others on the island and abroad.

### Monetary, Practical, and Social Remittances

Members of the Caribbean diaspora also keep strong ties with family members through remittances: monetary, practical, and social. Monetary and practical remittances are staples of Caribbean life; family members in the United States send money via services such as Western Union and ship goods to family members on the islands. Monetary remittances to the Caribbean from the United States grew exponentially from approximately US\$2 billion in 1988 to US\$12.5 billion in 2000, and research confirms that the total remittances returned to the islands is a function of the number of Caribbean immigrants admitted into the United States (Sampson & Branch-Vital, 2013). In addition, there is a tradition of shipping barrels of clothing and other goods from the United States to family members, especially intended for children whose parents have emigrated ahead of them ("barrel children"; Crawford-Brown & Rattray, 2002). Although Caribbean shipping businesses in Florida took a financial hit due to the recent global recession, the practice is still alive and well ("Caribbean Families Still Lean on Barrel Shipments From Overseas," 2012).

*Social remittances* have been defined as the "ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving-[country] to sending-country communities" between individuals who know each other (Levitt, 1998, p. 927). Social remittances use a variety of mechanisms, including migrants' temporary



or permanent trips back to the homeland, nonmigrants' trips to the diaspora, and telephone/video/written exchanges. For example, migrants from a town called Miraflores in the Dominican Republic residing in wintery Boston send boots and long-sleeved shirts back to Miraflores as gifts for relatives, resulting in a new hybrid fashion of wearing winter boots with shorts in tropical Miraflores. These transnational migrants also consciously and unconsciously model new behaviors and attitudes for island youth, slowly changing some local norms and values (e.g., increasing value placed on gender equality, which challenges male-dominated norms in the Caribbean; Levitt, 1998, pp. 933–934).

### **Research Findings on Remote Acculturation Among Youth in the Caribbean**

The back-and-forth migratory patterns of the Caribbean diaspora, the ebb and flow of U.S. tourists, and the steadily increasing consumption of U.S.-produced ICT, goods, and remittance flows into the islands create an interesting cultural context in which today's Caribbean youth come of age (Ferguson, 2013). Traditionally, Jamaican and other Caribbean children are socialized to value family and community and socialized to respect and obey parents and other adults (Richardson, 1999). Parents favor strict discipline, although it can be applied inconsistently and differently for boys and girls (Bailey, Branche, McGarrity, & Stuart, 1998; Evans & Davies, 1997). Jamaican teenagers describe average peers as fun-loving, motivated to fit in, fashion conscious, and into media (Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013). Developmentally speaking, adolescents are also focused on the task of self-definition by trying on identities, values, and behaviors (Erikson, 1968), including ethnic and cultural self-definition (Phinney, 1990). The modern globalized Caribbean context, therefore, predisposes island youth to remote acculturation toward U.S. culture(s) by bringing into their locale different sets of values (e.g., family values) and behaviors (e.g., fashions) via media and other mechanisms. A bicultural Americanized Caribbean identity is the most likely outcome of remote acculturation based on acculturation research findings with immigrant youth (Berry et al., 2006) and on predictions for nonmigrant youth acculturating in response to modern globalization (Arnett, 2002).

The Culture and Family Life Study has now demonstrated the presence of such a bicultural Americanized Caribbean identity among some urban adolescents in the Caribbean (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012, 2015). In the inaugural study, Ferguson and Bornstein (2012) administered questionnaires to approximately 250 adolescents (mean age = 13.27) and their mothers in Kingston, Jamaica, measuring acculturation using a three-pronged approach recommended by Schwartz and colleagues (i.e., acculturation behaviors, values, identity; Schwartz et al., 2010). Behavioral and identity acculturation were measured using the Acculturation Rating Scale for Jamaican Americans



(ARSJA; Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012), a measure adapted from the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA-II Scale I; Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). The ARSJA assesses respondents' orientation to Jamaican culture, European American culture, and African American culture separately by inquiring about the degree to which an individual participates in or enjoys aspects of each culture including entertainment (e.g., TV shows from each culture), social contact (e.g., friendships with individuals in each culture), and language (i.e., Jamaican Patois). Further, ARSJA respondents indicate the degree to which they identify as a member of each cultural group. Values acculturation was measured using the Family Values Scale (Berry et al., 2006), which assesses values regarding obligations that adolescents should have toward parents and family, and rights adolescents should have in the family. American adolescents, European Americans in particular, have been shown to have lower family obligations and higher adolescent rights compared with acculturating immigrant adolescent from Latin America (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Finally, parent–adolescent discrepancies in family obligations and rights were calculated and parent–adolescent conflict was measured (Robin & Foster, 1989) because acculturating immigrant families often report larger intergenerational discrepancies (Phinney & Vedder, 2006) and more parent–adolescent conflict than do nonimmigrant families (Birman, 2006).

Cluster analyses identified one cluster of youth with a bicultural profile (33% of sample) based on scores on multiple acculturation indicators measured (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). “Americanized Jamaicans,” as this cluster was labeled, reported high orientation to Jamaican culture as well as relatively high orientation to European American culture, lower family obligations, higher intergenerational obligations discrepancies, and higher parent–adolescent conflict compared with a second cluster of culturally “traditional Jamaicans” (i.e., 67% of the sample: high Jamaican orientation, low European American orientation, high family obligations, lower intergenerational obligations discrepancies, and low parent–adolescent conflict). However, Americanized Jamaican adolescents did not differ from traditional peers in orientation to African American culture (adolescents in both clusters had fairly strong orientation to African American culture). See Figure 4.1 for a graphical representation of the characteristics of Americanized Jamaican versus traditional Jamaican adolescents. Parent–adolescent conflict was associated with the acculturation gap: Dyads mismatched in remote acculturation (i.e., one partner was traditional Jamaican, whereas the other was “Americanized” Jamaican) reported significantly higher conflict than did matched dyads.

Remote acculturation of Jamaican islanders resembled traditional acculturation among Jamaican immigrants in the United States. Americanized Jamaican adolescents' orientation to European American culture was similar to that of Jamaican immigrant adolescents living in the United States,

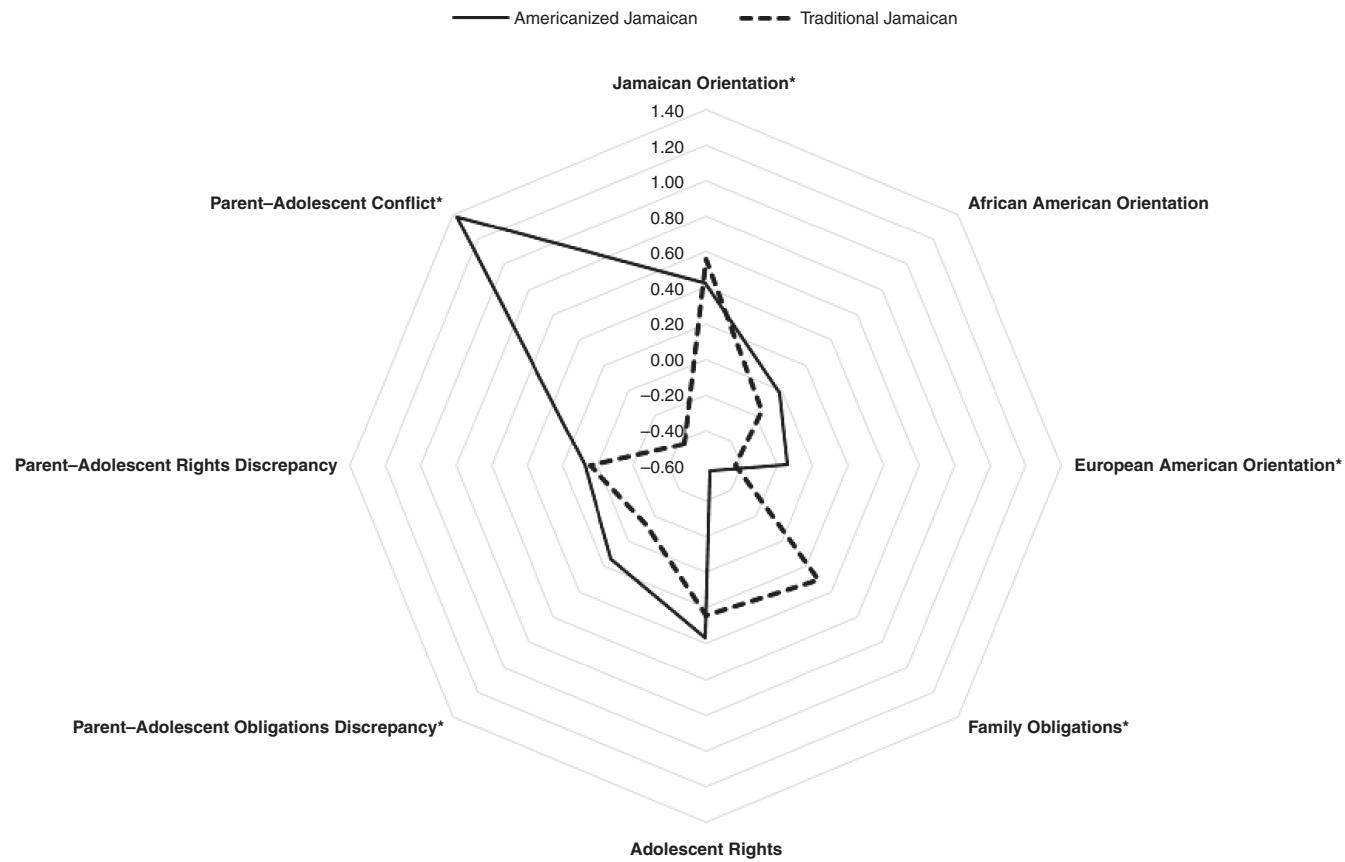


Figure 4.1. Remote acculturation clusters among adolescents in Jamaica. From “Remote Acculturation: The ‘Americanization’ of Jamaican Islanders,” by G. M. Ferguson and M. H. Bornstein, 2012, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 36, pp. 167–177. Copyright 2012 by SAGE. Adapted with permission. Standardized scores are used, thus positive scores in this figure reflect raw scores above the mean and negative Z scores in this figure reflect raw scores below the mean. Asterisks (\*) mark acculturation indicators in which there were significant differences between Americanized Jamaican and Traditional Jamaican youth.

and fell in between those of traditional Jamaicans and a comparison sample of U.S.-born European American adolescents. Americanized Jamaican adolescents were even more similar to European American adolescents than to Jamaican immigrant adolescents in terms of having relatively low family obligations. They also had much higher conflict with mothers than any other group, including Jamaican immigrant adolescents. The person–context fit perspective (Lerner, 1982) sheds some light on the latter finding in that a bicultural Americanized Jamaican adolescent will be more poorly matched to the values and expectations of his/her culturally traditional mother and environment in Jamaica compared with a Jamaican immigrant adolescent in the United States whose mother is, like her, embedded in the American cultural context.

Mothers in the Culture and Family Life Study (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012) also showed evidence of remote acculturation, although a smaller percentage (11%) demonstrated the bicultural Americanized Jamaican profile compared with adolescents (33%). Compared with two traditional Jamaican clusters, Americanized Jamaican mothers reported the highest European American orientation, obligations discrepancies, and parent–adolescent conflict.

These original remote acculturation findings were replicated in a second cohort of over 220 early adolescents (mean age = 12.08)<sup>2</sup> in Kingston, Jamaica, using the same methods, variables, and analyses, except that mothers were not included and parent–adolescent discrepancy scores were, therefore, not used (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Findings from this study also revealed that one set of adolescents was grouped into an Americanized Jamaican cluster, the remaining being traditional Jamaican. These replicated findings confirmed that remote acculturation was, indeed, occurring (i.e., findings from the original study were not an artifact or cohort effect) and could be reliably detected.

Ferguson and Bornstein's 2015 follow-up study went beyond replication and also investigated some potential mechanisms by which Jamaican island youth come in contact with U.S. culture, or “vehicles” of remote acculturation. These potential vehicles included interactions with U.S. tourists, communication with U.S. individuals and receipt of various kinds of remittances, and consumption of U.S. goods and media. Results showed that adolescents who consumed more U.S. TV (girls) and less local TV (both genders) had higher odds of falling into the Americanized Jamaican cluster. In addition, consumption of U.S. food, contact with U.S. tourists on the island, internet/phone communication with family/friends/acquaintances in the United States, and receipt of gifts from U.S. relatives/friends were all positively correlated with European American Orientation. The number of days visiting the United States on vacation was not related to remote acculturation;

<sup>2</sup>The only meaningful difference between the original remote acculturation study and the replication study was that mothers were not included in this study because very few mothers were Americanized Jamaicans (11%) compared with adolescents (33%). Thus, parent–adolescent discrepancies were not used as remote acculturation indicators in this study.

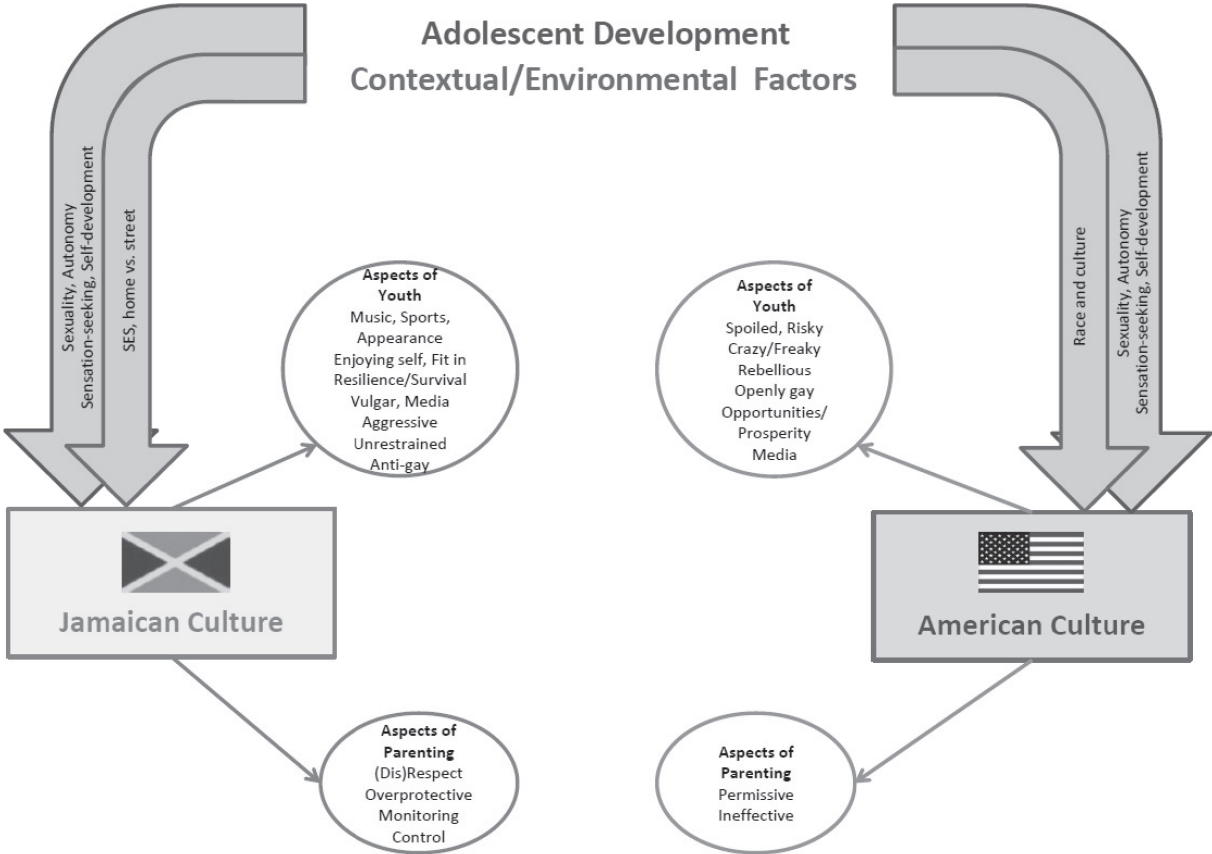
thus, traditional immigrant acculturation was an unlikely explanation for these adolescents' biculturalism. Parental education was measured as a proxy for socioeconomic status in both the original and replication studies and it was unrelated to remote acculturation in both cohorts. Thus, Americanized Jamaican youth are not just the privileged who can afford a cable subscription or to eat American fast food on a regular basis. This may be due to the fact that Caribbean youth from all walks of life have a stable mental image of migration, which is sustained by positive information communicated by relatives in the United States (Thomas-Hope, 2002).

Following an explanatory sequential design, focus group interviews were also conducted with a subsample of Jamaican boys from the Culture and Family Life Study to gain a more in-depth understanding of remote biculturalism.<sup>3</sup> Focus group questions first explored boys' construals of their local Jamaican culture and American culture ("Describe what Jamaican teenagers are like today" and "Describe what American teenagers are like today"; Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013). Exploring how Jamaican adolescents perceive Jamaican culture and European American culture is important to fully understand key aspects of biculturalism of Americanized Jamaicans. Next, questions explored the perceived advantages and disadvantages of being an Americanized Jamaican teenager in Jamaica (Ferguson, Kumar, Iturbide, & Simpson, 2013). Fifteen boys who participated in all other aspects of the study participated in focus group interviews.

Thematic analysis by a team of three coders (Jamaican on the island, Jamaican in the United States, Latina American in the United States) revealed first that when referencing American culture, Jamaican adolescents do think primarily of White Americans of European descent rather than African Americans. Overall, boys perceived some similarities (e.g., adolescent autonomy) and some differences (e.g., parenting style) between Jamaican and European American cultures. They construed Jamaican culture as aggressive, antigay, and fashion-focused, which reflected aspects of Jamaican dancehall culture's<sup>4</sup> view of masculinity. By contrast, boys' construal of American culture centered on spoiled and crazy teens who "rule" their permissive parents (Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013; see Figure 4.2). Moreover, boys saw both advantages (e.g., preparation for travel abroad, cultural flexibility in peer relations) and disadvantages (e.g., targeted for bullying, procedural confusion—using cultural strategies in the wrong context) to being a bicultural Americanized Jamaican living on the island (Ferguson, Kumar, Iturbide, & Simpson, 2013). Ferguson and colleagues noted that youths' construals of

<sup>3</sup>Girls were not included because the nature of gendered socialization in the Caribbean suggested that they would have a very different construal of local Jamaican culture, and it was not feasible at the time to conduct separate focus groups for girls.

<sup>4</sup>*Dancehall culture* refers to the values, rituals, lifestyles, and identities associated with dancehall music, a popular subgenre of reggae music, which largely originated in inner-city Kingston in the 1980s but now boasts a large fan base across socioeconomic classes in Jamaica and in other countries such as Japan. (See Hope, 2012, for more details).



*Figure 4.2.* Thematic map of Jamaican adolescent boys' construals of Jamaican and American cultures. From "Jamaican Boys' Construals of Jamaican and American Teenagers," by G. M. Ferguson and M. I. Iturbide, 2013, *Caribbean Journal of Psychology*, 5(1), p. 71. Copyright 2013 by the University of the West Indies, Mona. Reprinted with permission.

both American and Caribbean cultures are stereotypical, having been heavily influenced by popular media representations in both countries (U.S. cable television and Jamaican dancehall music, respectively). This caricaturization indicates an oversimplification of both cultures in adolescents' minds but nonetheless sheds light on dimensions of attitude and behavior that may be impacted by their remote acculturation toward European American culture.

A study in rural Haiti, which has limited ICT and less access to U.S. tourists and goods, suggests that remote acculturation is not pervasive across all Caribbean settings, however (Ferguson, Désir, & Bornstein, 2014). Just over 100 early adolescents (mean age = 12.87) completed questionnaires in Haitian Kreyòl in Northern Haiti. Findings revealed strong orientation to Haitian culture and very high family obligations (in boys especially) but very low U.S. orientation. However, adolescents who interacted more frequently with U.S. tourists and those who consumed more U.S. fast food had higher U.S. culture orientation. This suggests that if rural areas of the Caribbean become more exposed to U.S. culture, rural adolescents may begin to experience remote acculturation similar to urban peers.

To summarize, both quantitative and qualitative empirical research in the Caribbean reveals that remote acculturation in the form of Americanization is occurring among urban adolescents. Americanized Jamaican youth resemble Jamaican immigrant youth in the United States in terms of their orientation toward European American culture, although Americanized Jamaicans have higher conflict with their mothers than do immigrants. Higher conflict in remotely acculturating families relative to immigrant families may be related to the fact that mothers do not expect their Jamaican teenagers on the island to be acculturating to the United States. The qualitative findings that Jamaican adolescents perceive European American teenagers to be rebellious against permissive parents who grant them autonomy earlier (compared with Jamaican families; Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013) help to explain why Americanized Jamaican adolescents, who have higher European American orientation than do Traditional Jamaicans, are also distinguished by lower family obligations, higher adolescent–mother obligations discrepancies, and much higher adolescent–mother conflict (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012).

## POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

### Family and Health Policy

Remote acculturation has implications for both policy and practice in the Caribbean given the findings that bicultural Americanized Jamaican adolescents experience significantly more conflict with parents than do culturally

traditional adolescents. Ferguson and Bornstein (2012) found that this conflict was related to the acculturation gap with parents. Although parents of nonmigrant Jamaican youth are generally aware of adolescents' gravitation toward the United States and its products, they generally do not expect them to internalize U.S. cultural behaviors and values via remote acculturation, creating a culture gap between them. This situation predisposes mothers of Americanized Jamaican adolescents to have more conflict with their teenagers. Professionals working with Americanized Jamaican youth and families should be aware that the normative parent–adolescent conflicts are being exacerbated by parent–adolescent gaps in remote acculturation (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Professionals may be able to utilize literature on counseling immigrant families settling in industrialized countries to work with these nonmigrant families (see Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). In addition, basic psychoeducation regarding remote acculturation among parents, guidance counselors, and educators may be an important step.

## Youth Policy

According to the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development report (2010), Caribbean youth on the islands say they gravitate toward U.S. and other foreign cultures because they are seeking development opportunities they do not have in their local Caribbean communities. The Culture and Family Life focus group data lend strong support to CARICOM findings: Boys reported frustration at the lack of opportunities to develop personal skills such as leadership and self-care and admired the fact that American teenagers had these options in their schools (Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013). Similarly, boys reported having difficulty relating to locally produced shows, partly because they perpetuate negative stereotypical representations of Caribbean people, whereas they are seeking something more positive and growth-inducing. As one 14-year-old Jamaican boy explained,

“Miss but like Jamaican shows dem jus’ have like one ting about people from di ghetto an dis ahn dat . . . Yes Miss like gun, who go shirtless, ahn who a rob, and who a sell weed and dem stuff deh Miss” [English Translation: Miss, but Jamaican shows just have one theme about people from the ghetto and this and that . . . yes Miss, like guns, who goes shirtless, and who robs, and who sells weed (marijuana) and those things]. (Ferguson & Iturbide, 2013, p. 73)

While it is not possible for developing Caribbean nations to produce the volume or variety of local television programs to match those available on U.S. cable, cable television content can be used to spark intentional conversations at home and at school regarding personal development in



the local Caribbean context (e.g., how to make wise decisions regarding substance use).

## **Tourism and Migration Policy**

Remote acculturation has its liabilities for family life, but it may be an asset for keeping the Caribbean on the leading edge of the global tourism industry in terms of innovation and tourist experience. Americanized Jamaican youth have a deeper understanding of the culture, values, and lifestyles of their peers in the United States, who will be tomorrow's tourists. If Americanized Jamaican youths' biculturalism can be recognized as a marketable skill, they can play a significant role in securing the future of this prime industry for the region. Indeed, Glick Schiller and colleagues (2011) proposed "cosmopolitan sociability" as a unique social competence and communication skill facilitating globally open and inclusive social relations. Another potential asset is smoother adaptation to the United States should Americanized Jamaican adolescents emigrate in the future, which is of benefit both to those on the island (e.g., remittances), and to those in the United States (e.g., good ambassadors for the Caribbean).

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ACCULTURATION RESEARCH IN THE CARIBBEAN AND DIASPORA**

### **Remote Acculturation**

Remote acculturation should be investigated across other Caribbean islands, in terms of both Americanization and the influence of other remote cultures. More than two cultures may be relevant in some Caribbean settings; for example, Trinidad has Afro Trinidadian and Indo Trinidadian cultures in addition to its significant U.S. culture influence. Canada, Quebec in particular, may be another important remote destination culture for Haitians. Additionally, observations suggest that Jamaican or Trinidadian cultures may exert some influence on other islands by way of their music (reggae, soca, respectively) and products (e.g., food). Longitudinal and creative experimental research is needed to investigate, respectively, remote acculturation as a potential precursor to immigrant acculturation and to inform our understanding of the direction of remote acculturation effects (i.e., does engagement with identified vehicles of remote acculturation drive "Americanization" or vice versa or both?). Longitudinal research will also be valuable in understanding the process of psychological and developmental change experienced by remotely acculturating Caribbean youth. Researchers should also pay

attention to parents' experience of the remote acculturation of their teenagers. Although conflictual relationships are a challenge facing mothers of Americanized Jamaican adolescents, Jensen and colleagues (2011) hypothesized that such parents may nonetheless welcome these adolescents' preparedness for today's world.

### Caribbean Immigrant Acculturation Within the Caribbean Region

There is a high level of intraregional short- and medium-term migration in the Caribbean for study and work (Thomas-Hope, 2002; Pienkos, 2006). The University of the West Indies (UWI), for example, has campuses spread across several islands, and Cuba's medical schools attract students from across the Caribbean. Acculturation based on intraregional migration deserves scholarly attention to understand how Caribbean young adults acculturate when exposed to neighboring Caribbean cultures (e.g., whether biculturalism is also most common for them) and to assess the association between these acculturation strategies and students' psychological and sociocultural adaptation to their new country. Many intraregional foreign students experience acculturative stress, and some present at university counseling centers to seek support. Research in this area would inform the work of university clinicians and would provide the basis for preventive psychoeducational interventions targeting foreign students.

### CONCLUSION

The Caribbean is a unique and dynamic region and diaspora in which remote acculturation has produced a new generation of urban bicultural Americanized Caribbean youth on the islands. Americanization of Caribbean youth is not a rejection of Caribbean culture but an internalization of the hybrid Americanized Caribbean society that has evolved in Caribbean cities over decades due to migration and transnationalism, tourism and industry, and remittances of various kinds. Rather than ignore or deny the implications this new cultural reality has for Caribbean youth identities, it behooves Caribbean society to seek to understand it and work to maximize its assets while minimizing its liabilities.

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