

Introduction

The Cape Verdean community in the Netherlands is the third largest of the diaspora. The first Dutch-Cape Verdean immigrants settled in Rotterdam in the 1950s. Like their fellow countrymen who migrated to the US a century earlier, they were seamen employed in the merchant navy who found jobs ashore in Rotterdam. Reflecting a classic example of chain migration, they sponsored the trips of many other newcomers, including family members, friends and acquaintances. Today, there are over 21.000 Cape Verdeans living in the Netherlands (CBS, 2012).

Dutch-Cape Verdeans have been known for many years as “silent migrants”, a label that reflects the host society perception of these immigrants as hardworking, cooperative and quiet-natured (De Freitas, 2008). This image appears to be changing, however. On the one hand, that seems to result from the community’s increasing receptiveness to Dutch society. On the other hand, it may be a consequence of social problems identified with the second generation, which brought the community to the public eye.

This shifting image attests the ongoing diversification of the Dutch segment of the Cape Verdean diaspora. In this paper, we provide a sketch of the socio-demographic profile of Cape Verdean migrants in the Netherlands and look into their ascribed identity, recognition and integration in the host country. As we will argue, Dutch-Cape Verdeans are becoming a multifaceted community whose capacity to express their views and claim their rights is rising. Dutch-Cape Verdeans also face some challenges, however, that need to be addressed.

Migration to the Netherlands: the making of a community

Cape Verdean’s migration to the Netherlands may be described along three phases whose contours have been largely determined by shifts in the immigration policy of the host country and political changes in their homeland. The following provides an account of the main developments taking place in each of those phases and how they shaped the course of migration.

First phase: from the 1950s to 1975

Cape Verdean migration to the Netherlands was initiated mostly by young men from the *Barlavento* (Windward) islands, who were trying either to escape the hardships caused by long drought periods or to avoid compulsory military service imposed by the Portuguese colonial rule. Some also left in search of adventure. Attracted by the good labour conditions offered by the Dutch merchant navy they began to move to Rotterdam in the early 1950s (Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, 2002). The first settlers were particularly impressed by the prosperity of the country – the abundance of water, food and work was especially striking when compared to scarcity back home. When word spread that the Netherlands was a virtual ‘paradise’, more men began to seek jobs aboard Dutch ships (Pires, 2006). Hiring Cape Verdeans was also advantageous for Dutch companies for they were hard workers and could be paid lower salaries than seamen from other countries. The post-war boom of the European shipping industry and the massive growth of Rotterdam harbour in the early 1960s served to consolidate the pace of arrival of newcomers: between 1958 and the late 1960s the number of Cape Verdean seamen increased from 20 to 700 (Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, 2002). Equally fast growing was the number of Cape Verdean *pensões* (guest houses), which reached approximately 20 in the 1960s (Choenni, 2004). These *pensões* were essential for the settlement of Cape Verdeans in Rotterdam. There, newcomers found friendship, tips for work, and financial support during hard times. Another emblematic meeting point was the Heemraadsplein, also known as Pracinha d’Quêbrod⁷⁴, where Cape Verdeans gathered to socialise and to go find new jobs. The camaraderie and solidarity expressed during this initial period were key to the formation of the community. Many Cape Verdeans preserve those traits up and until the present day, offering shelter and food to those in need. The second generation, however, has been said to value this benevolent attitude somewhat less. In the opinion of some of the elders, that is linked to a greater sense of individualism (inspired by Dutch culture) and a lower sense of commitment toward the people from the islands, where many of the Cape Verdeans born in the Netherlands have never been.

⁷⁴ Pracinha d’Quêbrod means literally ‘square of the broke’. In 2001, the municipality of Rotterdam acknowledged the name of the square in both Dutch and Kriolu.

In the early 1970s Dutch immigration policy began to tighten. The lenient regulations of the previous decade were replaced by tighter measures of control and immigrants were requested to obtain a temporary stay permit (MVV) at the country of origin before departure. In addition, the 1973 oil crisis and the ensuing stock market crash led to a world-wide recession which affected the shipping industry in a highly negative way. Recruitment of seamen was curtailed and for Cape Verdeans, immigration to the Netherlands became increasingly more difficult. The independence of Cape Verde from Portugal in 1975 also made Cape Verdeans' entry into Europe more complicated (Carling, 2008a).

Second phase: from independence to the early 1990s

The second wave of Cape Verdean migration to the Netherlands began after 1975. Unable to find a place within the new sovereign regime, a different contingent of migrants composed mostly of former military staff, civil servants and school teachers left for the Netherlands. Many of them married Dutch citizens acquiring the right to permanent stay in the country (Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, 2002).

This period was also marked by the start of family reunification. In 1976, undocumented Cape Verdeans residing in the Netherlands received a 'general pardon' and almost 600 were legalised (Da Graça, 1999). In addition, seamen working on Dutch ships for over seven years were given the opportunity to acquire Dutch nationality. Many grasped this opportunity and started bringing their families to Rotterdam. Others, for whom the Portuguese colonial administrators had denied passports at the time of departure from the islands, remained undocumented until the 2000s⁷⁵.

The 1970s saw the start of yet two new Cape Verdean migration flows to the Netherlands. One was composed of Cape Verdeans from Santiago who had been recruited to work in Portugal in the 1960s. When word got out that better working conditions were to be found in the Netherlands, many migrated there to pursue better lives (Pires, 2006). The other flow included almost exclusively Cape Verdean women who had been employed in Italy as domestic workers (Andall, 1999). Upon arrival, they

⁷⁵ In the period before independence many Cape Verdean men were able to board ships without travelling documents with the connivance of ship captains. Some of them succeed to have passports issued at the Portuguese consulates in Senegal or Greece. Others reached Europe without papers (Pires, 2006). In 2005, given the relatively high number of undocumented seamen in Rotterdam, Project Apoio at Basisberaad Rijnmond launched a programme specifically designed to assist them in acquiring a legal status.

were able to count on the solidarity of their compatriots to get settled. These two flows, combined with the reunification of families that ensued, served to diversify the population of Cape Verdean residents in Rotterdam, both by increasing the number of islands of origin of the residents and by shifting the gender ratio toward a greater prevalence of women.

Third phase: from 1991 till the present

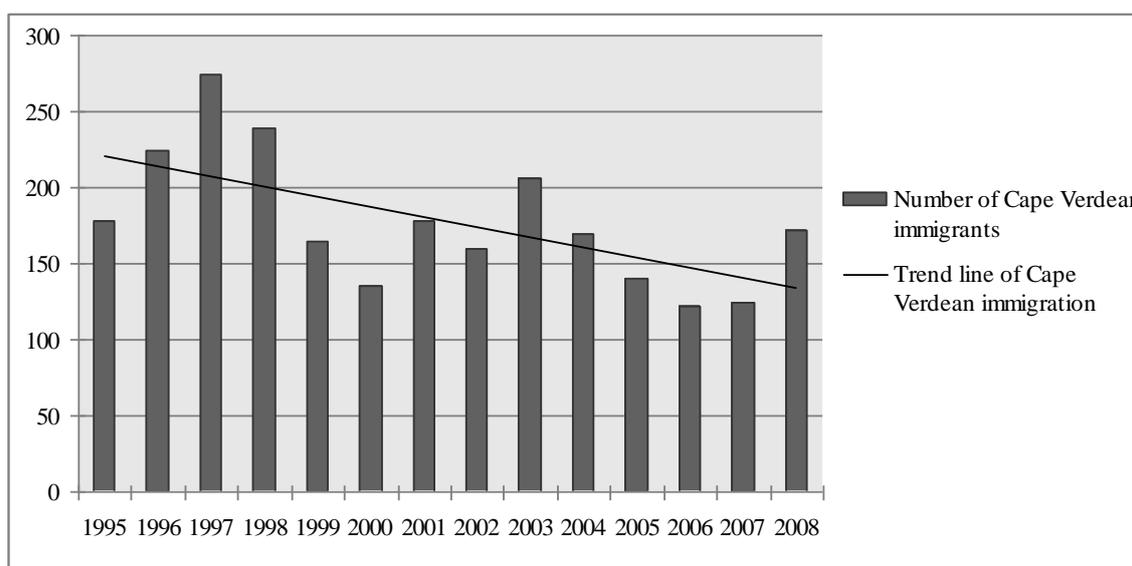
The first multi-party elections held in Cape Verde in 1991 marked the beginning of the third phase of Cape Verdean migration to the Netherlands. Amongst the migrants arriving directly from the islands were, primarily, educated young people seeking to further pursue their studies abroad. Cape Verdean women based in Italy and Portugal continue to arrive. But, in the early 1990s, immigration policy in the Netherlands suffered another restrictive turn: entering the country through family reunification became more difficult and undocumented migrants found it increasingly harder to find employment and to acquire residence permits after a period of illegality. As a result, marriage became one of the main ways of entry into the Netherlands. Similarly to what happened in the US after stringent immigration laws were enforced in the 1920s (Meintel, 1984), many of those unions were 'fixed marriages'. Although some Cape Verdeans married friends and relatives, others had to pay substantial sums for bogus marriages. Aware of this unorthodox 'channel of entry' the Dutch government issued a law in 1994 determining income thresholds for sponsors soliciting family reunification and family formation (Holmes-Wijnker, 1994 *et al.*, 2004). In addition, marriages to non-Western migrants were kept under surveillance by immigration officials.

As pointed out by Carling (2008a), it is important to note that fixed marriages are not a clear-cut phenomenon. Although acquiring a residence permit may have been the main reason behind such marriages, many Cape Verdean women developed a relationship and bore children with their Dutch partners. But fixed marriages could also place people in perilous positions: stories about difficult or even abusive 'bogus partners' became common, both from the side of the newcomer and from the side of the host. There are also instances of Dutch-Cape Verdeans who fall in love during a visit to the islands only to realise later that their spouse intended all along to abandon the marriage once he or she acquired a permanent residence permit, which are only issued after three years have passed.

Restrictions on family formation continue to increase in the 2000s. Between 1993 and 2006, the minimum income required from family formation sponsors almost doubled (Carling, 2008b)⁷⁶. Since 2002, if an application to marry a Cape Verdean is to be made, it must be filed from Cape Verde itself. In 2006, the Civic Integration Abroad Act was introduced stating that all non-EU migrants must have knowledge of the Dutch language and society prior to being admitted into the Netherlands. These measures make it particularly difficult for people who have a low education and scarce financial means to migrate.

In the last decade, the pace of Cape Verdean immigration to the Netherlands has been gradually slowing down (see Graph 1)⁷⁷. The immigration policy shifts just described may be on the basis of that decline.

Graph 1 Immigration of Cape Verdeans to the Netherlands, 1996-2008



Socio-demographic profile

In 2009, there were 20.669 Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands. Almost half of them (44%) are second generation migrants (see Table 1). This is indicative of both a

⁷⁶ In 1993, Dutch citizens or permanent residents in the Netherlands who wished to sponsor the entry of a non-Western migrant through marriage were required to have a net monthly income of 1.260 guilders, i.e. €572. In 2006, the corresponding amount had been raised up to €1.441. Adjusting for inflation, that constitutes an increase of 93% (Carling, 2008b).

⁷⁷ The trend line of Cape Verdean immigration to the Netherlands displayed in the graph was calculated using linear regression analysis.

long cycle of migration of over six decades and, as we noted earlier, a decrease in the pace of new arrivals.

Table 1 Cape Verdean immigrants by generation and gender, 2008

	Women	Men	Total	%
First generation	6 012	5 438	11 450	56
Second generation	4 473	4 441	8 914	44
Total	10 485	9 879	20 364	100

Source: CBS Statline (2008)

Most Cape Verdeans immigrants in the Netherlands have Dutch nationality (80% in 1996 (Bol, 1998) and many others, particularly the seaman, hold Portuguese passports. This makes it difficult to know if statistics in the Netherlands⁷⁸ are able to account fully for all those of Cape Verdean origin living in the country. In addition, according to the last estimates available, about 2000 undocumented Cape Verdeans were residing in the Netherlands in 2000 (Stichting Avanço, 2000).

Geographic distribution

The majority of Cape Verdeans live in the Rotterdam metropolitan area, where the pioneer migrants first settled (see Table 2). The city of Rotterdam hosts three quarters of the overall Cape Verdean population, most of whom live in the Delfshaven borough (43%). In Delfshaven, one in each ten inhabitants is a Cape Verdean (ISEO/COS, 2003) and it is not uncommon to hear the Kriolu language when walking on the streets. Boroughs such as Feijenoord, Noord and Kralingen-Crooswijk are also home to a fair number of Cape Verdeans. In the past years, there has been a tendency for Cape Verdeans to move from Rotterdam to the suburbs (i.e. Schiedam and Capelle a/d IJssel). This may be explained by problems related to increasing rates of unemployment and social problems in the neighbourhoods where Cape Verdeans originally settled.

⁷⁸ The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) defines immigrants as people who were born outside the Netherlands (first generation immigrants) or who have at least one parent born in another country (second generation immigrants). The designation ‘allochthonous’ is generally employed to refer to immigrants, irrespective of their generation. The term ‘autochthonous’ is used to refer to the native Dutch.

Only 15% of Cape Verdeans reside in cities outside the Rotterdam metropolitan area. Several hundreds live in Amsterdam and in Zaanstad and somewhat smaller communities live in The Hague and in the coastal town Delfzijl.

Table 2 Distribution of Cape Verdeans residents by selected municipalities, 2003

	Municipality	Residents	Proportion of total population*
Rotterdam Metropolitan Area	Rotterdam	14 983	76%
	Schiedam	795	4%
	Capelle a/d IJssel	341	2%
Partial total		16 119	82%
Other cities in the Netherlands	Amsterdam	552	3%
	Zaanstad	509	3%
	The Hague	271	1%
	Delfzijl	230	1%
	Other	1 985	10%
Partial total		3 547	18%
Total		19 666	100%

Source: ISEO/COS, 2003

* Proportion of Cape Verdean residents per municipality calculated in relation to the total Cape Verdean population in the Netherlands in 2003.

Age, gender and family

Given the relatively small size of the Cape Verdean community (when compared with other migrant groups in the Netherlands)⁷⁹ and its concentration in Rotterdam, most studies and data available on Cape Verdeans immigrants focus only on the residents of the region of Rotterdam. The socio-demographic data provided next are exclusively concerned with the share of Cape Verdeans living in that region.

Cape Verdeans form a rather young population: 50% are below 34 years of age and only 4% are above 65 (see Table 3). Amongst young Cape Verdeans, who usually

⁷⁹ Data and studies on migration in the Netherlands tend to focus almost exclusively on the four largest non-Western immigrant groups: Turks (378.330), Moroccans (341.528), Surinamese (338.678) and Antilleans (134.774). It should be noted that Indonesians (384.497) and Germans (379.559) are actually the largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands. However, they are considered Western migrants and the groups which fall in this category are usually out of the public eye. Although the geographical location and socio-political background of Indonesia would arguably confer it the status of non-Western country, its past colonial links with the Netherlands blur that fact.

identify themselves as Cabo, Rotterdam is known as *Cabostad* or Cabo City. There, Cape Verdeans do not go unnoticed but, when compared with other migrant groups, they are one of the slowest growing groups⁸⁰ (ISEO/COS, 2003).

At present, there are more Cape Verdean women than men living in Rotterdam. However, if we consider only second generation Cape Verdeans differences in the gender ratio disappear and if we take the age group above 45 years of age the proportion of men is higher. This indicates that, although Cape Verdean migration was initially led by men, women have taken the lead of migration flows to the Netherlands in recent decades.

Table 3 Cape Verdeans in Rotterdam by age, gender and generation, 2004

Age	First generation		Second generation		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
0-14 years	100	90	1 657	1 736	3 583
15-34 years	754	652	1 264	1 224	3 894
35-44 years	1 983	1 446	105	116	3 650
45-64 years	1 504	1 758	0	0	3 262
65 years or older	257	337	0	0	594
Total	4 598	4 283	3 026	3 076	14 983

Source: ISEO/COS (2003)

Many Cape Verdean families (27%) in Rotterdam are constituted by only one parent (ISEO/COS, 2003), who is normally the mother. Although authority has traditionally been reserved for the father, mothers take most responsibility for the household, particularly where child rearing is concerned. A study conducted in 1997 estimated that half of the Cape Verdean children are brought up in a single parent family (Naber and Veldman, 1997).

Educational level

There are still relatively few highly educated Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands. In 2001, only 8% of the Cape Verdean students pursued education in the university

⁸⁰ In 1998 there was an increase of 2,2% in the Cape Verdean population. In 2002, the population grew only 1,3%. In that same year the Surinamese population grew 1,9%, the Turkish population grew 2,9% and the Moroccan population grew 4,7% (ISEO/COS, 2003).

(HBO and WO)⁸¹. The majority (two thirds) enrolled in the lower level of education (MBO), after concluding high school (ISEO/COS, 2003). The Dutch education system is fairly complex and eligibility for each of the streams of education just mentioned, i.e. WO, HBO and MBO, is conditioned by the type of education followed during high school, something which is decided as early as the age of 12. Usually, teachers decide which type of high school education young pupils enrol in but parents can try to negotiate a shift into another type of education when they disagree with the teacher. In recent years, scores of the national education test – the Cito Test – have also become relevant for those decisions.

In 2002, Cape Verdean students scored lower on average than autochthonous students on the Cito Test (48 and 53, respectively). Although Cape Verdeans' scores are somewhat higher than those of students from other migrant groups (e.g. Turks and Moroccans) (ISEO/COS, 2003) they might not be considered high enough by teachers to assign them to the streams of high school education giving access to the higher levels of tertiary education. Indeed, Cape Verdean students are over-represented in the lowest level of high school education (Vmbo)⁸². This may be a result of difficulties with their command of the Dutch language: even though the majority of Cape Verdeans attending school in the Netherlands are second generation migrants, Cape Verdean families tend to speak a mix of Dutch and Kriolu at home (DSO, 2002). In addition, many first generation Cape Verdean parents have a low level of education (see Graph 2) and have jobs with somewhat odd hours (e.g. cleaning, factory work) and they themselves have a poor command of the Dutch language. These circumstances make it difficult for parents to provide the support their children need with education and participate in their activities at school. They are also likely to impair parents' ability to negotiate the assignment of their children to higher levels of high school education with teachers if

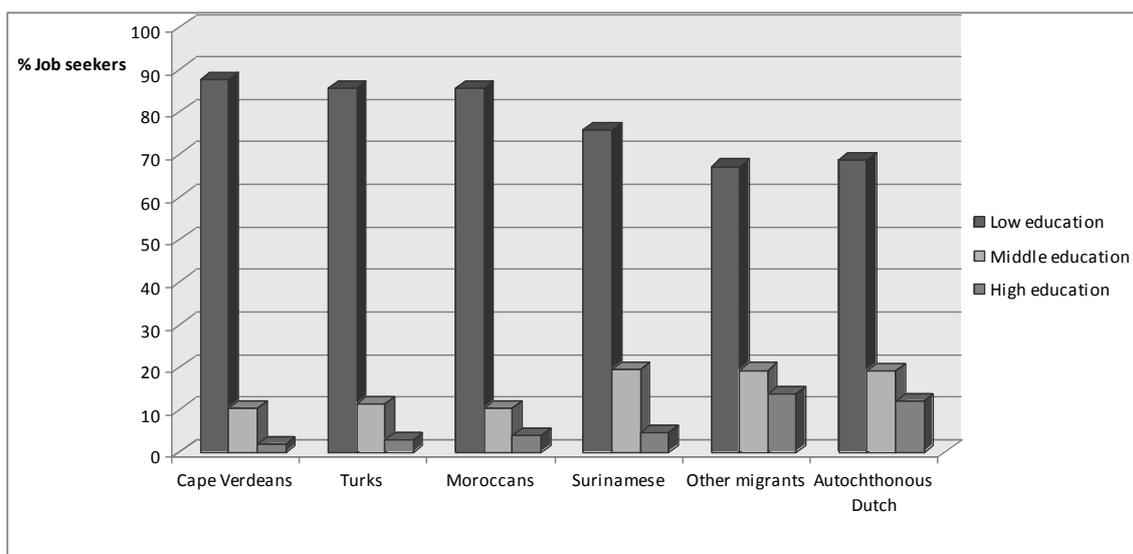
⁸¹ After concluding high school, students in the Netherlands may pursue three types of education: university education (*wetenschappelijk onderwijs* or scientific education, WO), 'higher applied education' (*hoger beroepsonderwijs*, HBO) or 'middle-level applied education' (*middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*, MBO). These three types of education constitute the three possible streams of what is designated tertiary education in the Netherlands.

⁸² High school in the Netherlands is divided in three types of education: the 'preparatory middle-level applied education' (*voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*, Vmbo), the 'higher general continued education' (*hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs*, Havo) and the 'preparatory scientific education' (*voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs*, Vwo). Upon completion, Vmbo enables students to pursue further education at the MBO level; Havo prepares them for HBO education; and, Vwo grants access to WO education. It is possible for a student who completed, for instance, a Vmbo high school education to enrol on a HBO programme. However, this is substantially more difficult to achieve than when students enrol on Havo education from the start. For students who complete a Vmbo education, university (WO) is almost out of the question.

doubt arises or to prevent them from being allocated to classes for children with learning difficulties when that is not absolutely necessary⁸³.

Jobs and income

Graph 2 Distribution of first generation immigrants and autochthonous Dutch job seekers in Rotterdam by educational level, 2002



Source: ISEO/COS (2003)

As shown in graph 2, first generation Cape Verdeans are the ethnic group with the highest proportion of people with a low education seeking jobs in Rotterdam⁸⁴. At present, the hardship of life in Cape Verde still forces many young people to drop-out of school to help support their families. However, during colonial times deprivation was even starker and opportunities to study much more limited. Some of the children living

⁸³ Placing a child with learning difficulties in a special class meant to attend her needs is far from a negative approach. However, when talking to Cape Verdeans whose children have been assigned to ‘special education’ it is not uncommon to hear that teachers justified those referrals based on children’s behaviour problems rather than on their learning difficulties. A common story is that of the teacher who signals the child for Attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), informs the parents and, without seeking a professional diagnosis, allocates the child to special education on those grounds. In general, Cape Verdean parents tend to look up to teachers and to believe they want the best for their children. Many may feel they lack the ‘expert knowledge’ and/or the legitimacy to contest teachers’ decisions, accepting the assignment of their children to special education without realising that that usually compromises their access to higher education.

⁸⁴ The level of education of second generation Cape Verdeans looking for a job is comparable to that of other ethnic groups. This indicates that the overall educational level of the Cape Verdean community has been rising (Choenni, 2004).

in Cape Verde in those times are migrant men and women seeking work in the Netherlands today. Yet, even if low education limits the range of jobs available to first generation Cape Verdeans, in 2002 they were the migrant group with the lowest unemployment rate (12%) (see Table 4). Second generation Cape Verdeans have also more chances of being employed when compared to first generation (Choenni, 2004), which indicates they are better prepared to integrate the Dutch labour market.

Table 4 Proportion of job seekers in Rotterdam by ethnic group and generation, 2002

Ethnic group	First generation	Second generation	Total
Cape Verdeans	13,6	6,9	12,0
Surinamese	16,0	8,3	14,3
Moroccans	25,7	11,3	22,3
Turks	25,7	11,3	22,3
Other ethnic groups	19,2	4,9	17,0
Autochthonous Dutch			6,6

Source: ISEO/COS, 2003

Cape Verdeans have a low average income because the majority of Cape Verdean workers are employed in sectors in which wages are relatively low: in 2005, 55 per cent of Cape Verdeans were employed as cleaners (28%), factory workers (14%), waiters (8%) or as construction workers (5%) (Pires, 2006). Immigrant entrepreneurship is not a prevalent feature amongst Cape Verdeans. While they make up about 5 per cent of the migrant population in Rotterdam, only 3 per cent of the immigrant-run businesses are Cape Verdean (Choenni, 2004). The largest share of Cape Verdean-own businesses is located in the borough of Delfshaven, which, as we mentioned earlier, is the borough with the highest concentration of Cape Verdean residents in the Netherlands.

Faith

Religion is a relevant element in the life of the Cape Verdean community in Rotterdam. Although it cannot be said exactly what proportion of the community professes which creed, it should be fair to argue that the majority of Cape Verdeans are Roman Catholics⁸⁵. The Igreja Nossa Senhora da Paz (Church of Our Lady of Peace) is

⁸⁵ In the mid-1980s, 75% of the Cape Verdeans residing in Rotterdam were Roman Catholics (Bijl, 1985). Although we can assume that many have kept their faith, it is not uncommon to hear of Cape Verdeans

an important reference for many Cape Verdeans. Aside from offering mass in Portuguese, the church is deeply committed to assist, strengthen and empower the community and it has promoted many social, cultural and emancipatory activities over the years. These activities are organised by a group of about a dozen volunteers who work together with the priest and the church's social worker. Among the various initiatives fostered is Casa Tibérias – a place of refuge and shelter for Cape Verdean women victims of mistreatment or in need of support. The church also organises music lessons and a scouts group for the youngsters and offers Dutch language classes for those unable to attend them at official institutions (Pires, 2006).

There is also a fair number of Cape Verdeans who became members of the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, IURD) in the last decades. IURD is a charismatic Pentecostal sect originating in Brazil which, among other practices, promotes 'healing by faith'. Affiliation with IURD is subjected to a monthly contribution of ten percent of each follower's produce or income – the *dízimo* (tithe). This has led many people with low incomes to leave the sect because it forced them into debt.

Racionalismo Cristão (Christian Rationalism), a Christian doctrine with spiritualistic influences created in Brazil and with a steady base in Cape Verde, also gathers a substantial number of followers. In Rotterdam, there are two places where the doctrine is practised – the Centro Redentor (Redemption Centre). Three times a week believers gather at the *Centro* to carry out a *limpeza psíquica* or 'psychic cleansing'⁸⁶. This practice is said to bring comfort and a sense of regained harmony to all followers and especially to people who face a great deal of psychosocial suffering (Beijers and De Freitas, 2008).

Health status

A final aspect we wish to address concerns health. For a long period of time little was known about Cape Verdeans' state of health in the Netherlands⁸⁷. A policy plan designed by the Rotterdam's public health authority – GGD Rotterdam – to

who changed into other beliefs over time. Some of them converted to the Mormon Church, others to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and yet others to Christian Rationalism.

⁸⁶ *Limpeza psíquica* is described as a practice of mental hygiene, a way to seek internal balance and spiritual serenity, in which ritual texts are read, higher spirits are summoned and lower spirits are asked to leave.

⁸⁷ One exception concerns a study carry out in 1991 about HIV and risk behaviour among Cape Verdeans commissioned by the GGD Rotterdam (van Butte, 1991).

improve health care for migrants in 1991 did not provide any data on Cape Verdean immigrants' health (GGD Rotterdam, 1991). Throughout the 1990s, Cape Verdeans were also excluded from the annual 'city health inquiry' carried out by GGD Rotterdam⁸⁸ (Strooij, 1996). When the first studies including Cape Verdeans' perceived health and health care use were published in the early 2000s (see Huiskamp *et al.*, 2000; Dieperink *et al.*, 2002), an alert echoed among professionals concerned with the health of ethnic minorities. According to those studies, Cape Verdeans perceived their own state of health to be poorer than Dutch natives. They also reported more psychosocial problems than the autochthonous population (see table 5). Yet, their use of primary health care (i.e. consultations with general practitioners)⁸⁹ was only slightly higher than that observed among Dutch natives and much lower than the number of consultations among any other ethnic group (see table 6).

Table 5 Deviance mean of experienced health and psychosocial problems in Rotterdam by ethnic group, 1996-2000

	Autochthonous					Cape
	Dutch	Turks	Moroccans	Antilleans	Surinamese	Verdeans
Experienced						
Health	1.00	.61	.77	.89	.86	.81
Psychosocial						
Problems	1.00	1.54	1.32	1.22	1.45	1.19

Source: Huiskamp *et al.*, 2000

Table 6 Relative frequency of consultations with general practitioners in Rotterdam by ethnic group, 1996-2000

	Autochthonous	Cape
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⁸⁸ According to an informant of the GGD Rotterdam interviewed by Strooij (1996: 94), the 'city health inquiry' did not include Cape Verdean immigrants because information on the different ethnic groups had been collected on the basis of nationality. In the mid-1990s, the number of people living in Rotterdam with Cape Verdean nationality was below the 2000. The informant argued that, given the low amount of Cape Verdean nationals in Rotterdam, no representative data could be delivered on the state of health of that group. In 1995, the Cape Verdean community in Rotterdam was already over the 13.000 people (including Cape Verdeans with Dutch or Portuguese nationalities) and, as it came to be observed later, there was a need to put special attention to the health needs and health care use of the community (see De Freitas, 2006).

⁸⁹ In the Netherlands, health care use is dependent on consultation and referral of general practitioners. Only upon the agreement of and referral by those professionals are patients entitled to seek other types of care and specialists. Access and use of primary care are determinant, therefore, for access to secondary care, in which mental health care is included.

	Dutch	Turks	Moroccans	Antillean s	Surinamese e	Verdeans
Consultations with general practitioners	1.00	1.86	1.59	1.51	1.27	1.03

Source: Huiskamp *et al.*, 2000

Where mental health care is concerned, the differences encountered were even sharper. Cape Verdeans' use of mental health services in 1998 was astoundingly low, 70% less than by Dutch natives and other ethnic minorities such as the Turks or the Moroccans (see table 7). In addition, there was also a marked discrepancy in the gender ratio of Cape Verdean mental health care users: women resorted to mental health services 2,5 times more often than men⁹⁰.

Table 7 Use of mental health care services in Rotterdam by ethnic group, 1998*

	Autochthonous					Cape
	Dutch	Turks	Moroccans	Antilleans	Surinamese	Verdeans
Men	30	31	43.2	16.7	21.7	8.9
Women	46.1	47	32	18.8	20.7	22.6
Total	36	36.7	36.2	16.9	24.6	15.1

*Annual figures per 1000 people between 20 and 64 years of age.

Source: Dieperink *et al.*, 2002

These findings led researchers and professionals to raise questions about Cape Verdeans' possible under-use of mental health care, i.e. why were Cape Verdeans making so little use of mental health services if need for that type of care appeared to exist? Studies carried out in the years that followed concluded that Cape Verdeans' under-use of mental health care could be explained by a set of interrelated factors. First, Cape Verdeans experience limited access to mental care as a result of poor information about health care services, incompatibilities in relationships with health professionals,

⁹⁰ Illness appears to be experienced in a substantially different way by Cape Verdean women and men. While men only perceive themselves ill when they are no longer able to get out of bed to go to work, women react to lighter symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, weight variation, etc. In addition, women also tend to consult more frequently with general practitioners (GPs) and, if help is needed by someone in the family, it is usually women who seek out to reach it. This is likely to put women in a more favourable position both in what concerns the acquisition of information about health and in what regards the acquisition of referrals for mental health care services from GPs (De Freitas, 2006).

difficulties in negotiating care (De Freitas, 2006) and lack of medical citizenship (see Beijers and De Freitas, 2008). Second, Cape Verdeans benefit from their own circuit of traditional healers as well as from self-devised and community-based solutions such as self-medication and spiritual and religious guidance (Beijers, 2004). The churches and houses of worship we mentioned above play a relevant role at this level. Finally, Cape Verdeans have a deterritorialised perspective over health and health care use and are part of a large diaspora which enables them to seek care across the Dutch borders⁹¹ (De Freitas, 2005). Transnational health care seeking allows the identification and use of the health care Cape Verdeans consider most appropriate to their needs. However, it may also reduce their opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to navigate the Dutch health care system (Beijers and De Freitas, 2008).

In 2000, a community-based project aimed at improving Cape Verdeans' access to mental health care and at advocating for their rights was set up in Rotterdam (Smulders, 2003). This project, named Apoio⁹², has become a key intermediary between Cape Verdeans affected by psychosocial problems and mental health and social care services. A study published recently shows that Cape Verdeans' use of mental health care services has increased 82 per cent between 1998 and 2004, with a growth of 20 per cent just between 2002 and 2004⁹³ (see Dieperink *et al.*, 2007). Some of these new mental care users found their way to mental health services through Project Apoio. The community's overall knowledge about mental health and mental care provisions also appears to have increased as a result of the initiatives organised within the Project. Furthermore, Cape Verdeans' participation in those initiatives is making the community more visible and giving it a more positive image, not only in the field of mental health but also in society at large (De Freitas, 2008).

The developments just described are likely to explain part of the increase in mental health care use observed among Cape Verdeans. Those figures must, nevertheless, be interpreted with caution: although the number of Cape Verdeans' mental care users is growing, it has not levelled yet with the number of Dutch

⁹¹ Cape Verdean immigrants in the Netherlands find transnational health care solutions not only in the homeland but also in Portugal and France. Health care seeking in other European countries is primarily facilitated by solid transnational ties with Cape Verdean immigrants in those countries (De Freitas, 2005).

⁹² During the period in which this article was being written, the host organisation of Project Apoio – Basisberaad Rijnmond – opened bankruptcy and the Project was discontinued. Efforts are being made to transfer Project Apoio to another organisation so it can carry on with its activities.

⁹³ It is important to note that, despite of this growth, in 2004 Cape Verdeans made the least use of mental health care services when compared to Dutch natives and to the largest migrant groups in the Netherlands.

autochthonous users. This disparity may be understood as an indication that the problem of inaccessibility of mental care has not yet been fully resolved, particularly if we take into account that Cape Verdeans report a higher rate of psychosocial problems when compared with Dutch natives. The furtherance of initiatives aimed at improving Cape Verdeans' access to care is, therefore, fundamental for that group to benefit of equity in health.

Ascribed identity and social recognition

As stated already Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands are referred to as *stille migranten* or silent immigrants⁹⁴. This label was coined based on the perception that Cape Verdeans are a group of quiet, hard-working and self-reliant migrants, who fulfil their obligations but are less than assertive when it comes to claiming their rights. The Cape Verdean community has also been generally perceived as somewhat isolated. Its in-group orientation, relative small size and spatial concentration in Rotterdam have given the community little visibility, reaffirming its position as a minority amongst minorities. Nevertheless, whenever Cape Verdeans have become better known, they have usually benefited from a good reputation. In fact, in the early 1990s, immigration authorities described them as well-integrated, asserting that Cape Verdeans were one of the least problematic migrant groups in Rotterdam (Butte, 1991).

The image of silent immigrants attributed to Cape Verdeans has been framed, to a great extent, in relation to first generation immigrants. In recent years, the growth of the second generation and its participation in Dutch society has inspired a more ambiguous portrayal of the community. Young Cape Verdeans raised in the Netherlands do not experience the language barrier their parents did and mingle more with other ethnic groups. They are also credited for further developing and disseminating a genre of music produced by Cape Verdeans living in Rotterdam in the 1980s – *cabo zouk*⁹⁵, making their cultural heritage accessible to other groups. Another interesting aspect of the Cape Verdean youth is their focus in creating an identity of their own. Many

⁹⁴ The label 'silent immigrants' was first employed by the Rijnmond Association of Immigrant Workers (Stichting Buitenlandse Werknemers Rijnmond) in 1988, which described Cape Verdeans as a 'silent group, who does not let much be heard about it' (see Strooij, 1996: 58).

⁹⁵ *Cabo-zouk* is a modern, highly technical, urban dance music style which combines Antillean *zouk* rhythms and romantic lyrics in Kriolu (Hoffman, 2008).

youngsters identify themselves as *cabo*⁹⁶. Although this self-attributed designation finds little appreciation among some of the older Cape Verdeans, for the youth it works as a ‘bridging’ term able to capture both their ethnic roots and the bond they have with the Netherlands. Overall, these are positive developments which attest the community’s increasing aperture to, and integration into, Dutch society. However, in the early 2000s, young Cape Verdean men were singled out by Dutch authorities for criminal behaviour (Butte, 2004). This caught both the community and the police off guard. Until then, there was almost no record of Cape Verdeans’ involvement with crime and, as a Cape Verdean social worker explained: ‘the authorities had never come across Cape Verdeans. They didn’t know us because we were *stille migranten*. They knew we lived in Rotterdam but we were kind of invisible. They had no problems with us’ (De Freitas, 2006). These events may have served to draw attention to the community but in a negative way. That raised considerable concern amongst Cape Verdeans, both because they disapprove of wrongdoing and they want their children to thrive in Dutch society and because they wish to sustain the positive image they have had for decades.

The issue of invisibility brought up in the explanation above has also characterised the Cape Verdean community in the US. Until 1980, Cape Verdeans were not included in the American Population Census, even though they had been in the country for over a century. That lack of recognition can be partly explained by the small size of the Cape Verdean migrant population and its former colonial ties to Portugal. Yet, it was really ‘race relations’ which had the chief role in determining the identity ascribed to Cape Verdean-Americans. According to Marilyn Halter (1993), racial classification in the US has fallen historically within the oversimplified parameters of ‘black’ and ‘white’ and this dichotomy virtually obliterated cultural differences among people of colour. During the initial phase of settlement, Cape Verdeans in the US sought to be recognised as Portuguese-Americans. Yet, mainland Portuguese soon excluded them from their community. Identification with black Americans made little sense to Cape Verdeans who refused to accept a black identity. The outcome of this position and the ensuing lack of identification with one of the two ‘racial poles’ was a never-ending redefinition of their ascribed identity. Over the years, Cape Verdeans were characterised as ‘neither black nor white, but sometimes white, at other times black,

⁹⁶ The Cape Verdean youth organisation created in Rotterdam in 1994 has, indeed, that very same name, i.e. Jongerenorganisatie Cabo.

African, Portuguese, brown, even green⁹⁷ (Halter, 1993: 14). These irreconcilable identities placed them in a fragile social position, hampering their recognition as a distinct minority in the US and, subsequently, inhibiting their entitlement to state developed programmes and funds attributable on the basis of race/ethnic background.

In the Netherlands, the identification and recognition of ethnic minorities does not fall within the boundaries of 'racial identification'. Instead, it is a matter of ethnicity and country of origin. The Dutch usually employ the term *allochthonous* to refer to migrants and their descendants. In its literal sense, the term means 'originating from another country'. Yet, within public discourse in the Netherlands, the term *allochthonous* is usually applied to address only migrants from non-Western countries such as Cape Verde. Non-western migrants are often perceived to share a culture significantly different from (and, sometimes at odds with) that of the autochthonous population.

In spite of the differences in terminology and classification systems, a parallel can be drawn between the social position of Cape Verdeans in the US and that of Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands. As we noted earlier, the label *silent immigrants* was attributed to Cape Verdeans, in part, because they are perceived as diligent and cooperative. Yet, that label also derived from an idea of invisibility, capturing the essence of a community which, in its self-reliance, placed little demands on Dutch public authorities. It might have been for those reasons that there was hardly any mention of Cape Verdeans in migrant policy in the Netherlands until the mid-1990s. This absence should not be understood as entirely negative, for implicit in it was the suggestion of Cape Verdeans as a well-integrated group. However, that very same idea might have obscured the necessity to proceed with a thorough evaluation of the community's needs: as we have seen above, there were almost no data or studies available on Cape Verdeans until the early 1990s but when studies began to emerge the need to improve the community's position in fields such as education and health was obvious. In addition, public authorities' lack of information about Cape Verdeans might have made it more difficult to justify the need for initiatives aimed at promoting community development and emancipation. Similarly to the US, funds in the Netherlands tend to be allocated more promptly to initiatives designed for communities

⁹⁷ When unable to classify Cape Verdeans by race some referred to them as 'the green people', taking the translation of the name of the archipelago of origin literally (Halter, 1993).

which are acknowledged, organised, and whose needs are properly researched and defined. Problems such as limited access to mental health care and to high education could have been tackled earlier had the community benefited from greater visibility and recognition.

One other aspect which is couched in the label silent immigrants is a certain expectation by society that Cape Verdeans adopt a passive attitude when it comes to claiming rights and advocating for their interests. This characteristic has been contradicted by Cape Verdeans' actions. Over the years, they have become increasingly more committed to improving the living standards of their community. An example of this is the substantial amount of associations and organisations they have initiated in Rotterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands. Those organisations were set up to respond to the community's various interests and needs and they are viewed as pillars which hold the community together and as sources of self-devised solutions for everyday problems. However, their activities and aims may not always be transparent to the wider society because, like many other ethnic-based organisations, they are essentially targeted at community members (Da Graça, 1999).

Another instance which challenges the passivity ascribed to Cape Verdeans is their engagement in community health improvement. As we noted earlier, Cape Verdeans are increasingly more involved in devising initiatives aimed at promoting (mental) health and fostering access to mental health care through the already mentioned Project Apoio. Among those initiatives are information sessions about mental health, mutual-aid groups, and home visits to people affected by psychosocial problems and in a situation of isolation. Its organisation and implementation are carried out through the direct participation of several dozens of Cape Verdean volunteers who have succeeded in reaching out to community members unable to find assistance in the Dutch mental health care system. But there have been other positive outcomes deriving from Cape Verdeans' participation in mental health. Aside from a more efficient dissemination of information about psychosocial distress and mental care services, the stigma associated with mental illness appears to be gradually decreasing. Furthermore, the rise of a Cape Verdean 'voice' in the field of mental health is in line with the principles currently governing the delivery of health care in the Netherlands which assert the need for care users to adopt an active role in selecting the care they find most appropriate (which implies access to information) and to exert pressure towards a finer

adjustment of services to their needs. Overall, it seems that the circle of silence that once placed Cape Verdeans affected by mental problems at the margins of society is being broken (see De Freitas, 2008). Project Apoio has also been considered a good practice in the field of migrant health, making both the community and its efforts toward emancipation and integration more visible and acknowledged.

Integration in the host society

Migrants' integration may be broadly understood as the weaving of newcomers to the social, economic, cultural, and political fabric of receiving societies. This implies a sustained mutual interaction between migrants and the host society which usually places a demand for change on both parties (Berry, 1999). In what follows we consider Cape Verdeans' integration in light of indicators such as labour market and civic/political participation, educational achievement, and geographical distribution. We also draw attention to the way transnational ties and health may function as an extra set of indicators able to provide further understanding on Cape Verdeans' integration in Dutch society.

Cape Verdeans may be said to have an 'in between position' where integration indicators are concerned, i.e. they usually rank between the largest migrant groups in the Netherlands: Turks and Moroccans on the one hand, and Surinamese and Antilleans on the other (Choenni, 2004).

The 'in between positioning' of Cape Verdeans is particularly noticeable in regard to educational achievement. In 2002, Cape Verdean students scored higher on the national education test than Turkish and Moroccan students but their average grade was lower than that of Surinamese and autochthonous Dutch. Cape Verdeans aged between 17 and 22 are also less likely to drop-out of school when compared to the former two groups. Yet, the proportion of young Cape Verdeans who were not enrolled in any form of education (30%) in 2002 was similar to that of Surinamese and higher than that of autochthonous Dutch (28%) (ISEO/COS, 2003). As we mentioned earlier, many of the parents of Cape Verdean youngsters have not attended school in the Netherlands. Some of them also experience difficulties with the Dutch language. This is likely to be undermining their ability to provide their children support when navigating the complex Dutch education system and with schoolwork. An important aspect to note here is that older first generation Cape Verdeans have not relinquished learning the Dutch language

and many take courses for several years (Strooij, 1996). This is an indicator of Cape Verdeans' aspiration to become more integrated in the Netherlands.

Single parenthood is another characteristic which reflects Cape Verdeans' positioning between the main ethnic minorities. Similarly to the cases of Surinamese and Antilleans, over one fourth of Cape Verdean households are composed by single parent families. This proportion is significantly higher than is found among Turks (11%) and autochthonous Dutch (5%) (ISEO/COS, 2003). Yet, it should be noted that these rates are not so different from those observed in Cape Verde, where 42 per cent of the children are brought up by single parents, usually the mother (Carling, 2008a). This may be explained by the unsteadiness of relationships and Cape Verdeans' understanding of kinship. When describing the notion of *família* (family) in Cape Verde, Åkesson (2008) brings to light the relevance of blood ties and the instability of conjugal relationships. In Cape Verde, it is relatively common for both men and women to switch partners without too much social upheaval. In addition, masculinity has been traditionally associated with polygamous behaviour. Women also keep more than one relationship at the time but they are expected to start new relationships only if they are single. In this context, blood ties have an important role in determining who is considered family and how responsibilities over children are met. When a relationship is discontinued children are usually left to the care of their incontestable kin: the mothers. A similar situation may be occurring in the Netherlands. However, Cape Verdean women in Rotterdam appear to have become less tolerant of polygamist relationships. The Dutch-Cape Verdean alderman of the Delfshaven borough has also stated that this is a problem which needs to be brought into public discussion and that Cape Verdean fathers must take responsibility for their children. Religious organisations also expressed concern over this issue and called for Cape Verdean men to accompany the process of emancipation initiated by women (Choenni, 2004).

Participation in the labour market is one of the most salient aspects of Cape Verdeans' integration: almost 70 per cent of the Cape Verdeans aged 15 to 65 have a paid job (Bijl *et al.*, 2005). This is one of the highest employment rates amongst immigrant groups in the Netherlands⁹⁸ and something which attests Cape Verdeans' image of hard workers in Dutch society. The proportion of Cape Verdeans who are

⁹⁸ All other large immigrant groups have lower employment rates than Cape Verdeans (69,1%). Surinamese have 67,4% of its population employed, Antilleans 59.6%, Turks 54,5%, and Moroccans 48,5% (Bijl *et al.*, 2005).

economically active is still lower than that of autochthonous Dutch (83,5%). This can be explained, to a large extent, by the marked differences found in entrepreneurship patterns: while over 9 per cent of Dutch natives had their own businesses in 2003, only 1,3 per cent of the Cape Verdeans opted to engage on private enterprise (Bijl *et al.*, 2005).

As we noted earlier, Cape Verdeans' tend to have a low average income. This is likely to change in the coming years as second generation Cape Verdeans reach higher educational levels and climb the social ladder. Nevertheless, low incomes limit Cape Verdeans' chances to acquire self-owned houses and condition their transition to better-off neighbourhoods: as we have seen, a great deal of Cape Verdeans are concentrated in a couple of neighbourhoods in Rotterdam. Residential concentration is, however, not necessarily a negative aspect in the life of the community: Cape Verdeans are fond of living side by side with friends and acquaintances, with whom they often organise social and cultural events. Conviviality and solidarity are strong traits exhibited by this community and spatial proximity favours its continuance.

Where civic participation is concerned, Cape Verdeans may be described as an active immigrant group. The first Cape Verdean association was set up back in the 1960s (Da Graça, 1999). Since then, Cape Verdeans have created over 60 associations and organisations divided into the following types: socio-cultural, sports and recreational, religious, homeland development-oriented, and media organisations (Strooij, 2000). The high number of organisations points to Cape Verdeans' commitment to advocate for their interests and to promote their integration in Dutch society. However, it also denotes a certain fragmentation within the community. The island of origin is a relevant element in the definition of first generation Cape Verdeans' identity, who often differentiate between the *badiu* and *sampadjudo* peoples and tend to form organisations along ethnic, religious and/or political lines (Gruijter, 2003). Second generation Cape Verdeans do not seem to share this characteristic with their parents. When they refer to their ethnic roots they usually speak of Cape Verde rather than of the island of origin of their family. Perhaps in the future there will be greater cohesion among Cape Verdean organisations.

The participation of Cape Verdeans in Dutch organisations and politics has been generally low. Although some Cape Verdeans have become public officials at the local and national governments, the community's political participation is not expressive: a

study of participation in local elections in Rotterdam in 2002 pointed to a turnout of 25 per cent among Cape Verdeans. Comparative to other ethnic groups, Cape Verdeans turnout rate was higher than that of Antilleans (20%), but lower than that of Surinamese (30%), Turks (55%) and autochthonous Dutch (60%). Cape Verdean women appear to be more aware of the importance of exerting their voting rights: in that same election, their turnout was considerably higher than that of Cape Verdean men (Van Rhee, 2002; Choenni, 2004).

As we pointed out earlier, in the early 2000s young Cape Verdean men were identified by the police for criminal activities. In hindsight, this may not have come as a surprise at first because there were instances of misbehaviour and, perhaps more strikingly, young Cape Verdeans scored the highest among all ethnic groups in two surveys measuring youngsters' self-reported aggressive and delinquent behaviour in Rotterdam (see Rovers and Wouters, 1996; Bun and Looij-Jansen, 2000)⁹⁹. Judging from those reports it seemed, indeed, that young Cape Verdeans were experiencing difficulties in integrating into Dutch society. However, when matched against the image of 'quiet and cooperative youngsters' ascribed to them by teachers, the police, other ethnic minority youngsters and the Cape Verdean community itself, those concerns appeared out of context. The discrepant views about Cape Verdean youth led to a study aimed at explaining those contradictory perceptions (see Butte, 2004). Yet, in the absence of police registers capable of disaggregating offenders by their ethnicity, it became difficult to reach a clear-cut answer to that question¹⁰⁰. The study concluded, nevertheless, that although Cape Verdean youngsters benefit from 'protection factors'

⁹⁹ The surveys were applied to 12 and 13 year old students in a school context.

¹⁰⁰ The study by Butte (2004) offers, however, two possible explanations which proved difficult to verify. On the one hand, the discrepancy found between Cape Verdeans' self-reported involvement with criminal acts and their image of 'quiet youth' may be explained by over-reporting, i.e. young Cape Verdeans may be over-stating their engagement with crime. This would justify their ascription with a positive image as, in practice, they would not commit that much crime. On the other hand, Cape Verdeans' high rates of criminality refer mostly to petty crime (i.e. verbal aggression, small thefts, etc.). This type of crime goes frequently unreported and is less visible. This means that the crime reported by Cape Verdeans would be accurate but most people would be unaware of it. The first explanation cannot be corroborated because police registers of criminal acts account only for nationality and do not include felons' ethnic origin. The majority of second generation Cape Verdeans have Dutch nationality. This makes it difficult to match the offenses they report with their actual participation in crime. It should be noted, however, that being known as 'quiet' may offer an extra motivation for Cape Verdean youngsters to adopt a *stoer gedrag* (tough behaviour) at school as a way to avoid the shortcomings usually associated with falling into an underdog position. This could have led some of the youngsters to over-state their involvement with crime.

such as a high participation in society¹⁰¹ and the presence of extensive networks of family and friends who watch over them, they are exposed to risk factors which can determine a greater appetite for criminality. Among those factors are problems at home¹⁰², residence in relatively deprived neighbourhoods, their over-representation in special education and a low level of education (in average). This points to a need for increased attention regarding young Cape Verdeans' integration, particularly in regard to aspects concerned with upbringing and assistance with school. However, linking the youth to crime without caution may lead to stigmatisation and contribute to their segregation. The need for further research on this issue is urgent.

Transnationalism is a predominant feature among Cape Verdean immigrants across the world. Connections to people in the home archipelago have been sustained on the basis of kinship ties, shared values and sentiments, as well as commercial trade (Meintel, 2002; Góis, 2006). With a diaspora outnumbering the population of Cape Verde, almost everyone in the islands has relatives or friends living abroad. Remittances play a relevant role in the economy of the country. In 2000-2001 they accounted for 22 per cent of its national income (Carling, 2005). The *tambor* – a container similar to those used to transport oil, which has recently given the name to a publication about Cape Verdeans' cultural heritage in Rotterdam (see Pires, 2006) – has become a familiar item arriving at Cape Verdean harbours and airports filled with consumer goods unavailable in the islands. *Casas holandesas* (Dutch houses) and *casas americanas* (American houses) built by immigrants stand out on the principal avenues of the Cape Verdean islands. In the last decades, the emergence of new communication technologies and cheaper transportation has intensified transnational connections. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for young second generation Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands to carry out internships in or to organise summer trips to Cape Verde or for first generation pensioners to move back or to spend a couple of months a year in the islands visiting

¹⁰¹ Aside from a high participation in the labour market, Cape Verdeans in general, and youngsters in particular, are quite fond of social events and activities and participate intensively in activities organised within the community (e.g. football) (see Butte, 2004).

¹⁰² As we noted earlier, difficulties encountered by youngsters regarding their upbringing are highly related to the fact that many Cape Verdean youngsters are brought up exclusively by their mothers. Cape Verdean mothers often find it difficult to combine child rearing with work and household tasks in the absence of a father. In addition, Cape Verdean youngsters have also reported to have difficulties coping with the traditional way by which they are raised by their parents. That usually involves strict rules and a demand for obedience, without too much attention for the youngsters' wishes and feelings (see Butte, 2004).

relatives. In addition, Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands have become increasingly more engaged in Cape Verde's politics.

As observed by Carling (2008a), transnationalism is sometimes perceived as unfavourable to integration. However, the maintenance of transnational ties involves financial costs which may not be easily met by Cape Verdeans with a low economic position in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it is likely that community members involved in homeland politics are better informed about and possibly more active in the politics of the host country. The intensity of transnational connections may, thus, offer an indication of the degree of integration experienced by Cape Verdeans, where the greater the ability to sustain such connections the higher the probability of a better social, political and economic position among the actors involved.

To close this section we would like to address the relationship between health and integration. As we pointed out in a previous article, migrants' state of health and migrant health care policies might be used as an indicator of integration (see Ingleby *et al.*, 2005). Successful integration of migrants in health entails, therefore, equality of access to health information, health care, and health participatory mechanisms, actual participation in health care policy, services and community-based projects and the same incidence of health risk factors within immigrant and autochthonous groups after a certain length of stay in the host country. As we discussed earlier, Cape Verdeans experience a poorer state of health when compared with other ethnic groups and their access to health care is limited (De Freitas, 2006). However, where participation in health is concerned they constitute a positive exception when compared to other minority groups: Cape Verdeans participate actively in health through community-based projects (e.g. Project Apoio) (see De Freitas, 2008)¹⁰³. These data may appear somewhat contradictory, i.e. the minority who perceives itself the least healthy has some of the most active citizens in health. Yet, it is precisely among communities experiencing disadvantage in health that participation is more opportune and necessary. That Cape Verdeans succeeded to engage in community-based projects attests their resilience in benefiting from good health and their willingness to exert their rights in the field of health. Nevertheless, much remains to be done in order to tackle the problem of health

¹⁰³ Ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are under-represented in the participatory mechanisms developed to enable participation in health policy, health care services (i.e. client councils), and health-related community-based projects (De Savorin Lohman, *et al.*, 2000). Cape Verdeans have succeeded to initiate an active participation in health at the community level. It should be noted, however, that like other minorities, Cape Verdeans are still insufficiently represented in health care services.

care inaccessibility and for Cape Verdeans to reach full health integration. As we showed in the previous section, the inability to access appropriate care in the Netherlands drives many Cape Verdeans to seek health care in other countries. Although transnational health care seeking enables access to a broader scope of treatment choices, fostering Cape Verdeans' autonomy and agency in selecting the health services they consider most adequate, it can also contribute for a decrease in contact with Dutch health care. This may delay the acquisition of fundamental information and skills to learn about and figure out the local health system (Beijers and De Freitas, 2008), impairing integration. The continuation and expansion of initiatives such as Project Apoio are essential to pursue this type of integration further.

Final Remarks

The Cape Verdean community in the Netherlands is becoming increasingly more diverse. The growth of the second generation, its greater aperture to other ethnic groups and the diversification of its skills and interests are making way for the emergence of an identity different to their parents'. This is not to say that young Cape Verdeans are losing track of their ethnic roots. On the contrary, there is even talk of an ethnic revival (Carling, 2008b). Many Dutch-Cape Verdean teenagers and young adults are seeking to learn more about Cape Verde, visiting the country, getting engaged in development projects, reinterpreting its music and disseminating its culture. First generation immigrants are also growing more aware of their rights and more vocal in expressing their needs. These developments point out the community's interest in and commitment to becoming more integrated into Dutch society.

Integration entails efforts by and changes among both immigrant communities and the host society. In the case of Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands, health has been one of the fields where mutual efforts toward integration have been more discernable in recent years. On the one hand, public authorities have acknowledged the need to fund interventions focused on improving the accessibility of health care to Cape Verdeans (e.g. Project Apoio). On the other hand, Cape Verdeans have responded to the opportunity of promoting their rights in health by participating actively in those interventions. As a result, the Cape Verdean community is increasingly more visible and recognised within social institutions and that is serving to discard less positive aspects linked to their image as silent immigrants: characteristics such as passivity can

no longer be easily ascribed to Cape Verdeans. We must bear in mind, however, that problems such as limited access to health care and to higher education are not yet fully resolved. This calls for attention from both the community and public authorities to keep investing in community development initiatives aimed at tackling those and other problems. Increased participation in such initiatives is likely to foster Cape Verdeans' awareness toward the need for greater civic participation and to enable them to acquire the skills necessary to become more socially engaged. That can contribute, in return, to enhance their integration into Dutch society and to promote their social mobility.

One final aspect deserving consideration is the association of young Cape Verdean men with criminality. As we observed earlier, there is no clear explanation for the mismatch found between the high involvement in light criminal offences reported by the youngsters and their image of a quiet and co-operative youth. Media coverage of some severe crimes by young Cape Verdeans in recent years has attracted negative attention to the community, putting its positive image somewhat at stake. This makes further inquiry on this problem imperative, for the possibilities exist that those were singular cases or that, indeed, they were just a few among many unrecorded crimes. Nevertheless, to frame a negative image of Cape Verdean youth on the basis of those events is not just precipitate but imprudent. Being linked to criminality can easily lead to stigmatisation. In the absence of certainty regarding the extent of the problem of criminality, efforts can better be placed in assisting the youngsters with finding their way through the Dutch education system and in gathering the conditions necessary for their safe and gratifying upbringing, than in emphasizing their association with social problems.

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